THE NATIONS GO UP

ICEJ CELEBRATES 25TH FEAST OF TABERNACLES

“The whole company that had returned from exile built booths and lived in them...
And their joy was very great.”  Nehemiah 8:17
The International Christian Embassy Jerusalem (ICEJ)

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 worldwide. We invite you to join with us as we minister to Israel and the Jewish people worldwide.

If you wish to make a donation to the general work of the ICEJ or to a specific project described in this magazine, please use the attached response envelope, use the address below or visit our Web site at www.icej.org/get-involved to send your gift. All donations are tax deductible according to the law of your country.

The nations come to worship the Lord in Jerusalem for the Feast of Tabernacles
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Dear Friends,

This year will be the 25th Anniversary of the Christian Celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles. To be sure this is a very important milestone as, at the very least, it represents God’s faithfulness to an event that has inspired and transformed thousands of lives.

More important still is the fact that the Christian Celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles has opened the truths of God’s word to perhaps millions of Christians worldwide. When all is said and done, it is the word of God and the word of God alone that will stand forever. We must build this word into our lives and live by it. This is the clear command of scripture (James 1:21).

This inspired and living word has much to say about Israel. It assures us that the nation of Israel is the foundation or bedrock upon which the redemptive initiative was begun and built ...... and it will be upon this “foundation” that it will end (John 4:22; Romans 9:1-5; Romans 11:25-26).

Israel’s journey has never been one that exclusively relates to one people. It has been a journey with one purpose in mind, the blessing of the world (Genesis 12:1-3). This blessing has been chiefly brought to the world in the person of Jesus. His redemptive work has transformed the lives of millions of people through the ages and today it is these transformed evangelicals that love Israel and pray for her. They do so because of the word of God, a profound sense of gratitude and a sincere longing to see Israel finally delivered from all her enemies and at peace with herself and with her God.

As we gather this year to celebrate yet another Feast, let us be mindful of the fact that we do so with gratitude for all that the Lord has accomplished through this event and let us embrace the future knowing well that His declared purpose will not fail. This is true for our personal lives, our churches and for Israel. Our heart cry is truly “Thy Kingdom Come.”

You will have noticed that our magazine has undergone an “upgrade.” We hope you like our new format and presentation and do pass it on to friends. As always, we covet your prayers and appreciate your financial support.

Yours in Jesus,

Malcolm Hedding
Executive Director of the ICEJ
Over the years the ICEJ has pioneered forms of Davidic worship and dance. Its many events all over the world and of course the annual Christian celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles in Israel have highlighted the importance of worship. In the “old day” worship was called “worthship.” This better reflects the true nature of worship in that it describes the character of God and brings glory to it. We live in a time when much of what we call worship is too man-centred and therefore subjective. The ICEJ constantly seeks to correct this and to thereby bring the people of God into a true encounter with the God of the Bible by focusing on Him and who He is.

Our Music Department, led by Chuck King and staffed by Sharon Bowater, works day and night to glorify Jesus. At the time of the Feast, the Worship Department is augmented by many talented musicians from all over the world. This year, Tim Bakker from South Africa, has come early to help the Music Department achieve its God given mandate to bring glory to the God of Israel.

Be sure to get last year’s Feast CD and order this year’s from our resource centre. You will be blessed and uplifted.

The ICEJ is acutely aware of the need to “pass on the baton” to the new generation. With this in mind, our Grafted Department has initiated a dynamic program for young adults. This program, embracing ages 18 to 30, runs throughout the year but culminates with a Feast tour.

This year some 100 young people will travel through Israel, attend the Feast, have lots of fun and be discipled in the ways of Jesus.

You can help us reach the young people of the nations by making a financial gift to the ICEJ general funds. You can get involved if you are young enough by signing up for future events and Feast tours. Just log on to www.grafted.org and get all the information. Be involved, get into the action and serve the purposes of God for Israel, your Church and your life.
Our financial team is constantly dedicated to looking after your “donor shekels.” Given the fact that we receive donations from all over the world, this is no small task.

Nevertheless, our donors can be assured that every attempt is made to achieve excellence in our accounting activities. This means that when you support us financially you can be sure that your gift is properly processed. The volunteers in the ICEJ Finance Department must learn the complex Israeli tax codes and balance the expenses and incoming gifts of a large global ministry.

We depend on your faithful support to keep us doing what God has called us to do in Israel. Thank you for standing with us in this crucial area.

A new development in Israel is the establishment of the Christian Allies Caucus in the Knesset. This broad-based initiative informs Israelis at every level that Christians support them and their country.

At a reception recently held in Jerusalem, the ICEJ was honoured for its involvement in the Passover outreach. This initiative, supported by the Caucus and Christian Zionist organizations, brought joy and practical assistance to more than 6,000 Israeli homes at Passover.

Jesus said to do unto His brethren as we would have done to us (Matthew 25:45). Real love helps where it is needed and always costs a high price. All the recipients of your gifts were told that they were blessed by Christians from all over the world who love and care for them.
The greatest story ever told

*ICEJ begins preparations for a new tour of “The Covenant” in spring 2005*

Though by now most of you are well acquainted with the musical, “The Covenant,” and its dynamic impact upon Israelis, you will be excited to know that next March we are planning another theatre tour for this exciting, biblically based musical.

This year our multiple city tour brought out thousands of Israelis to a dozen performances in seven venues. Our new tour is expected to include more cities and performances. Naturally, a project of this size needs constant financial under- girding. Without your help in this regard we could not produce it. It is as simple as that! Please help us get “The Covenant” to towns and villages where it has never been before. Designate your financial gift, “The Covenant” on the response card enclosed in this publication.

Also, be sure to get your copy of the DVD “The Covenant.” Details of how you can do this are also included in this publication. “The Covenant” is about the greatest story ever told and only as we partner together will it be heard. 🎶

The Hebrew tour of “The Covenant” was a huge success in Israel last year
ICEJ SAYS “SHALOM” TO GENERAL, AND FRIEND, ZVI

For 25 years, Zvi Givati has faithfully served the ICEJ. Not only has he acted as our liaison officer in Israel, but he has traveled to the nations, spoken in churches and addressed many pro-Israel gatherings. He has been a unique gift to our ministry and, together with his beloved wife Esther, has made a contribution to the work that only heaven fully knows about.

Now the time has come for Zvi to retire. This will formally take place at the end of the year and then he will serve out a retirement year as our special advisor and “father.” As from the end of 2004 his official designation will be Liaison Officer Emeritus.

Many of you have been profoundly touched by Zvi’s life and friendship. At this 25th celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles he will be publicly honoured and thanked for his years of faithful service.

We will always love Zvi and Esther very deeply and they will always be a part of our great worldwide family. Thank you, Zvi!

In memory

Remembering Kay Garbutt, national director of ICEJ Australia Branch for 12 years with husband Bruce

It is with sadness that we announce that Kay Garbutt went to be with the Lord on 22 August, after a long and courageous battle with illness. She will be greatly missed by everybody who had the privilege of knowing her.

Kay was deeply committed to the ministry of the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem. She fully believed in its mandate and calling, and gave all her efforts, time and energy to making these real. By the grace of God, she was successful.

Kay will be remembered most for her passion for the Lord, for the nation of Israel and for worship. A gifted and anointed speaker, Kay loved the word of God, and her insight into God’s word was appreciated wherever she spoke. The tapes, videos and DVDs of her teaching and her two books “Seven Churches of Revelation” and “Yeshua, the Bride-groom” have blessed thousands.

She was a wife, mother, grandmother and ambassador for Israel. Please join us in praying for Bruce and the family during this time of loss.
Spanning the globe

Our Executive Director Malcolm Hedding is constantly preaching in many nations of the world as is our International Director Michael Utterback. God has opened many wonderful doors of pulpit ministry to the ICEJ, not only within its own constituency, but also within other spheres of Christian ministry.

The purpose of God for Israel is foremost seen and discovered in the preaching of God’s word, making this aspect of ICEJ’s ministry vital and key to what Jesus wants us to achieve.

At the end of July, Malcolm Hedding attended the annual ICEJ conference in Norway where up to 600 people gathered to hear God’s word. Biblical issues relating to Babylon (Iraq) and Israel were explored.

Michael Utterback traveled to America for the Bi-Annual Church of God Conference where he continues to make an impact with his ministry to Israel.

Preaching the word of God is a privilege and an honour and we are ever mindful of the great responsibility that this places upon us. Please pray for us as we are further called upon to open God’s word and share it with the nations.

ICEJ Estonia made a mark on Estonian history by participating in the first Estonian documentary about the Shoah (or Holocaust). The film “Your Name Shall be Israel” directed by the Estonian Jewish Journalist Irina Stelmach won the Estonian film award for 2004. The main theme of this year’s annual ICEJ summer conference with participants from Estonia, Finland and Germany was “God’s promises for Israel today.” ICEJ staff member Lisa Rüdiger from Jerusalem shared about the ongoing Aliyah work of the ICEJ

TALLIN – Once again this year, the Estonian branch of the ICEJ determined to stand publicly with Israel and thereby to continue to build bridges to the local Jewish community. National director Peeter Võsu said that Estonian Christians achieved this goal in many different ways. In February, ICEJ Estonia organised a meeting for the Israeli ambassador to Finland and Estonia, Shemi Tzur, which included 50 Christian leaders of different denominations, organisations and media institutions. “After the official program, consisting of a speech from the Ambassador about the actual situation in Israel and a question and answer time, lively discussion continued for more than two hours,” Peeter reported. “Ambassador Tzur gave us positive feedback after the event, with a note that he would be willing to take part in ICEJ Estonia meetings in the future as well.”

ICEJ volunteer Lisa Rüdiger speaks at the summer conference of the Estonian Branch

Malcolm Hedding (right) in Norway with Leif Wellerop, ICEJ board chairman
Olafur Johannsson’s fascination with Israel began 25 years ago when the only availability
his travel agent could find for a vacation was a
week in the Holy Land – a place to which he
never before considered traveling to.

“That one week made the whole difference,” he recalled
while in Jerusalem in August. “I was so touched by everything
in Jerusalem.”

Now Johannsson is a long time ICEJ representative and
director of the ICEJ Iceland branch, brings tours to Israel every
year and has raised support for a Christian Arab school in Beit
Jalla for the past 24 years.

The pro-Israel contingent in Iceland has
grown over the years
from 12 members of the
“Zion Friends of Israel”
to a membership of 400
today.

The organization
has gained such a strong
voice in the country that
a group called “Friends
of Palestine” has formed
in response.

In Iceland, Johannson
has a weekly show
on a 24-hour Christian
television network called
“IIsrael Today” and a program on a 24-hour Christian radio sta-
tion where he talks about Biblical feasts.

The Muslim population is growing in Iceland, Johannsson
said. Sadly, coinciding with this is a rise in anti-Semitism, not
only in the wider community but also among Christians. The
same trends are discernable throughout Europe.

“What surprises me are the Christian pastors, even evan-
gelicals in the Lutheran church, who are against Israel,” he said.

The pro-Israel group is not always welcome to meet in
churches and it remains independent of any church.

But as strongly as he defends Israel and debates with
Muslims in Iceland, Johannsson maintains that part of our
commission, as Christians is to help the Arabs too.

“I pray everyday that I don’t become an enemy of any peo-
ple,” he said.

Johannsson’s connection with the Christian Arab school
has reached Arab Christians as well as Muslims.
"Our helping them has changed many of their views toward Christianity and the ICEJ," he said. "They are happy that a man who loves Israel also loves them."

To read more about the ICEJ’s Olafur Johannsson and his work in Iceland, check out the ICEJ Iceland Web site www.zion.is and support the ICEJ’s work through our global branches. See the enclosed response device in order to partner with us and our international work.

The serene landscape in Iceland belies the growing tide of anti-Semitism.

Iceland

Population: 293,966 (July 2004 est.)

Religion: Evangelical Lutheran 87.1%, other Protestant 4.1%, Roman Catholic 1.7%, other 7.1% (2002)

Number of registered Jews: 70

Language: Icelandic

Government: Constitutional Republic

The pro-Israel contingent in Iceland has grown from 12 members to more than 400 today.
B EIT SHE’AN – Bringing the first night of the Feast of Tabernacles from the Ein Gedi desert to Beit She’an’s ancient Roman city contains spiritual significance that coalesces with this year’s theme of the Lord’s kingdom.

“By using this venue it says the kingdoms of this world have truly become the kingdom of our Lord,” said ICEJ Music Director Chuck King.

Beit She’an is an archaeological site with layers of civilization – the most recently excavated, a Roman city replete with evidence of pagan worship. With the Feast’s opening night on 28 September, about 5,000 believers will be declaring the kingdom of the living God in that very city.

“Kingdoms come and kingdoms go, but the Word of God is eternal and that’s what we’re saying out there,” King said. “The area was one of the seats of Rome’s authority during the time of Jesus. The fact that it is crumbled makes a statement that the authority of God’s kingdom is eternal.”

The entire production is more involved this year including an orchestra, a 40-voice choir, dancers and technical and logistical teams which will be setting up a day in advance. King said he is also recruiting a local choir.

Steve Fry’s musical, “Thy Kingdom Come,” is the featured presentation which will include dramatic portrayals of Jesus’ ministry in the nearby Galilee and spiritual warfare.

“We’re making a statement for the purposes of God not only for this nation, but for the nations of the world,” King said.

ICEJ’s Feast of Tabernacles is designed to make a spiritual statement as well as keeping the Biblical mandate to celebrate the festival. If you can’t make it to Jerusalem this year, link with us during the Feast with a financial contribution.

Beit She’an amphitheatre
Feast volunteer at the 1980 celebration approached me in a bit of panic. “They asked me to find someone I could trust to count the money. You are the only one I know.” The rest is history.

I was treating myself to a Masters Degree study of Jewish Christian Relations at the Institute of Holy Land Studies (now Jerusalem University College) and attended the first International Feast that proved to be quite the “birth mother.” A smaller planning type Succot Celebration had taken place in 1979, and preceding that were several events called “Pray For the Peace of Jerusalem Conferences” that all had an influence on the first dedicated international Christian celebration during the Feast of Tabernacles in 1980.

The visionaries and leaders of that first Feast were Jan Willem and the late Widad van der Hoeven, Johann Luckhoff, George Giacumakis, Merv and Merla Watson, Jay and Meridel Rawlings, a host of resident Christian leaders, three dedicated South African girls who did a lot of work......and myself, who counted the money!

Some 1,300 pilgrims from approximately 30 nations showed up at the Anglican School yard in central Jerusalem. A makeshift stage, volunteer choir and orchestra, a few “worship in dance” volunteers, bible teachers and a member of Knesset, the late Zevulun Hammer, highlighted that first Feast.

Rev. David Pawson, a speaker at this year’s Feast, was also a speaker at that first one in 1980. For 25 years he has been challenging Christians to look deeply at their relationship with Israel.

Apart from the large international demonstration of Christian unity for Israel, the Feast of 1980 served as the official launching pad for the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem. After the Jerusalem March that featured IDF soldiers marching one way, and Feast and Israeli marchers going the other direction on Jaffa Road, Mayor Teddy Kolleck opened the doors of the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem. Next year at the Feast, the ICEJ will celebrate its 25th birthday.

In 1981, Feast celebrations, now sponsored by the ICEJ, moved - in great faith - to the largest convention centre in Israel, the Binyanei Hauma (International Convention Centre Jerusalem), where it stayed for 24 years. More than 3000 pilgrims from 80 nations attended that Feast. But perhaps the greatest boost the Feast and ICEJ could have had was the attendance of the Prime Minister, the late Menachem Begin, Mayor Teddy Kolleck, and the Jaffee Family from the Great Synagogue in Jerusalem. Their presence on behalf of the Israeli people, and acceptance of the declarative phrase that started with the ICEJ, “Israel you are not alone,” electrified the audience and presented a challenge of Christian support for Israel that continues until today.

From that point on, the Christian celebration during the Feast of Tabernacles, has been a dynamic expression of

The Feast has become Israel’s single largest tourism event on an annual basis

25 years of the ‘Feast’

ICEJ’s financial director tells his story

By Timothy King
Christian unity for Israel, a teaching tool for Christians to gain more of a biblical understanding of their unique role with Israel and a focus on rich praise and worship of Jesus in Jerusalem with His diverse, colourful and international Body.

Every year between 4 – 6000 Christians from over 100 nations have come up to Jerusalem to praise and worship the Lord. It has long ago passed the 100,000-attendance mark. What was once a Jewish celebration only in Jerusalem, the Christian celebration now challenges the tourism infrastructure to provide enough hotel beds, tour busses and guides.

The Feast has become Israel’s single largest tourism event on an annual basis, and brings some $8 – 12 million (US) of tourist trade to Israel every year. Even in the past few years of “intifada” when tourism collapsed, the Feast carried on with significant numbers.

Every prime minister since Menachem Begin (with the exception of Ehud Barak) and every mayor since Teddy Kolleck has welcomed Christians to the Feast.

More than 250 known expressions of the ICEJ Jerusalem Feast take place all over the world each year. Worship in dance and colourful banners pointing to the God of Israel - pioneered at the Feast through the years - have become a standard in many churches worldwide.

Quietly, each year, intercessors and prayer warriors in many countries cry out to the Lord for His rich anointing to envelope and dwell at the Feast in Jerusalem. Each year, God has been faithful beyond measure with His presence at the Feast. It is because of His direction, His presence, and His faithfulness that this great celebration continues.

I continue to count the money, but now with a great team of helpers. Contrary to popular opinion, the Feast is not a profit-making venture. We struggle to break even in order to help as many people as possible to attend.

So now at this 25th anniversary Feast, what should be different?

Except for changes necessary to appeal to the next generation of Christian Zionists, I hope not much. It should be the same dedicated expression of love for the Lord Jesus, a powerful international “body” of praise and worship, and once again, a Christian statement to the people of Israel that indeed, “You are not alone!”
Feast season heightens

An influx of Feast volunteers marks the beginning of the countdown to Succot

Preparations have long been underway for the 25th annual Christian celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles. The Feast is an awesome challenge every year with massive administrative and logistical hurdles to overcome before Opening Night.

However, our faithful team of Feast workers and volunteers joyfully embrace this challenge, knowing Jesus has commanded them to bless Israel and the nations with this dynamic event. The Feast is not just another conference, but it is a vital manifestation of the purpose of God for our time! This week of Succot is prepared for with tremendous love and dedication.

Feast season heightens

An influx of Feast volunteers marks the beginning of the countdown to Succot

Pastor, composer sings at Feast

Steve Fry, senior pastor of Belmont Church in Tennessee, will be performing at the ICEJ Feast of Tabernacles in his own musical, “Thy Kingdom Come,” released in 1990. Fry has composed several musical works all the while serving as a youth pastor and author. He lives in Nashville with his wife Nancy and three children. “Word From Jerusalem” (WFJ) interviewed him about his involvement in the Feast this year.

WFJ: What was your inspiration for writing the musical “Thy Kingdom Come”?

Fry: My inspiration had to do with a longstanding conviction that I was cultivating as a youth pastor in the 1970s. One night I was reflecting on Isaiah 2, “Come let us go up to the mountain of the Lord.” I had always understood as a boy the plans of God for Israel and the restoration of Israel to her homeland. That spoke and speaks of a fulfillment yet to come of Jerusalem. But what hit me was that this is what should be happening in every local church - that the power of God consumes every Christian in every city. There is some kind of fulfillment of kingdom prophecies of what God was going to do at the end of the age, but still a lot of power for the present. I reflected on prophecies like Ezekiel 47 and the book of Acts, what the prophets did in Jerusalem, an echo of what it was supposed to be. They weren’t holed up in office suites.

WFJ: What is the significance of “Thy Kingdom Come” being performed in Israel?

Fry: We’ve never done the full presentation in Israel. For me, it’s a lot like what happened in 1996 for me when a contingent of us came over for a prayer gathering to do (another musical Fry composed) “We Are Called.” In the view of the Eastern Gate it was like a dry run for the day the Messiah actually will open the Eastern Gate. The significance now is to sow a prophetic seed into the land - one of hundreds that have been sown - to declare the consummation of God’s promises. God is proving Himself to be the covenant keeping God, the God who is faithful to His word. It is a declaration that our God shall
Day of prayer for Jerusalem

“Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: May those who love you be secure.”
Psalm 122:6

The Day of Prayer for the Peace of Jerusalem, with the endorsement of hundreds of leaders from around the world representing tens of millions of Christians, will be inaugurated this year and then follow on the first Sunday of every October. The aim is for sustained, informed global intercession for the plans and purposes of God for Jerusalem and all her people. This global grassroots prayer initiative coincides with the season of Yom Kippur, recognizing the Jewish roots of the Christian faith.

This important initiative will be held in Jerusalem on the 3 October at 2 p.m. in Sacher Park. The International Christian Embassy Jerusalem, together with Eagles’ Wings, is coordinating this event in Jerusalem. Thousands of Christians from all over the world, who attend the Christian celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles, will gather together with prominent international Christian leaders, local Christian leaders and local Jewish spiritual and political leaders to humble themselves before the God of Israel and to call on His name for and on behalf of the peace of Jerusalem.

I only did five (musical) projects, but couldn’t focus on the concert thing. Most of the time I focused on youth leadership training. In the late 1990s, I began to write books. I traveled more to speak. So it was not a big jump to consider taking a senior pastor role. (Fry has been senior pastor at Belmont Church since September 2003.)

WFJ: How do you feel about the upcoming performance of “Thy Kingdom Come” at the ICEJ Feast of Tabernacles?

Fry: Obviously this is going to be the highlight of my life. The song, “Rend the Skies,” (from Isaiah 64), is Isaiah’s prayer for God to intervene in the history of His chosen ones. That prayer is as relevant now as it was when Isaiah prayed it. We desperately need that He do that – nothing short of a manifestation of the presence of God in His power and glory. It’s not going to come from our finely tuned programs or well-intentioned ideas.

There is coming a final demonstration of God and that is going to happen before Messiah comes. When we get to that place in the musical, I’m going to come prepared to sing that as a prophetic word, not just a song.

WFJ: What was your road to your present ministry as senior pastor of Belmont Church?

Fry: From the get-go, (my life) was all being driven by a broader ministry for me. I became a youth pastor at 17-years-old. That group grew to 600. In the early 1980s, I relinquished my role as youth pastor, and traveled in order to network local youth groups for missions projects.

In 1983, we recorded “We Are Called,” and it was released in 1984, the same year I mobilized a youth missions trip to the Los Angeles Olympics.
In another nearby home, Utterback saw a man was using sticks to build a replica of a synagogue destroyed in the 1920s. And in yet another house, an Israeli flag hung above the couple’s bed.

The ICEJ team altered a planned trip to Siberia and made this stop in China where they saw synagogues and a thriving Jewish community. The evidence is on the gravestones in a Jewish cemetery, where families have carefully recorded the names of their ancestors dating back to the 900s.

Utterback said that many of the Jews have tried to prove to the Israeli government that they are Jewish, but the official Israeli stance is that there are no Jews in China, since the Jews of China trace their ancestry through their fathers, while the Israeli government requires maternal ancestry for proof.

“We met with an Israeli official there who said there are no Jews in China,” Utterback said. “But my heart says there are.”

Further complicating matters, in the 1990s, the Chinese government reissued the passports of the Jews, changing the Jewish identification to Muslim or Buddhist in some cases.

In June, the first person from Kaifeng formally converted to Judaism in Israel, making her eligible for citizenship. Jin Wen-Jing, 18, spoke fluent Hebrew and answered questions before a Haifa conversion court. She moved to Israel four years ago.

Utterback said that while perhaps a spiritual stirring is taking place among the Jews, the situation has not budged. The Israeli government still officially maintains that there are no Jews in China, making Aliyah virtually impossible.

“They want to come home, but they can’t,” Utterback said. “At this particular time, there is nothing that can be done except to pray the Jews out of China.”

ICEJ will continue to monitor the situation and strike when the time is right to help the Chinese Jews come home to Israel. Support our Aliyah program and watch the difference!
n the 1940s, a group of Chinese Christians had a vision to take the Gospel of Jesus along the Silk Road to Jerusalem. They passed this calling on to a new generation of Chinese believers, beginning with 36 Chinese missionaries who set out from China in 2000.

Now hundreds of Chinese missionaries, tempered by intense persecution, imprisonment and torture in their own country, are preparing to face similar to worse conditions in the nations they traverse.

Brother Yun of the Chinese house church movement, one of the leaders in this call across his homeland, will be speaking at the ICEJ’s Feast of Tabernacles in Jerusalem this year. Brother Yun, whose gripping testimony of his own persecution and church-wide sufferings in China has been recounted in the book “The Heavenly Man,” helped to spearhead this movement.

Peter Xu Yongze, Enoch Wang and Brother Yun explain their strategy in the book, “Back to Jerusalem: Called to Complete the Great Commission.”

Contrary to its sound, “Back to Jerusalem” is not about Jerusalem, but is a call for the Chinese Church to establish fellowships of believers in all the countries, cities, towns, and ethnic groups between China and Jerusalem.

No small task considering more than 90 percent of the “unreached” people groups in the world today are located within that same region of the earth where the dominant religions are Islam, Buddhism and Hinduism. All 50 of the world’s 50 least-evangelized countries are located within this region.

The campaign aims to mobilize 100,000 Chinese missionaries who are willing to die to evangelize the estimated 2 billion people living along the former trade route, known by mission organisations as the 10/40 Window.
Austrian support comforts Israel

Austrian teens bring real-life message of support for Israel

BY NICOLE SCHIAVI

“Judaism thinks like this: A Jew gives to another Jew,” Sabati said. “But to give to someone you don’t know, who’s not from your country, your city or your culture, it’s lovely to see.”

At an Israeli style barbecue with both the Austrian and Israeli teens, one of the Austrians addressed the Israelis, apologizing for the Christian persecution of Jews throughout the centuries. Now, she said, they have come to do their part to show they love and support Israel.

But even more than the actual work they did, the Israelis they encountered were encouraged by their strong support for the nation of Israel.

“I’m very surprised by their responsibility and their willingness to do this volunteer work,” Yigal Klein, 18, said. Yigal said that Israelis hear about anti-

Semitism and criticism of their country in the news, but they don’t really experience it in the Jewish state.

“But this was the contrary,” he said about the support the Christian group brought.

Christian Wozabal, the group leader, said the purpose of the trip, which they make about every two years, was to show Israelis that they have friends in Austria. During this visit, the group spent three weeks painting homes and community centres, visiting terror victims and assisting in children’s programs. They worked with all spectrums of society from Israeli teens to Ethiopian immigrants to Arab children,
“I still hear so much in this land that makes me realize, Israelis have no clue there are people abroad who love them so much and support them,” Setz said. “We can write it in the papers and hold rallies, but when they meet a Christian and talk to them, they are deeply touched.”

Work like this that touches all spectrums of people in the land is possible with your continued support.

Your donations to the ICEJ’s general fund will go to help our staff coordinate more outreaches of this scale.

Pups for peace

ICEJ helps purchase bomb-sniffing dogs to patrol Israeli streets

JERUSALEM – It’s all a game to Heidi, but for her handlers and the security guards they work with, the pup’s work is of the utmost importance.

Moving through bus stops at the busy Central Bus Station, Heidi, a Belgian Shepherd, scours the area for any suspect scents, investigating each station’s frames and bags people are carrying.

She is trained to smell explosive materials and alert her handler. Her reward for spotting one is a toy. But for Israelis, the reward is increased safety and possibly thwarted terror attacks.

Since April 2002, Pups for Peace, a non-profit organization, has been operating in Israel as a counter-terrorism measure. Director Ronni Lotan said Pups for Peace provides the dogs, trains them and then lets them work with government employees who work with specially trained security forces.

including an outreach in the Old City of Jerusalem.

SAP Director Yudit Setz said the impact of the group wasn’t so much the work they did but the contacts they made.
ICEJ’s Lisa Rüdiger gives a cheque to Pups for Peace Director Ronni Lotan for $12,000 (US)

While dogs are used internationally for various measures such as drug detection at airports, this is the first time dogs have been used in public for terrorist detection.

“This is actually an invention because no one has done this before in a public area”, Lotan said.

Seeing the significance of this venture and how it would benefit Israelis and other innocent people on the streets here, ICEJ’s Social Assistance Program took on this project to find donors. The ICEJ German branch raised 54,000 shekels ($12,000) to launch the project.

Lotan said the money will go toward the goal of providing 80 dogs and 40 handlers to the Ministry of Transportation and the bus company’s security people.

The pilot program began in Netanya. Many people didn’t believe in the project and businesses were thrilled because they were not closed down for bomb scares. Lotan said just the presence of the bomb-snoifing dogs instilled confidence in skittish Israelis who do not hesitate to call the police when they see unattended bags.

After the successful stint in Netanya, the government of Israel adopted a resolution to instruct police to work with Pups For Peace in June 2003.

Now operating in Jerusalem full-time with a daily brigade of dogs, the handlers work a full shift, changing the dogs every 20 minutes. They cover specific areas like the major bus stations on King George, the Central Bus Station and Emek Rephaim Street, just for Israelis the reward is increased safety and possibly thwarted terror attacks.
blocks away from the ICEJ headquarters in Jerusalem’s German Colony neighbourhood.

So far, the dogs have not encountered any bombs, but one did intercept real material. The canine’s sensitive nose picked up a potentially lethal material that was nonlethally being used in another concoction. Lotan said the dogs’ presence on patrol is actually a deterrent.

ICEJ continually seeks to support projects such as this through our Social Assistance Program. We ask you to join us as you feel led in bringing added security to the people of Israel.

School aid

ICEJ joins in helping Israeli students go back to school in style

The ICEJ joined with other Christian organizations and the Knesset in purchasing and distributing 16,000 school bags and pencil kits for 1st grade children from low-income Israeli families.

The organizations’ volunteers worked together to prepare and distribute the bags to various locations, where Israeli social workers would pass them onto the needy children. Each bag contained a letter stating it was a gift from Christians.
Yardenit

Baptismal site seeks to get more international with languages

While most Christian sites in Israel are run by one church or another, the baptismal site on the Jordan River, Yardenit, is run completely by Israelis even though Christians compose 90 percent of the visitors to the site.

After all, the only activity at the site, besides the requisite eating and shopping, is getting baptized.

Where most sites hold historic or architectural value for visitors of any religion, the baptismal site doesn’t even claim to be the exact spot where John baptized Jesus, only that it was probably close. And really there’s not much besides the river there. Few Israelis and even fewer Muslims would ever go there.

Nevertheless, 250,000 Christians (600,000 before the intifada) visited the site in 2003.

The Israelis running the site completely cater to Christians – towels and robes are available in case you didn’t bring your own; certificates are given certifying the baptism; a New Testament scripture adorns the walls in nine languages and they are wanting to make it more than nine.

But as you walk around the place and hear the accents, from the manager to the clerks at the checkout counters, the staff is definitely Israeli.

Seasoned by years of Christian pilgrims who hold baptism and prayer services at the site, the place remains tranquil. Yonatan Bobrov, park manager, said he has observed over the years Christian groups who visit.

“They come and sing and I think, ‘Where does it come from?’” he said. “They sing so nicely – all the groups. It’s so impressive. Even we (the workers) like it.”

Bobrov said many secular Jews who live on the Kibbutz and work at the site feel a special peace on the site as they come closer to the water.

“It’s not nothing,” he said. “When they come closer to the water, you see it on their eyes, even the secular Jews, that they feel something.”

The New Testament baptism comes from the Jewish tradition of mikvahs, the ritual cleansing baths, Bobrov said.

“So we can find some common issues for all of us,” he said. “He is a Christian, I am a Jew and we can be friends. And here is the right place. Christians come here to visit and we have Israeli workers.”

Bobrov said it doesn’t really matter where Jesus was baptized – just that he was.

The name of the site is in Hebrew – Yarden means Jordan. Israel’s Ministry of Tourism maintains the site but requires that free entry be maintained. However that doesn’t help when they want to do extra projects.

Bobrov said that when the site was up for refurbishing four years ago, various artists and architects submitted entries for an internationally welcoming entrance area. While many of the presentations involved computer displays, lights and flashes, Hagop Antreassian brought one handmade tile with him.

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The art was in his heart, not just in his hands,” Bobrov said. Antreassian was also the only Christian among the applicants, fitting for a site that eventually featured a New Testament scripture.

The visitor’s store is not just your typical souvenir shop. Locally made and grown products like honey, dates and olive oil are sold and recipes for using the various date products made at Kibbutz Kinneret.

The site is open daily from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. except for Fridays when it is open only until 4 p.m. 

Mark 1:10

“As Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove.”

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The Feasts

A biblical portrait of the Lord’s Kingdom through the feast celebrations

By Malcolm Hedding

The Feast of Tabernacles is one of the three great pilgrim Feasts of the Bible; the other two being Passover and Pentecost. All three have to do with God’s Kingdom. Passover is the “Door” to the Kingdom. That is, it is only because of spilt blood that we can “go out” to meet with God. Our justification does not come from what we do but from what He has done by giving a Lamb to die in our place.

No wonder John the Baptiser, when he saw Jesus said: “Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29). Paul, of course, writes that Christ, our Passover Lamb, has been slain (1 Corinthians 5:7-8) and therefore we should live holy and clean lives because by His death we have been freed from death and liberated from the bondage of sin to serve God.

Pentecost reminds us of the word and power of God. This is the power of the Kingdom. It was on the Festival of Pentecost that the Law was given and it was on this festival that the early church was endued with power from on high (Acts 2). By the power of God’s Spirit the Word of God forms and fashions us and enables us to live in the freedom that Jesus purchased for us on the cross. Jesus clearly said that if we abide in His word, then we shall truly be His disciples (John 8:31-32).

The Feast of Tabernacles reminds us of the triumph of the Kingdom. In the end a New World Order will be ushered in. This “order” will be one in which all evil is overcome by good. God’s presence will fill the earth, as will His knowledge (Isaiah 11:9) and our King Jesus will reign in righteousness from shore to shore (Revelation 11:15; Psalm 2:7-8). Jerusalem will be His seat of authority and all nations will gather year by year in Zion to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles (Zechariah 14:16).

Those who have faithfully served the King will be resurrected and with Him will reign in righteousness (Revelation 2:26-29; Revelation 3:21). It will be a glorious day!

Our Feast theme this year is “Thy Kingdom Come.” Not only is our 25th gathering of this type one of great expectation but also one of great joy and thanksgiving.

International Christian Embassy Jerusalem

25th Anniversary

A very special commemoration

Twenty-five years ago the first Christian celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles took place in Jerusalem and the doors of the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem opened. Now we are about to celebrate the faithfulness of God to our work and ministry.

The Christian celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles has become Israel’s largest tourist event on an annual basis, and the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem has assumed a leadership position in Christian Jewish relations worldwide.

To commemorate the faithfulness of God to the Feast of Tabernacles celebration and the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem, the ICEJ has commissioned an Israeli artisan to produce a commemorative silver Kiddush Cup. This beautifully crafted cup made from 925 silver is a limited edition work of art and is displayed in a velvet-lined wooden box. Don’t miss out on acquiring this very special offer.

A contribution of US$200 (or equivalent) to the Embassy’s general activities in Israel will secure your Anniversary Kiddush Cup and help us to continue the work. See the enclosed response device.
Down a notch

PA leader Yasser Arafat weathered opposition from all angles

BY DAVID PARSONS

Yasser Arafat is looking unusually vulnerable these days. King Abdullah II of Jordan has urged him to “take a long look in the mirror” and step down. US Secretary of State Colin Powell cautions not to trust his “yo-yo” promises on reform that always “get pulled back.” Arafat’s humble pleas to attend his sister’s recent funeral in Gaza went completely unheeded by Israel. Worse yet, renegades in Fatah are burning his Authority’s offices and kidnapping his generals with impunity. All in all, the aging Palestinian leader has faced the most serious challenge ever to his one-man rule this summer – and survived.

Nonetheless, the rising levels of frustration with Arafat abroad and the unprecedented signs of rebellion among his own people are clear indicators that his iron grip on power is irretrievably slipping away. At long last, it is fair game to criticize the “Old Man” in public. But should Israelis take hope from the rumblings in the Palestinian camp? Or are those behind the reformist revolt just as intractable and devious in the pursuit of peace?

INTRA-FADA

The recent mutiny against Arafat erupted due to widespread disgust with corruption within the Palestinian Authority and the lack of any real democratic reforms that would end the thievery. The Palestinian people have been impoverished by the intifada against Israel, despite billions of dollars in sympathetic aid. Meanwhile, Arafat’s cronies seem to be only getting richer.

Yasser Arafat remains the symbol of Palestinian nationalism, but many are no longer willing to march to his orders.
Arafat is sitting on the corpses and ruins of the Palestinians at a time when they are desperately in need of a new mentality,” former Gaza security chief Muhammad Dahlan recently told the Kuwaiti daily Al Watan. “[$5 billion in donor funds] have gone down the drain, and we don’t know where.”

The “reformists” ganged up on Arafat from three directions. Threatening to resign, PA prime minister Ahmed Qurei and his cabinet demanded more powers, while Arafat’s critics in the Palestinian Legislative Council sought the same. But he is also a childhood friend of Hamas bomb-maker Muhammad Deif, has profited from official graft himself, and was recorded by the CIA ordering a deadly bus attack in Gush Katif in 2001. Cut in Arafat’s mafia-boss image, he could end up ruling Gaza with Hamas.

All sought an end to the corruption, chaos and uncertainty of direction within the PA, but there was absolutely nothing in their rhetoric to suggest that a softer line towards Israel is waiting in the wings. In fact, the street toughs insisted that Palestinian coffers be focused more squarely on terrorising the Jews.

At the height of the recent intifada, Fatah gunmen torched PA buildings and abducted policemen and foreigners to protest the cut-off of funds for their ‘military operations’, while Arafat fought back by dispatching masked men to shoot a dissident former cabinet minister, among other strong-arm tactics.

Eventually, the reformist revolt descended into an old-fashioned power struggle between rival forces in the next generation jockeying for position in the post-Arafat era.

Dahlan in particular has seen Arafat’s growing weakness, along with Israel’s disengagement plan, as an opportunity for him to wrest control of the Strip from the chairman, who
remains trapped in his bombed-out presidential compound in Ramallah. Dahlan supporters trounced Arafat loyalists in local Fatah elections in much of Gaza in July, emboldening him to issue the PA leader with an ultimatum on reforms or face mass demonstrations.

A FITTING END

Arafat has managed to fend off the challenge for now, largely because he remains the living symbol of the Palestinian nationalist movement. But he was undoubtedly whittled down a notch by his own people and a new poll shows 80 percent backing for an emergency unified command of nationalist and Islamic forces to steer Palestinians out of their current mess.

Arafat’s hopes for a comeback on the international stage rest on the results of the US elections in November. He is banking on the defeat of President George W. Bush, which he believes will lead to the downfall of Israeli leader Ariel Sharon, the man who vowed to remove him some two years ago.

For some reason, Sharon seems to have been the one Israeli leader over the years capable of standing up to Arafat and actually out-foxing him. It would be disastrous for Israel if Arafat were able to boast that he has outlasted Sharon as well.

It is no secret that many Israelis and their friends worldwide have spent years quietly hoping and praying for the demise of Yasser Arafat – whether by natural means or the IDF’s swift fury. But it would be far more just and fitting if he – like Saddam Hussein – were to be judged by his own people for the crimes he has committed against them. Such a turn of events for either man once seemed well beyond belief – but no longer.

The aging Palestinian leader has faced the most serious challenge ever to his one-man rule

With immigration numbers down and a sagging economic situation, a plane full of North Americans migrating to Israel, caught everyone’s attention and even warranted a runway welcome from Prime Minister Ariel Sharon.

The plane of 400 Canadians and Americans, which touched down at Ben Gurion Airport in July, was the first of three flights expected to bring 1,500 immigrants from North America this summer, a 20 percent increase over last summer.

ICEJ’s Aliyah Ministry and the Jerusalem Support Centre have typically helped Jewish people in the initial stages of settling into life in Israel, most from the former Soviet Union, but the trends are changing. The future demands new responses and greater financial resources. We need your help to fulfill this command of God’s Word to bring His ancient people home.
**Be‘er Sheva blasts kill 16**

Hamas terrorists carried out a double suicide bombing on two separate buses in Be‘er Sheva on Aug. 31, killing at least 16 people and wounding dozens. The two bombers, from Hebron, exploded almost simultaneously when the buses were about 100 meters apart. It was Israel’s first suicide bombing in five months. The attack occurred on the same day Prime Minister Ariel Sharon announced an expedited timetable for his Gaza disengagement plan. Sharon insisted that, “the war against terror will continue without letup.” Israeli officials said the attack was a sign that terrorist groups were trying to frustrate the disengagement, which calls for all Jewish communities to be evicted from Gaza and four isolated settlements in northern Samaria.

**Sharon’s coalition woes**

Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon has just been dealt another blow to his disengagement plan from his own Likud party. After losing a referendum among the party’s general membership on a Gaza withdrawal last May, the Likud Central Committee voted in mid-August to block his bid to bring the Labour faction into his dwindling coalition. Sharon argues that the Knesset alone is empowered to approve coalitions and has vowed to press on, but stark differences over economic policy still stand in the way of a national unity government.

**Iraqi, Palestinian Christians targeted**

Islamic insurgents fighting Western forces in Iraq have been terrorising the nation’s 750,000 Christians as well, culminating in a horrific day of car bombings outside five churches in early August. The coordinated blasts in Baghdad and Mosul killed 12 people, including Muslim bystanders. Islamic radicals charge their Christian neighbours are collaborators with the Crusader West. Palestinian Christians are likewise suffering under Yasser Arafat’s regime, as riots broke out recently in Beit Sahour, a Christian village east of Bethlehem, after a Muslim photographed a Christian woman in the changing room of a local clothes shop. Palestinian Christians frequently experience persecution, land seizures and loss of civil rights, but fear the repercussions of speaking out against Islamic oppression.

**Iran marches on towards nuclear threshold**

American and Israeli officials continue to fret over Iran’s steady development of nuclear weapons despite increased scrutiny by the International Atomic Energy Agency, and Washington is threatening to refer the issue to the UN Security Council for possible imposition of sanctions against Tehran. But the Islamic regime insists it has a natural right to go nuclear. Iran also just tested its improved Shihab-3 ballistic missile, now equipped with multiple warheads specifically designed to evade Israel’s Arrow anti-missile defence system.

**New Zealand-Mossad row**

New Zealand said it had concrete evidence that two Israelis sentenced on passport fraud charges are Mossad agents. Two Israeli citizens allegedly tried to obtain a fake New Zealand passport in April. Since then diplomatic ties with New Zealand soured and Jewish graves have been desecrated. New Zealand Prime Minister Helen Clark announced that the two had operated “on behalf of the intelligence services of Israel,” and proceeded to freeze all high-level contact with Israel.

**Israel’s first golden Olympics**

After 52 years, Israel celebrated its first gold medalist in the 2004 Olympics in Athens in August. Gal Fridman, 29, took gold in the men’s windsailing event.

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