



WORD

from JERUSALEM

USA EDITION November 2008



Feast Draws Record Crowd

Almost 8,000 Christian pilgrims from nearly 100 countries took part in the ICEJ's annual Feast of Tabernacles celebration in Jerusalem this October, shattering all previous records in the event's 29-year history and defying the recent downturn in global financial markets.

Following the theme "The Lion of Judah", the Feast began with a meal and dazzling musical program at the Ein Gedi oasis. The evening featured a special musical performance by a troupe of 20 Chinese Christians who had participated in the gala Opening Ceremonies at the 2008 Beijing Summer Olympics.

After an energetic mix of classical, contemporary, and Hebraic music, the Feast worship team presented a colorful biblical drama depicting Jacob blessing his twelve sons and the Father's blessing over Jesus at His baptism by John. It was a fitting introduction to Feast's powerful opening message on Judah's tribal inheritance by Rev. Mosy Madugba, Director of ICEJ Nigeria.

BY DAVID PARSONS

The throng of Feast pilgrims then ascended to Jerusalem to enjoy the remainder of the week-long festivities, as the dynamic worship experience continued to enrapture audiences. Among the Israeli dignitaries on hand to bring greetings were Minister of Tourism Ruhama Avraham Balilla, Knesset Christian Allies Caucus chairman MK Benny Elon, Rabbi Shlomo Riskin, and Israel's former US ambassador Daniel Ayalon.

The highlight of the Feast for most pilgrims once again was the popular Jerusalem March. Waving flags and decked out in a bright array of national costumes, the Christian visitors spilled out into the streets to take part in the traditional parade through the heart of the Israeli capital. Singing songs in Hebrew and their native tongues, the marchers handed out small national flags and candy to throngs of Israeli children lining the route.

With 1500 participants, the largest delegation came from Brazil, while the delegations from Finland, Germany, Norway and the United States all numbered around 500 participants.

"Did you see the number of Brazilians here? That whole country must be empty," one Israeli onlooker told the AFP news agency. Pilgrims came from as far away as the Cocos Islands in the Indian Ocean, which have only 680 inhabitants.

"They all came not only for the dynamic worship experience of the Feast, but also to express their deep love for Israel," noted ICEJ executive director Malcolm Hedding. "Their presence here, despite the recent economic turmoil, is a strong statement of solidarity with Israel, especially in the light of the growing Iranian nuclear threat."

Already Israel's largest annual tourist event, the 2008 Feast of Tabernacles concluded with a special evening for Israeli guests followed by a moving Communion service for believers from all over the world. 





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's United States Branch is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization with offices in Washington, D.C. and in Murfreesboro, Tennessee. We are a non-denominational faith ministry supported by the voluntary contributions of our members and friends.

We invite you to join with us as we minister to Israel and the Jewish people worldwide by using the enclosed response card to make your donation to the ongoing work and witness of the ICEJ.



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Murfreesboro, TN 37133
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www.icejusa.org



Dear Friends,

Once again we have experienced the wonder and blessing of God's presence and love at our annual Christian celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles. We saw an impressive record number of pilgrims come up to Jerusalem despite the recent economic turmoil. Enjoy the images from the Feast in this edition of our monthly magazine.

There is no getting away from the fact that our very special Feast took place against the backdrop of a growing storm in the world and in Israel. These storm clouds, getting ever darker by the day, are seen in the financial meltdown of the world's financial systems and institutions. There is also the threat of global terrorism and the "dangerous game" of nuclear proliferation being played by countries like Iran and North Korea. When one couples these storm fronts with the rise, once again, of the Russian Bear, then the threatening sky looks very ominous.

In many ways Israel is at the heart of this growing crisis as Iran's self-declared ambition is the destruction of Israel. The Russian-American standoff over Georgia has only served to drive Moscow more towards Iran's side, while the growing weakness of the USA has serious implications for NATO and Israel. It would thus not be surprising if men's hearts were fainting because of fear!

However we need now, more than ever, to know that the God of the Bible has everything under control. In fact, He is shaking all things so that the flimsy foundations of man's making may be laid bare for what they are: Weak, unstable and of no eternal worth.

Also, the God of Israel continues to watch over Israel day and night. He never sleeps in this watchful process. We are confident of this and commit ourselves, as always, to standing beside her. This is the day of being "sifted like wheat" and the Church together with the world is in the Valley of Decision. Are we going to follow a "New World Order" or a biblical order of working with the purpose of God?

We, by the grace of God, have chosen the latter.

Yours in Jesus,

Rev. Malcolm Hedding
ICEJ Executive Director

Your Embassy in Jerusalem *and* Online...

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The Roar of the Lion of Judah

Excerpts from a keynote address delivered in Jerusalem on October 24 at the ICEJ's 2008 Feast of Tabernacles celebration: 'The Lion of Judah'

BY MALCOLM HEDDING

The Right to Roar

Jesus is empowered to roar as the Lion of Judah because He is also the Lamb. The roar of the Lion is that powerful shaking voice of One who died for the world and patiently waits for repentance until His judgment can no longer be deferred.

His loving patience and His absence of judgment has been construed as an opportunity to further rebel against God and rejoice in evil. The cross, where amazing love was poured out for every human, is the mandate for the Lion to roar. This is only the beginning! His roar will cover the earth! (2 Peter 3:9)

The Book of Revelation warns that this roar will be chiefly heard in the collapse of the world's financial systems.

The Right to Roar in Scrutiny

The roar of the Lion is not only heard in the nations and their systems, but also in the House of God – the Church! In fact, His roar of judgment begins with the household of God (1 Peter 4:17).

Much of the mainstream Church has turned its back on the Lamb. That is, it denies the power of His finished work and espouses a faith that is foreign to the Scriptures, to their own historical traditions, and to God Himself.



2008 FEAST OF TABERNACLES
THE LION OF JUDAH

All the while, Evangelicals are painted as intolerant, radical fundamentalists. I tell you, the roar of the Lion is here! It may even be among us today if we don't humble ourselves before Him (2 Timothy 3:5).

The day of scrutiny is here and who will stand!? The Lion we serve is supremely concerned with character and not gifts. His work in us is chiefly aimed at producing His likeness! (Romans 8:29)

The Right to Roar in Warning

The warning of the Lion's roar can be summed up in one scripture: "Come out of her, My people!" (Revelation 18:4). Get out of Babylon. This means get it out of your heart! Be the Bride! Have purity of devotion to the Lion!

The Right to Roar for His Own

The modern-day restoration of Israel is not a coincidence, but rather evidence of God's faithfulness to His Covenant cut with Abraham 4000 years ago. The Lion has roared, calling for His children to come home (Hosea 11:10-11). This roar has gone throughout the earth calling for His children and for the foreigner to bring them home! The purpose of God is being worked out in Israel; it shall not fail! 🌟

Rev. Malcolm Hedding serves as ICEJ Executive Director in Jerusalem



Feast 2008: United Against Hatred

ICEJ Launches Unprecedented Alliance to Indict Ahmadinejad

BY DAVID PARSONS

With October's record-breaking Feast of Tabernacles celebration as a backdrop, the ICEJ announced a growing number of prominent Christian ministries who are joining an unprecedented Jewish-Christian alliance to push for the indictment of Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad for incitement to commit genocide against Israel.

Over recent weeks, such prominent Christian leaders as CBN founder Dr. Pat Robertson, former US presidential candidate Gary Bauer, Rev. Lou Sheldon of the Traditional Values Coalition, and Catholic League president Bill Donohue have endorsed the message of a global petition delivered by the ICEJ to United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon in September demanding that Ahmadinejad be indicted for his persistent threats to eliminate Israel.

The petition drive, which was signed by over 55,000 Christians from more than 120 countries, was launched last year in support of an indictment initiative spearheaded by former Israeli ambassador to the UN, Dr. Dore Gold. That effort has previously been endorsed by Nobel Laureate Elie Wiesel, Harvard law professor Alan Dershowitz, Canadian MP Irwin Cotler and former US ambassador to the UN John Bolton, among other luminaries.

"With the addition of Pat Robertson, Gary Bauer and other prominent Christian leaders, we are making an important and bold statement that Jews and Christians have joined hands like never before to confront the looming Iranian nuclear threat against Israel," said ICEJ Executive Director Malcolm Hedding. "We are confident that the growing momentum of this global campaign will eventually succeed in holding Ahmadinejad accountable for his radioactive rhetoric against the Jewish state."

Lending his support to the widening Christian efforts to speak out against Iran, Dr. Gold told journalists at the Feast of Tabernacles celebration that there are legal grounds for the indictment campaign.

"The UN's own Convention to Prevent and Punish the Crime of Genocide specifically mentions just that - preventing genocide, before it happens," Gold said. "It lists 'direct and public incitement to commit genocide' as a specific offense, and Ahmadinejad has done that time and time again."

Responding to some who have claimed that Ahmadinejad's words have been taken out of context or mis-translated, Gold who now runs the influential Israel-based think-tank, the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, emphasized that "that argument loses its credibility as soon as the Iranians write his exact words on the head of a Shihab-3 missile."

"Challenging the Iranian threat can only be a moral issue," Gold added. "There are plenty of reasons why countries won't support an indictment of Ahmadinejad - economic worries, fear of terrorism. We have to make it a moral issue."

In September, the Iranian leader conducted a highly-publicized visit to the United States, in which he used the United Nations' podium to launch yet another anti-Semitic tirade, accusing "Zionists" of dominating financial and political centers in Europe and the US. Afterwards Ahmadinejad dined with a group of Mennonite and Quaker pacifists, who explained afterward that it was their duty to pursue peace, no matter with whom.

"We were outraged that [Ahmadinejad] was on American soil in the first place, and that Christians met with him at all," said Hedding. "We fear that it's an appeasement of wickedness."

"We represent the true Christian voice when it comes to the relationship between Christians and Israel," Hedding continued. "And after the failure of churches to speak out in the face of Nazi Germany's anti-Semitism in the 1930s, we dare not be silent again." 🌍



SPEAKING OUT: AMBASSADOR DORE GOLD (LEFT) AND REV. MALCOLM HEDDING (RIGHT) ADDRESS THE MEDIA DURING THE 2008 FEAST OF TABERNACLES CELEBRATION AT THE INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION CENTER IN JERUSALEM.

Feast 2008: Dr. Ulla Järvillehto

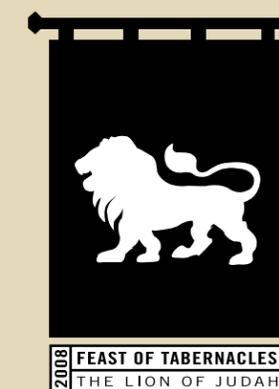
Surgeon, Parliamentarian, and Champion of Aliyah: ICEJ Finnish Branch Founder Receives the 2008 Nehemiah Award

BY MALCOLM HEDDING

The prestigious 2008 Nehemiah Award, which annually recognizes Christian leaders with an established record of supporting Israel was presented to Dr. Ulla Järvillehto during October's Feast of Tabernacles celebration in Jerusalem. Throughout her long career as a surgeon, parliamentarian, and advocate for Jewish aliyah, Dr. Järvillehto has proven herself indeed worthy of this honor.

Born in Tampere, Finland in 1938 and born again in 1949, Ulla first served within the Body of Christ as a Sunday school teacher and a speaker in various interdenominational meetings, such as Christian women's congresses and pro-Israel events. Meanwhile, she earned a medical degree in 1965 from the University of Turku, later completing studies at the University of Helsinki to become a specialist in obstetrics and gynecology.

In 1962, she married Kaarlo Järvillehto, a pediatric surgeon, and today they have two daughters, two sons, one foster-daughter, and 10 grandchildren.



In time, Ulla was elected a Member of Parliament in Finland from 1975 to 1983, representing the Christian Party, and served as a delegate at the Inter-Parliamentary Union, where she often sponsored and voted for pro-Israel resolutions.

Back in private life, Ulla has dedicated the years since to pro-Israel advocacy and particularly as a pioneer and champion of aliyah from the former Soviet Union. She was founder and chairperson of the Finnish Branch of the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem from 1984 to 2008, and served on our international Board of Trustees until last year. Ulla has also chaired the Exodus Committee, an alliance of the four main Finnish Christian organizations involved in supporting Israel.

Under her leadership, Finnish Christians in particular have assisted tens of thousands of Russian-speaking Jews to come home to Israel.

Dr. Ulla Järvillehto is a remarkable woman, a gift to the Body, and a blessing to Israel. Congratulations Ulla! 🌍





Living History

ICEJ AID helps hundreds celebrate the Jewish New Year with dignity, enlisting Israeli teens to help distribute holiday gifts and learn more about the elderly Holocaust survivors 'next door'.

BY NICOLE YODER & MAXINE CARLILL

At the call of the shofar this Rosh Hashana, families throughout Israel blessed each other with a wish for a New Year of plenty as they ushered in the so-called 'Days of Awe' – the start of the fall High Holiday season. It is a unique time in the Jewish calendar which combines introspection and celebration culminating in the 8-day festival of Succot, better known in scripture as Tabernacles, the 'Feast of Joy'.

Increasing Anxiety

Yet, with the dramatic plunge in the global markets, many of Israel's most vulnerable communities viewed the New Year holiday this past October with increasing anxiety.

Despite the recent wage and employment increases in Israel, poverty levels have also risen in the past twelve months. The latest government statistics tell of some 420,000 impoverished families representing some 1.6 million Israelis, half of whom are children. In a country with a population of just over 7 million, this represents well over 20% of Israelis as the gap between the rich and the poor widens.

Of greatest concern, however, is the demographic breakdown of poverty in Israel. Nearly 20% of recent immigrants live below the poverty line, 32% of Christians, 50% of Arab-Muslims and 57% of ultra-orthodox Jews. Key sectors in society are being left behind, among them the dwindling number of elderly Holocaust survivors.

“Key sectors in society are being left behind: Recent immigrants, Christians, and ultra-orthodox Jews...”

Miri and Daniella

For Miri, a single mother and immigrant from South America, such statistics come as no surprise. Although Miri works part time in a low paying job and receives minimal welfare assistance, nearly her entire income must go to cover bills leaving her with little to spend on basic needs. Faced with poor health and no support from the father of her child, Miri is alone in a difficult situation. Anxious to do all she can to improve her situation, Miri is currently studying Hebrew to enable her to find work in her profession of business management.

Daniella, a Jerusalem resident coping with long-term sickness, faced similar challenges after being separated from her husband due to his continual abuse and outbursts of rage. When her son died unexpectedly, she fell into deep depression. Daniella lives off a minimal disability pension and struggles to buy even the simplest of foods.

Not Forgotten

Miri and Daniella are just two of the hundreds helped over Rosh Hashana by ICEJ AID, the Embassy's social assistance arm. Holiday food baskets were distributed by Embassy staff and Israeli partners as a direct expression of the love of Christians from around the world. In Kiryat Gat, an Ethiopian immigrant town, community leaders said the impact of the Embassy's holiday baskets went far beyond the food they contained.

“The social welfare department in our town hasn't been able to give out even a symbolic gift at the holiday for the past 4-5 years,” said local aid worker Avraham Abouya. “If we did not receive help from ICEJ AID and others, we would have nothing to give to the many needy in our community. Your gift lets them feel that someone cares about them and that they are not forgotten.”

Living History

Northwards in the Golan town of Katzrin, nestled in the hills above the Sea of Galilee, Embassy staff took part in a unique educational project using local 12th grade students to carry baskets of fruit and traditional holiday foods to local Holocaust survivors, including many that are helped regularly through the ICEJ's Adopt-a-Holocaust-Survivor program.

Vladimir and Vera

ICEJ AID Deputy Director Yudit Setz (pictured right) tells of her encounter with Vladimir and Vera, during the recent Rosh Hashana food drive. These elderly Russian Holocaust survivors are not yet part of the Embassy's adoption program and live in great need and despair. A simple visit, Yudit admits, can be life-changing...

“We went to the home of Vladimir and Vera, a husband and wife, not yet 'adopted'. Both were in pain, Vladimir had recently undergone an operation, his wife suffered from health problems that seriously affected her legs.

“She cried as she told us of their need for financial help to cover their medical needs and how she wanted to die because of the constant pain. Like many older immigrants, they have not been able to master Hebrew, but we were able to understand enough of their Yiddish to get by.

“There were not only tears but a lot of joy at our visit. Vera pulled out old photos and showed them with so much pleasure. This couple represent many who are lonely and in poor health, who live with just their memories. It was a joy to give them a gift for them this significant Jewish festival.”



The students first learned about the history of the Holocaust before fanning out across the town to distribute ICEJ AID holiday packages to the living witnesses of that history in their community. The experience left a deep impact on many of the teenagers who until then knew nothing of the elderly survivors 'next door'.

“I discovered there were Holocaust survivors living in my street,” one girl responded. “I will definitely be visiting them from now on.”

Need for Belonging

For many of the elderly in Katzrin, it was the first time they had received a home visit on Rosh Hashana for many years. Lydia, herself a survivor who came from the Ukraine 18 years ago, works with other survivors from the former Soviet Union. She told us that not all the immigrants have family in Israel and they are so happy to receive help and attention during the holidays. “It helps them to feel part of Israel,” she said.

“I discovered there were Holocaust survivors living in my street,” responded one Israeli girl. “I will definitely be visiting them from now on”

The Katzrin project was also duplicated in the Tel Aviv suburb of Holon where three hundred and fifty elderly received generous ICEJ AID food baskets and blankets also hand-delivered by the young people of the town.

Thank you to all our supporters whose faithful giving made such a tangible difference in so many Israeli lives.



Adopt a Holocaust Survivor today:
www.icejusa.org/adopt



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