

-Jesus" continued

due to age-old anti-Semitism and modern-day terrorism.

Both are right –and wrong. These are not mutually exclusive concerns. Israel's rights to the Land were never more important to God than Israel's righteousness in the Land. Palestinians may be saved from Israel if they are afforded equal rights, but more importantly, Palestinians will receive salvation for their souls if they can learn to love their enemy.

My favourite comment on the subject happens to come from a journalist from a Muslim background who lives in Gaza and today believes in Jesus. He said, "If the suffering of Gaza is the cause of all this rage, imagine what the salvation of Gaza would do while the world's eyes are on her!" Four years ago at the beginning of the Al-Aqsa Intifada, Israeli soldiers arrested him under the unfounded suspicion that he was carrying a bomb. While the Israeli bomb squad was destroying his belongings, he told one of the soldiers that the only solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict would be for everyone to accept this Jewish soldier's Messiah. When the soldier asked doubtfully what proof he had that that would be anything of a solution, he replied, "The proof is that I don't hate you. In fact, I love you. And I know Islam, and the only thing that can change a Muslim's heart is Jesus."

Jesus' own teaching about political conflict and salvation was the same: it has little to do with rights and even less to do with theology, but everything to do with loving your enemy (Luke 10:25-31).

## Support Jerusalem Cornerstone's Children Fund

Now more than ever, impoverished Israeli and Palestinian children are falling through the cracks of government bureaucracy. The following are excerpts from a recent article in *Ha'aretz*:

*"Israel's children are becoming poorer, more violent and more neglected while the state is offering fewer and fewer solutions to these problems, according to the National Council for the Child's annual report.*

The report, presented Monday to President Moshe Katsav, states that there were 2,253,800 children in Israel at the end of 2003. Some 31 percent of them lived below the poverty line, as compared with 29.6 percent in the previous year. Despite the increased number of poor children, the number of children whose families received income supplements dropped by 40,000, to 262,000 in 2003, as criteria becomes more stringent. The number of children whose parents divorced in 2003 rose to 12,600 (as compared with 11,450) and the number of single-parent families increased by 10 percent. Nevertheless, the number of women receiving alimony via the National Insurance Institute dropped in 2003 to 50,000 - 5,000 fewer than in the previous year. "The data reveal that the troubles are increasing while the solutions are decreasing or disappearing," said Dr. Yitzhak Kadman, head of the council. "More poor children are receiving less and less economic support, more children are being hurt in schools but there are fewer nurses, more children are involved in violence and crime but there are fewer probation officers. The children of Israel are being left without ... support." The number of children who had a parent in jail grew by 70 percent in the years 2000-2003, to 10,369. Some 94,000 children living in Israel have no formal status, particularly those from the former Soviet Union.

Excerpts from *Ha'aretz* (Dec 29, 2004) "Report shows Israel's children are getting poorer" by Ruth Sinai.



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אבן פינה  
Jerusalem Cornerstone Foundation

# Jesus & the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

By Danny Kopp



I have made it a hobby of late to ask other journalists working in the Middle East why they think the media pays so much attention to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Why is it that Jerusalem has the second largest concentration of foreign journalists in the world after Washington DC? There are, after all, many worse conflicts around the globe that have cost many more lives. The civil war in the Congo, for example, has caused the deaths of 3.8 million in just the last six years and the fighting has not let up.

But the Congo is in some godforsaken corner of Africa and Rwanda, Somalia and Ethiopia are proof enough that African lives simply aren't as interesting to a Western-dominated media. Or perhaps, death and war alone are not what attracts public attention, but rather, conflicts which are of some consequence on an international level. About the only thing affected by the war in the Congo is the price of diamonds.

It is a common argument today that the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict has been the source of Muslim anger towards the West causing, among others,

the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks on the United States. A recent poll found a majority of Europeans to consider Israel as one of the main threats to world peace. Israel is thought to be a colony, created and backed by the West. Therefore, according to a growing number of people, the West should be held responsible for the suffering of the Palestinian people and consequential Muslim anger.

This may all be true, yet how is it that the Russian destruction of Chechnya and the decimation of its population (100,000 deaths during the last two decades) is not the cause of at least equal angst to Muslim sensitivities—or Western, for that matter. Neither western nor Muslim media provide nearly the same coverage for that war or other worse conflicts where Muslims and non Muslims are involved, India—Pakistan (Kashmir), Sudanese civil war (two million dead), the oppression of the Muslim minority in western China—to name only the most obvious.

It may not be fair or logical that one Israeli Jew killed or one Palestinian killed is more news worthy than the lives of others, but it remains a fact, unlikely to fall from the headlines any time soon. And yet, Israel of the Bible is often at the world's centre stage for either her righteous behaviour being a source of light for the gentile nations or God's judgement and punishment of her wickedness serving as a lesson to others. So where should all this leave us as Christians in forming our opinions on the increasingly divisive issue of modern day Israel?

Most Christians who are at all interested in this region have already made up their minds. An increasing number of churches solely support either Palestinian or Israeli causes in the name of biblically founded Christian principles. Christians who support Palestinian causes cite Israel's maltreatment of Palestinians and her unwillingness to provide justice to the alien as proscribed in the Bible. Pro-Israeli Christians cite biblical promises to restore the Land to its people and Israel's suffering

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“When this all started we felt we were abandoned and totally alone, but now we feel like we’ve gained a family.” That was how the Ethiopian Aweke sisters summed up a decade of fighting for their right to live in Israel

(see JCF June 2003 newsletter/  
www.jerusalemcornerstone.org for the full story).

## Bittersweet Resolution

*Ethiopian Aweke Sisters Emigrate to Canada*

For the past ten years, Jerusalem Cornerstone along with other Christian individuals and groups has persevered with and advocated for the Awake sisters during their trials of threatened deportation by the Israeli government. The three were born of a Christian mother but were later adopted by their Jewish stepfather who played a crucial role in Israel’s 1991 “Operation Solomon” that airlifted thousands of Jews out of Ethiopia to Israel. The three sisters immigrated to Israel that same year with their stepfather at the ages of 18, 16, and 15. Years later in the mid-90’s after their stepfather, highly honored by the Israeli government had died, they were wrongfully accused of coming to Israel under false pretenses, namely that they had tried to immigrate as Jews under the “Law of Return.”

During the past decade the Israeli government passed rulings revoking their citizenship, relegating them to refugee status within their “own” country. During that time, Chuck Kopp arranged countless meetings with government officials stumping the bureaucratic wastelands in order to plead their cause. Jeanine Navarro also helped to rally Christian support in Israel and abroad.

In the last year, the three sisters Tegest, Tadelich, Mimi, along with Mimi’s husband, Pe’er were granted the opportunity to immigrate to Canada. Danny Kopp drove the four of them to the airport this last month and Jeanine Navarro accompanied and aided them on their trip to Canada.

The outcome is bittersweet for us having lost the battle to restore the sisters’ Israeli citizenship, but with the help of many, the sisters have been able to secure refugee status and a new chance at life in Vancouver. They will be attending bible college, polishing up their English, and acclimating, yet again, to a completely new country and culture. God must have great things in store for their lives to have brought them through such trials. The Awake sisters’ exemplary resilience and faith have been a source of inspiration to all who cross their path.

## Everything and Everyone Can Be Used For Holiness

Thoughts on the weekly Torah portion (“Terumah” Exodus 25:1 – 27:19) which was read in synagogues on February 12<sup>th</sup>, 2005. By Jon “Yoni” Gerrish

There are many ways to consider the purpose of the Exodus. Perhaps the more obvious purpose has to do with the liberation of the Hebrews from slavery and bondage in Egypt. A less apparent but equally important rationale for the Exodus would be God’s need to delineate a physical setting for His Holy presence in the Hebrew community, specifically, the Tabernacle.

*And they shall make Me a Sanctuary, that I may dwell among them.* (Exodus 25:8)

Every feature of the Tabernacle teaches us how to serve God. We learn that each member of the community had a part to play. During the construction of the Tabernacle, for example, the people donated their most prized possessions and invested their best skills; these contributions were expected to flow from the heart:

*Tell the Israelites to set aside a contribution for me; you will accept a contribution from everyone whose heart prompts him to give it.* (Exodus 25:2)

Several rabbinic commentaries about the nature of the project suggest that raw resources, human labor, and unconsecrated materials would have been the only acceptable construction mechanisms. The entire edifice, one source tells us, became holy only after it was dedicated (Laws of Me’ila 8:4).

Applying this idea to our lives today, the late Rabbi Kook (1891-1982) astutely claimed,

*Just as the sanctuary was built in gradual stages, so is the redemption of Israel and the building up of the Land of Israel in our time. The secular foundation of the modern State of Israel lays the groundwork for ultimate sanctity. We build with the non-holy until such time that “the sanctification of Hashem [God] will appear in more and more light.”*

(Torat Eretz Yisrael, pp. 347-348)

The construction of the Tabernacle teaches us that even when we are involved in the mundane activities of everyday life we have the ability to be oriented towards the holy. This orientation is the essence of what it means to live today in the Kingdom of Heaven.

