

Why the Silence?

We need to make a bigger outcry. And we need to urge Jewish leaders to express their outrage.

When a terrorist attack occurred in March against a Messianic Jewish family in Israel, a Messianic friend wrote me and said that “the silence is deafening” because there was so little initial outcry about the heinous crime. During the Purim holiday, a package made to look like a gift was left on the doorstep of the home of David Ortiz, a Messianic pastor. Ortiz’s 15-year-old son, Ami, sustained serious injuries after opening the package, which contained a bomb.

At first police thought the source of the attack might be Palestinian terrorists, but now they believe it was Jewish extremists. The boy had an 8-inch gash, as if someone had slit his throat, ruptured lungs and two missing toes. He had second-degree burns on his chest and arms, there was no flesh on his thighs, and doctors had to operate on his tongue. Thankfully it appears he will live. You can read more on our Web site at

I reported on what happened in my e-newsletter, The Strang Report, urging Christians to respond. I’ve raised thousands of dollars to save Israelis or help them rebuild after terrorist attacks. Now the pressure against Messianics in Israel has escalated.

When Palestinians attack Jewish settlements, there is a huge outcry from the Christian community. So why would we be silent when a fellow believer is attacked in such a savage way?

I am outraged about this. Israel is a democracy that guarantees everyone freedom of religion. However, some of the anti-missionaries have become so vicious that it appears they have resorted to violence.

Messianic Judaism, though still embraced by only a small percentage of the population, is growing rapidly and is considered to be a threat by some Orthodox Jews. Harassment of all Christians in Israel is increasing, and Messianic believers are concerned that they may be facing a new round of persecution.

When I first sent out an e-blast about the tragic bombing of Ami Ortiz, most Americans had not heard about it. Most Christians had not heard, either. But now the word is starting to get out. In late March the House of Representatives of Kentucky passed a resolution to adjourn their 2008 session early "in honor of Ami Ortiz and his family for demonstrating the love and forgiveness of God in the face of murderous religious persecution."

But we need to make a bigger outcry. And we need to urge leaders in the Jewish community to express their outrage.

Many e-mails were sent to the Israeli government in response to my e-newsletter, and I'm grateful that the government responded quickly to condemn the attacks. But no arrests have been made. My Israeli sources say the pattern is to let time pass and sweep the investigation under the rug because many Orthodox Jews despise all Christians, not only Messianic believers.

Thankfully a few voices in Israel are speaking up. The reports on our Web site feature articles in which a Jewish writer compares the Purim incident to an anti-Semitic attack that occurred in France. French officials bent over backward to prove that not all France was anti-Semitic. Now it's time for Israel, a nation that seems to appreciate support from the evangelical Christian community, to show that it is not anti-Christian.

What can you do? Join me in writing letters of concern on behalf of evangelical and Messianic believers in Israel. Let's

bombard Israeli officials in the Foreign Ministry, the Tourism Ministry, the Prime Minister's Office and the Ministry of Justice. We must pressure them until the perpetrators are brought to justice. Our Web site has the names and addresses of the leaders to write to.

When you contact them, say you're concerned about the violence and believe something must be done about it. It may or may not have been caused by radical Orthodox Jews. But someone did it, and the guilty person or persons should be brought to justice. Also say that Israel's reputation as a liberal democracy will be in jeopardy if government leaders turn a blind eye to this type of violence. And remind them to stand with the evangelical community as the evangelical community has stood with them.

Stephen Strang is the publisher of Charisma. He encourages you to write to leaders in Israel and ask them to support evangelicals in their nation. Addresses are available at