



B'NAI B'RITH WORLD CENTER - JERUSALEM

Van Zile presented “An Introduction to Evangelical Anti-Zionism”, Santis spoke on “Prolonging Conflict: Western Government Funding of anti-Israel Activism in the Churches” and Nicholson addressed “Why anti-Israel Evangelicals Have Been Successful and How they Can be Challenged”. In her opening remarks, Liaison Committee co-chair Rev. Dr. Petra Heldt said “Efforts to divest Evangelical Christians from Israel might be a new twist, but it comes within a long-term strategy, that targets different groups of Christians, Jews, and Muslims alike as potential instruments in that battle. To this end, Christian Churches have been targeted as useful tools since the early 1970’s and since then many historic Protestant Church hierarchies have fallen victim to that anti-Israelism. They penetrated the minds of Western societies with anti-Israelism. All the while, many confused Christians are convinced BDS is a good thing – and consequently losing their faith. That strategy resembles suspiciously that of the PLO Charta of 1964 which calls for the destruction of Israel and recommends the penetration of Western superstructures, including the World Council of Churches, the YMCA, and the UN. It recommends building networks that destroy the institutions from within. The aim sounds positive, as supporting a Palestinian people. But it is a smoke screen behind which lies the desired aspiration to destroy Israel. The strategy is in alliance with the unmentioned elephant in the room, i.e., the Islamization of Western societies. It targets not only Israel, but the freedom and the identity of the Judeo-Christian culture.” In his opening remarks, Liaison Committee co-chair and World Center Director Alan Schneider paid tribute to the courage of the Christian speakers - Van Zile, Nicholson and Heldt - for defending Israel. He noted that while concerted efforts to drive a wedge between Evangelicals – particularly American – and Israel is not in itself new, observers believe that their reach is dramatically changing and that they are succeeding in reaching beyond the evangelical left, influencing the mainstream. In particular, they are penetrating the evangelical world at its soft underbelly: the Millennial generation.” The “Liaison Committee” is an informal Jewish-Christian initiative aimed at fostering better mutual respect and understanding between local Jews and Christians, and is as a platform for raising and resolving issues that impact on both communities. It was reconstituted by the B’nai B’rith World Center in Jerusalem and the Ecumenical Theological Research Fraternity in Israel in 2010 and since then we have conducted a number of important meetings, consultations and conferences geared to growing this relationship. Conclusions from the symposium will serve as the basis for future Liaison Committee activity with the Evangelical Christian community.