

## ***Outside Israel Spotlight: Operation Exodus Canada***

The mandate of Operation Exodus is to help the Jewish people make Aliyah (return home to Israel).

Twenty-five years ago the founder of Operation Exodus Gustav Scheller felt led by God to get a boat and help Russian Jews get home to Israel. In January 2016, it marks the 25th anniversary of that event. This first Operation Exodus Aliyah trip was from Odessa to Tel Aviv and it was with about 50 people. The vision for this boat trip was planted in Gustav's heart while at a prayer conference in Jerusalem.

Eric and Rozlynn Morneau became involved in Operation Exodus in a similar manner by listening to the Father's voice.

They were first introduced to the organization at an Operation Exodus Annual General Meeting (AGM) a couple of years ago and they were curious about the organization's mission. At the meeting Eric had a prompting in his heart to be involved. "I remember Eric saying 'Father if this is your will that we be involved, then my wife will say something in the morning.' This was very similar to what happened with Gustav's wife as she didn't know anything about Aliyah," said Rozlynn. At the AGM, the chairman of Operation Exodus Canada, Hank Van Zyderveld, asked if anyone would like to be involved with the organization as there were a couple board members retiring.

"I prayed in my heart that if we are meant to be board members then may my wife confirm it to me in the morning," said Eric. "She woke up the next morning and said 'Think we should become the new board members?' It was just like that."

The Morneaus were board members in their first year, and in their second year they became more involved with Operation Exodus Canada by serving in the office of treasurer. The couple recently returned to Canada from a trip to New York where an international Operation Exodus conference was held with a specific mission to pray that doors would open for greater Aliyah in North and South America to Israel.

"It was amazing to meet people from various Latin American countries passionate about helping the Jews return to Israel," said Rozlynn. "We do not know how many Jewish people there are that want to get back. It is a matter of trying to get them together." What is perhaps somewhat surprising from Operation Exodus

Canada's perspective is the fact that there are not many Jewish people making Aliyah from Canada or the United States.

"We are finding that the people are comfortable in North America, and say they do not have a need like many other countries to get back to Israel," said Eric.

"In France, we doubled the amount of people that moved to Israel in the past year from 30 to 60 people." The Morneaus believe there will soon be a shift happening where more Jews in North America will want to move to Israel. They touched on the current political climate in Canada where pro-Israel Prime Minister Stephen Harper may soon be replaced.

“What does Harper’s potential replacement mean for Jews in Canada? That could change our country’s stance on Israel, so that is a concern,” said Eric.

Rozlynn noted that with increasing anti-Semitism in the West, more Jews might desire to be in Israel where Jews have certain rights and protection.

The Morneaus have witnessed first hand the anti-Semitic climate that is changing in British Columbia, Canada. Most recently there was a Sabeel conference in Vancouver, B.C. hosted at an Anglican church. The Sabeel Ecumenical Liberal Theology Center has been at the forefront of an increasing number of Christians calling Israel “the occupying state” of Palestine. Other Canadian denominations to support the Vancouver event besides the Anglican Church of Canada included the Presbyterian Church of Canada and the United Church of Canada as announced in the following press release - <http://necefsabeel.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/Media-release-Controversial-Vancouver-conference-garners-widespread-support.pdf>.

The Morneaus noted how at the anti-Semitic, anti-Jewish, anti-Christian event there were some of the speakers that said Zionists who support Israel are an abomination. While outside of the church where the event was hosted, they noticed a lot of hatred directed towards them for supporting Israel.

“You call yourself a Christian and your Saviour was a Jew and yet you hate the Jewish people and everything they are about and want to support Palestine? That does not make any sense,” added Eric.

Even though there is increasing anti-Semitic sentiment in Canada, there are still beacons of light in Christian-Jewish relations. They noted how some of the attendees of the Sabeel conference were open to hearing the truth of what is happening with Israel in conversations that happened independent of the sessions at the event. The Morneaus said there were people that were surprised at what they didn’t know, and others who still rejected the truth.

Eric and Rozlynn also went to a Canadian Zionists for Israel event put on by several different Israel supporting groups in B.C. like Operation Exodus, International Christian Embassy Jerusalem and Bridges for Peace. The event featured Christian and Jewish people speaking about the importance of supporting Israel.

Eric shared the sentiment of one of the rabbis that spoke at the event, “He said, ‘many Jewish people do not know that there are believers that support Israel because there is so much anti-Semitism out there.

It is a relief to know there are people that support Israel,” said Eric.

Rozlynn noted that if people are going to stand up against anti-Semitism, people need to be educated in truth.