W hen Winston Churchill became prime minister of Britain in May 1940 he observed that the world was staring “into the abyss of a new Dark Age.” In less than six weeks Nazi armored divisions had swept virtually unopposed through Norway, Denmark, Holland and Belgium and had hopelessly encircled the remaining Allied fighting force in the small French fishing port of Dunkirk.

On May 23, 1940 — barely two weeks after Churchill took office — more than 400,000 British and French soldiers were trapped on the shores of northern France, a sitting target for the relentless German artillery and airborne bombing campaign that had been dispatched to finish them off. It was on that day that leading politicians and newspaper editors joined with King George VI to issue a call for a national day of prayer to be held on the following Sunday, May 26.

During the nine days that followed 338,000 soldiers were rescued in the fog by a flotilla of private yachts, cruisers, fishing boats and ferries, backed up by Naval destroyers and troop carriers. Although 30,000 lost their lives and 34,000 were eventually captured by the advancing Nazi brigades, the evacuation of Dunkirk became one of the most significant turning points of World War II, ensuring that the bulk of the British army lived on to fight another day. Despite taking pains to remind a jubilant House of Commons on June 4, that “wars are not won by evacuations,” even Churchill conceded that what took place on the shores of France was “a miracle of deliverance.”

The lesson of Dunkirk is clear. Concerted, intentional, corporate prayer stirs the heart of God and opens the doors for His intervention in our world.

“Concerted, intentional, corporate prayer stirs the heart of God and opens the doors for His intervention in our world”
Dear Friends,

Once again, at the political level, the helm of the ‘Good Ship Israel’ is to be vacated by her present captain. Ehud Olmert’s resignation just over a month ago plunged the nation into political uncertainty and crisis, even as the Israeli people were still reeling from a painful one-sided prisoner exchange with Hizbullah for the bodies of two IDF reservists captured at the start of the 2006 war (read more on pages 4-5).

In many ways, this is the power of democracy at work. Here is a nation that in the true democratic tradition can hold its leaders accountable and, if necessary, force their removal.

The same certainly cannot be said for China, the home of the 2008 Olympics, a competition which emerged, ironically, from the cradle of ancient democracy in Greece. How sad it is that the world appears so willing to overlook Beijing’s religious intolerance and human rights abuses for the sake of expediency and greed!

Israel’s democracy with all its flaws is, by contrast, a shining light in the wider Middle East and across much of the rest of the world, where these much needed values are despised and ignored.

I have often stated this and I wish to say it again: Israel needs our prayers and intercession. These should be frequent and passionate. God is faithful to His Word and will answer all prayer that is inspired by it. I don’t have to remind you of the growing threat that Iran, by virtue of its nuclear program, is posing to Israel. We have a greater weapon: It is called prayer!

The Bible also states that we should pray for “kings and all who are in authority” where we live (1 Timothy 2:2). This fall as citizens of the US, you too will make a critical decision about the leadership of your great nation – a decision that will have enormous implications for Israel and the rest of the world. That is why I’m asking you, on behalf of the ICEJ’s US Branch to join us in a time of concerted prayer and fasting for God’s favor on America and His sovereign hand over the outcome of the presidential election.

Log on to our website at: www.icejusa.org/pray and find out how you can get involved in praying for the upcoming elections in the US and Israel to seek God’s favor on both nations at this critical moment in history.

As I write here in Jerusalem, we are preparing for this year’s Feast of Tabernacles celebration that follows an extensive summer of ministry events across the USA (see report on page 3). It is not too late to make plans to ascend to Zion and stand by Israel during the Feast. I look forward to welcoming those of you that can make it to Jerusalem in October.

Yours in Jesus,

Rev. Malcolm Hedding
ICEJ Executive Director
Discerning the Times

Seminar Series Launch

Discerning the Times - a new educational initiative from the ICEJ - succeeded in impacting the lives of some 300 Christians at the end of June who gathered to learn more about Israel, Islam and the purpose of God in this generation.

Held close to the ICEJ’s US headquarters just south of Nashville, the Discerning the Times launch event included a world-class line up of guest speakers and academics addressing a varied range of topics from anti-Semitism and Jewish roots, to the persecution of Christians in the Middle East, the Islamic agenda and the role of Israel in God’s end-time purposes.

“For the first time in almost 2000 years the Church is learning to relate to the Jewish people with love,” the ICEJ’s US Director, Susan Michael, told the packed auditorium at World Outreach Church, Murfreesboro. “But,” she continued, “there is another historic shift happening in the world today; the confrontation between Islam and the Judeo-Christian world.”

“You opened my heart to love and pray for the world.”

Designed to educate Christians across America about the significance of the times in which we live, additional Discerning the Times events are being planned in different cities across the nation this fall and throughout 2009. If you would like to assist us in bringing this ground-breaking educational initiative to your area, contact our office at (615) 895-9830.

Summer Speaking Tours

From upstate New York to San Diego California, ICEJ speakers and teams have spent the summer crisscrossing the United States, speaking to Church and ministry leaders, youth groups and congregations bringing a balanced biblical message of God’s love for Israel and His Church.

In June and July ICEJ Executive Director, Malcolm Hedding spoke to more than 10,000 people across the Southeast - from Alabama to Florida and is scheduled to return to California, Oregon and Texas later this month (more details at www.icejusa.org).

Meanwhile, Bram and Liesl Maas from the ICEJ’s Young Adults ministry, Grafted, and Charmaine Hedding, director of the ICEJ’s Sudanese refugee project Operation Hope travelled extensively raising support and awareness of the Embassy’s work.

“...a new awareness to lose my complacency and pay attention to spiritual events.”

Rev. Malcolm Hedding
West Coast & Texas

Ashland, OR: Thursday Sept. 4th
Hollywood, CA: Sunday Sept 7th
Austin, TX: Thursday Sept. 11th
Yorba Linda, CA: Saturday Sept. 13th
San Diego, CA: Sunday Sept. 14th

More Info at: www.icejusa.org

Teaching tour 2008
Coffins for Child Killers

By David Parsons

Just two short weeks before Prime Minister Ehud Olmert announced his intention to step down, he was forced to make the “tormenting” decision to trade an unrepentant Lebanese child killer for the coffins of two IDF reservists. The bitter deal brought closure to the event that triggered the 2006 Lebanon War. But at what price?

Two years of hope and uncertainty over the fate of abducted IDF reservists Ehud Goldwasser and Eldad Regev came to an agonizing end in mid-July when Hizbullah handed over a pair of black coffins as part of a prisoner exchange that left Israel mourning two fallen soldiers and Lebanon celebrating the homecoming of five terrorists.

Normally such deals would be considered “lopsided,” but after witnessing up close one nation honoring so strongly the value of life and another rejoicing over a child-murderer, it would cheapen the memory of these two brave soldiers, as even their corpses are worth a thousand wretched Samir Kuntars.

Right up to the last minute, neither the Regev and Goldwasser families nor Israeli leaders knew for sure whether the two soldiers had survived the cross-border attack on their patrol on July 12, 2006, which ignited the Second Lebanon War. Hizbullah chief Hassan Nasrallah kept their deaths a secret to heighten the emotional pain, teasing Israelis right up to the eve of the swap that a “surprise” was waiting; that one or both might still be alive.

Nasrallah’s price for their return was emotionally steep as well. The Hizbullah border infiltration was intended to kidnap soldiers to use as bargaining chips for the release of Kuntar, a Lebanese Druze who joined a PLO splinter group and led a notorious terror raid on the coastal town of Nahariyah in 1979. Kuntar shot dead a policeman who intercepted his four-man cell, then killed a father in front of his four-year old daughter, saying he wanted it to be “the last thing she saw.” He then placed the young girl’s head against a rock and bashed in her skull with his rifle butt. The mother, meanwhile, was hiding in a nearby closet with a second infant daughter, whom she accidentally smothered to death while trying to muffle her cries.

Some Israelis soundly argued that freeing hardened terrorists like Kuntar and the four Hizbullah militiamen would only encourage more terrorism, and boost the standing of Nasrallah in the Arab world.

But in the end, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and his cabinet made the “tormenting” decision to approve the swap in order to relieve the suffering of the soldiers’ families and to maintain the Israeli army’s “moral” policy of always bringing its troops home.

For the embattled Olmert, the deal also helped bring some personal closure to a painful chapter that occurred under his watch, before he is driven from office. But
most cabinet ministers simply wanted to give an answer to the Goldwasser and Regev families concerning the fate of their sons.

In particular, Ehud’s wife Karnit Goldwasser had waged a very effective public campaign to bring back her husband. They had been married only ten months when he was abducted while on routine reserve duty, and no one wanted to see her become another Tami Arad.

Tami has been waiting more than twenty years for her husband Ron Arad to come home. The IAF navigator has been missing since his fighter jet went down over Sidon in 1986, and Hizbullah handed over a report as part of the recent exchange that claims they lost track of him two years later. The Arads were also newly weds and she bore him a child Ron has never seen. No Israeli can forget the decades of suffering written on Tami Arad’s face, and so a deal was struck with Hizbullah that would save Karnit Goldwasser from the same agonizing limbo.

Some contend that Israel’s record of trading hundreds of live terrorists for one or two Israelis – dead or alive – sets a bad precedent for the rest of the world when dealing with radical Muslims who take Western hostages. They also insist that most freed terrorists return to violence, and indeed Kuntar immediately donned a military uniform and vowed to continue the fight against Israel.

But Israel is a unique nation facing monstrous enemies and with an army that must answer for its citizen soldiers. It is also endeavoring to put into practice Jewish religious principles regarding the value of one single life.

Thus despite the enormous risks, it is hard to find fault with a people that place such worth on its missing comrades.


To the Families of Ehud Goldwasser and Eldad Regev:

On behalf of the worldwide constituency of the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem, I wish to convey our deepest sympathies to you on the loss of your dear and brave sons. We are receiving messages this day from Christians all over the world who sense your anguish and would wish to help you bear the pain of this very difficult moment.

We remember well when Shlomo and Zvi appeared on our stage during our annual Sukkot gathering in Jerusalem last fall and appealed for our assistance in resolving the fate of Ehud and Eldad. We honor the members of your respective families for the courageous struggle you have all waged to secure their return. For in these crises, you reminded everyone of the true value of their lives.

The trauma inflicted upon you is both personal and national. But we believe there is a special place in the heart of G-d for those who “mourn in Zion”; for those who pay dearly for the sake of Israel and her promised restoration. May Hashem comfort you in His fullest measure.

Lovingly yours,

Malcolm Hedding
ICEJ Executive Director
A Cry for Help at Rosh Hashana

Despite hi-tech economic growth the falling dollar, rising oil prices and terror have taken their toll on Israel’s poor

By Maxine Carlill

Does Israel still need our aid today in light of its strong economic growth? Sixty years after its modern rebirth, the nation is indeed facing severe social challenges, according to recent media reports. While the high-tech sector has led to accelerated economic growth, far too many families are being left behind.

Over the past decade, Israel went through an economic recession due to the second Palestinian intifada, forcing steep cuts in welfare and pension benefits that have yet to be restored.

More recently, the situation for the poor has further worsened as the weak American dollar has shrunk the funds available to non-profits in Israel and the surge in oil prices has led to sharp rises in food costs. The result is that more and more people simply cannot afford enough of the right nutritional foods.

ICEJ Aid has many opportunities to partner with Israeli charities that provide food for needy families, and there is no better time to provide this assistance than during major Jewish holidays.

In September, the nation will mark Rosh Hashana, the start of the New Year according to the Hebrew calendar. Also known as the Feast of Trumpets, the blast of the shofar will call the Jewish people to prepare their hearts for the coming High Holy Days.

It is a special time of celebration, reflection, and family traditions. For those families who barely have enough to live, their lack is only magnified at seasons like this.

The director of one food distribution project recently told us of a troubling visit to a family of Ethiopian Jewish immigrants to deliver a monthly care package. The mother met him with a hollow expression. When asked what was wrong, she fell onto his shoulder and cried. In their first few years in Israel, they received help from the government and aid organizations which enabled them to get by until her husband found work. But a decent paying job for a family with seven children never came. Then the special benefits and help from charities came to an end. Eventually, all they were left with was a low monthly income from the National Insurance.

She explained through tears that she has lost the strength to try and live from this money – since after the bills are paid she simply has nothing left, no matter how hard she tries.

Please help us to give Jewish families like this one a better start to their new year this Rosh Hashana! Time is urgent, so act now by making your tax-deductible gift of any amount online.

ICEJ AID: Rosh Hashana Appeal 2008

www.icejusa.org/NewYear
A number of Bible passages picture the unique phenomenon that we witness today of Christians from all over the world standing with and praying for Israel. This love for the people of Israel is ‘fueled’ by God’s Word, which contains many beautiful and humorous pictures of this reality. All of them constitute a surprise for Israel in that she never really expected to ‘win’ a family from the nations. This is an unexpected bride especially since this bride is committed to the God of Israel through one of Israel’s sons who has become the most famous Jew of all time - Jesus of Nazareth!

Jacob’s unexpected bride
(Genesis 29:21-30): Jacob, after cheating his brother Esau, goes into exile and works for his uncle Laban, who has one beautiful daughter Rachel and one not so beautiful daughter Leah. He serves seven years for the former, asks for her hand in marriage, and supposedly marries her but finds out the morning after the ceremony that he has been married off to Leah! In his eyes, she is something of an ‘ugly duckling’ but she does bear him many children. No doubt for Israel the gentile church has been something of an ugly duckling but today from all over the world this ‘bride’ has arrived in the tents of Jacob declaring a genuine and sincere love for him.

Joseph’s unexpected bride
(Genesis 45:1-8): The story of Joseph is well known. He is betrayed by his brothers, sold into slavery, falsely accused of a crime that he didn’t commit, sent to jail and then elevated to Pharaoh’s right hand of power. In the end, because of a famine in the land of Canaan, his Jewish brothers come seeking food and do not recognize him because he looks like an Egyptian. Joseph has saved Egypt from disaster and is revered throughout the land. He has ‘won’ a family by His suffering.

Today in every corner of the world because of the suffering of Jesus there is a family from every tribe and tongue (Egypt) that worship a Jewish savior and loves His people. This too is a picture of Israel’s unexpected bride.

Naomi’s unexpected bride
(Ruth 1:15-18): The story of Ruth the Moabitess is a romantic and beautiful one. Having gone to Moab, Naomi’s two sons marry Moabite women, Orpah and Ruth. As time goes by their husbands die and Naomi desires to return to Bethlehem in Judea. Orpah, meaning “happy go lucky,” stays in Moab but Ruth, meaning friendship, returns with Naomi to Israel and stands beside her embittered mother-in-law. Her love and commitment to Naomi and her people brings them new joy and hope and she ends up marrying into the royal family.

Today there are two streams of the church. The one like Orpah is unconcerned about Israel and happily goes on her way never responding to the great things that God is doing in Israel. The other is an ‘unexpected bride’ as she, like Ruth, is determined to go with Israel and be her friend. This amazes Naomi, who initially urges Ruth to return to Moab.

Today as well, Christian love and concern for Israel is considered strange and abnormal by some Jews but many have come to see that these Christians are true friends and they will stick by Israel through ‘thick and thin.’ In the end, we will all gain something in that Christians will understand their faith and Israel better and Israel will be made joyful by her new friends from ‘Moab!’

What Would Jesus Say... to the Church, the Nations and Israel Today?

A week-long Pastor’s Conference and Holy Land Tour
Hosted by the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem

March 6th-13th, 2009 ($1199*)
Call toll free for details: 1-866-393-5890

*For pastors only. Excludes airfare. Additional tour dates and discounted airline rates available.
Today, we stand on the threshold of a different kind of crisis. Gripped by economic uncertainty at home and war abroad, America is at a crossroads as it heads towards a presidential election this fall. Israel too finds itself in a similar predicament facing an acute crisis of leadership even as Iran edges ever closer towards the nuclear threshold.

“If My people,” the Lord promised King Solomon after he dedicated the Temple in Jerusalem, “who are called by My name will humble themselves and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land” (2 Chronicles 7:14).

This may be a familiar passage of scripture, but history testifies to its truth, not just in the experience of Britain at Dunkirk, but time and again throughout the centuries whenever God’s people have joined together to seek His face.

With just a few short weeks left before the presidential election on November 4, there has rarely been a more appropriate time to fast and pray for this nation; that our new president would use his influence wisely in defending Israel and in promoting the cause of liberty and justice around the world.

That’s why we are asking the ICEJ family here in the US to commit to setting time aside on each of the remaining Tuesdays leading up to November 4 to fast and pray for God’s mercy on our nation and on the outcome of the race for the White House.

Be part of the miracle. For more information go online to www.icejusa.org or call our office on (615) 895-9830 and commit to stand in prayer for the future of our nation today!

Susan Michael serves as Director of the USA Branch of the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem

If My People...
www.icejusa.org/pray