

Building Bridges: Unifying Christians and Jews During Feast of Tabernacles

The Feast of Tabernacles, also known as Sukkot, is a time of great significance for both Jews and Christians in Israel. While some within the Jewish community have called for protests against Christian celebrations of Sukkot, it is essential to understand why Jews in general and the State of Israel have a specific obligation to protect and respect Christians and Christian sites, especially during this sacred week.

Judaism, with its rich history of intellectual debate and dialogue, encourages respectful discussion of theological differences. Rather than shouting down or intimidating others, Jews and Christians should engage in meaningful conversations. Legitimate protests are acceptable, but they should not escalate to the point of assault and intimidation.

Jews and Israel have a unique obligation to protect and respect Christians and their sites, regardless of theological differences. While there may be disagreements, these should not hinder a strong bond of friendship. Early Christianity emerged from Judaism, with Jesus Himself being Jewish. Though significant theological distinctions exist, the common ground between the two faiths is more substantial

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Christian ministries like ICEJ aim to be a blessing to Israel and the Jewish people. They strive to break down historical barriers and educate Christians on their proper role concerning Israel. Embracing the Old Testament, shared by both

Jews and Christians, underscores the importance of the Temple as a house of prayer for all nations, not exclusively for Jews.

Even though the Temple is no longer standing, the celebration of Sukkot by Christian gentiles symbolizes a step toward the redemption both Jews and Christians await. This realization aligns with the prophecy in the book of Zachariah (14:16), which serves as the cornerstone of ICEJ's inspiration to organize the Feast of Tabernacles.

Building bridges between Jews and Christians can be challenging, often becoming a theological version of a contact sport. However, it is crucial not to generalize all Christians based on the actions of a few.

Sukkot has deep roots among Gentiles, as during the time of the Temple, Jews would offer 70 sacrifices on behalf of the 70 nations of the world. Rabbi David Stav noted that Christian support for Israel is a sign of redemption, citing King Solomon's vision of the Temple as a house of prayer for all nations. He stressed the importance of Jews acknowledging and affirming this in their daily prayers.

Rabbi Stav further emphasized that being Jewish does not equate to hating non-Jewish people. Instead, it means loving all of humanity, being a blessing and a light unto the nations. Judaism should care for all people, recognizing that they are created in the image of God.

In a world often marked by divisions and misunderstandings, the Feast of Tabernacles offers a beacon of hope. It is a time when Jews and Christians come together to celebrate their faith, fostering unity and mutual respect.

The obligations to protect and respect Christians and Christian sites in Israel are not just about theological alignment; they are about recognizing our shared humanity and the potential for coexistence based on love, understanding and

respect. {eoa}

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