



Bible & Life

BIBLE TEACHING NEWSLETTER

BIBLICAL DOCTRINE & NEW TESTAMENT ASSEMBLY LIFE

Vol. 20. No. 3

June 1, 2013

Stephen Sizer and “Christian Palestinianism”

By David Dunlap

“Christian Palestinianism” should be a concern to every Christian. The official beginning of this movement can be traced to 1994, when Palestinian Naim Ateek founded the “Sabeel,” a Palestinian study and theological center in Jerusalem. A few years later, Anglican leader Stephen Sizer, began to organize international evangelical and liberal church leaders to support Christian Palestinianism. In 2004, Sizer wrote *Christian Zionism: Roadmap to Armageddon*, in which he bitterly opposed the ideas that the Jews are the people of God and their right to the land of Israel. He has called upon Christians to support terrorist organizations, such as Hamas and the Muslim Brotherhood, against Israel. He called evangelicals who support Israel “one of the most dangerous and heretical movements which fuel the Arab-Israeli conflict.” He has championed pro-Islamic hate groups such as Friends of Al-Aqsa, “B. I. G. Campaign” (Boycott Israeli Good), the Muslim Association of Great Britain, and the Islamic Human Rights Commission. Currently, Stephen Sizer is the Vicar of Christ Church, an Anglican church in Virginia Water, Great Britain. This church is a member of the Willow Creek Association. He has been joined in his views by evangelical leaders such as John Stott, Lynne Hybels (wife of pastor Bill Hybels), Gary Burge of Wheaton College, Emergent Church leader Brian McLaren, and the president of the Christian Research Institute, Hank Hanegraaff. Hanegraaff’s book, *The Apocalypse Code* (2007), was endorsed by Stephen Sizer, and all Stephen Sizer’s books are for sale on the Christian Research Institute’s website.

What is “Christian Palestinianism”?

“Christian Palestinianism” is the idea that the Jewish people have been set aside and the Palestinian Arabs are the true people of God. All the basic elements of biblical prophecy concerning the Jews are rejected. The Jewish people are skillfully removed from the Old and New Testaments; 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. The formation of the Jewish nation in 1948 is a sad moment in history, in not a miracle; the Jewish people are illegal occupants of the land not rightful owners, and biblical prophecy tends to be forgotten and neglected. Although many well-known evangelical leaders have embraced this movement from its beginning, the overriding thrust of “Christian Palestinianism” is political, not biblical.

In the United States, a vocal group of academic scholars are championing this perspective. In Great Britain, this view has taken evangelicals by storm. In 2006,

“Such a movement would be somewhat easier to understand if it were composed of only liberals; however, many within the Palestinian Christian movement claim to be evangelical in their theology.”

Dr. Tom Ice
Director of Pre-Trib
Research Center

Melanie Phillips, a British journalist, wrote a book entitled *Londonistan*, warning England that Islam was taking over their country and culture. She explained that the British evangelical church had become pro-Islamic and had departed from historic biblical Christianity. She notes the rise of “Christian Palestinianism”:

So when Arab Christians reinterpreted Scripture in order to delegitimize the Jews’ claim to the land of Israel, this kick-started replacement theology, which roared back into the imaginations, sermons, and thinking of the Anglican church. This revisionism held that Palestinian Arabs were the original possessors of the land of Israel. The Anglican bishop of Jerusalem, Riah Abu el-Assal, claimed of Palestinian Christians: “We are the true Israel...”¹

“Christian Palestinianism” & Anti-Semitism

Christian Palestinian spokesmen Stephen Sizer and Naim Ateek have led the charge in anti-Israel and anti-Semitic hatred. These leaders have joined with Muslim activists in Great Britain in denouncing Israel. They have participated in anti-Israel rallies, alongside Islamic activists. They have called the Jewish people and Jewish leaders Nazis, violent, blood thirsty, and crucifiers of the innocent. They have called for the destruction of Israel. They have supported and encouraged others to support terrorist organizations, such as Hamas and the Muslim Brotherhood, against Israel.

In March of 2009, Stephen Sizer, vicar of Christ Church, appeared at an anti-Israel meeting with an Islamic activist called Ismail Patel. Patel has not only accused Israel of “genocide” and “war crimes” but considers Disney Corporation to be a Jewish plot and supports Hamas, Iran, and Syria.

Stephen Sizer has also applauded Iranian President Ahmadinejad for having “looked forward to the day when Zionism ceases to exist”. On July 4, 2006, during a conference of Christians and Jews which included Holocaust survivors, Stephen Sizer equated Israel with Nazi Germany when describing Israeli Prime Minister Olmert’s government.

Hank Hanegraaff joins Stephen Sizer in anti-Israel prejudice and contempt. In his book *The Apocalypse Code* (2007) he equated Zionism with racism, and joined revisionist historians when speaking of “the ethnic cleansing of Palestinians.”² Hank Hanegraaff’s language and tone in this book is aggressively anti-Israel, against Christians who support Israel, and anti-Dispensational.

“Christian Palestinianism” & the Holocaust

The “Holocaust” was the murder or genocide of six million Jews in German-occupied territories during World War II led by Adolf Hitler and the Nazi Party. Of the nine million Jews that resided in Europe before the Holocaust, approximately two-thirds were killed. In particular, over one million Jewish children were killed, two million Jewish women, and three million Jewish men. It is without doubt the darkest hour of the twentieth century.

Nevertheless, Christian Palestinian leaders would like the world to forget the horrors of the Holocaust. These leaders accuse Israel and her evangelical Christian allies of playing the “Holocaust guilt-card” and hiding behind the Holocaust in order to shield Israel from criticism. They do not seek to remember the Holocaust, but rather resent any reference to it. They seek to understate its horrors and denigrate its importance. Stephen Sizer has come to the defense of Iran’s President Ahmadinejad, who denied the historicity of the Holocaust!

“ So when Arab Christians reinterpreted Scripture in order to delegitimize the Jews’ claim to the land of Israel, this kick-started replacement theology, which roared back into the imaginations, sermons and thinking of the Anglican church. This revisionism held that Palestinian Arabs were the original possessors of the land of Israel. The Anglican bishop of Jerusalem, Riah Abu el-Assal, claimed of Palestinian Christians: “We are the true Israel.”

Melanie Phillips
British Journalist
Spectator Magazine

During a visit to Iran in 2007, Sizer was interviewed by the Islamic Republic New Agency. He is reported to have said: “The Zionists have distorted remarks by President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad about the Holocaust.” Sizer claimed that President Ahmadinejad was merely misunderstood. Sizer also suggested that the Israel and her Christian allies were to blame for the Middle East conflict. Sadly, these Christian Palestinian leaders stand firmly with the pro-Islamic activists who rejoice in the Holocaust and in any and all suffering the Jewish people have endured down through the centuries.

“Christ at the Checkpoint” Conferences

In 2010, at the calvinist Bethlehem Bible College, a controversial international conference, called “Christ at the Checkpoint Conference,” was held. At this first conference nearly 250 attended. Since 2010, the conference has become an annual event, now in its fourth year. This conference is sponsored by leading “Christian” Palestinian activists, such as Naim Ateek and Stephen Sizer. At the first conference, no leaders of Israeli messianic congregations were invited. This conference panel of speakers used the forum to condemn and foment hatred for Israel and Jewish causes. Leading pro-Islamic activists, such as Salam Fayyad (the Palestinian prime minister) and Sami Awad of the Holy Land Trust, were among the speakers. A number of speakers encouraged boycotts and the divestment of companies that do business with Israel. Other speakers gave words of sympathy to Islamic terrorist organizations and nations in their opposition to Israel. The Israeli government’s treatment of the Palestinian people was compared to those who crucified the Lord Jesus Christ. In many ways, this conference was an international forum to incite further hatred toward the Jewish people and acts of anti-Semitism. Sadly, many American and British evangelicals have agreed to attend and speak at this conference! Unfortunately, their presence and participation have given credibility and international recognition to this conference. Among the American and British evangelical speakers are: Lynne Hybels, co-founder of Willow Creek Community Church with her husband Bill Hybels; Tony Campolo, of Eastern College, in Philadelphia; Darrell Bock of Dallas Theological Seminary; Gary Burge, New Testament professor at Wheaton College; along with Stephen Sizer and Colin Chapman from Great Britain.

“Christian Palestinianism” and the Lord Jesus Christ

“Christian” Palestinian leaders seek to portray the Lord Jesus Christ, not as a Jew, a descendant of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but rather as a Palestinian and by implication a Muslim. Their goal is to remove Israel from the Bible, separate Judaism from biblical revelation, and to transform Christianity into a sect of Islam. In their minds, in order to accomplish this goal, they must simply demonstrate that Jesus Christ was a Palestinian Arab.

In an Easter message, Naim Ateek explained, “Here in Palestine, Jesus is again walking the Via Dolorosa. Jesus is the powerless Palestinian humiliated at a checkpoint...” Mustafa Barghouti, a leader within the Palestinian Authority, stated in 2009, “Jesus Christ is the first Palestinian who was tortured in this land.”³ At “The Christ at the Checkpoint Conference” in 2010, Lutheran priest Mitri Raheb boasted, “I am sure if we were to do a DNA test between King David, who was a Bethlehemite, and Jesus, born in Bethlehem, and Mitri, born just across the street from where Jesus was born, I’m sure the DNA will show

*“Despite
enlisting
support from
the theological
community and
seeking
validation
from academia,
the overall
thrust of
Christian
Palestinianism
is political, not
Biblical.”*

Paul Wilkenson
Author of “For Zion’s
Sake”



FORWARDING SERVICE REQUESTED

Bible & Life Ministries, Inc.
3116 Gulfwind Dr., Land O' Lakes, FL 34639

June 2013

INFORMATION

Bible and Life is published periodically and sent out free of charge and is supported entirely by the free will offerings of the Lord's people. Checks should be made out to "Bible and Life Ministries, Inc."

Correspondence should be sent to:

BIBLE & LIFE Newsletter
c/o David Dunlap
3116 Gulfwind Drive
Land O' Lakes, FL 34639
(813) 996-1053

e-mail

daviddunlap@earthlink.net

web site

www.bibleandlife.org



Facebook

http://www.facebook.com/pages/
Bible-Life/139555992799868

that there is a trace."⁴ The implication, of course, is that Jesus Christ is not a Jew, but rather, a Palestinian Arab. Therefore, He is not the Messiah of the Jews but of the Palestinian Arabs! They are employing the maxim, "If you repeat a lie often enough, it becomes the truth!"

Conclusion

The Psalmist writes, "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'" (Psalm 83:4). This ancient wish is alive in the hearts of the Christian Palestinian movement. Their hatred for the Jewish nation and Jewish people is ultimately behind all their literature, conferences, and media appearances. Although replacement theology is used as a pretext, "Christian Palestinianism" is a political movement more than a Christian movement. Unfortunately, many American and British evangelicals are misled, or in some cases, fully agree with their anti-Israel contempt. May many Christian leaders begin expose "Christian Palestinianism" for what it is, an anti-Semitic and anti-Israel political movement! "Christian Palestinianism" is not a cause to champion, but a fallacy to oppose. May Christians re-affirm a love and support for the people and nation of Israel.

Endnotes

- 1 Melanie Phillips, *Londonistan*, (New York, NY: Encounter Books, 2006), p. 152
2. Hank Hanegraaff, *The Apocalypse Code*, (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2007), pp. 166-169
3. Melanie Phillips, *Londonistan*, (New York, NY: Encounter Books, 2006), p. 212
4. Mitri Raheb - www.christatthecheckpoint.com/lectures/Mitri_Raheb.pdf

Further Reading

Paul Wilkenson, *For Zion's Sake: Christian Zionism and the Role of John Nelson Darby*, (London, GB: Paternoster Press, 2007)

Tom Ice, *Christian Palestinianism*, <http://www.pre-trib.org/data/pdf/Ice-ChristianPalestinian2.pdf>

Melanie Phillips, *Beware of the New Axis of Evangelicals and Islamists*- <http://www.spectator.co.uk/features/3409686/beware-the-new-axis-of-evangelicals-and-islamists/>