

Messianic Jewish Woman Urges Christian Support for Israel

Inna Perfido is mobilizing Christians to pray and take political action on behalf of Israel

During the Cold War, when Inna Perfido was a child living behind the Iron Curtain, she often listened to her Jewish father tell the ancient story of God's land covenants with Abraham and Isaac. Now she hopes to make history by urging Christians to support Jewish settlement efforts in biblical Samaria, Judea, the Gaza Strip and the Golan Heights.

The effort puts Perfido and her Temple Worship Command Center based in Charleston, S.C., in opposition to the Bush administration's proposed Middle East roadmap to peace, much like other Christian leaders who question Bush's model, including broadcaster Pat Robertson and Gary Bauer, head of the conservative think tank American Values. But for Perfido, the mission is personal.

"We cannot remain silent while Israelis are being killed in the settlements of biblical Judea and Samaria ... because they are fulfilling ancient prophecy in returning to the land of Israel," Perfido told Charisma. "If we do not raise our voices now, we will bear responsibilities for [the] rise of anti-Semitism in this country and abroad."

Born in Moscow, Perfido experienced anti-Semitism as a teenager. After she began wearing a Star of David and attending Moscow's only synagogue, she was beaten up on a bus simply for being a Jew. In 1981, after finishing her nursing degree, she immigrated to the United States, arriving in New York City with \$200 and two suitcases.

Perfido experimented with yoga and developed a psychic ability, but she still lacked peace. One day she cried out to God, saying, "I want to see You face-to-face." Perfido said she felt something like a holy wind come into her room. "A voice spoke to me three times and said, 'Jesus is the only way,'" she said.

For six months, "Jesus is the only way," danced through her mind. Then after watching The 700 Club, she asked Jesus into her life. Shortly afterward, she said, the Holy Spirit touched her so powerfully at a Bible study she could "barely breathe." That was in 1985.

When she later learned that Jesus was the Jewish Messiah, she cried. "It completed my heart, and I didn't desert my heritage," she said.

Some Christians believe the church has replaced Israel as God's chosen people, thus invalidating Israel's claims to Old Testament land promises. But others, like Perfido, say the fulfillment of biblical prophecies concerning Israel is essential for the second coming of Christ.

In 1994 Perfido began developing a worship and intercession ministry that utilized dance, banners and tabernacle objects. The result was Temple Worship Command Center, through which Perfido coordinates prayer for Israel.

"[Her ministry] is from a Jewish heart," said Margie Rudolph, who publishes The Jewish Star, a Judeo-Christian news magazine, with her husband, Marvin. "It's all about the love. If you show [Jews] God's love, they will come in."

Perfido, now 45, also has taken to political activism. In September she participated in a delegation called Support for Israel Starts With Me, which traveled to Washington, D.C., to urge Congress to freeze all funding for the Palestinian Authority.

“The case for sanity, shared values and democracy cannot be made by Jews alone,” said Rep. Eliot Engel, D-N.Y., during a reception sponsored by the Christians’ Israel Public Action Campaign held in concert with the rally. “We need evangelical Christian groups with us.”

For two years, Perfido—whose husband died in August—has organized the Judeo-Christian Zionist Congress to raise funds and awareness about the need for Jews in Israel to remain on the land she says God deeded to the Jews.

Perfido believes a revival of Christian Zionism is coming to the church. She said: “It is a prophetic voice of warning to the nations who [rebel] against the holiness of the everlasting and unconditional covenant of God concerning Israel.”

Arlene Bridges Samuels in Israel