

EZRA NEWS

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And HE will lift up a standard for the nations, and will assemble the banished ones of Israel, and will gather the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.

Isaiah 11:12

Starting to Believe God Exists

By Marcelo B, Representative in Argentina

I met Jorge in the beginning of spring, 2016. He was part of the lower middle class, the one suffering the most in the two-year economic crisis in Argentina. He told me about his work that I found interesting. He was a kit man in Chacarita, a second division soccer club, so our first talk was about soccer. When I told him that we are an Evangelical Christian foundation, he said he respected me but that life had taught him that God does not exist.

What's the Point of Living?

We had another talk to go over the last details and documents and I asked him why he wanted to make Aliyah. At that point, he opened up and broke down. He had had a difficult divorce, his two children had gone with his former wife to Israel, and his parents had died. Fixing his eyes on me, he said, "Marcelo, if I don't see my children, what's the point of living?"

I agreed and suggested that although he didn't believe in God, the Torah was a very wise book to comfort us and clarify the perspective of life for us. What I never imagined was that we would have many encounters before his trip to Israel.

The first subject we touched on was the importance of forgiving and being forgiven. It was incredible to see such a self-assured "porteño" (Buenos Aires City native) moved by the counsel of God.

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A Message From Mel

By Mel Hoelzle, Founder/President



I've recently flown to the fields of Eastern Europe and Asia to monitor the progress and challenges of rescue efforts. The resounding take-away is that Jewish

families want to go home to Israel. Isaiah foretold that God would beckon to the Gentiles (I believe He means Christians!) to bring Israel's sons and daughters home. The time for Israel's restoration is now! The workers are ready and waiting for resources that will make Isaiah 49:22 a reality. Help us shoulder this privileged responsibility with your contribution and may the God of Israel bless you.

In This Edition

Greetings! The stories here will strengthen your faith and give you a behind-the-scenes glimpse of God at work, doing mighty things He promised in His Word. You will learn of priceless courage, increased belief, fierce love, heart-filled giving, haunting rhythms, and the joy of finally reaching the land of Israel. You will be encouraged with the reports of life-changing events from South and North America, Eastern Europe, Asia and Israel. Join us in this wonderful work, and thank you for your provisions and prayers. The victory is sure, the Lord of Hosts is His Name!



*"For I will restore them to the land (Israel) I gave their forefathers."
Jeremiah 16:15b*

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Stop the Process

Then, halfway through the process he had a crisis and didn't wish to continue. I asked him why. He had received a letter from his former wife and the Jewish Agency saying he couldn't go. I was surprised and asked him, "Did you do anything bad to your children or your wife?" We had a meeting in the Jewish Agency and after several sessions, they understood it was ridiculous to deny him permission to make Aliyah. When we left the hearing he asked me, "What makes you so sure I have to go to Israel?" I told him, "God says so, not me!"

We had a meeting in a café, and beginning in Genesis and going through the prophets I showed him that the God he didn't believe in had an unconditional covenant with his people, that He was going to fulfil it, and that it includes him.

Help from Torah

He called me by phone and told me, "My son Marcelo called me and told me I could count on him." Jorge had become reconciled with one of his children. "Thank you, Marcelo," he said. "I would never have taken this step without the help I received reading the Torah."

Jorge travelled to Israel in March, 2017. He lives there with his son, he is learning the language and sends me photographs regularly. This new context is opening furrows of hope in

his life. "You won't believe me," he said, "but I'm starting to believe that God exists."

The image in the photograph is worth more than a thousand words. Jorge is no longer alone. He has his son and he is happy.

Postscript to this Happy Story



Ezra's work is not easy. The preconceptions and walls that have been formed throughout history between Jews and Christians make one believe that sometimes you're striking the air, but this story as well as many others, make us see the value of the

work and the reward of perseverance. We are working on something God has already told us to do, so it is only a matter of putting the hands to the plow, and when things get difficult, close your eyes and know that God is present. He keeps His promises to the children of Israel and to us, the grafted-in branch. We can be sure that, just like for them, the blessing of Abraham has reached us.

Making the Same Mistake?

By Rev. Gary Cristofaro, Director of Development

For the almost two thousand years leading up to the Holocaust, Europe and most of the world had been conditioned to treat Jewish people with disdain. They were even considered sub-human by many. But where was the church? How could the church praise the dead Jewish people of the Bible and hate the Jewish people currently living in the same towns and villages? How could they claim to love the Jewish Messiah, Jesus, and despise His brethren?

The death camp of Auschwitz stands as a constant reminder of one of the darkest days in human history. Not long ago, I experienced a gut-wrenching tour of this horrific place. I cannot even begin to imagine the horror and hopelessness that its victims must have experienced.

That visceral feeling I experienced in the camp re-emerged later in a surprising place. About 72 hours

after I returned from Poland I attended a large annual Christian meeting. I had closed my eyes as the worship music played and in my mind the beat of the music suddenly began to imitate the beat of railroad cars moving along the tracks. To my horror, I could see the image of these cars filled with Jewish people on their way to their death. And the Church sang on.

I asked myself: Is it happening again? Does anyone care that Jewish people are being trapped by a new wave of war, economic turmoil, anti-Semitism and the Islamic terror that is currently sweeping across the globe? Will the Church stand with them this time? Tragically, only a handful of Righteous Gentiles like Corrie ten Boom and her family could be found 70 years ago. Who will be there for them today? The good news is: Ezra International!

'Scary' to Live in Ukraine

By Representative in Ukraine

Inna and Sergei are making Aliyah with their son, Nikita.

Inna's sister made Aliyah a little while ago. Inna visited her in Israel and liked everything. She said, "I want to live in Israel very much." While she was in Israel, she learned a lot of information on her own about work opportunities there. She is a cook, and her husband Sergei is a car mechanic. She felt the opportunities were good so they decided to make Aliyah.

In Ukraine, there is little work. Wages are staying the same but prices are rising. Inna said, "We want a normal future for our son in a country where there is good medicine, with no worries about the fact that another vaccination for a child could cost him his life. It's just scary to live in Ukraine right now. Everyone talks about good changes but so far, we only see the bad. The State has debt but in order to repay them they increase all the prices. There is still war and there is no end in sight to that."

Ezra International helped the family with finances for their passports and for trips to the consul. "We thank you very much," Inna said. "Without this help we would have had to try to put aside money for a long time. Our salaries are only enough to live somehow to the next step."

And it will be said: Build up, build up, prepare the road! Remove the obstacles out of the way of the My people. Isaiah 57:14 (NIV)



That's It — It's Time to Go

By Representative in Azerbaijan

Gusein, a keen cyclist from Baku, Azerbaijan, is going to Israel because his relatives live there. He explains, "I decided somewhere about one year ago to leave, but there were problems of different kinds and I delayed my departure several times. Recently I made the decision and said, 'that's it – it's time to go.'"

Gusein understands that it will be a little difficult at first and then everything will work out. He expects only good from life in Israel! He says it's important for him to live there for a while and adapt to life there.

Many friends and relatives came to see him off. Gusein said, "As you can see, my friends and relatives are here to see me off. I will miss them. It's difficult to realize that, from tomorrow, I will live in another country."

Ezra International helped with consultation, his passport, the translation of documents, and with transportation to the airport and extra baggage. Gusein was very grateful for the help, saying, "Thank you very much! Thanks for helping! May God protect you and bless you!"

A Knight To Remember

By Carrie Burns, PhD, International Liaison



He never wanted to be a preacher and to be honest, his wife never wanted him to either. The farm was just fine. But God changes hearts and David Knight heeded the call to the pulpit some 34 years ago. His wife, Rita, has been cheering him on ever since.

A Prayer and an Answer

Okay, 'If I'm going to preach,' he reasoned with the Lord, 'my desire is that every person who hears will remember something.' God answered this good prayer - people remember. In fact, early on in Pastor David's ministry, an old-timer and veteran of WW I pulled him aside for a word. He told him this:

Some preachers are preachers.
Some are preachers and teachers.
Some are both.
You're both.

This is a high compliment for a farm guy who never wanted to preach.

The Wisdom of Parents: Israel



Meanwhile, the Lord was working behind-the-scenes to bump-up His servant's understanding of the Bible and to preach the Word into a whole new realm of influence. Rita's folks had the idea. They knew it would enhance their son-in-law's preaching, and so, 30 years ago, they gave David and Rita an extraordinary gift: their first trip to Israel.

When we asked Pastor David if going to Israel made a difference, he replied, 'Oh Wow.' This was followed with a steady

stream of superlatives, expressions of love for The Land where Jesus ministered, praises to God, and stories of spiritual adventure. This trip was so monumental to their faith that by the following year they were back in The Land and several times since. We asked Pastor David if there was a verse he particularly loved. Isaiah 62:1 immediately came to mind:

For Zion's sake, I will not keep silent,
For Jerusalem's sake I will not remain quiet,
Till her righteousness shines like the dawn,
Her salvation like a blazing torch.

Something else happened. As Pastor and Rita's love for Israel and the Jewish people grew, the minds and hearts of the congregation were touched and they grew as well. Mightily. And, abiding.

Strong Hearts for the Jewish People

Over the last few years, David and Rita Knight and their congregation, First Assembly of God Vidalia, Georgia, have made an impression on our Ezra International staff by their generosity, prayers, and heart for the work.

Rev Barry Wagner, the Vice President of Ezra International, has been visiting churches for twenty years to preach the message of the ministry's mission to the Jewish people and Israel. He's preached at First Assembly of God Vidalia four times. Pastor Barry readily recognizes that there are many exemplary churches that stand strong for the Jewish people, but he has been impressed - blown away, actually - by the faith and generosity of Pastor David, Rita, and the congregation.

What explains this passion? Pastor David - in his soft-spoken and unassuming way - said simply, 'This church loves missions.' He said that on the first Sunday of each month they take their regular offering and then an additional, separate offering, for missions - two offerings on one Sunday. The 120 or so weekly-attenders provide funds for over 21 missionaries each month. The church board is missions-minded and so too are the children.

For ministering to the Jewish people and Israel through Ezra International, there is an extra outpouring. Pastor David added, 'Every time Barry Wagner comes to preach the people always give a good offering.' Indeed, they do. It is beautiful and it stretches a long way to help Jewish families move home to Israel. It also strengthens the hearts and resolve of all who are working together for Ezra International to fulfill God's Word by serving His chosen people in far-off lands and in Israel.

Ezra International is grateful for Pastor David, Rita and First Assembly of God Vidalia. Mel Hoelzle, Director of Ezra International, as well as all of us with the ministry, believe that you, Pastor David Knight, are surely 'a knight to remember', and we want you to know that ...



2 Thessalonians 1:11 (NIV)

With this in mind, we constantly pray for you, that our God may count you worthy of His calling, and that by His power He may fulfill every good purpose of yours and every act prompted by your faith.

Bold Faith

Look for articles that highlight the bold faith of those who serve Israel and the Jewish people.
You will be inspired and encouraged.

Twenty Years of Helping Children in Crisis

By Anne Elliott, Representative for the Children's Program



The Dream Has Become Reality

Twenty years ago, in the country of Ukraine, a local doctor named Roman Korniyko had a dream. Homeless and orphaned children had no place to go and no one to care for them, so, he began to work with a few of the neediest little ones in a flat in an apartment building. Over the years, the needs and accommodations expanded to a house that was loaned to the work. From there, the ministry grew to a vacant Communist-era Kindergarten, and finally, to the cheery sky-blue building among others in a complex that are now called Father's House. Founder and Director of Ezra International, Mel Hoelzle, cut the ribbon for the new home. The exterior of the main building (left) is now covered with murals of friendly Ukrainian folk animals, clouds and sunshine.

To date, 3,850 children have come under the care of this ministry!

June 2nd Celebration

Twenty years of serving almost four thousand children is a milestone and cause for celebration! What a party it was! On 2 June (see photo, below) everyone came together for speeches, good food, family fun and a huge display of photos of the children. Ezra International Board member, Bruce Elliott was on-hand to party with the children, staff and well-wishers. Usually never seen together, a Ukrainian Orthodox priest (burgundy hat) and an Orthodox priest from Moscow (white hat) stood side-by-side on the platform. This is a unifying work.

Time For Camp

Summertime brings camps. Funds are needed to increase the number of Children-in-crisis who can attend these special camps, sponsored by Father's House and Ezra Child Rescue. The more funds we receive, the more children will be able to attend. If you would like to donate to this life-changing cause, please write Father's House in the memo line of your check. We thank you on behalf of the children!



Ezra International
P.O. Box 120926
Clermont, FL 34712-0926
(352) 394-4673
www.ezrainternational.org

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Please support Ezra International's work of bringing the Jewish people home to Israel with the largest gift possible.

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I Just Want To Go Home

By Marcelo B, Representative in Argentina



Our team in Argentina helped Rolando prepare to make Aliyah and go to the land promised to his forefathers. Here's what Rolando shared: "I have decided making Aliyah since very many years ago. Sometimes I ask to myself, 'Why?' The answer always was the same. I have Israel in my heart since I was a kid. I just wanted to go home. So, since I was a kid I felt myself part of this culture. My mother and my sisters and my friends support me all time."

Rolando continued, "When I start being part of the Jewish community I felt myself between brothers and sisters, whom not only respect me and take care of me, but they taught me to take care and have respect for others as well. It touches my heart that the people you least expect are the first to lend you a hand."

Finally, Rolando added, "I want to go home where I will know exactly who I am and what is my potential. My roots are there and my family as well. I can't wait to be there."

The Courage You Gave Has No Price

On leaving day, Rolando wrote, "Today I cross my way with people whom I never expected to meet, people who open their heart like giving a present to a child. I have not enough words to say thank you. Marcelo, the courage that you give about my right to go to the land which God promised to my Father Abraham has no price."

I want to show you that your help wasn't in vain, because I am full of dreams and emotions, I know It won't be easy. I thank Ezra International because you all are having faith in my dreams, in people who wish go home to the land that God promised us. You all have no idea the big help that you are giving to people like me who dream to go home.

So again, I thank you. Thank you in my name and in the name of many people that you are continually helping."

When the LORD brought back the captives to Zion, we were like men who dreamed Psalm 126:1 (NIV)