The Balfour Project

In November 1917 the British Government issued the Balfour Declaration which promised a homeland for the Jewish people in Palestine, while also promising to protect the rights of the existing indigenous Arab population. In 1915 Britain had already promised the Arabs that after the war they would be granted independence in their lands, including Palestine.

In 1922 the League of Nations gave Britain a mandate to administer Palestine, requiring her to implement the Balfour Declaration and to prepare Palestine for independence. Subsequent British Governments upheld the promise to create a Jewish homeland but did not fulfill the promise to protect the rights of the Arab people, the majority. Israel, a homeland for the Jewish people, has been achieved while Palestinian independence is still to be fulfilled.

Following the Balfour Declaration there were a series of contradictory promises, culminating when the mandate was surrendered in 1948, so that Britain gave up its pledge to protect Palestinian rights by withdrawing its forces. A total of 750,000 Palestinians became refugees.

The Balfour Project invites the Government and people of the United Kingdom to mark the centenary of the Balfour Declaration on November 2, 2017 by:

- Learning what the Balfour Declaration means for both Jews and Arabs.
- Acknowledging that while a homeland for the Jewish people has been achieved, the promise to protect the rights of the Palestinian people has not yet been fulfilled.
- Urging the people and elected representatives of the UK to take effective action to promote justice, security and peace for both peoples.

Action is needed to make churches and communities aware of the Balfour Project and to work on it during 2017, including the offering of clear education and the writing of letters to MPs. Make November 2, 2017 a national and local anniversary and a challenge to Government. Let the Christians Aware office know of your prayers and action and they will be collected for the project.

Christians Aware, 2 Saxby Street, Leicester LE2 0ND (barbarabutler@christiansaware.f9.co.uk).

Lord, bring comfort to all the suffering people of the Middle East. Bring hope, trust and healing.

Message from the late Bishop John Austin Baker, former Bishop of Salisbury and chaplain to the Speaker of the House of Commons:

"There is no peace without repentance; There is no repentance without knowledge; There is no knowledge without education."

The Balfour Project so truly fulfills these principles that it can only do good, where good is desperately needed, and deserves all the help we can give.