

Dear members of the Israeli government, dear members of the Knesset, dear survivors of the Holocaust, distinguished guests of honor from around the world, ladies and gentlemen, brothers and sisters, dear friends!

First of all, I want to express my deep gratitude to the government and to the parliament of Israel for launching and hosting such a unique event as we experience today. It is a strong expression of the respect and friendship which has grown over the last years between the government and other representatives of the modern state of Israel and Christian leaders and movements from around the world. And as a German, being sensitive to our history, I want to express on behalf of the whole German delegation how honored and privileged we are, to be part of this distinguished gathering. May this hour even the more deepen our awareness of common roots, values, interests and hopes in order to strengthen future cooperation in a spirit of mutual respect, friendship, and trust.

Speaking as a German at this solemn event today, I want to take this opportunity to bring our attention to a unique date, only a few weeks away from today: On the 20th of January 2012 we will commemorate the 70th anniversary of that unspeakable event, which went into the history books by the name of "Wannsee-Konferenz". On January 20, 1942, 15 of the leading officials of the Nazi-government came together under the leadership of SS-chief Reinhard Heydrich and his assistant Rudolf Eichmann to masterplan the annihilation of the whole European Jewry: 11 Million Jewish man and women, old and young should be erased without exemption within the shortest possible time. This conference was the last and final milestone, the last and final escalation of what Hitler called "die Endlösung" the "final solution", later to be called the Holocaust, the Shoah, the greatest manifestation of evil that mankind has ever seen.

Ladies and Gentlemen, it is unbelievable, but it is true: Today, only 70 years later, with hundreds of thousands of survivors of Hitlers Holocaust still amongst us, a next Holocaust is in preparation. Iran is working on its atomic bomb, Hisbollah, Hamas, the Moslem Brotherhood, Al Kaida and many other enemies of Jews and Christians alike are today actively pursuing the destruction of Israel and the annihilation of the Jewish people as a stepping stone toward world

dominance. Only 70 years later! And the most perplexing thing is that most of the world does not seem to be able or willing to see the historic parallel to the times and goals of Hitler and Nazi-Germany – as represented by the Wannsee-Konferenz, and take the action that is needed in order to fill the global, emphatic “never again” vow after World War II with credibility and substance today – in this time of testing and in this time of need.

On this background, I want to address my Christian brothers and sisters around the globe with the political leaders of Israel and leaders within the survivors’ networks as witnesses: In this time of testing and in this time of need, while most of the nations are either antagonistic or lukewarm in their response to the serious threat of a second holocaust – it is our time and opportunity as the church of Jesus to raise up and stand strong on behalf of the Jewish people, on behalf of the Jewish state of Israel and on behalf of the Holocaust survivors still amongst us. This is our time and opportunity to utter a wake up call within our Christian churches, networks and denominations and to stand strong and united in prayer and action as “salt and light” within our nations and towards our own leaders and governments. As our visible “fruit of repentance” and a sign that we have learned a lesson from some of the darkest chapters of church history in relation to the Jewish people.

I want to close my remarks with a concrete proposal: How would it be, if the leaders of the nation of Israel, and leaders of Christian movements, networks and ministries all over the world – together with the victims and witnesses of the Holocaust - form a global Coalition? A global Coalition for Israel? With a twofold goal in mind:

1. To continue to raise global awareness and humanitarian support for Holocaust survivors in Israel as long as they are still amongst us.
2. To complement this by a global campaign of education concerning the history of the Shoah and concerning the battle against lack of knowledge, minimization or even denial of it.

The window of opportunity is short. Survivors and witnesses of the Holocaust will not be amongst us for too long. 2015 we will see the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II and of the Holocaust which will be another pivotal date of global awareness and attention with regard to the Holocaust. This date could

give us a concrete bench mark to work towards. This would give us at least 3 years, which we could use together, as a global coalition for Israel with this twofold mission as uniting factor.

Ladies and Gentlemen! As long as Holocaust survivors are still amongst us, the last chapter of the history of the Holocaust is not yet written. It is in our hands how this last chapter will end. Will it end on a note of loneliness, bitterness and pain? Their sufferings of past being forgotten or even denied? Their present needs and fears unattended?

Or will this last chapter of the Holocaust will end on a redemptive note - with honor and dignity for the survivors – and with a common testimony and effort to let their voices – and the history behind it - be heard all around the world?

May we find wisdom and courage to recognize this unique window of opportunity and to respond to it appropriately as a clear signal that indeed we as Christians have learned our lessons from history and are able and willing to give substance and credibility to the global vow after World War II: “Never again!”. May god help us all! May god bless Israel!

(Harald Eckert)

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