

Muslim Demonstration on the Temple Mount Stuns Christian Students

Christian college students representing some of America's largest churches and denominations have returned home from the 2014 Israel Experience College Scholarship program (IE), sponsored annually by Eagles' Wings. A jarring confrontation on the Temple Mount may be one of the most lasting impressions of their time in the Holy Land.

"Our group was touring the Old City of Jerusalem and visiting the Temple Mount when we happened upon a demonstration of Muslim women leading dozens of young children in a protest march," said Michael Onifer, program director for Eagles' Wings. "The women were leading the children in a chant which said, 'We will liberate Palestine with our blood and our flesh.' Our students were distraught by the obvious brainwashing of these innocent young children happening right on front of them. Israel Experience Scholars visiting the Temple Mount in 2013 witnessed Muslim men leading dozens of children in the same chant demonstrating the ongoing radicalization of children."

The sight on the Temple Mount also stunned Israel Experience Scholar Fiona Moodie.

"The Muslim women leading the protests clearly responded to our presence on the Temple Mount," she said. "When they saw our group they began leading the chants, and when the students began taking pictures and video one woman began provoking an Israeli police officer with the obvious intent of causing a forceful response. The fact of the matter is that the presence of the Israeli police allowed us to visit the Temple Mount without being harassed by the protesters."

"I am amazed at how Israel goes to extremes to preserve religious freedom, free press, and free speech. It's heartbreaking to see this freedom being used to indoctrinate children, teach them to hate, and glorify death. Children should be taught how to think, not what to think and this indoctrination is a deliberate effort, at the hands of Islamic extremists, to lead the Palestinian people down a path of self-induced poverty, anguish and suffering."

Under the direction of Dr. Robert Stearns, the Israel Experience College Scholarship has identified and trained young Christian leaders since its inaugural program in 2004. Against the backdrop of the waning support for Israel among young evangelicals and an increasing anti-Israel vitriol within university classrooms and campuses, the Israel Experience College Scholarship empowers the next generation of pro-Israel Christian leadership. Recipients of the scholarship have worked for the White House, Congress and state legislators. Many appear regularly on major news networks, and all credit the Israel Experience College Scholarship for strengthening their commitment to Israel and the Jewish people.

Now in its 10th year, the Israel Experience College Scholarship is one of the flagship educational programs of Eagles' Wings, training exceptional students. During the 2014 Israel Experience College Scholarship program, dubbed the "Christian Birthright" by the *Jerusalem Post*, the IE Scholars truly experienced the inescapable reality of Israel's daily security challenges.

One young woman, who joined the Israel Experience College Scholarship after a year of teaching English in the West Bank, said, "Before this trip, I viewed Israel primarily as the perpetrator. My perspective has now changed. After seeing the homemade missiles in Sderot & dialoguing with members of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, I realized Israel has many legitimate and grave security concerns. As such, I can now

accept and understand many of their defensive measures. Furthermore, I realized that Israel is working hard to achieve peace using ethical and just means.”

Grace Stamos, another IE Scholar, currently operates a nonprofit organization called “Dream Room Syria,” which provides aid to Syrian children who are living as refugees due to the ongoing conflict in that country. During the Israel Experience College Scholarship, Grace recognized that being pro-Israel did not contradict her desire to address the needs in the Arab nations surrounding Israel.

The Israel Experience College Scholarship demonstrated to her that a pro-Israel stance does not equate an anti-Arab position. Grace also recognized that Israel represents hope for the rest of the Middle East as Israel is the only nation in the Middle East where women and minorities are free and protected.

During the 2014 Israel Experience College Scholarship, eight former Israel Experience Scholars were able to meet with current scholars due to their active presence in the land during the summer. Many of these IE Alumni are studying in Israeli universities and volunteering in Israeli nonprofits.

Joshua Charles, one previous IE Scholar and now a *New York Times* best-selling author, is conducting research for an upcoming book and met with the students in Israel during this time. The publication will focus on Israel and is scheduled for release in 2015.