

GODLESS CHURCHES CURSE ISRAEL

By Don Feder

A leader of the Presbyterian Church, USA (AKA: the PC-USA, appropriately enough) Ronald Stone is nobody's candidate for the annual brotherhood award of the National Council of Christians and Jews. At a meeting with representatives of Hezbollah in Lebanon last week, Elder Stone fawned on the terrorists while observing that people of the Jihad persuasion are far more congenial than those horrible Hebrews.

“We treasure the precious words of Hezbollah and your expression of good will toward the American people,” the Presbyterian poo-bah simpered to his terrorist hosts. Hezbollah demonstrated its good will toward the American people in 1982, when it slaughtered 240 of our Marines in the Beirut barracks bombing.

In the same meeting, Stone confessed, “As an elder of our church, I'd like to say that according to my recent experience, relations and conversations with Islamic leaders are a lot easier than dealings and dialogue with Jewish leaders.”

One can see why the mainline-church honcho would be vexed with the Chosen People.

After all, Jews in Pakistan periodically shoot churchgoers. Jews in Sudan are waging genocidal warfare against Christian tribesmen. In Nigeria's northern provinces, there's a concerted effort to impose Jewish law on Christians.

In Saudi Arabia, Jews have banned Christian worship services, even in private homes. Jews in the Balkans are committing ethnic cleansing of Orthodox Christians, as well as demolishing their churches, monasteries and shrines. And all over the world, radical synagogues and Jewish day schools teach hatred of Christians and the religious imperative to wage holy war against them.

Oops, I forgot, it's Moslems who are the perps in all of these cases. Still, Stone finds Jews difficult and Moslems easy. To a liberal Protestant, the persecution of Christians in the Third World is irrelevant – compared with the opportunity to declare his solidarity with so-called victims of Western imperialism.

The PC-USA promptly disavowed Stone's comments, which, it maintained, “do not reflect the official position of the Presbyterian Church.”

Stone's obscene groveling to Islamo-fascists may not be his church's “official position,” but certainly reflects its mind-set.

In July, the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA) voted 413-62 to divest itself of companies doing business in or with Israel – thereby equating the Jewish state with apartheid South Africa.

Explaining the PC action, Rev. Nile Harper, head of the Presbyterian delegation to the Middle East, declared, “The occupation by Israel in the West Bank and Gaza must end because it is oppressive and destructive for the Palestinian people.”

Israelis are the only people who get to occupy their own territory. In the time of Jesus, land designated the West Bank was occupied by -- guess who? (Hint, it wasn't Arabs.) Having been born and Bethlehem and residing in Nazareth, Jesus would fit the PC definition of a “Jewish settler.”

It's appropriate to speak of the German occupation of France during World War II. Prior to the Nazi conquest of 1940, France was a sovereign state, and had been for centuries. When was “Palestine” last a sovereign state? Where was its capital? Who was its ruler? The Welsh have a better claim to statehood than the Palestinians.

The Presbyterian position reflects the zealous anti-Zionism of mainline Protestant churches – whose leaders are on the verge of allowing suicide bombers to join their restricted country clubs.

On September 27th, the Institute on Religion and Democracy released an extensive report on human-rights criticism by mainline denominations. Of 197 such statements issued between 2000 and 2003 (by the Episcopal Church, United Methodist Church, Evangelical Lutheran Church and their umbrella groups – including the National Council of Churches) 37% of the condemnations were directed at Israel, while 31% targeted the United States.

The IRD study observed that China, North Korea and Saudi Arabia – among the worst human rights abusers in the world (in China, Christians are regularly imprisoned, and tortured) – “weren't criticized even once.” I'm waiting for the Presbyterians to notice the Syrian occupation of Lebanon.

Outside of the Arab League and the Organization of the Islamic Conference, you'll find less love for Israel among the mainline churches than anywhere on earth.

In June 2001, Churches for Middle East Peace – composed of the usual suspects – declared, “Few things have done more to destroy the hope and pursuit of peace through negotiations than Israel's *unrelenting settlement activity*.” Those relentless Jewish settlements comprise roughly 2% of the land on the West Bank.

Strangely, 250,000 Jews living in the midst of 2 million Palestinians on the West Bank is an insurmountable obstacle to peace, in the opinion of Churches for Middle East Peace. But 1 million Arabs living among 5 million Jews in pre-1967 Israel present no problem whatsoever.

In October 2000, the United Methodist Church called the current Intifada, “an expression of deep Palestinian frustration over ongoing disrespect, dehumanization and denial of their basic human and national rights by an *unjust political system*.”

That “unjust political system,” the only democracy in the Middle East, has had four peaceful changes of government in the past 10 years. Arabs sit in the Knesset with Orthodox rabbis, socialists and sundry nationalists. It’s the only political system in the region that even comes close to protecting the rights of all.

Would the average Methodist leader rather be arrested in Tel Aviv or Tehran, in Jerusalem or Damascus? Those are rhetorical questions.

And in a March 2002 letter to Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, the Presbyterian Church, USA, blathered, “While we do not condone the acts of violence by certain Palestinian extremists (*not terrorists, not butchers, not cold-blooded killers of women and children, but “extremists”*), we are appalled that Israel, in response, has continued to punish the entire Palestinian population and its leaders who have been your government’s partners in the peace process.”

And at Munich, the Nazi regime and German people were Britain’s partners in peace. A few years later, that beastly, old warmonger Winston Churchill was punishing the entire German population and its leaders – England’s erstwhile peace partners – by dropping bombs on Berlin and Dresden.

Earth to Presbyterians: The Palestinian population sends its sons and daughters into Israel to blow up grandmothers and toddlers. The Palestinian population is rabidly anti-Semitic. The Palestinian population wants to wipe Israel off the map. The Palestinian population worshipped Saddam Hussein, when he was in power. After 9/11, the Palestinian population hailed Osama bin Laden as a conquering hero.

The anti-Zionism of the mainline churches is a logical consequence of the terminal liberalism to which they have succumbed.

In the 19th century, the Church of England was described as the Tory Party at prayer. Today, Presbyterians, Episcopalians, Methodists, etc. could be called Hillary and Howard at prayer, with the Rev. Al Sharpton conducting the service.

These churches spent most of the Cold War whining about how America was responsible for East-West tensions. Wherever we stood up to communist aggression – Vietnam, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Afghanistan – liberal churches blasted us as insane warmongers. Whenever we deployed advanced weapons, they claimed that we were taking the world to the brink of nuclear annihilation.

They eagerly embraced Liberation Theology – an attempt to reconcile Christianity and Marxism -- which suggested that communist thugs attempting to murder their way to power were the equivalent of Jesus confronting the establishment of his day.

Gulags, the Red Army permanently encamped in Eastern Europe, atrocities and the bitter persecution of Christians were ignored. In 1993, Joan Brown Campbell (former general secretary of the National Council of Churches) confessed: “We did not understand the depth of the suffering of Christians under communism. And we failed to really cry out under the communist oppression.”

When liberal Protestants finally figure it out, the realization comes decades too late.

As the cheese-eating surrender monkeys say: The more things change, the more they remain the same. In an article in *The Weekly Standard* (5/23/03) Rachel DiCarlo notes that under Bob Edgar (who became general secretary of the National Council of Churches in 2000) in the post-Cold War era, knees are still jerking spasmodically..

In the Elian Gonzalez affair, Edgar helped the Castro regime secure the return of Fidel’s little runaway slave. DiCarlo, “At every turn, Edgar’s positions were identical to those of the Cuban government – right down to demanding that the boy be denied U.S. citizenship.”

Naturally, Edgar opposed the U.S. war on Saddam Hussein, predicted that civilians would be deliberately targeted by U.S. forces, and signed an anti-war ad in *The New York Times* which insisted that Jesus would have opposed “this proposed attack.” This from the same folks who scream bloody murder whenever Christian conservatives suggest that gay marriage and abortion aren’t compatible with the teachings of Jesus.

In 2001, a group of influential mainline churchwomen called Women in Solidarity for Peace and Reunification of Korea called for immediate talks on reunification, without specifying if the Korean people should be ruled by democracy (as they are in the South) or by a savage, sadistic Stalinist state (as they are in the North). They also opposed a proposed missile shield for South Korea – as an impenetrable barrier to their attempts to bring peace and justice to the Korean Peninsula.

Increasingly, the mainline churches are devolving to self-parody. Take an article in the January/February 2001 issue of *Christian Social Action*, published by the United Methodist Church, which called for the liberation from U.S. “colonialism” of Guam, Puerto Rico and Hawaii! Ah, those poor, oppressed Hawaiians – subjugated by a tourist industry which brings billions to the islands annually.

Evangelical Christians support Israel because of the Biblical mandate. Mainline churches long ago abandoned the Bible for the gospel of social action. They’ve betrayed the God of Sinai for the gods of the left – income redistribution, ecology, feminism and liberation theology.

In light of the foregoing, the mainline churches’ hate-Israel campaign was foreordained.

But even here, one can see the Bible's promises coming to pass. God told the Children of Israel, "I will bless the people who bless you. And curse the people who curse you." Or, as Bea Arthur used to say to her husband on "Maude" – "God's gonna get you for that, Walter."

The mainline churches are in steady decline. Between 1983 and 2003, the Presbyterian Church's membership plummeted from 4.2 million to 2.4 million. (Guess the social gospel isn't that inspiring to people in the pews.) At the same time, the Southern Baptists and other evangelicals – Christian Zionists, one and all -- experienced a boom.

Israel should wear the ill will of the mainline churches as a badge of honor. Given liberal Protestants' history as communist apologists -- and the fact that they're usually oblivious to the suffering of Christians under Third World despotisms-- I'd hate to have them on my side.