

Support Organization Touches Lives of IDF Soldiers

While relations between the U.S. and Israeli governments have been strained in recent months, groups and individuals are attempting to counteract that trend by bringing unity between Israeli Jews and Western Christians.

The Texas chapter of Friends of the IDF recently hosted an Israeli Defense Forces pilot, Captain A, at Gulf Meadows Church in Houston to promote dialogue among pro-Israel supporters in the Christian community.

“Support like this—not only the tangible things we get that do wonders, but also knowing we have people on our side from so far away—it’s as if you are fighting side by side with us,” Captain A told the diverse crowd.

Friends of the Israel Defense Forces (FIDF) was established in 1981 by a group of Holocaust survivors to provide for the well-being of the men and women who serve in the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) as well as the families of fallen soldiers.

The organization’s mission statement says that it “helps support education, social, cultural and recreational programs and facilities for the young men and women soldiers who defend the Jewish homeland.” FIDF also supports families of fallen soldiers.

One of its mottos is “Their job is to look after Israel. Ours is to look after them.”

“As Christians, we believe that we have a biblical mandate to support Israel and the soldiers that defend her,” says Becky Keenan, pastor of Gulf Meadows Church and an FIDF supporter. “Friends of the Israeli Defense Forces is a great support

system for the IDF, which courageously fights to defend liberty and democracy, two ideals in which we wholeheartedly believe.

“My desire is to spread awareness to the Christian community of how important it is that we stand as one with Israel, because Israel is the only true and stable democracy in the Middle East. Israel is the United States’ first line of defense in the war against terrorism and is our most important ally in the Middle East.”

The FIDF has 14 chapters throughout the United States and supports programs like the Lone Soldier; DIGNITY, which eases financial burdens of IDF soldiers; and IMPACT, a scholarship program that helps invest in Israel’s future leaders.

The FIDF’s support has been a tremendous morale booster for IDF soldiers.

“When the Friends of the IDF brings soldiers to Gulf Meadows, we are always overwhelmed by the outpouring of love and support the members of the church express toward Israel’s brave men and women in uniform,” says Scott Kammerman, executive director of the Texas chapter. “The soldiers consistently leave reinvigorated, knowing that American Christians are supporting them and their tireless efforts in maintaining the sanctity and security of the Holy Land.”