

Israel: Ominous News and Incredible Opportunities

While Israel is a place from which good news is abundant, recent news has been somewhat ominous.

A report this week indicated that the Palestinian Authority government is planning on resigning. This will create a vacuum that, based on abundant precedent, will leave anarchy or be filled by relative extremists. In all cases, this is bad for Israel.

Other reports lambaste the release of a United Nations commission report in which Israel was slammed for alleged war crimes while defending itself in last Gaza summers war as Israel was targeted by some 5,000 rockets. This was a war that Israel didn't want, but our hand was forced to defend ourselves. Despite doing so with great efforts to minimize civilian casualties, despite our enemies using civilians as shields to protect their weapons and fighters, Israel is being blamed.

And the crème de la crème of ominous news, the world powers continue to run towards closing a deal with Iran on its nuclear weapons program, one that's bad for Israel, bad for the Middle East and bad for the world. If such a deal is struck, the world powers will wash their hands of the consequences. If Israel needs to launch a pre-emptive strike or a response to an Iranian attack either directly or through one of their puppet jihadi organizations, the global precedent will be to blame Israel.

Other reports have Israel preparing for another war this summer. Indeed, we recently went through a national exercise simulating an attack on three fronts. I just returned from a visit to the Syrian and Lebanese border where I heard fighting

from just kilometers away. Not only is a war not impossible, but also many Israelis think it's likely.

I don't like to portray Israel from a half-empty perspective, fanning flames of fear and worry as many do. Israel is a magnificent, dynamic, and exciting place that's not only half full, but whose cup runneth over in so many ways. Nevertheless, there is a sense of something looming. Being just months away from the fourth blood moon, I am concerned.

My concern was diminished this week hosting a special ambulance dedication for the newest ambulance donated by Bridges for Peace. The event, attended by some 200 people in the Galilee city Karmiel, was meaningful and rightly festive. Having another ambulance driving the roads of the historic Galilee is a comfort to all Israelis.

That this ambulance celebrates five decades of unhesitant commitment and service to Israel during which Bridges for Peace has blessed Israel in a vast number of ways, makes the comfort we Israelis feel all the deeper. It was an honor to participate and celebrate, and special to take a break from the challenges we face to point to an event and a ministry that shares God's heart for Israel. I shared how many others have been motivated and inspired by their donating two ambulances this past year, magnifying the blessing many fold.

Recently I spoke with my friend Gary Bauer whose insight to and understanding of the threats Israel faces are profound. We were talking about these threats and he said something that struck me and charged me to take action. Gary observed, "just as the army needs to stockpile weapons to defend Israel from all threats, you need to stockpile lifesaving emergency medical equipment and supplies to be ready for whatever may come."

Gary is right of course. But how to help individually is the question. Not every person or ministry can afford the \$100,000

to donate and outfit a new ambulance. It would be nice to have dozens of ministries step up and join Bridges for Peace, John Hagee Ministries and others, and donate one or more ambulances. But what's an average person to do to make a difference and save lives?

Well, we have the answer, **Watchmen on the Roads**. I realized after speaking with Gary that together, lots of individuals can make a difference.

Watchmen on the Roads is Heart to Heart's latest program specifically to enlist at least 2,000 people or ministries to donate at least \$50 a month, providing at least \$100,000 each month to produce and deliver a new fully equipped ambulance to Israel.

When running the idea by friends for input, I've been met with unilateral positive responses. Everyone is sure this is going to reach and surpass our expectations. The more who join **Watchmen on the Roads**, the more emergency medical equipment we can provide, and the more lives we can save, no matter what the challenge we may face.

In sharing the idea with another friend, Pastor Keith Johnson, his response was immediate.

"That's brilliant." He then asked if anyone had joined us yet and declared that he would be the first. Since then, numerous others have joined, writing checks and making monthly donations by credit card.

Honestly, we are not 100 percent ready to launch **Watchmen on the Roads** in a big way, but God put on my heart that the time to start is now. We cannot delay. There's no formal donor page to do so, but that hasn't stopped some from jumping on board right away.

We don't have a logo, but it's about more than looks. Other exciting plans are in the works, but one thing that we are

committed to is that every **Watchman on the Roads** will receive personal updates each time a new ambulance rolls off the assembly line, is stationed in Israel, responds to a unique incident that is in the news, and when a baby is born on these ambulances.

With the goal to launch formally shortly, we are seeking initial participants now. I'd be thrilled to see at least 10-20 percent of the first 2,000 participants join us. Some have sent checks, payable to Heart to Heart but with "Watchmen on the Roads" in the memo. Others have gone to our website and entered a monthly donation.

Please join us. Please share this opportunity with others. The time is now, the threats are real, and the need is great.

Please also be in touch to discuss other ways in which you and your ministry can partner with us as there are many possibilities.

Jonathan Feldstein was born and educated in the U.S. and immigrated to Israel in 2004. He is married and the father of six. Throughout his life and career, he has been blessed by the calling to fellowship with Christian supporters of Israel and shares experiences of living as an Orthodox Jew in Israel. He writes a regular column for's Standing With Israel. You can contact Jonathan at firstpersonisrael@.