

May 23, 2020

## Setting The Record Straight on Proselytizing

Last week I was presented an article from Arutz Sheva in Israel regarding an Evangelical leader calls on Israel to ban missionary TV content:

*American evangelical leader Laurie Cardoza-Moore urges Israeli government to bar Christian TV channel from broadcasting missionary content.*

What is the controversy?

Tennessee-based evangelical leader Laurie Cardoza-Moore has called on the Israeli government to ban *GOD TV* from broadcasting programs focused on converting Jews to Christianity.

The article begins...

*Cardoza-Moore is the founder of Proclaiming Justice to The Nations and host of the Evangelical Christian television program "Focus On Israel" which formerly aired globally on GOD TV and is currently syndicated on tens of other Christian channels reaching a weekly audience of billions. The statement comes after GOD TV announced that they have received permission from the Israeli government to proselytize Jews in Hebrew on Israeli cable TV.*

<https://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/280094>

I have yet to submit my response to this article, but this is what I took away from it.

I was immediately struck by who was speaking out against this...an evangelical Christian. I found it to be odd, yet in reading further, can see her position.

*Cardoza-Moore continued: "Unfortunately, because of biblical illiteracy, we are seeing a rise of antisemitism again in Christianity. Christians have adopted false doctrines and traditions known as "Replacement Theology" and "Supersessionism" that has mobilized the Amaleks of history. These false doctrines are what fuel the desire to force unbiblical principles on our Jewish brethren. GOD TV should be encouraging Christians to repent of the history of Christian arrogance and ignorance that has incited some of the worst antisemitic incidents in history, including the pogroms, the Inquisition, and more recently, the Holocaust. Instead, they should ask their Jewish brethren to teach them the Torah as was stated by the prophets."*

You don't usually see such passion on this matter from an evangelical Christian. Many usually tow the party line regarding conversion. "your no longer Jewish but now a Christian" to which *Cardoza-Moore further revealed...*

*"Unfortunately, Christian history is replete with examples of Christians forcing their doctrinal views on Jews; either through torture, or, with a disingenuous smile. As a descendant of Sephardic Jewish ancestry, I have studied the implications of where this type of ideology can lead. My ancestors were forced to convert to Catholicism during the period of the Spanish Inquisition. King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella blamed corruption in the Catholic Church on the Jews. In order to survive that dark period in history, they were forced to convert. For 500 years since they hid their identity from generation to generation only to disclose the hidden truth upon the matriarch's or the patriarch's passing. They were known as Conversos. Conversos were blamed for plagues, accused of poisoning wells and kidnapping Christian boys for their blood. Many of the Conversos were tortured or burned at the stake to test the authenticity of their conversion."*

Her perspective on the history of the church in relation to this newly revealed piece of information about herself... *a descendant of Sephardic Jewish ancestry* further reveals her motivation in commenting. This matter hit home for her. I would say it became personal to her.

The second aspect of the article that caught my attention was the subject itself.

### Proselytizing

The premise of such a polarizing subject is rife with error and misconception on both sides of the matter. Ms. Cardoza-Moore's words speak for themselves. The other side of the debate, the Jewish side is in many ways a response to what they have been presented with and how it has been presented, not to mention the historical record that supports such practices.

There is a third aspect of the article that further caught my attention and was her final comment which I will address later.

There was a second article last week from the Associated Press - *"'GOD TV' spat exposes tensions between Israel, evangelicals"*

It provides further context that was not prevalent in the first article. As the article conveys, it is about "An evangelical broadcaster who boasted of miraculously securing a TV license in Israel now risks being taken off the air over suspicions of trying to convert Jews to Christianity."

What was missing in the first article was some context for which I am going to use as the point where I push off from, with the intention of providing clarity on a subject that is highly sensitive to some while being highly inflammatory to others.

In the second article...

*Simpson denied trying to convert Jews to Christianity. He said Jews who accept Jesus as the messiah can continue to practice their faith, a reference to Messianic Jews, popularly known as Jews for Jesus.*

*The Messianic movement, which emerged in its modern form in the 1970s, incorporates Jewish symbols and practices — including referring to Jesus by his Hebrew name, Yeshua — but is widely seen as a form of Christianity. All major Jewish denominations reject it, and Israel considers Messianic Jews to be converts to another faith.*

<https://www.yahoo.com/news/god-tv-spat-exposes-tensions-061144479.html>

The issue here is Proselytizing. That is the action of attempting to convert someone from one religion, belief, or opinion to another.

There are many layers to this subject for which one sermon cannot adequately address in totality. So, I will condense it to the points that are most relevant and that which you need to know.

At the heart of the matter for the Jewish community is identity. For millennia, the Jewish people have been the target of nation after nation, monarchy after monarchy while challenged with maintaining their identity as a people. A people, who were reliant on other nations for a place to reside, they were beholden to the cultures for which they would dwell. They would be like renters as opposed to owners. Whether your lease was up or you received an eviction notice, they were at other's behest. They did not control their own destiny as is displayed by the litany of countries that have expelled the Jewish people. We know of the most renowned ones, yet here are

some you are likely not aware of..

- Alexandria, Egypt (412 CE)
- [Muhammad](#) expelled Jewish tribes [Banu Qaynuqa](#) and [Banu Nadir](#) from [Medina](#), (7<sup>th</sup> Century)
- Jews expelled from Upper [Bavaria](#). (1276 CE)
- [Naples](#) issues first expulsion of Jews in Southern Italy (1288 CE)
- Jews expelled from Hungary by [Louis I of Hungary](#) (1360 CE)
- Pope Clement VIII expels Jews living in all the papal states, except Rome, (1593 CE)
- Jews expelled by [Ulysses S. Grant](#) under [General Order No. 11](#) from TN, KY and MS (1862 CE)

These are but a few. The list is much longer...

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Expulsions\\_and\\_exoduses\\_of\\_Jews](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Expulsions_and_exoduses_of_Jews)

The challenge to maintain identity is at the heart of the Jewish objection because it is not merely a generational struggle, but a battle against history.

Whether you are confronted with “convert or die” during the crusades or “you are no longer Jewish you are now a Christian” the identity you have been birthed into is threatened. Another word that speaks to the fear of identity loss is cultural assimilation.

*“Cultural assimilation is the process in which a minority group or culture comes to resemble a dominant group or assume the values, behaviors, and beliefs of another group”*

This outcome is a threat to Jewish identity and its survival. If the goal of Christianity is to convert Jewish people and then assimilate them into the church, for which has no resemblance of its origins, the Jewish people should be afraid.

I can't tell you about the many conversations I have had with leaders from the Jewish community about our purpose as a congregation. This very aspect of cultural assimilation is happening to the Jewish community as we speak. Adonai is opening Jewish eyes, yet to say the laborers are few in the Messianic movement is an understatement.

Messianic Judaism is the solution to cultural assimilation, yet because of this historical legacy in how the Jewish people have been treated, and “in the name of Jesus” the Jewish community's leaders view us as a “wolf in sheep's clothing”. I kid you not, these words were actually conveyed to me by one of the leaders. Interesting how the words of Yeshua are used to identify us by someone who has yet to embrace Him. That we are just Christians pretending to be Jewish is how we are viewed.

When we battle history we cannot directly confront our antagonists, but merely their ghosts. Further, the spirit of the past resides in the current generation. You might call it a legacy that has been passed down.

Yet, what we see today in how this aspect, Proselytizing is presented. Is it historically accurate or has it been compromised along the way? This idea of Proselytizing is not an accurate representation of what Scripture conveys.

Everyone listening should be familiar with the great commission...

[Mat 28:18](#) Yeshua came and talked with them. He said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

[Mat 28:19](#) Therefore, go and make people from all nations into talmidim, immersing them into the reality of the

Father, the Son and the Ruach HaKodesh,  
**Mat 28:20** and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember! I will be with you always, yes, even until the end of the age."

Interestingly, there is a word missing from the great commission. A word Yeshua never said.

Proselytize, that is convert.

No...His words make people into talmidim, students. Immerse them, teach them the reality of Adonai, the authority of Yeshua and the power of the Ruach ha Kodesh. Transform their lives through the blessing of being obedient to Adonai's word.

Torah tells us to have two or three witnesses.

**Deu 19:15** "One witness alone will not be sufficient to convict a person of any offense or sin of any kind; the matter will be established only if there are two or three witnesses testifying against him.

If one witness is not sufficient to convict, then one witness alone is not sufficient to substantiate.

I now call to the stand Rav Sha'ul.

Did he ever talk about proselytizing in any of his letters?

To those in Corinth he wrote...

**1Co 7:17** Only let each person live the life the Lord has assigned him and live it in the condition he was in when God called him. This is the rule I lay down in all the congregations.

**1Co 7:18** Was someone already circumcised when he was called? Then he should not try to remove the marks of his circumcision. Was someone uncircumcised when he was called? He shouldn't undergo b'rit-milah.

**1Co 7:19** Being circumcised means nothing, and being uncircumcised means nothing; what does mean something is keeping God's commandments.

**1Co 7:20** Each person should remain in the condition he was in when he was called.

Did Sha'ul "convert"?

Long after his Damascus road experience, Sha'ul writes this about himself..

**Rom 11:1** "In that case, I say, isn't it that God has repudiated his people?" Heaven forbid! For I myself am a son of Isra'el, from the seed of Avraham, of the tribe of Binyamin.

Does he abandon his identity or does he embrace it and use it?

**Rom 9:1** I am speaking the truth — as one who belongs to the Messiah, I do not lie; and also bearing witness is my conscience, governed by the Ruach HaKodesh:

**Rom 9:2** my grief is so great, the pain in my heart so constant,

**Rom 9:3** that I could wish myself actually under God's curse and separated from the Messiah, if it would help my brothers, my own flesh and blood,

This perspective is there for everyone to read, yet appears to be hidden, lost, ignored due to historical glasses believers are using to view scripture.

What does Sha'ul convey in the verses that follow...

**Rom 9:4** the people of Isra'el! They were made God's children, the Sh'khinah has been with them, the covenants are theirs, likewise the giving of the Torah, the Temple service and the promises;

**Rom 9:5** the Patriarchs are theirs; and from them, as far as his physical descent is concerned, came the Messiah, who is over all. Praised be Adonai for ever! Amen.

This message, that today is shrouded in the guise of Proselytizing / conversion, the message of the Gospel, the Good News at times is unrecognizable to Jewish ears and yet is a Jewish message.

Again, witness Sha'ul, what do you have to say...

**Rom 1:16** For I am not ashamed of the Good News, since it is God's powerful means of bringing salvation to everyone who keeps on trusting,

A place where many stop reading

Is that all?

Sha'ul, do you have anything more to add?

...to the Jew especially, but equally to the Gentile.

To the Jew especially, but equally to the Gentile. The Gospel doesn't seem to include proselytizing because Jews are still Jews and Gentiles are still Gentiles, thus remaining in line with his letter to Corinth.

**Rom 1:17** For in it is revealed how God makes people righteous in his sight; and from beginning to end it is through trust — as the Tanakh puts it, "But the person who is righteous will live his life by trust."

Consider the last words of verse 17...Sha'ul is providing a quote "*But the person who is righteous will live his life by trust.*" This is from Habakkuk, specifically verse 4. However, I believe it is important that you know the verses that are associated with this partial verse quote.

**Hab 2:1** I will stand at my watchpost; I will station myself on the rampart. I will look to see what [*God*] will say through me and what I will answer when I am reproved.

**Hab 2:2** Then Adonai answered me; he said, "Write down the vision clearly on tablets, so that even a runner can read it.

**Hab 2:3** For the vision is meant for its appointed time; it speaks of the end, and it does not lie. It may take a while, but wait for it; it will surely come, it will not delay.

**Hab 2:4** "Look at the proud: he is inwardly not upright; but the righteous will attain life through trusting faithfulness.

Bringing in this verse from Habakkuk and within the context of Sha'ul's letter speaks to the time for which He is writing and an audience for which the reality of Adonai, the authority of Yeshua and the power of the Ruach ha Kodesh has been revealed.

Let me bring in another witness who can speak to the aspect of conversion. This conversion would be from the Jewish perspective. I bring this up because today within Judaism, there is a conversion process. Actually, there are several. Yes, the Jewish community does proselytize. Each sect, Reform, Conservative and Orthodox have their own standards for conversion. Interestingly, there is not one uniform standard so if someone goes through the Reform process, they will not be recognized by the Orthodox as being Jewish.

Let's hear from Ruth the woman from Moav.

Ruth suffered the tragic loss of both her sons. She was blessed with two daughters-in-law. One, would end up returning to her people, while Naomi, her other daughter-in-law was planning to return to her people in Beit Lechem within Judea. Close to Naomi, Ruth, conveys to her...

**Rth 1:16** But Ruth said, "Don't press me to leave you and stop following you; for wherever you go, I will go; and wherever you stay, I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God will be my God.

**Rth 1:17** Where you die, I will die; and there I will be buried. May Adonai bring terrible curses on me, and worse ones as well, if anything but death separates you and me."

Some have identified Ruth as having converted to Judaism here, yet in what way does she continue to refer to herself...

**Rth 1:22** This is how Na'omi returned, with **Rut the woman from Mo'av**, her daughter-in-law, accompanying her from the plain of Mo'av. They arrived in Beit-Lechem at the beginning of the barley harvest.

Throughout the book of Ruth, she is identified as the woman from Mo'av five additional times. Her identity didn't change, but her relationship with Adonai did. She did not "convert" but was transformed.

**Rom 12:1** I exhort you, therefore, brothers, in view of God's mercies, to offer yourselves as a sacrifice, living and set apart for God. This will please him; it is the logical "Temple worship" for you.

**Rom 12:2** In other words, do not let yourselves be conformed to the standards of the `olam hazeh. Instead, keep letting yourselves be transformed by the renewing of your minds; so that you will know what God wants and will agree that what he wants is good, satisfying and able to succeed.

**Rom 12:3** For I am telling every single one of you, through the grace that has been given to me, not to have exaggerated ideas about your own importance. Instead, develop a sober estimate of yourself based on the standard which God has given to each of you, namely, trust.

This challenge we are confronted with is historical. We are going against thousands of years of history. A narrative framed by history, while that narrative has been embraced on both sides in the present. The narrative of proselytizing, with the establishment of man-made requirements in order to adhere to the person's "new religion"

Yet Messianic Judaism has no proselytizing program, yet we are frequently accused of what others do. WE DON'T!

There was a third observation I had made regarding these articles and those specifically involved in the reporting, that is Ms. Cardoza-Moore provided an historical context that frames the narrative as it is presented, unfortunately, her conclusion is totally wrong.

This is her concluding statement...

*Cardoza-Moore concluded: "In recent decades, millions of Christians have felt the call to stand with the State of Israel and the Jewish people with no hidden agenda. Our only mandate to the Jewish people is to love and support them because they are God's chosen people. Any attempts to convert Jews or downgrade their religion will only sew undue hatred at a time when we should unite in the face of darkness."*

Again, she has framed her response as if the issue is binary, when it is anything but binary. What she said is true, yet there is a word that greatly limits what she says, while at the same time provides no further context.



The word I am referring to is “only” where she states “*Our only mandate to the Jewish people is to love and support them because they are God's chosen people.*”

What this word “only” does is limit, if not restrict the responsibility of believers in their relationship to them.

Gentiles, the church is to love the Jewish people, while at the same time, provoking them to jealousy with the intent of drawing them back to Adonai.

**Rom 10:11** For the passage quoted says that everyone who rests his trust on him will not be humiliated.

**Rom 10:12** That means that there is no difference between Jew and Gentile — Adonai is the same for everyone, rich toward everyone who calls on him,

**Rom 10:13** since everyone who calls on the name of Adonai will be delivered.

**Rom 10:14** But how can they call on someone if they haven't trusted in him? And how can they trust in someone if they haven't heard about him? And how can they hear about someone if no one is proclaiming him?

**Rom 10:15** And how can people proclaim him unless God sends them? — as the Tanakh puts it, "How beautiful are the feet of those announcing good news about good things!"

**Rom 10:16** The problem is that they haven't all paid attention to the Good News and obeyed it. For Yesha`yahu says, "Adonai, who has trusted what he has heard from us?"

**Rom 10:17** So trust comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through a word proclaimed about the Messiah.

**Rom 10:18** "But, I say, isn't it rather that they didn't hear?" No, they did hear — "Their voice has gone out throughout the whole world and their words to the ends of the earth."

**Rom 10:19** "But, I say, isn't it rather that Isra'el didn't understand?" "I will provoke you to jealousy over a non-nation, over a nation void of understanding I will make you angry."

**Rom 10:20** Moreover, Yesha`yahu boldly says, "I was found by those who were not looking for me, I became known to those who did not ask for me";

**Rom 10:21** but to Isra'el he says, "All day long I held out my hands to a people who kept disobeying and contradicting."

While they, the nations are to come alongside the Jewish people as joint heirs, joint laborers in what were the first verses I gave you today...The Great Commission...

**Eph 3:5** In past generations it was not made known to mankind, as the Spirit is now revealing it to his emissaries and prophets,

**Eph 3:6** that in union with the Messiah and through the Good News the Gentiles were to be joint heirs, a joint body and joint sharers with the Jews in what God has promised.

There is no greater love expressed than the love of Messiah and being introduced to that love. It was no different when Sha'ul walked the face of the earth, nor should it be any different today. For Adonai is the same yesterday, today and forever.

So, when you share the reality of Adonai, remember to do so through Jewish eyes, putting yourself in their shoes and seeing from their perspective. What you say is important, but what you do prior is even more important and that is to pray for eyes to be open as I conclude with these words from Yeshua to Kefa...

**Mat 16:13** When Yeshua came into the territory around Caesarea Philippi, he asked his talmidim, "Who are people saying the Son of Man is?"

**Mat 16:14** They said, "Well, some say Yochanan the Immerser, others Eliyahu, still others Yirmeyahu or one of the prophets."

**Mat 16:15** "But you," he said to them, "who do you say I am?"

**Mat 16:16** Shim'on Kefa answered, "You are the Mashiach, the Son of the living God."

**Mat 16:17** "Shim'on Bar-Yochanan," Yeshua said to him, "how blessed you are! For no human being revealed this to you, no, it was my Father in heaven.

The narrative of proselytizing is a false narrative embraced by both sides of the aisle for it is Adonai who transforms anyone whose eyes He has opened and has called upon Him to be

Speaking of the Day of Adonai and Yeshua's return the Prophet Yoel conveys...

**Joe 2:31 (3:4)** The sun will be turned into darkness and the moon into blood before the coming of the great and terrible Day of Adonai."

**Joe 2:32 (3:5)** At that time, whoever calls on the name of Adonai will be saved. For in Mount Tziyon and Yerushalayim there will be those who escape, as Adonai has promised; among the survivors will be those whom Adonai has called.

Let's not wait until then.