

The Foundation for Relief and Reconciliation in the Middle East (FRRME)

Canon Andrew White's Update

Middle East Daily Update 30 September 2014

Dear Friends,

Greetings from Baghdad. People are very fearful the nation looks as if it has collapsed. The usual hectic and crazy streets were this morning almost empty. The news from our friends in areas surrounding Baghdad is equally worrying, the Islamic State (ISIS or DAASH as they are known locally) are very close to Baghdad. We do not really know what is happening all we know is that people are very afraid. We know that civilians have been killed in air strikes; we know that there are huge battles with ISIS; and we know that our army is not very efficient.

This morning I was with one of my soldiers who is assigned by the government to protect me. I asked him what he would do if he saw ISIS coming. He told me he would take off his uniform and run. So I asked if he took seriously his role as a soldier to fight and protect his people, he assured me he did not. He told me he just did it because he needed the money.

Meanwhile yesterday at Church I spoke on the subject of why we must love Israel. I posted the following brief posting:

"Why We Must Love Israel. This was the title of my sermon today, quite an interesting title for a sermon in Iraq. The sermon was based on Romans Chapter 11, "do not boast over the root for the root supports you". The sermon was well received as I have been working on the issue for so long. Because Abraham is so important to us here the issue of the Yehudi and us is taken very seriously. Despite being in Iraq I love the Jews and Arabs, Israelis and Palestinians, and Iraqis and G-d loves them all too."

I received a barrage of postings from people whether they hated Israel and saw them as anti-Palestinian or they were totally for Israel. What most people failed to understand was that loving Israel was far more than love for a State - it was love for a people. Love for a people that my Lord Jesus was part of and that our salvation came from. Though can we see that we are called to love Jews and Arabs alike but that loving Israel is not an option for those of us who love Yeshuah, we have to. We must not forget the history. We as Christians have got to accept that our theology was responsible for the development of Anti-Semitism.

At 2.40 am this morning I had a call from one of the security chiefs at the US Embassy here in Baghdad. Congressman Trent Franks in DC, who was very concerned about my security situation, had contacted them. He in turn had been contacted by one of our US Board members. We were with the congressman just last week, he is a good friend. The issue that was so worrying to the Embassy was that I no longer even have a badge to get into the Green Zone. I have a badge to get into the US and British Embassies but I cannot even get to them without being able to get into the Green Zone. We were able to get in until all the Badges to the Green Zone were replaced 6 months ago. So the Embassy say they will work at getting us the badge today. I really pray that this will happen today.

Added to all these problems my hearing aids got lost when the cleaner was cleaning my room. Without these I can hear very little and my work becomes really difficult. I have managed to order new ones, which my staff who are coming to Israel with me next week can hopefully take with them. I just pray that G-d will help me find the £2700 I need to buy them. No insurance is covered in Iraq so we cannot claim for things lost or stolen here.

The latest news this morning appears to be that the further advance of ISIS towards Baghdad appears to have been halted. How far they are from here varies according to who is providing the information but they appear to be 5-15 miles away and in the last 12 hours have not got closer. So we live in hope. Sorry this update is longer than usual but rather a lot is happening. We seriously need your prayer.

With every blessing,
Andrew