

The Apostasy of the Presbyterian Church (USA)

Please note that this article is specifically addressing the actions of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA), and not the Presbyterian denomination as a whole. Furthermore, it is directed at the members of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA) - and not necessarily its congregational churches, or members. Indirectly this article is directed at the congregation members of the Presbyterian Church (USA) since they, as individuals, must take a stand - either with or against their General Assembly.

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At the heart of the Presbyterian Church (USA) are more than 11,000 congregations witnessing to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

www.pcusa.org/navigation/congregations.htm
4 October 2004.

On July 2, 2004, at the 216th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA), the assembly voted in favour of condemning Israel - on several fronts.

One measure approved was for the "selective divestment of holdings in multinational corporations doing business in Israel/Palestine". The reason for this action is because the PC (USA) are "opposing the Israeli occupation of Palestine".

Other actions voted for, include:

- the condemnation of the West Bank Security Fence (despite the fact that it has to-date impacted the number of successful suicide bombings),
- the denouncement "'Christian Zionism' as a legitimate theological stance",
- the PC (USA)'s "Middle East and Interfaith Relations office to develop resources (*in other words, doctrines*) on differences between fundamental Zionism and Reformed theology", and
- to "study the feasibility of sponsoring economic-development projects in Palestine and putting an action plan in place by 2005".

Ironically (or hypocritically), the PC (USA)'s website includes the following description of the purpose of the General Assembly,

The General Assembly ... reviews the work of synods, resolves controversies in the church, is responsible for matters of common concern for the whole church, and serves as a symbol of unity for the church.

The General Assembly has several specific responsibilities outlined in Chapter 13 of the Book of Order. The **assembly seeks to protect our church from errors in faith and practice**, is **responsible for assuring that the expression of our theology remains true to the biblical standards in our historic confessions**.

The General Assembly presents a witness for truth and justice in our community and in the world community. It sets priorities for the church and establishes relationships with other churches or ecumenical bodies.

www.pcusa.org/generalassembly
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The action of the General Assembly has caused some concern and alarm for many within the PC (USA). Subsequently the PC (USA) has issued statements explaining the circumstances under which the decision was reached in order to justify their position and to defend the actions voted for.

When a handful of commissioners expressed reservations about the action, the Rev. Mitri Raheb, a Lutheran pastor from Bethlehem, an ecumenical guest at the Assembly, said divestment is important because it is a way for the churches to take direct action. For too long, he said, the churches have simply issued statements - and that is not enough...

"Sisters and brothers, this is a moment of truth," Raheb said.

The Rev. Victor Makari, the PC(USA)'s liaison to the Middle East, supported the divestment strategy, saying, "I think the issue of divestment is a very sensitive one with Israel. ... If nothing else seems to have changed the policy of Israel towards Palestinians, we need to send a clear strong message."

www.pcusa.org/ga216/news/ga04121.htm
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In effect, the PC (USA) seeks to take specific action against Israel, and yet reward the Palestinian Authority by "sponsoring economic-development projects in Palestine". I wonder whether during such development projects the PC (USA) will bother issuing statements against the Palestinian Authority, or Yasser Arafat's successors, and their martyr brigade, or more correctly suicide bombing terrorists? One has to question whether Arabic translations of the Bible which use the name "Allah" for "God" has resulted in Palestinian Christians worshipping the wrong god. If these Middle Eastern "Christians" started using the Name 'Yahweh' or 'Jehovah' then maybe they would recognise the root and the tree they are grafted into. If both Rev. Raheb and Rev Makari fail to recognise the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob then what chance do the Palestinian Christian congregations have?

The page "Israel & Jewish Relations" on the PC (USA) website says,

Two issues in particular have caused the most discussion: a decision to "initiate a process of phased, selective divestment in multinational corporations operating in Israel," and the rejection of a proposal to suspend national-level funding for any further "messianic" new church developments until this form of evangelization can be evaluated in light of our understanding of Christian-Jewish relations.

www.pcusa.org/israelandjewishrelations
4 October 2004

The moderator of the 216th General Assembly, Rick Ufford-Chase, then professes that the PC (USA) has a,

... long history - all the way back to 1948 - of standing in support of our Jewish brothers and sisters and of the right of the state of Israel to exist within recognized and secured borders.

We also have long supported the Palestinian people and, in response to consistent pleas from our Christian Palestinian sisters and brothers, we have stood firmly against the occupation of Palestinian lands and the growing encroachment of settlement there.

Some would suggest that holding those two positions is contradictory, or even, morally untenable. I would suggest the opposite, that we should be proud of our history of upholding both positions.

www.pcusa.org/israelandjewishrelations
4 October 2004

One questions how a General Assembly, which claims it "*seeks to protect our church from errors in faith and practice, is responsible for assuring that the expression of our theology remains true to the biblical standards in our historic confessions*", can even make a proposal (whether it is rejected or otherwise) for the suspension of "*national-level funding for any further 'messianic' new church developments until this form of evangelization can be evaluated*

in light of our understanding of Christian-Jewish relations". The Church at Jerusalem in the book of Acts was established by the Apostles and other Jews who recognized Jesus as the Messiah. Why, therefore, would ANY church need to propose the need to **investigate** the funding of "*church developments*" for messianic (i.e. Jewish) believers? Further, to quote, J.C. Ryle's¹ commentary² on Luke 24:44-49 (and specifically verse 47),

[Beginning at Jerusalem.] This expression taught two things. One was, that the apostles and first preachers of the Gospel should not shrink from offering salvation to the worst and greatest sinners. They were not to regard even the city where their Master was crucified as hopelessly wicked, and too bad to be benefited by the Gospel. The result showed that this command was not given without cause. The greatest triumph ever won by the Gospel, perhaps, was the conversion of three thousand Jerusalem hearers on the day of Pentecost. – The other lesson was that the first offer of salvation should always be made to the Jews. Hardened, unbelieving as they were, they were still "beloved for the Father's sake," and were not to be despised. (Rom. xi. 28.)

The Acts of the Apostles, in instances too many to be quoted, as well as St. Paul's words in the Epistle to the Romans, (Rom. i. 16.) show how faithfully the apostles discharged the duty of preaching to the Jews.

The duty of Christians to care specially for the souls of Jews seems plainly pointed out in the expression before us.³

Until his death, the Palestinian Authority (PA) was under the leadership (dictatorship) of Egyptian-born Yasser Arafat. The PA and its leaders have, since their inception, established educational publications and maps that DO NOT show or recognise Israel. Arafat did not want a Palestinian state UNLESS it included ALL of Israel; it is not in the Islamic world's ideology to think otherwise. Now despite the justified need for support of Arab Christians (incorrectly termed Palestinian Christians), let us not confuse the issue that the Palestinian Authority is "in charge" of the "Palestinian" people. How can the PC (USA) support relations with both the Israeli government and the Palestinian Authority?

And knowing their thoughts Jesus said to them, "Any kingdom divided against itself is laid waste; and any city or house divided against itself will not stand".

Matthew 12:25 (NAU)⁴

Jewish immigration back to the Promised Land really started to accelerate from the mid-19th century through to the 1930s. After World War 2, the United Nations partitioned "British Mandated Palestine" and formalised the boundaries for a Jewish Homeland. In 1947 the United Nations voted in favour of the establishment of a Jewish State, with Israel - as a nation state - being resurrected in 1948. The day after Israel was formally established, she was invaded by Syria/Lebanon, Iraq, Jordan, Egypt and Saudi Arabia (who sent some troops but under Egyptian command). The eventual cease-fire line left Egypt in control of the Gaza Strip. With this history in mind, let us consider chapter 3 of the Book of Joel.

*"For behold, in those days and at that time, **When I restore the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem, I will gather all the nations and bring them down to the valley of Jehoshaphat** (Yahweh judges). Then I will enter into judgment with them there **On behalf of My people and My inheritance, Israel, Whom they have scattered among the nations; And they have divided up My land.** "They have also cast lots for My people, traded a boy for a harlot And sold a girl for wine that they may drink. "Moreover, **what are you to Me,** O Tyre (Syria controlled Lebanon), Sidon (Syria controlled Lebanon) and all the regions of Philistia (Land of the Philistines - Gaza Strip)? Are you rendering Me a recompense? But if you do*

¹ J.C. Ryle (1816-1900), first Anglican Bishop of Liverpool.

² His commentary on Luke was first published in 1858. Consider now the times in which he was writing these words.

³ J.C. Ryle, *Expository thoughts on Luke: Volume 2* (Edinburgh, The Banner of Truth Trust, 1986), 522, 523.

⁴ Bible verses used throughout this article are NAU - Updated New American Standard.

recompense Me, swiftly and speedily I will return your recompense on your head. "Since you have taken My silver and My gold, brought My precious treasures to your temples, and **sold the sons of Judah and Jerusalem to the Greeks in order to remove them far from their territory, behold, I am going to arouse them from the place where you have sold them, and return your recompense on your head.** "Also I will sell your sons and your daughters into the hand of the sons of Judah, and they will sell them to the Sabeans (Ethiopia), to a distant nation," for the LORD has spoken. Proclaim this among the nations: **Prepare a war; rouse the mighty men! Let all the soldiers draw near, let them come up! Beat your plowshares into swords And your pruning hooks into spears; Let the weak say, "I am a mighty man." Hasten and come, all you surrounding nations,** And gather yourselves there. Bring down, O LORD, Your mighty ones. **Let the nations be aroused And come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat** (Yahweh judges), **For there I will sit to judge All the surrounding nations.** Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Come, tread, for the wine press is full; The vats overflow, for their wickedness is great. **Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! For the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision.** The sun and moon grow dark And the stars lose their brightness. The LORD roars from Zion And utters His voice from Jerusalem, And the heavens and the earth tremble. **But the LORD is a refuge for His people And a stronghold to the sons of Israel.** Then you will know that I am the LORD your God, Dwelling in Zion, My holy mountain. So Jerusalem will be holy, And strangers will pass through it no more. And in that day The mountains will drip with sweet wine, And the hills will flow with milk, And all the brooks of Judah will flow with water; And a spring will go out from the house of the LORD To water the valley of Shittim. **Egypt will become a waste, And Edom will become a desolate wilderness, Because of the violence done to the sons of Judah, In whose land they have shed innocent blood.** But Judah will be inhabited forever And Jerusalem for all generations. And I will avenge their blood which I have not avenged, For the LORD dwells in Zion.

Joel 3:1-21 (NAU)

Consider now the Islamic terrorist groups which confound Israel: Al-Jihad (established in Egypt, and exists in "Palestine"), Hamas ("Palestinian"), Hezbollah (Lebanese), Muslim Brotherhood (exists in several countries), The PLO (established in Egypt, three years before the 1967 'Six Day War'), Fettayim (established in Egypt), and others. Not forgetting, of course, that Yasser Arafat himself was born in Egypt. "Egypt will become a waste...because of the violence done to the sons of Judah, in whose land (Israel) they have shed innocent blood." How many have died through suicide bombings?

When the United Nations sought to determine the borders and boundaries of modern Israel, they determined that no resident Arab person should be displaced. In declaring who was a "resident Arab/Palestinian", they determined that a resident was not a person whose ancestry had lived in "Palestine" for 1500 years, not 1000 years, not 500 years, not 100 years, not 50 years, but a person who had lived in "Palestine" for 2 years. As a result of the fruitful industry and employment opportunities being generated by Jewish immigrants and communities of the preceding decades, immigration from the surrounding nations, increased the Arab population by around 400%.

Today, Israeli Arabs are the descendants of those Arab persons who were real residents who stayed in Israel despite the prompting of other Arab nations to evacuate while they "drive the Jews into the sea". The "Palestinian" Arabs are (for the most part) immigrants who came to "Palestine" to take advantage of the prospering Jewish communities - but had NO true heritage in Israel. They had no "roots" in the land, no land to protect and nothing to lose by leaving. But when the surrounding Islamic nations lost the 1948 (Israeli War of Independence), it was they, the Islamic nations, who forcibly setup the "Palestinian" refugees in camps: Jordan keeping towns of refugees in the "West Bank", and Egypt doing the same in the Gaza Strip. In 1967 when Israel again defeated the Islamic nations (in the Six Day War), Israel "inherited"

the "refugees" and their camps. Refugees which Jordan and Egypt would not assimilate into their own countries: intentionally kept in squalor and detention so they could be a pawn to be used against Israel. Is the PC (USA) so ignorant of the modern history of the Middle East that they take action against Israel's attempts of security?

Since her inception Israel has made many mistakes - there is no denying that. But despite their failings has God abandoned them? Has God abandoned the descendants of Jacob (Israel)? No!

*I say then, God has not rejected His people, has He? May it never be! For I too am an Israelite, a descendant of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God has not rejected His people whom He foreknew. Or do you not know what the Scripture says in the passage about Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel? "Lord, THEY HAVE KILLED YOUR PROPHETS, THEY HAVE TORN DOWN YOUR ALTARS, AND I ALONE AM LEFT, AND THEY ARE SEEKING MY LIFE." But what is the divine response to him? "I HAVE KEPT for Myself SEVEN THOUSAND MEN WHO HAVE NOT BOWED THE KNEE TO BAAL." In the same way then, there has also come to be at the present time a remnant according to God's gracious choice. But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works, otherwise grace is no longer grace. What then? What Israel is seeking, it has not obtained, but those who were chosen obtained it, and the rest were hardened; just as it is written, "GOD GAVE THEM A SPIRIT OF STUPOR, EYES TO SEE NOT AND EARS TO HEAR NOT, DOWN TO THIS VERY DAY." And David says, "LET THEIR TABLE BECOME A SNARE AND A TRAP, AND A STUMBLING BLOCK AND A RETRIBUTION TO THEM. "LET THEIR EYES BE DARKENED TO SEE NOT, AND BEND THEIR BACKS FOREVER." I say then, they did not stumble so as to fall, did they? May it never be! But by their transgression salvation has come to the Gentiles, to make them jealous. Now if their transgression is riches for the world and their failure is riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their fulfillment be! But I am speaking to you who are Gentiles. Inasmuch then as I am an apostle of Gentiles, I magnify my ministry, if somehow I might move to jealousy my fellow countrymen and save some of them. For if their rejection is the reconciliation of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead? **If the first piece of dough is holy, the lump is also; and if the root is holy, the branches are too.** But if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive, were grafted in among them and became partaker with them of the rich root of the olive tree, **do not be arrogant toward the branches; but if you are arrogant, remember that it is not you who supports the root, but the root supports you. You will say then, "Branches were broken off so that I might be grafted in." Quite right, they were broken off for their unbelief, but you stand by your faith. Do not be conceited, but fear; for if God did not spare the natural branches, He will not spare you, either.** Behold then the kindness and severity of God; to those who fell, severity, but to you, God's kindness, if you continue in His kindness; otherwise you also will be cut off. And they also, if they do not continue in their unbelief, will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again. For if you were cut off from what is by nature a wild olive tree, and were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these who are the natural branches be grafted into their own olive tree? **For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery-- so that you will not be wise in your own estimation-- that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in; and so all Israel will be saved;** just as it is written, "THE DELIVERER WILL COME FROM ZION, HE WILL REMOVE UNGODLINESS FROM JACOB." "THIS IS MY COVENANT WITH THEM, WHEN I TAKE AWAY THEIR SINS." From the standpoint of the gospel they are enemies for your sake, **but from the standpoint of God's choice they are beloved for the sake of the fathers;** for the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. For just as you once were disobedient to God, but now have been shown mercy because of their disobedience, so these also now have been disobedient, that because of the mercy shown to you they also may now be shown mercy. For God has shut up all in disobedience so that He may show mercy*

to all. Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways! For WHO HAS KNOWN THE MIND OF THE LORD, OR WHO BECAME HIS COUNSELOR? Or WHO HAS FIRST GIVEN TO HIM THAT IT MIGHT BE PAID BACK TO HIM AGAIN? For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen.

Romans 11:1-36 (NAU)

It is apparent that the PC (USA) regards Israel ONLY in the context that the United Nations defines her. Israel, as a country (i.e. parcel of land), as a nation, as a people was brought back into being by God - despite any United Nations involvement. God has defined Israel's borders, and God called it the Promised Land - the Land of Israel. And that Land was promised to Abraham and his descendents - through Isaac (the Child of Promise). The borders defined by the United Nations are political - God's are covenanted. Or does the PC (USA) think that God is subordinate to the declarations or whims of man?

Any church or denomination, which elevates itself to a position of dictating to Israel what its policy should be; is setting itself up against God. Any church or denomination whose leaders take it upon THEMSELVES to be a party to the "peace process" between Israel and the "Palestinians" - is brokering for the dividing up of God's land.

*"For behold, in those days and at that time, **When I restore the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem, I will gather all the nations and bring them down to the valley of Jehoshaphat** (Yahweh judges). Then I will enter into judgment with them there **On behalf of My people and My inheritance, Israel, Whom they have scattered among the nations; And they have divided up My land.***

Joel 3:1-2 (NAU)

*Then I saw an angel standing in the sun, and he cried out with a loud voice, saying to all the birds which fly in midheaven, "Come, assemble for the great supper of God, so that you may eat the flesh of **kings** and the flesh of **commanders** and the flesh of **mighty men** and the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them and the **flesh of all men, both free men and slaves, and small and great.**" And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies assembled to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army.*

Revelation 19:17-19 (NAU)

A statement released by the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly of the PC (USA) includes,

We make every effort to discern God's presence in the world and to "let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an everflowing stream" (Amos 5:24). It is out of this faith and commitment, and with careful reflection, that the commissioners to the 216th General Assembly took a number of actions concerning our relations with the Jewish community, as well as the situation of Israel and Palestine.

www.pcusa.org/oga/newsstories/israel.htm

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The quotation from Amos, by the Stated Clerk, is but one verse out of a discourse. At the time when Amos wrote, the Northern Kingdom of Israel was prospering and they were blinded by their greed (just like the Word-Faith Ministries of today). They regarded material success as justification of their spiritual/doctrinal standing and relationship with God. Amos' prophetic words, though, were a rebuke, with God saying that he abhors their sacrifices when they neglect good and righteous judgements. The context of this verse has NOTHING to do with the PC (USA) making "every effort to discern God's presence in the world", and though true justice and righteousness should be sought - the PC (USA) has neglected the history of modern Israel

and the prophecies of God concerning her. We should read the Book of Amos, and in particular take note of chapters 5 through 7 for the context of the aforementioned verse.

Alas, you who are longing for the day of the LORD, For what purpose will the day of the LORD be to you? It will be darkness and not light; As when a man flees from a lion And a bear meets him, Or goes home, leans his hand against the wall And a snake bites him. Will not the day of the LORD be darkness instead of light, Even gloom with no brightness in it? I hate, I reject your festivals, Nor do I delight in your solemn assemblies. Even though you offer up to Me burnt offerings and your grain offerings, I will not accept them; And I will not even look at the peace offerings of your fatlings. Take away from Me the noise of your songs; I will not even listen to the sound of your harps. But let justice roll down like waters And righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.

Amos 5:18-24 (NAU)

The fact that the PC (USA) can NOT even discern relevant prophecies for Israel, shows that they can NOT "discern God's presence in the world". The PC (USA)'s discernment lies in what the United Nations, and popular news media, deem to be appropriate for Israel, and not God.

The Pharisees and Sadducees came up, and testing Jesus, they asked Him to show them a sign from heaven. But He replied to them, "When it is evening, you say, 'It will be fair weather, for the sky is red.' "And in the morning, 'There will be a storm today, for the sky is red and threatening.' Do you know how to discern the appearance of the sky, but cannot discern the signs of the times? "An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign; and a sign will not be given it, except the sign of Jonah." And He left them and went away.

Matthew 16:1-4 (NAU)

The Pharisees and Sadducees couldn't discern the sign of the times. Today, the "Religious Leaders" of the Presbyterian Church (USA) have the same problem. But the PC (USA)'s hypocrisy is to side with and reward Islam for the hard line Israel has been forced to take. Over 11,000 congregations are being represented by the PC (USA) General Assembly; whose 'gospel' are they witnesses of? Jesus Christ's or Muhammad's?