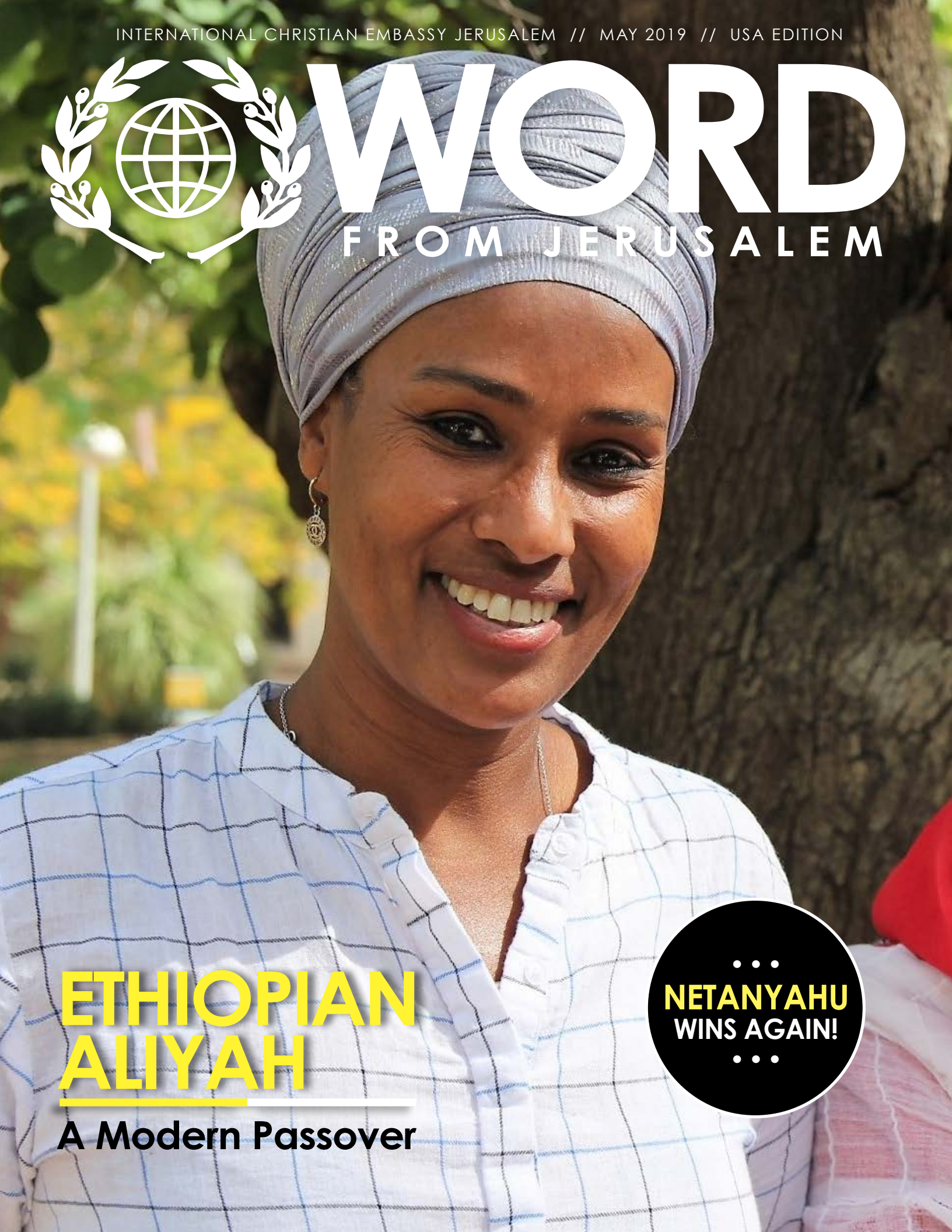




WORD

FROM JERUSALEM



ETHIOPIAN ALIYAH

A Modern Passover

...
**NETANYAHU
WINS AGAIN!**
...



FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK



Dear Friends,

Israel has voted and a new government is being formed. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu got an overwhelming vote of confidence from Israel's electorate, which makes him the longest serving Prime Minister in the history of Israel. It seems that the nation affirmed his strong stance on economy and security. Under his leadership, Israel has forged unprecedented alliances with foreign nations, including Arab nations that were once hostile toward Israel.

There are two things the Bible tells us about governments. First, the Bible teaches us that governments and their leaders are appointed by God. The prophet Daniel declares: "He changes times and seasons; he removes kings and sets up kings" (Daniel 2:21). The New Testament church also holds this worldview. Paul writes: "Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God" (Romans 13:1). This is not only true for Israel but for any government in the world. Paul was writing these lines not to a democratically elected liberal government but to the church in Rome that was under the rule of an often-oppressive regime.

Second, the Bible instructs us to pray for our leaders. It asks us to bring "supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgiving ... for kings and all who are in high positions" (1 Timothy 2:1-2).

Therefore, wherever you read this, I ask you to do just that. Thank God for the newly elected government in Israel. Pray that God will use them to further his purposes in Israel. Pray that they will know "what makes for peace" for Israel and all its inhabitants. Pray that under the new government the local body of Christ can fulfill its calling. Pray that God will give wisdom and knowledge to Prime Minister Netanyahu to lead the nation of Israel in the midst of all its challenges. Pray that God will protect him and his family in these turbulent times.

I also encourage you to pray in the same way for your own government wherever you live. As we do so, the Bible promises us two things. If we pray for our leaders, "we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way," for "it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all the people to be saved" (1 Timothy 2:3-4). Praying for our government touches the heart of God in a special way.

Finally, remember that "the effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much" (James 5:16). With this I also ask you to pray for us: for the different activities you read about in this magazine, for our leaders around the world, and for us in Jerusalem.

Thank you for your support and for standing with us.

Yours in Christ Jesus,

Dr Jürgen Bühler
ICEJ President

COVER PHOTO:

An Ethiopian immigrant at a Passover Seder provided by the ICEJ's generous donors.



For magazine archives visit
www.icejusa.org/wfj



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

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

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

Our vision is:

- To reach every segment of Israel's society with a Christian testimony of comfort and love, and
- To reach and actively represent to Israel the support of denominations, churches, and believers from every nation on earth.

The Christian Embassy is a non-denominational faith-based ministry supported by the voluntary contributions of our partners and friends across the globe. We invite you to join with us as we minister to Israel and the Jewish people worldwide by donating to the ongoing work and witness of the ICEJ.



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INTERNATIONAL CHRISTIAN EMBASSY JERUSALEM - USA

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NETANYAHU STAGES HISTORIC COMEBACK

BY DAVID PARSONS, ICEJ VP & SENIOR SPOKESMAN

Benjamin Netanyahu celebrates with his wife Sara at the Likud victory party in the early morning hours after the elections (AP).

It was vintage “Bibi.” For the third time in his record five election victories, Israelis went to bed thinking Benjamin Netanyahu was vanquished only to awaken the next morning and discover he was their prime minister.

It first happened in 1996, when Netanyahu trailed in the late night returns before narrowly eclipsing Shimon Peres by 30,000 votes come morning. Again in 2015, the evening exit polls had the National Union edging Likud before the next day’s official tally showed Netanyahu handily winning by six Knesset seats. Even in 2009, when Kadima bested Likud by one seat, Netanyahu still managed to outflank Tzipi Livni and retain the premiership.

His victory on April 9 was equally dramatic—especially given the forces arrayed against him. For starters, he was facing indictment in three corruption probes. The Israeli media was decidedly against him. And three former IDF chiefs-of-staff banded together to topple Netanyahu, calculating that their combined military experience would neutralize his advantage as “Mr. Security.”

Yet Netanyahu managed to shock the nation and the world by scoring what looks to be a historic fifth term in the prime minister’s office. He must still forge a coalition government with majority support in the new Knesset. But with this triumph Netanyahu has achieved legendary status as modern Israel’s most victorious and longest-serving premier—surpassing David Ben-Gurion’s four victories and 13 years in office.

The close results, with the two central parties splitting the lion’s share of ballots, indicates the campaign indeed boiled down to a referendum on Netanyahu. The three IDF generals, led by Benny Gantz, united with Yair Lapid’s faction to form the upstart Blue & White list, whose sole agenda was to send Bibi packing. The new alignment did not assail his economic or security policies, and they even acknowledged his competency in running the country and handling foreign affairs. Rather, they denounced his “divisiveness” and his sense of entitlement after holding onto power for so long.



Netanyahu did upset many Israelis, and many American Jews as well, by repeatedly bowing to the ultra-Orthodox parties on Western Wall prayers and Haredi draft exemptions. He also drew complaints for legitimizing the anti-Arab Kahanists on the far Right.

But his recent accomplishments, most notably on the world stage, also gave many voters added confidence in his stable leadership. Just days before the election,

Netanyahu was invited to Washington, where US President Donald Trump handed him a timely boost by recognizing Israel’s claim to the Golan. Then, Russian leader Vladimir Putin hosted him in Moscow; Netanyahu came back with the long-sought remains of an IDF soldier missing for 37 years.

Certainly, no other aspiring Israeli leader at present could pull off such diplomatic feats. Thus, in the waning days of the campaign, Netanyahu and his Likud party picked up crucial extra votes at the expense of other factions to his Right. Even so, Netanyahu and his “natural partners” in the Right bloc will hold 65 seats in the new Knesset, giving him the clearest path to head the government. But each will try to exact a price for their loyalty.

For example, he will need support from Avigdor Lieberman of Yisrael Beiteinu, who bolted the last government due to Netanyahu’s perceived weakness toward Hamas in Gaza. Lieberman and his secular Russian immigrant party also do not relish sitting in a coalition with the religious factions Shas and United Torah Judaism.

Netanyahu also must rely on the staunchly pro-settlement Union of Right-Wing Parties, which could insist that he keep his promise, made in desperation late in the campaign, to annex parts of Judea/Samaria. Yet such a move could undermine the long-awaited Trump peace plan and Israel’s overall relations with a friendly US president.

Meanwhile, Netanyahu must fend off the expected indictments for bribery and fraud now hanging over his head. The parties on the Right are reportedly prepared to stand by him as prime minister until he is actually convicted of a crime. But another alternative could eventually present itself by way of a national unity government with Blue & White, if they are willing to protect him from removal from office so long as he is pursuing a viable US-led peace process with the Palestinians.

So the 2019 elections may be over, but uncertainties abound as the legendary career of Bibi Netanyahu continues. 🌐



ICEJ CHALLENGING UN ABUSE OF ISRAEL

BY DR. JÜRGEN BÜHLER, ICEJ PRESIDENT


The United Nations has a long record of abusing Israel, and this happened again recently when the UN Human Rights Council passed five resolutions condemning the Jewish state on various trumped-up charges. Yet there are positive signs that key Western democracies are starting to challenge this deplorable UN fixation with Israel, and the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem is reaching out to them to encourage this shift in attitude toward Israel.

In March, the UNHRC vilified Israel for daring to defend its citizens from violence and terror. It also wrongly described as “peaceful” the Gaza border protests of the past year. Emboldened by the friendly message coming from Geneva, Hamas immediately stepped up the violent protests and launched rockets deeper into Israel.

It has become far too easy for the Palestinians to manipulate UN forums to go along with their agenda, which aims to deny Israel its right of self-defense and ultimately its right to exist. Yet thankfully, some moral, sane countries are waking up to this twisted reality and decided not to support any resolutions submitted under Agenda Item 7, the UNHRC’s

annual session that permanently singles out Israel for abuse. They realize this undermines the cause of peace and the credibility of the United Nations.

The next big test at the UNHRC will be over its plans to publish a blacklist of companies doing business in Israeli settlements. The HRC was founded to deal with human rights violations by sovereign states, so this would mark the first time it has sought to sanction private actors. By singling out Israel, it is also violating its mandate to protect human rights on a universal basis “for all people.”

In response, the Christian Embassy has written to the heads of the UNHRC and also activated our national branches in key member states of the Council to press for a halt to this UN blacklisting effort. We are approaching officials in Australia, Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Fiji, Hungary, Italy, Philippines, Slovakia, South Africa, and Ukraine. We are hopeful these democratic nations will persuade the Human Rights Council to abandon this misguided anti-Israel initiative. 

TRUMP 'GIFTS' GOLAN TO ISRAEL

BY DAVID PARSONS, ICEJ VP & SENIOR SPOKESMAN

Old Syrian bunkers on the Golan now carpeted with flowers

Israelis were thrilled when US President Donald Trump recently recognized the Golan Heights as part of Israel. Some called it a surprise “gift” for Purim. But it would be amiss to claim Trump just “gave” the Golan to Israel, since God already did that long ago. Besides, Israel has been in possession of the Golan fair-and-square for decades and will never surrender its grip.

Now most world powers insist Israel has illegally “occupied” the Golan since capturing the area from Syria during the 1967 Six-Day War. This makes it sound like it was always Syrian territory.

In fact, the Golan is part of the land God promised to Abraham in Genesis 15:18–21 and elsewhere in Scripture. Also known by its biblical name “Bashan,” it was conquered by the Israelites under Moses and Joshua some 3,500 years ago and allotted to the tribe of Manasseh. There is ample evidence of a continuing Jewish presence there over the ensuing centuries.

In modern times, Britain and France wrestled over the Golan when dividing the vacated Ottoman territories after World War I. An elevated plateau, it was valued more at that time for its water resources, and eventually got included in France’s mandate for Syria. This despite the fact that Jewish benefactors—mainly through the Jewish National Fund—had already purchased large tracts on the Golan to settle Jews there, since they considered it part of biblical Israel.

But Syria wound up with the Golan and turned it into one massive military base, brimming with bunkers, trenches, and artillery positions each facing down on northern Israel. From these fortified positions, Syrian gunners routinely made target practice of Jewish farms and villages below. Tensions escalated further in 1964 when the Syrians dug channels on the Golan to divert the headwaters of the Jordan River, a move some historians say helped spark the 1967 conflict.

In the Six-Day War, Israel indeed captured the Golan from Syria—only after Egypt and Syria unified forces, blocked the Straits of Tiran, kicked UN observers out of Sinai, amassed troops along their borders with Israel, and threatened a war of extermination. Israeli leader Levi Eshkol spent several tense weeks exhausting all avenues of diplomacy to avert war, before ordering a preemptive strike. Thus, Israel has every right and reason to contend they took the Golan in a legitimate act of self-defense.

After gallantly holding on to the Golan in the Yom Kippur War of October 1973, Israel has transformed it into a peaceful, prosperous agricultural region and popular tourist destination. Israelis—left and right—are proud of what they have made of the Golan, with its vineyards, wineries, fruit orchards, dairy farms, horse ranches, and wind turbines. Israelis flock to its log cabins and the Hermon ski resort. They repel and hang glide off its cliffs, hike its scenic trails, and relax in its warm springs.

Most Israelis also know the Golan has immense strategic value due to its commanding terrain, and this advantage should never be surrendered voluntarily. What if Syria were still ensconced on the Golan over the past eight years of the Syrian civil war? No doubt Assad’s troops, rebel forces, ISIS jihadists, and Hezbollah units would all have relished the chance to fire away at Israel from its lofty heights. It also would have seriously compromised the IDF’s ability to strike Iranian positions inside Syria.

Israelis also know that, unlike the West Bank, there are no masses of Arab refugees clamoring to return to their homes on the Golan, because the Assad regime never allowed them to live there in the first place.

So whether one approves of Trump’s decision or not, Israelis agree that the Golan always has and always will belong to them. 🌸

MEET THE NEW DIRECTOR AT CHRISTIAN FRIENDS OF YAD VASHEM

BY ICEJ STAFF



SARI GRANITZA

In early May, Israel marked Yom HaShoah—the nation's annual Holocaust Remembrance Day. It was a solemn occasion with many unique traditions that paid tribute to the six million victims of the Holocaust. Television stations refrained from airing their normal daily programs. Movie theaters and dance clubs were closed. In the morning, a nationwide siren brought all traffic to a complete stop and everyone stood to attention. The president, prime minister, and other senior leaders assembled at Yad Vashem to lay wreaths in honor of those who perished in the Nazi genocide against the Jews.

For Christians, a new tradition has developed around Yom HaShoah as well. The International Christian Embassy Jerusalem, through its unique partnership with Christian Friends of Yad Vashem (CFYV), helps sponsor an annual Christian Leadership Seminar during the week of Holocaust Remembrance Day. This special educational program draws Christian pastors and ministry leaders from all over the world to Yad Vashem for a week of lectures by experts on the Holocaust and anti-Semitism, encounters with Holocaust Survivors, and related field trips around the country.

This year's Christian Leadership Seminar will be the first one held under the new Director of Christian Friends of Yad Vashem, Ms. Sari Granitza. She has been working in the International Relations Division at Yad Vashem since 2003 and took over the reins of the Christian Desk from Dr. Susanna Kokkonen in mid-2018.

Ms. Granitza was born into an observant Jewish family in Jerusalem and was raised both in Israel and the United States. She received her BA in Psychology and Sociology from the University of Haifa and her MBA from Tel Aviv University. For ten years, she worked in Israel's thriving hi-tech industry. From there, she assisted Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in foreign relations

during his first term in the premiership in the late 1990s, developing key contacts with government officials and leaders in the Jewish Diaspora from around the globe.

Ms. Granitza comes into her new position with 15 years of valuable experience in building support for Yad Vashem and explaining its important mission to a variety of audiences. As Deputy Director of the International Relations Division, she was involved in every aspect of the events and visits of Yad Vashem's supporters from around the world, including many Christian leaders throughout the years. She also frequently presented lectures on the Holocaust in both Hebrew and English, including on behalf of Christian Friends of Yad Vashem at prestigious events, such as the National Religious Broadcasters convention in the United States. Ms. Granitza was also responsible for planning and executing Yad Vashem's International Missions to Europe and Israel, hosting donors of all faiths, backgrounds, and nationalities.

Having lost family members in the Holocaust, Ms. Granitza takes her job seriously. As an ambassador for Yad Vashem to the Christian world, she will continue to promote Holocaust education as an important means for ensuring that the atrocities of the Shoah never happen again.

Founded in 1953 by an act of Israel's parliament, Yad Vashem was entrusted with the mission of safeguarding the memory of Jewish victims of the Holocaust and imparting its meaning to future generations. Christian Friends of Yad Vashem was established in October 2006 in cooperation with the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem to raise awareness about the Holocaust and its universal lessons within the Christian world. Today, CFYV is active in many countries worldwide and works with a variety of denominations and Christian ministries to build bridges between Jews and Christians. 🌍

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For more information or to support the work of Christian Friends of Yad Vashem, please go to:
www.icejusa.org/yadvashem



Rev. Malcolm Hedding speaks at Yad Vashem alongside its Chairman, Avner Shalev.

A SPECIAL MESSAGE FROM REV. MALCOLM HEDDING, KEY ORIGINATOR OF CHRISTIAN FRIENDS OF YAD VASHEM

The ICEJ's former executive director, Rev. Malcolm Hedding, was one of the key initiators behind the establishment of Christian Friends of Yad Vashem. As such he participated as a speaker at the Christian Leadership Seminar in early May. He shared a portion of the message given to this year's participants with the *Word From Jerusalem*.

Over the years I have encountered many Holocaust Survivors, and these encounters have profoundly impacted my life and ministry. I will be sharing these at the Christian Leadership Seminar at Yad Vashem—and in such a way that we rededicate ourselves to telling the story of the Shoah accurately and powerfully. This is most urgent and important because many of the Survivors are now sadly leaving us, and the truth about what happened to them must live on to ensure that the Shoah never happens again.

The Christian Desk at Yad Vashem was founded to harness and give expression to the love and support that a new generation of Christian Evangelicals have for Israel and the Jewish people. The shadow of the Holocaust still hangs over the Christian world because the underpinnings of this evil endeavor were Christian. This has to be recognized, repented of, and confronted by those Christians interested in learning the truth and equipping themselves in a manner that they can rekindle genuine remembrance in a redemptive way. Forgetfulness will lead to "exile," and we refuse to forget for the benefit and good of our children and for the well-being of Israel. Herein lies the importance of Christian Friends of Yad Vashem. 🌍

Haifa
Home
UpdateICEJ Staff
member
Yudit Setz
with Naomi
& Avraham

The Druze community put out a warm, colorful welcome for the ICEJ at the dedication of a new computer room.

SORROW OF DEATH & SWEETNESS OF COMMUNITY

BY KAYLA MUCHNIK

Imagine spending 67 years with your husband, and then one day, he is gone. This is the sorrowful reality for Naomi, a precious Holocaust Survivor who just lost her husband and closest friend, Avraham.

Death is difficult to face for everyone at the ICEJ's Home for Holocaust Survivors in Haifa: for the residents who are losing their spouses and dearest friends, for the staff who are losing patients that have become like family, and for the actual families of the Survivors who are losing beloved parents and grandparents. Since most of the more than 70 Holocaust Survivors at the Home are now in their 80s and 90s, such losses have been unfortunately occurring quite often over recent years due to their advanced age. Yet, they always seem to band together and pull one another through it all.

During the week of sitting *shiva* for Avraham—a time when family and friends mourn the passing of a loved one according to Jewish tradition—Naomi's relatives visited her as well as friends from the Haifa Home for Holocaust Survivors. The cook even made special visits to the family home to provide food for everyone.

ICEJ staff members Yudit Setz and Jannie Tolhoek embraced their friend Naomi at the *shiva*. Because of their friendship and a sense of trust that had developed over the years, Naomi shared from her broken heart that she did not know how she would live without her husband after 67 years of life together. Naomi's tearful granddaughter also showed us one of her favorite memories, which was a photo of her dancing with grandpa Avraham on her wedding day.

The sweet comfort of community the Survivors, staff, and family members at the Haifa Home share is tangible, especially in such times of grief.

These losses remind us of the opportunity to show all the love and comfort we can to those Holocaust Survivors still alive and under our care at the Haifa Home! 🌍

Please support the ICEJ's Haifa Home for Holocaust Survivors. Make your donation today at: www.icejusa.org/haifa

DRUZE SCHOOL GRATEFUL FOR NEW COMPUTER ROOM

BY ICEJ STAFF

The Christian Embassy has always sought to reach out to all the different people groups in the Land of Israel—whether Jewish, Arab, Christian, Muslim, Bedouin, or Druze. In February, ICEJ staff members visited a special project in the Upper Galilee, which we undertook at the request of a Druze welfare society. Over the past decade, we have partnered with this charity by sponsoring several youth-oriented educational projects, including a school library, a music room, and a high school robotics team that won a nationwide competition. This time, we dedicated a new computer room with two-dozen computer workstations, located in a mixed high school for Christian, Druze, and Muslim students.

Upon arrival we were treated with the utmost respect, as if we were royal dignitaries. In addition to all the students and faculty, the local Druze mayor and regional council head were waiting at the school to welcome our delegation. There were packed assemblies, speeches, and musical performances, plus a bountiful lunch. It was truly impressive! Clearly this community does not take our gifts for granted. Our investment will bear fruit for years to come and give these young minority citizens of Israel a better chance to succeed in this high-tech nation. 🌍

ETHIOPIAN ALIYAH A Modern Seder



Shalom Dear Friends,

This has been an exciting and important week. On the grand scale, Israel went into general elections for the role of Prime Minister and Knesset members giving the citizens of Israel an opportunity to exercise their freedom. On the smaller, but in many ways prophetic scale, Israel welcomed some 85 new olim from Ethiopia, joining the some 300 new olim from Ethiopia that had arrived in recent weeks, all coming together to prepare for the celebration of Passover, the holiday of Freedom.

Thanks to you, our dear friends at ICEJ, we are able to provide these new olim with a meaningful, warm and inspiring experience of Passover. Each family will be able to celebrate in dignity, with the full customs of Passover carefully observed. For the olim this is a dream come true, and not just any dream, as some have been dreaming their entire lives.

To help the olim prepare for the holiday and know its traditions as they are celebrated in Israel (quite different from the purely biblical way they were celebrated in Ethiopia), we provided in each of the centers not only teachings and classes but also a real experience – a Preparation Seder with all the major blessings and traditions. We do this so the olim may arrive at the Seder night with knowledge and confidence, so they can truly celebrate with joy and experience the meaning of their new found freedom. It was wonderful to share this experience with Barry, Nicole, Amanda and members of your team.

I was privileged to meet one of these excited new olim earlier this week as we held a festive preparation Seder at the Ibim Aliyah and Student Village, located just 7km from Gaza. Tigbo, 30 years old who until making Aliyah last week, served as the Cantor (Chazan) of the Gondar community.

As Tigbo held the microphone to sing a special prayer, on the faithfulness of G-d to his people during times of crises, he wept with excitement.

He has been waiting for 20 years to make Aliyah and says his faith has never wavered. The director of Ibim shared that when the olim at the center heard Tigbo would be coming soon, they were very excited and happy as they so missed his faithful singing of the prayers at the synagogue.

Tigbo sees deep meaning in his arrival in Israel at this time of freedom. Tigbo feels as if while in Ethiopia, he was like a slave in Egypt, his body was in Ethiopia while his heart and soul yearned for Israel. He trained a choir of children in Gondar and he nearly cries when he asks: "When will they make Aliyah?"

Tigbo's dream is to study and become a Rabbi, a spiritual guide for his community. He also dreams of marrying and starting a family, a family with children who are born to freedom.

Thank you for partnering with us to allow Tigbo and the hundreds new olim from Ethiopia that have found freedom in 2019, and the hopefully thousands more that will be coming home. Below is a link to pictures you may use in your publications and share with your members.

Happy Passover!

Danielle

Danielle Mor
Director, Angels of Zion



ICEJ's Barry Denison and Nicole Yoder at the Seder



New Olim reading the Hagaddah at the Seder



New Olim Tigbo who served as the Cantor

Rabbi Adviv conducting the Seder



Ethiopian Seder

Please give to Ethiopian Aliyah at www.icejusa.org/Ethiopia



Dinner with pastors from all around the country of Vietnam

VIETNAM

DOORS OPENING IN VIETNAM

BY MOJMIR KALLUS,
ICEJ VP FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

More than forty years after the end of the bitter conflict that raged on its soil, the nation of Vietnam remains in the minds of an entire generation ever associated with the bloody war fought between the North and the South—but more broadly between the Communist forces and the free world led by the United States.

The country is now united, and despite residues of Communist ideology, it is generally open and allows Christians to live in relative freedom. Relations with Israel that opened in the 1990s have been booming in recent years, especially due to Israeli inventions and technologies that significantly contribute to improving citizens' lives. Today, Vietnam is a fast-developing country with over 90 million people, and it is becoming one of the major players in all of Southeast Asia.



Mojmir Kallus with leaders of the new Israel Ministry, Pastor Pham Tuan Nhuong (second from right) and Sister Chung Bach (far right)

In late February, I spent several days in the capital of Hanoi as a result of previous contacts made with Sister Chung Bach at our regional conference in Singapore and at the ICEJ's Feast of Tabernacles last year. I found the door to be wide open for cooperation with the growing body of local Christians. At a dinner with 15 pastors from across Vietnam I was able to share about the history, mission, and vision of ICEJ. The next day, I conducted a seminar for about 80 people, mostly church leaders, who were shown ICEJ videos and heard about the biblical foundations of our support for Israel.

An umbrella organization for Christian ministry to Israel in Vietnam was established at the seminar, and the ICEJ is privileged to be a leading partner.

The Chairman of the new organization is Pham Tuan Nhuong, the senior pastor of a Word of Life church in Hanoi, who will represent the ICEJ in Vietnam going forward. We hope to see a group from Vietnam at this year's Feast of Tabernacles, as our cooperation and exchange continue to flourish. 🌍



A group of pastors from Kazakhstan who support the ministry of ICEJ

KAZAKHSTAN

A GOOD REPORT FROM ICEJ-KAZAKHSTAN

BY SERGUEI POPOV

The ICEJ Kazakhstan Branch opened about two years ago, and since then, God has carried out a great work among the Christians in this Central Asian nation. Many churches now celebrate Israel's Independence Day every year in May. Monthly prayer services are held in the northern city of Karaganda and the southern city of Almaty. Kazakhstan is also

one of the few Muslim countries sending "love offerings" to Jerusalem. Last year, 46 pilgrims from Kazakhstan attended the ICEJ's Feast of Tabernacles in Jerusalem, and more pilgrims plan to come this year. Please pray with us for God to continue to richly bless the work of ICEJ in Kazakhstan and other Muslim countries in the region and worldwide. 🌍



Dr. George Giacumakis thanks the ICEJ after receiving the 2016 "Nehemiah Award" at the Feast of Tabernacles.

IN MEMORIAM OF DR. GEORGE GIACUMAKIS

The ICEJ and ICEJ USA mourn the passing of friend and founding Chairman Dr. George Giacumakis on April 6. Dr. Giacumakis was Director Emeritus of the California State University Fullerton – Irvine Campus and Professor of History at Cal State Fullerton, as well as Adjunct Professor of History at Biola University. He founded the Museum of Biblical and Sacred Writings at Biola and HistoryOnTheMove Study Tours to Europe, the Middle East, and Africa.

He and his wife, Joan, along with their four children, lived in Jerusalem from 1979 to 1984 while he was President and Executive Director of the American Institute of Holy Land Studies (now called the Jerusalem University College) on Mount Zion. Each week he joined Christian leaders from various Jerusalem-based organizations at the King David Hotel for breakfast and prayer. It was that prayer group that came up with the idea of starting an organization to show Christian support for the modern state of Israel. Thus, in 1980, when the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem (ICEJ) was born, Dr. Giacumakis became the founding chairman of the board and served as such until 2004 after which he continued to serve as chairman of the ICEJ's USA Board until his death.

Dr. Giacumakis' love for Israel and the Jewish people went back to when he was a college student studying Hebrew and Greek. The newborn state of Israel was only ten years old at the time and was the subject of much attention amongst his fellow Bible students. When awarded a scholarship by Brandeis University, he studied at the largely Jewish school and earned both a Master's and a PhD degree in Mediterranean Studies (Near East and Islamic Studies).

His friendship with the Jewish people continued while living in California. He was such close friends with Reformed Rabbi Haim Asa that when the Rabbi passed away his wife contributed four nineteenth-century Torah scrolls to the newly founded Museum of Biblical and Sacred Writings.

While excelling in the world of academia, Dr. Giacumakis continued to serve Israel through the ICEJ. His leadership to both the International Board and to the USA Board of the organization was a great blessing and provided stable leadership during many seasons and stages of development of the ministry. For his lifelong service to Israel and the Jewish people the ICEJ awarded him the 2016 Nehemiah Award. 🇮🇱



YOUR ISRAEL ANSWER:

Why Does the United Nations Single Out Israel?

By Susan Michael, ICEJ USA Director

The United Nations charter of June 26, 1945, reflected lofty goals to help nations recover after WWII and set a course of peace for the future. The UN Security Council was specifically created to negotiate and maintain peace around the world. However, the United Nations currently seems to be preoccupied with the Palestinian issue, while ignoring genocide and gross human rights violations by a number of countries.

Increase in Number of Member States

In the ensuing years after WWII, the United States exercised considerable influence over the 50-odd member states. But, new nations came into being across the Middle East and in Africa. The United Nations member states grew from 51 to the current 193. While the United States still holds significant weight, there are many other alliances among members that are also highly influential.

Alliances and Demographics of Member States

The sheer growth in numbers is not the major problem—the alliances and demographics of those member states is. For example, the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), whose original purpose was within the context of the Cold War, now has 120 member nations who control every corner of the United Nations except for the UN Security Council. NAM is an umbrella for the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). Fifty-seven member states are affiliated with the OIC and twenty-two of those states are

members of the Arab League. This is a significant voting bloc in the United Nations.

For this reason, the historic UN General Assembly resolution on November 29, 1947—the United Nations Partition Plan—which paved the way for the creation of the modern State of Israel, would not pass in today's United Nations due to the OIC voting bloc. In 1947, thirty-three nations voted YES, thirteen NO, and ten nations abstained. The next year on May 14, 1948, when Israel declared its independence, the new Jewish State was accepted into the United Nations with a majority vote of 33 nations voting YES. The OIC voting block today is significantly larger.

Conclusion

The scales have tipped toward a demonstrable coalition in the United Nations that defames Israel at every opportunity. The only democracy in the Middle East, with enshrined principles protecting and promoting religious freedom, humanitarian outreach, freedom, innovation, and pluralism, is routinely singled out by the UN Human Rights Council at the expense of other crises around the globe.

David Keyes, Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu's spokesman, said, "Imagine that. A country with free speech, free elections and minority rights is condemned more than mass murdering dictatorships like North Korea, Iran, and Syria." 🌐

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