

October 31, 2013

Submission by NGO Monitor to the Methodist Consultation on Israel – Boycotts, Divestment and Sanctions

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NGO Monitor's mission is to provide information and analysis, promote accountability, and support discussion on the reports and activities of NGOs claiming to advance human rights and humanitarian agendas.

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NGO Monitor was founded jointly with the Wechsler Family Foundation
NGO Monitor is a project of the Amutah for NGO Responsibility (R.A. 580465508)
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Introduction

NGO Monitor welcomes this opportunity to participate in the Methodist Consultation on Israel – BDS. We appreciate the intent of the Methodist Church to seek a wide-range of perspectives on this important and highly disputatious issue.

After examining the questionnaire and reading through the Church’s website, we have concluded that the process leading up to the questionnaire and the premise upon which it is built is seriously flawed. The title of the Consultation and the nature of the questions, taken cumulatively, are premised on a presumption of exclusive Israeli guilt for the origins and perpetuation of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

As such, the Church fails to ask hard-hitting questions of Palestinian representatives regarding their role in the origins and perpetuation of the conflict. No questions are asked about such relevant matters as terrorism, antisemitic incitement, “anti-normalization” and other forms of rejectionism, and rejection of genuine and substantial Israeli offers for compromise and peace.

This format is akin to a loaded or “complex question” in which “a question having several parts is asked in such a way that, if the respondent answers it directly, he is trapped into conceding something that would cause him to lose the argument, or otherwise be unfavorable to his side.”¹ This limits the respondent’s options to either refusing to respond, which leaves the accusation inherent in the question unanswered, or to reject the premise of the question. In either case, the respondent is on the defensive.

Despite this essential problem of both the process and the questionnaire, we nonetheless wish to engage with the Methodist Church in Britain. Our intention is to open a space for critical thinking that will hopefully broaden the discussion to include consideration of the global political “soft power” war being waged against the legitimacy of the State of Israel by a global network of well-funded non-governmental organizations (NGOs), of which BDS is a central strategic component.

The central question for the Methodist Church in Britain is: would endorsement of BDS be a moral choice? We argue that a decision by the Church to support BDS would be unethical and self-defeating. It would tarnish the Church’s moral voice in the world, make it a participant in the Middle East conflict and thereby undermine its role as a peacemaker.

¹ D. Walton, *The Fallacy of Many Questions: On the Notions of Complexity, Loadedness and Unfair Entrapment in Interrogative Theory*, (Netherlands, Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1999)

The Questionnaire's Built-In Bias Against Israel

We take notice of the following details that point to an inherent partiality against Israel within the Church:

Disproportionality

- The Background Notes for the Consultation on Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions states that the “annual Conference of the Methodist Church in Britain has engaged in debate on Israel and Palestine at most Conferences over the past 15 years.” Have any other international conflicts and border disputes garnered this much consistent attention by the Methodist Church in Britain over such a prolonged period?
- The only geographic region listed on the Methodist Church’s “Peacemaking” webpage is “Israel-Palestine.” The page also lists drones, the Trident nuclear submarine, and “Peacemaking Sunday.”²

One-sided condemnation and a disregard for Israeli human rights

- The Methodist Conference of 2010 adopted a position paper titled “Justice for Palestine and Israel,” which advocated an entirely one-sided position against Israel.
 - All demands were placed on Israel, none on the Palestinians.
 - The report failed to condemn terrorism by Palestinian groups such as Hamas, Islamic Jihad, Al Aqsa Martyrs’ Brigade, and others that has taken the lives of some 1,000 Israelis (mainly civilians) and wounded thousands more from 2000 to present.
 - No condemnation is to be found in the report of the war crimes and crimes against humanity perpetrated by these Palestinian groups on Israeli non-combatants.
 - While the report does mention “suicide bombings, bus bombings and rocket attacks [that] have involved indiscriminate attacks on the civilian population,” it references these only as explanation for the Israeli electorate’s support for the Israeli government’s policies toward Palestinians.

This presentation of the Israeli-Palestinian dispute, and the placing of the onus solely on Israel is a moral failing on the part of the report and the Church Conference that accepted it.

Resources on the Conflict used by the Church

- We note the resources that inform the authors of the 2010 report and of the questionnaire, specifically the Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center and the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI). (See below for more information on these groups.)
- We also note the references to Israeli resources including the Israeli Committee Against Housing Demolitions, Zochrot, MACHSOM Watch, Women in Black, New Profile, Breaking the Silence and others. These groups represent a miniscule slice of Israeli society, and

² See <http://www.methodist.org.uk/mission/public-issues/peacemaking>

have virtually no constituency. By engaging solely with these fringe groups, the Methodist Church has limited itself to hearing from an extremely narrow perspective of Israelis. Not talking to groups most representative of Israeli public opinion creates a self-censoring dynamic whereby the denomination engages only with those voices that confirm previously held beliefs.

- We further note the frequent reference to the Kairos Palestine Document within Methodist Church in Britain documents. (See Appendix C for a list of critical resources on Kairos.)

The Goal of BDS: Defeating Israel, not Peace

BDS is immoral

- By singling out Israel and using double standards, BDS undermines and is the antithesis of universal human rights values.
- BDS applies false comparisons to apartheid South Africa, attempting to transform a complex political dispute into a question of racial discrimination.
- It collectively punishes Israelis.
- As acknowledged by BDS ideologue Omar Barghouti³ of the Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (PACBI),⁴ BDS undermines liberal values, such as academic freedom and freedom of expression, through intolerance and by restricting debate.

BDS is anti-peace

- Boycotts are the antithesis of dialogue, cooperation, and developing peaceful ties between Israelis and Palestinians.
- Ali Abunimah,⁵ major BDS speaker and head of “Electronic Intifada,”⁶ labels Palestinian leaders who negotiate with Israel “collaborators.”⁷
- BDS activists promote “one-state” solutions, meaning the elimination of Israel as the historic homeland of the Jewish people.

BDS: Roots

The BDS campaign has its origins in the NGO Forum of the UN’s 2001 World Conference Against Racism in Durban⁸ where some 1,500 NGOs united to adopt a political war plan against Israel.

The primary tactic of the “Durban strategy” is to delegitimize Israel and place it outside the community of nations by leveling accusations of Israeli “war crimes,” “apartheid,” and “racism.”

³ See http://www.ngo-monitor.org/article/omar_barghouti

⁴ See http://www.ngo-monitor.org/article/factsheet_palestinian_campaign_for_the_academic_and_cultural_boycott_of_israel_pacbi

⁵ See http://www.ngo-monitor.org/article/ali_abunimah

⁶ See http://www.ngo-monitor.org/article/electronic_intifada_and_ali_abunimah_factsheet

⁷ See <http://electronicintifada.net/content/why-israel-wont-survive/7999>

⁸ See http://ngo-monitor.org/article/ngo_forum_at_durban_conference

Israel's international isolation, not peace and reconciliation between Israelis and Palestinians, is the goal of this campaign.⁹

Among the accredited NGOs¹⁰ at the Durban NGO Forum were thirty-five mainline Christian churches and organizations.¹¹ In the following decade many of these would be targeted for co-optation by the proponents of the Durban strategy, with a few denominations actively promoting this strategy.

The NGO Forum's Final Declaration, based on language from a pre-conference meeting in Teheran, uses virulent and demonizing terminology to describe Israel as a "racist, apartheid state in which Israel's brand of apartheid [is] a crime against humanity." The declaration calls for the "launch of an international anti-Israeli apartheid movement," and for the "complete and total isolation of Israel" through the "imposition of mandatory and comprehensive sanctions and embargoes, the full cessation of all links (diplomatic, economic, social, aid, military cooperation and training) between all states and Israel."¹²

Following this Durban strategy, BDS (boycotts, divestment, sanctions) campaigns seek to totally isolate Israel via boycotts of Israeli academic, cultural, consumer, and sports institutions, divestment from companies doing business with Israel, and sanctions in the areas of military, economic, and diplomatic cooperation agreements between Israel and other states.¹³

This strategy is driven by UN-based groups, as well as highly politicized non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that exploit the funds, slogans, and rhetoric of the human rights movement. The program of action is promoted by a multi-million dollar international network of hundreds of NGOs that exploit and wield the language of human rights as a political weapon targeting Israel.

⁹ For further analysis of how the apartheid accusation is used as a polemical slur against Israel, see Richard J. Goldstone, "Israel and the Apartheid Slander," The New York Times, October 11, 2011, available at http://www.nytimes.com/2011/11/01/opinion/israel-and-the-apartheid-slander.html?_r=2&ref=opinion&

¹⁰ See <http://www.icare.to/list%20of%20accredited%20NGO%20representatives%20at%20the%202001%20WCAR.pdf>

¹¹ American Friends Service Committee, Australian Catholic Social Justice Council, Catholic Bishops Conference of India / Commission for Scheduled Castes – Scheduled Tribes, Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace in Malawi, Catholic Institute for International Relations, Catholic Organisation For Relief and Development (Cordaid), Catholics for a Free Choice, Church World Service, Churches Commission for Racial Justice, Commission of the Churches on International Affairs of the World Council of Churches, Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, Congregations of Saint Joseph, Diakonia Council of Churches, Franciscans International, Friends World Committee for Consultation, General Conference of Seventh Day Adventists, International Catholic Migration Commission, Lutheran World Federation, Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers, Mennonite Central Committee, National Black Catholic Congress, Presbyterian Church (USA), Society of the Immaculate Heart of Mary (ICM Sisters) – Trichy, Unitarian Universalist Association, Unitarian Universalist Service Committee, United Church Of Christ - Board for World Ministries, United Church of Christ Justice and Witness Ministries, United Methodist Church - General Board of Global Ministries, World Alliance of Reformed Churches, World Alliance of Young Men's Christian Associations, World Evangelical Fellowship, World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church Women, World Student Christian Federation, World Union of Catholic Women's Organizations, World Young Women's Christian Associations.

¹² See <http://academic.udayton.edu/race/06hrights/WCAR2001/NGOFORUM/>

¹³ See <http://www.bdsmovement.net/bdsintro>

Since Durban 2001, a series of political battles, aimed to isolate and demonize Israel toward weakening that country to the point of economic and political collapse, have been fought in the UN, the media, on campuses, in trade unions, in sports, and in the churches.

In July 2005, a number of groups issued the “Palestinian United Call for BDS against Israel,” further expanding the radius of these activities and increasing the resources devoted to this form of political warfare.

The NGO-led activity has produced the Goldstone Report (since disavowed by Judge Richard Goldstone himself ¹⁴), the myth of the Jenin “massacre,”¹⁵ and the dismissal and disparaging of the security barrier protecting Israeli civilians from terror attacks. Manifestations of the well-funded global BDS campaign include academic and cultural boycotts, and the church-based anti-Israel divestment campaign.

Governmental funding of the “Durban Strategy”

European governments provide at least \$50 million annually to Palestinian, Israeli, and international NGOs that are active in the context of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Direct and indirect government funding comes from multiple sources: the European Union, which includes 27 states; from individual EU member states, independent of EU funding; from Norway and Switzerland, which are not members of the EU; from a consortium of four European countries, in addition to individual funding; and indirect channels through European or local development organizations.

A large international network of Protestant and Catholic aid societies serve as funding agents for the humanitarian foreign aid programs of many governments. Some provide taxpayer funds to politicized NGOs active in the Arab-Israeli conflict. This is accomplished through Catholic aid societies such as the Caritas Internationalis network and Pax Christi. Protestant aid societies are also utilized by their respective national governments as third party agents for the distribution of humanitarian foreign aid, some of which is allocated to politicized NGOs active in the Arab-Israeli conflict.

BDS: Coopting the Churches’ Moral Voice

BDS activists are fully aware of the role churches can and do play in amplifying and legitimizing their radical anti-Israel message. The BDS movement states so explicitly:

“Religious institutions are seen in many communities as embodying important moral and ethical principles... Divestment campaigns that target companies such as

¹⁴ Richard Goldstone, “Reconsidering the Goldstone Report on Israel and war crimes,” The Washington Post, April 2, 2011, available at http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/reconsidering-the-goldstone-report-on-israel-and-war-crimes/2011/04/01/AFg111JC_story.html

¹⁵ Marcus Sheff, “A decade since the battle of Jenin, ‘the myth of Jeningrad,’” The Jerusalem Post, April 19, 2012, available at <http://www.jpost.com/Opinion/Columnists/A-decade-since-the-battle-of-Jenin-the-myth-of-Jeningrad>

Caterpillar have been initiated in a number of major Christian churches. Not only will successful divestment campaigns financially weaken the Occupation, but will raise both the public profile and legitimacy of the BDS campaign.”¹⁶

Over the last decade, activism in support of the Palestinian nationalist cause has increased markedly in mainline churches in the U.S., Canada, U.K., Europe, South Africa, and elsewhere. This increase is not spontaneous. Rather, it is the result of a confluence of efforts pushed by a number of Palestinian Christian organizations whose influence within the mainline churches has increased dramatically. The oldest and most influential of these groups is the Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center.

Sabeel and the Methodist Church in Britain

The Methodist Church in Britain is a partner with Sabeel and views it as an important resource. This is seen in the denomination’s endorsement of Sabeel, its theology and programing on the Church’s website, which:

- promotes Sabeel’s Global Young Adult Festival¹⁷
- celebrates Sabeel’s “25th Anniversary of Palestinian Liberation Theology”¹⁸
- announces a partnership with Sabeel “to organise and host two youth gatherings in Israel/Palestine.”¹⁹
- announces “letters of affectionate greetings” to the “leaders of the churches in Jerusalem and the Sabeel Ecumenical Centre, expressing solidarity with the Palestinian and Israeli organisations working for relief, human rights and a just peace.”²⁰
- lists Sabeel as a resource²¹
- praises Sabeel as “working to bring people together from different perspectives to seek peace and justice.”²²

Background on Sabeel

Jerusalem-based Sabeel was founded in 1989 and is led by Anglican Canon Naim Ateek. Sabeel is a major actor in the effort to convince Christian churches to support divestment and boycotts against Israel. Promoting its “Palestinian Liberation Theology,” Sabeel plays a central theological role for pro-Palestinian activists in the mainline churches.

- Ideologically, Sabeel supports “one-state,” meaning no independent Jewish state. Its “Vision for Peace”²³ states: “The ideal and best solution has always been to **envisage**

¹⁶ See <http://www.bdsmovement.net/2008/faith-based-125>

¹⁷ See <http://www.methodist.org.uk/mission/world-church/moving-mountains-reshaping-the-world-calling-all-methodist-youth>

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ See <http://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:gC6H0k8GHugJ:www.methodist.org.uk/mission/world-church%3Fpage%3D4+&cd=4&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=il&client=firefox-a>

²⁰ See www.methodist.org.uk/downloads/pi_ipconfresolutions02-009_0809.pdf

²¹ See www.methodist.org.uk/downloads/wor-ecusuns-wwppi-140409.pdf and

²² See www.methodist.org.uk/downloads/lk_publicissues0505.pdf

²³ Naim Ateek: <http://fosna.org/content/jerusalem-sabeel-document-principles-just-peace-palestine-israel>

ultimately a bi-national state in Palestine-Israel... **One state for two nations and three religions.”** (emphasis added)

- Sabeel promotes **Palestinian Liberation Theology**, which includes Christian replacement theology,²⁴ as a means to refute Jewish religious and historical claims to the land of Israel. At its core, this is Palestinian nationalist ideology wrapped in a theological casing.
- Sabeel invokes antisemitic deicide imagery against Israel. It consistently disparages Judaism as “tribal,” “primitive,” and “exclusionary,” in contrast to Christianity’s “universalism” and “inclusiveness,” fitting the definition of supersessionism.²⁵ Following are examples of this rhetoric and other disparaging descriptions of Judaism by Rev. Ateek:

Ateek:

- **Deicide imagery:** “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 [G]olgotha. The Israeli government crucifixion system is operating daily. Palestine has become the place of the skull...”²⁶
- **Denigration of Judaism as “primitive” and “tribal”:**
 - “The establishment of Israel was a relapse to the most primitive concepts of an exclusive, tribal God.”²⁷
 - “The tragedy of many Zionists today is that they have locked themselves into the nationalist concept of God. They are trapped in it and they will be freed only if they discard their primitive image of God for a more universal one...”²⁸
 - “And the way using some of the texts in the Hebrew Scriptures, or Old Testament, unbelievable! Twisting, taking a tribal theology and making it the biblical theology. You know we have tribal theology, but it moves on to a universal theology where God is concerned about all people, not only one segment of humanity.”²⁹
 - “‘Don’t make peace with the people of the land, they will be like thorns in your throats, get rid of them – either out or kill them.’ That’s in the heart of the Torah, in the heart of the Torah, which is the most authoritative part of the Hebrew Scriptures for Jews.”³⁰
 - “Those texts represent a tribal understanding of God, which we don’t have today. I mean later on these texts begin to open up and develop. And so the exclusive

²⁴ See

http://www.interfaithfamily.com/arts_and_entertainment/popular_culture/Catholics_and_Jews_A_Review_of_Constantines_Sword.shtml

²⁵ See <http://www.theologicalstudies.org/resource-library/supersessionism/324-defining-supersessionism>

²⁶ Naim Ateek: <http://www.sabeel.org/pdfs/2001%20Easter%20Message.htm>

²⁷ Naim Ateek: <http://www.sabeel.org/news.php?eventid=181>

²⁸ Naim Ateek, *Justice and Only Justice: A Palestinian Theology of Liberation*, Orbis Books, 1989

²⁹ Naim Ateek, keynote speech, Conference “A Time for Truth; A Time for Action,” First Presbyterian Church, San Anselmo, CA – March 5 – 6, 2010

³⁰ Ibid.

versus the inclusive was one of the most important parts of a Palestinian Liberation Theology.”³¹

- “Old Testament and New Testament, we share the Old Testament with Jewish people. And the heart of it, how do we re-interpret the text, is it an exclusive theology of land or an inclusive theology of land... It’s a theology that opens up the whole world. For us Christians ‘God so loved the world’ it doesn’t say ‘God so loved the Jewish people.’”³²
- Sabeel seeks to build a critical mass of influential church leaders who will amplify its message that Israel is solely culpable for the origin and continuation of the Israeli-Palestinian/Arab conflict. To accomplish this, Sabeel works with activists within different denominations internationally and sponsors an “International Conference which attracts intellectual, spiritual and civic leaders from around the world,”³³ and brings delegations of Christians on highly politicized “Witness Visit” tours “to experience the reality of life in today’s Holy Land.”³⁴

The Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel ³⁵

- The Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI) was founded by the World Council of Churches in August 2001. The WCC Executive Committee recommended to “*develop an accompaniment programme that would include an international ecumenical presence* and which would also be closely linked to the local churches.”³⁶ In February 2002, with the approval of the WCC Executive Committee, EAPPI was established.
- EAPPI brings international volunteers to the West Bank “to experience life under occupation” and to “provide protective presence to vulnerable communities, monitor and report human rights abuses and support Palestinians and Israelis working together for peace.”³⁷
- EAPPI consistently demonizes Israel,³⁸ making accusations of “apartheid,” “war crimes,” and “Bantustans,” and calls the security barrier (which has saved countless lives from suicide bombings³⁹) “evil.”⁴⁰
- EAPPI presents a one-sided Palestinian narrative, participates in activities commemorating the Palestinian “Nakba” (catastrophe), and promotes⁴¹ the “right of

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

³³ See <http://sabeel.org/intconferences.php>

³⁴ See <http://sabeel.org/events.php?eventid=244>

³⁵ See http://www.ngo-monitor.org/article/ecumenical_accompaniment_programme_in_palestine_and_israel_eappi_0

³⁶ See <http://eappi.org/en/about/overview.html>

³⁷ See <http://www.eappi.org/>

³⁸ See <http://www.eappi.org/en/news/eappi-news/se/browse/6/article/4834/wcc-head-occupation-is-a.html>

³⁹ See <http://www.theisraelproject.org/atf/cf/%7B84dc5887-741e-4056-8d91-a389164bc94e%7D/DEATHS%20FROM%20SUICIDE%20BOMBINGSII.JPG>

⁴⁰ See http://www.eappi.org/fileadmin/eappi/files/resources/chain_reaction/Chain_Reaction_6th_edition.pdf

⁴¹ See <http://www.eappi.org/ru/novosti/soobshchenija-ochevidcev/r/article/4837/city-of-dreams.html>

return.”⁴² The organization ignores terror attacks against Israelis, placing the blame for the conflict entirely on Israel. EAPPI frequently uses inflammatory and demonizing rhetoric against Israel and engages in BDS campaigns.⁴³

- EAPPI is a partner⁴⁴ for the South Africa Team for “Israeli Apartheid Week,” which is “made up of 25 members stretched across South Africa.”⁴⁵
- An EAPPI publication titled “[40 Years of Occupation](#)” included an article advocating illegal and inflammatory activities – such as hacking government websites – to “end the occupation.”⁴⁶

Conclusion and Recommendations

The process for the Methodist Church in Britain’s Consultation on BDS is significantly wanting. The principle problem lies in the Church’s obsession with and built-in bias against Israel. This is a result of the Church’s over-reliance on external resources that are themselves highly politicized and biased in their respective agendas.

Given the BDS movement’s ultimate goal of dismantling Israel as the nation-state providing sovereign equality for the Jewish people, endorsement of the BDS movement by the Church would be a major blow to Christian-Jewish relations. Much of the post-war interfaith work would be greatly harmed, if not undone, if Christian churches were to support campaigns that called for Israel’s destruction.

After the Holocaust, many Christians began to explore how centuries of Christian anti-Jewish demonization fed into twentieth century Nazi ideology. Their focus was on what historian and Holocaust survivor Jules Isaac called the “teaching of contempt,”⁴⁷ which is based on three principles:

1. that Christianity superseded the Jews as the “New Israel” (replacement theology or supercessionism);
2. that the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem and the dispersion of the Jews were divine punishments for Jewish rejection of Jesus;
3. that “the Jews” are collectively responsible for Jesus’ death.

Isaac’s work led to the beginnings of significant revision of Catholic and Protestant teachings about Jews and Judaism. His 1960 conversation with Pope John XXIII is largely seen as an

⁴² See <http://www.eappi.org/ar/news-events/eappi-news/news-wcc/sw/browse/5/article/4566/church-representatives-fr.html>

⁴³ See <http://www.ngo-monitor.org/article.php?id=86>

⁴⁴ See <http://www.bdssouthafrica.com/2012/02/8th-international-israeli-apartheid.html>

⁴⁵ See <http://www.ngo-monitor.org/article.php?id=3627>

⁴⁶ See http://www.eappi.org/fileadmin/eappi/files/resources/chain_reaction/Chain_Reaction_6th_edition.pdf

⁴⁷ Jules Isaac, “The Teaching of Contempt: The Christian Roots of Anti-Semitism,” Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., New York (1964)

important stimulus to the Second Vatican Council's declaration on the Jews. Ever since, the general trajectory of Jewish-Christian relations has largely been positive.

Zionism is a political, not theological, construct. As such, anti-Zionism can provide a secular framework for the timeworn theological teachings of contempt. This is seen in the activities of Sabeel and its promotion of "Palestinian Liberation Theology," a fusion of Christian theology (including replacement theology) with Palestinian nationalism.

Sabeel's promotion of supersessionism and deicide imagery is a strong echo of a time in Christian-Jewish relations many had thought ended. Ateek's attacks on Judaism as "tribal" and "primitive" and his comparisons of Palestinians with the crucified Jesus – while pointing a finger at Israel's "crucifixion machine" – is antisemitic. His comment that the "establishment of Israel was a relapse to the most primitive concepts of an exclusive tribal God" is most illustrative of this intolerant denigration of Judaism.

This deep-seated theological enmity against Judaism does not belong in the 21st century. The Methodist Church in Britain's institutional partnerships with Sabeel is deeply disturbing. A significant first step to restoring the Church's role as a true peacemaker between Israelis and Palestinians would require the Church to sever its relationship with Sabeel.

To be a true peacemaker trusted by both sides the Church must not be a participant in the conflict. If the Church were to decide to support BDS this would be a significant moral failing. Instead of promoting understanding, common ground and peace, the Methodist Church in Britain would intensify its involvement as a participant in the conflict. The Church would be guilty of fomenting misunderstanding, divisiveness and hate.

For the Methodist Church in Britain to retain a moral voice as a genuine peacemaker, it must reject BDS.

Appendix A: BDS Goals – In the words of its founders and leaders:

Omar Barghouti

Co-founder and Steering Committee member of Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel (PACBI). He was also a doctoral student at Tel Aviv University.⁴⁸

“‘The only ethical solution is a (single) democratic, secular and civic state in historic Palestine,’ says Omar Barghouti, founder member of the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) campaign.”⁴⁹

“(The one state solution means) a unitary state, where, by definition, Jews will be a minority.”⁵⁰

Barghouti also falsely claims a “right to resist”:

“International law does give people under occupation the right to resist in any way, including armed resistance.”⁵¹

Dr. Norman Finkelstein

A major BDS supporter, severely critiqued the BDS movement⁵² for being “dishonest” about their goals, saying,

“We have to be honest, and I loathe the disingenuousness. They [BDS] don’t want Israel... And they think they’re very clever because they know the result of implementing all three [demands] is what? What’s the result? You know and I know, what’s the result? There’s no Israel.”

Dr. As’ad Abu Khalil

A California academic and BDS campaigner, responding to Finkelstein:

“Finkelstein rightly asks whether the real aim of BDS is to bring down the state of Israel. Here, I agree with him that it is. That should be stated as an unambiguous goal. There should not be any equivocation on the subject. Justice and freedom for the Palestinians are incompatible with the existence of the state of Israel.”⁵³

⁴⁸ Anshel Feffer, “Academic boycotter to study in Tel Aviv,” The Jewish Chronicle Online, April 23, 2009, available at <http://www.thejc.com/news/israel-news/academic-boycotter-study-tel-aviv>

⁴⁹ Philippe Agret, “One-state debate gathers pace as peace hopes fade,” Arab News, October 13, 2012 available at <http://arabnews.com/one-state-debate-gathers-pace-peace-hopes-fade>

⁵⁰ See <http://www.counterpunch.org/barghouti12132003.html>

⁵¹ See http://www.therealnews.com/t2/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=31&Itemid=74&jumival=5558.

“Armed resistance” is a euphemism for terrorist attacks on unarmed Israeli civilians.

⁵² See <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ASIBGSSw4II>

⁵³ See <http://english.al-akhbar.com/blogs/angry-corner/critique-norman-finkelstein-bds>

Ahmed Moor

A leading BDS activist in the United States

"Ending the occupation doesn't mean anything if it doesn't mean upending the Jewish state itself... Ok fine. So BDS does mean the end of the Jewish state... I view the BDS movement as a long-term project with radically transformative potential. I believe that the ultimate success of the BDS movement will be coincident with the ultimate success of the Palestinian enfranchisement and equal rights movement. In other words, BDS is not another step on the way to the final showdown; BDS is The Final Showdown." ⁵⁴

Michael Warschawski

"Peace—or, better yet, justice—cannot be achieved without a total decolonization (one can say de-Zionization) of the Israeli state; it is a precondition for the fulfillment of the legitimate rights of the Palestinians—refugees, those living under military occupation, and the second-class citizens of Israel." ⁵⁵

Ronnie Kasrils

"BDS represents three words that will help bring about the defeat of Zionist Israel and victory for Palestine." ⁵⁶

⁵⁴ See <http://mondoweiss.net/2010/04/bds-is-a-long-term-project-with-radically-transformative-potential.html>

⁵⁵ Michael Warschawski, "Yes to BDS! An Answer to Uri Avnery," in Audrea Lim, ed. *The Case for Sanctions Against Israel* (London: Verso, 2012)

⁵⁶ See http://palestinechronicle.com/old/view_article_details.php?id=14924

Appendix B: Kairos Palestine Document – A Sampling of Critical Voices

Kairos Palestine has come under strong criticism by a range of Jewish and Christian theologians. Some examples:

- [Theology Fail in Christian Statement on Israel, Judaism, Palestine](#), by Dr. Adam Gregerman, Assistant Director of the Institute for Jewish-Catholic Relations at Saint Joseph's University
- The [Palestinian “Kairos” Document: A Behind-the-Scenes Analysis](#), by Malcom Lowe
- [Dr. Michael Volkmann](#), the representative for the Dialogue between Christians and Jews of the Evangelical (Protestant) Church in Württemberg, Germany
- “Let us Have Mercy Upon Words,” [International Council of Christians and Jews](#)
- [Disentangling Kairos Palestine](#) and [The Kairos Palestine Document and PCUSA's Response: Time for a Candid Discussion](#), Presbyterians for Middle East Peace
- [Christians for Fair Witness on the Middle East](#)
- Statement by [Central Conference of American Rabbis \(Reform\)](#).
- [Un-christian responses to the Middle East](#), by Prof. Amy-Jill Levine, E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Professor of New Testament Studies at Vanderbilt University Divinity School, Graduate Department of Religion, and Program in Jewish Studies