

New Study Shows Adherence to Evangelical Beliefs and Practices Most Reliable Indicator of Support for Israel Among Christians

The Messianic Jewish organization Chosen People Ministries released results of a survey conducted earlier this year that measured the impact of the Gaza War on Christian views of Israel and the Jews.

The survey was conducted between March 8-14, 2024 and included 2,033 self-identified Christian adults with a ± 2.2 margin of error. Chosen People was a major sponsor of the study, along with the Alliance for the Peace of Jerusalem, and by Jews and Christians seeking a better understanding of the Israel-Hamas conflict and concerned with the rising tide of antisemitism today.

The survey was conducted by Dr. Motti Inbari, a professor of Jewish Studies at UNC Pembroke, and Dr. Kirill Bumin, the Associate Dean of Metropolitan College and Director of Boston University Summer Term Programs.

The survey revealed that Evangelical Christians are more likely to support Israel rather than Palestinians in the current Gaza War, while support for Israel was less pronounced among Roman Catholic Christians.

The study showed that self-proclaimed Evangelical Christians' support for Israel closely tracked age and biblical knowledge.

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Agreement with the statement, "God's covenant with the Jewish people remains intact today," was the greatest indicator of support for Israel among the various factors examined. There was a three-fold increase in support for Israel among respondents who agreed with that belief. Almost half (48%) of all respondents reported believing God's covenant with the Jewish people remains intact today.

Approximately the same number (48%) said they believe "the Jewish people have the right to the land of Israel by the covenant God made with Abraham."

Another common indicator of support for Israel was agreement with the statement, "Jews need a state of their own after the Holocaust," with respondents being 122% more likely to support Israel in the current war if they held that view.

The survey showed that respondents among the those aged 50 to 64 showed the most support for Israel, while respondents under age 30 were 47% less likely to support Israel compared to those over 65.

Some of the major findings of the survey were:

- 87% of all respondents are concerned about antisemitism in America today, with only 12% not particularly worried by the current levels of antisemitism in the United States.
- 48% of respondents believe it is "definitely" antisemitic to say Israel does not have the right to exist, and another 14% believe such views are "to some extent"
- 43% of respondents believe top American universities either tolerate antisemitism "to some extent," or

tolerate antisemitism “quite a lot,” while 13% believe these universities do not tolerate antisemitism.

- Among those who think “top American universities” tolerate some degree of antisemitism, 74% believe these universities “actively promote”
- 49% of respondents blame “mostly Hamas” for the current war; only 8% ascribe blame to “mostly Israel;” 39% blame “both sides equally;” and 4% blame “someone else.”
- 45% of Christians see the Israeli response to the Oct. 7, 2023, attacks by Hamas as “mostly justified;” 36% see Israeli action as “partially justified;” while 19% see Israel’s response as largely or “mostly unjustified.” By contrast, only 11% see Hamas’ attacks on Israel on Oct. 7, 2023, and its subsequent war with Israel as “mostly justified.”
- 29% say their church prays for Israel, while 17% say their church prays for the Palestinians. Five percent say their church sends money to Israel, while 3% say their church sends money to the Palestinians.

Dr. Inbari and Dr. Bumin found that mainline Protestant clergy are increasingly becoming pro-Palestinian and supporting progressive values, while their congregants may not be.

They found that 80% of Protestant respondents had never heard of the Boycott, Divest, and Sanction (BDS) movement, while only 7% agreed.

Researcher Motti Inbari shared a surprising finding from the study that attitudes among most immigrants towards Israel

change the longer the immigrant stays in the United States.

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“The gist of it – the longer one resides in the U.S., the more pro-Israel and the less pro-Palestinian they become,” Inbari said. “American pro-Israel culture changes immigrant attitudes over time.”

Dr. Bumin said that the scale of violence in the war “does not seem to impact how most respondents perceive the conflict and which party to the conflict they support.”

However, the survey also found a decrease compared to past studies in core Evangelical behavior such as attending church regularly and reading the Bible. Both of those behaviors have been demonstrated in past studies to have a high correlation with support for Israel. Fifty-six percent of respondents said they never or seldom attend church, while 28% attend weekly. Evangelicals reported the highest church attendance.

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