ICEJ INTERNATIONAL CHRISTIAN EMBASSY JERUSALEM UNITED KINGDOM

Word from Jerusalem

ICEJUK DECEMBER 2011 EDITION

Teaching TRUTH Comforting ISRAEL Confronting HATRED

Our dear friends and lovers of Israel, we want to thank you for your prayers and financial support throughout 2011. Both our Aid Programme within Israel and the Aliyah Programme throughout the world have caused thanks and perplexity from the Jewish people, so many of whom consider all Christians as anti-Semitic and anti-Zionist. Your belief and giving to the work of ICEJ are a testimony and a blessing to Israel. It is wonderful to have our supporters and branches throughout the world who stand and proclaim that God has not finished with Israel; they are the apple of His eye; His chosen people, chosen to be a light to the nations.

'Israel, A Light to the Nations' was the theme of the Feast of Tabernacles celebration in Jerusalem. If you have not read any reports of this wonderful event, please look at our website and share in an overflow of the blessing of the week. In fact why not make a resolution now to join our Feast group in 2012 – or the comprehensive tour in May (see back cover). Our next conference will be 9th and 10th March in Billinge and we will be having other regional events; look out for our UK emails or check the website.

Malcolm Hedding is still very much involved with the ministry of ICEJ. We are delighted as we look forward to him visiting the UK in 2012. We also remember in prayer Malcolm's successor, Dr Juergen Buehler, his wife, Vesna, and their children - that they will be strengthened and helped as they shine for the Light of the World in Israel.

Finally, as we have mentioned the lights of Israel, may He who is the unique light of lights, the 'shamash' or 'servant light' so cause your light to shine before men in this dark world that both Jew and Gentile, may glorify our Father in heaven.

The Hanukkah light was not lit to give light within the house but rather so that those without would seek and ask "What is that light for?" The answer given is that the Hanukkah lights are a reminder of the miraculous provision of the Lord.

May 2012 be to you and to Israel a year of increased illumination of our wonderful Yeshua, the Light of the World, Jehovah-Jireh our provider.

Dr David Elms
National UK Director

From the ICEJ UK, May you have a blessed and wonderful 2012.

ICEJ AID Funds Special Day Care in Samaria

by Estera

The village of Immanuel in central Samaria is an unusual Israeli community, as most its residents are ultra-Orthodox Jews who rarely engage even with fellow Jews in nearby religious Zionist 'settlements'. Their sense of isolation is compounded by the fact that many of the community's families are poor and struggle to meet their household needs. Even day care services for their children are beyond the means of these families.

Yet thanks to Yossi Barksi, there has been a day care centre operating in Immanuel free-of-charge for the past 30 years. Established in 1981, the centre is popular with Jewish communities throughout the region. But it is essential for the strictly observant Jewish families in Immanuel, many of whom have no regular source of income.

However, providing child care free of charge means the Immanuel day care centre must find outside support to stay open. Israeli standards for day-care centres are very strict, and Yossi has even gone into debt personally in recent years to keep the Immanuel centre open and in compliance with the law.

Yet Yossi seems to love each child as if they were his own. Many of the children have suffered from neglect at home, as the economic downturn worldwide has hit many local families very hard. He knows he cannot solve all of the problems of the children he serves, but he is also aware that his care and concern could have a positive impact on the rest of their lives.

Yossi has a motto that "each day is a new day". He encourages his staff to approach their work with the same enthusiasm as if it were their first day on the job.
To work there requires personal sacrifice, as the Immanuel day care centre is likely the only Israeli facility of its kind that takes in children for free. The youngsters are given exceptional opportunities to learn and interact with other children. One classroom at Immanuel is even set aside for children that speak only Yiddish as opposed to Hebrew, which is common in many ultra-Orthodox families.

However, some cannot be accepted into the day care program because there are not enough funds or teachers.

"With a good heart you try to do more and more, but there is a point where you can't do that anymore", Yossi explained during a recent visit by the ICEJ AID team.

The visit came after the ICEJ AID department had contributed funds to the centre, which were used to purchase new beds, books, toys and chairs for the children. Some of the monies were used just to keep the Immanuel day care centre operating.

"We would have been forced to close without the Christian Embassy", Yossi confided.

For many of the isolated community's residents, this is the first positive testimony of genuine Christian love and care for the Jewish people they have ever encountered.

The Immanuel day care centre is still in need of an industrial refrigerator, as well as refurbishment of the outdoor playground, to make it safe and clean for the children. Yet Yossi is also torn about using any donations just to take in more children in need of day care.

"The time they spend here with us is a large part of their day, and it helps them to grow well," he insisted.

The staff at the Immanuel day care centre have seen children in their care overcome difficult circumstances at home and go on to become well-adjusted students at higher levels of schooling. This gives the day care providers the strength and motivation to carry on with their work despite the lack of adequate funding. ICEJ AID is committed to helping the Immanuel day care centre continue its mission of lifting these precious children up towards a better future.

Please join with us as we reach out to needy Israelis through our local charitable partners. Give to ICEJ AID today via at www.icejuk.org

ICEJ hosts Open House for Israeli visitors

In November, the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem welcomed over five hundred Israeli visitors on a Friday as part of the "Open House Jerusalem" event held city-wide each autumn.

Historic and stately buildings throughout the capital are opened to the public on this annual occasion and many Israelis had specifically requested to tour the Christian Embassy headquarters at 20 Rachel Imeinu, in the German Colony neighbourhood of Jerusalem. The building has a distinct architectural style due to its construction by Circassian builders in the 1940s.

The Circassians are a small Muslim community in Israel who originally came from southern Russia to serve as mercenaries for the Ottoman Turks. Built for a wealthy Jew, the structure then served as the Embassy of Czechoslovakia, and later as the Embassy of the Ivory Coast, which rented out space to three other West African countries. After the Ivory Coast left Jerusalem under pressure from the Arab states, they leased the building to the Shalom Hartman Institute until 1997, when the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem secured the building as its new global headquarters.

According to the description in the Open House brochure, "the house boasts a magnificent entrance gate, a royal stairway, meticulous wooden details and a date tree in the front".

The ICEJ UK exists to comfort Israel, raise Christian support, teach truth and confront hatred.

We seek to support the ministry of the International Christian Embassy in Jerusalem. The ICEJ was established in 1980 and represents millions of Christians from over 100 countries who share a love and concern for the Jewish people.

"Comfort, oh comfort, My people," says your God.

(Isaiah 40 v 1)

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For unto us a Child is born

By Juergen Buehler

Since the fourth century at the latest, Christianity has set aside a certain day to celebrate the birth of Jesus. The dates may vary; Western churches mark Christmas on the 25th of December, while most Eastern churches celebrate it on January 6th or 7th. Historically, the older Eastern churches linked this season to the Epiphany tradition, thereby relating the Incarnation to the baptism of Jesus, when God proclaimed: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." (Matt. 3:17) According to these Church fathers, God demonstrated on this occasion the divinity of His son.

In celebrating Christmas, the central character is a small, vulnerable infant. While our view of Jesus should never be reduced to a mere child in the arms of his mother, it is precisely this frail and delicate baby who is at the centre of the Christmas narrative.

The child as sign:

Already, the prophet Isaiah saw "the child" as a sign of salvation for the Jewish people. In his day, Israel was challenged by a serious military threat from Assyria and was governed by a king who "not only wearied men but who wearied God also" (Isa. 7:13). Yet God decided to give this hopeless king a sign of redemption. "Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." (Isa. 7:14)

In chapter nine, Isaiah again presents a picture of looming national disaster. The region of the Galilee is beset by hostile invading armies. But it is precisely this "dark land" and "the people which walk in darkness" that see the bright light of salvation – a light which will remove the rod of oppression and heavy yoke of the enemy. But all those who expected the appearance of a military hero will be disappointed. The agent of salvation which brings redemption to Israel is surprisingly weak: "…for unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given!" (Isa. 9:6)

A similar image can be found in the book of Micah. Here, the prophet also paints a dark picture of oppression: "Now also many nations have gathered against you, who say, `Let her be defiled, and let our eye look upon Zion´." (Micah 4:11) Yet Micah also sees the redeeming light which would transform a hopeless situation: "But you, Bethlehem Ephrata, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall come forth to Me the one to be ruler in Israel, whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting." (Micah 5:2) Yet again, the timing of Israel's salvation is tied to the birth of a child, as Micah notes: "Until the time that she who is in labour has given birth." (Micah 5:3)

Is it not remarkable that three times the Hebrew Prophets of old declare that the sign of salvation for Israel is the birth of a child? And this is exactly what was announced to the lowly shepherds in the fields outside Bethlehem. After the angel heralded great joy to all peoples and the arrival of the saviour, he explained: "And this will be the sign to you: You will find a babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger." (Luke 2:12) Just a few weeks later, when Mary and Joseph presented Jesus in the Temple, Simeon the Just held up the infant and prophesied: "This child is destined … for a sign which will be spoken against." (Luke 2:34)

Why of all things should the delivery of a child, a vulnerable baby, be such a significant sign? Every day countless children are born. And this particular birth did not even occur in some spotlight of the Roman world, but in a dirty stable belonging to a little town in the remote province of Judea.

The identity of the child:

The Hebrew prophets also answer the riddle of why this child would be so special. He would not stand out by being especially gifted or intelligent. It would not be his skills \but his very identity which would make the child a sign of salvation.
"Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel," says Isa.7:14.

"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; ... and his name will be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace," proclaims Isa. 9:6.
"But you, Bethlehem Ephrata … out of you shall come forth to me the one to be ruler in Israel, whose goings forth are from of old, from

everlasting," assures Micah 5:2.

Both prophets declare the inconceivable, that the God who created the heavens and the earth would come be part of His own creation. This defenceless babe, covered in swaddling cloth and lying in a feeding trough, was at the same time the "Mighty God" and "Everlasting Father".

Our human minds struggle to grasp this. But it is this very fact which some 30 years later gave Jesus the confidence to declare: "No one comes to the Father except through me. If you had known me, you would have known my Father also." (John 14:6-7)

The birth of Jesus meant the manifestation of God among men. For this reason, his name was to be called *Immanuel* – "God with us".

John declares this truth thusly: "In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God. … And the word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the father, full of grace and truth." (John 1:1, 14)

Micah declares His origins are from "everlasting". Jesus also said of himself, "before Abraham was, I am." (John 8:58)

A sign of controversy:

So God became man! That is an incredible concept, which caused offence and misunderstanding back then and even to this day – both in Israel as well as in the Christian world. Simeon the Just was right when he exclaimed: "This child is destined … for a sign which will be spoken against."

Even today, belief in the Incarnation of God through the virgin birth is being shed in many Christian circles like it were some irrational fundamentalist ballast. Yet this is not about some bizarre medieval dogma, but the very essence of who Jesus is.

The shepherds were told: "For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord." (Luke 2:11) The old Syrian-Aramaic Peshitta translation of the New Testament translates it as follows: "For there is born to you the saviour, Lord and Messiah." And "Lord" here is the Aramaic name for God in Hebrew, which is *Yahweh*.

Therefore, Christmas should be for us a feast of gratitude and adoration. God came down to us and had mercy upon a humanity which urgently needed His salvation. This child is still spoken against, yet he has brought deliverance to millions of faithful followers around the world.

Yet the Hebrew prophets made clear that this child is also the deliverer of his own nation, Israel. This part of his ministry is still unfolding. But all signs point to it's soon fulfilment. Until then, let us follow the shepherds and wise men and worship our Saviour. Even the angels had to burst forth in enthusiastic praise: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men!" (Luke 2:14)

Come and behold Him,
Born the King of Angels;
O come, let us adore Him,
Christ the Lord.

John Wade (1751)

An unforgettable Israeli Guest Night

David Parsons

Each year at the Feast of Tabernacles, the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem hosts an annual Israeli Guest Night. The program is designed to appeal to an Israeli audience, featuring musical performances by our Feast worship and dance teams and special Christian artists from around the world.

At this year's Feast in October, a record number of nearly 1,500 Israelis showed up for this year's celebration in their honour. Besides the inspiring worship experience, the Israeli guests also enjoyed special video presentations about the work of the Christian Embassy.

One video highlighted the ICEJ's involvement in funding the Haifa Home for Holocaust Survivors over the past two years. This unique assisted-living home can now house more than 130 poor and needy Holocaust survivors, making it the largest facility of its kind in Israel.

More than 30 residents of the Haifa Home made the long journey to Jerusalem on a bus to be our guests of honour on Israeli Guest Night. Shimon Sabag, director of our charitable partner *Yad Ezer L'Haver*, was welcomed to the stage to give a word of thanks on their behalf for our sponsorship of his 'warm home'.

The Haifa home residents all agreed that the trip was well worth the effort.

"Everything was so beautiful, the dancers and the music and the whole program", exclaimed Shulamit. "We need these festive evenings. They warm our hearts."

"Actually I was feeling sick, but then I decided to join the others", said 92 year old Benjamin Ginsberg with a smile. "I'm so glad I came!"

Other video presentations focused on the extraordinary efforts of the ICEJ's Czech branch to teach Holocaust education in every public school in their country, as well as a powerful short film on Israel's many technological and medical advances in recent decades.

In addition, the ICEJ paid tribute to two Christian women killed in terror attacks in Israel over the past year – Kristine Luken and Mary Jane Gardner. For many, the highlight of the evening came when Kay Wilson, an Israeli tour guide, recounted how she and Kristine were brutally stabbed while on a walk in the Jerusalem Forest last December and how she barely managed to survive and eventually find help. Kay followed with a performance on piano of her own jazz rendition of the popular movie hit "Somewhere Over the Rainbow." *

The response from Israelis to the evening was overwhelmingly positive. "I was blown away", said Yossi, a concert producer. "We had no idea that Christians cared about us this much", said another Israeli guest.

"I always invite my friends to the Israeli evening because once they see all that you do they are changed forever", added Emanuel, who runs a jewellery store in Jerusalem.

"I have so much to say about the whole evening", said Gideon from nearby Ma'ale Adumim. "Israel is so horribly used to terror… But Kay's story of her heroism, her attempt to defend herself with a pen knife, and her amazing rendition of 'Somewhere Over The Rainbow', all revived faith in the audience in how God gives strength to those who have faith in Him."

**Kay mentioned this song means so much to her as it saved her life; she sang it to herself, step by step, whilst staggering to find help.*

My visit to the Home for Holocaust Survivors

Wendy Hogarth
ICEJ UK
Administrator

During the Feast I had my first visit to Israel in 10 years and was hugely blessed to join a group visiting the Home in Haifa led by ICEJ Aid's Yudit Setz for whom the Home holds a very special place in her heart. In her 27 years' involvement with ICEJ Aid, she says it is by far the most amazing project she has ever worked on. I can also say how humbled I have been to receive people's gifts for it and see how they've been touched.

It was fascinating to hear founder Shimon Sabag address us and show his own promotional film which clearly demonstrated his high regard for the Christian Embassy and his gratitude. It was moving to see the number of ICEJ signs and flags outside the buildings which he himself has put there; I gather he has even lost some Israeli sponsorship due to his acceptance of Christian support.

Shimon, whose own mother was a holocaust survivor, established the home with 14 residents but since his approach to ICEJ in 2009, and especially due to German support, expansion has resulted in several buildings in the street being taken over. During our visit there was a constant sound of banging and drilling … so I heard it in action! Yudit said that on several occasions renovations had to stop when funds ran out … which meant delaying accepting certain elderly people ready and anxious to move in. Yet she told stories of times when the Lord sent in funds just in time and works could resume. There are still hundreds on the waiting list.

We heard Miriam and Esther relate their stories translated by Yudit, which was very emotional for her. Pictures of both ladies, plus Miriam's story, are in the October issue of *Word from Jerusalem.* Esther was six when her father was murdered in Poland and her mother fled with five children into the forest. Her mother and 3 siblings were then killed in front of her eyes but she ran away with her wounded 12-year old sister and they survived along with other people in the forest for a couple of years. She was taken in by a Christian family and eventually sent to Eretz Israel where she lived in a children's home with other survivors. She said those years in the children's home were her happiest memories … and now she feels she has come full circle and is happy to be back in a similar situation to the children's home, i.e. in a 'family' of people with shared experiences.

We saw a few rooms and enjoyed meeting some residents, though time was short. I felt I was taking the love and warmth with me from all those UK Christians who have given so generously to the buildings and to the people. A very special day I will never forget!

"ICEJ UK Board Member, Mike Kerry at a village near Sderot in October with the local mayor, the ICEJ AID Director, Nicole Yoder and ICEJ Canada Director, Donna Holbrook during the installation of a bomb shelter provided by the UK and Canadian Branches."

ICEJ UK Official Tour

Join Mike and Marion Kerry on a comprehensive biblical tour of the Holy Land,

3rd - 14th May 2012

The price of this tour is £1,431 based on five star half board accommodation, transfers, the services of a guide, all excursions and entrance fees. The main party is leaving from Manchester, but alternative flights can be organised from Luton.

We have great fellowship, on site teaching and one of the many highlights will be to share Shabbat worship with the Messianic Congregation on Mount Carmel. Don't miss this wonderful tour!

Full details in the brochure from our website www.icejuk.org, the ICEJ UK Branch or Mike on 07843 282303

For those ages 18-35 yrs, we recommend you join the Grafted Young Adults Tour (to the Feast and/or Summer Hands-on Tour) Learn more at www.grafted.org

GRAFTED ICEJ Young Adults

Next Year in Jerusalem!

Join Mike Kerry for the FEAST OF TABERNACLES 29 September – 5 October 2012 Feast Theme: "The Spirit of Grace and Supplication"

Hotel: Five star Ramada Hotel, Jerusalem www.ramada.com 15 minutes' walk from the International Convention Centre.

Land package: £610 per person for airport transfers, 6 nights' accommodation, based on two sharing, breakfast and evening meal.

Flights: Additional charge for Easyjet Flights from London Luton on 29th September and 5th October. Please contact us for help and advice if you wish to travel on alternative dates or airports.

Registration: Additional charge (fee to be confirmed) payable via ICEJ UK branch.
Contact Mike Kerry via the ICEJ UK office now.
Tel. 01923 445983
email: info@icejuk.org

Details of Feast programme (30 Sept. to 4 Oct. 2012) to follow; or check the Feast section of the website at www.icejuk.org for updates.

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