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After watching his village burned to the ground in South Sudan ‘Emmanuel’ saw his younger sister raped by an Arab Muslim militia then killed alongside his mother. He was then tied up and marched for days to Khartoum, the northern capital of Sudan. He was only thirteen.

In Khartoum, he was sold into slavery to a member of the Arab government and forced to convert from Christianity to Islam. His master told him: “You are a black boy and you are now in slavery to me... If you are not a Muslim you’re not a human being.”

Emmanuel knew that he would be killed if he was caught attempting to escape, but fled anyway, braving the perilous journey to Egypt. There he registered with the United Nations as a refugee from Sudan.

In Cairo, though no longer a slave, he was repeatedly imprisoned, interrogated and tortured for his Christian faith and forbidden from associating with other Sudanese believers.

So once again Emmanuel took his life in his hands and began the arduous trek across the Sinai desert. There he paid Bedouin shepherds to take him to the Israeli border, in a final attempt to reach freedom at last.

He was one of the fortunate ones.

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Dear Friends,

A recent report coming out of the United Kingdom stated that the Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, has spoken of the inevitability of the introduction of certain aspects of Sharia Law to the British legal system. This of course sent shockwaves through British society and reminds us yet again of the well conceived agenda of radical Islam to get a foothold in western countries with the express idea of subverting them.

Instead of embracing the laws, culture and values of these countries, they instead set up ‘ghettos’ or even ‘no go’ areas, such as in Greater Paris, where Sharia law reigns unchallenged. This includes the suppression of women’s rights and honor killings.

We warned about this strategy of “creeping takeover” years ago. In fact, as a ministry we have always stated in our papers and articles that the goal is to set up Sharia law within the very heart of the democratic west.

In concert with this is the intimidation factor that says no one can criticize Islam in any fashion or form without receiving an aggressive, if not violent, backlash. Western societies are caving in to this intimidation and thereby forfeiting their democratic right to free speech to the radicals within Islam. More disturbing still is the fact that sleepy western countries are defending this removal of their rights and laws in the name of political correctness.

Naturally, and sadly, alongside all of this goes the surge in anti-Semitism. Israel is now openly vilified in the capitals of Europe and no one says anything. In France a young Jewish man was attacked, brutally tortured, and left to die on a railroad line for simply being a Jew!

Here in Israel rockets and missiles continue to rain down on Israel’s southern towns and villages because the radical Islamic group Hamas is fully dedicated to Israel’s destruction. No amount of peace talks, negotiating or conferences will change this. Hizballah to the North and Iran to the East have similar goals. All the while much of the west plays a game of appeasement. As I write, Islamic radicals are rampaging through Southeast Asia, Sudan, wider Africa, the Middle East, Pakistan, Iraq, Afghanistan, Europe, England and elsewhere. Thousands have died and are dying. The questions is, “Who will stand up and speak out?”

Yours in Jesus,

Rev. Malcolm Hedding,
ICEJ Executive Director

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Sign up a friend for a FREE copy of our flagship monthly publication by returning the enclosed response card.
Good Foundations

By Malcolm Hedding

The biblical basis of support for Israel is clear and challenging. If we are going to serve the purposes of God correctly, we must be sure about the biblical foundations that we stand upon. If we compromise these, we dishonor not only the Scriptures but the God we serve and ultimately the people we claim to stand with. When and if this happens we lose our ‘salt’ and become irrelevant to the plan and purpose of God.

Israel’s Existence

The biblical foundation upon which the existence of Israel stands is the Abrahamic Covenant. This great covenant of the Bible not only brings Israel into existence and bequeaths land to her, but it also gives the reason for this heavenly initiative. Namely, that because of Israel and her land, all nations will be blessed (Genesis 12:1-3; Genesis 17:7-8).

Israel is thus a means to an end!

The end is the salvation of the nations. Israel and the land of Canaan is thus a type of springboard for a divine plan to reach a lost and broken world. Jesus said, “Salvation is of the Jews” (John 4:22). Paul not only echoed these words in Romans 9, but in Galatians he clearly teaches that the blessing that comes to the world through Abraham and his children is redemptive by the once-for-all finished work of Messiah (Galatians 3:8-9).

The bold heavenly plan has been mediated to the world through Israel. No wonder her existence has been challenged time and time again by the powers of darkness and their human collaborators. The theory is simple: Destroy Israel and you will destroy the purpose of God. This is why the Book of Revelation pictures the dragon before the woman Israel, seeking to annihilate her (Revelation 12). This conflict still rages today!

Israel’s Journey

Sadly this call and warning given by Paul has been unheeded by the Church through the centuries. The result has been tragic! Nevertheless, the truth of God’s Word is not going to fail. Though Israel’s journey is unique and mysterious, it is sure. So:

1. She is blinded (Romans 11:25; 7–8);  
2. She is beloved (Romans 11:28);  
3. She is a blessing (Romans 9:1–5; Romans 15:27);  
4. She will return to the center of God’s purpose (Romans 11:25–27), and  
5. She will be recognized and ‘saluted’ for her unique role in world redemption (Romans 15:7–13).

The journey has been long and dangerous but one day she will rejoice in all her children worldwide. God has fulfilled His promise to make her a blessing to the nations.

Israel’s Famous Son

A fallen world alienated priestly and kingly Messiah. the Lamb of God (John 1:29), the world; and kingly because order and peace to a chaotic Psalm 2). For Christians, famous King/Priest and Son he came to Israel presenting credentials (Matthew 21:5).

Israel’s rejection of His two offices does not change who He is. In fact, her rejection of his priestly and kingly credentials, in the plan of God, opened the door for the nations to be saved (Romans 11:11–12; 28–30). The purpose of God is always mysterious, a point Paul concedes that applies to Israel’s rejection of Jesus (Romans 11:25–26).

Though these things are sometimes hard to understand, Paul calls upon us to resist arrogance and disdain when it comes to Israel (Romans 11:20–21). This should be taken seriously! Arrogance against Israel has serious consequences in that it breeds pride, contempt and eventually anti-Semitism. This is displeasing to God!

As Christians, we affirm that Jesus is the only Saviour of the whole world, regardless of race, color or creed. We also affirm that Israel’s modern-day restoration is not a political accident, but dynamic evidence of God’s faithfulness to His covenant made with Abraham some 4,000 years ago. This is a covenant that God has never anulled (Galatians 3:15–18).

We love the Jewish people, recognize their remarkable journey so filled with mystery, and comfort and pray for them. 😃

Rev. Malcolm Hedding serves as ICEJ Executive Director in Jerusalem
Life-Saving Shelter
Aiding the Embattled Israelis of Sderot
By David Parsons, Aaron Hecht & Michael Hines

February 9, 2008: Palestinian rocket crews in the Gaza Strip launched a barrage of some 40 deadly Kassam short-range missiles in and around the nearby Israeli town of Sderot. Eight-year old Osher Tuito and his 19-year old brother Rami were on their way to buy their father a birthday present. When the town’s ‘code red’ warning siren sounded, the brothers failed to find shelter before a rocket exploded in the street in front of them.

More than 48 hours later, Osher remained hospitalized and heavily sedated. One leg had already been amputated below the knee while doctors fought to save his other shattered limb from deadly infection. Experienced medical staff who saw him on arrival were still haunted days afterwards by his screams. His mother, Iris, simply wept at the thought of waking him. His greatest dream was to become a soccer player, she said.

Dozens more children like Osher have either been killed or injured during the seven year rocket war from Gaza forcing Israelis across the western Negev to completely change their lifestyles. Very few sleep in upstairs bedrooms anymore. They leave their TV and radio sets turned down low and their car windows open to better hear the 15-second warning sirens. For Osher and Rami, though, 15 seconds was not enough.

“We go to the downstairs toilets,” Yigal Levi, an Israeli social worker with four children, told Word from Jerusalem. “The most difficult thing is in the night when you see the red rockets. It’s very difficult in 15 seconds to wake up all the kids and go downstairs to a cramped bathroom.”

“If Israel thought that in 2005 terrorism would stop by leaving the Gaza Strip, well unfortunately we’ve experienced exactly the opposite... In fact, four times the number of rockets have landed than before disengagement,” explained Israeli police spokesman Micky Rosenfeld.

In response, the ICEJ has committed to helping these embattled Israeli communities cope with daily rocket and mortar fire from Gaza, by providing public bomb shelters through Operation Lifeshield as part of our ‘Help Sderot’ Campaign. Just a few weeks ago, Embassy staff in Jerusalem visited the Sderot area to dedicate three new shelters capable of withstanding a direct Kassam hit and protect up to 15 people at a time. One of those shelters was paid for exclusively by the generosity of American friends and supporters of the ICEJ.

“For us, this is a question of ‘to be or not to be’,” said Eli Segal, general manager of the Sha’ar Hanegev regional council who attended the dedication. “We are civilians trying to live ordinary lives in an impossible situation, with no end in sight. We are very grateful to our Christian friends for all their support. Let us hope for better times.”

Thanks in part to the USA Branch’s ‘Help Sderot’ campaign ICEJ AID has been able to present a $25,000 donation to Sderot’s Keren Or Youth Center that will help provide a safe room for the dozens of troubled teenagers who are there trying to get their lives back on course.

Some of the center’s youth have confided to ICEJ staff that they want to leave Sderot but their parents cannot find buyers for their homes. Our visit and the shelters we are providing have encouraged them to stay, they said.

“The government promised us that they would protect us, but they haven’t. I’m grateful to the Christians and others who have helped us,” said 16-year-old Ayelet.
It may have been cold and even snowy outside, but inside the large Jerusalem dining hall the food was hot and spirits were warmed by broad smiles and lots of Irish music.

In January, the ICEJ partnered with the Irish charity Eschol to honor Israel’s 60th Anniversary celebrations by feeding lunches to nearly 5,000 needy Israelis during eight days of festivities that also featured Irish, Russian and Hebraic music and dancing.

Some 40 volunteers from Ireland joined with Christian Embassy staff to serve up to 800 lunches a day at the Ramat Rachel conference center. Among the invited Israeli guests were Russian immigrants, Holocaust survivors, victims of terror, families on welfare, and residents of the embattled town of Sderot.

The Eschol Trust was founded by Ronnie McCracken, who as a young pastor in Belfast in the 1970’s developed a burden for Christians suffering behind the Iron Curtain. This eventually led him into charitable work feeding thousands of needy people in Eastern Europe through mobile soup kitchens; a unique ministry which greatly expanded after the fall of Soviet communism. Having fed multitudes, he was close to retiring in 2001, but the Lord said he could not quit until he had brought his distinctive outreach to Israel.

McCracken then spent six frustrating years trying to arrange such a time of ministry in Israel, before finally linking up with the ICEJ last year.

“When we were first approached by Ronnie about this, I got a real excitement in my heart because it so fit our calling to bless the people of Israel,” said Yudit Setz from the Embassy’s ICEJ-AID program.

“It was not just want to do this for the poorest people, but also for those traumatized by the conflict or just lonely and stuck at home,” said Setz.

“I have had a deep love and connection with Israel for a long time and feel particularly proud of the work we did here,” said McCracken. “We wanted to make this more than just an ordinary ‘soup kitchen’. From the bands to the volunteers and organizers, so many people worked hard to give these people a real treat.”

“Many of our Israeli guests were not able to put into words the warmth they felt from our team, especially the older volunteers who came from Ireland. They brought such warm smiles and servant’s hearts,” added Setz.

“In my twenty years of service in Israel, I've never experienced such a flow of God's love between Jews and Christians.”

“Over the years we have built up an enormous network of contacts with social workers and fellow charities throughout Israel. To find 800 people to feed every day was not easy, but we put out a broad invitation and they came by the bus loads.”

ICEJ-AID receives requests for assistance from Israelis every day. Please help us respond to these urgent needs by supporting this vital work with your financial gifts and prayers.

“An Irish Blessing
5,000 Needy Israelis Fed, Irish-style, in Jerusalem

By David Parsons

Above: One of 40 Irish Christians who Traveled to Israel to Bless Some 5,000 Needy Israelis with a Feast of Food, Music and Dance.

Above: Eschol Trust Founder, Ronnie McCracken during the January ‘Irish Blessing’ week in Jerusalem - A Unique 60th Anniversary Outreach to Israel Made Possible by ICEJ AID.
Opening Pandora’s Box

Lessons from the Holocaust Part 1: The Power of Hatred

By Susan Michael

N othing can unite people in pursuit of a common cause like hatred. And no ideological movement is more dangerous than one held together by hatred of a demonized enemy.

Anti-Semitism - singling out the Jewish people as the root of society’s ills - has always been the world’s early warning system of such hateful movements. It is often described as the “canary in the mine-shaft” warning us that a Pandora’s box of death and destruction is about to be opened.

Eric Hoffer, in his 1951 book entitled The True Believer, explained that mass movements are not built so much on positive beliefs or goals of the group but on their opposition to an enemy. “When Hitler was asked whether he thought the Jew must be destroyed,” Hoffer recounts, “he answered: ‘No.... We should have then to invent him. It is essential to have a tangible enemy, not merely an abstract one.’”

Hitler understood that the ideal ‘enemy’ would unify Germany and would deflate the resistance of the surrounding countries he intended to occupy. He knew that by demonizing the Jews every Nazi failure could be blamed on them and every success seen as a triumph over the mythical devil they had come to represent.

Once he was asked if he was not attributing rather too much importance to the Jews, and he exclaimed: “No, no, no!... It is impossible to exaggerate the formidable quality of the Jew as an enemy.”

When Hitler founded Nazism on hatred of the Jew, he plunged the world headlong on a path of destruction that continued for decades to come. Some six million Jewish lives were exterminated and almost 50 million more people died from the resulting war. Among the dead were church-going Germans and Russians not to mention hundreds of thousands of allied forces who fell in battle.

Today, anti-Semitism is rampant in the Muslim world. Leaders like Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad are demonizing the Jews and focusing their nation’s anger against the “evil Israelis and Americans,” and away from the socio-economic problems at home. Those in quest of pan-Arab leadership must use hatred for Israel to unite the otherwise divided Arab world behind them.

We must stop the hatred by standing up to anti-Semitism and bigotry wherever it occurs. If we don’t, we will witness a wave of death and destruction like the world has never seen.

Find out more about the ICEJ’s efforts to combat anti-Semitism worldwide. Visit us online at: www.icejusa.org

Susan Michael serves as Director of the ICEJ’s USA Branch
A Blinding Hypocrisy
The Bush Team Needs to Identify the Real ‘Racists’ in this Conflict

BY DAVID PARSONS

WHY DOES all this matter? Because it means the Palestinians, including the ‘moderate’ Abbas, have never given up on their dream of destroying Israel. Fatah and Hamas still share the same strategic goal of eliminating the “Zionist entity”\footnote{\textcopyright{} Daily News, 2007.}; Fatah is just willing to use diplomatic tactics alongside the “armed struggle” to achieve that end. Ultimately, by persisting in their claim to a ‘right of return,’ the PLO hopes to flood Israel with enough Arab refugees to turn a two-state solution into one Arab state.

This rejection of Israel’s Jewish character extends to the wider Arab world, which opposed the 1947 UN partition plan to the point of initiating war, and have yet to truly come to terms with Jewish sovereignty in their midst. Even the peace treaties with Egypt and Jordan contain no recognition of Israel as a Jewish state. This despite scores of UN resolutions and documents expressly endorsing Israel as such.

NOW SOME may say it is irrelevant whether the Palestinians ever see Israel as it sees itself. Others view Israel’s demand in this regard as ‘racist.’ But what troubles me most is the way the Palestinians also get away with the immoral demand that their own future state be purely Arab. Their long hatred of Jews has blinded them to their own hypocrisy, and yet no one in the international community is calling them on it.

Witness the traditional pre-Christmas message of Latin Patriarch Michel Sabbah, an Israeli Arab cleric but self-identified Palestinian nationalist.

“If there’s a state of one religion, other religions are naturally discriminated against,” he averred. “[Israel should] discard its identity as a Jewish State [for] a political, normal state for Christians, Muslims and Jews. This land cannot be exclusive for anyone.”

But what of the Palestinian position that their state must be free of Jews? Isn’t that equally discriminatory? – Nay, even more so, since Sabbah knows well that a thriving Arab minority indeed live in Israel and are free to exercise their democratic rights. Let’s hear him say his beloved Palestine must also be a “political, normal state for Christians, Muslims and Jews.”

I appreciate Bush’s backing of Israel as a Jewish state. I just wish the Bush Administration, along with other world leaders, would confront the Palestinians on their demand that Judea and Samaria be Judenrein. But instead, we get Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice’s bizarre comparison of the Palestinian situation to the Jim Crow South.

Isn’t it time to identify the real racists here?
Just a few weeks ago, however, everything changed.

After months of imprisonment and uncertainty, Israel finally agreed to relocate several hundred African refugee families to Tel Aviv. The decision marks a victory for the ICEJ and other non-profit organizations in Israel that have argued vigorously against the suggestion of deporting them back to Egypt where they face persecution and possibly death.

Authorities informed the ICEJ that the Ketziot detention center is releasing 50 refugees per day from among the over 800 currently being held there. There is however, no place for them to go.

That's why the ICEJ has stepped in to assist Israel in meeting this emergency need by assuming temporary care for eight Sudanese Christian families, which together include 30 children, some still nursing babies and toddlers, as well as one pregnant mother. Our assistance will help provide accommodation until Israeli humanitarian workers can find them jobs and more permanent housing. If funding is not found, these large families will likely find themselves on the streets.

Reflecting on ICEJ efforts to care for Sudanese Christians seeking asylum in Israel throughout the past year, ‘Operation Hope’ coordinator Charmaine Hedding recalls one family with five children who had nowhere to stay. After checking them into a hostel in Jerusalem, she joined hands with them to pray about their situation.

“There was a strong presence of the Lord,” Hedding recalls. “His love was overwhelming, flooding through our clutched hands as we stood in prayer. I was humbled to be there.”

Please consider being a part of Operation Hope today by helping us care for these precious African brothers and sisters in Christ drawn to hope and freedom in Israel.

www.icejusa.org/hope