Standing for Something
How Christians can support Israel in an increasingly hostile world

BY MALCOLM HEDDING

Further, Jerusalem and especially the Old City are not negotiable for us because of the 3,000-year-old Jewish claim and connection to this city. To disinvest the Jewish people of their possession of this city is nothing short of an outrage. It betrays a more sinister scheme that has more to do with anti-Semitism than we might think. To deny Israel’s claim to the city is like believing that the world is flat! So why do people do it?

WHERE IS MANDELA?
The current peace process is going nowhere because Israel cannot find a “Mandela” on the other side. That is, there is no Palestinian leader able to take his people past the radical Islamic theology which refuses to recognize Jewish sovereignty anywhere in the Land and thus demands the total destruction of the Jewish State. Those who deny this have their heads in the sand and deny the obvious. Until a definite peace partner can be found, we should not expect any real progress in peace talks. So the question has to be asked, “Why don’t politicians get it?”

TWICE CORNERED
Two huge mistakes have been made by successive Israeli governments. The first of these began with the 1991 Madrid Conference and gained momentum throughout the Oslo era. That is, by these political instruments Israel eventually accepted the notion of the “Occupation.” This was largely due to Israeli revisionists who essentially rewrote the narrative of Israel’s restoration in 1948 and totally ignored the jihadist component of her struggle with the Arab world.

Columnist Avi Becker, writing recently in The Jerusalem Post, states: “The work of the New Historians, who revised and interpreted anew the history of the Arab-Israeli conflict, has had disastrous implications. For some these post-Zionist views were replaced by anti-Zionism.”

Becker adds that since then, much to the consternation of the liberal Left, prominent historian Benny Morris has published a new book correcting the record he once helped distort. In his new book, Morris accuses...
The International Christian Embassy Jerusalem

The International Christian Embassy Jerusalem was founded in 1980 as an act of comfort and solidarity with Israel and the Jewish people in their claim to Jerusalem.

Today, the Christian Embassy stands at the forefront of a growing mainstream movement of Christians worldwide who share a love and concern for Israel and an understanding of the biblical significance of the modern ingathering of Jews to the land of their forefathers.

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In May, seven members of the student worship team from Oral Roberts University in Oklahoma, USA, made a special trip to Israel to visit biblical sites and to use their musical talents to bless the people of the Holy Land. The group consulted with the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem about ways to be of practical assistance in the land, and one encounter arranged in coordination with the ICEJ AID department was a solidarity visit to the Keren Or Youth Center in Sderot.

Sderot is located near the Gaza border and has been battered by thousands of Kassam rockets over the past decade. This means that the children and teenagers in town have endured warning sirens and mad dashes to bomb shelters for most of their young lives. But the ORU worship team brought an uplifting song and a word of encouragement that will not be soon forgotten.

The group sang and played instruments with the youth at Keren Or, and also joined in a friendly game of soccer. Some of the teens had musical talent as well, and were thrilled to play together with skilled musicians.

Yigal Levy, the social services director for Sderot and founder of the Keren Or Youth Center, said “we appreciate everyone who visits Sderot. It’s like telling us we have brothers... It was great fun for our kids!”

Edward, the on-site youth director, only speaks Hebrew but assured that – despite the language barrier – the visit itself spoke louder than words.

“It makes our kids feel special that someone has come from the outside... that someone has paid attention to them. It just brings a lot of joy,” said Edward. “You might sing different songs, but you have a chance to share something of yourself with each other.”

ICEJ AID director Nicole Yoder was also on hand and explained to the ORU students that those who live in this part of southern Israel know the current ‘quiet’ will not last long.

“It’s good to visit and identify with the people of Sderot knowing that others do not usually come down here because of the threat from Hamas in Gaza,” said ORU team coordinator Nathan French. “It’s good to let them know there are people who are thinking and caring and hoping that all things are going well for these people,” said French.

For ORU student Spencer Sharpe, a skilled base player, the visit was a welcome ministry opportunity to talk and play with youngsters from troubled backgrounds. “Despite seeing bomb shelters on every corner and seeing helicopters overhead, it was still a great time to love on these kids and have a good time together,” said Sharpe.

“I am studying social work and so to be here today was amazing. I love hanging out with youth! It’s a passion of mine,” said Courtney Kristene, a singer on the ORU worship team. “For me personally, coming from my background, I also grew up in a hard home life. So it’s just really a great experience, because I learn so much from them while they learn from me. Just to be able to share in that and show God’s love, this was great. I really enjoyed it!”

Support at-risk youth in Sderot. Make your tax-deductible gift online at: www.icejusa.org/sderot

Project Update

The ICEJ has a long-standing relationship with the Keren Or Youth Center, an after-school facility for some 80 at-risk youths in the embattled Israeli border town of Sderot. At present, we are seeking to help the center expand its facility and to make it fully bomb-proof.

We have already raised $32,000 towards the construction, which is 25% of the $130,000 needed to finish the project completely. In addition we have covered the cost of building permits to add a second floor and a reinforced roof.

But we still have a long way to go. Please partner with us as we reach out to bless, comfort and protect this precious community in Israel!
The Two-State Impasse
Israelis Ponder Alternative to the Two-State Solution

BY DAVID PARSONS

The relentless Obama administration finally managed to launch “proximity talks” between Israel and the Palestinian Authority in May, but expectations remain very low that the indirect negotiations will produce any real breakthroughs soon towards a final peace accord. In fact, many Israeli officials and experts – Left and Right – assess that the window for an envisioned two-state solution is nearly closed, leading some to openly espouse other options for bypassing the current impasse.

Since taking office last year, US President Barack Obama has been clear that the “status quo is unsustainable” between Israel and the PA and the only option is creating a viable, peaceful Palestinian state alongside Israel. But this White House was unable to revive talks largely due to tactical blunders. In particular, its one-sided pressure on Israel over continued settlement building in the West Bank and east Jerusalem only fed the Palestinian inclination to sit back and let the Americans do the negotiating for them.

But recently, US special Mideast envoy George Mitchell switched to more quiet diplomacy and finally found the right formula to pull the Palestinians into the talks. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was upbeat over the launch of the talks on his terms; that is, without preconditions. He also stressed the need to move quickly to direct negotiations.

Yet most of Netanyahu’s cabinet ministers expressed serious doubts that the process will bear any fruit. The consensus among Netanyahu’s coalition was that the PA’s primary goal at present is to portray Israel as the obstacle to peace in hopes the international community will intervene to create a Palestinian state, which could then be used to great advantage to carry on the conflict with Israel.

Such gloominess runs even deeper among veteran security and political analysts in Israel who are freer to speak their mind – to the point that hawks and doves alike are openly pronouncing the demise of the two-state solution, despite the overwhelming support it still enjoys among world leaders.

Maj. Gen. (ret.) Giora Eiland, who was Prime Minister Ariel Sharon’s national security advisor, recently explained the dilemma Israel finds itself in:

“Everyone wants to resolve the conflict and everyone knows the answer is the two-state solution, based roughly on the Clinton parameters of December 2000. But this solution is not really desired by both sides,” Eiland appraised. “And the game that has been played by both the Israelis and the Palestinians for at least the last ten years is how to convince the international community, and particularly the United States, that the other side is guilty or responsible for the lack of progress.”

Given such a bleak picture, Eiland outlined seven alternatives to a two-state solution which Israelis are left to consider:

1) Conflict Management – As with past US and Israeli governments, the peace process is often less about conflict resolution as it is a way of keeping the conflict on a low flame. The Obama administration insists this approach is no longer tenable, but with the sort of economic cooperation and investment being offered by the Netanyahu government, even PA officials concede that life for Palestinians in the West Bank at least has become quite bearable for now.

2) An Imposed Solution – Recent reports suggest the Obama administration has already prepared a back-up plan if proximity talks flounder, in the form of an international summit after the fall US elections at which to table its own Mideast peace proposal. The PA would likely welcome such a scenario based on a calculation this president is closer to their positions than to Israel’s on most of the core issues in dispute.

3) Partial Solution Now – This option was advanced last year by former defence minister Shaul Mofaz of Kadima, who proposed creating an interim Palestinian state within provisional borders and solving whatever else can be solved now, while keeping the most sensitive issues to the last, especially Jerusalem and refugees. The rationale is that this may build trust and a better atmosphere between the two sides, leading to greater flexibility for compromise in future on the big ticket items. Israel and the US have officially rejected the idea for now.
4) Unilateralism – Until four years ago, this was the official policy of the government of Israel, and only after the Second Lebanon War in the summer of 2006 was it abandoned. Until then, Prime Minister Olmert was pushing a ‘Realignment’ plan for a major West Bank withdrawal to the security fence. But given the intolerable rocket threats following the unilateral pullbacks from south Lebanon and Gaza, it is unlikely Israelis will return to this option anytime soon.

5) The Jordan Option – This alternative would involve a return to a situation similar to before 1967, when Jordan was in the West Bank and Egypt in Gaza, or some form of Palestinian confederation with Jordan. The West Bank would handle most of its own affairs but Amman would control security and foreign policy. This notion would have been totally rejected five years ago, but the rise of Hamas in Gaza has changed things. Most Israelis would prefer this option over the ordinary two-state solution, because they trust the Jordanians. But Amman first wants a Palestinian state in place before discussing any union.

6) Grand Land Swaps – This option entails really “thinking outside the box” for alternatives that would radically redraw the map of the Middle East. The concept of land swaps has already been accepted “in principle” by both sides, but under this scenario Egypt and other neighbouring Arab states might be called upon to exchange lands in three-way deals. Such proposals were once ridiculed but are now gaining some traction within Israel.

7) One-state solution – This would encompass creating one bi-national state for Arabs and Jews between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea, under the slogan “one land for two peoples and three religions.” It would be based on the democratic tenet of one-man, one-vote, and already has strong backing among the European elite. Most Israelis instantly reject such a solution as woefully unworkable, since the two historically hostile populations would always be competing to establish their own majority rule. The PA, on the other hand, has threatened to appeal to the international community for a one-state solution should the peace process remain deadlocked.

Truth be told, the Palestinian insistence on both a two-state solution and the right of return of Palestinian refugees to Israel has always been aimed at a one-state solution anyway – one which anticipates the demise of the Jewish state.

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many of his professional colleagues of ignoring “the jihadi rhetoric and flourishes that accompanied it,” which was perceived by the Arabs as a “holy war... [a] divinely ordained necessity.”

In truth, the Palestinians never had a state and the only territory that Israel “occupied” was that which she took from Jordan in 1967, which Jordan had illegally occupied itself during the 1948 War of Independence. So Israel did not occupy any “Palestinian land”! But who cares about this truth today?

The second mistake was to accept the notion of a “two state solution.” The absence of a ‘Mandela’ plus the rise of Hamas means that Israel knows she cannot – indeed dare not – move toward a two state solution! The Gaza evacuation debacle certainly demonstrated this. However, Israel has acknowledged the Occupation and a two-state solution, leaving her in the unenviable position of being trapped in a corner. She can’t go back and yet neither can she go forward. A friendlier US administration knew this and gave her breathing space and even sought to enlarge this space. That day has now gone!

A more aggressive US administration is now holding Israel to her acknowledgments and is thereby suffocating her. That is, Israel will have to risk conflict with its long standing ally by not moving forward into a suicidal position.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has the added pressure of the growing Iranian nuclear threat. Iran, it is reported, could have a nuclear device by the end of this year! The timing of all this could not be worse. Israel needs US President Barack Obama to handle Iran’s firebrand president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, but Obama is using this crisis as a stick to pressure Netanyahhu, believe it or not, on the final-status issue of Jerusalem! Netanyahhu has thus far stood firm by stating that Jerusalem is not a settlement! That Israel is in this position with her closest ally is very troubling indeed.

INSIDE OUTSIDERS

All of the above is made more complicated by figures like Judge Richard Goldstone and other liberal Jews who would deny Israel’s right to defend herself in the face of constant attacks against its civilian population. These attacks are always downplayed, as is the role of Islamic theology in prolonging the conflict. Israel is always portrayed as the aggressor and a grave violator of human rights.

They have helped fortify the “Apartheid” accusation against Israel, which is growing in intensity with every passing day. This is designed to discredit, delegitimize and finally dismantle Israel. The dangers posed by this movement cannot be ignored.

All of this makes defending Israel more difficult, especially when one considers the “politically correct” climate of our day which insists no sustained campaign can be waged against the real threat of militant Islam. Those who dare point this problem out are immediately branded bigots or racists. So the real nature of the problem in the Middle East is ignored. All the while, Ahmadinejad unashamedly calls for the destruction of Israel in the name of Islam. Hamas, Hizbullah and even Fatah do the same, as can be verified by MEMRI and Palestinian Media Watch. Yet sadly, for some no amount of verification will suffice.
When one puts this whole picture together, it is not surprising that antisemitism is rising in the world today. The liberal Left, with assistance from the media, has provided room for this to happen. It must be remembered that Adolf Hitler was actually a left-wing nationalist loon! Today, we have left-wing globalist loons. This situation can only become more dangerous!

**Our Platform**

It’s all very well, and even vital, to point out what the challenges and difficulties are but, apart from what we are against, what are we for? Given where Israel has placed herself, this must be carefully considered. I believe the following is workable:

A more truthful articulation of the issues facing Israel must be made, foremost being the threat posed by Islamic radicalism. The Iran/Hamas/Hizbullah axis must be exposed, recognized and dealt with, lest they continue to destabilize the situation. Peace must be maintained by virtue of strong security until this axis is neutralized. There is no way around this.

An international campaign should be launched insisting that Jerusalem remain entirely under Jewish sovereignty.

Israel should invest heavily in its own Arab community with infrastructure, schools, hospitals and recreational facilities. The international community must also make accountable investments in the West Bank, so that Palestinians ‘taste’ the fruits of prosperity. Israel should even explore the possibility of a low-level international airport in the West Bank, with proper security measures.

Negotiations should only start when terrorism and violence are removed from the table. Israel could then decide between a demilitarized Palestinian homeland with economic viability, or consider new models of resolving the conflict, such as a confederation involving Jordan.

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Rev. Malcolm Hedding serves as the Executive Director of the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem and travels extensively around the world teaching on the biblical basis of Christian support for Israel and the critical days in which we live.

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**Breaking Down Walls**

**ICEJ AID Project Update**

In recent months, ICEJ AID has funded the renovation of an art room at a school for orphaned and abused boys run by an ultra-Orthodox community in Kfar Chabad, near Tel Aviv. Called Or v’Simcha (Light & Joy), the boarding school is home to some 340 boys in need of great care and healing, and the art room has brought excitement and a creative outlet to express themselves.

The boys are either orphaned or come from abusive households. Some have fathers in jail. Others are there by court order because of a violent parent. Still others come from impoverished or homeless families. All their stories are tragic in one way or another and that’s why ICEJ AID has stepped in to help.

The art room project was launched during the ICEJ’s Feast of Tabernacles celebration in October 2009, when ICEJ AID brought 50 Feast pilgrims to the school to meet the boys and to tear down a dilapidated wall to prepare for the renovations.

“We are very grateful to meet the ICEJ. It was just unbelievable during Succot, when you came in with sledge hammers and literally broke down the wall!” recalled school director Rabbi Ze’ev Slavin.

Slavin described the old facility as having collapsing walls and floors and crumbling furniture. Now everything is brand new, including the furniture provided by the Christian Embassy.

“Around 150 boys use the art room each day, and their art work is just phenomenal. You guys have touched the lives of these kids every time they walk in here,” assured Slavin.

“This is a wonderful project of friendship, particularly for these boys who need it so much,” said ICEJ Executive Director Malcolm Hedding. “They will find much joy here.”

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