

October 2002

Pastor-Advisory Board

Rev. Earl Bradley
Capital Region Ministries, Olympia

Rev. Randy Burtis
Luis Palau Crusades

Rev. Mike Fogaras
Gateway Christian Center, Olympia

Rev. Jon Hagebusch
Word of Life, Lynden

Dr. Stephen Hammond
Cornerstone Bible Church, Enumclaw

Rev. Ted Hanson
Abundant Life Fellowship, Bellingham

Rev. Keith Lamm
Yakima Evangelical Church

Dr. Jim Modlish
Faith Baptist, Chehalis

Rev. Scott Montagne
Bayside Community Church, Kingston

Rev. Jon Oletske
Stone Church, Yakima

Rev. Ken Parsley
Church on the Move, Yakima

Rev. Jim Ripley
Neighborhood Christian Cntr, Tumwater

Rev. Reuben Sapien
The Sanctuary Church, Lynnwood

Rev. Dan Secrist
Faith Assembly of Lacey

Dr. Ken Squires
Marysville First Assembly

Rev. Dwain Wolfe
New Horizons Christian Center, Fife

Board of Directors

Paul Middleton
Chairman, Olympia

Dennis DeFries
Secretary, Olympia

Jim Winterstein
Treasurer, Olympia

Scott Blanton
Vancouver

Dorsey Holt
Shelton

Jere Irwin
Yakima

Peggy Kirk
Montesano

Dick Raport
Camano Island

Jim Robinson
Spokane

Fred Weiss
Bellevue

Rick Forcier
Executive Director

Staff

Sharon Crain
Administrative Assistant

Beth Davis
Accounting

Julie Gallagher
Prayer Coordinator

Rusty Howell
Field Director

Steve Matthews
Field Director

“Next Year in Jerusalem”

It's remarkable to think that the most significant prophetic event of the Bible (next to the Cross) that signals the soon return of Messiah has been fulfilled in our generations. On November 29, 1947, an ad hoc committee of the United Nations voted 33 to 13 with 10 members abstaining to allow the establishment of a Jewish State in Palestine. That historic vote, coupled with Israel's subsequent declaration of statehood on May 15, 1948, brought to a close, nearly two thousand years of forced exile for Jacob.

But much like a previous return from exile during the time of Zerubbabel, Ezra and Nehemiah, Arabs and other refugee groups that had been living in the area were not exactly tying “yellow ribbons round the old oak tree” on that memorable spring day as the British surrendered military control of the region and scurried for cover.

Palestine, the name given the region by Roman conquerors in 70 AD, was partitioned according to UN sanctions to accommodate both Arabs and Jews. Jerusalem itself was divided down the middle. But it became apparent that serious trouble was ahead when Arab leaders persuaded an estimated 630,000 Arab refugees to leave Israel, promising to purge the land of Jews.

During the past 54 years of statehood, Israel has had to go to war no fewer than five times to defend its right to exist. It has convincingly won each time—despite overwhelming odds and a world that grows less tolerant of the Jewish State with each passing day. Only America has stood resolutely behind Israel for most of those years, and even that support, some worry, is waning.

Jesus prophesied both the destruction and restoration of Israel in Luke 21:24 when he said, *And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.* Within 40 years of that prophecy, Roman armies laid siege to Jerusalem putting a million Jews to the sword and dragging off another two million in chains to serve as slaves in various parts of the empire.

For a brief period after the fall of Jerusalem, a small group of Jewish zealots called *Sicarii*, continued to resist by taking over fort Masada (Hebrew for *mountain fortress*) which looms 1400 feet above the Dead Sea. In their final hours before committing mass suicide rather than surrender to Rome, the *Sicarii* buried a scroll in the synagogue with the words of prophecy from Ezekiel 37; a sign of their belief that one day the nation of Israel would be miraculously resurrected.

It is quite amazing, even miraculous, that the Jewish people retained their language, their culture and their religion through the Diaspora by transmitting the hope of God's promises from one generation to the next. Although Jews learned to adapt to the nations within whose borders they lived, they unceasingly prayed for their return to Zion.

“Next year in Jerusalem” became an expression of hope at each Passover that one day, they would indeed, celebrate their special feast “at home” in Israel.

That hope, was remarkably enhanced as a result of some unusual circumstances that occurred during, if not because of, World War I.

Great Britain and the Allies were seriously bogged down in their efforts against the Central Powers which included Germany, Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria, and the Ottoman Empire. The most pressing concern for the Allies was the rapidly depleting store of explosives due to a critical shortage of acetone—essential to the manufacture of ammunition.

Meanwhile, Dr. Chaim Weizmann, a Jewish scientist, and subject of England at the time, just happened to discover TNT and presented the formula to the government. When grateful officials wanted to know how they might reward him, Dr. Weizmann told them he wanted nothing for himself but they could in fact do something for his people. As a result, Arthur J. Balfour, the British Foreign Secretary issued a declaration on November 2, 1917, which read in part:

“His Majesty’s Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object.”

Barely a month later, British expeditionary forces moved within striking distance of Jerusalem and the fierce Ottoman Turks who controlled it. On the evening of December 8th, General Sir Edmund Allenby knelt in his tent and prayed that God would spare both sides the horrors of a bloody siege that everyone was expecting.

At first light, Allenby sent several planes ahead to scout out the area. Never having seen a plane before, the badly frightened Turks fled from the city without a single shot being fired—perhaps in fulfillment of Isaiah 31:5 which says; *As birds flying, so will the Lord of hosts defend Jerusalem; defending also He will deliver it; and passing over He will preserve it.*

As Allenby approached the Jaffa Gate two days later, his troops saw him dismount before entering the old city—an unspoken gesture that he came to Jerusalem as a pilgrim and not as a conqueror.

While there are many remarkable stories associated with the abrupt re-emergence of ancient Israel, the point is that God has special plans for His people that will not fail. We must not wring our hands in despair of every bad report that comes from the developing situations in Palestine and throughout the Middle East. Rather, because we recognize that God is in control, we must faithfully fulfill our charge to pray for the peace of Jerusalem (PS 122:6).

In addition to our prayers, we must look for ways to bless Israel as well (Gen 12:3). History bears witness to the truth of Scripture that God is always pleased to use a Darius, a General Allenby, or a government in need of TNT to bless his special people.

Later this week, the Christian Coalition of America will gather at the Ellipse near the White House with other supporters of Israel, to publicly proclaim that Christians love and support our Jewish brethren and stand with them in their fight for freedom. Many thousands of people are expected to attend the special rally.

On the same day, we will be participating in a conference of Christian and Jewish leaders in Seattle. Be in prayer for us—and we’ll see you “next year in Jerusalem!”

Rick Forcier

Executive Director