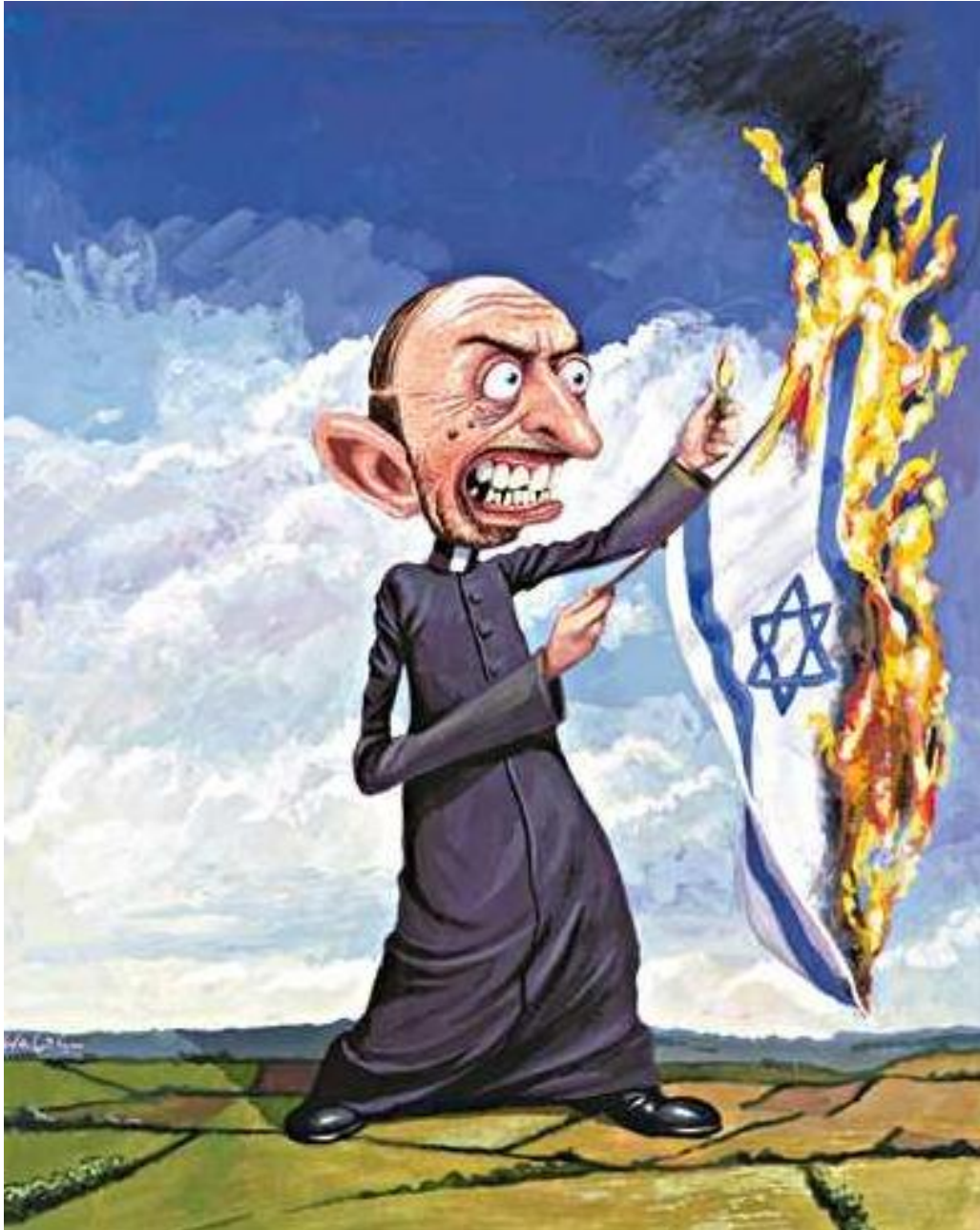


“Prophets Who Prophecy Lies In My Name”



Christian Palestinianism and the anti-Israel Crusade

Paul Wilkinson

Hazel Grove Full Gospel Church

68 London Road, Hazel Grove, Stockport, Cheshire, SK7 4AF. (UK).

Tel: 0161 456 8393. Reg. Charity: 1051785.

In Association with The Fellowship of Christian Assemblies

Senior Pastor: Andrew Robinson. Associate Minister: Paul Wilkinson

Elders: Steve Fitton, Roger Simkin. Treasurer: Ben Fallows



Replies to:

Dr. Paul Wilkinson
72 Fold Green
Chadderton
Oldham
Lancashire, OL9 9DX
United Kingdom

Tel: 0161 345 8910

Email: pwilkinson71@ntlworld.com

4th March 2011

Dear Friends,

For many years we have been concerned about the growing opposition within the Evangelical Church towards the modern State of Israel. This opposition is rooted in an interpretation of the Bible which views the Church as having replaced (or 'fulfilled') Israel in God's prophetic purposes. In recent years this theology of replacement has become increasingly politicized, and enjoys wide-ranging support among Church leaders, denominations, charities, and associated mission and humanitarian groups. Of particular concern has been the speed with which alliances have been forged with secular, political and non-Christian religious groups in what can only be described as a mounting anti-Israel crusade.

The enclosed document highlights the scale of the problem, and it is our hope and prayer that its contents will serve not only to inform, but also to awaken the Church to the lateness of the hour and the nearness of our Lord's return.

As we stand with the Jewish people in these dark days, let us pray for our brothers and sisters in Christ who are unwittingly opposing God's purposes for His ancient covenant people, that by His grace they may be restored to the truth.

Your brother in Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Andrew Robinson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Andrew D. Robinson
Senior Pastor

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Scripture quotations are taken from the Holy Bible, King James Version.

Profile

I am the Associate Minister at Hazel Grove Full Gospel Church in Stockport, England. I was converted to Christ in February 1990 whilst studying Mathematics and Statistics at the University of York. I have a BSc in Mathematics and Statistics, a BA and MA in Theology, and a PhD in Religions and Theology. An edited version of my PhD thesis was published by Paternoster Press in 2007 entitled, *For Zion's Sake: Christian Zionism and the Role of John Nelson Darby*. I have also studied at the International School of Holocaust Studies at Yad Vashem in Jerusalem.



I am a member of the Council of Prophetic Witness Movement International in the UK, and a member of the Pre-Trib Research Center in Lynchburg, Virginia.

Introduction

This document is based on a Powerpoint presentation I gave on December 7, 2010, at the 19th Annual Pre-Trib Study Group Conference in Dallas/Fort Worth (available from the address at the end of the document). The title was taken from the words spoken by the LORD to Jeremiah about the false prophets of Israel. I believe that an application of this prophecy can be made to those who believe and teach that God has rejected Israel and replaced her with the Church, and who give political, economic, and theological expression to this erroneous belief:

“Thus saith the LORD of hosts, Hearken not unto the words of the prophets that prophesy unto you: they make you vain: they speak a vision of their own heart, and not out of the mouth of the LORD ... I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran: I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied ... I have heard what the prophets said, that prophesy lies in my name, saying, I have dreamed, I have dreamed. How long shall this be in the heart of the prophets that prophesy lies? yea, they are prophets of the deceit of their own heart ... Behold, I am against them that prophesy false dreams, saith the LORD, and do tell them, and cause my people to err by their lies, and by their lightness; yet I sent them not” (Jeremiah 23:16-32).

I coined the term ‘Christian Palestinianism’ whilst doing my PhD research at Manchester University (2003-2006). My thesis was entitled, ‘John Nelson Darby and the Origins of Christian Zionism.’ The term is used to represent those within the Church whose theology of Israel is diametrically opposed to that of *biblical* Christian Zionism, and whose opposition to Israel and her Christian allies is expressed in their outspoken support of the Palestinian agenda.

1. The Rise of Christian Palestinianism

The following timeline highlights some of the key stages in the development of this movement, which can be traced back to the establishment of the modern State of Israel on May 14, 1948:

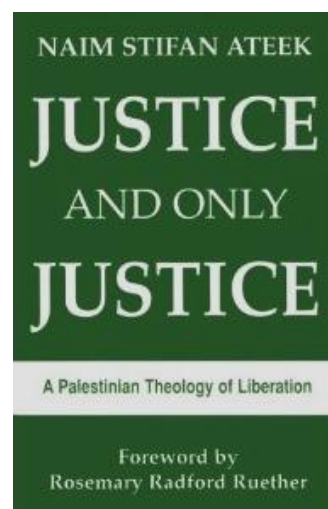
1948	World Council of Churches	1986	Evangelicals for Middle East Understanding
1956	Near East Christian Council (1962 – Near East Council of Churches)	1987	First Palestinian <i>Intifada</i>
1971	Gustavo Gutiérrez, <i>A Theology of Liberation</i>	1989	Naim Ateek, <i>Justice and Only Justice: A Palestinian Theology of Liberation</i>
1974	Middle East Council of Churches	1990	First International Symposium on Palestinian Liberation Theology
1979	U.S. “La Grange Declaration”	1994	<i>Sabeel</i> - Palestinian Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center
1982	World Vision reverses pro-Israel policy	1995 –	
1985	Donald Wagner and Ray Bakke “listening tour” of Middle East		

- In August 1948, just three months after the modern State of Israel was established, the World Council of Churches (WCC) was formed in Amsterdam. The WCC is the broadest expression of the modern ecumenical movement, and has become increasingly outspoken in its opposition to Israel and the alleged ‘occupation.’
- In 1956, the Near East Christian Council (NECC) was established as a co-ordinating body for Protestant mission in the Middle East, changing its name in 1962 to the Near East Council of Churches. This led to strong alliances being forged between Protestant and Orthodox churches in the region.
- In 1974, the Middle East Council of Churches (MECC) was established. The MECC is the oldest ecumenical organization in the region, now incorporating the Roman Catholic churches in the Middle East. Soon after its formation the MECC became affiliated with the World Council of Churches, which was then championing the cause of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). The MECC has enabled member churches in the East and West to unite around a common, pro-Palestinian, anti-Israel policy.
- During the 1970s, many liberal Protestants began to embrace the ‘liberation theology’ of the Peruvian Roman Catholic theologian, Gustavo Gutiérrez. His book, *A Theology of Liberation (1971)*, portrayed the Lord Jesus Christ as the great liberator of the poor and the oppressed, and the champion of “social justice”.
- In 1979, five thousand American church leaders formulated the ‘La Grange Declaration,’ voicing their opposition to Christian Zionism and accusing Israel of occupation, land confiscation, and “brutal torture”.

- In 1982, following Israel's invasion of Lebanon, World Vision, a Christian humanitarian organization, reversed its pro-Israel policy. In the same year, Mercy Corps International launched a series of educational tours to the Middle East to encourage North American Christians to re-evaluate their support for Israel.
- In 1985, American Presbyterian minister and national director of the Palestine Human Rights Campaign, Donald Wagner, accompanied Ray Bakke of the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization on a 'listening tour' of Israel and six neighbouring Arab countries. Wagner and Bakke challenged the theological basis of traditional American Evangelical support for Israel.
- In 1986, Evangelicals for Middle East Understanding (EMEU) was founded as an affiliation of North American churches and agencies which support Arab churches in the Middle East, oppose the State of Israel, and denounce Christian Zionists.
- In 1987, the first *Intifada* (Palestinian 'uprising') took place, resulting in the formation of Hamas, a terrorist organization bent on the destruction of Israel.
- In 1989, Palestinian Anglican Naim Ateek, a graduate of Berkeley, California, who was then serving as canon of St. George's Cathedral in Jerusalem, published his book, *Justice and Only Justice: A Palestinian Theology of Liberation*. Ateek's book was the catalyst for the First International Symposium on Palestinian Liberation Theology, which was held at the Tantur Ecumenical Institute in Jerusalem in 1990 and organized with the help of the Mennonite Central Committee.
- In 1994, Naim Ateek founded 'Sabeel' – the Palestinian Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center based in Jerusalem. Christian Palestinianism was now institutionalized, having a name to spearhead the movement and a co-ordinated voice with which to marshal its troops.¹

Naim Ateek

Chief Architect of Christian Palestinianism



¹ Paul Richard Wilkinson, *For Zion's Sake: Christian Zionism and the Role of John Nelson Darby* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2007), pp. 59-62.

In his most recent book, *A Palestinian Christian Cry for Reconciliation* (2008), Naim Ateek highlights what he believes is the essence of Palestinian liberation theology:

“In many ways, a Palestinian theology of liberation has re-established the balance between Christ’s two natures – his divinity and his humanity. Palestinian liberation theology focuses on the humanity of Jesus of Nazareth, who was also a Palestinian living under an occupation.”²

Identifying Jesus as “a Palestinian living under an occupation” has become normative for Christian Palestinianists, and a powerful propaganda weapon in their anti-Israel crusade. This identification was most evident in the Easter message which Ateek preached in Jerusalem on April 9, 2001:

“Here in Palestine Jesus is again walking the via dolorosa. Jesus is the powerless Palestinian humiliated at a checkpoint, the woman trying to get through to the hospital for treatment, the young man whose dignity is trampled, the young student who cannot get to the university to study, the unemployed father who needs to find bread to feed his family ... In this season of Lent, it seems to many of us that Jesus is on the cross again with thousands of crucified Palestinians around him. It only takes people of insight to see the hundreds of thousands of crosses throughout the land, Palestinian men, women, and children being crucified. Palestine has become one huge Golgotha. The Israeli government crucifixion system is operating daily. Palestine has become the place of the skull.”³



The above picture is the work of Palestinian artist Mohammed Abdul Ghani Saba’neh. I chose it to illustrate Naim Ateek’s sermon, and what Egyptian-born British author and political commentator, Bat Ye’or, calls the “Arabization and Palestinization of the Jewish Jesus”.⁴ This Palestinianist portrayal of the Lord Jesus is further illustrated by the following examples, which are taken from the website of Palestinian Media Watch:

² Naim Stifan Ateek, *A Palestinian Christian Cry for Reconciliation* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2008), p. 11.

³ Naim Ateek, ‘Jerusalem Easter Message,’ http://www.hcef.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=372:jerusalem-easter-message&catid=1:news&Itemid=229.

⁴ Bat Ye’or, *Eurabia: The Euro-Arab Axis* (Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2007), p. 214.



On December 24, 2010, an Israeli research institute called Palestinian Media Watch (PMW), which monitors and analyzes messages being delivered to the Arab Palestinian population by its leaders, posted the following headline on their website:

“Jesus was a Palestinian – ‘no one denies that,’ says PA TV.”

According to the PMW article, “One of the ways the Palestinian Authority attempts to create a Palestinian history is to deny the Judean/Jewish nationality of Jesus, and misrepresent him as a ‘Palestinian.’”⁵

Palestinian Media Watch has been documenting the ongoing attempt by the Palestinian Authority to revise not only the history of the re-establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, but also the biblical history of the Lord Jesus Himself. PMW list numerous examples of this misrepresentation of Jesus, including a statement made on May 12, 2009, by its religious leader Muhammad Hussein that Jesus and Mary were “Palestinians par excellence.” Author Samih Ghanadreh (above) was interviewed on PA TV and asserted that Jesus was the first Palestinian martyr, or *shahid*.



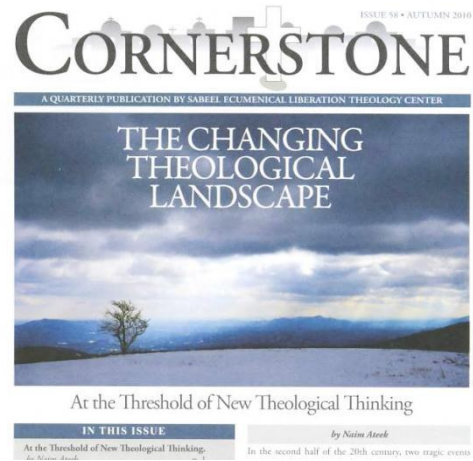
Mustafa Barghouti (right), an influential leader within the Palestinian Authority, made a similar claim in December 2009, when he described Jesus as “the first Palestinian who was tortured in this land.”⁶

As Bat Ye’or writes, “This Islamization of the Jewish sources of Christianity, disseminated through European Islamophile church networks, plays into the hands of Muslims eager to co-opt Christianity and instrumentalize Christians as partners in their struggle against Israel.”⁷



⁵ Palestinian Media Watch, ‘Jesus was a Palestinian,’ http://www.palwatch.org/main.aspx?fi=157&doc_id=4038.

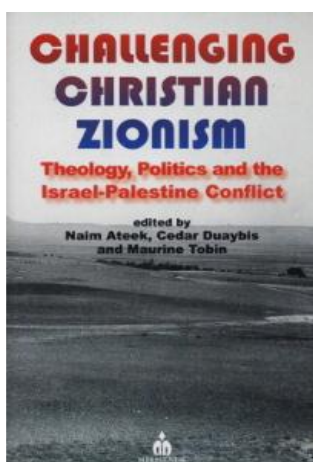
⁶ Palestinian Media Watch, ‘Jesus was a tortured Palestinian,’ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gggViM5wi60>; cf. Melanie Phillips, *Londonistan: How Britain is Creating a Terror State Within* (London: Gibson Square, 2007), pp. 212-238.



“Sabeel is an ecumenical grassroots liberation theology movement among Palestinian Christians. Inspired by the life and teaching of Jesus Christ, this liberation theology seeks to deepen the faith of Palestinian Christians, to promote unity among them toward social action. Sabeel strives to develop a spirituality based on love, justice, peace, nonviolence, liberation and reconciliation for the different national and faith communities. The word ‘Sabeel’ is Arabic for ‘the way’ and also a ‘channel’ or ‘spring’ of life-giving water.”⁸

Sabeel seeks to disseminate its message through various channels:

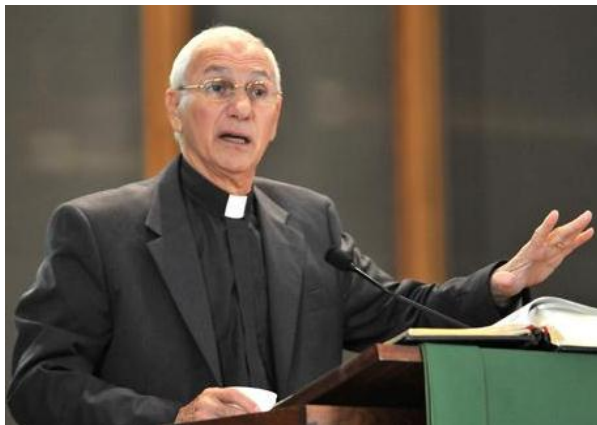
- Its own *Cornerstone* magazine (56 editions to date)
- International Friends of Sabeel, which comprises international ‘chapters’ located in the USA, Canada, UK, Ireland, Scandinavia, and Oceania. (Sabeel has hosted over 30 major conferences in North America alone since 2002)
- ‘Witness trips,’ designed to enable Christians to experience life “under the occupation”
- Youth conferences and women’s conferences
- International Conferences (8 to date), sponsored by groups such as the World Council of Churches, the Presbyterian Church (USA), and the Church of Scotland



Following the 5th International Sabeel Conference held in Jerusalem in 2004, a ‘reader’ was published entitled, *Challenging Christian Zionism: Theology, Politics and the Israel-Palestine Conflict*. The conference brought together over six hundred members of the clergy, theologians, and peace activists from around the world to strategize against Christian Zionism; nearly three hundred delegates were from the United States. The following extracts from the conference offer an insight into the nature of this movement:

⁷ Ye’or, *Eurabia*, p. 215.

⁸ Sabeel, ‘Purpose Statement,’ <http://www.sabeel.org/etemplate.php?id=2>.



Naim Ateek denounced Christian Zionism as “the worst anti-Semitism one can imagine.” He accused Christian Zionists of teaching that the Jewish people must be brought back to the Land “in order to be annihilated or converted to the Christian faith”. Ateek declared that “God is not the God of Armageddon but the God of Golgotha”.⁹

Mitri Raheb, pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran Christmas Church in Bethlehem, spoke on Acts 1:6 (“Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?”). He denounced the Apostles as “very narrow-minded,” “nationalistic,” and “blinded.” According to Raheb, Christian Zionists are not interested in the Palestinians, because suffering does not sell: “They really want the American dream of success,” he said, which is why they “want to win wars”.¹⁰



Michael Prior (deceased), a radical Roman Catholic priest and theologian, was the most controversial speaker at the conference. In his unpublished address, Prior, who believes that the narratives in Genesis-Joshua belong to the genre of myths and legends, described Joshua as “the patron saint of ethnic cleansers,” and the God whom Christian Zionists worship as “the Great Ethnic-Cleanser, a militaristic and xenophobic

genocidist, who is not sufficiently moral even to conform to the requirements of the Fourth Geneva Convention”.¹¹

⁹ Naim Ateek, ‘Introduction: Challenging Christian Zionism,’ in Naim Ateek, Cedar Duaybis, Maurine Tobin (eds), *Challenging Christian Zionism: Theology, Politics and the Israel-Palestine Conflict* (London: Melisende, 2005), pp. 17, 19.

¹⁰ Mitri Raheb, ‘The Third Kingdom,’ in *Challenging Christian Zionism*, pp. 265, 269.

¹¹ See Michael Prior, ‘The Holy Land and the Scandalous Performance of the Churches,’ *Cornerstone* (Winter, 2003), p. 6.

2. An Ecumenical and Inter-Faith Agenda

One of the most disturbing developments within Christian Palestinianism in recent decades has been the alliances which have been forged between Evangelicals and the Muslim world. Christian Palestinianist leaders frequently share conference platforms with Islamic clerics. Spearheading this inter-faith dialogue, and the Christian Palestinianist movement as a whole, is the Anglican vicar from England, Revd Dr Stephen Sizer.



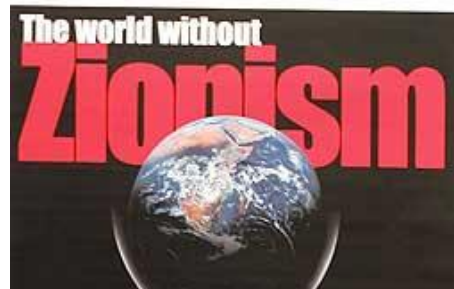
(Source: www.stephensizer.com/photos/)

Stephen Sizer *Champion of Christian Palestinianism*

“The British author said that the Zionists have distorted remarks by President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad about the Holocaust.”

The above quote was taken from the website of the Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA), who interviewed Stephen Sizer during his visit to Tehran in October 2007. During his interview, Sizer defended President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad following his public denial of the Holocaust. (During a speech he delivered at the ‘World Without Zionism’ conference in Tehran in 2005, Ahmadinejad insisted that Israel must be “wiped off the map.”) In his interview, Sizer laid the blame for the conflict in the Middle East at the feet of Israel and her Christian allies.

Please note that the picture disc standing in front of Stephen Sizer in the above photograph is of Ayatollah Khomeini (1900-1989), the Shiite Muslim leader who instigated the downfall of the Shah and transformed Iran into an Islamic Republic in 1979.



Profile of Stephen Sizer

- Vicar of Christ Church, Virginia Water, in England. Christ Church is a member of the Evangelical Alliance, and of the Willow Creek Association, which is chaired by Bill Hybels. According to its own website, Willow Creek “is regarded as the most influential ministry to evangelical pastors in the U.S.”¹² [Bill Hybels’ wife Lynne works closely with Stephen Sizer, and is on record as saying, “I don’t hold to a theology asserting that the modern State of Israel represents a divinely mandated return of ancient Israel to the Promised Land”.¹³ Of Willow Creek’s overall approach to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Donald Wagner writes, “There is no hint of a pro-Zionist perspective to Willow Creek’s Middle East work.”¹⁴]
- Founding member of the Institute for the Study of Christian Zionism (www.christianzionism.org), “which is a group of pastors, academics, students, interested laypersons and a Rabbi who have been disturbed by the growing influence of Christian Zionism on the political scene in America recognizing this ideology to be a major factor in the stalled peace process in Israel/Palestine.”¹⁵
- Co-author of the ‘Jerusalem Declaration on Christian Zionism’ (August 22, 2006), which “categorically rejected”¹⁶ Christian Zionism and which was signed by the Roman Catholic, Syrian Orthodox, Episcopal and Evangelical Lutheran churches in Jerusalem
- Member of the Advisory Council of Evangelicals for Middle East Understanding (EMEU)
- Member of the UK Board of Reference for the Mar Elias Educational Institutions in Ibillin, Galilee, founded by the Vatican-approved Melkite Catholic Archbishop, Elias Chacour
- Patron of the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions
- Photographer for the Palestine News Network
- Contributor to the *Friends of Al-Aqsa* journal
- Member of the Interfaith Group for Morally Responsible Investment

¹² Willow Creek Association, ‘Our Story: Who We Are,’ <http://www.willowcreek.com/about/>.

¹³ Lynne Hybels, ‘I Am Still Pro-Israel, But I’ve Also Become Pro-Palestinian,’ *Sojourners*, www.sojo.net/index.cfm?Action=magazine.article&issue=soj1007&article=following-jesus-in-the-west-bank.

¹⁴ Donald Wagner, ‘Evangelicals and Israel: Pointing to the Third Millennium,’ www.christianzionism.org/Article/Wagner05.asp.

¹⁵ Institute for the Study of Christian Zionism, <http://www.christianzionism.org/aboutN.asp>.

¹⁶ Zenit, ‘Religious Leaders’ Statement on Christian Zionism,’ <http://www.zenit.org/article-16848?l=english>.

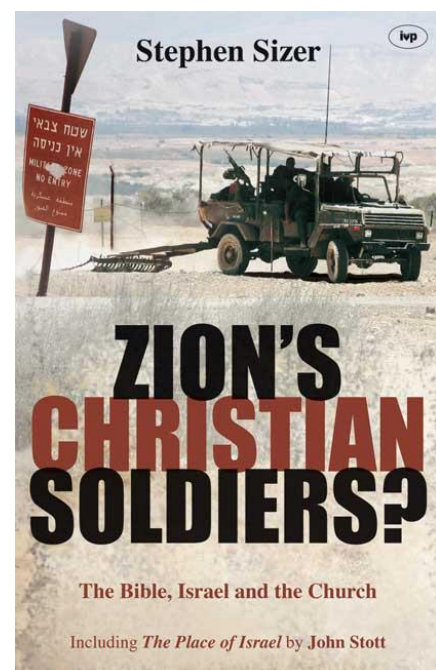
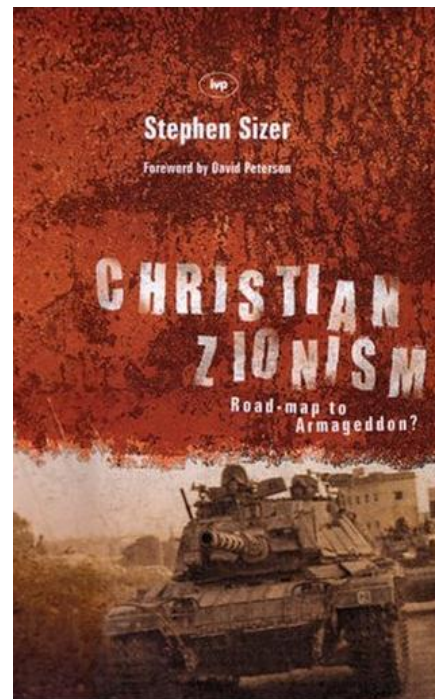
Stephen Sizer's two most influential books to date are his published PhD thesis, *Christian Zionism: Road-map to Armageddon?* (2004) and *Zion's Christian Soldiers? The Bible, Israel and the Church* (2007). Both books, which have been widely endorsed, serve only to misrepresent and caricature Christians who have, since the time of the English Puritans in the 16th and 17th centuries, understood that God has neither rejected Israel nor replaced her with the Church.

Reviewers of Sizer's first book have hailed it as the "most important and comprehensive on the subject to date," and the "scholarly treatment to counteract the rabid prophecy pack." They have condemned Christian Zionism as "pernicious," a "totally unbiblical menace," "a powerful force that encourages the destruction of millions of people," and "one of the most dangerous and heretical movements in the world which fuels the Arab-Israeli conflict".¹⁷

Zion's Christian Soldiers includes a sermon by the notable British Evangelical scholar, John Stott, who has himself denounced Christian Zionism as "biblically anathema to the Christian faith".¹⁸ In 2005, *Time* magazine ranked Stott among the 100 most influential people in the world.

Former assistant Anglican Bishop of Jerusalem, Kenneth Cragg, has also endorsed Stephen Sizer's book. Before Sizer edited it, Cragg's endorsement originally included a statement which exposes the heart and tone of the Christian Palestinianist movement:

"Zion's Christian Perverts might have been a wiser title."



¹⁷ Published Writings of Stephen Sizer, <http://www.cc-vw.org/articles/ivp.html>.

¹⁸ Quoted in Donald E. Wagner, *Anxious for Armageddon* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1995), p. 80.

Endorsements of Stephen Sizer's Books

Hank Hanegraaff (USA)

- President of the Christian Research Institute in North Carolina, and the 'Bible Answer Man'

"Sizer's Christian Zionism dramatically demonstrates how a politicized religious movement with a dubious pedigree is a prescription for disaster. From caricaturing Arabs to catalyzing Armageddon, Christian Zionist beliefs and behaviors are the antithesis of biblical Christianity."



Tony Campolo (USA)

- Baptist minister, author, and Professor of Sociology at Eastern University in St. Davids, Pennsylvania

"A comprehensive survey describing how Christians have embraced a theological perspective that has encouraged justice for Jews but has also led to the oppression of Palestinian people and extreme hostility between Christians and Muslims worldwide."



Gilbert Bilezikian (USA)

- One of the founding leaders of Willow Creek Community Church in South Barrington, Illinois:

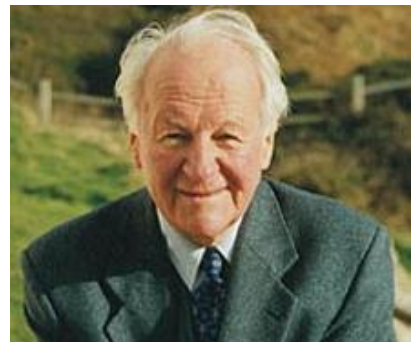
"Some theologies, that make Israel central to the purposes of God and to the processes of history, reduce the Church to the status of concubine while Israel becomes the Bride. Sizer's work provides a timely reminder that, according to the New Testament, God's people is to be identified on the basis of grace, not of race."



John Stott (UK)

- Theologian, former chaplain to Queen Elizabeth II, and Rector Emeritus of All Souls Church in London

"I myself believe that Zionism, both political and Christian, is incompatible with biblical faith. Stephen's book has helped to reinforce this conviction."¹⁹



¹⁹ 'Sixty Academics Endorse Christian Zionism Book,' <http://stephensizer.blogspot.com/2008/10/sixty-academics-endorse-christian.html>.

Stephen Sizer has promoted his distorted version of Christian Zionism across the Middle East. As these photographs indicate, he has been warmly received by Islamic clerics and scholars wherever he has gone, and was welcomed by one Islamic university in 2007 as 'Archbishop' Stephen Sizer. This kind of reception indicates that what he is presenting to them is not the pure Gospel of Jesus Christ, but an anti-Zionist / anti-Christian Zionist distortion of the Gospel, which serves only to affirm Muslims in their hatred of Israel.



Please note again the photograph of Ayatollah Khomeini, this time hanging above the head of Stephen Sizer as he dialogues with Muslim clerics in Iran.

Stephen Sizer is not alone in championing the cause of Christian Palestinianism throughout the Muslim world. Two of his closest friends and colleagues within the movement are Gary Burge and Donald Wagner, both of whom are ordained ministers within the Presbyterian Church (USA). The following photographs show the three men at the Second Meeting of the Evangelical Christian-Muslim Dialogue, which was held in Tripoli, Libya, in 2008.



Donald Wagner

- Director of the Center for Middle Eastern Studies, North Park University, Chicago
- Founding member of the Institute for the Study of Christian Zionism (ISCZ)
- Author of *Anxious for Armageddon* (1995) and *Dying in the Land of Promise* (2003)



Gary Burge

- Professor of New Testament at Wheaton College, Illinois
- Member of the Advisory Board of the Holy Land Christian Ecumenical Foundation (HCEF)
- Member of the Board of Evangelicals for Middle East Understanding (EMEU)
- Author of *Whose Land? Whose Promise?* (2003) and *Jesus and the Land* (2010)



Bridges of Faith

Evangelical-Muslim Dialogue Conference, Toronto, May 2010



In May 2010, Sizer, Burge and Wagner were in Toronto for the fourth “extended conversation” with Islamic scholars, sponsored by the **World Islamic Call Society**. The first such meeting took place in Chicago in 2006, and was followed by further “conversations” in Tripoli (Libya), and in Pasadena, California (at Fuller Theological Seminary). According to the Bridges of Faith website,

“The ultimate goal of the Evangelical Christian-Muslim Dialogue is to commit ourselves to a dialogue that will build a deep and lasting trust that will remain despite any obstacles that may arise ... It is our intention to endeavor sincerely to discover our common values and systems of ethics so that we may agree on a common set of shared spiritual values and moral precepts.”²⁰

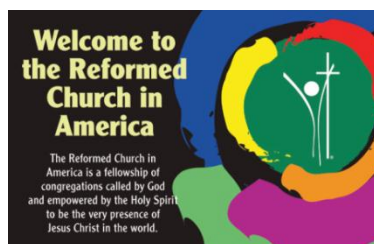
The “ultimate goal” outlined by Bridges for Faith is clearly at odds with *the* ultimate goal of the commission which was given by our Lord Jesus Christ to His Church, namely to go and “teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you” (Matthew 28:19, 20). How, then, can we reconcile the fact that Evangelical leaders are involved to this extent with Islamic scholars and clerics, with whom they have nothing in common? Perhaps the answer lies in the fact that they have a common enemy, namely Israel and her Christian allies. The following scripture seems to encapsulate what is happening:

“And the same day Pilate and Herod were made friends together: for before they were at enmity between themselves” (Luke 23:12).

²⁰ Bridges of Faith, ‘The Evangelical Christian-Muslim Dialogue Group,’ <http://www.bridgesoffaith.org/>.

The Influence of Christian Palestinianism on the Denominational Churches in the United States and the United Kingdom

Over the past few years a number of Church denominations and ecumenical organizations have issued statements condemning the alleged Israeli “occupation,” and have chosen either to support campaigns to boycott Israeli goods and divest from multinational companies operating within Israel, and/or to denounce Christian Zionism as a heresy, which they say threatens peace in the Middle East. It is striking to observe that the reports presented to the various denominational synods or assemblies were all based on the writings of Stephen Sizer, Gary Burge, Donald Wagner, Naim Ateek and other members of the Christian Palestinianist movement; not one Christian Zionist theologian or historian was referred to.



The following resolution, which was adopted by the General Synod of the Reformed Church in America in 2004, is representative of all of the above denominations:

“To declare the ideology of Christian Zionism, and the extreme form of dispensationalism that undergirds it, to be a distortion of the biblical message noting the impediment it represents to achieving a just peace in Israel/Palestine.”²¹

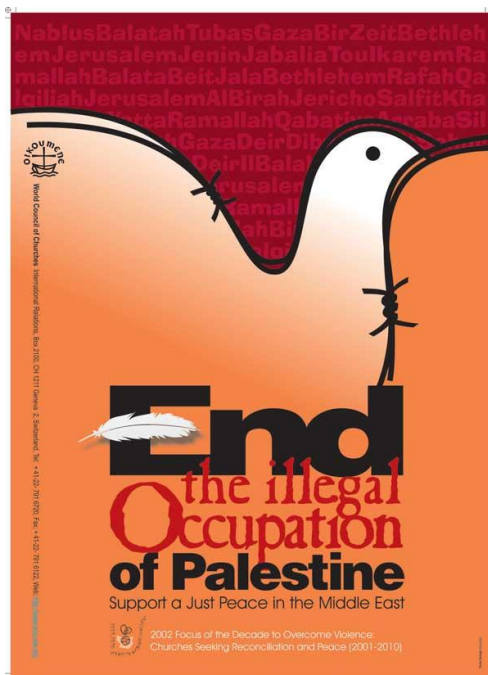
²¹ Reformed Church in America, ‘Position on Christian Zionism,’ <https://www.rca.org/sslpage.aspx?pid=3839>.



World Council of Churches

Israel's Ecumenical Enemy

In September 2009, the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches (WCC) met in Geneva and released its 'Statement on Israeli Settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.' The anti-Israel thrust of this statement is entirely consistent with the historic position adopted by the WCC in relation to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The Statement supported the establishment of a Palestinian state, condemned the "unyielding nature of Israel's occupation," called for an end to Israeli settlement building, endorsed UN resolutions which seek to place Jerusalem "under a special international regime," and called for "an international boycott of goods produced in the illegal Israeli settlements in the occupied territories."²²



In 2002, the WCC published a document (left), calling upon member churches to help end what they referred to as "the illegal occupation of Palestine." In 2007, the WCC launched the Palestine-Israel Ecumenical Forum (PIEF), which provides a platform for churches "aimed at ending the illegal occupation (of Palestinian territories) in accordance with UN resolutions."²³

In its statement about Jerusalem, the PIEF declared the following: "The WCC has repeatedly addressed the question of Jerusalem since 1948. It affirms that Jerusalem is a holy city for three monotheistic religions – Judaism, Islam, and Christianity. The WCC believes that 'Jerusalem must remain an open and inclusive city' and that it must be 'shared in terms of sovereignty and citizenship' within the framework of international law."²⁴

²² World Council of Churches, 'Statement on Israeli Settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory,' <http://www.oikoumene.org/resources/documents/central-committee/geneva-2009/reports-and-documents/report-on-public-issues/statement-on-israeli-settlements-in-the-occupied-palestinian-territory.html>.

²³ World Council of Churches, 'Israel/Palestine,' <http://www.oikoumene.org/member-churches/regions/middle-east/israel.html>.

²⁴ Palestine-Israel Ecumenical Forum, 'Jerusalem,' <http://www.oikoumene.org/en/programmes/public-witness-addressing-power-affirming-peace/churches-in-the-middle-east/pief/issues/jerusalem.html>.

In its 'Proposed Strategic Plan of Actions for 2009-2010,' the PIEF declared how "For the last forty years the Christian churches [within the WCC] have called for an end to the Israeli occupation of Palestine." The Plan's 'Premises for Action' included the following:

- That UN resolutions are the basis for peace
- That Palestinians have the right of self-determination and the right of return
- That a two-state solution must be viable
- That Jerusalem must be an open, accessible, inclusive and shared city for the two peoples and three religions
- That the Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories are illegal, and constitute an obstacle to peace
- That the 'Separation Barrier' constructed by Israel in the occupied Palestinian territories is a grave breach of international law and must be removed from the occupied territory

A further stated goal of the PIEF is to "challenge Christian Zionist and millennialism theologies or other theologies which support the occupation".²⁵

Boycotting Israel

In an interview conducted by Stephen Sizer during the 'Christ at the Checkpoint' conference in Bethlehem in 2010, Naim Ateek expressed his delight at the way Christians in the United States were enthusiastically supporting "B.D.S. – Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions" against Israel. As Ateek stated, "I feel that that's the way forward – it's the way of resisting non-violently".²⁶

In January 2011, Marwan Barghouti (right), a notorious Palestinian terrorist and head of the Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades, sent a letter to the International Conference for Palestinian Prisoners held in Morocco. Barghouti is serving five life sentences for orchestrating suicide bombing raids. In his letter, Barghouti described Israel as "the worst and most abominable enemy known to humanity and modern history," before calling for a complete boycott of all Israeli products:



"We must continue to act to isolate Israel further on the international, official, and popular level, and on all levels and in all spheres, as well as continuing the campaign to boycott all Israeli goods, not limiting it to settlement goods exclusively."²⁷

²⁵ Palestine-Israel Ecumenical Forum, 'Proposed Strategic Plan of Actions 2009-2010,' <http://www.oikoumene.org/fileadmin/files/wcc-main/documents/p3/pief/files/PIEF%20Strategic%20Plan-final.pdf>.

²⁶ Stephen Sizer's blog, 'Canon Naim Ateek on Sabeel and the Future of Palestine,' <http://stephensizer.blogspot.com/2010/03/canon-niam-ateek-on-sabeel-and-future.html>.

²⁷ Palestinian Media Watch, 'Marwan Barghouti on Israel,' http://palwatch.org/main.aspx?fi=157&doc_id=4575.

On April 1, 1933, just one week after taking power in Germany, Nazi leader Adolf Hitler ordered a boycott of Jewish shops, banks, and businesses. This order was implemented by Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels:



Reproduced with permission from Yad Vashem, Jerusalem

The same anti-Semitic spirit which drove the Nazi regime in 1933 and beyond is today driving the 'Boycott Israeli Goods' campaign, which many Christian leaders, mainstream denominations, and the World Council of Churches have unashamedly and irresponsibly endorsed:



As we read in the Book of Ecclesiastes,

“The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun” (Ecclesiastes 1:9).

Rediscovering Palestine

In May 1998, a stand seeking to promote 'alternative tourism' to 'Palestine' featured at the Christian Resources Exhibition (CRE) at Sandown Park in Surrey, England. The stand was called 'Rediscovering Palestine.'²⁸ Today this umbrella organisation claims to represent charities and organisations in the UK who are "working for justice, peace and reconciliation for all peoples in the Holy Land."²⁹ The reality is that *Rediscovering Palestine* equates, in my mind, to *Reprimanding, Replacing and Redefining Israel*. Its recommended reading list is a veritable "who's who" of Christian Palestinianist authors featured in this document, thereby revealing the true agenda behind this organisation.



(Photographs posted on the R.P. website, taken from its 2010 Greenbelt festival stall in Cheltenham, England)

Member Organisations include:

Amos Trust
 BibleLands
 Christian Aid
 Church Missionary Society
 Churches Together in Britain and Ireland
 Friends of Sabeel UK
 Living Stones
 Palestine Solidarity Campaign
 World Vision

Recommended Authors include:

Naim Ateek
 Stephen Sizer
 Michael Prior
 Mark Braverman
 Donald Wagner
 Elias Chacour
 Ben White
 Ilan Pappé
 Mitri Raheb

²⁸ Stephen Sizer, 'The Promised Land: Palestine and Israel,' <http://www.cc-vw.org/articles/theysawandbelieved.htm>.

²⁹ Rediscovering Palestine website, <http://www.rediscoveringpalestine.org.uk/>.

3. Despising the Holocaust

Christian Palestinianists are notorious for exploiting, and ultimately denigrating, the Holocaust in pursuit of their anti-Zionist and anti-Christian Zionist agenda. They typically accuse Israel and her Christian allies of playing “the Holocaust guilt-card,”³⁰ and of hiding behind “Holocaust theology”³¹ in order to shield Israel from censure.



Kenneth Cragg (left) denounces what he calls “the awful authority of the Holocaust,” which “unjustifies all Palestinian protest”³² and gives Israel “a warrant of innocence”.³³ The late Michael Prior adopted the same argument, and tone, in his writings, claiming that Auschwitz had become for the Jewish people “a place where they can hide their accountability in the present” and “a symbol that makes them untouchable.”³⁴ Marc Ellis, one of a number of Jewish liberation theologians who staunchly support this pro-Palestinian movement, portrays the Arab Palestinians living in Israel today as “the last victims of the Holocaust”.³⁵

Secular historian Regina Sharif, whom Christian Palestinianists have cited in their writings, takes this whole argument to its logical conclusion. Sharif asserts that “on the theoretical as well as on the practical level, the Nazis and the Zionists saw eye to eye,” claiming that the “cornerstone of Zionist theory ... found its ultimate justification in the Nazi theories of racial supremacy.” As far as Sharif is concerned, “Zionism, racism, and anti-Semitism are all part of one phenomena”.³⁶

³⁰ Charles P. Lutz, ‘What’s So Special About This Space?’, in Charles P. Lutz and Robert O. Smith, *Christians and a Land Called Holy: How We Can Foster Justice, Peace, and Hope* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2006), p. 31.

³¹ Michael Prior, ‘Zionism and the Bible,’ in *Holy Land Hollow Jubilee: God, Justice and the Palestinians*, ed. by Naim Ateek and Michael Prior (London: Melisende, 1999), p. 71.

³² Kenneth Cragg, *This Year in Jerusalem* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1982), pp. 129-131.

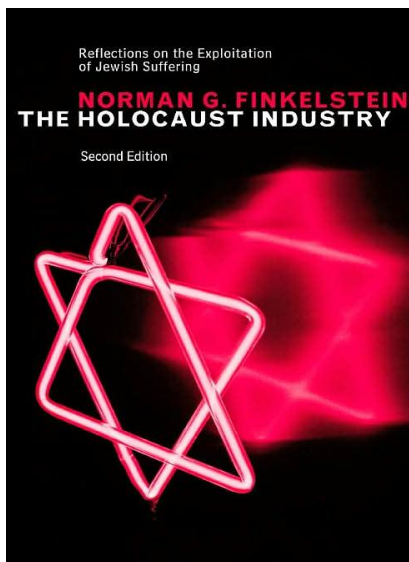
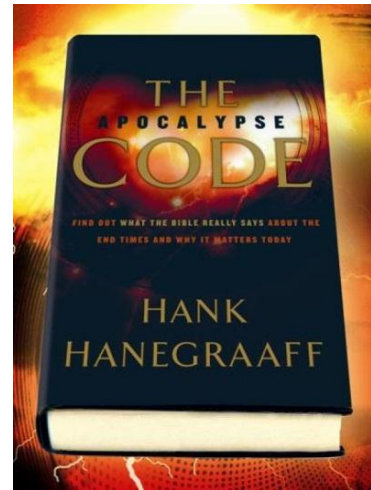
³³ Kenneth Cragg, *The Arab Christian: A History in the Middle East* (London: Mowbray, 1992), p. 28.

³⁴ Michael Prior, *Zionism and the State of Israel: A Moral Inquiry* (London: Routledge, 1999), p. 220.

³⁵ Marc H. Ellis, ‘The Boundaries of Our Destiny: A Jewish Reflection on the Biblical Jubilee on the Fiftieth Anniversary of Israel,’ in Ateek and Prior, *Holy Land Hollow Jubilee*, p. 236.

³⁶ Regina S. Sharif, *Non-Jewish Zionism* (London: Zed Press, 1983), pp. 5, 1, 76.

Hank Hanegraaff, President of the Christian Research Institute (CRI) based in Charlotte, North Carolina, follows suit in his book, *The Apocalypse Code* (2007). He affirms the equating of Zionism with racism, and follows revisionist historians when speaking of “the ethnic cleansing of Palestinians”.³⁷ Hanegraaff’s aggressively anti-Zionist, anti-Christian Zionist, and specifically anti-Dispensationalist stance is perhaps not surprising when we consider that his book is endorsed by Gary Burge, Stephen Sizer, and Colin Chapman, all of whom have appeared on his daily national radio show, ‘The Bible Answer Man.’ Their books are for sale on the CRI website.



The Holocaust is “*an indispensable ideological weapon ... for deflecting criticism of Israel*” (Finkelstein, *The Holocaust Industry*, pp.3, 30).

In his book, *Christian Zionism: Road-map to Armageddon?*, Stephen Sizer enlists the support of Norman Finkelstein, one of the most controversial Jewish political scientists and anti-Zionist activists in the United States. Sizer cites Finkelstein’s book, *The Holocaust Industry* (2000), in order to strengthen his own contention that the Holocaust has been exploited by both Jewish and Christian Zionists “to immunize Israel from censure.”³⁸

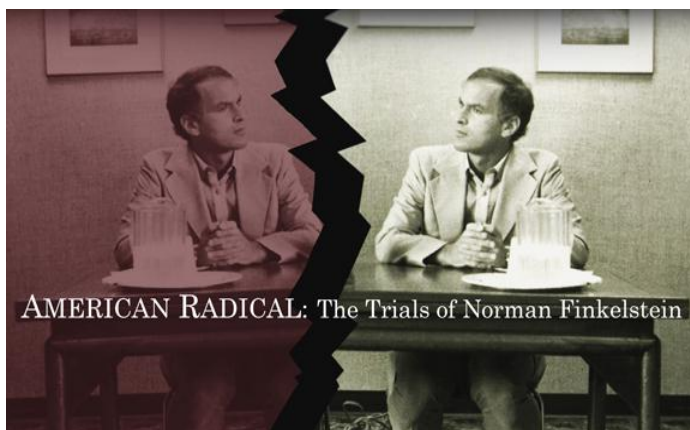
³⁷ Hank Hanegraaff, *The Apocalypse Code* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2007), pp. xxiii, 166-169.

³⁸ Sizer, *Christian Zionism*, p. 21.

In November 2010, Sizer posted on his internet blog a video of Norman Finkelstein addressing students at the University of Waterloo in Ontario, Canada. In the video, Finkelstein is challenged by a young student who was offended by remarks he had made likening Israeli Jews to Nazis (something which Finkelstein has done ever since he campaigned against Israel's invasion of Lebanon in 1982). Finkelstein defended himself by speaking of how his parents had survived the Auschwitz and Majdanek death camps and the Warsaw Ghetto uprising, and how every member of their families had perished during the Holocaust. Dismissing the student's remarks and what he called "crocodile tears," Finkelstein turned on his detractors in the audience by shouting: "If you had any heart in you, you would be crying for the Palestinians". Underneath this clip on his blog, Stephen Sizer writes:



"Norman Finkelstein has my deepest admiration for the stand he is taking."³⁹



The suffering which Norman Finkelstein's parents and their relatives endured during the Holocaust must never be overlooked or downplayed in any assessment of the man himself. However, for the purposes of this document, the question needs to be asked: How can an Evangelical

vicar like Stephen Sizer express "deepest admiration" for such a controversial and combative man, who describes himself as "a devout atheist," and who, in 2008, was banned from entering Israel for ten years by the Israeli government because of "security concerns"? Finkelstein is so controversial that a documentary portrait of his life was released in the U.S. in 2009 entitled, *American Radical: The Trials of Norman Finkelstein*. The film, which features the clip mentioned above, gives an insight into the troubled and self-destructive mind of a Jewish man who, during his 2008 book tour of southern Lebanon in the wake of Israel's conflict with Hezbollah, made the following statement in front of the cameras:

"I think that the Hezbollah represents the hope. Sometimes I think it's a very good thing that Hezbollah inflicted a huge defeat on Israel. You have to keep knocking them into the head until they reach their senses."⁴⁰

³⁹ Stephen Sizer's blog, <http://stephensizer.blogspot.com/2010/11/crocodile-tears-says-norman-finkelstein.html>.

⁴⁰ David Ridgen and Nicolas Rossier, *American Radical: The Trials of Norman Finkelstein* (Typecast Releasing: 2009).

4. How Christian Palestinianists Interpret the Bible



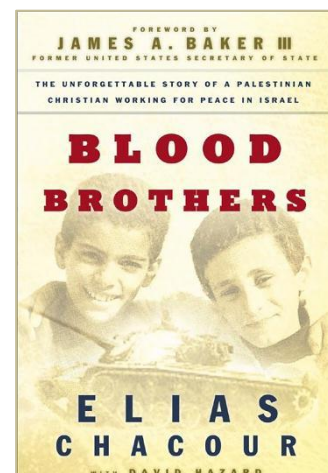
Fr. Elias Chacour

Godfather of Christian Palestinianism

“We have been taught for centuries that the Jews are the Chosen People. We do not believe anymore that they are the Chosen People of God, since now we have a new understanding of that Choseness.”

This quote was taken from Elias Chacour’s article, ‘Reconciliation and Justice: Living with the Memory,’ in Naim Ateek and Michael Prior’s book, *Holy Land Hollow Jubilee: God, Justice and the Palestinians* (London: Melisende, 1999, p. 112). It sums up how Christian Palestinianists misunderstand and misinterpret what the Bible so clearly teaches about God’s prophetic purposes for Israel, and how they, in turn, misrepresent the Holy One of Israel as a covenant-breaking God.

Elias Chacour is the Vatican-approved Melkite Greek Catholic Archbishop of Israel and one of the most influential Arabs in Israel. He is greatly esteemed within the Christian Palestinianist camp. His first book, *Blood Brothers*, was published in 1983 and tells the story of his childhood in Upper Galilee before the establishment of the modern State of Israel in 1948. The influence of this book on Evangelicals in the West cannot be overstated. According to Donald Wagner, *Blood Brothers* “touched the hearts and opened the minds of thousands of evangelicals concerning Christians in the Holy Land”.⁴¹

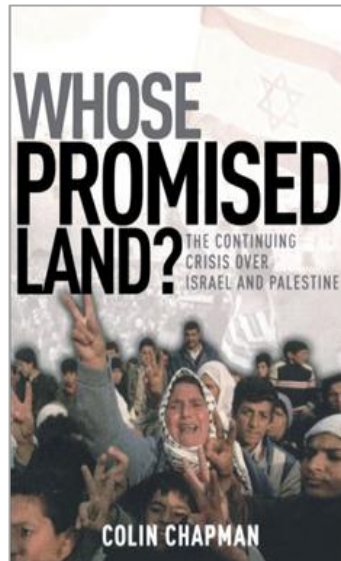


⁴¹ Dan O’Neill and Don Wagner, *Peace or Armageddon? The Unfolding Drama of the Middle East Peace Accord* (London: Marshall Pickering, 1993), p. 88.

In the same year that *Blood Brothers* appeared, Colin Chapman, a former lecturer in Islamic Studies at the Near East School of Theology in Beirut, published one of the most influential, and damaging, books on the subject of Israel, entitled *Whose Promised Land?* (1983). British journalist and author Melanie Phillips has aptly described it as “a poisonous travesty that uses theology to deligitimise Israel.”⁴² By contrast, Hank Hanegraaff is among the many Evangelical leaders indebted to Chapman, whose book he quotes from extensively in *The Apocalypse Code*.

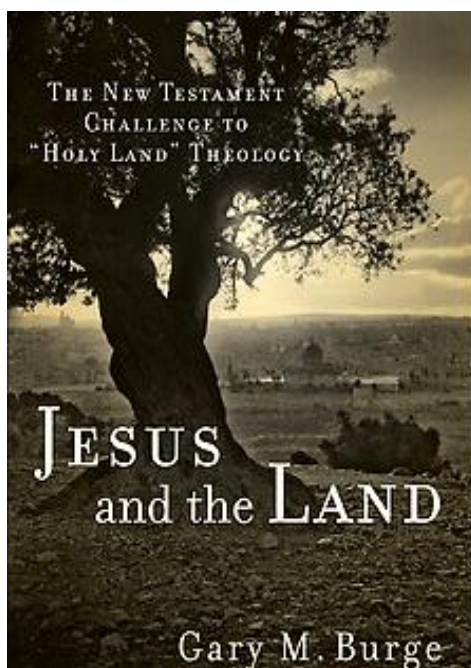
Fulfilment Theology

In more recent times, Christian Palestinianists have tried, and failed, to rebrand their ‘replacement theology’ as ‘fulfilment theology.’ Their basic assertion is summed up in Colin Chapman’s quote (right), namely that Jesus fulfilled all the promises relating to the return of the Jewish people to the Land. By ‘fulfilled,’ Chapman means that everything spoken



The New Testament writers “ceased to look forward to a literal fulfilment of Old Testament prophecies of a return to the land and a restored Jewish state. The one and only fulfilment of all the promises and prophecies was already there before their eyes in the person of Jesus” (p.189).

of by the Old Testament prophets in relation to the land and people of Israel was *spiritually* fulfilled two thousand years ago in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. The nation of Israel thus holds no further prophetic significance, since the Church is ‘the new Israel’.



In *Jesus and the Land* (2010), Gary Burge gives the following interpretation of Acts 1:6-8 and Galatians 6:16 respectively:

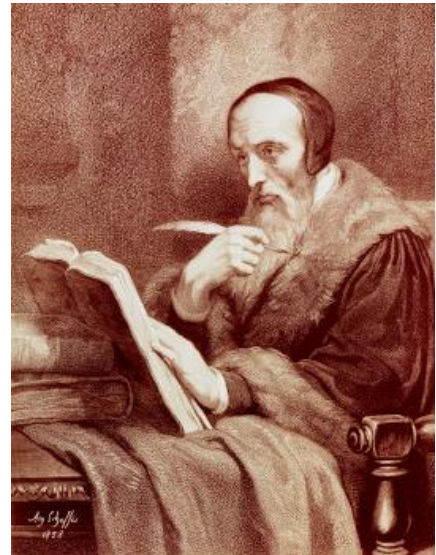
“Jesus does not envision a restoration of Israel *per se* but instead sees himself as embracing the drama of Jerusalem within his own life ... In some manner, the initial restoration of Israel has already begun inasmuch as Christ, the new Temple, the New Israel, has been resurrected” (p. 60).

“This is perhaps the apostle’s most stark example of universalizing the new identity of the people of God. The apostle is redrawing the definitions for self-identity” (pp. 83-84).

⁴² Phillips, *Londonistan*, p. 233.

In the Footsteps of Calvin

Christian Palestinianists like Gary Burge look to the French Protestant Reformer, John Calvin, as one of their theological champions. In his commentary on Acts 1:6-8, Calvin asserted that there were “as many errors ... as words” in the question which the Apostles asked the risen Lord concerning the restoration of the kingdom to Israel. This, he believed, proved “how bad scholars they were under so good a Master,” and therefore “when he [Jesus] saith, *you shall receive power*, he admonisheth them of their imbecility.” Calvin further claimed that Jesus was attempting to “lift up their minds” from “the common error” of the Jewish nation, which believed that the Messiah would “reign as a king in this world a thousand years”. This interpretation, Calvin maintained, was the “folly”⁴³ which had been adopted by the early Church premillennialists, who were known as ‘chiliasts.’



In his own exposition of these verses, Donald Wagner (below) has not only contemporised John Calvin’s commentary, but also added a mocking tone to it:

“It was as if these disciples were saying, ‘Well, Lord, we were truly impressed by the miracles you performed while we labored with you. We were inspired as well by your great teachings. Then the resurrection was truly fantastic. But now, will you do the “big one”? Will you restore the kingdom to Israel now and drive the Romans from our land?’ I think the Lord needed to employ every bit of his sense of humour at this point. I can see him saying, half in jest, and half seriously, ‘I don’t believe it! Where have you people been for the past three years? You’ve missed the point of everything!’ Then Jesus became very harsh with the disciples ... This is a clear word from the Lord to the futurist dispensationalists ... Here Jesus was telling the disciples not to place their trust in nor devote their energy to end-time prophecy or the militant Zionist ideology of the Zealots.”⁴⁴



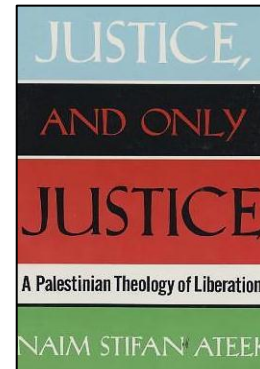
⁴³ *Commentary Upon the Acts of the Apostles by John Calvin: Vol. I*, ed. by Henry Beveridge (Edinburgh: 1844), pp. 43-48.

⁴⁴ Wagner, *Anxious for Armageddon*, p. 83.

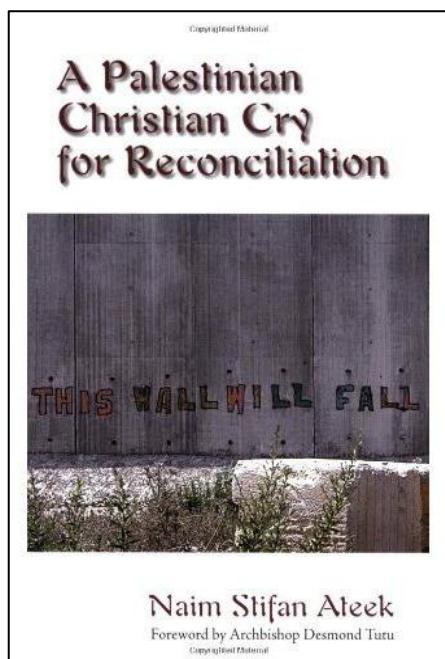
Creating God in Their Own Image

One of the most conspicuous characteristics of Christian Palestinianism is its low view of the authority of Scripture. The very fact that its proponents deny any future prophetic role for the nation of Israel, and fail to acknowledge the sovereign hand of God in Israel's re-establishment in 1948, substantiates this claim. Consider the following statement made by Naim Ateek, as he expounds 'a new way' of interpreting Scripture – what he calls a “new hermeneutic” (p. 81):

“When confronted with a difficult passage in the Bible ... one needs to ask such simple questions as: Is the way I am hearing this the way I have come to know God in Christ? Does this fit the picture I have of God that Jesus has revealed to me? ... If it does, then that passage is valid and authoritative. If not, then I cannot accept its validity or authority” (pp. 81-82).



For example, when Joshua and the Israelites were commanded by God to destroy Jericho, they “utterly destroyed all that was in the city, both man and woman, young and old, and ox, and sheep, and ass, with the edge of the sword” (Joshua 6:21). According to Ateek, such a passage reflects “an early stage of human understanding of God’s revelation that conflicts with the Christian’s understanding of God as revealed in Jesus Christ” (p. 82), and therefore has no authority for the believer; it serves only to “clarify what God is not” (p. 83).



In his most recent book, *A Palestinian Christian Cry for Reconciliation* (2008), Ateek highlights what he considers to be the single most authoritative text in the Old Testament:

“In my understanding, the inclusive text of Jonah is a standard against which Old Testament theology must be measured” (pp. 54-55).

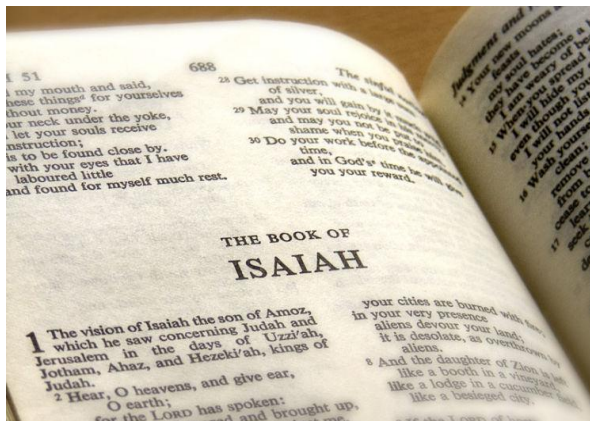
According to Ateek, the author of Jonah is “the first Palestinian liberation theologian” (p. 71), since he exposed the narrow nationalism of both the prophet and the nation of Israel, which had misrepresented God as “tribal and xenophobic”.

In Naim Ateek’s view, the Book of Jonah represents “the movement toward a more universal understanding of God, the nations, and land” (p. 55).

The 'Racist' Prophets of Israel

Naim Ateek continues what is essentially an attack on the authority of Scripture by stating that even the “greater prophets,” like Isaiah and Jeremiah, “used racist utterances” like Jonah. He claims, for example, that Isaiah 43 contains “quite disturbing racist implications” in these verses:

“I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee. Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honorable, and I have loved thee: therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life” (vss. 3-4).



Unwilling to submit to the authority of any scriptural passage which assigns to the nation of Israel a unique role in the sovereign purposes of God, Ateek writes: “How do Egyptians feel about being a ransom for Israel, or Ethiopians and Nabbeans who would be given in exchange for Israel? ... There is a great need to ‘de-Zionize’ these texts” (p. 55).

Ateek then cites Isaiah 61:5-6, which speaks of a time yet to come when foreigners “shall stand and feed” the flocks of Israel and serve as Israel’s “plowmen and vinedressers,” and when Israel as a nation “shall eat the riches of the Gentiles”. He concludes: “This exclusivist text is unacceptable today, whether it has to do with God or people or land. It must be de-Zionized as well” (p. 56).

In the School of the Palestinianist Prophets

In an attempt to add theological weight and academic credibility to their essentially political crusade, a number of leading Christian Palestinianists have drawn from the writings of an English scholar – the former Bishop of Durham, N.T. Wright. Stephen Sizer, Gary Burge,

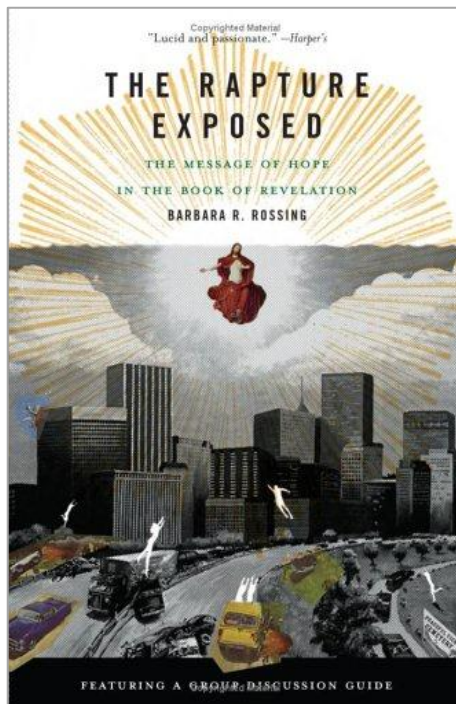
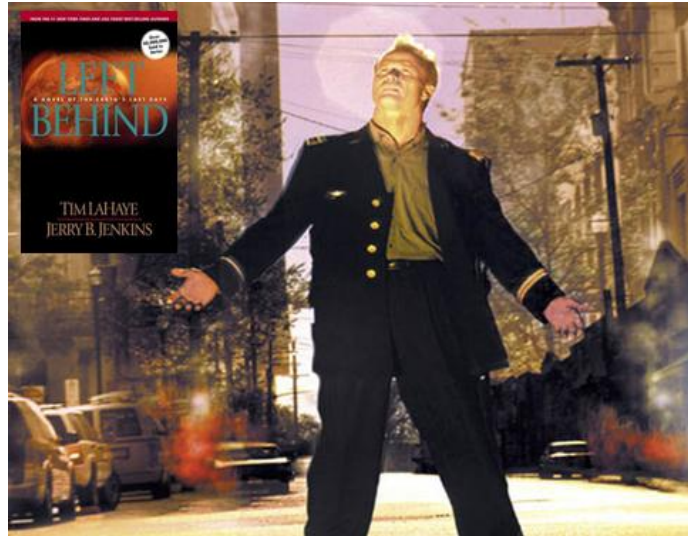


Naim Ateek and Hank Hanegraaff are among those who have expressed their debt to Wright, either in their books or on their internet websites and blogs.

Contempt for the Doctrine of the Rapture

In a 2001 article entitled, 'Farewell to the Rapture,' N.T. Wright wrote the following:

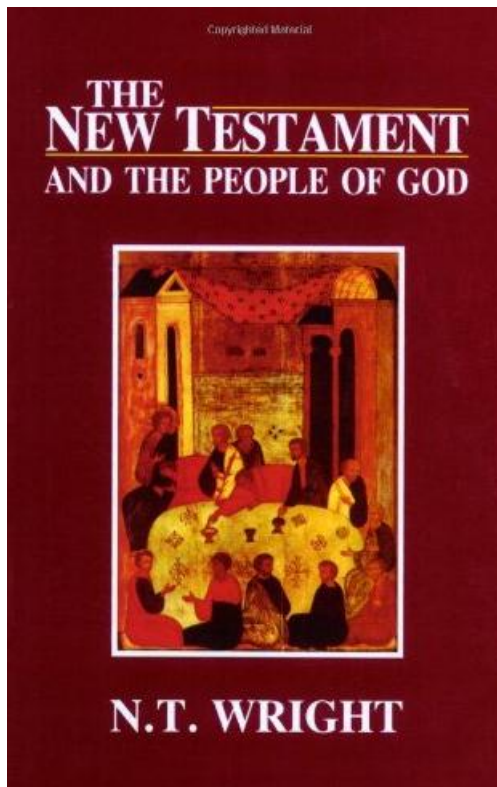
"The American obsession with the second coming of Jesus — especially with distorted interpretations of it — continues unabated. Seen from my side of the Atlantic [in England], the phenomenal success of the *Left Behind* books appears puzzling, even bizarre. Few in the U.K. hold the belief on which the popular series of novels is based: that there will be a literal 'rapture' in which believers will be snatched up to heaven."⁴⁵



Before we focus on N.T. Wright's erroneous theology of Israel, it is important to highlight the contempt which Christian Palestinianists in general hold for the doctrine of the any-moment Rapture of the Church. In her book, *The Rapture Exposed* (2004), Barbara Rossing, who is a graduate of Harvard and Yale, an ordained minister in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and a regular speaker at Sabeel conferences, attacks the *Left Behind* novels and those who subscribe to the basic end-times theology underpinning them. Rossing's book opens with the following statement: "The Rapture is a racket ... We are not Raptured off the earth, nor is God ... God will never leave the world behind" (pp. 1-2).

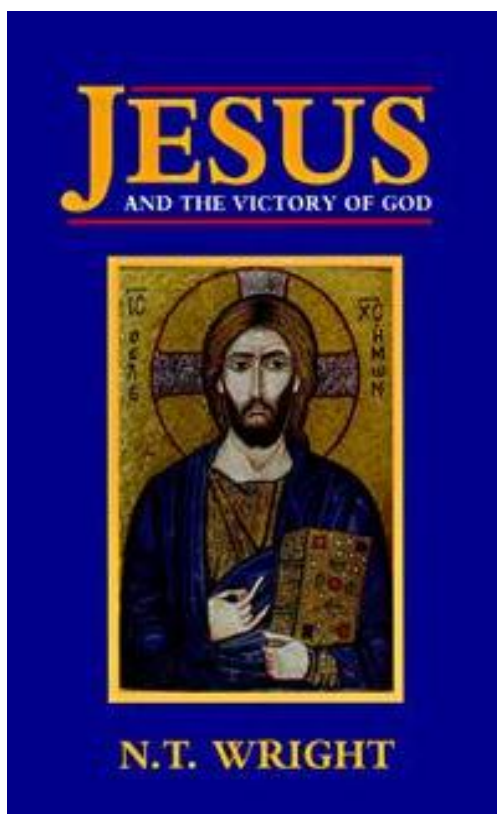
Rossing believes that the Book of Revelation presents a vision, not of judgment and destruction, but of renewal and healing, all of which is made possible through "Lamb power." In outlining her "Lamb theology," Rossing depicts the Lord Jesus as "lambkin," "lamby," and even "Fluffy" (pp. 109-113).

⁴⁵ N.T. Wright, 'Farewell to the Rapture,' http://www.ntwrightpage.com/Wright_BR_Farewell_Rapture.htm.



N.T. Wright is a prominent New Testament scholar and advocate of Replacement Theology who has, in recent years, been recruited to the Christian Palestinianist cause.

Wright interprets the Bible along traditional Reformed, amillennial, covenantal, and supersessionist lines, but with his own particular theological slant. True to Reformed theology, he argues that the Land of Israel, the City of Jerusalem, and the Jewish Temple are now redundant, since Christ is the 'new land,' the 'new city,' and the 'new temple.' He and his fellow amillennialists have not only robbed Israel of her promised earthly blessings, but they have also robbed Christ Jesus of His earthly inheritance!



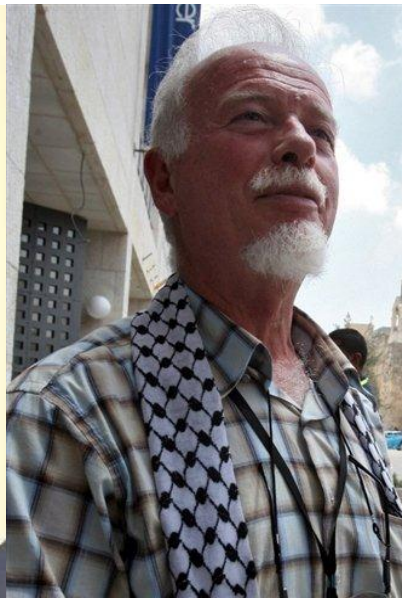
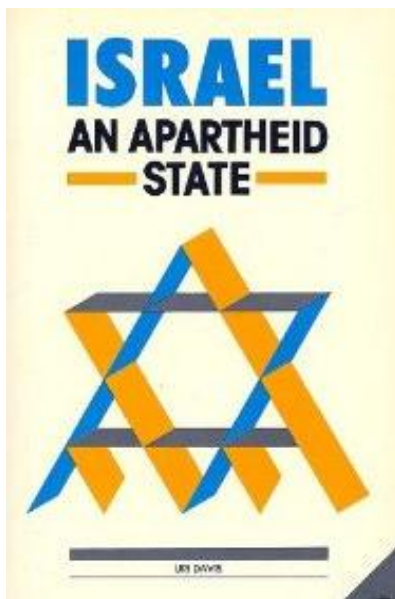
Here is a sample of quotations relating to Israel, taken from the first two volumes (abbreviated NTPG and JVG) in Wright's intended six-part series, 'Christian Origins and the Question of God':

- Jesus "is enacting the great healing, the great restoration, of Israel" (JVG, 130)
- Israel's story "reached its intended climax with his death [Israel's exile] and resurrection [Israel's restoration]" (NTPG, 366)
- The Church has "taken the place occupied ... by (Jewish) ethnic identity" (NTPG, 367)
- Jesus was "reconstituting Israel around himself" (JVG, 131), "reinterpreting" Israel's hope (JVG, 241), "reusing Israel's prophetic heritage" (JVG, 349), and "redefining" the kingdom (JVG, 471)

N.T. Wright states that the Old Testament promises relating to the restoration of 'Zion' (Jerusalem, the Land of Israel, the People of Israel, the Jewish Temple) "are now transferred to Jesus and his people," meaning the Church (JVG, 363).

5. Palestinianist Propaganda and the Jewish Fifth Column

Christian Palestinianists are skilled in the propaganda art of ‘labelling.’ By attaching to Israel such emotive labels as ‘apartheid,’ ‘ethnic cleansing,’ and ‘occupation,’ they have twisted and turned the minds of many believers against the Jewish people and the Jewish State. As we saw in the case of Norman Finkelstein, a fifth column of Jewish scholars and activists are working closely with Christian Palestinianists to bring down Israel and silence her Christian allies.



In his book, *Israel: An Apartheid State* (1987), Uri Davis describes Israel’s treatment of Palestinians as “Zionist apartheid” (pp. 26, 60). Davis describes himself as “a Palestinian Hebrew national of Jewish origin, anti-Zionist, registered as Muslim and citizen of an apartheid state”.⁴⁶ He was recently elected to the Fatah

Revolutionary Council. Stephen Sizer⁴⁷ and Rosemary Radford Ruether⁴⁸ are among those who have adopted Davis’ “apartheid” terminology.



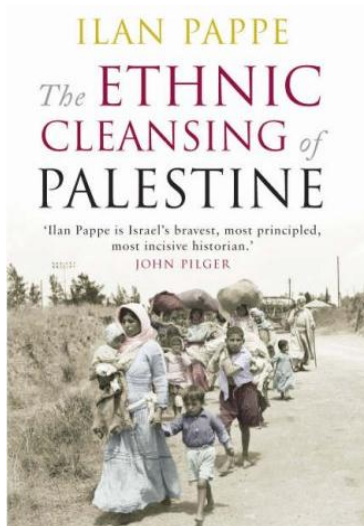
Ben White is an English freelance journalist who writes about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the wider Middle East. He is also campaign coordinator for ‘A Just Peace for Palestine.’ In his book, *Israeli Apartheid: A Beginner’s Guide* (2009), which was endorsed by Stephen Sizer, Gary Burge,

and Desmond Tutu, Ben White brands Zionism as a worse form of Apartheid than existed in South Africa (p. 8).

⁴⁶ The Alternative Information Center, ‘Interview with Dr. Uri Davis,’ <http://www.alternativenews.org/english/index.php/topics/news/2113-interview-with-dr-uri-davis-newly-elected-member-of-fatah-revolutionary-council>.

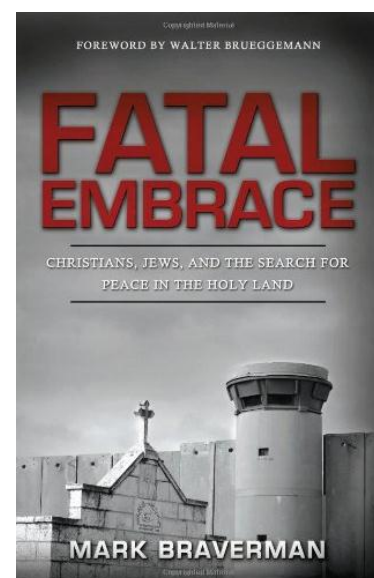
⁴⁷ Stephen R. Sizer, ‘Christian Zionism, True Friends of Israel?,’ *Evangelicals Now*, December (2000), 14.

⁴⁸ Rosemary Radford Ruether and Herman J. Ruether, *The Wrath of Jonah: The Crisis of Religious Nationalism in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*, 2nd edn (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2002), p. xiv.



Ilan Pappé is a controversial Israeli academic and political activist who, along with his fellow ‘New Historians,’ has rewritten the accepted history of the establishment of the modern State of Israel in 1948. In his book, *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine* (2006), Pappé argues that it was the express policy of Zionist leaders to ethnically cleanse the land of its indigenous population. Christian Palestinianists have used the same inflammatory language as Pappé for their own propaganda purposes. As Stephen Sizer writes, “My research has highlighted how the Palestinian Christian community has suffered isolation, discrimination, and persecution akin to ‘ethnic cleansing,’ and a form of apartheid.”⁴⁹ In 2009, Pappé addressed a conference of Anglican clergy in Winchester, England – another example, as with Norman Finkelstein, of Church leaders turning to Jewish extremists in order to bolster their anti-Israel crusade. Stephen Sizer has posted Pappé’s conference address on his own website, along with links to Pappé’s website.

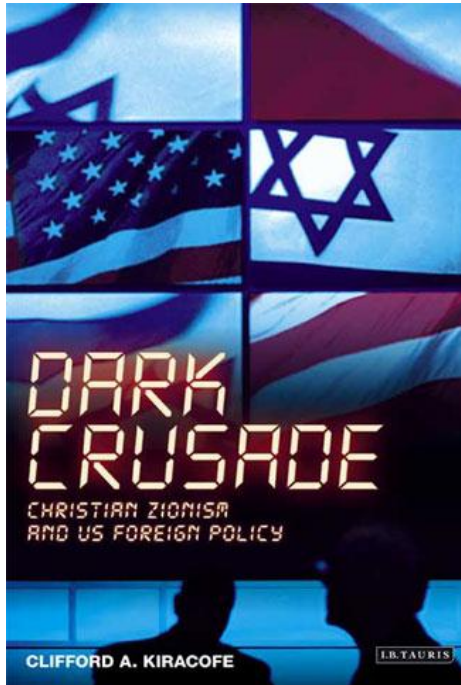
A more recent recruit to the Christian Palestinianist cause is American Jewish political activist, Mark Braverman, who is a member of the Advisory Committee of Friends of Sabeel North America. In his book, *Fatal Embrace: Christians, Jews, and the Search for Peace in the Holy Land* (2010), which includes endorsements from Naim Ateek and Stephen Sizer, Braverman follows Ilan Pappé when claiming that Israel has consistently pursued a policy of “ethnic cleansing” towards the Palestinians (p. 10). Braverman was profoundly affected by a visit he made to Sabeel in 2006, and by Naim Ateek’s book, *Justice, and Only Justice*. He writes, “Sabeel had helped open a pathway back to the prophets” (p. 44). This begs the question, ‘Which prophets?’



⁴⁹ Stephen Sizer, ‘The Promised Land: Palestine and Israel,’ in *They Came and They Saw: Western Christian Experiences of the Holy Land* (London: Melisende, 2000), p. 159.

Battle Against the ‘Armageddonites’

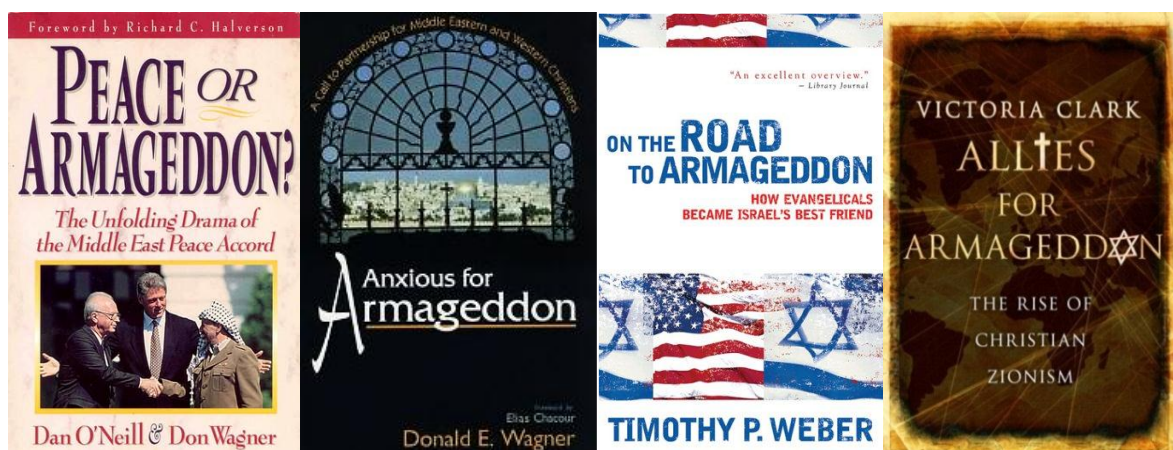
Israel is not the only target of the Christian Palestinianist propaganda machine. Referred to as “armageddonites”⁵⁰ by Stephen Sizer, Christians who base their theology of Israel on a plain, natural reading of the Bible and on a fundamental understanding of the covenant faithfulness of God, are frequently in their sights.



In his book, *Dark Crusade: Christian Zionism and US Foreign Policy* (2009), Clifford Kiracofe, a Virginia Military Institute professor and former Senior Professional Staff Member of the U.S. Senate on Foreign Relations, contrasts the “deep pessimism” of Christian Zionism with the “traditional optimism” at the core of the American psyche (p. xiii). He also accuses Christian Zionists of “poisoning US relations with the Arab and Muslim worlds” (p. 43).

Kiracofe, who has clearly been influenced by Stephen Sizer’s book, *Christian Zionism: Road-map to Armageddon?* (2004), speaks disparagingly of one man in particular – English clergyman and principal founder of Plymouth Brethrenism, John Nelson Darby (1800-1882). Kiracofe describes Darby as “the person who brought the Armageddon theology to America” (p. 63).

The term “Armageddon theology” has become part and parcel of Christian Palestinianist propaganda, as the titles below illustrate. In her book, *Allies for Armageddon: The Rise of Christian Zionism* (2007), English journalist Victoria Clark portrays Christian Zionism as a “gun-slinging, Armageddon-fixated ideology”.⁵¹



⁵⁰ The term used by Stephen Sizer in his endorsement of Hank Hanegraaff’s book, *The Apocalypse Code*.

⁵¹ Victoria Clark, *Allies for Armageddon: The Rise of Christian Zionism* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007), p. 256.

7. Unholy Alliances

Another disturbing feature of the burgeoning Christian Palestinianist movement is the way its leaders share platforms and form alliances with those whose stated goal is to destroy Israel. A case in point is the meetings which have taken place in Gaza in recent years between Ismail Haniyeh, a senior Hamas leader who was elected Prime Minister of the Palestinian National Authority in 2006, and two high profile ‘Christians’ – South African Archbishop Desmond Tutu (below with Haniyeh, left, and Arafat, centre) and former American President Jimmy Carter (bottom of page).



Desmond Tutu, champion of the anti-Apartheid campaign in South Africa, today champions the anti-Israel crusade as Patron of Sabeel. In his foreword to Michael Prior’s *Speaking the Truth: Zionism, Israel, and the Occupation* (2005), he wrote: “Now, alas, we see *apartheid* in Israel ... The apartheid government [in South Africa] was very powerful, but today it no longer exists. Hitler, Mussolini, Stalin, Pinochet, Milosevic, and Idi Amin were all powerful, but, in the end, they bit the dust.”⁵²



Jimmy Carter (seen here embracing Ismail Haniyeh) is no friend of Israel. His controversial book, *Palestine: Peace Not Apartheid* (2006), was a *New York Times* bestseller. Both Carter and Tutu are recipients of the Nobel Peace Prize – but what kind of peace are they working towards?

⁵² Desmond Tutu, ‘Foreword,’ in *Speaking the Truth: Zionism, Israel, and Occupation*, ed. by Michael Prior (Northampton, MA: Olive Branch Press, 2005), p. 12.

The 5th International Sabeel Conference (2004)

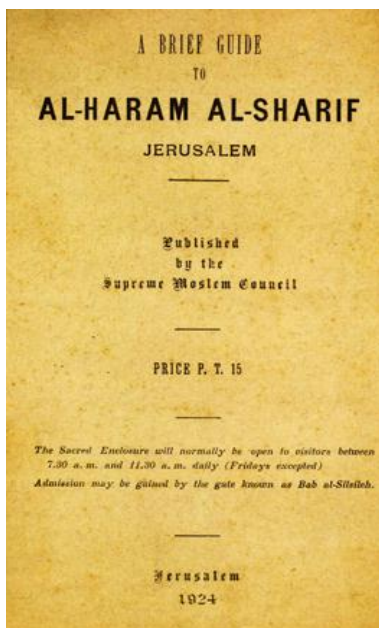
Challenging Christian Zionism: Theology, Politics, and the Palestine-Israel Conflict

In April 2004, I attended the 5th International Sabeel Conference, which was held at the Pontifical Institute Notre Dame Centre in Jerusalem. Conceived in 1884 as a centre for French pilgrims, it was completed in 1904 and crowned with a statue of Mary. In 1978, Pope John Paul II established it as a Pontifical Institute and Ecumenical Centre, before inaugurating the new Conference Centre in March 2000.

Naim Ateek, Stephen Sizer, Gary Burge, Donald Wagner, and Michael Prior were among the speakers at the conference. We were also addressed by a leader of the Muslim Waqf on the steps of the Temple Mount (right), which Muslims call Al-Haram Al-Sharif ('The Noble Sanctuary'). In keeping with Islam's version of replacement theology, we were told that a Jewish temple had never stood on this site.



This claim has been widely disseminated by Muslim clerics who wish to sever all historical connection between the Jewish people and this site. However, in 1924 the Supreme Moslem Council (SMC), which was established during the British Mandate



Period in order to exercise authority over Muslim affairs, published a document entitled, *A Brief Guide to Al-Haram Al-Sharif Jerusalem*. I have a copy of the 1935 edition. This is a remarkable document for many reasons, especially in view of what is stated in its opening 'Historical Sketch':

"The site is one of the oldest in the world. Its sanctity dates from the earliest times. Its identity with the site of Solomon's Temple is **beyond dispute** [my emphasis]. This, too, is the spot, according to the universal belief, on which 'David built there an altar unto the Lord, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings' (2 Samuel XXIV, 25)."⁵³

This statement is all the more remarkable when we consider that when the booklet was first published in 1924, the SMC was presided over by the virulently anti-Semitic Grand Mufti of Jerusalem and staunch ally of Adolf Hitler, Hajj Amin al-Husseini.

⁵³ The Supreme Moslem Council, *A Brief Guide to Al-Haram Al-Sharif Jerusalem* (Jerusalem, 1935), p. 3.

Another item on the Conference agenda was a visit to the Muqata'ah in Ramallah, where Yassir Arafat had been confined by the Israeli government. On that occasion Naim Ateek expressed "unanimous" support for Arafat, who was physically embraced by his friend and 24th Presiding Bishop and Primate of the Episcopal Church in America, Edmond Browning



At the Muqata'a with President Arafat, and Hanan Ashrawi (photo by Mizead Yacoub)

(right). Arafat and Hanan Ashrawi (seated with Ateek) expressed their delight at this expression of 'Christian' solidarity with the Palestinian cause – which Arafat termed "the peace of the brave".

Michael Prior and Stephen Sizer used the occasion to present Yassir Arafat with a copy of the book referred to earlier: *Speaking the Truth: Zionism, Israel, and the Occupation*. The overwhelming majority of those present in the Muqata'ah that day applauded Arafat, and later shook hands with him for a photo opportunity. Among them was Stephen Sizer:



(Source: Stephen Sizer's Powerpoint presentation, "Sabeel Conference & Wall")

A copy of the report I wrote about the 2004 Sabeel Conference is available from the address given at the end of this document.

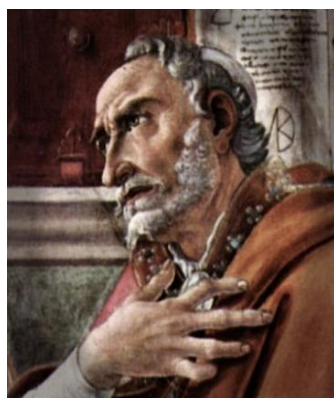
8. The Theological Roots of Christian Palestinianism

Jesus said, “A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit” (Matthew 7:16-18). Just as the root system of a tree determines its *natural* health and the *natural* goodness of its fruit, so the root system of any tradition of teaching in the Church will determine the *spiritual* health and the *spiritual* fruit of its followers. Christian Palestinianism is a corrupt tree producing bad fruit, because its root system is diseased:



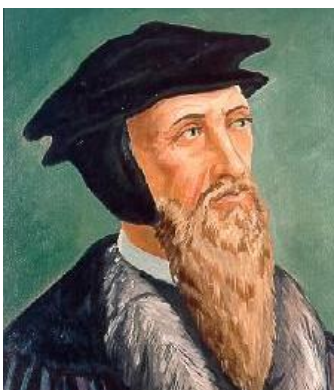
Plato (c.429-347BC)

Neo-Platonic thought crept into the early post-Apostolic Church, based upon the belief that the *material* world was irrelevant because *matter* was essentially corrupt. It was deemed necessary to seek a higher, spiritual meaning to everything. Neo-Platonists in the Church, such as Origen (c. AD185-254), taught the need to uncover the hidden, allegorical meaning in Scripture. Prophecies relating to a physical land (Canaan), city (Jerusalem), and sanctuary (Temple) were therefore to be interpreted spiritually.



Augustine of Hippo (AD354-430)

Augustine’s theology underpins the Roman Catholic *and* Protestant Churches. Following in Origen’s footsteps, Augustine allegorised Scripture, replaced early Church premillennialism with amillennialism, and taught that God had preserved the Jews to be ‘witness people’ – wanderers upon the earth whose existence would bear witness to the fact that God had rejected Israel and replaced her with the Church.



John Calvin (1509-1564)

John Calvin (Jean Cauvin) was the most influential of the sixteenth-century Reformers. Like Martin Luther, he was Augustinian in his basic theology and eschatology. He was also a covenantalist, or advocate of ‘covenant theology,’ teaching that there has only ever been one people of God (‘the Church’) and one covenant of God (‘the covenant of grace’). Calvinism teaches that the Church has replaced Israel.

In his book, *Christian Zionism: Road-map to Armageddon?* (pp. 261-263), Stephen Sizer summarizes the belief system of those who, like himself, hold to a covenantal position. According to Sizer, a covenantalist believes that:

- There has only ever been one people of God through history – ‘the Church’
- All biblical covenants are subsumed under one covenant of grace
- The Jewish people, as an ethnic nation, have fulfilled their role in history, which was to prepare the way for the Church/Christianity
- The Church is the new Israel, enlarged through Christ to embrace all peoples

Below is an extract from the table which Stephen Sizer has produced in his book:

Doctrine	Covenantalism
Old Testament Prophecy	Largely fulfilled
Israel’s National Promises	Spiritualized and universalized in the church
Unbelieving Jews	Loved by God, but cut off from God’s people
Relationship of Israel to the Church	One people of God
Ecclesiology	Church began with Israel
Eretz Israel (Land of Israel)	Fulfilled and annulled
Jerusalem	Historical role no longer significant
Temple	Fulfilled in Jesus, now redundant
Eschatology	Largely amillennial, postmillennial or preterist
Armageddon	Figurative battle between good and evil
Return of Jesus	One visible event
Kingdom of God	Not of this world
Millennium	Figurative



In July 1974, a gathering of 2,700 participants from over 150 countries took place in Lausanne, Switzerland, to bring new impetus to the proclamation of the Gospel. The main inspiration behind the International Congress on World Evangelization was Billy Graham. John Stott (pictured left with Graham) chaired the committee which produced 'The Lausanne Covenant.' This document remains one of the most influential within the Evangelical Church.



In October 2010, the Third Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization took place in Cape Town, South Africa. The Lausanne Theology Working Group had previously held three 'consultations' to consider their slogan, "the whole church taking the whole gospel to the whole world". The following statement is from the second consultation, which focused on "the whole church":

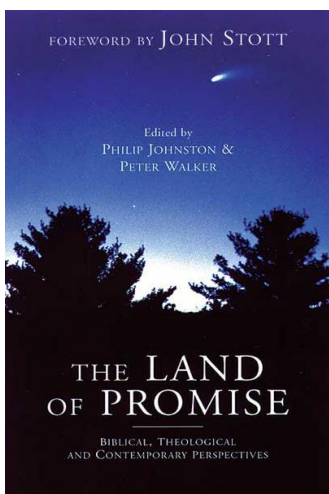
"The one Church that God has called into being in Christ is drawn from every nation, tribe, people and language, with the result that no single ethnic identity can claim to be 'God's chosen people.' God's election of Old Testament Israel was for the sake of the eventual creation of this multi-national community of God's people ... We strongly affirm, therefore, that while there are multiple ethnicities within the one church by God's clear intention, no single ethnic group holds privileged place in God's economy of salvation or God's eschatological purpose. Thus, we strongly believe that the separate and privileged place given to the modern Israeli state, in certain forms of dispensationalism or Christian Zionism, should be challenged".⁵⁴

⁵⁴ The Third Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization, 'The Whole Church taking the Whole Gospel to the Whole World: Reflections of the Lausanne Theology Working Group,' <http://www.lausanne.org/participant-information/twg-paper.html>.

9. The Goliath Taunt

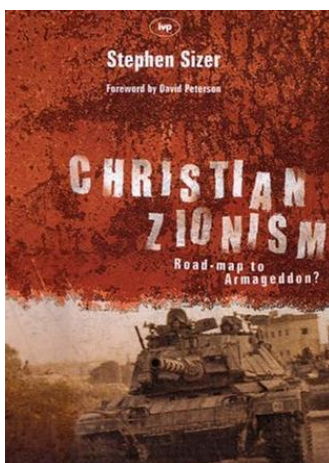
“And there went out a champion out of the camp of the Philistines, named Goliath ... And the Philistine said, I defy the armies of Israel this day: give me a man, that we may fight together ... And when the Philistine looked about, and saw David, he disdained him: for he was but a youth, and ruddy, and of a fair countenance ... And the Philistine said unto David, Am I a dog, that thou comest to me with staves? And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. And the Philistine said to David, Come to me, and I will give thy flesh unto the fowls of the air, and to the beasts of the field. Then said David to the Philistine, Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied” (1 Samuel 17:4-45).

Like Goliath before the armies of Israel, Christian Palestinianists stand and taunt Christians who interpret the biblical promises and prophecies relating to Israel’s national restoration *literally*.



In his essay, ‘Ten Questions for a Theology of the Land,’ Colin Chapman concluded with these words:

“A *Challenge*: can Christian Zionists support their case with recent scholarship? The case against Christian Zionists has been supported by new scholarship, as, for example, in the writings of N.T. Wright (1996) and Peter Walker (1994, 1996). Can work of this quality be matched by Christian Zionists, or are they simply, dare I say, repeating the same old arguments that have been put forward in the past?”⁵⁵



In his endorsement of Stephen Sizer’s book, *Christian Zionism: Road-map to Armageddon?*, Colin Chapman repeated his challenge on behalf of the Christian Palestinianist camp, which continues to defy not only the nation of Israel, but also the God of Israel Himself:

“Sizer has thrown down the gauntlet in a way that demands a response from those who support the state of Israel for theological reasons.”⁵⁶

⁵⁵ Colin Chapman, ‘Ten Questions for a Theology of the Land,’ in *The Land of Promise: Biblical, Theological and Contemporary Perspectives*, ed. by Peter Johnston and Peter Walker (Leicester: Apollos, 2000), p. 185.

⁵⁶ ‘Sixty Academics Endorse Christian Zionism Book,’ <http://stephensizer.blogspot.com/2008/10/sixty-academics-endorse-christian.html>.

10. On The Campaign Trail

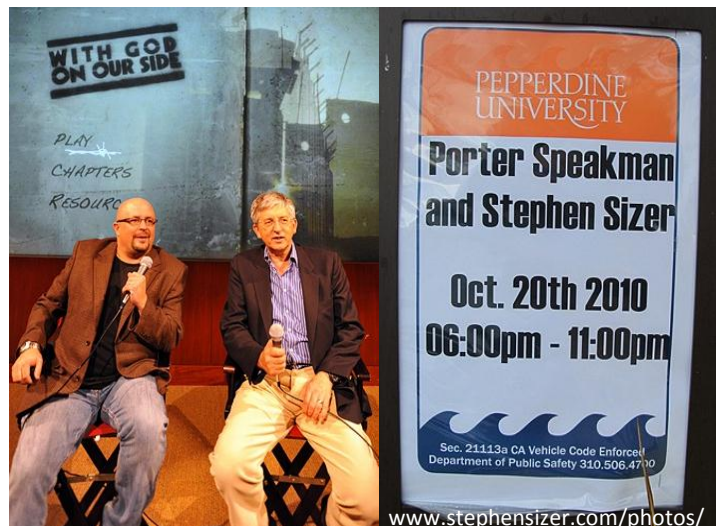


In 2010, a new documentary film was released in the United States entitled, ‘With God On Our Side.’ Directed and produced by Porter Speakman Jr. (pictured left with Stephen Sizer in Washington D.C.), the film seeks to critique and ultimately denounce Christian Zionism, and the belief that God’s covenant promises to Abraham’s natural descendants (through Isaac and Jacob) are everlasting. Speakman’s goal in producing the film was to present what he calls “a better way, a way of justice, peace and love for Jews and Palestinians. One that is inclusive, not exclusive.”⁵⁷

The film includes interviews with Stephen Sizer, Gary Burge, Ben White, Ilan Pappé, and Norman Finkelstein, all of whom have been featured in this document. The two sole representatives of Christian Zionism who are interviewed in the film are John Hagee (Senior Pastor of Cornerstone Church in San Antonio, Texas, and National Chairman of Christians United for Israel) and Malcolm Hedding (Executive Director of the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem). Frank Schaeffer, son of the late American theologian Francis Schaeffer, gave his verdict:

“After watching ‘With God On Our Side’ I have a renewed hope for the Evangelicals in America. And maybe peace in Palestine and Israel is possible. This film can help that happen by signaling the beginning of the end of the largely unchallenged influence of Christian Zionism.”⁵⁸

In 2010, the film was screened in many churches and academic institutions across the United States and the UK, at meetings organised by Speakman and Sizer. Venues in the U.S. included Wheaton College, Harvard University, Princeton University, Biola University, Pepperdine University, Eastern University, and North Carolina State University.



⁵⁷ With God On Our Side website, <http://www.withgodonourside.com/title.htm>.

⁵⁸ Porter Speakman’s blog, <http://porterspeakmanjr.com/category/with-god-on-our-side/>.

Venues in the UK where Sizer and Speakman presented the film included the Nazarene Theological College in Manchester, Cambridge University, Trinity College Dublin, Queen’s University Belfast, and the Scottish Assembly in Edinburgh. The film was also screened at Stormont in Belfast, home to the Northern Ireland Assembly ... and in a room belonging to Sinn Fein (right)!



In an article posted on his own website on November 21, 2010, Nelson McCausland, the Minister for Culture, Arts and Leisure in the Northern Ireland Assembly, gave his opinion of this screening at Stormont, which took place on Armistice Day (November 11, 2010):

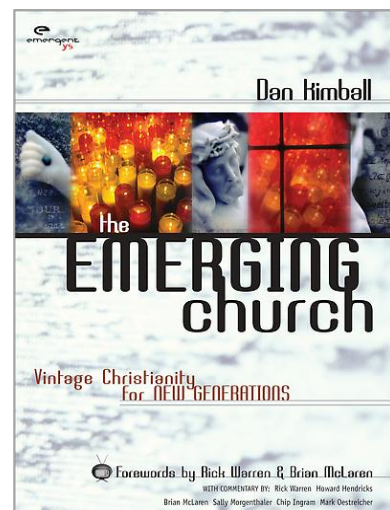
“Sizer and Speakman are entitled to their views on Christian Zionism but is there not something inappropriate about asking Sinn Fein to host a film about Israel? During the Second World War, while the Nazis were persecuting Jews in Europe, the IRA allied themselves with the Nazis. They saw Britain’s difficulty as their opportunity and ignored the record of the Nazi regime. Stephen Sizer seems to be remarkably naive and ill-informed. His blog gives the impression that this was in some way an ‘official’ showing associated in some way with the Northern Ireland Assembly. In fact it was not – it was just a private event sponsored by Sinn Fein.”⁵⁹

The Emerging Christian Palestinianists

On the back cover of the DVD, ‘With God On Our Side,’ is written the following endorsement by Brian McLaren, one of the leaders of the apostate ‘Emerging Church’ movement:

“Finally! A look at what Christian Zionism teaches and more importantly, the real implications it has on the people of the Middle East.”

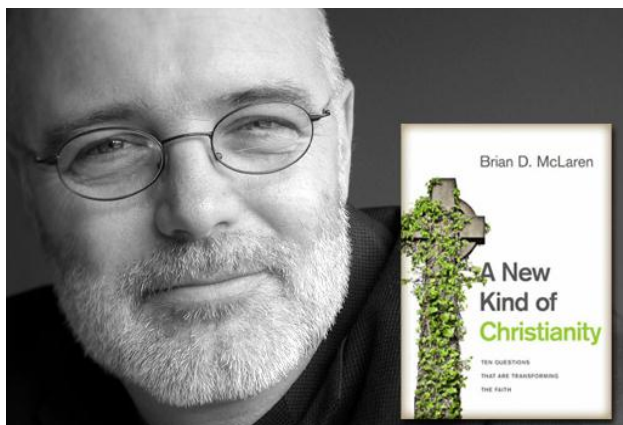
The website for ‘With God On Our Side’ also includes this commendation from Tony Campolo: “I don’t know of anything quite like it – and I would have to say the church desperately needs it.”



⁵⁹ Nelson’s View, ‘With God On Our Side,’ http://theministerspen.blogspot.com/2010_11_01_archive.html.

Brian D. McLaren

In a June 2009 article for the *Jerusalem Post*, Brian Schrauger spoke of the erosion of Evangelical support for Israel. The three names he mentioned as leading the anti-Israel movement within the Evangelical Church were Stephen Sizer, Jimmy Carter, and Brian McLaren.⁶⁰



Brian McLaren speaks on his internet blog of “The need to confront the terrible, deadly, distorted, yet popular theologies associated with Christian Zionism and deterministic dispensationalism” which “use a bogus end-of-the-world scenario to create a kind of death-wish for World War III, which – unless it is confronted more robustly by the rest of us – could too easily create a self-fulfilling prophecy.”⁶¹

McLaren has also posted on his blog his response to a request for recommended books on the subject of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. With the exception of Marc Ellis’ book, all of the titles he recommended have been cited in this document as being representative of Christian Palestinianism:

“There is no shortage of excellent books, but here are a few that I recommend for those new to the subject. They’re listed from the most gentle to the most hard-hitting:

Elias Chacour – Blood Brothers
 Naim Ateek – A Palestinian Christian Cry for Reconciliation
 Mark Braverman – Fatal Embrace
 Ben White – Israeli Apartheid
 Marc Ellis – Judaism Does Not Equal Israel.”⁶²

Brian McLaren was a signatory to the ‘Joint Declaration by Christian Leaders on Israel’s 60th Anniversary,’ issued on May 8, 2008. The declaration was organised by Ben White, author of *Israeli Apartheid*, and Philip Rizk.⁶³ Although the declaration is not overtly anti-Semitic/anti-Zionist, it is theologically and politically loaded. The wording of such declarations may not always betray their underlying agenda, but their signatories tell us a great deal. Among the 140+ names added to this particular declaration were Desmond Tutu, Stephen Sizer, Donald Wagner, Gary Burge, Brother Andrew, Jim Wallis, Colin Chapman, and Porter Speakman Jr.

⁶⁰ Brian Schrauger, ‘Israel is losing the PR war so badly that even evangelical support is eroding,’ *The Jerusalem Post* (June 15, 2009), www.jpost.com.

⁶¹ Brian D. McLaren, ‘Three Crises of Peace #3,’ <http://www.brianmclaren.net/archives/blog/three-crises-of-peace-3.html>.

⁶² Brian D. McLaren, ‘Q&R: Palestine, Gaza, West Bank, Israel,’ <http://brianmclaren.net/archives/blog/q-r-palestine.html>.

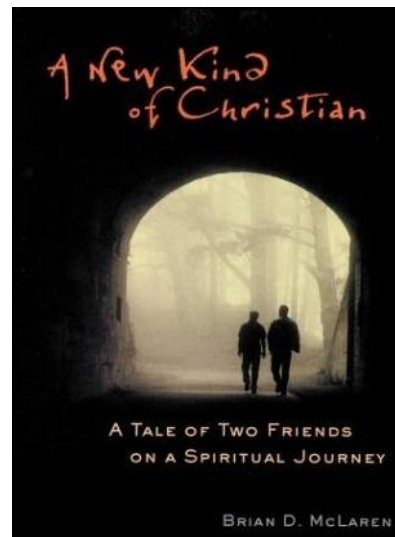
⁶³ World Evangelical Alliance, ‘Joint Declaration by Christian Leaders on Israel’s 60th Anniversary,’ <http://justpeace60.blogspot.com/>.

On January 28, 2010, McLaren posted on his blog a report entitled, ‘Last Day in Israel and Palestine,’ in which he gave an update of his ‘pilgrimage tour’ to Israel. Clearly enamoured with the Christian Palestinianists he met, he wrote the following:

“This morning I’ll be back in East Jerusalem with the good people of Sabeel, leaders in developing a faithful Christian theology contextual to the Palestinian occupation ... While at Sabeel, it was a pleasure and honor to finally meet Naim Ateek, whose work and writings I have long admired from a distance. Naim is a Palestinian signatory to an important statement called the Kairos Document [see below] created by Christian leaders across denominational lines across Palestine. You can add your name to it, as I have.”⁶⁴

Earlier in the tour McLaren made the following statement on his blog, which reveals the essence of this “new kind of Christianity” he is selling to an apostate Church that loves not the truth:

“Next to the ugliness of occupation, we’ve seen the beauty of God’s Spirit at work ... shining in a Quaker Palestinian woman activist, glowing in a Franciscan Catholic priest, warm in an Eastern Orthodox family, radiant in a Muslim volunteer at a refugee center, sparkling in two professors – one Muslim and one Christian, who team teach college students about religion. In the land where Jesus walked and worked, there are many Christ-like people still walking and working ... in conditions not unlike those of the first century in many ways.”⁶⁵



Kairos Palestine Document (KPD) – ‘A Moment of Truth’

Presented as “the Christian Palestinians’ word to the world about what is happening in Palestine,” the Kairos Palestine Document (2009) is the Palestinian equivalent of the Kairos Document, which was issued in 1985 by a group of 150 black South African liberation theologians in Soweto. That document, the first chapter of which begins with the words, “The time has come. The moment of truth has arrived,”⁶⁶ was an impassioned plea to churches in South Africa to stand against the Apartheid regime. Unsurprisingly, the Palestinian Christians who have formulated the KPD, including Naim Ateek and Mitri Raheb, have exploited the South African experience in order to lay the blame for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict squarely at the feet of

⁶⁴ Brian McLaren, ‘Last Day in Israel and Palestine (January 28, 2010),’ <http://brianmclaren.net/archives/blog/this-morning-ill-be-back.html>.

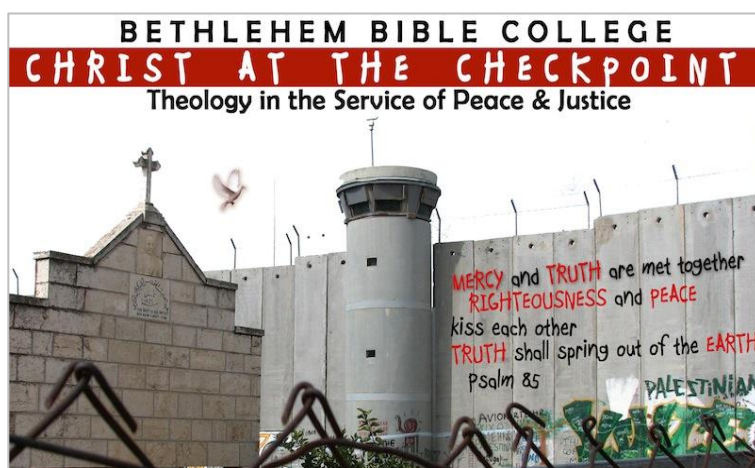
⁶⁵ Brian McLaren, ‘Reflections from Ramallah, Taybeh, and Beit Sahour (January 23, 2010),’ <http://brianmclaren.net/archives/2010/01/>.

⁶⁶ The Kairos Document, http://www.thatreligiousstudieswebsite.com/Ethics/Applied_Ethics/Race_Racism/kairos_document.php.

the Israeli government. Palestinian suicide bombers, terrorist groups such as Hamas and Hezbollah, and the Islamic religion as a whole all escape censure; the Palestinian resistance is even described as being “legal.” The document calls for an end to the “occupation,” for the establishment of an independent Palestinian State with Jerusalem as its capital, and for governments around the world to exert political and economic pressure upon Israel. Portraying “boycott and disinvestment” as necessary “tools of non-violence for justice, peace and security for all,” the document calls for “a response to what the civil and religious institutions have proposed, as mentioned earlier: the beginning of a system of economic sanctions and boycott to be applied against Israel.”⁶⁷

Tony Campolo

Tony Campolo is perhaps best known to many Christians for his sermon, *It's Friday, but Sunday's Comin'*. He was a spiritual advisor to President Clinton in the wake of the Monica Lewinsky scandal. In July 2007, he was one of 34 American Evangelical signatories to the ‘Letter to President Bush From Evangelical Leaders.’ The letter, which was an overt attempt to counter traditional Evangelical support for Israel, called upon then President George W. Bush and his administration to implement the two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.⁶⁸ Other signatories included Ronald Sider (President, Evangelicals for Social Action), Raymond Bakke (Chancellor, Bakke Graduate University), Vernon Grounds (Chancellor, Denver Seminary), Gary Burge (Professor, Wheaton College and Graduate School), Richard Mouw (President, Fuller Theological Seminary), Richard Stearns (President, World Vision), Berten Waggoner (National Director, Vineyard USA), and David Neff (Editor, Christianity Today).



In March 2010, Tony Campolo joined Naim Ateek, Stephen Sizer, Gary Burge, Colin Chapman, Lynne Hybels, Brother Andrew, Mitri Raheb, and other Christian Palestinianist speakers at the ‘Christ at the Checkpoint’ Conference held in Bethlehem. Organised by

⁶⁷ Kairos Palestine, ‘A Moment of Truth,’ <http://www.kairopalestine.ps/sites/default/Documents/English.pdf>.

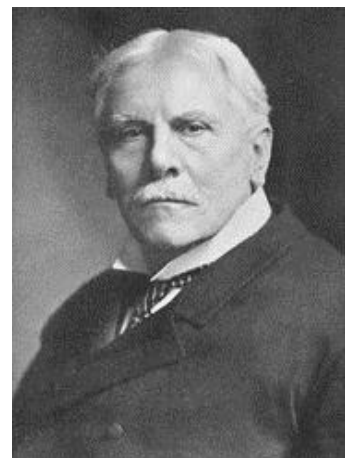
⁶⁸ ‘Letter to President Bush from Evangelical Leaders,’ *The New York Times* (July 29, 2007), http://www.nytimes.com/2007/07/29/us/evangelical_letter.html.

Bethlehem Bible College, it was hailed as “the first global evangelical conference to take place in Palestine.”⁶⁹ In an interview conducted by Stephen Sizer during the conference, Tony Campolo criticised Christians who believe in the literal fulfilment of biblical prophecy:

“We’ve all been caught up in this theology coming out of Scofield Bibles and Darby that suggests that Jesus can’t return until the Jews are returned to the Promised Land. I think the scholars have ascertained that John Darby and the whole Dispensationalist movement basically grew out of the fact that these people felt that the prophecies that were in the Old Testament, in the Hebrew Bible, about what God was promising Israel, had not been fulfilled, therefore before the Lord can return these prophecies have to be fulfilled”.⁷⁰

In an article entitled, ‘Christian Zionism: Theology that Legitimizes Oppression,’ which he wrote upon his return from the Bethlehem conference, Campolo strengthened his criticism:

“The most serious threats to the well-being of the Palestinians in general, and to the Christian Palestinians in particular, come not from the Jews, but from *Christian Zionists* here in the United States. They are armed with a theology created in the middle of the 19th century by a disaffected Anglican clergyman named John Nelson Darby [right] in Plymouth, England. With this theology, called ‘Dispensationalism,’ they argue that according to their interpretation of Genesis 15:18-21, the Holy Land should belong *exclusively* to the Jews. They contend that *all* of this land is what was promised to ‘the seed of Abraham’ ... This Johnny-come-lately theology of John Nelson Darby has permeated American Protestantism via the publication in 1908 of the incredibly popular *Scofield Reference Study Bible* [compiled by Cyrus Ingerson Scofield, right] ... Darby’s influence on American Protestantism has recently received an enormous boost with the publication of the *Left Behind* series of books by Tim LaHaye and Jerry Jenkins.”⁷¹



⁶⁹ Press Release, ‘Christ at the Checkpoint Conference Completes its Work in Bethlehem,’ http://www.christatthecheckpoint.com/news/press_release.html.

⁷⁰ Stephen Sizer’s website, ‘Tony Campolo on the Israeli Occupation of Palestine,’ <http://www.vimeo.com/10149203>.

⁷¹ Tony Campolo, ‘Christian Zionism: Theology that Legitimizes Oppression,’ *Sojourners* (May 19, 2010), <http://blog.sojo.net/2010/05/19/christian-zionism-theology-that-legitimizes-oppression/>.

Campolo's article was posted on the *Sojourners* blog in May 2010. The *Sojourners* magazine was founded by Revd Jim Wallis as an expression of the Sojourners Community he established in 1975, in an inner-city neighbourhood of Washington D.C. According to Wallis, "Sojourners are Christians who follow Jesus, but who also sojourn with others in different faith traditions and all those who are on a spiritual journey."⁷²

'Progressive Christianity' – Apostasy on the Move

Jim Wallis, who was raised in a Plymouth Brethren home, is a staunch advocate of what has become known as 'Progressive Christianity,' which challenges traditional, conservative Evangelicalism and champions human diversity, environmental stewardship, ecumenism, inter-faith dialogue, and "social justice." Liberation theology is one of several theological streams feeding into this apostate movement. Two of Wallis' closest associates within the movement are Brian McLaren, who is a contributing editor to the *Sojourners* magazine, and Tony Campolo.



In a book published in 2010 entitled, *You Can Still Trust The Communists ... To Be Communists (Socialists and Progressives Too)*, David Noebel highlights Jim Wallis' role as spiritual advisor to President Barack Obama. During the Democratic presidential candidates' campaign in 2007, Obama and Hillary Clinton joined

Wallis (pictured centre) at the George Washington University for the 'Faith Guiding our Votes' forum. Wallis was subsequently chosen by Obama to draft his faith-based policies for his 2008 campaign. Noebel highlights in his book the support which Wallis and his *Sojourners* community have given to communist regimes in Central and South America.⁷³

Jim Wallis was one of 84 signatories to 'An Evangelical Statement on Israel/Palestine,' which was released on November 28, 2007, and which called for a two-state solution. The statement expressed the resolve of the signatories "to work for a viable permanent, democratic Palestinian State."⁷⁴ In addition, the film, 'With God On Our Side,' was endorsed in the March 2010 edition of the *Sojourners* magazine, while in the July 2010 edition the Kairos Palestine Document (KPD) was, with some qualifications, endorsed and hailed as a "prophetic milestone".

⁷² Sojourners' History, http://www.sojo.net/index.cfm?action=about_us.history.

⁷³ David A. Noebel, 'Barack Obama's Red Spiritual Advisor,' in *You Can Still Trust The Communists ... To Be Communists (Socialists and Progressives Too)*, ed. by Fred C. Schwarz and David A. Noebel (Manitou Springs, CO: Christian Anti-Communism Crusade, 2010), pp. 275-283.

⁷⁴ 'An Evangelical Statement on Israel/Palestine,' http://www.cfr.org/publication/15810/evangelical_statement_on_israel_palestine.html.

11. Our Response to Christian Palestinianism?

Below is a photograph of Stephen Sizer and Porter Speakman Jr., which was taken in November 2010 outside a church in Scotland and then posted by Sizer on his website. It appears, on the surface, to be harmless enough. However, when we consider where the picture was taken, a rather different impression is formed.

The photograph was taken in the grounds of St. Peter's Free Church of Scotland in Dundee. The occasion was a seminar on Christian Zionism conducted by Sizer and Speakman, during which a preview of 'With God On Our Side' was shown. The church which hosted the seminar is perhaps best known for the man who once pastored it



during the first half of the nineteenth century, a man by the name of Robert Murray M'Cheyne (1813-1843). Underneath this photograph, Stephen Sizer refers to Murray M'Cheyne as "one of my spiritual heroes."

In 1839, M'Cheyne was part of a four-man Church of Scotland delegation sent to explore the Land of Israel and to report on the condition of the Jewish people. The account he wrote with Andrew Bonar was entitled, *Narrative of a Mission of Inquiry to the Jews from the Church of Scotland in 1839*. During the ten days he spent in Jerusalem (the painting by David Roberts below was of the city as it looked in April 1839), M'Cheyne wrote the following in a letter home to Scotland:



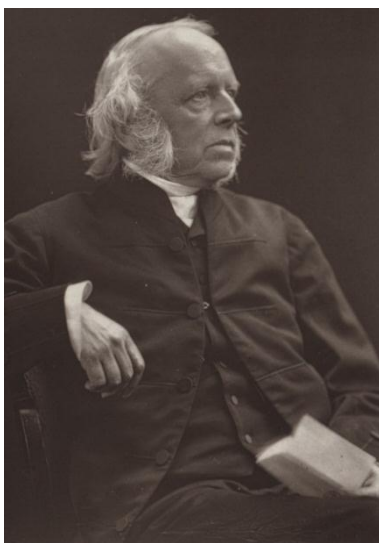
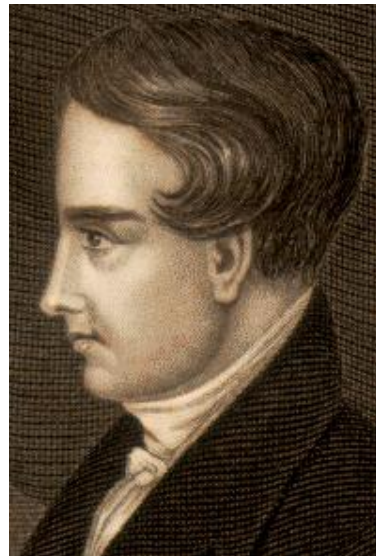
“We stood at the turning of the road where Jesus came near, and beheld the city, and wept over it. And if we had had more of the mind that was in Jesus, I think we should have wept also.”⁷⁵

⁷⁵ Quoted in Andrew A. Bonar, *The Life of Robert Murray M'Cheyne* (London: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1972), p. 112.

In a letter dated June 12, 1839, M'Cheyne wrote: "Now that we are in the most wonderful spot in all this world – where Jesus lived, and walked, and prayed, and died, and will come again – I doubt not that you will be anxious to hear how we come on."⁷⁶

On November 17, 1839, following his return from the Land of Israel, M'Cheyne preached a sermon entitled, 'Our Duty to Israel,' which he based on Romans 1:16. M'Cheyne stressed how critically important it was for the Church not only to preach the Gospel to the Jewish people, but also to experience the love and compassion of God for them. He gave the following impassioned plea, which resonated throughout much of the Evangelical world during the nineteenth century:

"The cloud of indignation and wrath that is even now gathering above the lost will break first upon the head of guilty, unhappy, unbelieving Israel. And have you none of the bowels of Christ in you, that you will not run first to them that are in so sad a case? ... It is like God to care first for the Jews. It is the chief glory and joy of a soul to be like God ... But the whole Bible shows that God has a peculiar affection for Israel ... Strange, sovereign, most peculiar love! He loved them because He loved them ... Now the simple question for each of you is, and for our beloved Church, Should we not share with God in His peculiar affection for Israel? If we are filled with the Spirit of God, should we not love as He loves? Should we not grave Israel upon the palms of our hands, and resolve that through our mercy they also may obtain mercy?"⁷⁷



Andrew Bonar (left), who accompanied M'Cheyne in 1839, believed that the very future of the Church of Scotland depended on its response to the Jewish people. He wrote:

"If the Church of Scotland in these perilous times 'take hold of the skirt of the Jew' [Zechariah 8:23], God may remember her for Zion's sake ... May the God of Israel, for his ancient people's sake, make this work useful in kindling a brighter flame of love to the Jews in the bosom of all who are 'the Lord's remembrancers' in Scotland."⁷⁸

⁷⁶ Quoted in Bonar, *The Life of Robert Murray M'Cheyne*, p. 113.

⁷⁷ Andrew A. Bonar, *Memoir and Remains of Robert Murray M'Cheyne* (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1978), pp. 490-493.

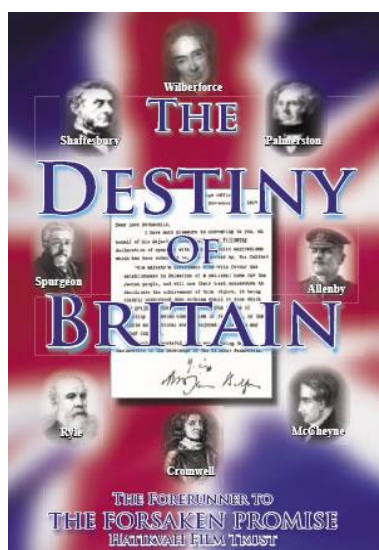
⁷⁸ Andrew A. Bonar and Robert Murray M'Cheyne, *Narrative of a Mission of Inquiry to the Jews from the Church of Scotland in 1839* (Edinburgh: William Whyte and Co., 1850), p. vi.

On May 24, 1889, on the occasion of the jubilee of the ‘Palestine’ deputation, Adolph Saphir, a Jewish Christian, implored the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland “not to forget *the love to Israel* which at that time so eminently characterised you.”⁷⁹

Tragically, in May 2007, the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland issued a declaration which called upon ‘The Kirk’ (the Church of Scotland) to reject Christian Zionism – a declaration that was based largely on the work of Stephen Sizer. It read as follows:

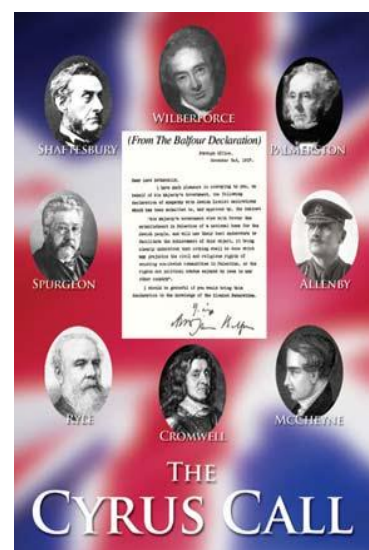
“Christian Zionism ... seeks openly to use the Jewish Zionist cause in order to achieve its own theological and political reality, with dire consequences. The Christian Zionist worldview has cataclysmic consequences for a religiously integrated and lasting peace in Palestine/Israel ... Christian Zionism portrays an unjust God, with an unjust people ... [and] ... seeks to exclude and expel and, arguably, eliminate whatever is perceived to be alien to its cause.”⁸⁰

It is clear that the appeals made by Robert Murray M’Cheyne, Andrew Bonar, and Adolph Saphir have gone unheeded.



UK Version

In 2008, Hatikvah Film Trust produced a documentary film charting the history of British Evangelical belief in the restoration of the Jews. The film includes an inspiring re-enactment of Murray M’Cheyne’s sermon in 1839, and is available in the UK from www.hatikvah.co.uk, and in the U.S. from www.visionvideo.com.



USA Version

Robert Murray M’Cheyne understood something of God’s heart for Israel – Stephen Sizer does not. Murray M’Cheyne understood that the Lord Jesus will one day return in Person to Jerusalem and restore the kingdom to Israel – Stephen Sizer does not. The day before his seminar at Murray M’Cheyne’s church, Sizer and Speakman addressed an audience at a hotel in Dundee. In an interview recorded on that occasion by Thistle Channel TV, Sizer stated the following:

⁷⁹ Adolph Saphir, *Christ and Israel: Lectures and Addresses on the Jews* (London: Morgan and Scott Ltd., 1911), p. 14.

⁸⁰ Church and Society Council, ‘Christian Zionism: Hope or Despair?’, <http://www.google.co.uk/search?sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8&q=http://www.+churchofscotland.org.uk/generalassembly/downloads/gareports07churchsociety.txt>.

“Israelis will wish that they had compromised in ’67. I see Israel like an addictive gambler who has always won every time they’ve had a war, they’ve always won, they’ve always won more land, they’ve always won more kudos, until Beirut, until southern Lebanon [2006] ... Israel is like a child with their hand in the cookie jar; it wants to be a Jewish State, [and] a democracy, and [wants] all the land. It can have two of those, but it can’t have the three [meaning, in Sizer’s opinion, that Israel can’t have the land].”⁸¹

In light of such statements, Stephen Sizer would do well to revisit the writings of his ‘spiritual hero,’ who understood God’s “everlasting love” for the Jewish people (Jeremiah 31:3,20), and the decree which God Himself made concerning the land and people of Israel:

“But ye, O mountains of Israel, ye shall shoot forth your branches, and yield your fruit to my people of Israel; for they are at hand to come. For, behold, I am for you, and I will turn unto you, and ye shall be tilled and sown: And I will multiply men upon you, all the house of Israel, even all of it ... and will do better unto you than at your beginnings: and ye shall know that I am the Lord. Yea, I will cause men to walk upon you, even my people Israel; and they shall possess thee, and thou shalt be their inheritance, and thou shalt no more henceforth bereave them of men ... For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean ... A new heart also will I give you ... And I will put my spirit within you ... And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers: and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God ... Not for your sakes do I this, saith the LORD God, be it known unto you” (Ezekiel 36:8-32).

As the anti-Israel crusade gathers momentum, let us be in NO DOUBT that the LORD our God will vindicate His Word, and let us pray more earnestly in line with the solemn words of Psalm 83:

“Keep not thou silence, O God: hold not thy peace, and be not still, O God. For, lo, thine enemies make a tumult: and they that hate thee have lifted up the head. They have taken crafty counsel against thy people, and consulted against thy hidden ones. They have said, Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation; that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance. For they have consulted together with one consent: they are confederate against thee ... Fill their faces with shame; that they may seek thy name, O LORD [emphasis mine] ... That men may know that thou, whose name alone is JEHOVAH, art the most high over all the earth” (Psalm 83:1-5, 16, 18).


⁸¹ Christians Together website, ‘Dundee Film Showing and Subsequent Interactive Bible Study,’ http://www.christians-together.net/Articles/240563/Christians_Together_in/Around_the_Region/Wider_News/Gods_purposes_in.aspx.

Conclusion

“Christian Palestinianism is an inverted mirror image of Christian Zionism. All the basic elements of a Christian Zionist eschatology are reversed, so that the Bible is seen to be Christian, not Jewish, the land of the Bible is Palestine not Israel, the Son of God is a Palestinian not a Jew, the Holocaust is resented not remembered, 1948 is a catastrophe not a miracle, the Jewish people are illegal occupiers not rightful owners, and Biblical prophecy is a moral manifesto and not a signpost to the Second Coming. Despite enlisting support from the theological community and seeking validation through academia, the overriding thrust of Christian Palestinianism is political, not Biblical. As we have seen, this reactionary movement, spearheaded by Sabeel, is a one-issue coalition of strange bedfellows whose diverse, ideological perspectives are held in tension as they unite against a common enemy ... In the process, the reader has been alerted to the scale of this para-church movement which, by covering itself in a veneer of Biblical respectability, has gained a major foothold within the Evangelical Church.”⁸²

Summary

Underlying theology	=	Liberationist, covenantal, supersessionist, allegorical
Underlying eschatology	=	Amillennial or preterist; anti-dispensational
The Bible	=	Christian, not Jewish
The Church	=	The new Israel
The Land	=	Palestine, not Israel
The Holocaust	=	Resented, not remembered
14 May 1948	=	A catastrophe, not a miracle
The State of Israel	=	Illegitimate, not the fulfillment of prophecy
The Jewish People	=	Illegal occupiers, not rightful owners
Bible Prophecy	=	A moral manifesto, not to be taken literally
The Lord Jesus	=	Palestinian, not Jewish



The hour is late and “the coming of the Lord draweth nigh” (James 5:8). Let us therefore stand firm in what we have believed, seek the restoration of those who have wandered from the truth, and pray for the peace of Jerusalem, for “they shall prosper that love thee” (Psalm 122:6).

⁸² Wilkinson, *For Zion's Sake*, p. 65.

Contact Details

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Hazel Grove Full Gospel Church, 68 London Road, Hazel Grove,
Stockport, Cheshire, SK7 4AF. UK.
Tel. 0161 456 8393 or 0161 682 1157
Email: grainforthe famine@hotmail.co.uk
Charity No: 1051785

In association with The Fellowship of Christian Assemblies.