

IFCJ Chairman Gives Emotional Account of Ukrainian Children Arriving in Israel

Bishop Paul Lanier, chairman of the board for the International Fellowship of Christians and Jews (The Fellowship), provides an eyewitness account of the arrival of 100 Ukrainian Jewish children into Israel on Sunday, March 6.

On any given Sunday morning, you'll find me in church. But last Sunday was different.

Earlier that week, I got a call from Yael Eckstein, The Fellowship's president and CEO. "Can you come to Israel?" she asked. "There's something extraordinary happening." And so it was that with just a few days' notice, I boarded a plane to the Holy Land.

That's how last Sunday morning, I ended up on the tarmac at Ben Gurion International Airport in Tel Aviv to welcome a very special flight of 100 Jewish children—orphans—from Ukraine. The Fellowship was able to rescue them from that war-torn country and secure passage to Israel for them.

Can any of us even begin to imagine what those children must have been feeling? The sounds they have heard ... the things they have seen ... the anguish, the heartache, the brokenness. And then, they are sitting in an airplane, arriving in Israel.

The first child came down the steps, walking with a rabbi with a long, flowing white beard. Then came another child, carried by Israel's Prime Minister Naftali Bennett, who had come to meet the flight. As he went down the steps, he gently kissed the child on the forehead and I thought, *Even the prime minister himself can't help but cherish this moment.* And in the midst of it all, of course was our Yael Eckstein, who

dreams it, and then sits at the table and finds the most creative way of getting things done—of delivering aid and comfort and saving lives.

What a remarkable, prophetic moment, and what an amazing thing to be able to witness. While I was waiting for the flight to arrive, someone handed me a small Israeli flag. You know I'm going to keep that flag forever.

Learn more about how The Fellowship is responding to the current crisis in Ukraine by listening to Yael Eckstein's podcast with Michele Bachmann, former member of the U.S. Congress and current dean of the Robertson School of Government at Regent University.

Maybe you couldn't be there to meet the plane, but all of you who give and pray to help God's people through this International Fellowship of Christians and Jews are a big part of this, and you know it. You turned these Jewish orphans threatened by war into *olim* immigrants (immigrants on *aliyah* to Israel). This is why you sacrifice. This is why you give. This is why you pray. This is why you fast. You're part of these prophetic moments.

These dear little ones, orphans, children of God—oppressed, desperate, endangered—have come home. You know, God has a way of using crises to fulfill His perfect will. What the enemy means for evil, God will turn for good. Watching this extraordinary scene unfold, I couldn't help but think of Psalm 118:23 (NIV): "The LORD has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes."

Find out how you can help Ukrainian Jews in crisis right now with lifesaving food, shelter, medicine and beds. {eo}

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