

Part 2: Christian Support for Israel a Miracle

Together, how should Jewish and Christian Zionists proceed in this chaotic world of uncertainty? This is and should remain an open question by all concerned. Even so and for now, here are three suggestions:

First, we need to begin with mutual recognition that, like Israel itself, our shared passion is a miracle. It is, in fact, a “God thing” that is not going to disappear. Support from the core of Christian Zionism is not going to wane.

Rising winds from a 21st century storm of Replacement Theology aimed at Evangelicals may rile the shallow waters of those whose support is little more than response to a poll, but it will only make small ripples on the surface among those with a deep commitment to the Jewish State, Christians who see its rebirth as fulfillment of God’s irrevocable covenants with the Jewish people.

Second, both sides need to address the larger population of global Evangelicals and traditional Christendom, especially with proactive initiatives in response to two very different trends, the so-called Prosperity and Social Justice “gospels.” As expressions of authentic faith, there are aspects of each that resonate with Judaism.

There are troubling aspects too. Is Genesis 12:3 a formula for getting rich? Is social justice the *raison d’être* for redemption? No and no, of course. Still, in both cases, the question is, how can we plug into the positive aspects of these trends, maintaining a balance between *faith* and *works*? And in the social justice stream, how can we do so without being bamboozled by Palestinian Liberation theology that delegitimizes Israel’s existence?

Third, we need to build better and more meaningful alliances with Christian Zionist organizations so that their constituents develop a deeper understanding of Israel's people and culture. NGOs like the Christians United for Israel, Eagles Wings, International Fellowship of Christians and Jews, the International Christian Embassy of Jerusalem, Bridges for Peace, Christian Friends of Israel, AIPAC and Heart to Heart are nurturing the larger number of Christian Zionists who pray for Israel and are open to learning more about the unique passion God has given them for our reborn nation. How can we help these and other organizations like them nurture and strengthen their constituents' real but nascent passion?

Of equal if not greater importance, how can we help them reach the children of their constituents, especially those attending Christian universities, places where there is almost no understanding of Judaism, Jews or the culture of Israel?

The prevailing view is to strengthen advocacy primarily by helping supporters understand the modern history of Israel and its contributions to science, technology, medicine and agriculture. For its part, the Center for Jewish-Christian Understanding and Cooperation—the CJCUC—believes theology must come first.

Christianity's engrained anti-Semitism, as expressed by Martin Luther, is the fundamental reason for atrocities by the Church against the Synagogue. The task of addressing theology requires a new form of communication, a framework that allows all parties to walk down paths of dialogue without tripping landmines that blow up relationships. In essence, the safeguard is mutual commitment to understand the other's point of view.

Understanding, both sides must acknowledge, does not mean agreement. CJCUC has learned that 90 percent of Jewish-Christian relations in the matter of theological discussion is simply a matter of listening, and to do so without the need to

teach, preach or proselytize.

Notably, a focus on theological dialogue must not be limited to the age 50-plus demographic of Christian Zionists. It is critically important that the priority of biblical, ideological discussion include the campuses and curricula of Christian schools. It is easy, but dangerously inaccurate, to assume that the children of Christian Zionists are building on the foundation of what these parents have learned. The fact is that many Christian universities and colleges have not corrected Martin Luther's anti-Semitism in their Bible, Theology or Missions departments.

Conclusion

Like Israel's rebirth, a passion to nurture the nation is a miracle found in the hearts of most Jews and some Christians too. Still, many fellow Jews are inclined to protest, "Christians? We should join forces with them? Really?"

This skepticism is entirely understandable. Many Jewish Zionists come from families who survived the Holocaust. When this unspeakable result of Christian anti-Semitism is combined with 2,000 years of church atrocities against the synagogue, it is natural and easy to assume that all Christians share the sentiments that justified these evil acts. Christians who genuinely stand with Israel? Christians who are Zionists? They must have ulterior motives, perhaps to covertly convert. How is it possible that they are really different than their religious ancestors?

I have shared all of these concerns. But after 13 years of working, living and studying with core Christian Zionists, a called-out remnant if you will, I know their passion is genuine and righteous. It's true, they really are different!

Theirs is a calling nuanced with the simple faith that blessing Israel means receiving blessings from God as stated in Genesis 12:3. Theirs is a mandate to be Watchmen on the

Wall as mentioned in the Psalms. Theirs is the responsibility to do as Esther did when Mordecai told her that if she did not act for God's chosen people, He would bring salvation from someone else.

The former Chief Rabbi of England, Jonathan Sacks, once said that today's strain of Anti-Semitism is a moral infection that cannot be cured or defended by Jews alone. We need the help of others. I concur. God is raising up these "others" that we need. We must acknowledge that He is doing this; that He is moving in mysterious ways, stirring up the hearts and minds of Christians around their world to boldly stand with Israel.

Judaism and Christianity share more than common values—much more. We believe in the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; we share a common Scripture that is the Word of God; and we share a common mission to be His agents for redemption in a broken world.

For nearly 2,000 years, the Synagogue and the church have been at odds. Now, like a gift, we are presented with unprecedented opportunities to dialogue and work together for the betterment of humanity. We can, we must, accept this gift and put it to work as a team, recognizing and responding to God in each other.

For part one of this story, [click here](#).

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