

Peace in the Grove

There's a saying in Israel," says Curt Landry. "'In the olive grove is where we work in unity.' That's why the saying is 'extending an olive branch,' because we all work there. We all need olive oil—for our food, for our anointing oil. Olive oil is considered L'chaim—in Hebrew, the oil of life. It's where peace comes from."

Landry, a businessman whose radical story of salvation led him into full-time ministry and humanitarian aid, is dedicated to bringing peace to Israel. Through his organization My Olive Tree (MOT), Landry creates Israeli jobs, honors the Jewish people and gives Christians around the world the opportunity to stand with Israel. MOT leaders point to their mission statement in Isaiah 1:17 (NIV): "Learn to do right; seek justice. Defend the oppressed. Take up the cause of the fatherless; plead the case of the widow."

"That's always been the vision of My Olive Tree: to bring jobs, bring peace and bring a collective gift to be able to honor the Holy Land of God and honor what God honors," Landry says.

MOT uses its resources to plant olive trees across Israel—rather than directly donating money—in order to help boost the Israeli economy and provide resources. The goal is to eventually plant 1 million olive trees in Israel. For Landry, MOT's mission is a way of demonstrating honor.

"Honor is the currency of heaven," he says. "You can't have what you don't honor. You must honor what God honors in order to walk in kingdom finances and kingdom blessings, because honor is the key of David that opens that door. When you plant an olive tree, you're honoring not only the people but God's boundaries, covenant and land. You're saying, 'I agree with what the Bible says.'"

Landry specifically points to Amos 9:15, in which God says, “I will plant Israel in their own land, never again to be uprooted from the land I have given them.”

“We decree this over all our trees: that Israel will never be removed from their land ever again,” Landry says. “So when you plant an olive tree, it’s almost like a covenant act. It is [coming] in agreement that ... the Jewish people belong in this land.”

Landry’s passion for the mission of MOT comes out of his own radical testimony and life experiences, which planted the initial seeds. Landry spoke to Charisma Digital about his supernatural encounter with God, his relationship with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and the significance of U.S. President Donald Trump’s foreign policy with Israel.

Radically Saved

Conceived out of wedlock to a Jewish mother and a Catholic father, Landry was born May 11, 1955, delivered to a Catholic orphanage and adopted by the Landry family six months later. However, Landry says his home was not overly religious, and his first real encounter with life-changing faith didn’t happen until his early 30s, when his wife received salvation through Jesus Christ. He says at the time, he was frustrated: “I felt like Jesus stole my wife.” Landry, a successful broker and businessman, continued to live a successful, country club lifestyle while his wife quietly prayed for him.

About three years after his wife’s salvation, while she was away on a trip to see family, Landry says he supernaturally encountered God for himself. He was celebrating a work accomplishment with champagne in the bathtub when he felt another presence enter the room—even though the bathroom door remained shut.

“Now I realize it was actually Jesus who came into the room, but He came in through the wall behind me,” Landry says. “He

was standing right behind me, and I felt this presence of anxiety, but at the same time, this overwhelming presence of God's love, for which I had no reference point at this time in my life."

He says he saw a vision of a monitor that played back shameful moments and sins he had committed throughout his life, and he felt the pain he had caused God in those moments. Landry estimates he watched the monitor for "two and a half or three hours." But what struck him the most was not shame, but God's enduring and faithful love despite his own unfaithfulness.

"Coming from my background of being in an orphanage it was a great relief to me, that in the midst of all my bad, sinful behavior, that the Lord never left me nor forsook me," Landry says. "That was a surprise to me."

Landry wept and repented for his past sins and received salvation in Christ. That encounter changed his life forever.

"I became so radical in the Holy Spirit that just a week or so later, the company I worked for fired me, because I started leading so many people to the Lord—all I would talk about is Jesus, and I wouldn't talk about my experience or do my job," Landry says. "I don't blame them!"

Planting Trees

After his salvation, Landry says he and his wife began attending a small church in Redmond, Washington, where they got involved in missions' ministry. The church had a particularly active branch of Operation Exodus USA, which helps Jewish people scattered around the world immigrate to Israel. In 1991, Landry went on his first trip to Israel and immediately felt burdened for the poverty he saw in Israel's immigrant community.

"We helped these immigrants make the return," Landry says. "But then so many of them—particularly those from the Soviet

Union—didn't speak Hebrew. Their professional licenses were not recognized in Israel. So, if they were a doctor or a nurse or a lawyer, they had to start all over again. So, there was a lot of poverty, alcoholism and drug abuse taking place, because you have these people who were successful in their land, who come to the promised land, and all of a sudden now they're washing dishes or waiting tables. It was creating really a cultural poverty that a lot of people didn't want to talk about. And somehow I got involved in this."

Landry decided to switch his focus from helping Jewish people make pilgrimage home to providing humanitarian aid and supporting the community already living in Israel. In 2004, he was involved in a large Christian outreach involving multiple ministries sending large sums of money—in the form of aid—to Israel. Using his skills as a former broker, Landry went to Israel on behalf of one of the ministries involved to handle paperwork. While there, he became friends with then-Finance Minister Benjamin Netanyahu (who now serves, at time of publication, as Israel's prime minister).

After a few weeks—when Landry was trusted enough to be left alone with Netanyahu (without security oversight)—he remembers Netanyahu asking him, "Why do you do this?"

Landry replied, "Two days ago I was in Tiberias, Israel, where our ministry supports an after-school program for children in need. We went there and delivered soccer balls, a new oven, some toys, food and essentials blankets and sheets. There were two little girls there, ages 5 and 7. One grabbed my leg on one side, and one grabbed my leg on the other. And in their broken English they said to me, 'Are you going to come back?' That's all they wanted to know: 'Are you coming back?' I said, 'Yes, I'm coming back.' And they thanked me in Hebrew. They can't come into your office and ask you for help—the structure just is not there. But they can grab onto my leg and ask me, and ... I'm here on their behalf. This is real grassroots.

"I was an orphan raised in downtown Los Angeles for six months, and praise God that the Landrys adopted me," Landry told Netanyahu. "But my life could have gone a lot of different directions. The Lord has blessed me in business. And Scripture says of those who have been given much, God requires much. It's my duty to come to you and represent those who have not been as fortunate as I was."

Moved, Netanyahu replied, "That's good enough for me," and then added: "I appreciate the charity. I appreciate what you're doing. But Israel is not a welfare state. We're not a third world country. And as finance minister, I want to get jobs. So as good as you are at doing this, would you help me to bring jobs and do something that would help the poor and bring jobs?"

"Yes, sir," Landry said. "I'll pray about it and see if the Lord shows me something."

Landry says MOT is what God laid on his heart after that conversation. He says the olive tree, in particular, is symbolic of doing something that will impact not just your generation or the next generation, but generations to come. He says olive trees exist on the Mount of Olives and in the Garden of Gethsemane that are 2,000 years old—that would have been there when Jesus walked the earth.

"In Jewish culture, you plant a vineyard for your son, but you plant an olive tree for your grandson," Landry says. "The reason is because olive trees are so long-lasting. ... Olive trees are very symbolic of long-lasting or territorial authority."

MOT provides the nursery stock for olive trees, water pumping systems and irrigation, according to Landry, while he has worked out deals with the Israeli government to provide water and labor for the site. He says MOT fulfills his promise to Netanyahu to bring jobs, as every phase of the planting and

maintenance of these trees requires laborers. Olive oil produced by the olive trees is donated to Israeli soldiers and their families as well as farmers, while annual contributions are given to humanitarian aid projects in Israel including lone soldiers, safe houses, and Holocaust survivors through Curt Landry Ministries.)

“It is a fulfillment of Bible prophecy,” Landry says. “It’s what the prophet Isaiah said: ‘And the desert shall bloom like a rose.’ I have to tell you, it’s so moving and so powerful ... to see Jews and Gentiles coming together, causing the desert to bloom.”

In the Heights

MOT’s newest project involves 500 olive trees planted in a grove near the Golan Heights. The Golan Heights refers to strategically advantageous territory contested by Israel and Syria. The region was captured by Israel during the 1967 Six-Day War, and Israel’s occupation of the region has been disputed by many countries. However, in March 2019, President Donald Trump made the United States the first and only country to recognize Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights territory, as a way of standing with Israel. In recognition of his bold stance, Israeli lawmakers approved a plan to name a new community in the region after Trump, calling it “Trump Heights.”

Landry says he was deeply impressed by Trump’s declaration of Israeli sovereignty, as well as his movement of the U.S. Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.

“I have listened to politicians for years, and they all make political promises,” Landry says. “... [But] when Donald Trump recognized the sovereignty of the Golan Heights, I was actually in Israel, in meetings that involved Prime Minister Netanyahu and some other dignitaries. Everybody was blown away. Everyone said, ‘This is incredible to have this

recognition.'"

At that time, Landry decided he wanted to do something to honor Trump as well as Israel through MOT, resolving: "We're going to do something in the Golan Heights for the Trump family, to be able to honor them and tell them, 'People appreciate it. Thank you so much.'"

At the bottom of the Golan Heights sits an old French government building that was recently acquired by a friend of Landry's. When Landry told his friend about plans to honor Trump, his friend offered his own land to help: "Let's partner together and plant 500 olive trees right here, because this is right at the base of where you drive into the Golan Heights." Landry agreed.

Included in the 500-tree grove, are 50 mature olive trees—90 years old each—one to represent each of the U.S. states saying "thank you" to the Trump family. (Landry says each tree can be sponsored for \$2,020, and whoever sponsors it for their state will have their name added to a frameable certificate of authenticity honoring their sponsored state.)

Landry has also partnered with MyPillow's Mike Lindell and Pastor Ramiro Peña from Waco, Texas, on the project.

"We're going to create a beautiful framed picture with the names of all the 500 people who will sponsor the year-old trees and a special notation for the [50] who sponsor the 90-year old trees for each one of the states," Landry says. "We're going to have it very well framed and decorated with the name. Then we're actually going to make a presentation to the Trump family and tell them, on behalf of Israel and on behalf of the Christians, ... 'We honor you by planting olive trees in the Golan Heights.'"

Landry says he cannot wait for that day, and there is still plenty of time for other Christians to partner with him on this project and stand beside Israel and President Trump. He

says any interested readers can make their voice heard this election year “by sponsoring one of the year-old trees. ... For \$249, they can sponsor a tree, and they can go to to do that.”

Believers can also stand with Israel by praying and interceding for God’s people. Landry says the proposed peace deal between Israel and the Palestinians should be a primary focus this March.

“Let’s pray for wisdom and knowledge for the Trump administration, for the team that is negotiating the deal of the century peace treaty between Israel and the Palestinians,” Landry says. “Pray for wisdom. Pray for grace for both sides. Pray for favor for the message of hope for Israel, and for the Palestinian people to be able to change the narrative from a very divisive, warlike position to a place of peace and prosperity for all the people.

Landry says Psalm 122:6, which urges prayer for the peace of Jerusalem, is as relevant today as it was millennia ago.

“They need to pray for peace,” he says. “The word peace in Hebrew is ‘shalom.’ Shalom means ‘nothing broken, nothing missing.’ I believe the destiny and purpose of that which you speak peace over may prosper and manifest according to what God has said about it.”

READ MORE: To sponsor an olive tree in Israel, visit

Taylor Berglund is the associate editor of Charisma magazine and host of several shows on the Charisma Podcast Network