SINT A CALL TO RETURN A CALL TO RETURN TO THE LAND

"I am the God of Bethel, where you anointed the pillar and where you made a vow to Me. Now arise, get out of this land, and return to the land of your family."

GENESIS 31:13

A Christian organisation helping the Jewish people return to Israel

A CALL TO Return to the land

OUR NEW INTERNATIONAL CHAIRMAN

"...For the overseer must be above reproach as God's steward ... hospitable, loving what is good, sensible, just, devout, self-controlled, holding fast the faithful word..." Titus 1:7-9, NASB

n 1st January 2023 I handed over the role of Chairman of the Ebenezer International Board to **Philip Holmberg,** my beloved brother and Board colleague. It has been a wonderful privilege to serve the Lord in this capacity. Whatever position we serve in it is for a specific season and only by His grace, and it is a joy to see that the Lord has clearly called and equipped Philip to succeed me as Chairman for such a time as this.

Philip and his wife Ulla live in Stavsjö, Sweden. Philip is well known amongst the international Ebenezer family, serving both as chair of the Baltic-Nordic Board and, from 2014, as a member of the International Board. With qualifications in education, Philip went to Asia to become the principal of a school for blind children. Returning to Sweden, he served as headmaster in the education system for two decades and became pastor of an independent church. The first sermon he brought upon being appointed pastor was on the Lord's prophetic purposes for the Jewish people and the nation of Israel.

Philip is a gifted leader and teacher of God's Word. His passion for seeing Ebenezer's prayer leaders mobilised, equipped and moving together in common purpose across the nations has seen a significant strengthening in Ebenezer's unity and commitment to prayer.

We highly value Philip's mature walk with the Lord. The International Board will flourish under his servant-hearted headship. Let's keep both Philip and Ulla and their family in prayer as Philip steps into these new responsibilities.

Pete Stucken

"I am the God of Bethel, where you anointed the pillar and where you made a vow to Me. Now arise, get out of this land, and return to the land of your family." Genesis 31:13

hese words were addressed to Jacob at the end of his twenty years of exile in Padan Aram. He received a clear command, impossible to misunderstand: *"arise, get out of this land, and return to the land of your family"*.

It sounds so simple – stand up, leave, go home. If this command had come early on, almost twenty years earlier, when Jacob was all on his own, with just a staff in his hand, it might have been simple. But now, with a big family, wives, and eleven sons? Now he had "become exceedingly prosperous, and had large flocks, female and male servants, and camels and donkeys" (Genesis 30:43).

The first seven years of his exile passed quickly: "So Jacob served seven years for Rachel, and they seemed only a few days to him because of the love he had for her" (Genesis 29:20). But the following seven years may have felt longer and, I imagine, the final six years of his time in Mesopotamia much longer than that. His father-in-law changed his wages ten times and, even worse, the attitude of the people in that faraway land changed towards Jacob – "Jacob has taken away all that was our father's", accused Laban's sons (Genesis 31:1).

So the Lord got Jacob's attention again by calling him: "Jacob!" And Jacob found the grace to say: *"Here I am" (Genesis 31:11).* Now he was ready to listen – and act. God reminded him of the vow he made at the start of his exile: *"...'If God will be with me, and keep me in this way that I am going, and give me bread to eat and clothing to put on, so that I come back to my father's house in peace, then the LORD shall be my God. And this stone which I*





have set as a pillar shall be God's house, and of all that You give me I will surely give a tenth to You'" (Genesis 28:20-22).

Now, after all those years, Jacob was ready, to listen to the Lord, to fulfil his vow, to obey, to arise, to get out of this land, to return to the land of his family: "So he fled with all that he had. He arose and crossed the river, and headed towards the mountains of Gilead" (Genesis 31:21).

Today our prayer is that the Jewish people, descendants of Jacob, will respond with "Here I am" as they hear the Word of the Lord by leaving the lands of their exile to return to the land of their forefathers.

Even before Jacob had made his vow to the Lord, God gave him His promise: "Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have spoken to you" (Genesis 28:15).

God had given Jacob a dream of a ladder set on the earth reaching all the way to heaven, with the angels of God ascending and descending on the ladder. The Lord stood above it and said, *"I am the LORD God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will*



give to you and your descendants. Also your descendants shall be as the dust of the earth; you shall spread abroad to the west and the east, to the north and the south; and in you and in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed" (Genesis 28:13-14).

Through this the Lord renewed the promise He had given to Abraham and Isaac! He gave Jacob a personal assurance of the promise being in force and that the blessing would reach all the families, every nation, tribe and language, in the entire world! The Lord watches over His word, He remembers, He brings it to fulfilment. His angels are still ascending and descending between heaven and earth, guiding, helping and protecting the Jewish people on their way home to Israel.

The attitude and hearts of the nations towards the Jewish people are deteriorating. As the times get more confusing, chaotic and dangerous for them, the Lord will use Christians and organisations like ours to help them return to Israel in many practical ways. In his vow, Jacob mentioned, "bread to eat and clothing to put on". It is good to bring a message of hope to Jewish families and we desire to continue to do so in every nation the Lord opens to us. It has also been such a blessing over many years that the Lord has given us the grace to combine the message with practical help where it has been needed.

The war in Ukraine has tremendously increased opportunities to help in practical ways. This is a time when the Lord is testing our hearts and our commitment towards the Jewish people. Are we ready to meet their practical needs in Ukraine, in other areas and in Israel? I believe the Lord has given us eyes to see, ears to hear and hearts to understand the needs of the Jewish people in our time and to serve Him in every way He calls us.

INTERNATIONAL



PHILIP HOLMBERG Chairman, International Board

Ukraine: Yanya (left) and Vadim (right) helping a family with some much-needed supplies and sharing about making aliyah to this Jewish family.

gratitade LETTER OF GRATITUDE

INTERNATIONAL



HERIBERTO GONZALEZ ON BEHALF OF MEMBERS OF THE EOE INTERNATIONAL BOARD

Then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Shen. He named it Ebenezer, saying, "Thus far the LORD has helped us." 1 Samuel 7:12, NIV

wenty years ago Pete Stucken, his wife Fiona and daughters Niki and Annita flew to Israel to be part of Tom Hess's All Nations Convocation. As they stepped off the plane at Ben Gurion airport, Tel Aviv, they could sense a spiritual transaction unfolding in their hearts, an encounter with the God of Israel.

Two years later, drawn by the Holy Spirit, they all went to Jerusalem where the Lord called them to become part of the Ebenezer family. After several years serving Him in different leadership positions, regionally and internationally, in 2013 Pete was appointed Chairman of Ebenezer's International Board.

Since then Pete has been a blessed instrument of the Lord, providing clear and wise guidance to affirm and consolidate many good things that have been established these past years, even during financial shortages, lockdowns, wars, border closures, government restrictions, and unforeseen and extended delays.

During his leadership through all this, our support for *aliyah* has grown, along with other encouraging fruits. These include increased and continuous international united prayer, links between people and nations, a new generation rising up to serve the ministry, new educational material and a house in Haifa to assist *olim* arriving in Israel.

Pete took the decision to stand down from the International Board and Finance Steering Group at the end of 2022. All of us on the Board are so thankful to God for his leadership and the privilege of serving alongside him. And we are glad that he and Fiona are still part of Ebenezer, seeking to consolidate the ministry in the Asia Pacific region and make the vision for the work of *aliyah* known in nations not yet reached there. We pray that the Lord will guide them and use their gifts to bear much good fruit.



International Board (left to right): Gary Kah (USA), Gian Luca Morotti (Italy), Pete Stucken (Australia), Philip Holmberg (Sweden), Abe Oommen (India), Heriberto Gonzalez (Mexico).

ALIYAH AND FEEDING THE HUNGRY

""for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink: I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me ...' And the King will answer ...' inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.'" Matthew 25:35-40

S ince the war in Europe started last year millions of people have lost their homes and very often any perspective for the future. In the midst of them are tens of thousands of Jewish people who for various reasons have not yet returned home to Israel. Ebenezer has not given up despite the hardships of almost daily power cuts, living in cold rooms and driving on slippery, dangerous roads.

As soon as we saw that fewer *olim* were arriving in western Ukraine, our team started to travel closer to the war zone to distribute humanitarian aid to needy Jewish families and talk with them about making *aliyah*. At the time of writing, we plan to distribute another 700-plus food parcels to needy Jewish families. The ongoing support for Ukraine enables them to continue our work even under harsh winter conditions. From a human perspective, it is tempting to want to give up, but all Ebenezer team members know God's calling. It's a joy to look into the eyes of Jewish people when we bring them clothes, food or provide a warm place to sleep. That joy surpasses all personal sacrifice.

I recently had the privilege to stay a night in Ukraine with our team. On a trip a few days later I was invited to speak in a church in Lviv to give Biblical input regarding the situation. Our team enjoyed the fellowship with other Christians who understand what it means to bless Israel!

New *aliyah* routes have opened, others seem to close down. We have to live with the fact that the war creates a constant need of adapting to the situation.

Please pray that our teams do not get tired, but are daily strengthened by the Lord UKRAINE



JOHANNES BARTHEL REGIONAL COORDINATOR





ALIYAH NUMBERS IN 2022 REACHED A 23-YEAR HIGH.

Some 74,000 new immigrants made aliyah from 95 countries. This was a dramatic increase over the previous year when only 28,600 new immigrants arrived. Of the 74,000 new olim, over 58,000 were from Russia and Ukraine.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PRAYERS & SUPPORT.

THE LIGHT OF HOPE

UKRAINE



YANYA UKRAINE TEAM

n order to minister to Jewish people we drive thousands of kilometres, sometimes on very bad roads, and despite the dangerous situation in Ukraine. We look for Jewish refugees who have fled the hostilities and settled in more peaceful regions of the country. Although there is often no power in the houses we visit, we see the light of God, the light of hope, fill their hearts as we share with them.

Sadly, this war has affected everyone, including the babies born during these days of trouble. We met Oxana's family from Kharkiv. Oxana shared that their youngest son was born on 21st February 2022. Instead of returning home and raising her baby in peace and comfort, she and her two young children had to flee and hide in someone else's basement, as their city came under heavy attacks. Oxana had no access to baby care items, food or fresh water. They had to survive in the basement until 28th March, having no contact with her husband and other relatives.

Oxana said, "There were several mothers with children hiding in the basement. My children were the youngest (my eldest son is two, and my youngest was a newborn baby). Daily we went outside in search of water and food. God helped us through some kind people, who shared with us everything they had.

One day I went outside and another shelling began; as the gunfire poured down on the city, I was helped by some volunteers into a shelter. I got hysterical because my children had remained in the basement. Thankfully, some Ukrainian soldiers, risking their lives, drove me to the house where they were hiding. As we arrived, I fainted because the house had been destroved! After recovering, I saw some volunteers and soldiers digging a passage to the basement. When it became clear that the basement had not been damaged, my heart was overwhelmed with inexpressible joy and relief!

We were taken to a shelter, where the conditions were much better, and where, one day, I heard my husband's voice! We had not heard from each other since the outbreak of the war, and when we finally met we cried for joy! Some people around us could not help crying, witnessing our family's reunion. My husband had become a volunteer, helping with the evacuation of city residents.



Oxana and her family with Yanya and Viktor receiving supplies and information about making aliyah.



Shortly atterwards, our family was evacuated to Poltava, where shells did not hit the area as hard as Kharkiv. Today you called me and suggested that we should meet. Thank you for sharing about the opportunity to go to Israel. It is like a dream!"

There was a ray of hope in Oxana's eyes, and the family was very thankful for the humanitarian aid parcel and the message we shared with them. The whole family was smiling as we said goodbye. Oxana and her husband were encouraged to start bringing their documents together. Hopefully, they will be able to go to Israel soon.

Looking to the future

Recently when we had to survive two particularly difficult days due to the complete absence of power, heating and running water, as well as means of communication, the first days of war came to my mind again. Over nine hard months have passed but, thankfully, we are still free and alive, standing firm and pressing on!

Today, amidst the horrors of war, it is so encouraging to see the fruit of our labour and to rejoice about the ingathering of the Jewish people to Israel! Another Jewish family is already sitting in the van and Johannes is about to close the doors and drive to Warsaw (Poland), where they will apply for *aliyah* and fly to Israel. Suddenly, I hear someone call my name and I turned around to see a man whose face looked vaguely familiar. "You may not remember me, but I do remember you, Yanya. I am Vladimir. You and some foreign volunteers visited our family many years ago."

I begin to recall our first meeting, which took place nineteen years ago... Vladimir was not interested in returning to Israel then, whereas today, he admits: "Many years have passed, and you, Yanya, were right in saying that 'time would surely come for us to go too', adding that it might happen in very difficult, tumultuous days, and today we have to flee. Our children and grandchildren made *aliyah* in peaceful days, although me and my wife are following them today, in an extremely difficult and turbulent time."

Glory to God for His faithfulness to His promises!



Please visit the Ebenezer Operation Exodus YouTube channel to see a video about this story.

KEY WORDS

Aliyah is the word for the immigration of Jewish people from the Diaspora to the Land of Israel. The word in Hebrew means ascent and is defined as 'going up' – progressing towards Jerusalem.

Olim means Jewish immigrants to Israel – those making aliyah. In the singular, a male immigrant is called an **oleh** and a female immigrant an **olah**. Potential olim are those our teams contact and encourage to make **aliyah**.

Klitah concerns the absorption of olim after they have arrived in Israel. It includes all aspects of integrating into society, including learning Hebrew, finding employment and housing, school enrolment and serving in the Israel Defense Forces (IDF).

Viktor & Yanya, wearing flak jackets, whilst distributing much-needed aid to families in Kharkiv, North Eastern Ukraine.



MOLDOVA



PAVEL AND LINA MOLDOVA LEADERS

"I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will guide you with My eye." Psalm 32:8

S ince the first Jewish refugees from Ukraine poured over the border into Moldova last year and arrived in Chisinau, the capital, our team has assisted over 2,500 of them to make *aliyah.* We thank God for His provision and the resources available to help Jewish people go home to Israel!

We thank the Lord for every peaceful day, for keeping the "corridor" through Moldova safe for the exodus of Jewish people from Ukraine and for working miracles on their journeys. It is encouraging to see the fulfilment of God's promise to enable them to go to their true homeland, which we find in Ezekiel 39:28: *"I am the LORD their God, who sent them into captivity among the nations, but also brought them back to their land, and left none of them captive any longer."*

We helped Inesa, her 12-year-old son and Inesa's parents (both with physical disabilities) to make *aliyah* from Chisinau last Spring and we are pleased to know that they have settled well in Israel (see Bulletin Issue 2, 2022). We have kept in touch with Inesa and have been praying for the reunion of the whole family in the Land. Then the Lord miraculously opened a way for Inesa's husband, Sergey, to be reunited with them.

As men aged 18-60 are not allowed to leave Ukraine, Sergey had to stay behind, but then he was able to cross the border into Moldova, apply for *aliyah* and arrive safely to Israel. Inesa and her son could not thank Ebenezer enough to express their heartfelt gratitude for our practical assistance, encouragement, words of comfort and, most importantly, prayers for Sergey's release from the "captivity" of the war.

The family has witnessed that the mighty God of Israel is faithful to His promises and is never late, as He brought the family together shortly before Hanukkah, enabling them to celebrate the Festival of Lights together in Israel!



Right: Sergey at Chisinau airport.

HELPING THEM TO SETTLE

A Nishma? (How are you?) How have you lived since you arrived in Israel? Do you feel that you have settled well in the land? Where did you feel supported and what are the areas that you still struggle with? All these questions were asked of the olim when we visited them in Israel recently.

Every *olim* has a different background and not one story is the same. Just as different is the process of their *aliyah* and settling in Israel. Deep down in their heart, they all know that Israel is their destiny and place to be. But in reality, this conviction can be challenged. And that is where we must be attentive and carefully listening, in order to pray specifically and improve our support of *aliyah*.

Several parents have told us that it was tough to adapt to the culture in Israel, to learn how to speak and read Hebrew fluently. However, it was encouraging to hear that their children usually find it much easier as they grow up as Israelis and become fluent in Hebrew quite quickly at school. The parents are encouraged when they see their kids planted in the Land. Their long journey of sacrifice is paying off.

When speaking to different people in Israel, we realised how important connections are in this country. Everything, even finding a reliable garage for the car, works best through connections. When we met a divorced mother with her two young children in Jerusalem, we saw how hard it could be when one doesn't have many connections and is just trying to make a living for the children to have a warm bed and something to eat at the end of the day.

The Lord is calling His people back home.

Let's pray that He will also settle and plant them in the land as He promises in Amos 9:15:

"I will plant Israel in their own land, never again to be uprooted from the land I have given them, says the LORD your God" (NIV).

SWITZERI AND



GERALDINE & JAEL EBENEZER SWITZERLAND





Top: Joel & Esther with their kids. Bottom left: Philip & Nancy. Bottom right: Geraldine & Tina.





JOHN PROSSER PRESIDENT & CEO **OPERATION EXODUS USA**

e are grateful to the Lord for the hundreds of Jewish people **Operation Exodus USA helped** to make aliyah last year. Many American Jews are realising that we have entered a new season in America as they witness and experience the alarming rise of anti-Semitism.

HE GRE

America is on the cusp of the greater exodus. We cannot predict what the work of our ministry will look like in the months and years ahead. Our Jewish friends may find themselves in a variety of dangerous and difficult challenges. Opportunities will arise to assist the olim in new and unusual ways we have not experienced before.

It takes courage and great faith to wait on the Lord. We have to remind ourselves that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day (2 Peter 3:8). The Lord is faithful and true. He will not delay - He will bring

about every promise He has made to gather His chosen people home.

As we pray and remind ourselves that the ministry's mission is a holy work, the Father-in His faithfulness-will help us as we seek Him for His wisdom and guidance. As we wait on the Lord, in the fear of the Lord, the ministry will remain before our Holy God in a posture of humility, prayer, and worship. We trust that the Lord is opening the way for the greater exodus that is building momentum in our nation. All glory be to our God!

It is a privilege and honour to serve the Lord with our Ebenezer Operation Exodus family. We are placing our trust and hope in God for the full restoration and redemption of Israel, for with Him is unfailing love and full redemption.

In God we trust!



Right: "We are making aliyah due to the increased anti-Semitism in the United States," said Rivka. "We want our children to be proud they are Jewish and not have to fear they will be attacked because of their religion." Rivka and family.

ALONG ANCIENT PATHS

"This is what the Lord says: 'stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is, and walk in it'" Jeremiah 6:16, NIV

Vigour, energy, freshness, and intensity are some nouns that refer to youth. A period brimming with opportunities to learn.

We remember young Timothy, surrounded by knowledge generated firstly in his family environment and later on in the company of the apostle Paul. Even though Timothy was reserved by nature, and with fragile health, he and Luke were Paul's most constant companions. After Paul's death, Timothy's work consisted of caring for the church in Ephesus.

The youth need instruction on how to face the difficult task of leadership within the church, teaching in the faith and how to live by the Word of God.

Let us pray for the current young people within the church. May God surround them with reverent servants worthy of respect, temperate, self-controlled sound in faith, love, and endurance, not slanderers or slaves to alcohol. May these prayers form a retaining wall, affirming generation after generation according to the good, pleasant and perfect will of our beloved Lord. May the power of the Holy Spirit prosper the seed sown and bring accelerated growth in the revelation of the restoration of Israel and *aliyah* to each young soul, manifesting itself in the multiplication of intercessors, volunteers, coordinators, administrators and joyful givers for the fulfilment of His promises and the everlasting covenant.

One of the most beautiful experiences our Lord has allowed us to share with Him is to see how two teenagers love God with all their hearts, souls and strength, blessing Israel with passion, fervour and faith. Aaron (14) from Honduras and Abraham (13) from Mexico are making a difference in the EOE Youth group of Latin America.

We pray that Aaron and Abraham will continue to live to give fruits of justification and glory to our God.

Let us proclaim Psalm 119:9-16 together: "How can a young person stay on the path of purity? By living according to your word..." (NIV) PRAYFR



ENRIQUE & KATIA DE SANTIAGO LATIN AMERICA YOUTH LEADERS

EBENEZER INTERNATIONAL srael Tour 17-24 November 2023

tarbours & Coastland our

email: israeltour@ebenezer-oe.org

For more information www.ebenezer-oe.org/events for TOUR & BOOKING details



KLITAH -AREYOU HOMEYET?

Klitah (heb. קליטה): absorption, integration, reception, acceptance.

ISRAFI



JUDITH VINAPEL **ISRAEL TEAM**

mos 9:15 says that God is bringing His people back to Israel and will plant them there, "never again to be uprooted" (NIV). Why is it important that in the context of aliyah we also speak about klitah, the reception and integration in the land?

Six months ago I married the love of my life, an Israeli Jew, and moved to Haifa. I have known him, his friends and family for years and have been to Israel many times. But I didn't expect that moving there would be such a different experience. Knowing that I will not see my family in Germany that often, pressing random numbers because the hotline's electronic voice would only instruct you in Hebrew, and happily buying green grapes because the red ones cost more are just examples of day-to-day adjustments.



While my love for Israel continues to grow, I start to understand and appreciate every oleh or olah's decision and concern about the actual move to Israel. Recently I joined the local Ebenezer team and our hearts burn for *olim* to be planted in the land. We see how God fills our hands so that we can assist them in a loving, welcoming way.

But what does it take to be planted in the land? Finding a house, school, work? Learning Hebrew? Letting the old life go and finding a new one? When you find a home it's mostly empty, so how does a family of four, each bringing three suitcases or less, make it comfortable within a few days? In a land where the right connection is worth more than a thousand Google reviews, who do you ask?

Speaking with olim, it is amazing how much the food cards, Haifa House and other Ebenezer assistance actually make a difference in their lives. God has promised to plant them here.

Let us pray that He continues to fill our hands and the hands of others in the land to help them make Israel their lasting home.

We want to widen our network, so if you know people or organisations that work with and help olim with storage or documents in the land, please send these contacts to haifahouse@ebenezer.org.il

Right: Leonid with his wife and son. Leonid came from Russia and applied for aliyah in Israel. His wife, son and mother-in-law all followed him afterwards. Leonid stayed at Haifa House during this process and became part of the family there.

> Our vision is to be servants and intercessors of the Lord, to help the Jewish people return to the land of Israel from all the nations and to proclaim God's Kingdom purposes for their return.



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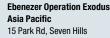


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Scripture quotes from NKJV unless otherwise stated. Operation Exodus is the operational part of

Ebenezer Emergency Fund International. Started in 1991 with just three people,

it now has representatives in more than 50 countries worldwide.

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