

CHRISTIANS IN ISRAEL

I've had this argument a lot with "professional" Christian friends and clients—journalists, editors, clergymen, activists, etc.—representing most mainline Protestant (not Catholic) denominations. The World Council of Churches and any number of local synods and church associations in America and Europe are firmly anti-Israel and pro-Palestinian. That is simply a fact.

And I, whenever I can, try to explain that we're not the enemy of Christianity. Islam is, and the ancient Christian communities of the Middle East (like the church of Antioch, founded by St. Paul himself) have simply disappeared over the centuries under pressure from Islam.

And that Israel is, in fact, the only place in the Middle East in which Christians are not threatened. The only place in the Middle East that has MORE Christians now than it had in 1948.

Don't know if it makes any difference (don't think so), but I found this report on Guysen News, a daily internet news service:

As documented in the Central Bureau of Statistics' [Statistical Abstract of Israel 2008 \(Chart 2.2\)](#), in the last dozen years, Israel's Christian population grew from 120,600 in 1995 to 151,600 in 2007, representing a growth rate of 25 percent.

In fact, the Christian growth rate has outpaced the Jewish growth in Israel in the last 12 years! In 1995, there were 4,522,300 Jews in Israel, and in 2007 there were 5,478,200, representing a growth rate of 21 percent – 4 percent less than the Christian population grew during the same time.

Since 1949, when there were 34,000 Christians in Israel, the Christian population has grown 345 percent.

Get it? The rate of Christian population growth in Israel is greater than the rate of Jewish population growth. Who would have believed it!? ■