

A Messianic Map to Peace With the Palestinians

For the 70 years of Israel's modern statehood, the prevailing assumption has been that the Jewish state can live in peace alongside a Palestinian Arab state. After 25 years of intense American efforts to broker an agreement, nothing has been achieved. Now, a new effort offering a practical solution based on the Bible is gaining traction in US and Israeli government circles.

What's being called a "one-state" solution is being promoted by the Messianic Jewish group "Alliance for Israel Advocacy" (AIA). Their proposal is to offer young Palestinians living in the biblical territories of Judea and Samaria significant financial incentives to relocate to another country, thereby creating a majority of Jewish residents in the disputed areas. Today, there are about 2.5 million Palestinians living in Judea and Samaria, while approximately 380,000 Israeli settlers reside there. "Over 10 years, by helping fund economic opportunities outside the land, there could be approximately one million Palestinians and one million Jews living in Judea and Samaria, creating a whole new reality on the ground," Paul Liberman, Executive Director for AIA (on the photo), told *Israel Today* in an exclusive interview.

Liberman pointed out that only 29 percent of Palestinians are fully employed, and most of those are government employees, like police officers and municipal workers. Many young Palestinians are looking for a better life. "In order to find out if Palestinians between the ages of 18-30 would leave Judea and Samaria if assured of an opportunity of a good, high-paying job, we ran a professional survey," Liberman said.

The survey, which was conducted between 31 January - 4 February 2017

among 650 male and female Palestinians aged 18-30 and living in Judea and Samaria, revealed that 48 percent of respondents discuss emigration "frequently" or "occasionally" with friends or family. When all respondents were asked under what circumstances they might consider emigrating, 63 percent said that economic factors are the most decisive in determining whether they would ever seriously consider leaving.

"The US government is already giving \$300 million a year, with most of that going to the Palestinian Authority and never getting into the hands of the local population," Liberman explained. "Suppose these funds were offered as incentives for Palestinians to emigrate to other Arab nations?" Liberman believes that the one-state proposal could eventually be adopted by the other countries that give \$1.3 billion annually to the Palestinian Authority. "Wouldn't it be far more profitable to support Palestinians resettling in countries where they could settle and get a good job?" he wondered. Many Jewish organizations and Christians who love Israel might also be interested in investing resources to bring a resolution to the Palestinian problem and restore the biblical lands to Israel.

The survey and the AIA proposal have already been presented to the offices of 40 US congressional members.

The Messianic group has also been invited three times by White House staff who wanted to assess their strategy. They were told, "the two-state solution is dead. Your idea is original." And it's gaining momentum. "Legislative language is currently being drafted by the US House of Representatives Foreign Affairs Committee," Liberman disclosed.

So far, AIA has remained under the radar, not wanting to stir up opposition. "Now we are at the point where we are becoming more visible," Liberman said. AIA is also making efforts to garner endorsements from leading figures in the Evangelical world in hopes that the one-state proposal will become the de facto conservative position vis-a-vis the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

"While US government authorities are fully aware that we are a Messianic Jewish group," said Liberman, "we have generally received a warm reception." He added that the group visits regularly with members of Knesset and Israeli ambassadors. They have also hired a registered lobbyist to promote their biblical ideas in Israel's Knesset. "The Holy Scriptures are the title deed to the land, and we want to assert that. We want to push forward the idea that the Jewish nation is promised to the Jewish people," Liberman concluded. ■

By David LAZARUS