

Become a Watchman

The American church remains largely unmoved by and uninvolved in Israel's struggle, yet Robert Stearns explains why our fight—and very survival—rests upon this tiny nation.

There seems to be a presumptuous triumphalism affecting—rather, infecting—the Western church, especially in America. This attitude, based on poor theology and ignorance of history, causes believers either to be unaware of or to deny outright the existing crisis regarding the future of Christianity in the face of jihadist Islam.

Proof texts such as “I will build my church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it” are thrown about as we seek to convince ourselves that America is immune to the persecution already prevailing against Christian brothers and sisters around the world because of Islam. We forget that there are many, many places (such as Turkey) where Christianity once flourished but where today Islam exerts total control.

Biblically we know there will always be a pure and indeed triumphant expression of Christ's church in the earth. But it is a big leap to believe that somehow God is obligated to ensure the existence of the American Christian comfort zone.

In Israel one does not have the option of divorcing ideology from reality. When a Jew boards the public bus in the morning, he can only hope that an Islamic suicide bomber has not planned to blow up Israelis on that bus that morning as a way of gaining access to the 70 virgins he believes reside in paradise.

Israel demands reality. When we wrestle with the question of Israel we are forced to respond by confronting our comfort zones and changing the way we think and behave.

Whatever safety we have in America from the rising tide of jihadist Islam we owe in large part to the heroism of Israelis who live on the front lines of the battle for Western civilization as we know it. I am not speaking only in military terms. Israel's determination to remain a democracy in a sea of 22 Islamic dictatorships is a massive demonstration of noble courage.

Israel, like any other nation, is not perfect. It has weaknesses as well as outright flaws. But there is no question that, measured by any moral standard, it is unequivocally standing on the side of all we call righteous. By standing on the side of right, it has become the wall of protection between us and a jihadist attack.

It seems, however, that much of the American church remains unmoved by and uninvolved in Israel's struggle. We choose to ignore the reality of the approaching danger. After all, most of us drive to work instead of taking the bus—and we're not Jewish—so the problem seems remote.

There are some notable exceptions to our lukewarmness that give rise to hope. The astounding success of the Global Day of Prayer for the Peace of Jerusalem () and the rise of Christians United for Israel () are allowing more American Christians the opportunity to take their places alongside their Israeli brethren as watchmen on the wall over the freedoms with which we have been blessed.

But this is not nearly enough of a response to the urgency of the hour. An almost nuclear Iran, led by a modern-day Hitler madman, and the bloodthirsty Hamas, who joyfully offer the blood sacrifice of their children to kill Jews, are just two of the looming demonic powers arrayed against Israel—and you—at this moment.

I invite you to recognize the truth now rather than later: Israel's fight is your fight. Israel's cause is your cause.

Israel's survival is your survival.

Engage your mind, heart and spirit in the issues. You will find your comfort melting away and your priorities changing. You will awaken suddenly, as though a fire alarm had gone off and interrupted your sleep in the middle of the night.

You must wrestle with the question of Israel.. Like Jacob, who wrestled with God, you will be changed by the process. You may limp, but you will also receive a new identity and purpose. You will no longer be a spectator but an alert, awakened watchman on the wall.

Robert Stearns is the founder and director of Eagles' Wings Ministries () and co-chairman of the annual Day of Prayer for the Peace of Jerusalem ().