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PM Netanyahu delivers annual Christmas Greeting at Christian Embassy in Jerusalem

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu paid a visit to the International Christian Embassy in Jerusalem on Wednesday (December 21) to deliver his annual Christmas Greeting to the Christian world.

In his traditional holiday greeting, Netanyahu stated:

“To all of our Christian friends around the world, Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! I send you these greetings from Jerusalem. I'm standing in the courtyard of this magnificent International Christian Embassy. I'm so proud of our relations with our Christian brothers and sisters. I wonder for many of you if you remember the experience you had when you first visited Israel, when you saw the Church of the Holy Sepulchre or the Via Dolorosa or the Sea of Galilee or Nazareth. I'm sure it moved you deeply. And it moves us deeply to have this bond with you because we all know that this land of Israel is the land of our common heritage. It changed the story of humanity, it changed civilization. What a magnificent heritage it is. Yet, we also know that it is under attack these days, that the forces of intolerance, of barbarism that attack all religions attack Christians with particular vehemence. We stand with you and I'm proud of the fact that in Israel, this is the one place in the Middle East that the Christian community not only survives but thrives and it's no accident. It's because of our commitment to religious freedom; it's because of our embrace of our heritage; it's because of our embrace of our common future. So please come to Israel. Come and visit me, I'm waiting for you. It will be a great experience for you. Merry Christmas, Happy New Year.”

With Christmas falling this year on the same day as the Jewish festival of Hanukkah, ICEJ Executive Director Dr. Jürgen Bühler responded by wishing the prime minister a “Happy Hanukkah,” and giving him a special Hanukkah dreidel as a gift.

“It was a great honor to host the Prime Minister at our Embassy headquarters and to receive his good holiday wishes for Christmas,” said Bühler. “We know his warm, sincere remarks will be greatly appreciated by Christians in lands far and wide. It also was a thrill to respond with our own ‘Happy Hanukkah’ wishes for him, his family and all the Jewish people. This indeed is a season when both communities can celebrate the triumph of light over darkness. And this display of solidarity shows once more that Israel is a country where religious freedoms are not only safeguarded but also proactively encouraged.”

Founded in 1980, the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem is considered the largest global pro-Israel Christian ministry, with branch offices established in over 85 nations and supporters in more than 160 nations worldwide.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

USA

Daryl Hedding, ICEJ-USA Deputy Director: (615) 895-9830, daryl.hedding@icejusa.org

ISRAEL

David Parsons, ICEJ Senior Spokesman: Cell: +972-52-381-6214, david.parsons@icej.org

VIDEOS:

The official Christmas video greeting has been posted on the prime minister's YouTube (broadcast quality) and Facebook pages:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7oIQXIZbxg0&feature=youtu.be>

<https://www.facebook.com/Netanyahu/videos/10154221473407076/>

PHOTO CAPTIONS:

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is welcomed by Dr. Jürgen Bühler of the International Christian Embassy in Jerusalem on Wednesday just ahead of the Christmas holiday. (ICEJ/Emill Salman photo)

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu receives a gift of a silver Hanukkah dreidel from Dr. Jürgen Bühler of the International Christian Embassy in Jerusalem during a visit on Wednesday just ahead of the Christmas holiday. (ICEJ/Emill Salman photo)