

EZRA NEWS



VOLUME 18, NUMBER 1

RESCUE • RETURN • RESTORE

Another great year thanks to you!

To all our partners and supporters, I want to give you all a personal THANK YOU for helping us make 2017 one of Ezra's best years. We were able to help thousands of Jewish people make their final Exodus to Israel because of your generous support. Many came from very difficult situation where war, anti-Semitism, poverty, and terrorism have forced them to need our help in getting to Israel. We are only able to help because of all of you, THANKS AGAIN.

As we begin the new year I am reminded of God's promise to the Jewish people; **"And He will lift up a standard for the nations and assemble the banished ones of Israel, and will gather the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth."** (Isaiah 11:12)

And His promise to us; **"I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."** (Genesis 12:3)

And to those of us who HE has called to help. Thus, says the Lord God, **"Behold, I will lift up My hand to the nations and set up My standard to the peoples;**

And they will bring your sons in their bosom, and your daughters will be carried on their shoulders." (Isaiah 49:22)

2018 can be another great year as you and our Ezra teams can continue to be a part of God's plan in helping thousands more of the poorest Jewish people make their exodus to Israel.

Remember no gift is too big or too small and the greatest gift to Israel is helping one more Jewish person get HOME to Israel where God is calling them for the coming of Messiah. **"I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him like the bitter weeping over a firstborn."** (Zechariah 12:10)

God bless and thank you all for your support,

Mel Hoelzle
Founder and President



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

Our Partners in Ministry
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Straight From My Heart

By Rev. Barry Wagner, Vice President

Throughout my adult life I have always enjoyed New Year's Eve, not for all the parties, the celebrations and the ball drop in Times Square New York. I can't even imagine standing in single digit freezing weather for hours and hours just to watch a ball drop from its lofty perch to ring in the new year. LOL

No, my joy for the New Year is because it gives us an opportunity to look back over the previous year with all of its joys, its challenges, its victories and yes - even some failures along the way. But it also gives us the opportunity to look ahead to the new year which lies before us with a renewed confidence, joy and with great anticipation

New Beginnings

We can take all the many lessons we learned from the past year and have them work for us in the coming New Year. It truly is a time of **New Beginnings!** May we all determine right now with God's help and His Divine leading to make 2018 the greatest year of our life and our ministries.

What all of this means to me on a personal level also holds true for the work and ministry of Ezra International as we continue to be used by Abba in the prophetic return of the Jewish people to Israel from the four corners of the globe. What a privilege and honor it is for each of us!

This past year has been a record-breaking year in so many ways for Ezra International for which we thank the Holy One of Israel and each of you who have stood with us so faithfully for so long. The thousands of Jewish lives you have touched for eternity are living testimonies to your love, your kindness, your prayers and your financial giving. The accomplishments of 2017 would have been impossible without each of you standing with us. So, on behalf of the many thousands of Olim (Jewish immigrants), now living in Israel we say **THANK YOU** for giving them their **New Beginning!** **"When the Lord brought back the captives to Zion, we were like men who dreamed."** (Psalm 126:1) The dream is of a new beginning!

Fishing Trip

One of the highlights for me this past year was hosting my annual **Jeremiah 16:16 "Fishing Trip"** to Kiev and Odessa, Ukraine. Once again, this year God raised up a wonderful team of lovers of the Jewish people from across America to go to them, to pray for them, to encourage them and to love them unconditionally as Jesus loves them. I wish so much that each of you could see first hand how much our visits to the Jewish people means to them and how it impacts their lives. Many of them break down and cry as they see for the first time in their entire lives that they are not alone, that there are people in this world who loves them and supports them and who stands with them. To my team members from our September **"Fishing Trip"** I just want to say thank you **"Straight from My Heart."** You will never know fully the impact you made on these precious people's lives.

If you would like to travel with me to Kiev and Odessa on this year's **Jeremiah 16:16 "Fishing Trip"** you need only to contact me at: barry@ezrainternational.org or phone me at 407-353-2145. The dates of travel will be September 13th through September 22nd, 2018.



Bold Faith Messenger

Faith Working Through Love

She's a powerhouse-pixie with a doctorate, dimples and a twinkle in her eye who lights up every interaction with her love for the Lord. Not only that, her love for the Jewish people and her desire to learn about their suffering compelled her to tour Auschwitz-Birkenau, the former German Nazi camp, on her birthday last year. A high-level executive, Dr. Sharon Smith works for big corporations so she can fund her mission trips around the world. After the Iron Curtain fell, she focused her efforts on teaching about Israel and biblical prophecy in fledgling Christian universities and churches in Russia.

Stop the Process

When she learned that Dr. Carrie Burns (International Liaison for Ezra International), had registered to attend a conference in DC, Sharon immediately asked Carrie for her bio, photo, and a description of her talks, and off she went, activating her DC network to find places for Carrie to speak. Through a flurry of e-mails, calls and lunch meetings with her friends in ministry, church leaders and Bible study teachers, Sharon spread the word about the ministry of Ezra International and the message that the time for teachings on the return of the Jewish people to Israel is NOW.



The results? In addition to providing her home for Carrie's lodging, Sharon set up engagements for her in Virginia and Maryland that include two large Bible studies, two church meetings, a church dinner, and a luncheon for Jewish neighbors. Further, the churches that could not schedule Carrie on this round are interested in scheduling a visit next time Ezra International comes to town.

The message of Ezra International has taken root around our nation's capital because of the love, motivation and efforts of one woman who worked behind the scenes in her spare time. We thank God for Sharon! To set up just one speaking engagement makes a strategic difference for the Kingdom of God. But with His help, Sharon set her bar high, gained momentum, and presented these speaking opportunities to the ministry of Ezra International with a burst of enthusiasm and joy.

Invite An Ezra International Representative To Your Area

Tel: 352-394-4673 Toll Free 866-539-6829 email@ezrainternational.org

Their "Final Exodus"

How very thankful we are to the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob for an extremely great year for so many Jewish people returning to the land of their inheritance in their "Final Exodus." With the war in Eastern Ukraine still raging, anti-Semitism at a very dangerous level, stark poverty and horrible living conditions in the many countries Ezra International is laboring in much of the Jewish populations are desiring to go home to their "Promised Land."

We are most happy to share the 2017 Aliyah statistics with you so that you can see what your faithful prayers and financial giving has made possible. YOU have impacted these precious Jewish lives for all eternity.

Due to security concerns in some of the countries in which we are working we have been asked by the Jewish Agency not to publish the statistics. Below are the statistics we can report freely.

Argentina	50	Armenia	75	Azerbaijan	102	Brazil	99
Georgia	137	Hungary	3	Kazakhstan	94	Moldova	156
Russia	1,481	Ukraine	2,641	Uruguay	2	Uzbekistan	146

Thanks to you, these 4,763 precious Jewish people are now living as free Jews in the land of the Jews according to God's eternal plan for their lives. We thank you on their behalf.

Heavenly Order in Earthly Chaos

By Rev. Gary Cristofaro

Protest in Iran

The recent protests in Iran highlight yet another example of how precarious Jewish life is among the nations of the world. “What I learned about the Jewish community of Iran was that theirs was a freedom with strings attached, a somewhat secure life inside a gilded cage, where minorities are kept as proof of a tolerant society, but forced to comply with the oppressive lines and framework of an unpredictable regime. In certain ways, being a Jew in Iran means a more secure life than that of a non-Jewish Iranian, but that security is hinged on an agreement that everyone involved knows can be torn to shreds at any time.” (1) When the last revolution occurred in Iran, at least 70,000 Jewish people left. Today, it is estimated that there are anywhere from 8 to 25 thousand Jewish people still living in Iran.

The Forgotten War In Ukraine



In February, it will be four years since Russia's president, Vladimir Putin annexed Crimea and helped foment a rebellion in Ukraine's industrial east. Since then about 10,000 people have

died, including 3,000 civilians, and more than 1.7 million have been displaced. Aid agencies say that 4.4 million people have been directly affected by the continuing hostilities, while 3.8 million need urgent assistance. The world has turned its gaze elsewhere. (2) But not you, not our faithful donors. You helped thousands of Ukrainian and Russian Jewish people get home to Israel in 2017.

Rising Anti-Semitism

According to American Jewish leader Malcolm Hoenlein, Anti-Semitism is taking on potentially “pandemic” dimensions globally. Sadly, even in the US, and “if left unchecked could grow into an immensely serious threat.” He called on world leaders to convene a global summit to forcefully denounce the phenomenon. Ezra International is already on the ground in countries where these threats are very real.

Divine Order in the Chaos

War, protests, anti-Semitism, hate rhetoric and ongoing terror threats have together camouflaged the divine order in all of this chaos. God has promised to re-gather His people from the four corners of the earth. Therefore, upon closer examination one will witness how all of this is working together to fulfill that divine purpose.

The prophet Ezekiel tells us that the people of the nations desecrate the name of The Holy One Of Israel when Jewish people are in their midst. When they came to the nations, wherever they went, they profaned My holy name—when they said of them, ‘These are the people of the LORD, and yet they have gone out of His land.’ But I had concern for My holy name, which the house of Israel had profaned among the nations wherever they went. **“Therefore, say to the house of Israel, ‘Thus says the Lord GOD: “I do not do this for your sake, O house of Israel, but for My holy name’s sake, which you have profaned among the nations wherever you went.”’** (Ezekiel 36:20-22) Anti-Semitism is not just an attack on Jewish people. It is a direct affront to the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. It is in essence a mocking of His faithfulness and ability to fulfill His promises.

Therefore, we can take heart that the turmoil in and around the world is further evidence of God's faithfulness. It is through this chaos that He is stirring the hearts of His people to return to Israel once more. Thus, by entering the land His word declares they are actually sanctifying His Holy name. In fact, God's name will not be fully sanctified in the eyes of the nations until He has re-gathered all of His children back to the land of Israel. Thus, it is through the Aliyah that God is revealing His order in the chaos!

Being A Part of God's Divine Order

It's amazing, but our Heavenly Father wants our participation in His holy work. Speaking of the Jewish people, He said through the prophet Isaiah; Thus, says the Lord GOD: **“Behold, I will lift My hand in an oath to the nations, and set up My standard for the people; they shall bring your sons in their arms, and your daughters shall be carried on their shoulders;”** (Isaiah 49:22) That's you and I when we give the much-needed financial gifts that help make this work happen. Make your best gift today. Help bring heavenly order in the midst of this growing earthly chaos and may The Holy One of Israel bless you abundantly as you do!

(1) The Jerusalem Post, Iranian Jews in a time of protest. By Annika Hernroth Rothstein 01/02/2018

(2) The Guardian, Ukraine on the Front Line of Europe's Forgotten War. Julian Coman 11/12/17



Child Rescue During Frigid Winter

By Bruce & Anne Elliott, Representative for the Children's Program



Child Rescue Mobile Unit

This is a Ukrainian boy in his flat, receiving love in the form of warm winter clothing, thanks to you. Look closely at his living conditions. The poverty, dirt, mold and lack of heat are typical of the households served by the Ezra International Child Rescue Mobile Unit. Conditions for these kids are heart-breaking. Family situations are rife with hunger, illness, abuse, alcohol and drugs. Even our seasoned and caring staff has to draw on God for every ounce of strength to bear-up under these emergency house calls.

Re-Cap of 2017 - Thank You

Thank you for your generous giving in 2017. Because of your assistance last year, the Child Rescue Mobile Unit was able to serve:

- 193 families in crisis
- 364 children (an astounding number for our small corps)
- humanitarian aid, which included basic food and medicine
- a few parents who agreed to go into rehab
- 43 children need to be placed in Christian homes because of dangerous conditions



Winter Rescue Need - Thank You

It's shivering-cold in Ukraine. Please help Ezra International with funds for:

- Gas, to get the **Child Rescue Mobile Unit** to the kids in crisis.
- Warm clothes and warm food for the cold and hungry kids.
- Medicine - most all of the kids are in very poor health.

Our goal is to help as many children as we possibly can. In our view, there can be no greater purpose than to rescue and give hope to these young lives.

If you would like to reach out to these kids, please write Children's Program in the memo line of your check. Thank you for helping us care for these little ones during Ukraine's harsh winter and we praise God for your mercy, faithfulness, prayers and generosity.



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Please Support Ezra International *With a Gift*

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RESPONSE CARD

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

If you would like to make a ONE-TIME GIFT or a monthly donation to Ezra International, please send your financial gifts to:

Four Generations Make Aliyah

Story from the field

This family lived in the village of Magdalenovka, Ukraine. They are very poor and lived in a small house. So, when there was a fire this past year and part of the roof of the house burned, there was no money for restoration. After the fire, they finally became certain that it was necessary to make Aliyah and that now is the time. After meeting a city representative at a Jewish Agency Fair, they chose, Akko, Israel as their new home. They feel Akko was a good city for their big family to start their new life.



Ready To Start A New Life

Everyone has their own expectations of what life in Israel will be like. The parents expect a good quality of medical care and normal life for their old age. They want a calm life close to their children and grandchildren. Tatyana is very anxious as her husband (common law) remains in Ukraine but she plans to work and help the children. Margarita and Ivan are the most positive. They are full of vitality and ready to start a new life and to try and make it more "colorful, diverse and promising."

Ezra International helped this family financially because without our help it would have been impossible for them to leave Ukraine. We also drove them to their Consular appointment and finally to the station when it was time for them to leave. They were truly grateful.

Be Part of Biblical Prophecy

You can help other families just like this one. Your financial gifts of any size are making a difference in the lives of the Jewish families we help. When you give you are also taking part in the fulfillment of Biblical prophecy and this is pleasing to the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, The Holy One of Israel.

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

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