

What You Need to Know About the Growing Antisemitism in Mainline Churches

Two ironic but related headlines in today's news:

(1) From U.S. News and World Report: "Iraqi Christians flee homes as Sunni militants seize land; many say they're not going back." Quote: "During the past 11 years, at least half of the country's Christian population has fled the country (Iraq), according to some estimates, to escape frequent attacks by Sunni Muslim militants targeting them and their churches. Now many of those who held out and remained may be giving up completely after fighters belonging to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant swept over the city of Mosul and a broad swath of the country the past week."

(2) From The Chicago Tribune: "Met Opera cancels live transmission due to anti-Semitism concerns." Quote: "New York's Metropolitan Opera announced on Tuesday that it has cancelled its plans for a live transmission of the opera 'The Death of Klinghoffer' in movie theaters because of concerns that it could fan global anti-Semitism."

Christians around the world are under pressure, if not overt persecution. Jews are the subjects of a growing, noxious anti-Semitism that threatens the very existence of the State of Israel, let alone the lives of individual Jews around the world.

So, consider the unique irony of this story: old-line Protestant denominations are getting into the act.

United Methodists: "The pension board of the nation's largest mainline Protestant denomination, the United Methodist Church,

has decided to divest its shares in a British company that supplies security equipment to Israel for use in prisons and in the occupied West Bank.”

United Church of Christ: “The United Church of Christ (has) called for a boycott of goods produced in Israeli settlements, including eastern Jerusalem. In a new report released a few days ago in Canada, which will have severe consequences for the congregation in North America, the Church calls for an economic divestment against the Jewish State.”

Presbyterian Church USA: “The Presbyterian Church (.) appears to be on the brink of handing a major victory to a movement that wants institutions to wield their investment dollars against Israel over its treatment of the Palestinians. The Presbyterian General Assembly, gathering in Detroit through next week, will consider withdrawing its investments from some companies whose products are used by the Israeli government in the Palestinian territories. Divestment advocates were narrowly outmaneuvered at the last Presbyterian convention in 2012, losing a crucial ballot by just two votes. They enter this year’s fight with signs of increasing momentum, within and outside the church.”

So, to be clear: Professed heralds of the Gospel of Jesus—a Jew—decide with great moral unction to jettison investments in companies that are in or do business with Israel.

As FRC has documented, religious liberty in the U.S. is being pressed and diminished. Internationally, the Jewish people and/or the State of Israel are being marginalized, often by professing Western Christians.

There is no space to go into all the theological, historical, or political ironies of these actions. Is the modern State of Israel flawless? Of course not—no human government or institution is untainted by sin and short-sightedness. But is Israel the one beacon of hope, decency, and liberty in the

Middle East? Yes, without question. And has Israel been victimized, and the Jewish people brutalized, in ways we dislike even considering? Yes. And yes.

Every morning, I drive past the Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C. and observe a sign that says, "Think about what you saw." The memory of the Holocaust should burn in our memories. It's freakish evil should be an ongoing reminder of the rapidity with which gross malevolence can erupt. Yet in the ostensibly free and sophisticated West, our failure to think about what we know is deliberate, and chilling.

Christians, are you thinking about what you're reading?

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