



July 2021

*From the President's Desk***It Is Time To Be Born Aloft On the Wings of Eagles****By Daniel Gwertzman*****"Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself." (Exodus 19:4)***

What does it mean to be born aloft on the wings of eagles? In Hebrew the expression is *Kanfei Nesharim* (Wings of Eagles). This is also the name applied to Operation on the Wings of Eagles which brought 49,000 Yemenite Jews to the new State of Israel between June 1949 and September 1950. Its nickname which was more widely known was Operation Magic Carpet. All these Jews were airlifted to Israel on 380 flights from Aden, at some point this operation was also called Operation Messiah's Coming. For those taking these flights this was their first plane trip and it represented the fulfillment of the Biblical Prophecy of their return to their ancient homeland.

In honor of this operation there are streets in Israel named *Kanfei Nesharim* (Wings of Eagles) in Jerusalem, Herzlia, Ramat Gan and *Kerem Hateimanim*, Tel Aviv. What this expression in the Book of Exodus refers to is God taking the Israelites out of Egypt and protecting them through their wilderness wanderings in the desert.

Why was the eagle chosen for this role of protection? To begin most eagles are larger than any other raptors apart from some vultures. Eagles' eyes are extremely powerful. They have visual acuity 3.0 to 3.6 times that of humans. Eagles normally build their nests called eyries in tall trees or on high cliffs.

The eagle is an example of the Lord's relationship with Israel. He watches over them on high, He saves them and carries them through their dangerous journey and brings them to safety. He shows compassion as the eagle does when bearing his fledglings aloft.

***"As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings:" (Deuteronomy 32:11)***

The eagle is a large, heavy bird and its fledglings are small and frail. If it would land as other birds, do it would frighten the young birds. Therefore it hovers over the nest flaps its wings and swoops from tree to tree shaking the branches and making a commotion to wake up the young birds so they will see it coming and prepare themselves to be with their father and accept his dominion. When the Lord comes to judge us and prepare for our future, He does not come all at once. He shakes the branches He creates a commotion in the world around us so that we will shake ourselves out of our slumber and take notice. The is precisely what is happening in our world today and it is time to take notice and prepare ourselves.

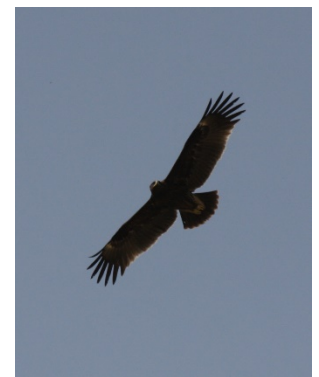
The eagle carries its young upon its wings unlike other birds which carry their fledglings below them. The eagle carries them on top of its wings to protect them from the danger below and shields them from attack. Therefore we must hop on for the journey and take part in our own salvation. If we don't jump on, we will remain where we are. We must make that leap of faith.

***"But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint." (Isaiah 40:31)***

I know that all of my readers have concerns about how they will rise above their current difficulties, but this same idea is found in the New Testament.

***"And seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind. For all these things do the nations of the world seek after: and your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things. But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you." (Luke 12:29-31)***

In this spirit we have started a Bible study course with a small group and we are working on our next seminar tour which will take place from January 30-February 9, 2022, God willing. Many have contacted us asking when tours will start. Individual tourists were supposed to be admitted starting July 1, 2021, but owing to an increase in Corona virus cases of the Delta variety this date was postponed until August 1, 2021. However, we see many encouraging signs and we trust in the Lord to see all our friends from around the world in Jerusalem soon.

***"A land which the Lord thy God careth for: the eyes of the Lord thy God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year." (Deuteronomy 11:12)***

## Beit HaNassi – The President's Residence

By Ingrid Willner

Recently when the opportunity arose to join a guided tour to the President's official Residence, *Beit HaNassi*, immediately I signed up for this event. Together with some friends I was eager to see this place.



Isaac Herzog and Reuven Rivlin

In 1963 the Israeli government decided to build a permanent residence for the head of state. The location was chosen by Israel's 3<sup>rd</sup> President, Mr. Zalman Shazar, who was very much a man of the people and he wanted to live in a residential area. The 10 dunam plot that was chosen is located in the Talbiye neighborhood of Jerusalem. The Israeli architect Abba Elhanani designed the building which was inaugurated in 1971 by President Shazar, was built in a beautiful park, where there are various trees including the Cedar of Lebanon, art works, a sculpture of Theodor Herzl and sculptures of previous Presidents.

The Reception Hall is decorated with pieces of fine art, among them artist Reuven Rubin's stained glass triptych with three Jewish leaders, including King David. The President's Room has a very warm and friendly touch.

Since July 24, 2014, Reuven Rivlin has served as Israel's 10<sup>th</sup> President. During our visit we did not meet the President in person. However, the whole visit gave a very good impression and we watched a film which covered previous Presidents work for the People and the Land.

On June 2, 2021, Isaac Herzog was elected the 11<sup>th</sup> President by an absolute majority and his term commences on July 7, 2021. Maybe it will be possible to include a visit to the President's Residence in our future programs.



## Relations between Jews and Christians in Switzerland

By Pastor Renata Burr, Basel

This is a great and widely branched theme – and above all highly sensitive: relations between Jews and Christians! But I experienced here blessings – worthy of consideration for new blessings.

Over 50 years ago I came to Switzerland on my own. On recommendation of my professors in Bethel, Germany, I was able to continue my studies in theology without students' unrest at the University of Basel, the oldest university of Switzerland (founded 1460), then received my ordination in the Basel Cathedral and worked as a reformed pastor in beautiful Swiss mountain landscapes and Swiss cities.

However, I have experienced how Switzerland hides its own antisemitism. The regions of the Swiss mountains are popular with Jews. They are enjoying their vacations, suddenly a problem will arise that has antisemitic roots – even if the hosts try to resolve it quickly. The Jewish professor in history Jacques Picard (see his writings) at Basel University was for me excellent in portraying the sorrowful stories of the Jews during centuries in Switzerland!

But I have seen: as with Joseph in the Bible, a profound mystery happens for the good.

My motivation to write this article is: How can trust arise at all between Jews and Christians, even mutual support – and further grow in Basel and Switzerland?

The following quote was for me the exact key that opened doors to understanding how this could happen and is still going on in Switzerland: „There is no more anything impossible for us – because there is nothing impossible for God“. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, 1906-1945. (See the excellent biography by Eric Metaxas „Bonhoeffer“).



The „March of the Living for Israel“ in Basel, which is taking place since 2016, is a wonderful stage for a trustful relationship between Jews and Christians and strengthening these ties (<https://mdl-basel.ch>). The best quote I heard concerning a true overcoming of antisemitism was at the latest March in Basel in April 2021: „50 years of talks about antisemitism did not help. A real antisemite cannot be convinced by reason. He always finds himself confirmed in his own opinion. It only goes through the heart. Then the human being gains a new view – and everything becomes different. Christians come to Jesus, their salvation. They listen to his teachings in a Jewish context. The next step to take is an



encounter with the living Jews as God's people. Christian-Jewish encounters are not a Jewish-Christian dialogue, but an acknowledgment – as Ruth said to Naomi:

**„Your people is my people, your God is my God“  
(Ruth 1,16)**

The Church left this path for 2000 years – and is afflicted by forgetting this acknowledgment. But we should practice this new perception every day.

To publicly speak out as an official person in an important function, it takes great courage to withstand the Zeitgeist – but this attitude bears promise and feeds confidence between Jews and Christians in view of the coming of the Kingdom of God. This firm determination in support of the Jews and Israel is shown as an example for us Christians in Basel by the Head of the Reformed Church of Basel. He studied profoundly

Judaism in Jerusalem and learned to speak modern Hebrew. He supported the flagging Jewish community of Basel (IGB) in its financial problems: in 2018 he joined a human chain of Christians around the synagogue in the intention to get a lasting security force for the synagogue by the Basel Administration – with success, after collecting money from Christians in all churches and offering it to the IGB. On the 2018 March for Israel a Jewish lady witnessed before leaving Basel on Aliya to Israel that the Jews in Basel feel very comfortable and secure thanks to those Christians and she gave credible thanks. The answer came quickly: We as Christians appreciate our Jewish citizens and our mutual relationship enriches us.

A change in attitude „goes through the heart“, this was said in Basel loud and clear. Thus, many Christians are living this conviction in good deeds and faithfully. There are over 20 Swiss societies for Israel.

A bridge to build up trust are the Bible texts of the prophets which are taken seriously both by Jews and Christians.

A memory very much alive and still inspiring is the work and stay of Theodor Herzl in Basel in 1897 where he opened the First Zionist Congress. He wrote: „In Basel I founded the Jewish State“. Tourists are looking till today for the famous „Hotel Drei Könige“ where Herzl stayed, and for the Stadtcasino where he spoke. In the same year 1897 the Jewish newspaper „Die zionistische Welt“ reported: „The protestant population call themselves Bible believers. And as such they

show not only mere sympathy for the Jews, but they believe firmly in the fulfilment of the prophetic promise, the imminent return to Palestine“.

What can we learn today concerning our mutual support? In 1897 Christians followed Herzl's vision without if and but in a very practical fashion due to their biblical conviction, that before Messiah returns, the Jews will be regathered into their land of Israel as promised in God's agenda.

In this year's March for Israel in April 2021 the Cantor of the Jewish community of Basel practiced with us Christians the „Ani ma'amin“ song openly in a park – a famous song about the coming Messiah – courage to hold out, even if he tarries. Jews and Christians are waiting in different ways for the Messiah, but a strong hope for a bright future binds us together by taking seriously the biblical prophecies.



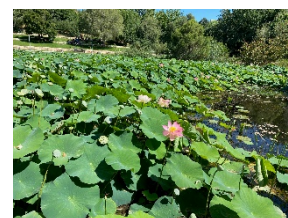
Why am I speaking so much about Basel? Theodor Herzl said once: „You don't understand that there are certain things which can be said in Basel, but maybe not in Zurich or Lucerne. “Herzl did organize a Zionist Congress in London in 1900 without satisfaction. He returned to „our Basel“ and greeted his followers from Vienna instead of „masel tow“ with „Basel tow“. Herzl was received as a Jew with a vision. I think this brought blessings to Swiss history, to its good system in

many areas, its freedom from war and its wealth.

**„I will bless them that bless thee and curse him that curses thee“. (Genesis 12:3)**

In my opinion Basel breathes an atmosphere like an anteroom to Israel. Those who love Israel and the Jews (as the God of Israel loves them) are working each in his place and task, like the salesperson among the marketeers selling products from Israel beneath an Israel flag. The buildings dating back to Herzl are even more beautiful after the late renovation. The only Jewish Museum of Switzerland is domiciled in Basel. The literature about Zionism is flourishing since Herzl, and especially in 1997 on the occasion of the 100th jubilee celebration. A Christian bookshop is selling Judaica books. Theological studies in Judaism are enabled at the Institute for Jewish Studies of the University of Basel. There Christians can also study modern Hebrew, as I did myself. Until today Jews and Christians say freely hello to one another when meeting in the streets.

Be blessed!





## Letter from Jerusalem

By Prof. (Emeritus) Meron Medzini (Hebrew University of Jerusalem)

Seventy years ago, in July 1951, I voted for the first time in my life in the elections for the Second Knesset. I was 19 years old and voted for the founding father David Ben-Gurion. Since then I voted in almost all of Israel's parliamentary elections. In March 2021 I voted once again, this time for the 24<sup>th</sup> Knesset. Since 1951 I followed keenly politics in Israel, irrespective if I was in the government or outside. I believe I have a good knowledge of Israeli politics. Therefore I can say with some degree of certainty that never in my wildest dream did I imagine the makeup of the new government, Israel's 36<sup>th</sup> cabinet that was sworn on the 14<sup>th</sup> of June 2021. It breaks all precedents for the following reasons.

It is composed of eight parties, ranging from the radical left Meretz (6 seats), moderate left Labor Party (7 seats), centrist parties Yesh Atid (17 seats), Blue White (8 seats), the nationalist secular party supported mainly by Russian immigrants called Yisrael Beitenu (7 seats), nationalist right New Hope (6 seats) and nationalist religious right Yamina (7 seats, but actually 6 because one has already defected). They are joined by an Israeli Islamist party called Ra'am (4 seats). Put together they command 61 votes in the 120 member Knesset. Hence this is the most fragile coalition one can think off, and is an ideological hotchpotch.

Another first: the Prime Minister Naftali Bennet is the youngest ever in Israel, 49 years old, who is a hi-tech wizard and was able to go into politics because he made a killing in a correct exit, selling his company to an American conglomerate. He is also the first premier who wears a yarmulke. Another precedent: the new cabinet has eight women cabinet members, three of them hold important portfolios such as Interior, Education and Transportation. There are 30 Knesset members who are women. Another precedent: this cabinet is supported from within by an Arab party.

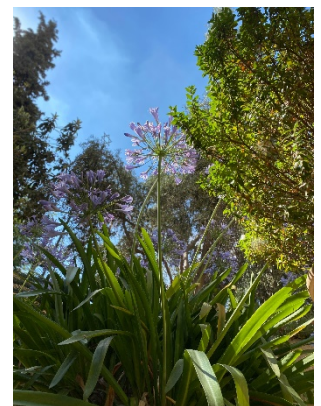
Under the coalition agreement, the prime minister will serve until September 2023, and will be replaced in a rotation agreement by the leader of Yesh Atid and the current foreign minister Yair Lapid, who is the founder and head of the largest party in the coalition. Lapid is now also an alternate prime minister.

How long can such a cabinet hold? There are many views as to its longevity. Some give it several weeks at best. Others give it longer and argue that the glue that holds these eight parties together is called Benjamin Netanyahu, the outgoing prime minister who has held this position longer than any previous leader (some 15 years). Netanyahu still commands 30 seats in the parliament and he is the leader of the largest party – the Likud – that elected him as its leader almost thirty years ago. Netanyahu is currently facing a trial on three charges of corruption, breach of trust and bribe taking.

Many Israelis wish well to this seemingly impossible new cabinet. Israel did not have a working budget for almost three years thus in fact paralyzing the government. We are recovering from the after effects of the Covid-19 pandemic that created a huge deficit and mass unemployment, and is just now beginning to recover. We had four elections in less than three years and faced the prospect a fifth election this fall. Most Israelis would like to see the new cabinet tackle such issues as traffic jams in the major urban areas, cheap housing, lower food prices, changes in the existing status quo on religious matters such as introducing public transportation on the Sabbath, giving local rabbis greater authority on conversions and matters of Kosher food certification, perhaps even getting more ultra -orthodox men to serve in the army. The issue of law and order and fighting crime, especially in the Arab sector is also urgent. Repairing ties with the United States is high on the agenda. This means no annexation of Palestinian territories or even settlement expansion. Israel is also seeking to coordinate its Iranian policy with that of the Biden Administration. Israel needs to repair its ties with the Democratic Party and find common language with young American Jews.

All this means that for the time being the new cabinet will not want to become entangled in volatile issues such as negotiations with the Palestinian Authority or writing a constitution for Israel. It should focus more on economic and social issues, revive the moribund civil service, preserve the judiciary that came under attack by the outgoing government and reinvigorate the depleted police force.

Happily, all the new ministers, most of whom are in their late forties, fifties and early sixties, want to focus on running their ministries, getting the government moving again and working for the betterment of the people of Israel who would like to return to normalcy after the recent upheavals that included the pandemic as well as a ten day mini war with Hamas in Gaza. As a loyal Israeli citizen all I can do is pray for them to carry on with their daily mundane tasks to the best of their ability.



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