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Jacob—in a time of need

They will not care how much you know until they know how much you care.

--Christian Coalition Leadership Manual

Dear Friends:

Ten people were killed and 50 more wounded when a Palestinian “policeman” self-detonated on a city bus several days ago as it pulled to a stop near the Prime Minister’s residence in Jerusalem. Some 31 people remain in area hospitals as the troubled city reels from its 29th suicide attack.

“Jerusalem is without doubt the most intractable of world problems,” writes Joseph DeCourcy, editor of *Intelligence Digest*. “Israel’s attachment to Jerusalem including East Jerusalem cannot be exaggerated... The Arab-Israeli dispute cannot be solved with concessions over the West Bank and Golan Heights because the real problem lies in Jerusalem and neither side will ever compromise.”¹

I was in Jerusalem two weeks ago. Traveling with me were pastors and other Christian leaders from the Northwest, including Lou Beres, my counterpart in the state of Oregon. The purpose of our excursion to the Holy Land was part Christian pilgrimage and part political briefing. It was a thrill to visit significant sites where Jesus lived and ministered, and a privilege to attend meetings in the Knesset, briefings at military installations, and even visit a family home for an evening Shabbat celebration.

Some 20 hours after departing Seattle, we arrived at Ben Gurion Airport in Tel Aviv, Israel. Boarding an armor-plated charter bus, we headed north into the West Bank for dinner and a night’s rest in the village of Ariel. Climbing quickly from sea-level, we wound our way up through the rocky outcroppings known as the “Mountains of Israel.” The biblical name for the region is Samaria. Judea and Samaria are situated in the center of the Holy Land.

The media chooses not to recognize these historic names, instead, calling Jerusalem, and the regions immediately north and to the south of the great city, the “West Bank.” Israeli villages are typically referred to as “settlements.” But that’s OK with many of the locals who believe they are a prophetic people. For the Lord said, *I will settle people on you as in the past and will make you prosper more than before.* (Ezek 36:11).

Rising early in the morning, we were joined by a PBS film crew doing a story for *NOW With Bill Moyers*, (airing sometime in March). My guess is that Moyers is probing for serious discord between President Bush who supports land for peace proposals and evangelicals who generally do not. Our comments and reactions were taped as we visited some of the disputed “settlements” such as Karnei Shomron and Shiloh, home to the Ark of the Covenant before the first temple was built, where Samuel served Eli.

Even our Jewish friends (who genuinely admire the President) were curious why Mr. Bush draws different conclusions from scripture about Israel’s covenant land than do most leading evangelicals such as Pat Robertson, James Dobson, and Franklin Graham.

While I couldn't speak for the President, I did think about a chilling verse that says *I will gather all nations and bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat. There I will enter into judgment against them concerning my inheritance, my people Israel, for they scattered my people among the nations and divided up my land.* (Joel 3:2).

We did pay attention to the controversial security fence that restricts movement between Arab and Israeli settlements. The installation of miles of chain link fence crowned with razor wire and electronic sensors has angered the Bush administration even though the artificial boundary has reduced surprise attacks in some areas by as much as 80 percent.

Even so, attacks are still too frequent. During our stay, a female suicide bomber (and mother of two) blew herself up at a checkpoint near the Gaza Strip, killing four Israeli soldiers and wounding nine others. A day later, Roe Arbel, a father of five, was ambushed and killed near the village of Talmon as he traveled home from his job at the Motorola plant in Ramat Gan. Fatah's Al Aksa Martr's Brigade claimed responsibility.

But many Israelis, especially in media and academia, have defected to a far left point of view that the enemies of Israel are VICTIMS. New textbooks characterize the 1948 war of independence as an Israeli military complex against outclassed Arab peasants. Students are being told that Palestinians fled the country—not to clear the way for the invading Arab armies—but to avoid Jewish retaliation and brutality.

Middle East expert Daniel Pipes says that most Israelis are sick of fighting and want to concentrate on their expanding high tech economy. He says they are fatigued—to the point of foolishness—convincing themselves “that Arabs feel the same way, and want the same things, they do.”²

But a survey of 1,600 Arab students at the American University in Beirut demonstrates otherwise. Respondents, by a ratio of 79 to 18 percent, rejected the idea of doing business with Israelis even after a total peace, and by 87 to 13 percent, supported attacks by Islamic groups against Israel.³

Yes, there are problems in Israel—religious problems, political problems, ethnic, social and economic problems. But there is also a stirring for G-d in the hearts of the Jews we encountered, and a palpable love for Christians. More than once, we heard, “you love Israel, you love us, and you think just like we do. Why is this?”

We had no plans to witness while in Israel—but frankly—it was almost unavoidable!

A young family in our group that ministers with *End-time Handmaidens and Servants* asked our Shabbat celebration hosts if they could share in song. The room grew quiet as the “Christians” began to worship softly in Hebrew. I didn't understand the words, but I didn't need to. With tears in her eyes, the woman of the house whispered, “They cannot be Christians, they sing in our language. Certainly they are Jewish—for they are just like us!”

Shabbat Shalom,

Rick Forcier
Executive Director

¹ Lindsey, Hal, *Planet Earth-2000 A.D.*, 1994, Western Front, Ltd., Palos Verdes, CA, pg. 247

² Kozodoy, Neal, *The Mideast Peace Process; an Autopsy*, 2002, Encounter Books, San Francisco, CA., pg. 83

³ *Ibid*, pg. 78