

25 September 2009

Greetings from Tyler,

We woke up to the first bright, cool, dry morning of the season. That's after nearly two weeks of a combination of drizzle and frog strangulation. It's unbelievable that the Feast is upon us, and this will be the last update until we return. We've had no rest from outrageous reminders of just how off its axis our world has become.

No doubt, you've seen or heard at least some of what transpired in New York at the United Nations this week. A rogue's gallery of demented dictators (Khadaffi, Ahmadinijad, Chavez) ranted and railed against the United States, Israel and their allies, punctuated with praise for our current president. The bright spot, if it can be called that, was the sincere, heartfelt address by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu when he tried to appeal to the decency of mankind to recognize the historical fact of the holocaust. He also asked for recognition of the danger that Israel faces from a prospective nuclear armed Iran.

Then, just this morning the news broke that Iran has a secret underground nuclear enrichment facility that isn't secret any more. It is all too logical that Iran has been lying through its teeth about its nuclear program, again. Surely this calls for diplomacy! Sanctions maybe!

A couple of days ago former President Jimmy Carter's national security advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski called for the United States to shoot down Israeli military aircraft if they try to take action against Iran's nuclear facilities! What an unbelievable, shocking suggestion, until you consider the source. But it's getting harder by the day to determine whose side our country is on, from the eastern Europe/Russian equation to the Middle Eastern Muslim/Israeli equation, to the South American dictators versus small, poor free countries. Now we can't even tell whether our own government is for or against American citizens.

We're not the only ones who are nervous about all the contradictions between what we thought we knew we could depend upon, and the disturbing realities that confront us every time we hear current news. American allies all over the world are wondering where they stand as the mysterious concept of "change" gradually takes shape.

Yesterday we were treated to a praise/worship service, the likes of which we've never seen before in the United States. You know the one. Little school children had been taught to sing praises, with a catchy beat, to a man their teacher apparently believes is worthy of worship. It's precisely the kind of indoctrination of the innocent that has routinely taken place under the world's most brutal regimes, as you well know. You may have seen another promotional video making the rounds, of Hollywood A-list celebrities pledging service, not to our country, but to our president. And then there was the group of musicians and celebrities that joined in song in Geneva to stop global warming. It seems the waves of propaganda are never ending.

I could go on about the bleak prospects we face as a people and as a nation, but am confident you all have a handle on it. Right now we need to direct our thoughts to the God-ordained days before us, the Sabbath, the Day of Atonement and the Feast of Tabernacles. There has never been a time when prayer and fasting was more pertinent to us as a people and as a church. I've even heard one popular talk radio host suggest that his audience "join the Jews" in fasting, and pray for our republic. And that's not all, we're also to pray for the coming of God's Kindom, and that is precisely what we'll be honouring at the Feast of Tabernacles.

We hope everyone will have safe travel and a wonderful environment in which to observe the Feast this year. It will be great for so many of us to be together again, doing what God has ordained for all the right reasons, amid a culmination of national and international events the likes of which we've never seen. Have a great Sabbath, Day of Atonement and Feast of Tabernacles.

I'll hope to see you there.

Mark Armstrong