

Opposition to Unjust Theology Regarding the Holy Land

WHEREAS many Christians adhere to the theology of Christian Zionism, believing that the modern state of Israel is a continuation of biblical Israel and a fulfillment of biblical prophecy and that “it is the responsibility of Christians to support the State of Israel and its policies,”¹ and

WHEREAS the New Testament does not prophesy a modern Israeli state controlled by any single group of people, but does envision a time when Christ will have eliminated “the dividing wall of hostility” between Jews and Gentiles (Ephesians 2:14), and

WHEREAS a statement endorsed by thirteen bishops and patriarchs of Palestinian Christian churches says that Western Christians have attached “biblical and theological legitimacy to the infringement of our rights” and calls on their fellow Christians to “deepen their reflection on the Word of God and to rectify their interpretations” and avoid “any use of the Bible to legitimize or support political options and positions that are based upon injustice,”² and

WHEREAS, for decades, the United Methodist Church has opposed Israel’s treatment of the Palestinian people, including: “the continued military occupation of the West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem, the confiscation of Palestinian land and water resources, the destruction of Palestinian homes, the continued building of illegal Jewish settlements, and any vision of a ‘Greater Israel’ that includes the occupied territories and the whole of Jerusalem and its surroundings,”³ and

WHEREAS Christian Zionism is having a significant and dangerous impact on U.S. policy regarding Israel, by obstructing efforts to achieve a just peace and promoting U.S. acceptance of unjust treatment of Palestinians, and the Israeli government is increasingly reliant on Christians in the United States who adhere to this theology for political support.⁴

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the _____ Conference of the United Methodist Church declares its opposition to any theology or biblical interpretation that would justify denying or violating the human rights of Palestinians and other religious and ethnic minorities in Israel/Palestine, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the _____ Conference calls on its bishop to establish a task force to explore and identify the biblical and theological reasons for opposing Israel’s treatment of the Palestinian people and to submit a report to the 2023 annual conference session which shall include recommendations for actions the Conference should take in light of those findings.

FOOTNOTES

1. www.christianzionism.org
2. The Kairos Palestine Document – Paragraphs 2.3.3 and 2.4
https://www.kairosresponse.org/kairos_palestine_document.html
3. Opposition to Israeli Settlements in Palestinian Land, UMC Book of Resolutions 2016, #6111
<https://www.umcjustice.org/who-we-are/social-principles-and-resolutions/opposition-to-israeli-settlements-in-palestinian-land-6111>
4. Christian Zionism and the Formation of Foreign Policy
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/24915906>
The Impact of Christian Zionism on American Policy
https://ciaotest.cc.columbia.edu/olj/ad/ad_v9_2/daw01.html
The mainstreaming of Christian Zionism could warp foreign policy
<https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/2020/06/30/mainstreaming-christian-zionism-could-warp-foreign-policy/>
The Dangerous Potent Elixir of Christian Zionism
<https://www.wrmea.org/007-april/the-dangerous-potent-elixir-of-christian-zionism.html>
As Israel increasingly relies on US evangelicals for support, younger ones are walking away
<https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2021/05/26/as-israel-increasingly-relies-on-us-evangelicals-for-support-younger-ones-are-walking-away-what-polls-show/>
What Next for Christian Zionists?
<https://foreignpolicy.com/2021/07/19/christian-zionists-israel-trump-netanyahu-evangelicals>