The Lesson of the Almond Tree

Amidst our weakness, frailties and the turmoil of nations, God is Watching!

It is amazing to see beautiful almond trees blossoming all over Israel every winter. They are the first tree to blossom and yet the last to bear fruit.

The almond tree is associated with one of the earliest prophecies of a young Jeremiah. “Moreover the word of the Lord came to me, saying, ‘Jeremiah, what do you see?’ And I said, ‘I see a branch of an almond tree.’ Then the Lord said to me, ‘You have seen well, for I am watching to perform My word.’” (Jeremiah 1:11-12)

This prophecy uses a play on words that carries a vital truth for Israel as well as for us. The Hebrew word for almond, shaked, is also translated “to watch”. By seeing the almond branch, God assured Jeremiah that He is watching over His word to bring it to pass, no matter the passage of time.

In context, God had just given Israel a warning. “I have this day set you over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, to destroy and to throw down, to build and to plant.” (Jeremiah 1:9-10) Then after Jeremiah sees the almond tree, God shows him a boiling pot over Jerusalem which portends “calamity” (Jeremiah 1:13-14). While the almond is a sign of hope that God will eventually fulfill His wonderful promises to Israel (or to us), the context is more ominous.

Later, God repeated the warning through Jeremiah: “Behold, I will watch (shaked) over them for evil, and not for good...” (Jeremiah 44:27). God’s message to Israel was that sin has consequences and there will come a time of reckoning – namely the destruction of Jerusalem and the captivity of Israel.

Years later, Daniel would pray: “Therefore has the Lord watched (shaked) upon the evil, and brought it upon us: for the Lord our God is righteous in all His works which He does: for we obeyed not His voice.” (Daniel 9:14)

The lesson of the almond tree, therefore, is that God in heaven watches a sinful nation walking away from Him and declares it will have consequences. His message to humanity today is still the same: God is watching! He will watch over His word either for curse or for blessing. When sin and immorality engulf nations and even penetrate the Church, we should remember: God is watching! When nations assail Israel and seek to divide her land, we can be sure: God is watching!

Still, the message of the “almond” does carry a strong encouragement. Jeremiah also foresees a miraculous restoration for Israel. “And it shall come to pass, that as I have watched over them, to destroy, and to afflict... so will I watch over them, to build, and to plant, says the Lord.” (Jeremiah 31:28)

If we decide to consecrate our lives to God, then He promises to watch over us for good. Even with our weaknesses and frailties, His eyes are always upon us! ☀️
The International Christian Embassy Jerusalem

The International Christian Embassy Jerusalem was founded in 1980 as an act of comfort and solidarity with Israel and the Jewish people in their claim to Jerusalem.

Today, the Christian Embassy stands at the forefront of a growing mainstream movement of Christians worldwide who share a love and concern for Israel and an understanding of the biblical significance of the modern ingathering of Jews to the land of their forefathers.

From our headquarters in Jerusalem and through our branches and representatives in over 80 nations, we seek to challenge the Church to take up its scriptural responsibilities towards the Jewish people, to remind Israel of the wonderful promises made to her in the Bible, and to be a source of practical assistance to all the people of the Land of Israel.

The ICEJ is a non-denominational faith ministry, supported by the voluntary contributions of our members and friends across the globe. We invite you to join with us as we minister to Israel and the Jewish people worldwide by using the enclosed response slip to make your donation to the ongoing work and witness of the ICEJ.

Dear Friends,

As I write to you again, chaos is still erupting throughout the Middle East region. No one really knows where it will all end but we do know that the world has not been abandoned to the forces of chaos by the God of the Bible that we serve. “He removes kings and raises up kings” (Daniel 2:21). The Middle East will get the kings (leaders) that it deserves and the leaders that will serve the purpose of God. We will have to wait patiently and pray and we may just be as surprised, as Habakkuk was, at the result. It is at times like these that we come to understand how small and weak we are. The God we serve is all powerful and will move on to fulfill His will. All we can do is say, “The Lord has given and the Lord has taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord.”

However, He has revealed His will to us and it is this revealed will that we must be found following on the day of visitation (Deuteronomy 29:29). Jesus told a parable about this in which He turned the will of His Father into “talents” (gifted deposits like money) that we have all been given (Matthew 25:14-30). With these we have to get on and do “business’ until He comes again. The great issues of His sovereignty we will handle with humility and prayer and leave to Him. But blessing Israel, comforting Israel and defending Israel in a hostile world is our business, especially as we see the increased hostility of the world against her growing.

Israel was born out of Egypt supernaturally, she has been sustained for thousands of years supernaturally, and she will survive by the hand of the same supernatural God. (Jeremiah 31:35) Passover is an endless story of a people on a physical and spiritual pilgrimage. The temporal destiny of the nations has been linked to this journey and the eternal destiny of every man, woman and child has been eternally linked to this journey and it is not yet over. Paul said that, “If their being cast away is the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?” (Romans 11:15)

Israel’s survival and existence will yet deliver a dying world from its chaos and ruin. Thus the King will reign from Zion and the New Jerusalem will forever be adorned with the names of the twelve tribes of Israel and of the twelve Jewish Apostles of the Lamb. An eternal reminder that salvation is of the Jews! (John 4:22) May the Lord God of Heaven strengthen us as we go forth to this most holy work.

In Jesus,

Rev. Malcolm Hedding
ICEJ Executive Director

Word From Jerusalem

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: Malcolm Hedding
INTERNATIONAL DIRECTOR: Jürgen Bühler
EDITOR: David Parsons
LAYOUT: Michael Hines
ADMINISTRATION: David van der Walt, Wim van der Zande
CONTRIBUTORS: James Cheatham, Stephan Vorster, Nicole Yoder
PHOTOGRAPHY: Matthias Guggisberg, Operation Blessing, Istock, AP
PRAYER CAMPAIGN  WORD FROM JERUSALEM

Isaiah 62 Prayer Initiative

“He has set preappointed times and boundaries”

Dr Jürgen Bühler

And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwelling, so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us... (Acts 17:26-27)

sense it is no coincidence that, at the beginning of 2011, God called the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem to increased prayer and fasting for Israel and the region. These are crucial times for the entire Middle East and though God does not need us, He invites us to work with Him in prayer.

In Acts 17:26-27, it states that God has “determined pre-appointed times and the boundaries” for people and nations in order “that they should seek the Lord”.

We can be totally assured that in the midst of all the turmoil raging in the Middle East, our God is in full control. As we gather in Jerusalem, united in prayer with our staff and supporters across the world, let us pray that the current events unfolding before us in Egypt, Libya and beyond will indeed lead the peoples of the Middle East to seek the Lord.

He desires for each one of us to stand in the place of prayer, lest He say: “I sought for a man among them who would make a wall, and stand in the gap before Me on behalf of the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found no one.” (Ezekiel 22:30)

The Isaiah 62 Prayer Campaign is our response. We have decided to set aside time each month to fast and pray for Israel, the region and our ministry.

So we urge you to join us in whatever way you are able by downloading the latest Prayer letter and encouraging others in your local churches and Bible study groups to do the same.

Dr. Jürgen Bühler serves as ICEJ International Director and lives with his family in Jerusalem.

Sign up for latest project news and Isaiah 62 Prayer Alerts from Israel at: www.icej.org

Prayer Points for Israel:
• Wisdom for the government facing times of increasing international isolation
• For the surviving children of the Fogel family killed in the March 11 terrorist attack in Itamar
• For greater honesty and integrity in the world media with respect to Israel (see p.10)

For Libya
• An end to the conflict, bloodshed and the rise of a just government
• The Libyan Church - for Bibles and teachers
• That new leaders would arise who are favourable to Israel
• That the gospel would spread to Libya’s unreached tribal areas

For Egypt:
• Revival and freedom for the Egyptian Church
• Protection for Christians and a curbing of the influence of Muslim Brotherhood.
• For leaders that honour the peace treaty with Israel and refuse to enter an alliance with Iran

For the wider Middle East:
• For the persecuted Church of Jesus Christ: for courage to be a witness
• Rulers that would seek peace & righteousness
• For those caught up in the unrest in Bahrain
• For freedom from the oppression of Islam
• For people willing to “seek the Lord” according to Acts 17:27 - that they would find the Truth
One of those Jewish activists is Carmi Ashboren, a consultant for several non-profit agencies combating social ills like poverty and domestic violence. He approached the ICEJ AID department last year with a request for funding of a ground-breaking survey of Arab social needs on behalf of the Forum of Social Services Directors for the Arab Community, an umbrella organisation set up in 2003 to coordinate efforts among directors of welfare departments in the 75 Arab-run municipalities throughout Israel.

“There were prior surveys done of the Arab sector, but their conclusions were never adopted by the government”, said Ashboren. “This time, the Ministry of Social Welfare has commented positively on the findings and is much more likely to use the results. New minister Moshe Kahlon (Likud) is also receptive to the survey’s findings.”

“We were extremely pleased to fund this first systematic study of the welfare needs of Israeli Arab society”, said Rev. Malcolm Hedding, Executive Director of the International Christian Embassy. “It is also our hope that the results will be used wisely to lift many deserving families out of poverty and its ill effects, while also demonstrating Israel’s credentials as a fair and just society.”

Working in unison, the Forum has managed to secure increased expenditures for the Arab sector from the annual state budget in recent
years. But this has failed to keep pace with the growing numbers of large families in need of social welfare services.

In addition, municipal sources of funding – which by law account for one-quarter of social welfare budgets – have been cut due to the global financial downturn. This in turn reduces the state’s 75% share, as it is based on matching funds.

“Due to severe pressures, most welfare departments devote their time and resources to extinguishing fires, rather than on planning and activities which can prevent them”, explained Emile Sema’an, chairman of the Forum and the head social worker in the mixed Druze-Christian town of Peqi’in. “This problem is even greater in the Arab sector since most of the population falls within a low socio-economic category.”

Thanks to the grant from the ICEJ, the Forum commissioned the Massar Institute, assisted by a team of researchers, to conduct the comprehensive survey with the aim of pinpointing the most glaring deficiencies and recommending solutions. Social welfare managers in twenty of the 75 Arab-majority municipalities took part in the extensive interview process concerning current practices and needs. The results have been compiled into an 85-page report that has been sent to all social welfare departments in the country.

Ashboren is confident the study will lead to increased resources and enhanced performance for the Arab sector and applauded the Forum for deciding to conduct it.

“The Forum does not focus on protests and complaining, but has a professional approach for constructive action in close cooperation with governmental authorities, with proven success”, noted Ashboren.

A non-partisan organisation serving all the Muslim, Christian and Druze communities in Israel, the Forum hopes the study will build on its previous successes in advocating for improvements in both policies and direct levels of welfare services. This has included higher budgets for youth day care centers, programs for children at risk, community boarding schools, family treatment, and combating violence.

The Forum will now seek official approval for implementing the survey’s recommendations nationwide while finding private charitable partners to fill in the gaps where government resources are lacking.

ICEJ AID, the Embassy’s social assistance program, is committed to supporting Arab youth-at-risk in Israel as part of our ongoing efforts to provide practical solutions to the issues raised in this report.

Support this vital work with your online donation at: www.icej.org

Findings & Recommendations

The main findings of the survey include:

1) Most managers of Arab welfare departments are saddled with too much daily case work to engage in proper planning and budgeting.

2) Half the Arab welfare departments have no case workers trained in the field of at-risk children, which is the most urgent problem area in the Arab sector.

3) Over 30% of the households in Arab communities (and 50% in four such municipalities) are in need of social assistance.

4) The two main types of social aid recipients were at-risk children (37%), and individuals with poverty and income difficulties (20.5%).

5) The social problems which have continually grown over the past five years are poverty, unemployment and violence.

6) Lack of manpower, specialized training and budgets are the major obstacles to the adequate handling of most of these social problems.

7) Social workers in the Jewish sector handle 43% fewer cases on average than in the Arab sector, with the average size of assisted Jewish families standing at 3.5 persons in 2008, as against 4.8 in the Arab sector.

8) During the years 2007-2009, some 252 new social worker positions were added nationwide, of which 42% went to the Arab sector. This slightly reduced the gap in case loads per social worker, but more are still needed.

Among the primary recommendations are:

1) A mechanism to guarantee a more equitable sharing of case loads between welfare departments in the Jewish and Arab sectors, taking into account family sizes.

2) A more equitable formula for allocating budgets.

3) More training programs for Arab social workers, including in specialized fields like at-risk children, which is the most prominent social problem in the Arab communities.
Over the last two years, the government has also financed training courses for the returning refugees in agriculture, primary health care, entrepreneurship and commercial driving. Courses are held at Eilat’s Josephthal Hospital, kibbutzim and other sites in Eilat, Arad and Tel Aviv.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Yigal Palmor would not confirm or deny the existence of the repatriation program, but seemed to tip his hand by adding wryly, “We’re in the business of doing, not commenting”.

Until now, this story has been kept almost entirely under wraps by government censorship. Hedding said she was revealing it in detail to The Jerusalem Post “so the truth would come out”.

Many media accounts in the past indicated that the government, which is exploring various ways to drastically reduce the refugee population, was pressuring and even informally bribing Southern Sudanese to go home.

This notion was refuted by both Tall and Hedding.

“We interview all these people to ascertain that they’re going back voluntarily, that they’re making an informed decision, and we haven’t found any cases where they’re being pressured into leaving. The government isn’t always cooperative with the UNHCR, but this time it’s been very cooperative”, said Tall.

It is a story that can now be told. For the past several years, the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem has quietly served as liaison between Israel and the South Sudanese Authority, mainly for the purpose of repatriating hundreds of Sudanese refugees in Israel. The following is an exclusive account which finally broke the story in The Jerusalem Post on 23 February 2011 and is reprinted with permission.

Larry Derfner - The Jerusalem Post

“No Unhappy Endings”

ICEJ teams with Israeli Government to take Sudanese refugees home

We’ve interviewed all these people. They’re happy to go home. The Israeli government isn’t forcing them”, said William Tall, representative in Israel for the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, as another planeload of Southern Sudanese refugees flew home in late February at government expense.

Speaking by telephone through a translator at Ben-Gurion Airport before takeoff, Regina, 26, travelling with her one-month-old baby, May, said she was going home after 14 months in Israel “because Southern Sudan is going to be independent, and also because I miss my parents”.

Ninety-seven refugees were aboard the charter flight headed for Juba, capital of Southern Sudan. All told, some 400 have been flown home in the last 2½ years, said Charmaine Hedding, a leading activist on behalf of the refugees, who initiated the program by securing the cooperation of Israel’s Foreign Ministry.

“I have a waiting list of 400 more people. I can’t keep up with the demand”, said Hedding, who has close ties with the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem, which is also involved in the program.

[The ICEJ has acted as a liaison between the Israeli government and the South Sudan semi-autonomous authority because the Islamist regime in Khartoum is still in a state of war with Israel.]

Over the last two years, the government has also financed training courses for the returning refugees in agriculture, primary health care, entrepreneurship and commercial driving. Courses are held at Eilat’s Josephthal Hospital, kibbutzim and other sites in Eilat, Arad and Tel Aviv.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Yigal Palmor would not confirm or deny the existence of the repatriation program, but seemed to tip his hand by adding wryly, “We’re in the business of doing, not commenting”.

Until now, this story has been kept almost entirely under wraps by government censorship. Hedding said she was revealing it in detail to The Jerusalem Post “so the truth would come out”.

Many media accounts in the past indicated that the government, which is exploring various ways to drastically reduce the refugee population, was pressuring and even informally bribing Southern Sudanese to go home.

This notion was refuted by both Tall and Hedding.

“We interview all these people to ascertain that they’re going back voluntarily, that they’re making an informed decision, and we haven’t found any cases where they’re being pressured into leaving. The government isn’t always cooperative with the UNHCR, but this time it’s been very cooperative”, said Tall.
Said Hedding: “I’ve been critical of Israel’s asylum policy, or lack thereof, but these Southern Sudanese are desperate for education, to have something to take back with them to their country, and the government is giving it to them. The Foreign Ministry has been amazing in getting the training programs off the ground.”

Southern Sudan’s emerging independence is what made the program of voluntary repatriation possible, Hedding explained. Following last month’s referendum, in which nearly 99% of southerners voted for independence, the “Republic of South Sudan” is scheduled to be born on July 10.

“In late 2007, a lot of Southern Sudanese in Israel began telling me they wanted to go back home and help rebuild their country”, she said.

The half-century of fighting with the north, which cost 2.5 million southerners’ lives, is what drove the refugees to flee their homeland and migrate to Israel in the first place. The mainly Christian, oil-rich south’s struggle to break away from tyrannical, Muslim Sudan ended with the 2005 peace treaty that paved the way for independence.

At about that time, Southern Sudanese who had migrated to Egypt began heading clandestinely across the border into Israel. Some 8,000 are now in the country (along with some 25,000 other African refugees, largely from Eritrea, who have also crossed over from Egypt).

Hedding, who accompanies refugees on flights back to Southern Sudan every month except during the rainy season, May through September, said that when the homecoming planes approach Juba airport, “there’s so much excitement on board, it’s hard to describe. People always cheer when the plane lands. When they get off, sometimes they kiss the ground.”

“They always have family members waiting for them, and I remember once a woman got off the plane, she was met by her sister, and the two of them began hugging each other, rolling around in the dust, crying and laughing.”

Arrangements are made for the refugees’ smooth return home, Hedding added, noting that she monitors their progress and that “so far, there have been no unhappy endings”.

One man who took the course here in entrepreneurship is now running a taxi service in Southern Sudan with a rickshaw he outfitted with a motorcycle engine. Another returnee opened a sports bar that made a name for itself with satellite TV broadcasts of the World Cup, she said.

Emanuel Logooro, who returned to Southern Sudan nearly a year ago after four years at Kibbutz Eilot, said he was in the process of starting up a kibbutz back home.

“I want to contribute to my country, and a kibbutz would be a great contribution”, he said while visiting Israel. “My family said I could have some of their land – Sudan is a very, very big country, and they gave me enough land to start seven kibbutzim.”

“I got a bank loan to start building the facilities, and now I’m hoping to find about 40 families to join”, said Logooro, who came to Israel with his wife and is now back home with her and their three children.

Hedding noted that the repatriation from Israel is a drop in the ocean of some two million Southern Sudanese who’ve returned home in recent years, mainly from refugee camps in neighbouring African countries.

Some in Israel are still hesitant to return for fear that the fighting with the north will resume.

But for the most part, she said, the community here is gaining encouragement from the stories of Southern Sudanese who have made the trip back from Israel to their soon-to-be-independent homeland.

“Potentially”, Hedding said, “there are thousands more in Israel who will be joining them”.

Larry Derfner is a senior writer and columnist for The Jerusalem Post.
Jim Schutz continued on to visit our new branch in Ghana. During the various meetings in Accra and the surrounding areas, he witnessed a great hunger to hear about and to pray for Israel. The same was observed by Antonio and Carla Melo, our National Directors in Portugal, as they spoke recently in various conferences and pastors’ meetings in the Republic of Congo and Angola.

Meanwhile, two East African countries where visited by Pastor Erik Selle, an ICEJ spokesman from Norway. Speaking in churches across Uganda and Kenya, he found a true revival for Israel is also taking place there. Erik had the opportunity to address some of largest congregations in Kampala and Nairobi. “It was amazing to see how people just could not get enough to hear about Israel”, he said. “And of course, everybody wants to visit Israel. This is surely the future of Christian Zionism.”

**Africa**

In January, Pastor Larry Booth from our USA branch together with Jim Schutz from our Jerusalem office went for the week-long “Prayer Quake” conference in Port Harcourt, Nigeria. More than 10,000 pastors from all over Africa attended the gathering to pray for the many needs of their continent. Yet one day of the conference was declared as “a day to honour Israel.” ICEJ-Nigeria National Director Rev. Mosy Madugba, who coordinates the annual prayer conference, also made sure that on every day a special teaching seminar was held for Israel. Larry Booth was inspired to see the fervent prayer of the African church, adding, “Africa is surely waking up to bless Israel”.

The ICEJ is called to declare even to the remotest parts of the world that, “He who scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him as a shepherd keeps his flock.” (Jeremiah 31:10) In just the first quarter of 2011, Embassy speakers have gone out to all the main continents, speaking to gatherings of Christians both great and small on behalf of Israel.

**To the Four Corners of the Earth**

Taking the message of God’s faithfulness to Israel to every continent
Asia

In January, the ICEJ had its very first meeting in Thailand. Dr. Jürgen Bühler landed in Bangkok on his way to the Pacific region, using the stopover to meet with our newly established national branch there. With only short notice, a venue close to the airport was packed with people. Only 0.5% of Thailand’s population is Christian, but this body is growing and is aligning itself with Israel and the Jewish people, relates Pastor Krisada Chusakulthanachai, newly appointed ICEJ National Director for Thailand.

Australasia

After an Israel awareness event in Brisbane, Australia with the ministry’s national spokesperson, Jesma O’Hara, Jürgen Bühler continued farther east towards the island nation of Fiji. The Fijian branch was led for many years by Willem Gonoolevu and Ana Soqeta. The ICEJ wishes to express all our gratitude to both of them for their tireless work on behalf of Zion. They now handed the work over to the younger generation. During his visit, Bühler installed Pastor Alipate Cakaunivere as the new National Director for ICEJ-Fiji.

Fijian believers are proud that, from Israel’s vantage point, the Pacific Islands literally represent the ‘ends of the earth’. Meeting with pastors and leaders from the surrounding islands, Bühler was impressed to see how, within little more than a century, the Gospel of Jesus Christ has transformed this lovely island people. Today, missionaries are sent out from Fiji to minister in remote areas of the African jungle. “That the Gospel penetrated even those remote islands is a true sign of our days. The task of the Great Commission to bring the Gospel of Jesus to the uttermost parts of the world is surely being fulfilled in our generation,” observed Bühler.

Europe

The Embassy’s speakers and worship team have visited many countries in Europe this year. David Parsons, Doron Schneider, Jürgen Bühler and Ray Ramirez have paid separate visits to the United Kingdom, Finland, and Germany for numerous church meetings and Israel conferences. The ICEJ-UK annual conference in March also featured branch director Dr. David Elms and noted Bible expositor Rev. David Pawson. In Norway, ICEJ Executive Director, Rev. Malcolm Hedding joined International Chairman Leif Wellerop as a keynote speaker at a major Oslo symposium organized by the Norwegian Branch that featured parliamentarians, journalists and academics from Europe, Israel and the United States. Rev. Juha Ketola, National Director of ICEJ-Finland, was also invited by his counterpart in the Czech Republic, Mojmir Kallus, to address churches and activists on Israel’s behalf.

Meanwhile, new ICEJ staff member Estera Wieja was invited back to her native Poland in March to address a large annual Christian women’s conference on the topic of Israel and the ministry of the ICEJ. She spoke to more than 1,000 Polish believers about God’s great love for Israel and why it should concern all of us. Many gave their hearts to Jesus or rededicated their lives to the Lord.

The Americas

Finally, Rev. Malcolm Hedding spent the first two months of 2011 on an extended speaking tour through the United States. Visiting a number of states, he addressed a host of Sunday services, prayer meetings and pastors’ luncheons, as well as a special conference in Washington, D.C. attended by more than 20 Members of the US Congress. There, Hedding brought a new awareness and understanding on the serious challenges facing Israel and the pressing issues of a chaotic Middle East.
Recent events unfolding in the Middle East have been welcomed all over the world, though with some uneasiness. The revolution in Egypt was especially inspiring, as young people demanded a true democratic form of government with all the freedoms that entails. Having lived for thirty years under the heel of dictatorial rule, they deserve it as do all the other peoples of the region.

However, it is not a given that Egypt is headed towards a true democracy. The younger generation lacks organisation and proven leadership. Meanwhile, waiting in the wings are the members of the Muslim Brotherhood, with their dream of imposing a new Caliphate over the entire region! They are shrewd operators and will not immediately seize power. Rather, they will seek to put forward a "moderate" front while working by stealth and intrigue to slowly usurp power and steer the nation toward Shari'a law. All the while, they will pursue and encourage a wider confrontation with Israel.

All of this has emboldened similar groups in surrounding Arab countries. The younger generation in countries like Jordan, Syria, Yemen, Iran, and the Gulf states want democratic freedoms. But the local chapters of the Muslim Brotherhood and other jihadist groups want to exploit the current political turmoil to impose strict Islamic law and renew hostilities with Israel. Given the deeper roots and determination of the Islamist movements, the Middle East has truly entered treacherous waters!

It is thus madness to expect Israel to vigorously pursue a peace process aimed at a two-state solution anytime soon. Yet I hear even Israelis and her committed friends abroad expressing support for a fresh push towards birthing a Palestinian state.
Besides the threat of hostile regimes arising in neighbouring countries, Palestinian Authority chairman Mahmoud Abbas is a weak, ineffectual leader, as well as an unsuitable and unwilling partner for peace. His tentative hold on the West Bank could easily fall to Hamas, especially if it is bolstered by fellow radical Islamists who rise to positions of power in nearby capitals. This was exactly the intent of the Islamist regime in Turkey in sponsoring the ill-fated Gaza aid flotilla last year. More such provocations are sure to come.

So with Hizbullah gaining ascendance in Lebanon, Iran sending warships to Syria, the Jordanian monarchy under siege, and Egypt’s future clouded by uncertainty, the noose is effectively tightening around Israel. Yet she is expected to concede more territory strategically vital to her defence to a feeble Abbas, who is losing ground to his radical Islamist rivals.

Under these conditions, it is irresponsible for the so-called “friends of Israel” to get up, time and time again, to express support for a two-state solution to the conflict. This politically correct game has to end! Maybe a few years ago it had a glimmer of hope, but today it is not feasible by any stretch of the imagination and those who desire Israel's best interests had better reassess their position.

In the Middle East so far, the notion of democratic elections consists of one man, one vote, one time - as we witnessed in Gaza in 2006. Hamas is biding its time, as all the events around it are serving its interests. A new government in Egypt will likely lift the blockade on Gaza – for humanitarian reasons, of course – and arms from Iran will flow anew to Hamas.

The Middle East is changing rapidly and until the “fog has cleared”, the oft quoted cliché of two democratic states living side-by-side in peace and security should be shelved.

It is also high time that the fear of God should take hold of us. Israel’s modern-day restoration has happened against the tide of history because it enjoys God’s favour. He watches over Israel day and night. Indeed, He warns the world not to divide the land He bequeathed to Israel. To disregard this great purpose and warning of God is foolishness.

Israel is the vehicle of world redemption and has given birth to a moral code that has enlightened much of the world. She has given to the world the greatest and most beloved Man that ever lived. We who claim to love her and stand by her should be careful, lest we too find ourselves in conflict with the God of Heaven!

Rev. Malcolm Hedding serves as ICEJ Executive Director and travels extensively speaking on Israel and the days in which we live.
ISRAEL
A LIGHT TO THE NATIONS

2011 FEAST of TABERNACLES

October 13-18

Event Schedule

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 13TH
Opening Ceremonies (7:30pm)
International Convention Center Jerusalem

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 14TH
Morning Seminars (8:30am)
International Convention Center Jerusalem
Evening Celebration (6:30pm)
Outdoor event at the Ein Gedi Spa (Dead Sea)

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 15TH
Evening Celebration (7:30pm)
International Convention Center Jerusalem

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 16TH
Morning Seminars (8:30am)
Evening Celebration (7:30pm)
International Convention Center Jerusalem

MONDAY, OCTOBER 17TH
Morning Seminars (8:30am)
Evening Celebration (7:30pm)
International Convention Center Jerusalem

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 18TH
Morning Seminars (8:30am)
Grand Finale Evening Celebration (7:30pm)
International Convention Center Jerusalem

Please Note* Events, times, locations, and speakers are subject to change

Special Guest:
Angus Buchan
Malcolm Hedding
David Pawson
Jurgen Buhler
Werner Oder
Allen Jackson

www.icej.org
Feast Registration Office • PO Box 1192 • Jerusalem, Israel • 91010
Tel +972 2 539 9700 • Fax +972 2 566 9612 • Email: feastreg@icej.org