

Palestinianism and the Kairos Document

An important change is taking place in the hearts and minds of many people with regard to the spiritual and political claims of Palestinians in traditional Jewish territories. They are now regarded by some as the original inhabitants and also the spiritual heirs of the Promises Land – and all of that at the cost of Israel.

In his article, *Christian Palestinianism*, Thomas Ice describes this big spiritual and ideological threat to Israel as Christian Palestinianism. That is a Christian movement which expresses itself against Israel and in favour of the Palestinians. This liberal theological dogma is in opposition to Christian Zionism, which is focused on emphasising Israel's biblical rights and also actively supports the full restoration of Israel in an undivided land. Christian Palestinianism propagates an amillennial and anti-Jewish theology in which the restored Israel plays no part, and in which the Palestinians are regarded as the legitimate owners of the entire Palestine. In practice, that means that there should, according to them, not be a state of Israel which can interfere with the rights of the Palestinians. This liberation theology for Palestinians also enjoys great support in the secular world.

Many of the Palestinian Christians have embraced the politically-motivated and anti-Israeli liberation theology and proclaim it for the sake of their national survival. It is strongly anti-dispensational and does not recognise a future Messianic state for Israel, but pursue an alternative kingdom here and now. A large number of Palestinian Christians do not even read the Old Testament because of the central role which Israel occupied during the dispensation of the law. Some of them do read it, but only selectively. They do not at all recognise any relationship between biblical Israel, the present Jews and the modern state of Israel.

Theological Palestinianism poses a very big danger. An Egyptian scholar, Bat Ye-or, has a chapter in her book *Eurabia* about the Islamisation of Europe. According to her, Palestinianism paves the way for the Islamisation of the church. It is a kind of replacement theology in which Israel is replaced by the Palestinians. In the process the four Gospels are disengaged from their Jewish connection and attached to the Palestinians to make the New Testament more acceptable to Islam. In the process, Jesus is rendered a Palestinian Saviour.

A British Jew, Melanie Phillips, has published a book entitled *Londonistan* in which she warns England that Islam is taking over their country and culture, mainly because the church has become pro-Islamic and against historic Christianity. She describes the rise of Christian Palestinianism as follows: "When Arab Christians reinterpreted Scripture in order to delegitimise 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 ... and that they are the true Israel."

In this new form of replacement theology Israel is not only replaced with the church, but specifically also with the Palestinian Christians. In the process, the Bible is robbed of many of its basic statements on Israel and gradually reinterpreted in terms of the Koran. Donald Wagner (*Dying in the Land of Promise: Palestine and Palestinian Christianity from Pentecost to 2000*; London, 2003) wrongly argues that about half of the population in Israel at the time of Christ was not Jewish, thereby justifying his claim that Arab Christians are racially descended from the original church in Acts 2 in Jerusalem. However, the church Father Eusebius confirms in his book on church history that the early church was virtually 100% Jewish (*Ecclesiastical History*, London 1926. Translated by Kirsopp Lake).

Hank Hanegraaff of the Christian Research Institute also rejected dispensationalism and the restoration of Israel, and now advances Palestinianism. He accuses Israel of the ethnic cleansing of Palestinians and describes supporters of Israel as racists. However, it is obvious that the Bible teaches the physical and spiritual restoration of Israel in their own land. People who object to this teaching are opening the door to replacement theology and the increased acceptance of Islamic points of view.

Christian churches have to decide whether they literally believe the Bible. If so, they are committed to accepting Israel as a people in their own right, to whom alone the promise was made that they would forever occupy the land of Israel. Their unbelief was indeed the cause of the Diaspora, but the Lord now brings them back to spiritually revive them and make them a blessing to the whole world (Rom. 11:1-32).

Israel's future is not in the hands of orthodox Jews who are still rejecting the Messiah, but in the hands of Messianic Jews who have accepted Jesus as Messiah and are serving Him. Although they are a small minority group the Bible prophesies great and wonderful things for them. We should support them so that their testimony to unsaved Israeli's would go out clearly and unambiguously. According to the Bible the whole remnant in Israel will eventually accept Jesus as Messiah. Do not associate with the enemies of Israel as, according to Genesis 12:3, the judgements of God rest upon such people.

The Kairos Palestine Document

To the Palestinians, the new South Africa has in various respects become a role model for political liberation from domination by a selective and oppressing group. In 1994, a radical transition was made in South Africa from a multi-ethnic dispensation to integrated majority rule, in which no right of self-determination is granted to the former domineering group. The Palestinians also contemplate a transition in their land in which the present Jewish government will lose all its power and ultimately vanishes from the scene.

It is conspicuous that spiritual leaders in South Africa theologically paved the way towards total and unqualified surrender to the intimidating demands of the majority. Motivated by a politically-driven liberation theology, leading preachers and theologians of different churches have turned the backs upon the biblical principle of the self-determination of peoples, or nations, in their own territories (cf. Acts 17:26), and contrary to this principle embraced the idea of non-ethnic majority rule.

In 1985 an ecumenical group of preachers, many of them from Soweto, accepted a Kairos document in which apartheid (separate development) is declared as a sin, and in which an integrated political system for South Africa is called for ("kairos" means "a special moment" or "the moment of truth"). Palestinian Christians followed this example and on December 11, 2009, issued the "Kairos Palestine Document" in which they call on all Christians in the world to support the cause of Palestinian liberation. In the document they say, among others: "The injustice against the

Palestinian people, which is the Israeli occupation, is an evil that must be resisted. It is an evil and a sin that must be resisted and removed.”

On March 31, 2010, an ecumenical group of Christians and Muslims in South Africa reacted to the Kairos Palestine Document by expressing full solidarity with them. They also justified the replacement theology, in which Israel’s biblical position and rights are assigned to the Palestinians. In their letter they say, among others:

“Our dear Palestinian brothers and sisters ... Thank you for the document written by you, the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the descendants of Jesus Christ and whose ancestors were the first to receive his message. Yours is a proud history of keeping the faith in the Holy Land, and we salute you for doing that despite the most difficult situation into which you have been placed. From our perspective, we can see how you are being pressurized and forced out of your own land, and we urge you to continue to resist that with love, and to continue to show what our Lord Jesus Christ taught us.”

Kairos South Africa supports a similar transition in Palestine, in which no Israeli rights are guaranteed and effectively no future is offered to them. On April 4, 2011 they issued the following press release as South Africa’s contribution to the objectives of Christian Palestinianism:

“Kairos Southern Africa’s response to Palestine Kairos: The Palestine Kairos document was launched in South Africa on Monday evening 4 April 2011, at a meeting of Kairos Southern Africa in Bredell near Johannesburg. The document is called: *A moment of truth – A word of faith, hope and love from the heart of the Palestinian suffering.*

The notion of a Palestine Kairos Document was inspired by the South African Kairos Document as a Christian testimony of faith during the dark and last days of apartheid. Palestinian lay people, theologians and church leaders came together to express a testimony of faith in relation to their experience under the occupation of Palestine by Israel.

In response to the message of the Palestine Kairos document, Christians from South Africa and countries in Southern Africa gathering at the conference decided to state the following:

We fully honour this faith commitment and courageous witness as expressed by Christian brothers and sisters in Palestine. This testimony of faith, hope and love is a profound expression of Christian faith under circumstances of gross injustice.

We feel seriously challenged by the Palestinian witness of faith in general as well as by their Kairos document and consequently we:

- Affirm with the Palestinians that the core of the 'conflict' between Israel and Palestine is the occupation of Palestine by Israel. We affirm with them that the occupation of Palestine is a fundamental evil to be resisted as an obligation of faith. Moreover, we also consider the Christian theological justification of this occupation based on Zionism as a heresy. We have to deal with our own complicity towards putting the credibility and integrity of the Christian gospel at stake in the Holy Lands. We will have to challenge our own reading of the Bible in lending support to the death and destruction in Palestine today.
- Consider the Zionist ideology as racist. Furthermore we consider the State of Israel to be an apartheid state. For South Africans, the similarities between the situation faced by Palestinians and the situation faced by us under apartheid are clear, striking and extremely painful.
- Accept our complicity to the injustices suffered by Palestinians albeit through widespread ignorance, silence and apathy in our society.
- Will challenge our society, government, political parties, business community, civil society, and indeed the churches and the Christian community in general about their complicity regarding this.
- Stand in solidarity with Palestinians in their commitments towards non-violent resistance against the occupation. We support the call towards boycotts, divestments and sanctions (BDS) against the Israeli government.
- Promote an ethical code of conduct about pilgrimages and other tours to the Holy Lands. We are concerned that, as things stand now, such tours obscure the present-day realities in Palestine under the Israeli occupation.

Just as the white community in general and supporters of South African apartheid locally and abroad were challenged to change, we also challenge the conscience of all who support the Israeli occupation of Palestine. This change is possible.

Whilst we reject the racially exclusive solution of Zionism to the holy land, we pray for an inclusive and just peace where the dignity and equality of all inhabitants are upheld.

Rev. Moss Nthla, Chairperson: on behalf of Kairos Southern Africa"

The rise of Chrislam

Another recent development which also favours the further promotion of Christian Palestinianism is Chrislam, which is an effort towards the ecumenical reconciliation between Christianity and Islam. This is an attempt to merge Christianity and Islam into a worldwide mega-religion. On one of their websites (www.chrislam.org/) this movement's ecumenical approach is articulated as follows: "We are brothers. We are a family of God. Not one of us is better than the other in His eyes." To them, the two major monotheistic religions are closely related and should join hands.

The Chrislam movement has gained impetus from statements by prominent theologians and politicians that Christians and Muslims worship the same God and also serve the same Jesus. In *A brief illustrated guide to understanding Islam* (p. 57), I.A. Ibrahim says: "Muslims respect and revere Jesus (peace be upon him). They consider him one of the greatest of God's messengers to mankind."

However, Jesus in the Quran is neither the only-begotten Son of God, nor the Messiah who was divinely appointed to restore the throne of David. He is rather viewed as a prophet who was appointed by Allah to prepare mankind for the coming of Muhammad. Islam also denies the atoning death of Jesus. Ibrahim (*ibid.*, p. 58) says: "Muslims believe that Jesus was not crucified. It was the plan of Jesus' enemies to crucify him, but God saved him..." Islam clearly promotes *another Jesus* who is foreign to the divine revelations of the Bible.

Chrislam has utterly failed in its efforts to identify common ground between Christianity and Islam. The Islamic concept of a Creator-God who is singular and has no Son, cannot be reconciled with the Christian concept of the Triune God – neither is there any correlation between the Islamic Jesus who is the uncrucified son of Mary, and the Christian belief in the crucified and risen Son of God who Himself is God.

The great end-time conflict

There are good reasons why the Israeli/Palestinian conflict is playing a prominent role on the world stage. Events related to the emerging new world order focus strongly on Palestine, Israel, and, more specifically, on the city of Jerusalem. In spite of fact that the Palestinians are not historically significant and are not ethnically a well defined and coherent people, they find themselves in an area where the future of the world will be determined. Their claims for statehood are used by revolutionary forces to gain influence in the land and city destined by God to be the centre of the Messiah's world government.

The mustering of power which currently takes place in the world will, in the near future, culminate in an antichristian new world order in which Israel's territory will be further reduced until the point where this country will be faced with extinction. Jerusalem will probably be placed under international control and assume a multireligious character. Liberal, ecumenical-minded Jews will collaborate with the false messiah to effect this transformation. The final result will be a fully-fledged world government and alliance of world religions under the control of the Antichrist.

Only when the true Messiah comes, a Christian new world order will be instituted with Jerusalem as its capital. The boundaries of Israel will then be considerably expanded, while the artificially created state of Palestine will cease to exist and its inhabitants either remain in Israel as "foreigners" or return to their countries of origin, i.e. Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, and Syria.

Prof. Johan Malan, Mossel Bay, South Africa (November 2011)