

Orthodox Jew: Yes, We Can Trust Christians

Note: There are many facets and pillars of Jewish-Christian relations and Christian support for Jews and Israel. The recent cancellation of the GOD TV license to broadcast in Israel touches on many. This is part two of a four-part dialogue. For part one, [click here](#).

Many Jews who work in a range of diverse ways that define Jewish-Christian relations promote and celebrate the unconditional love and support of Christians for Israel and the Jewish people. Many more Jews are skeptical and don't believe there's such a thing.

Through our actions, our words and just by association, many of us in this field try to explain to other Israelis and Jews that we can trust Christians, that they do not have ulterior motives. GOD TV's statements affirmed for many that there are very clear ulterior motives, undermining trust and reinforcing the question of whether our Christian friends truly support Israel and the Jewish people, or ever have. Consequently, Jews and Christians engaged in building bridges are now under tremendous scrutiny, facing challenges to our respective integrity and overall credibility.

Many Christians who work closely with and among Jews, particularly in Israel, are offended by GOD TV's actions and the resulting fallout. Some share that openly; others privately. It challenges their ability to continue to fellowship and build trust. A long-time Christian pillar in Israel commented, "It makes my gut turn to see the continued arrogance and deceitful actions of people who call themselves Bible-believing Christians. Christians must repent for 'replacement theology.' I am worried about arrogant Christians and those they represent. May God have mercy on their souls

and deliver them from this darkness. May He use us Christians who have seen the error of our ways to throw the others a lifeline of hope!”

Another Christian friend shared that “Christians who truly seek a deeper relationship with Jewish people [need to know that] a true relationship cannot be predicated on hoping that one party will change.”

Will Christian love and support of Israel change or be withdrawn because of GOD TV’s initial rejection after being approved despite the fact that two other Christian stations exist on Israeli cable? Will this deepen some individuals’ beliefs that support for Israel is conditional, or will we learn and grow from this together to be more sensitive and careful not to do things that are offensive and polarizing?

Replacement Theology

For those who know what it means, “replacement theology” is not a badge of honor. How could it be? It means redefining core biblical principles for one’s own narrow and even malicious (theological) agenda.

It replaces God-ordained elements of His Word, promises and covenant with the Jewish people. Christians who embrace it don’t do so in any formal way. It’s not like there’s a “world council of replacement theology-related ministries,” although there are various denominations and no shortage of people who hold this as a core belief.

Christians who think Jews need to convert to be saved or that Judaism and the promises that God made to and through the Jewish people have been overridden by Christianity turn a key element of their own faith on its head: that God is faithful, and He makes and keeps covenants, not breaks, repeals or replaces them. It’s hard to question parts of God’s covenant with the Jewish people in a way that doesn’t completely undermine all of God’s Word.

Many Christians decry the idea of replacement theology and its adherents because it's not just un-Christian, but unbiblical. It turns God into one who makes eternal promises and then changes His mind.

Christians who reject replacement theology understand that Christianity did not replace Judaism any more than Islam replaced Christianity. Christians would be right to be angry at the thought and would resist any Muslim attempt to convert to Islam. In recent years, many Christians have been persecuted and martyred by extremist Muslims because of their adherence to Christianity. Even more so, Jews who have suffered persecution at the hands of Christians for centuries repel their efforts at conversion.

Noting the increase of interest among Christians to learn about the Jewish roots of their faith, one Christian leader in Israel observed, "There is a hunger to learn more because church leadership in most places do not teach against replacement theology nor can they because they do not understand it. I am devoting much time to educate about this. I ask for your support and prayers. It's long overdue."

Indeed, in seminaries, replacement theology is neither taught nor debated. Its elements are assumed. Even people who do not embrace it may not be able to articulate why, but may embrace parts unknowingly.

Refuting replacement theology, one Christian friend shared, "As a Christian in fellowship with many Jewish friends, I want to be more like Jesus. Jesus was a Jewish rabbi. He taught and studied the Torah. I want to learn more about the Torah to understand the foundation of the newer covenant. I love Israel and the Jewish people because I am grafted in through Jesus. It makes no sense to tell Jewish people not to believe or follow the Torah."

Conversion of Completion

Jews have suffered millennia of people trying to forcibly convert or annihilate us and annihilate us because we won't convert. If there's a testimony to God's promise to bless and restore us, it's the fact that there is no other people group in human history that has been dispersed from its land, and discriminated against, as often and as long as the Jewish people.

And yet we not only survive, but thrive.

Jews look at efforts to force another religion on us as being more of the same. Especially because of our history, Jews view attempts at conversion as a way to erase us, our history, values, teachings and ethics. It's a theological genocide.

Generations ago, efforts to force conversion were based on church anti-Semitism to ridicule and eliminate us. Jews don't see the change in language or approach today as anything but a change in tactic.

Some Christians see Jews accepting Jesus as not being "converted," but "completed." Obviously, there's Jewish pushback to this.

One Christian friend offered, "I encourage Christians to acknowledge that it's an act of the Holy Spirit that brings a person to Jesus, to work to be better Christians rather than better missionaries, realize that the relationship that Jews have with Father God exists and it's not through the Son, and if Jews had converted to Christianity throughout the ages, would there be a biblical Israel as it exists today with God's divine intervention visible at every turn? I encourage Christians to see that it's more complicated than 'to the Jew first.'"

When Christians tell Jews they love us and want us to accept Jesus to be saved, and that we can believe in Jesus as Messiah and still be Jews, many Jews look at that as insincerity at best. It comes across as a non-Jew giving rabbinic

dispensation for something that's fundamentally not Jewish.

Ask yourself: Should a Christian make such a theological statement regarding what a Jew should or should not believe, any more than a Jew dipping his toe into the rift of who is really a Christian? {eoa}