

June 23, 2010

## SPECIAL REPORT

**WORSHIPING MOLOCH** – Earlier this month we were in Samaria, our first stop on a mission trip to the Middle East. The Western media and leaders call this area the "West Bank," while tens of thousands of Israelis call it home. The Western media refers to Samaria as the West Bank, as does President Obama, because they refuse to admit that it was ever a part of Israel. While there, my wife Nancy and I stayed in the apartment of a Messianic Jewish couple whose son was severely injured in a bombing in 2008. A few miles away from their apartment, there is a newly found sacrificial altar to the god Moloch which was carved from rock about the time Solomon became involved with pagan gods.



Moloch was one of the gods worshiped by means of human sacrifice. Pagans who worshiped Moloch often sacrificed one of their own children, who was ritually murdered and then placed in a sacrificial altar of fire. Some followed the Canaanite practice of placing the bones that remained after the burning under the front doorstep of the family as a blessing to provide prosperity. In short, a child was murdered for the financial reward and convenience of the family. This sounds barbaric, until we realized that since the Roe v Wade decision, more than 40 million babies have been murdered legally in the United States for the convenience or prosperity of their mothers and other family members. There are some differences, one being that the pagans actually buried their dead children whereas in the United States, their bodies are flushed down toilets, tossed in dumpsters or used in medical experiments.

**THE ORTIZ FAMILY** – While in Israel Nancy and I stayed at the apartment of David and Leah Ortiz who lead a Christian ministry in Samaria to both Arabs and Jews. The Ortiz family has six children, five boys and one girl. David, four of the five boys and the daughter have served in the Israeli army and all swore their oath to Israel on the New Testament. The fifth boy, Ami, was critically injured in a bombing of the Ortiz apartment in Ariel in 2008. Shortly after the bombing I flew to Israel to visit Ami in the hospital. The bomb, in a fruit basket, exploded inches away from him and it is literally a miracle that he lived.



Bill and Nancy Murray, Leah and David Ortiz

A huge hole was blown in a solid wood table where the bomb sat and every window in the apartment was blown out. Nuts and bolts planted in the bomb ripped through Ami and destroyed almost everything in sight, even the refrigerator. Ami spent nearly a year in the hospital, but praise God, he has returned home and to school and has even played some basketball although he will still need years of plastic surgery.

Besides medical bills not covered by insurance the family owes \$160,000 in legal and other bills from the explosion. A lawyer and media expert had to be hired to pressure police and the prosecutor to arrest the perpetrator because the bomb was planted by a Jewish extremist who wanted to rid Israel of Christians. The Religious Freedom Coalition raised over \$15,000 for the Ortiz family to assist with various medical and legal bills.

**ARAB CHRISTIANS PERSECUTED** - On our second night in Samaria, David Ortiz and I sat in a car outside a Palestinian village waiting for a believer to sneak out of the village to join us. He came for prayer because the next day the Palestinian Authority would be formally charging him with leaving Islam, unless he denied his faith in Jesus. If charged, he would be jailed. He was told by Palestinian policemen that he would be convicted of something, even other criminal offenses, unless he returned to Islam.

He sat in our car crying as he told us that he had told his wife not to wait for his return. I have met other Palestinian believers in the past who were hung by their arms from the walls of Palestinian jails for weeks to force them to denounce the Lord. Note: Palestinian police can be paid to ignore the order of a judge, but in this believer's case he was told "no exceptions," (meaning no bribes would work). After we prayed for him we watched him walk back to his village to face certain imprisonment for publicly proclaiming Christ. We later learned his arrest has been delayed for "further investigation," which means more pressure on his family to force him to convert back to Islam.

This is the government of "President Abbas," the man trusted by Barack Obama, the man to whom Obama just recently gave \$400 million dollars to support police and other activities. The Palestinian Muslim community is as corrupt as ever. Since taking authority over parts of the West Bank from Israel, the corruption has gotten worse and the persecution of Christians has just continued.

**HOPE SCHOOL** – On another day David, Nancy and I drove on the back roads through Palestinian controlled areas from Ariel to Jerusalem. We continued to the nearby town of Beit Jala, once 100% Christian, but now more and more Muslims have moved in and many Christians have left. The Saudi government will lend any Muslim double or more of the real value of a Christian home, to buy it and move the Christian family out. If a home is worth \$200,000 the bank will give up to half a million dollars to a Muslim family and the Christian family will normally move to South America; they are not welcome in the United States by our government. At Hope School, the headmaster, Solomon Nour, told us of the continuing problems with taxes paid to the Palestinian Authority as well as curriculum problems. Although they are a private Christian school, the PA requires that they use textbooks that contain Koranic verses and anti Israel, anti-Semitic materials, even in the math books. Over the last ten years the Religious Freedom Coalition has assisted with security measures as well as lab and kitchen equipment.

We also visited Christian families in Bethlehem and other areas to talk with them about the ongoing flight of Christians from that area. As the Christians leave, the Muslim hold on Bethlehem becomes even more extreme.

Our mission ended in Ariel and Samaria with a service for Messianic Jews, those Jews who have accepted Christ. The service was led by David and Leah and I spoke to those who were gathered, including Russian immigrants to Israel. The entire mission went well. During our time we delivered financial aid to the Ortiz ministry and others thanks to the generosity of the supporters of the Religious Freedom Coalition.

**AMMAN, JORDAN** – It is just a short drive from Jerusalem to Amman, Jordan, but not all that wise to do in a car with Israeli plates. While officially there is a peace treaty in place and Israelis do visit Jordan, there are violent Islamic elements here. The Jordanian Islamist newspaper Al-Sabil reported this month on the death of Anaa Al-Khadr, a Jordanian citizen who had joined the mujahideen in Chechnya. According to his obituary, Al-Khadr, was interested in a number of Jihadist battle grounds, but decided to fight the Russians rather than the West. Some of the most violent Islamic preaching comes from Jordan despite King Abdullah’s “moderate” approach.

We took a 20 minute flight from Tel Aviv to Amman. In Amman we stayed at the Landmark Hotel which was formerly called the Radisson SAS. The name was changed after a suicide bombing in November 2005 killed 38 people. Two other Western hotels were bombed here that same day as well. As a result, everyone is searched at the entrance to every hotel in Amman and all bags go through x-ray machines. Cars are searched before they can enter hotel grounds as well. Although the Landmark is a very nice hotel, the rooms are cheap because many locals do not want to enter the hotel where so many died.

In Jordan the Religious Freedom Coalition works with numerous ministries. One of those operates a very nice bookstore and coffee shop in Amman. The shop is well known in the entire Middle East for Christian and other quality books. Americans visiting Jordan from Iraq stop at the store to purchase books to take back with them. The store also fills orders for books throughout the Middle East. The store is a ministry and not a for profit enterprise. Indeed revenue from the store assists other ministry efforts including relief efforts to poor Jordanian and Iraqi Christians.



**Recently unloaded rice in storage**

Relief efforts supported by the Religious Freedom Coalition continue in Jordan. The ministry we support here transports food to distribution areas at various churches. Iraqi Christian refugees must show their documents and a strict record is maintained to make sure each family is only receiving a single provision. Rice, beans, pasta and canned meat are separated equally into large plastic bags for each family.

Several separate storage areas are maintained in Amman. While some contain bulk rice as shown in the photo, others contain canned goods including oils. Donated clothing is kept separately. Photos of the actual distribution cannot be printed because the faces of workers and those receiving the supplies would be shown.

**THE CAMP** - I have written about Camp xxxxxx numerous times because I have been so impressed by it. During June and July different age groups gather each week at the camp to be together and to learn about the Lord. Many of the youth have “Christian” printed on their national ID cards, but are in families that do not attend church on a regular basis. Just like in the United States, there are many who are “born” Christians who are not “born again.” There are also youth who are believers who attend to meet other young people who know the Lord.

For whatever reason a young person comes to the summer camp they get something special, the opportunity to interact without the interference of Islam. In the public schools and in their neighborhoods there is the constant reminder that they live in an Islamic society. Even here they must be alert. The camp has been burned to the ground three times. It is surrounded by a barbed wire fence and must be guarded 24 hours a day year round.



The Religious Freedom Coalition recently replaced the entire water system at the summer camp thanks to the generosity of the supporters of the Religious Freedom Coalition. The week we visited the camp there were 137 youngsters in 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grades, plus 40 camp counselors. All 177 were able to enjoy fresh clean water this year because of the new water system.

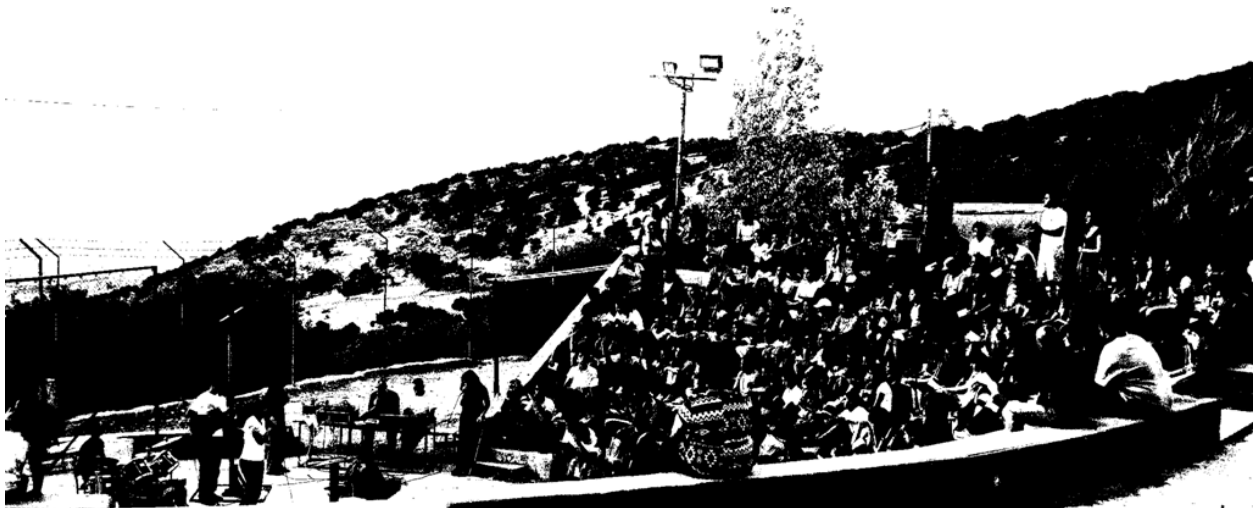


Above is a photo of the old metal tanks which had actually rusted through. Funds raised by the Religious Freedom Coalition replaced the 25 year



old tanks with new state of the art tanks made of composite material that will not rust. Three sets of tanks sit on the roofs of three different buildings. Each tank set holds four cubic meters or about 1,000 US gallons. The total water capacity of the system was increased by nearly four hundred percent meaning that mid week water deliveries are no longer needed.

It was a really blessed experience for my wife Nancy and me to see the joy of the young people as they sang songs of praise to the Lord at sunset. The week we were there many young people who had been marginal Christians accepted the Lord as their personal Savior.



**Youth and counselors gathered at Camp Xxxxxx's for sunset service.  
(Photo altered for Internet to protect location and identity of individuals)**

*William J. Murray*

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