

PART FOUR

2. CHRISTIAN PALESTINIANISM

a) *IMPORTANT FIGURES IN THE MOVEMENT:*

- *NAIM ATEEK*
- *STEPHEN SIZER*
- *OTHERS: Gary Burge, Lynne Hybels, John Ortberg, Tony Campolo, Brian McLaren, Jimmy Carter*

b) *IMPORTANT ORGANIZATIONS WITHIN THE MOVEMENT*

- *SABEEL – The Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center (Jerusalem)*
- *CHRIST AT THE CHECKPOINT*
- *BDS MOVEMENT – Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions*

C. SEE THE DANGER OF CHRISTIAN PALESTINIANISM

1. A REJECTION OF THE AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE

a) *REJECTION OF A literal interpretation of the Bible*

Stephen Sizer... “When we talk about Israel in the Hebrew Scriptures, we are not talking about a racial identification ... Israel as a racial identification, as a national people, was never how the Old Testament understood God’s people”

(<http://www.raptureready.com/soap/wilkinson2.pdf>)

b) *ADVOCATES OF replacement theology*

Andrew Robinson – Pastor of Hazel Grove Full Gospel Church, UK – (church of Paul Wilkinson)

“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.” (Andrew Robinson, *Prophets Who Prophecy Lies In My Name*, <http://www.raptureready.com/soap/wilkinson.pdf>)

Brian McLaren

“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”

(<http://www.thebereancall.org/content/chrislam-christian-palestinianism-0>)

c) THE RESULTING ‘islamization’ of the Scriptures

Riah Abu el-Assal, the Anglican bishop of Jerusalem, , claimed of Palestinian Christians:

“We are the true Israel...” (Melanie Phillips, *Londonistan*, New York: Encounter Books, 2006,pg 152)

Jack Sara, President of Bethlehem Bible College, revised Ezekiel 37:

“The hand of the Lord was on me and He brought me out by the Spirit of the Lord and set me in the middle of the West Bank – Bethlehem, Qalqilya and Jenin and Salvit and Nablus and Ramallah – it was full of bones ... He asked me, ‘Son of Man, can these bones live? Can the Palestinian people live?’ Then He said to me, ‘Prophecy to these bones, and say to them, “Dry bones, hear the word of the Lord”’ ... You see, the Palestinian people were, and a lot are still like this valley of dry bones that is in need of the Church to come and prophesy life on them, and I think through the Christ at the Checkpoint conference there was a lot of prophesying life over the Palestinian people. Will you agree with me?” [applause]

(<http://www.raptureready.com/soap/wilkinson2.pdf>)

2. THE DESTRUCTION OF THE GOSPEL

A SOCIAL GOSPEL FOUNDED ON liberation theology

“People quote from Genesis that G-d has given the land to the Jewish people. So the land is given by God so they have a divine right to the land and the Palestinians have no rights. They need to go. It is the wrong way of interpreting scripture. Palestinian liberation theology comes to really help people understand that the message of the Bible is not about a god who is a person concerned about a piece of land here or there, but a god of justice, a god of peace, a god of compassion.”

(Naim Ateek - http://www.camera.org/index.asp?x_context=2&x_outlet=118&x_article=1711)

3. THE DE-LEGITIMIZATION OF ISRAEL

a) “GOD IS AGAINST ISRAEL AND IS ON THE SIDE OF THE PALESTINIANS”

“In the deep pain of the Palestinian people in Gaza, the West Bank and East Jerusalem, of Palestinian refugees and of Israeli Arab citizens, we witnessed the tears of God. God keeps the flame of faith alive, as the darkness of despair closes in. God lives and breathes in the lament of those whose future has been stolen. In the cries of the dispossessed we have sensed the passion of God for right to prevail. God takes sides for justice against injustice.” (Kairos, The Bethlehem Call, 2011)

"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."

(**Naim Ateek** (2001). "An Easter Message from Sabeel". *Sabeel*. Archived from the original on 2008-03-10. Retrieved 2008-05-17)

b) PORTRAY ISRAEL AS an apartheid state

"The Holocaust has been perpetuated over the last forty or fifty years; it's the Palestinians who are going through their Nakba ['catastrophe'] now, and one wrong doesn't right another wrong".
(**Stephen Sizer**, <http://www.raptureready.com/soap/wilkinson2.pdf>)

Declarations within THE BETHLEHEM CALL document of 2011:

"As witnessed with our own eyes, the treacherous conditions imposed by the Israeli occupation on Palestinians and their land have reached a level of almost unimaginable and sophisticated criminality. This includes the slow yet deliberate and systematic ethnic cleansing and the geo-cide of Palestinians and Palestine as well as the strangling of the Palestinian economy"

"The government and state of Israel is now regarded as an apartheid regime in terms of international law"

We "call the Israeli occupation of Palestine a crime and sin. We reject any theological or political justification for the Occupation"
(*The Church at Christ's Checkpoint*, Paul Wilkinson, 2012, pg. 11)

c) PORTRAY ISRAEL AS the sole cause of the conflict

We "reject any argument aimed at convincing Palestinians and the international community that the problems are caused by Muslims rather than the Occupation"
(*The Church at Christ's Checkpoint*, Paul Wilkinson, 2012, pg. 11)

4. THE TARGETING OF EVANGELICALS WHO SUPPORT ISRAEL

Stephen Sizer said *"There are certainly churches in Israel/Palestine that side with the occupation, that side with Zionism. One of my burdens is to challenge them theologically and show that they've repudiated Jesus, they've repudiated the Bible, and they are an abomination."*
(<http://www.freerepublic.com/focus/f-bloggers/3113958/posts>)

a) CHRISTIANS who support Israel ARE BLAMED AND DESPISED

Mark Tooley, President of the Institute for Religion and Democracy;

"In the mind set of many Christ at the Checkpoint organizers and speakers, a Texas Baptist who believes God still blesses the Jews is more morally culpable for Mid-East conflict than a Hamas-supporting Islamist in Nasrallah who believes Allah wants to drive the Jews into the Sea."
(<http://standupforthetruth.com/2012/02/>)

“In a letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury Dr Rowan Williams (June 2011), Naim Ateek... described Jewish and Christian Zionists as “a greater threat to us [Arab Christians] than the extremist Islamists.”” (<http://www.raptureready.com/soap/wilkinson2.pdf>)

Tony Campolo - *“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.”*

(<http://www.thebereancall.org/content/chrislam-christian-palestinianism-0>)

b) EVANGELICALS ARE BEING TARGETED to win over

Mark Tooley -

“The Checkpoint's goal is to highlight 'injustices in the Palestinian Territories' by Israel and, more centrally, to steer U.S. Evangelicals especially away from traditional friendship for Israel towards neutrality or even hostility.”

(<http://crossmap.christianpost.com/news/christ-at-the-checkpoint-looks-to-chip-away-at-evangelical-support-for-israel-9233>)

D. BE READY WITH AN ANSWER

➤ **Isaiah 62: 1a – “For Zion’s sake I will not keep silent,”**

1. KNOW WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS

2. KNOW THE FACTS ON THE GROUND

3. BE PREPARED TO TAKE A STAND FOR THE TRUTH!

E. BE DEVOTED TO PRAYER

1. PRAY FOR the Jewish people and the nation of Israel

- **Psalm 122: 6** – “Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: “May they prosper who love you.””

2. PRAY FOR the Palestinians and Arab peoples

3. PRAY FOR our churches to wake up and speak out

CONCLUSION: