



The Transfer of Christians out of the Middle East, Israel and the Jewish Fate

What will the Pope find in the Middle East? The silent transfer, which is almost not talked about, where the region is slowly emptied of its Christians. The data are clear and very cruel: Under the Political Islam there is hardly any place for non-Muslims. The life of Christians becomes insufferable, and they do have a choice: To leave. And they indeed emigrate in an unending stream. In another 15 years they are expected to disappear completely from our region. But the Pope has greater troubles: His congregation in Europe proper is weakening. What does the transfer of Christians out of the Middle East teach us – about ourselves?

Dr. Guy Bechor, Gplanet

Ever since the beginning of the site, every month of December, on the occasion of the Christian holidays, I check the condition of the Christian communities in the Middle East, and the data strike anew every year: Their numbers in our region dwindle year by year, and again this is an opportunity, with the Pope's visit in our region and in Israel

Alas, it is quite possible to talk about a silent transfer, that is in progress in our region, where day by day Christian families emigrate from here. In addition to the lowest birthrate in the entire region, as a result of which there are almost no Christians left in our region, except perhaps Egypt, but there too the community is being harassed

The Pope is now in Jordan, and will also visit the Palestinian Authority , but what does he have to discuss there? The Muslim region which is not ready to have Christians and Jews live in it? The unfortunate Christians were not wise enough to establish a state of their own, and hence, even a "multi-religious" state like Lebanon does not have any chance. In the past Arab nationalism guarded them, and they guarded it. The Christians were at the forefront of Pan-Arabic nationalism. At present, when those defining them are already religious, or politically-religious, they can continue living in the area, but in day-to-day life they are barely tolerated

That is the huge difference between the Christians and the Jews, who take care of themselves, in the framework of Jewish nationalism, with a strong state and an army

In Israel, the Holy Land, the Christians are already demographically marginal, some 8% of the Arabs, and one and a half percent of the entire population (I refer only to Christian families, and not to relatives of Russian and other immigrants). In 2006 the Christians Arabs were about 10%, and you see the drop. They number almost a hundred thousand, and for the first time they equaled or numbered even less than the local Druze minority. What causes the drop? Accelerating emigration, as a result of persecution by Muslims, in particular in mixed villages, and the feeling that the country does not sufficiently protect them. Also the percentages of natural increase are very low in this community: The fertility of a Muslim mother stands at present at 3.9 children, of a Jewish woman at 2.9, a Druze woman 2.5 and a Christian woman 2.1 children. Such a fertility rate means that the community does not have a natural increase. **The forecast is that in future Christian fertility will drop below 2 children**

In the War of Independence not many Christians escaped, and hence their percentage of the non-Jewish population in Israel jumped upward. At the end of the British mandate it

was around 10%, and in 1949 their percentage of the non-Jewish population rose to 21%. But since that year they have dropped .even below the original percentage

The Christian population in Jerusalem numbers at present 15,000, i.e. 2% of the population of the city (in 1946 there lived some 31,000 Christians in the city, 19% of its population). But this number is misleading, for it also includes the Russians, foreign monks and others, where Christian Arabs in Jerusalem currently number 12,500. This means that the Christian Arabs in Jerusalem are a mere 1.6%. **It means empty churches, disappearing communities, and .social ruin**

In the Palestinian Authority (Gaza inclusive) Christians make up about 1.5% of a population of about 3 million, some 50,000 people. This is an amazing number, for in the past these numbers were much higher. Where did the Palestinian .Christians disappear to? They emigrated

Bethlehem and Nazareth, which in the past were cities with a Christian majority, have now a Muslim majority (76% of the residents of Nazareth are at present Muslim). To think that

easygoing Bethlehem requested to be annexed to Jerusalem,
!under Israeli rule. At present Bethlehem is run by Hamas

What is left for the Christians under the rule of Hamas? Under
persecution, harassment, prohibition to eat during the
Ramadan, and enforcement of women to wear Muslim head cover?

.To emigrate

Good Friday Hymn (أنا الام الحزينة) I am the sad mother
performed by the Lebanese-Christian singer Fairuz

Emigrate whereto? **Mostly to Chile in south America**. At present
there are some 70,000 Palestinian Christians in the capital
Santiago, whole communities moved there, and the emigration is
.continuing. A family that emigrates brings another one along

The magnificent school system of the churches is no longer relevant, for lack of pupils, **and hence schools have begun to accept Muslim pupils in growing numbers**, so that now they are the majority in the Christian schools in the Palestinian Authority

Muslim pupils are studying in mission schools, because Christian education was always at a high level, but all of course keep their Muslim identity

According to official data, there are in Israel 17 Catholic schools with 21,671 pupils – in the entire process up to university level – of which 13,576 (62.6%) are Christians, 8,095 (37.4%) are Muslims. In the Palestinian Authority there are 18 Catholic schools, with 15,764 pupils, of which 7,271 (46.1%) are Christians, and 8,493 (53.9%) are Muslims. So why keep this school system going, if there is no longer a community

Lebanon once was a country with a Christian–Maronite

government, but no longer. The Christians after the Taëff agreement lost their hegemony, and at present they are threatened by the Shiites and Hezbollah. Because more than a million Christians emigrated from Lebanon in the past decades, they have families in Europe and in the American continent, it is easy for them to emigrate

According to a recent survey, almost half the Maronites, the largest Christian community in the country, said that they consider emigration. More than 100,000 have applied to foreign embassies for visas. About 60,000 Christians have left since the last war, in the years 2006-2007. These are amazing figures, which may deteriorate the country again into a civil war, for the Muslims, and in particular the Shiites, are justified in their demand for a new division of the government pie and the power in the country. In Lebanon there are at present one to a million-and-a-half Christians left

In Jordan are not many Christians, about 400,000, but they too are not very happy, where the Political Islam in the country grows stronger and stronger. The Royal House guards them better than in some other Arab countries

A particularly serious situation has been created for the Christians in Iraq after Saddam Hussein, where both the Sunnis and Shiites would like to transfer them out of the country. In February last year, Boulos Faraj Rahho, the Assyrian Archbishop of the city of Mosul, was kidnapped. His body was found two weeks later. The Christian community in Iraq, numbering at present some 850 thousand (out of a population of 28 million people), has paid a heavy price since the removal of Saddam Hussein and the Baath regime. Reference is to a relatively solid community, but in the anarchy created in Iraq many were killed, others were kidnapped for ransom, girls were raped and executed, and churches were torched. A wave of many refugees, numbering some 3 million people fled Iraq, reportedly numbered some 100,000 Christians. Christians in the country understand that they do not have a future there. Many wish to emigrate, mostly from the city of Mosul, the third largest, in which there is a relatively large Christian community.

In Egypt too life for the Christians becomes more difficult year after year, with the ascent of Political Islam. Out of 80 million citizens, between 6-10% are Christian Copts, and life is difficult between suppression by the street and by the government.

Only last month riots flared up again in Alexandria, where hundreds of Muslims threw stones on Christian-owned shops and the police station in the city. The background for the riots

was the killing of a Muslim man, supposedly by his Christian landlords. The Copts claim that the government does not do enough to protect them. The country itself tries to hide Coptic suffering as much as possible, to placate the Islamic groups. This way the Egyptian Government exploited the "swine flu" in order to liquidate in one fell swoop the entire hog population in the country, about 320 thousand hogs. This means another heavy blow to the Christian community, this time .on the part of the government

Syria has an estimated two million Christians, and they are in good shape, of course in the data provided by the Syrian police state. The regime is a last secular-nationalistic regime, and hence it keeps the Christians as a minority, in its capacity as a sectarian minority in itself, the Alawites. But just like the other Syrian citizens they have almost no possibility of obtaining a passport, or freely leave the country without interference of the Mukhabarat, the Internal .Security Service

With such depressing data of a pitiable and a demography slated for liquidation within 15 years, what else is left for the Pope in the Muslim region? Does he provide an answer at ?all to the Christians in the region? Protection

.As for us, **our great fortune is the Jewish State**

To those calling for a state for all its citizens, or similar slogans – study what happened to the Christian minority, that did not think of establishing its own state in the Middle East, has paid a price for this and is still paying it day by .day

Translation from [Hebrew](#): Michal Elata

► [The unbelievable story of “neutral” Switzerland versus the Jews. And now versus Israel as well](#)

► [Is there still room for a Jewish existence on the sick European continent? A letter to the Jews of the European continent](#)