



Update . . .

February 2011

5771 Adar I



Gil Ronen (2nd from left) discusses Israeli family values with Mike Huckabee.

Who will rescue the family?

by Gil Ronen, familism lobbyist

The normal nuclear family unit is under threat in Israel, just as it is throughout the western world. Our children are the biggest casualties. Worse yet, approximately 71% of at-risk children in Israel suffer needlessly.

Familism is a belief that the father-mother-children nuclear family is the basic building block of society and that society has a vested interest in making the family unit work – especially for our children's sake. Society and its social institutions should be proactive in helping people resolve differences and get over marital

crises. We believe that more than half of the divorces taking place in Israel today could have been averted, if a pro-conflict ideology hadn't permeated academia, the family courts, the media and the child welfare system.

As familists, we are influenced by the spirit of Jewish Law or *halacha*, which sanctifies the family unit and recognizes society's obligation to support married couples during a crisis and act towards reconciliation, or *shlom bayit*. We see divorce in much the same way a responsible surgeon sees a dangerous operation. Like a dangerous

operation, divorce should be something undertaken only when there is no other choice – especially when children are involved.

We would like to see the Knesset repeal divorce-promoting legislation like the "Single Parent Families Act". On the one hand, we need to find a way to assist divorced mothers who wish to put their best years into child raising even at the expense of their own careers - especially when the divorce was not their fault. On the other hand we also need to prevent situations in which divorcing a man becomes an accepted fast track to making easy money. As it is today, Israeli courts can be counted upon to wrest inflated child support payments from low-income fathers, even if this entails driving them into penury. This reality is not in our children's best interest.

We are working to with organizations like the Love for Israel Relief Fund to create a Knesset committee of inquiry regarding the family crisis in Israel. This committee, we hope, can eventually turn into a Committee for the Family. By simply promoting family values to our nation's decision-makers, we can eliminate at least half the number of Israeli children in crisis. Organizations like the Love for Israel Relief Fund are crucial partners in this endeavor.

Gil Ronen founded The Familists, an Israeli lobby group dedicated to promoting family values in Israel. He is also an editor for Israel National News and a divorced father of two children. His articles on the Middle East conflict circulate globally each day. Ronen's highest priority, however, is resolving conflicts in the family.

Purim Project next month. Please join us in sending Purim gifts to at-risk kids in Israel. Our first priority is a request from a special-education school serving 80 students and we will continue down the list of incoming requests until your donations maximize smiles during this season in Israel. Every \$10 towards this project puts a smile on a child's face.

Special events, like weddings and bar mitzvahs, happen year round for hundreds of at-risk kids and needy young adults in Israel. Donations designated "special events" will be set aside for such use.

You can donate online at:
<http://love4israel.org/donate.html>

On behalf of the Israelis you help - Todah Robah!

Send checks to:
Love for Israel Relief Fund
2020 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Suite 445
Washington, DC 20006