

INTERNATIONAL CHRISTIAN EMBASSY JERUSALEM // JULY 2025 // USA EDITION



WORD

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SEA SCROLL
DEBATE**
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ISRAEL AND IRAN AT WAR



INTERNATIONAL CHRISTIAN EMBASSY JERUSALEM

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

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

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

Our vision is:

- To reach every segment of Israel's society with a Christian testimony of comfort and love
- 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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INTERNATIONAL CHRISTIAN EMBASSY JERUSALEM - USA

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FROM THE DESK OF THE PRESIDENT



Dear Friends,

As I write this, 28 Israelis are dead and over 3,000 wounded after Iran unleashed a relentless wave of ballistic missiles across the country. This assault came in response to Prime Minister Netanyahu's June 13 strike targeting Iran's top leaders, nuclear facilities, and missile infrastructure. It could have been worse, as each missile carries a massive warhead. But we thank God for His protective hand, for Israel's anti-missile systems, and for the safety of bomb shelters.

Our AID team, already busy with ongoing recovery work since October 7, quickly mobilized again to bring emergency relief to Israelis devastated by Iran's recent missile attacks. Since June 13, more than 10,000 people have lost their homes. While our rebuilding efforts along the Gaza border are still underway, we are doing all we can to reach those newly displaced and traumatized people—bringing urgent aid, comfort, and hope in the face of increasing destruction.

One article in this month's magazine that highlights these efforts shares about the destruction experienced by the residents of Bat Yam, a coastal community in Israel, after Iranian missiles ripped apart an entire neighborhood. The article lays bare the residents' anguish and how the ICEJ is stepping in to meet basic urgent needs while looking forward to how we can help with long-term recovery and restoration. *I encourage you to read it.*

Israel's (and the United States') military successes over Iran mark a major shift for the Middle East. For me, it feels like the fall of the Berlin Wall and collapse of the Soviet Union back in 1989. What inspires me most is that these events were strongly linked to prayer. On the day of the October 7 terror attacks, we expanded our weekly Global Prayer Gathering to a daily online event, and we haven't stopped. Israel and Iran are always the main prayer focus. Join us on these calls at: www.icejusa.org/event-item-global-prayer-gathering.

This battle won't be won in Washington or Jerusalem, but in the spiritual realm—as Paul reminds us in Ephesians 6:11–20. Keep praying for a move of the Holy Spirit across the Middle East, especially in Iran's churches—and always for Israel.

And thank you for your faithful support. As you read this magazine, you'll see how your prayers and gifts are making a real impact. Please keep standing with us at this critical hour!

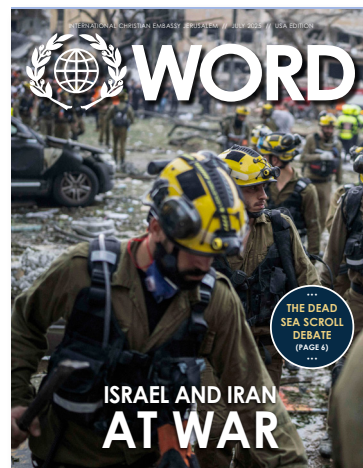
The Lord bless you from Zion,

Juergen Buehler

Dr. Juergen Buehler
ICEJ President

COVER PHOTO: Israeli rescue teams amid rubble of buildings hit by an Iranian missile (AP Photo)

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ISRAEL AND IRAN AT WAR

A DESERVING END TO IRAN'S NUCLEAR LIES

BY DAVID PARSONS, ICEJ SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT & SPOKESMAN

As the high-stakes conflict between Israel and Iran unfolded over recent weeks, there were two competing narratives on how we got here. As the fallout continues from Israel's emerging victory in this historic confrontation, it remains imperative that world leaders decide which narrative holds the truth, because entertaining folly on an issue as weighty as nuclear arms can be enormously perilous for everyone.

NARRATIVE #1

One narrative held that Iran is a peace-loving nation that has been developing a nuclear program solely for benign, civilian purposes. Further, Iranian officials were negotiating in good faith with the United States concerning its rightful efforts to enrich uranium, until Israel maliciously blew up those talks by launching "Operation Rising Lion."

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi claimed that "Iran did nothing wrong," and US President Donald Trump—by launching his "Midnight Hammer" bunker-buster mission while deceptively calling for more talks—had "betrayed" the respectful path of diplomacy. Russian President Vladimir Putin concurred that the coordinated Israeli and American attacks against Iran's nuclear sites were "groundless." Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan went even further, describing Israel's military strikes against Iran's nuclear program as "criminal," "crazed," and acts of "state terrorism," while adding that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has now surpassed Adolf Hitler in committing crimes of genocide.

NARRATIVE #2

The other narrative asks us to take a more measured, objective look back to the origins and declared aims of the clerical regime, which has ruled Iran since the Islamic Revolution of 1979. This is when Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini swept into power in Tehran on the crest of Islamic fundamentalism,

which centered around his message that the Arab and Muslim world had suffered repeated defeats and humiliations against Israel on the battlefield because they had left the basic, core tenets of Islam. But if they returned to the pure Islamic faith taught by the prophet Muhammed in the seventh century, Khomeini preached, it would please Allah, and he would grant them victory first over the Jewish State and then conquest of the world.

Once ensconced in Tehran, the Ayatollahs were determined to export their Revolution throughout the region. Thus, the mullahs quickly arranged the assassination of Egyptian president Anwar Sadat, the Arab leader who had just made historic peace with Israel. The Ayatollahs also sired the rise of Hezbollah in Lebanon and instructed its ranks on the virtues of suicide missions, thereby inspiring the twin bombings of the US Embassy and the US Marines barracks in Beirut, which claimed hundreds of American lives.

From the outset, the radical Sh'ite regime deliberately focused on confronting America as the "Great Satan" and Israel as the "Little Satan" due to their assessment that these were the only nations that took their dark, global ambitions seriously and could stand in their way. The rest of the world was seen as simply too weak, gullible, or asleep to stop them. Sadly, they were largely right for all these decades.

Iran's Plot Against Israel

The Iranian plot against Israel was to encircle the "Zionist entity" with a "ring of fire" in the form of well-trained and armed proxy militias. Hezbollah grew into the "A-team" of global terror militias, carrying out lethal bombings against Jewish and Israeli targets as far away as Argentina. They eventually accumulated an enormous arsenal of over 150,000 rockets—surpassing the strength of most nations' military forces. Hamas, though

Sunni Muslims, accepted funding, training, armaments, and backing from the Shi'ite clerics. Similar jihadist militias were enlisted among the Shi'a Arabs in war-torn Iraq and the Houthis separatists in Yemen, while Syria's Alawite minority, led by the Assad family dynasty in Damascus, also became increasingly subservient to Tehran.

Meanwhile, Iran had learned a painful lesson during its eight-year war with Iraq from 1980 to 1988. As Saddam Hussein lobbed hundreds of Scud missiles at Iran's largest cities far behind the front lines, the Ayatollahs realized this would be an attainable weapons system to terrorize Israel's civilian heartland. Thus began its ambitious ballistic missile program, aided by a space satellite agency that chiefly served as a cover to test rocket engines for their long-range Shahab missiles.

Finally, Iran set out on a clandestine quest for atomic weapons under the guise of a peaceful nuclear program. Israeli leaders have known of the existence of Tehran's program and its genocidal designs on the Jewish State since at least the Rabin government in the early 1990s, but the world has been much slower at putting these pieces together. Iran, again, learned another key lesson from watching Israel take out the Iraqi nuclear plant at Osirak in 1981 and the secret Syrian nuclear reactor at Khyber in 2009. In response, Iranian leaders decided to spread out their nuclear facilities among numerous sites to duplicate many key functions, such as multiple centrifuge cascades for enriching uranium and encase vital components of their nuclear program in fortified structures deep underground.

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)

As the world began to slowly wise up to Iran's duplicity, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) started to monitor and inspect the Isfahan conversion facility and other nuclear sites, which was required of Iran as a signatory to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. Thus, the cat-and-mouse games began, with the Iranian opposition soon outing Tehran in 2002 over its hidden enrichment activities deep underground at the secret Natanz site. The so-called EU-3 of Germany, France, and the United Kingdom then opened direct talks with Iranian officials to try to contain the burgeoning network of nuclear sites. But amid those talks, the Europeans were greatly miffed to learn in 2009 that there was an even larger, secret, fortified uranium enrichment plant buried deep inside a mountain at Fordow. Yet they seemed to quickly recover from the shock as they teamed up with the Obama administration to continue the talks with Iran until reaching the JCPOA deal in 2015.

From there, Iran used US President Barack Obama's cash deliveries and eased sanctions to expand its reach, using the windfall of billions of dollars to further bolster its vast regional network of proxy armies. But when Trump entered the White House, he withdrew the US from the JCPOA agreement due to its flawed sunset clauses, lack of any requirement to dismantle Iran's nuclear program, and failure to deal with Tehran's support for terror groups, stockpiling of ballistic missiles, and other bad behaviors.

Iran and Israel: October 7

While President Joe Biden brought back Obama's appeasement policies toward Iran, the Hamas mass terror attacks of October 7 finally forced Israel to go on the offensive against the Iranian-led "ring of fire" surrounding it. With its battering of Hamas and Hezbollah and then Trump's return to office, Jerusalem finally regained the confidence to confront directly the source of the existential threat against it: the radical regime in Iran.

Under *this* narrative, Israel has actually been very patient and cautious in dealing with Iran, choosing to engage rather in a long shadow war of covert operations that inflicted temporary setbacks on Tehran's nuclear program but no real death blows. Israel also has always been very open and transparent about this growing threat to its existence, with Netanyahu in particular warning the world at every opportunity not to trust Iran's lies about its peaceful nuclear intentions.

Indeed, it would be pure folly for anyone to accept Tehran's assurances when it has been aggressively enriching uranium to 60% purity, which has no peaceful civilian use and is dangerously close to weapons-grade uranium. Iran was hiding its nuclear facilities, reinforcing them underground, closing them off to inspection, and duplicating the stages of weapons development. Iran has even been caught designing nuclear detonators and forging converted metal into the telltale shape of an atomic warhead. Even the IAEA recently concluded that Iran has enough highly enriched uranium to build in a short time at least nine atom bombs.

CONCLUSION

Finally, Iran was using the recent negotiations with Trump's envoys as a cover to make a mad dash for the bomb! So who has been deceiving whom? To the extent President Trump tricked the Iranians into thinking there would be a sixth round of talks in Oman, or he would not bomb Fordow for another two weeks, the evil, duplicitous regime in Tehran got what they have long deserved. 🌐

An Israeli plane takes off to strike Iran.

(Credit: IDF)



THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS DEBATE

Challenging the Essene Hypothesis

BY SHELLEY NEESE

AMERICAN CHRISTIAN LEADERS FOR ISRAEL (ACLI) COORDINATOR

The discovery of the first Dead Sea Scrolls in 1947 marked the beginning of a new era in biblical scholarship. These scrolls predated the oldest known copies of the Hebrew Bible by a thousand years. They outlined the messianic hopes, prophetic interpretations, apocalyptic beliefs, and strict communal practices of a Jewish community unlike either the Pharisees or Sadducees, the two most well-known sects of the Second Temple period. After more than half a century of archaeological excavation and scroll study, one glaring question remains unanswered: Who wrote the Dead Sea Scrolls?

The Residents of Qumran

Almost immediately, the scrolls were associated with Qumran, an area of ruins near the Dead Sea. Out of 11 caves, 6 are within a quarter mile of Qumran. The cave that stored the largest cache of scrolls is just 500 yards from the ruins. Additionally, Jodi Magness, a University of North Carolina professor, identifies another connection between Qumran and the scrolls: the same peculiar type of pottery jars that contained the scrolls was excavated at Qumran. Excavations also revealed several inkwells—a rare find at comparable sites from this period and potential evidence that at least some occupants were scribes. According to this logic, the Dead Sea Scrolls must have comprised a permanent library for the inhabitants of Qumran. But who were Qumran's residents?

From the outset, academics believed Qumran was a branch of the Essene movement, a sect of Jews who separated themselves from the leadership of the Second Temple and practiced a stricter form of Judaism than their religious contemporaries. The first-century Jewish historian Josephus claimed to have spent time with the Essenes personally. In his writings, Josephus goes into great detail

about the Essenes' initiation processes, purity rituals, finances, and even toilet habits. The communal practices Josephus describes, such as the pooling of personal property, seem to match the requirements laid out in the Community Rule, one of the most popular manuscripts in the Dead Sea collection. The Damascus Document, another common manuscript at Qumran, depicts a strict interpretation of religious law that matches what we know to be true of the Essenes, as opposed to the Pharisees or Sadducees.



The Damascus Document Scroll 4Q271 (4QDf)
(source: Library of Congress, 2012, <https://www.loc.gov/exhibits/scrolls/images/damasc-b.jpg>)

Pliny the Elder, an ancient Roman geographer, mentions the location of the Essenes in his book *Natural History* (AD 77). He describes the Essenes living at a necessary distance “to the west of the Dead Sea,” above the town of Ein Gedi. Pliny’s description seems to correspond with Qumran’s location.



Caves of Qumran (source: Wikimedia Commons, by Tamarah, 2007)



Caves of Qumran (source: Wikimedia Commons, 2011)

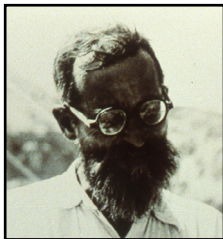
Aspects of Qumran’s architecture also appear to fit what an ascetic group focused on community and cleanliness would need. In the ruins, there are at least eight stepped pools, identified as *mikvahs*, a necessity for the Essenes’ ritual purity laws. Excavations uncovered a pantry with tall stacks of plates and bowls, pointing to the existence of communal meals, an important observance for Essenes, according to Josephus. Near Qumran lie approximately 1,200 ancient graves, only a fraction of which were excavated in the 1950s. All the corpses received a strict religious burial, and most of the remains were male, aligning with the belief that the Essenes of Qumran were a celibate, all-male community.



Qumran living quarters (source: Wikimedia Commons, by Wilson44691, 2007)

For three decades, the question of who wrote the Dead Sea Scrolls seemed to be settled. Biblical scholars widely accepted that Essenes occupied Qumran and that these occupants owned the

scrolls. This theory aligned with the conclusions of Pere Roland de Vaux, a French archaeologist who professionally excavated Qumran from 1951 to 1956.



French archaeologist Roland de Vaux, who excavated Qumran from 1951 to 1956
(source: Wikimedia Commons, unknown author, 1954)

Reconsideration of the Essene Theory

By the late 1980s, however, cracks in the Essene theory began to emerge. De Vaux had died before completing a final report from his Qumran excavations. Scholars tasked with cataloging and publishing de Vaux's material returned to the archaeological record on Qumran to take a second look at the findings. What they determined, rightly or wrongly, was that the original excavations failed to establish a concrete link between Qumran and the scrolls. For example, no scrolls or pieces of scrolls were found at Qumran. Out of 900 scrolls and scroll fragments, the term "Essene" or the name of any other known Jewish sect is not mentioned anywhere. As for Josephus, he says the Essenes lived in towns all over Israel but never specifically mentions Qumran as an Essene center. Furthermore, excavations revealed an insufficient number of private dwellings at Qumran for a place assumed to house a religious community.

The late Norman Golb, professor at the University of Chicago, was the most ardent dissenter from the Essene theory. Golb argued that too many Jewish viewpoints and textual traditions were represented in the Dead Sea Scrolls to attribute them to just one group. He also noted that a small sectarian community would not have possessed such a large library. The community would have likely lacked the number of scribes sufficient to produce so many manuscripts. Golb proposed that many different groups wrote the scrolls, which he believed were removed from Jerusalem libraries during the Roman war. Jews fleeing the Roman forces between AD 66 and 73 went to Qumran, a day's walk away, and hid the scrolls in caves for safekeeping. The problem with Golb's theory lies in the opinions of the sectarian scrolls' authors, who write about a deep hostility

toward the groups controlling the temple and who do not express the views of mainstream Judaism at the time.

Recent Excavations

Two established Israeli archaeologists, the late Yuval Peleg and Yitzhak Magen, who were among the most recent to excavate Qumran, propose that the site was just a pottery factory that had nothing to do with the Essenes. They suggest that the scrolls came from the sectarian libraries of Jewish refugees under Roman threat. Peleg and Magen recognize the pottery link between Qumran and the caves but theorize that the refugees hastily took jars from Qumran, which by that time might have been vacated, to hide their scroll deposits before fleeing the region.



Dead Sea Scroll – Isaiah Scroll (Isa 57:17 - 59:9), 1QIsab before 100 BC (source: Wikimedia Commons, by Daniel.baranek)

Professor Rachel Eilior of Hebrew University further stirred up controversy in her book *Memory and Oblivion*. Eilior claimed that the scrolls came from Jerusalem and were written by the Sadducees—ousted temple priests. Eilior went one step further, asserting that Josephus invented the Essenes and that they never really existed.

The argument over the origins of the Dead Sea Scrolls and who wrote them brings normally collected scholars close to physical blows. Not all theories mentioned here were presented passively by academics looking to foster constructive debate. Among the scroll scholars, there exists an Essene camp and an anti-Essene camp. Before his

passing, Golb claimed for years that the pro-Essene scholars tried to silence him. Magen called the proponents of the Qumran Sect theory "a guild with money and conferences."

A New Low

In March 2009, the academic feud reached a new low—lower than the Dead Sea itself. Golb's 49-year-old son, Raphael, was arrested for an internet plot to promote his father's theories. He used at least 80 fake online aliases to post inflammatory comments on blogs defending the credibility of his father's theories. According to the Manhattan District Attorney, Raphael was "creating multiple aliases to engage in a campaign of impersonation and harassment relating to the Dead Sea Scrolls and scholars of opposing viewpoints." In at least one case, Raphael opened an email account under the name of New York University professor Lawrence H. Schiffman, who opposed Golb's opinions. Sending emails in Schiffman's name, Raphael fabricated a confession from the NYU professor that he had plagiarized parts of Golb's work.

Despite Raphael's efforts and the depth of emotion surrounding the debate on the origins of the scrolls, no new consensus has yet replaced the Essene hypothesis or categorically disproved it. In the intriguing world of scroll scholarship, academics who believe the Essenes wrote the manuscripts are still in the clear majority. In the last 25 years, the landscape of scroll scholarship has changed as a growing group of dissenters has succeeded in adding a degree of doubt to a theory about who wrote the Dead Sea Scrolls once accepted unanimously.

The case is never closed. In the fickle field of archaeology and scroll study, we are always one discovery away from changing the entire question. 🌐

SEE QUMRAN FOR YOURSELF

Join an ICEJ USA tour to Israel
and watch your
Bible come alive.

LEARN MORE AT
www.icejusa.org/tours



ICEJ USA's Church Relations Coordinator John Vedder speaks to the student body of Mt. Juliet Christian Academy.

EDUCATING THE NEXT GENERATION ABOUT ISRAEL

ICEJ Participates in High School Band Concert, "The Hope"

BY ICEJ USA STAFF

The International Christian Embassy Jerusalem USA Branch was honored to join a uniquely collaborative evening of music, art, and cuisine at Mt. Juliet Christian Academy's (MJCA) spring band concert entitled "The Hope." Organized by the school's band director Beth Davis, the evening was a culmination of months of hard work by band members as well as the art and home economics classes at MJCA.

Students and staff spent several months learning more about the significance of the Jewish roots of Christianity and the importance of standing with Israel today. In our generation of rapid change and in a nation where academic institutions seem to be shifting away from truth and toward an anti-Israel stance, it was such a blessing and encouragement to see a group of believers gather in Middle Tennessee to honor Israel and the Jewish roots of our faith. Mt. Juliet Christian Academy is taking a stand to teach biblical truth with moral clarity!

The Bible clearly reveals God's desire for unity between Jew and gentile, Israel and the church—working together as part of His redemptive plan. This does not mean we are called to endorse every decision made by the modern State of Israel. However, we are undeniably mandated to pursue reconciliation, foster meaningful relationships, and intentionally equip the next generation to carry this sacred calling forward with wisdom, conviction, and grace.

That's why the MJCA concert was so moving. The theme and celebration were birthed out of Beth's heart for Israel and love for her students. We listened to music written by Jews spanning many decades, ate Jewish and Middle Eastern desserts, and enjoyed art from the students inspired by their studies of Israel and the Jewish people.

Senior Pastor Phillip Dunn spoke about his personal experiences in Israel and on the biblical foundations of the people of Israel. John Vedder, Church Relations Coordinator for ICEJ USA, spoke on the Lord's heart of restoration between Jews and Christians and introduced the mission of the ICEJ.

"As believers, we are called to work as one body and to support each other, and this also means causes that are near to the heart of the Lord—and Israel is near to God's heart. . . . I'm grateful for other believers to come alongside as we took this opportunity to educate the next generation to value the past, the now, and the future of God's people" Beth said.

How can your school or organization stand with Israel today? Take the lead. Launch a meaningful event in your local school, church, or community, and invite the ICEJ to partner with you. Don't wait for others to move—be the catalyst that inspires awareness, solidarity, and lasting impact. 🌍

Contact us to host an ICEJ speaker at your event
www.icejusa.org/contact-us



IN MEMORIAM: Kay Arthur



ICEJ USA President Dr. Susan Michael, Kay Arthur, and author and television host Terry Squires at Israel's 75th Anniversary Gala in Nashville, TN (2023)

"The people who know their God will display strength and take action."
—Daniel 11:32b NASB

"Kay Arthur, cofounder of Precept Ministries, beloved Bible teacher, and prolific author, went home to be with the Lord in late May. A passionate lover of God's Word, Kay carried His heart for Israel and the Jewish people, leading thousands on life-changing journeys to the Land throughout her decades-long ministry. Her legacy of faithfulness and devotion continues to impact countless lives, including many on the ICEJ staff who were deeply shaped by her teaching and love for Israel.

"In 2022, I had the great honor of having Kay write the foreword to my first book with Embassy Publishers, *Encounter the 3D Bible: How to Read the Bible So It Comes to Life*. Her encouragement was a personal blessing and a mark of her generous spirit.

"Kay was a dear friend who loved me like a daughter. Though I grieve her passing, I rejoice in the hope she clung to, knowing she is now fully alive in the presence of her Savior she loved so deeply. Thank you, Kay."

—ICEJ USA President Susan Michael

WATCHMAN OF ZION AWARDS

Faithfully Connecting Others to Israel

"When I arrived at Grace Church in 2020, one member of the congregation faithfully gave to support Israel through the ministry of ICEJ. This middle-aged, single gal supported the Jewish people in a tiny but consistent way. It was not until nearly five years later when Dr. Tyson Lambertson came to share on the mission of ICEJ that we became more focused as a congregation on supporting Israel. This faithful saint quietly kept us 'connected' to brothers and sisters in the Holy Land."

—Pastor Tim May, Grace Church, Springfield, MO



Dr. Tyson Lambertson with Becky, a member of Grace Church and faithful ICEJ supporter

The Rock Church



Dr. Tyson Lambertson with Pastor Shane Beeson

"In May, I had the distinct honor of presenting The Rock Church in Scottsbluff, Nebraska with the ICEJ USA Watchman of Zion award. This is the church I had the joy of pastoring for over 18 years—a place that will always hold a sacred place in my heart. During those years, we witnessed firsthand the truth of God's promise: those who bless Israel will be blessed.

"Today, under the faithful leadership of Pastor Shane Beeson, that legacy continues with unwavering conviction. He has stepped in with humility, strength, and a clear passion to keep blessing Israel at the heart of the church's mission. The Rock has not missed a beat.

"The ICEJ USA is deeply grateful for this small-town church with a global heart—making a lasting impact for the Jewish people and standing strong as a true friend of Israel."

—Dr. Tyson Lambertson, ICEJ Outreach Director



ICEJ REBUILDING YOUTH ACTIVITY CENTER IN KIBBUTZ BE'ERI

Christian Embassy Investing over \$5 Million to Restore Gaza Border Communities

BY DAVID R. PARSONS, ICEJ SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT & SPOKESMAN

A special delegation of over 50 global Christian leaders with the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem (ICEJ) recently toured the Gaza border communities and held a groundbreaking ceremony with representatives from Kibbutz Be'eri to completely rebuild their youth activity center destroyed during the October 7 massacre.

The attack on Kibbutz Be'eri left 132 residents killed or kidnapped, including 51 elderly; over 120 homes and key community facilities were destroyed. The original youth center was used by terrorists as a command post and had to be leveled.

In response, ICEJ has committed to rebuilding the center from the ground up. Once completed, it will serve local children with meals, homework support, enrichment programs, and holiday camps—offering much-needed care and stability as families return and rebuild their lives.

Several other projects in addition this one at Kibbutz Be'eri will help these communities recover and draw back evacuated families to their homes. The list of current ICEJ projects includes:

- Remaking a retirement home into an elderly care and activity center in Kibbutz Be'eri
- Renovating a damaged kindergarten to serve as a children's trauma center in Kfar Aza
- Turning an abandoned building into an innovative music therapy center in Kfar Aza
- Restoring and expanding an animal therapy petting zoo in Kibbutz Urim
- Building a new greenhouse classroom at an agricultural tech school in Sde Nitzan
- Building three large bomb shelters for a new trauma center on Sapir College campus

The total costs of these building projects will come to well over \$5 million USD. These funds are being collected from Christians worldwide who want to help these farming villages reclaim their homes and lives.

Many of the evacuated families experienced traumatic events in their own homes, and those chilling memories will not be easy to overcome. One key to the rebuilding process will be to offer a wide range of community activities and services that will make living back in their villages more attractive. The Israeli government has established a special fund to help rebuild the homes of those affected, but each community must now find the resources needed to help restore their public community buildings.

Over the past 15 years, the Christian Embassy already assisted many of these villages in the Western Negev with more than 160 mobile bomb shelters, dozens of fire-fighting vehicles, and other emergency aid. This has built up a relationship of trust between these Israeli communities and the ICEJ.

"This is the most ambitious series of building projects the Christian Embassy has ever undertaken at any one time, and it presents a truly unique opportunity for our Christian supporters around the globe to have a timely, tangible impact here," said ICEJ President Dr. Juergen Buehler.

"We have already invested much in these border communities over recent decades, in terms of portable bomb shelters and fire-fighting equipment. But now they need us more than ever, and we are determined to stand with them in rebuilding their communal life together. We especially are seeking to provide trauma care facilities and to meet the special needs of the most vulnerable—the children and elderly," he added. 🌍

You can be part of this incredible effort. Donate today to the Kibbutz Be'eri project at:
www.icejusa.org/returnandrebuilt

REBUILDING KIBBUTZ BE'ERI

HELP REBUILD THE BE'ERI YOUTH CENTER IN ISRAEL

On October 7, 2023, Kibbutz Be'eri suffered one of the deadliest terror attacks in Israel's history. Over 130 residents were killed or kidnapped—including 51 elderly—and more than 120 homes and 13 public buildings were destroyed. Among them was the youth activity center, once a safe and joyful space for elementary school children.

SUPPORT ISRAEL'S TRAUMATIZED FAMILIES

In April 2025, construction began on a new, secure youth center in Kibbutz Be'eri—designed as a vibrant space for learning, healing, and summer programs for returning families. More than a building, it will serve as a lifeline for a generation of traumatized Israeli children. Completion is expected by October 2026.



ICEJ National Representatives (top) and Susan Michael (left) help pour cement ...
HELP US REBUILD!

YOUR DONATION MATTERS

By giving to this urgent rebuilding effort, you are:

- Helping Israeli children heal from trauma
- Supporting a war-torn community through education and emotional recovery
- Fulfilling Isaiah 60:10: "Foreigners will rebuild your walls"

Your gift declares to Israel: **"You are not alone—American Christians are standing with you."**

Donate today at: www.icejusa.org/returnandrebuild





ICEJ HELPING

The Hurting, Homeless Victims of Iran's Cruel Missile Attacks

BY NATIVIA SAMUELSEN, ICEJ AID ADMINISTRATOR

As Israelis slept early Sunday morning on June 15, Iran launched another attack on Israel, resulting in a half-ton warhead tearing through a residential neighborhood in the coastal town of Bat Yam. In a flash, lives were shattered, homes were ripped apart, and shards of glass rained in all directions. This typically quiet community instantly turned into a ghastly scene of thick smoke, frightened screams, mounds of rubble, flipped cars, and blaring sirens.

This was ground zero for the deadliest missile strike yet in Iran's desperate bid to draw Israeli blood since the start of "Operation Rising Lion" last Friday.

"There's nothing left. No house. That's it!" shouted Yivgenya Dudka, staring in disbelief at the scraps that remained of her apartment after this attack by Iran, according to the global news agency AFP.

Lives Cut Short, Critical Injuries

The missile landed at 2:45 a.m., catching many off guard in the middle of the night. The rocket struck directly on the sixth floor of a tall apartment building, causing an entire side of the building to collapse. The concussion wave from the blast damaged buildings and cars for

several blocks all around. Seven people were killed, including an 8-year-old girl and a 10-year-old boy, their lives cut short in the very place they should have been safest. Dozens more were injured, some critically. Scores of others were saved when they reached stairwells or bomb shelters just in time.

Rushing immediately to the site, emergency crews crawled through the twisted metal, broken concrete slabs, and charred furniture to help anyone they could find. As the rescue teams sifted through the wreckage, they listened for sounds of breathing or crying beneath the heavy layers of debris. The dark night air was still clogged with dust and smoke. Survivors sat in shock on the sidewalks, wrapped in blankets. Some were speaking to first responders, others were clutching phones or the hands of neighbors, everyone anxious for news about missing loved ones.

The Aftermath of the Attack by Iran on Bat Yam

As the ICEJ AID team toured the Bat Yam neighborhood the next day, the destruction was unbelievable. Some 75 surrounding apartment buildings sustained serious damage—22 of them

were destroyed. Tsvika Brot, the mayor of Bat Yam, escorted our team around, trying to encourage everyone with fast-track plans to tear down the unsafe buildings within two months and completely rebuild and upgrade the area within two to three years.

But most local families are still in shock and can't begin to think about several years down the road. Hundreds are now left homeless and have been evacuated to nearby hotels. Among them are many elderly people who need medicine still buried in the hopelessly gutted remains of their homes. Approximately 200 children from 5 local schools are also among those affected and face uncertainty about school next fall. Bat Yam is home as well to many Russian Jewish immigrant families with little social support.

Surveying the damage, Nicole Yoder, ICEJ Vice President of AID and Aliyah, recoiled at the wreckage caused by the blast:

"This level of devastation is something new for us to see in Israel," she observed. "We're heartbroken for the lives lost and deeply concerned for the thousands now displaced here and elsewhere in Israel, many of whom have no safety net."

The Impact of the Iran Attack on Israel

Israeli authorities say that at least 28 civilians have been killed so far by the 500-plus Iranian missiles launched at the nation's coastal heartland over the past four days. Around 30 missiles have slipped past Israel's vaunted multitiered air defense system, causing similar scenes of destruction at their points of impact up and down the country. Some 3,000 people have been injured in these blasts; 10 still in serious condition. In all, an estimated 10,000 Israelis are now homeless, and most fled with nothing but the clothes on their backs.

Thus, these families have many urgent needs: clothing, food, medicines, diapers, and hygiene supplies. Once these basic needs are met, the focus in the days and weeks to come will shift to longer-term recovery.

Back in the hardest-hit town of Bat Yam, Mayor Brot listed his initial set of priorities, explaining that after the people

are provided food, temporary housing, and other basic necessities, the focus must turn to the children:



Apartment complex in Bat Yam hit by an Iranian missile

"Therapeutic summer camps for traumatized children are an immediate essential, to help the impacted children deal with the trauma as soon as possible. Then later, educational and resilience support for those returning to school in the fall and rebuilding these homes as quickly as possible."

The people of Israel emerged from nightly bomb shelters wondering once again who their true friends are in the world. The answer must be Christians like us! We must not look away but step in and help these battered Israelis who have lost everything in a battle of good versus evil.

Conclusion

Many Israeli families are hurting from the loss of home and loved ones, yet they remain determined to press on toward a better future. The ICEJ is there at ground zero in Bat Yam, and across Israel, on your behalf.

Help us meet the urgent needs of those left homeless by attack missiles of Iran, Israel's fanatical enemy. Your gift to the ICEJ Impact Fund will help us provide store vouchers for evacuated families to purchase food, clothing, and other essential items, help provide children summer therapy camps and other urgent trauma care, and even help fight antisemitism here in America. 🌍

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ICEJ AID Assistant Jannie Tolhoek congratulates Israeli Druze students

ICEJ PROVIDING A BRIGHTER FUTURE FOR DRUZE STUDENTS

BY NATIVIA SAMUELSEN, ICEJ AID ADMINISTRATOR

The Druze community in Israel consists of only 1.6% of the Israeli population and is an often-overlooked segment of society. Yet their unwavering loyalty, renowned hospitality, and numerous contributions have had a profound and positive impact on the nation of Israel as a whole.

The Druze religion dates to the eleventh century, when it separated from a branch of Shi'a Islam. They are considered heretical by most Muslims, leading to much persecution against Druze followers. Today, the Druze people live primarily in Israel, Syria, and Lebanon. There are approximately 145,000 Druze in Israel, split between the Carmel range, the Upper Galilee, and the Golan Heights.

Unlike other non-Jewish minorities in Israel, the Druze are subject to mandatory military service. This policy is welcomed by the Druze as an expression of their loyalty to the State of Israel. Many Druze serve not only in the Israel Defense Forces but also in the police, the judiciary, and the Knesset.

The International Christian Embassy Jerusalem (ICEJ) has developed good relations with the Israeli Druze community over several decades now. At a recent ceremony in the Galilee, we again enjoyed a glimpse into the life of this proud, intriguing people, which highlighted once more not just their challenges but their vision for the future.

This year, ICEJ has funded the renovation of a robotics class for a Druze elementary school in Yarkah and sponsored 47 scholarships for the students.

Many of the scholarship recipients also volunteer during their studies, and each meets weekly with a dedicated mentor throughout the program. The fields of study are diverse and include psychology, electrical/software/civil engineering, social work, diplomacy, computer science, occupational therapy, economics, business, dentistry, and law.

At the ceremony celebrating the Druze scholarship recipients, local leaders and other donors emphasized the crucial importance of education and the shared responsibility between generations.

“Never forget where you came from and who provided you with this opportunity to study,” Mr. Amer, head of the Hurfeish regional council, told the students. “These donors believe in you and wish you success. At every place you visit, demonstrate the excellence of our Druze community. Seize every opportunity to learn and grow.”

“Our vision is to nurture a generation of leaders from diverse Israeli communities, including Druze, Arabs, and Jews,” said Aya Ha’asiya from the Ministry of Education. “Investing in your

education is vital because it shapes your future. Keep dreaming. Keep studying . . . Understand that you are our future leaders, and we take pride in you.”

A recurring theme throughout the evening was deep mutual respect between generations, between communities, and between partners. Druze leader Mofied Amer was keen to underscore their warm, longstanding ties to the ICEJ.

“The ICEJ has consistently been a supportive ally of the Druze community,” he said. “Their support includes investing in our youth, enhancing classrooms, and assisting Druze students in their educational pursuits. We perceive this as a warm embrace from the ICEJ.”

Jannie Tolhoek and Pnina Zubarev of our Jerusalem staff were deeply moved by the friendly reception they received as representatives of a Christian organization.

“The Druze are a truly faithful and generous people,” explained Pnina. “They’ve fully embraced life in Israel and are deeply committed to its success, even to the point of serving and sacrificing in the military.

“What struck me most was their deep, intergenerational respect,” she added. “Young people genuinely honor their

elders, and the elders feel a responsibility to pass down their values and support the next generation. At the ceremony, an elder said, ‘How we care for you—now you must care for the next generation in the same way.’ That mindset is rare in today’s world; it feels like we lost it, but they have it.

“They welcomed us with warmth, love, and abundance. It felt like being part of a big family. You don’t always see that level of hospitality and mutual care in other parts of the country. There’s a strong sense of identity here, not based on nationality but on faith and community. Their loyalty lies with the nation of Israel—not just outwardly but wholeheartedly. You can feel the pride and responsibility they carry,” Pnina concluded.

“As I shook hands with the students, I was looking into the eyes of the next generation of doctors, lawyers, engineers, nurses, and robotics specialists,” Jannie reflected on the visit. “It was so deeply touching to see each individual we are impacting with these scholarships that uplift the Druze community and all of Israel.”

This ceremony made one thing clear: While the Druze may live quietly in the hills of northern Israel, their presence has a ripple effect across the nation. Their loyalty, deep respect for tradition, and investment in education make them a hidden yet vital community. 🌍

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A NEW WAVE OF ALIYAH

Jews from the West Are Coming Home

BY HOWARD FLOWER, ICEJ ALIYAH DIRECTOR

I will bring your children from the east and gather you from the west.
— Isaiah 43:5

In a witness to the power of the call of Zion, another group of French Jews landed in Israel in late April, illustrating the latest chapter in a growing wave of Aliyah from Western nations. The 15 new arrivals, sponsored by the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem (ICEJ), were greeted by the warm embrace of their ancestral homeland. Their journey reflects a broader trend: as antisemitism surges across Europe and other western countries, and as the desire to build a future in Israel intensifies, the ICEJ stands as a faithful partner in this prophetic homecoming.

The Rising Tide of Western Aliyah

For decades, Aliyah was primarily associated with Jews fleeing persecution in the Soviet Union, Ethiopia, or war-torn regions. Today, a new narrative is unfolding—one where Jews from Western nations like the United States, France, Great Britain, South Africa, and Australia are choosing Israel in growing numbers. Driven by both push-and-pull factors, this modern exodus echoes biblical prophecies of ingathering: “I will bring your children from the east and gather you from the west” (Isaiah 43:5).

France: A Community at a Crossroads

France is home to Europe’s largest Jewish community, with roots stretching back to Roman times. Yet in recent years, escalating antisemitism—from violent attacks to systemic discrimination—has left many feeling like strangers in their own land. The October 7 Hamas massacre and its aftermath became a tipping point, with antisemitic incidents in France soaring by 1,100%. Surveys now indicate that 38% of French Jews—nearly 200,000 individuals—are actively considering Aliyah.

The ICEJ has responded to this urgent need. In the past two years alone, we sponsored flights for 654 French Olim (immigrants),

including 154 in 2025—French Aliyah has increased 55% from the previous year, which was itself up 99% over 2023.

Among them are young professionals like Alison, a 28-year-old teacher from Marseille, who shared: “I wanted to raise my children where they could be proud of their Jewish identity without fear.”

Germany: From Renewal to Return

Germany’s Jewish community, once decimated by the Holocaust, experienced a remarkable revival after the fall of the Soviet Union, with over 220,000 Russian-speaking Jews immigrating under the *Kontingentflüchtling* program. Yet today, rising extremism from the Left and Right and Islamic extremism fueling anti-Israel sentiment are prompting many young German Jews to consider Aliyah.

Since 2005, the ICEJ’s *Habaita* program has worked to reconnect German Jews with their heritage, and since then, has nearly doubled its Aliyah numbers. Initiatives like the Naale Academy—a tuition-free high school program in Israel—have been transformative. Talia, a Naale student from Frankfurt, embodies this shift: “My grandparents hid their Judaism in Ukraine. My parents rediscovered it in Germany. Now, I get to live it fully in Israel.”

The Baltic States: Small Communities, Bold Steps

In Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, where Holocaust devastation nearly erased Jewish life, renewed fears of regional instability amid the Ukraine war have spurred Aliyah. The ICEJ’s 2023 sponsorship of over 200 flights from the Baltics and cultural programs like the recent Jewish heritage trip to Estonia highlight our commitment to these often-overlooked Jewish communities.

ICEJ's Multifaceted Aliyah Efforts

The ICEJ's mission extends beyond funding flights. We address every stage of the Aliyah journey—from awakening Jewish identity to ensuring successful integration in Israel.

Sponsoring Flights and Logistics

- Covered airfare for 500 French Olim in 2024
- Sponsoring pre-Aliyah programs for Ukrainian Jews fleeing to Israel via Germany and the Baltics

Youth Aliyah: Building the Future

- Partnered with the Jewish Agency on Naale, where 90% of graduates remain in Israel, often followed by their families
- Funded summer camps and seminars for Baltic youth, like the 2024 Vilnius seminar for 52 young families

Combating Antisemitism, Encouraging Aliyah

- Publicly standing with Israel and the Jewish people in cities around the world and in Israel
- Supporting virtual and in-person events connecting diaspora youth with Israel

Integration Support

- Operated the Haifa Home for Holocaust Survivors, housing elderly Olim from Europe
- Offered Hebrew classes, job placement aid, and trauma counseling for new immigrants

Why Now? The Catalysts behind the Wave

1. Antisemitism: The Unignorable Push

The post-October 7 explosion of hatred—from campus protests in the United States to violent attacks in France—has shattered illusions of safety. In Germany, a far-right party's recent electoral gains have deepened anxieties. As Chief Rabbi Moshe Sebbag

of Paris lamented: "It is clear today that there is no future for Jews in France."

2. Israel's Pull: Identity, Purpose, and Opportunity

For most Olim, Aliyah is not an escape but a homecoming. Young Jews like Yaron, 18, from Paris, are drawn to serve in the IDF or join Israel's tech sector. Others seek the intangible joy of living without self-censorship, as Alon from Offenbach described: "Here in Israel, I no longer feel like an outsider."

The Road Ahead: ICEJ's 2025 Vision

With Jewish Agency for Israel (JAFI) chairman Doron Almog predicting a major wave of Olim in the coming years, the ICEJ is scaling up efforts:

- Expanding flight sponsorships for France and other countries
- Increasing Baltic outreach with "Aliyah Days" in Riga, Tallinn, and Vilnius
- Supporting new integration program for Western Olim facing high living costs in Israel

A Prophetic Moment

This Aliyah wave is more than a demographic shift—it is the fulfillment of God's promise:

I will plant them in their land, and no longer shall they be pulled up from the land I have given them. (Amos 9:15)

For 45 years, the ICEJ has helped nearly 190,000 Jews return home. As the sands of history shift, we remain steadfast in our calling: to comfort God's people (Isaiah 40:1) and assist in their restoration.

For French and German Jews, Israel is not just a safe haven but a place where they can live their Jewishness to the fullest. —Natan Sharansky

The journey continues. The ICEJ will be there—every step of the way. 🌍

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French Jewish people making Aliyah (JAFI)





YOUR ISRAEL ANSWER

Antisemitism in America: Why We Must Speak Up and Stand with the State of Israel and the Jewish People

By Dr. Susan Michael, ICEJ USA President

Since October 7, antisemitism in America has surged at an alarming rate. But two recent incidents in just over a week—the murder of two young Israeli embassy staffers in Washington, DC, and a violent, calculated attack on pro-Israel demonstrators in Boulder, Colorado—represent an even more disturbing escalation of hate on US soil that highlights the urgent need for action.

The Antisemitism Surge on US Soil

The recent spike in antisemitism in America ignited when Hamas terrorists attacked Israel on October 7, 2023, resulting in the deaths of 1,200 Israelis, including children and elderly Holocaust Survivors, and the kidnapping of 250 individuals. According to the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), there were over 10,000 antisemitic incidents reported in the year following the outbreak of the war—a 200 percent increase from the previous year.

This included a wave of antisemitism that infiltrated mainstream culture—like Kanye West's release of a single and music video titled "Heil Hitler," a Pulitzer Prize awarded to a Hamas hostage denier for commentary on the Israel-Hamas war, and widespread media coverage of a factually incorrect statement made by a United Nations spokesperson, who falsely claimed that 14,000 Gazan babies would die in 48 hours. Social media users even

justified the murders of Yaron Lischinsky and Sarah Milgrim in Washington, DC.

The Jewish people are living in fear for their lives as terrorists are emboldened by the mainstream culture's normalization of toxic rhetoric against Israel and the Jewish people. One Jewish man on a television news bite said that Jews feel like they are being hunted.

Another glaring example of antisemitic bias is the early mainstream media reports on the morning of June 1, 2025, that indicated that the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) were responsible for killing more than 30 civilians outside an aid distribution center in Gaza. Those reports were based solely on information provided by the Hamas-led Health Ministry and were quickly reported without contention or context even after Israel denied the reports. This is not the first time that the terrorist organization has used propaganda and the mainstream media to further its agenda and distort the reality of the war.

Political Antisemitism

What we are witnessing is not just religious or racial antisemitism—it is a dangerous form of political antisemitism aimed at the Jewish collective, targeting the very existence of Israel as a Jewish state. This is not about policy disagreements; it's about hatred. The violent extremists terrorizing our streets are not seeking debate—they are seeking blood.

The radical left-wing antisemitic movement, masked as anti-Israelism, is in fact promoting outright antisemitism. The willingness of those in this movement to harm any Jew they encounter demonstrates that they are using politics as an excuse to attack and kill Jews—period.

It's Time to Act

Now is the time to raise our voices and stand boldly with the State of Israel and the Jewish people. We must urgently turn our attention to the next generation of American Christians—young people inundated daily with antisemitic narratives on social media and university campuses. To reach them, we need innovative, relevant education that speaks their language and meets them where they are.

We must also spotlight media accountability and launch focused educational efforts that defend truth and protect Jewish communities. We must demand that the mainstream and legacy media prioritize integrity and moral clarity over being the first to report breaking news or further the agenda that Israel and the Jewish people are the aggressors when it's obvious that they are the victims of heinous violence again and again.

Silence in the face of this vile and growing hostility toward God's people is not an option. 🌐

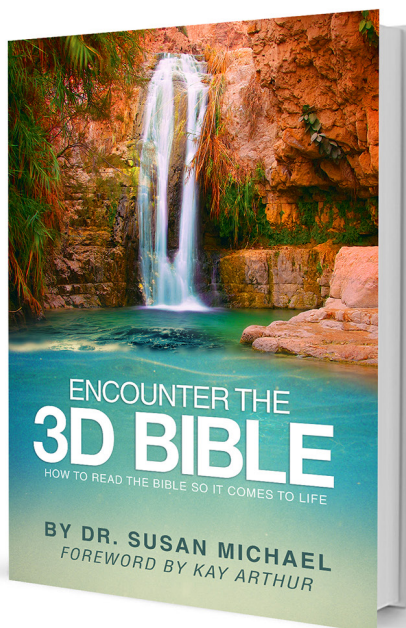
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