

## Traditional Christians Challenge Zionists Within Southern Baptists Sect

Mainline Protestants Awaken to Their Peacemaker Calling, written by this author in October, observed that at least five significantly large mainline Christian denominations, all protestant, each with some million of members, have taken a public, scripture-backed stance supporting peace and Palestinians' rights.



Bruce Kugler, lawyer and Southern Baptist pastor led the charge at the SBC national convention for a Palestinian resolution passed by the Illinois State Baptists Convention

We also acknowledge a small but steadfast minority inside the Southern Baptist Convention who are fanning a spark of truth that has taken root there. Through Southern Baptists like Bruce Kugler, active in the Illinois State Southern Baptist organization, and activist Southern Baptist Pastor Jamal Bishara, of [Phoenix Arizona](#), an awakening is taking place within the very center of Zionist support in the Southern Baptist Convention. Kugler helped to pass a pro-peace resolution respecting Palestinian rights in Illinois, which was voted down at the national conference of the Southern Baptist Convention in St. Louis in June 2016. Even this was progress, for the Illinois arm of the SBC did pass the resolution. Shamefully its national conference passed a contrary resolution supporting Israel and its genocidal treatment of the native Palestinians.

The Israeli occupation of Palestine in 1948 was the first case of US supported "regime change" in the Middle East. And the USA's WWII allies contributed to each subsequent attack on the sovereignty of oil-producing and transporting nations there. In 1953 the CIA instigated and oversaw the downfall of Iran's Nationalist Prime Minister Mohammed Mossadeq, who had attempted to nationalize Iran's British-owned oil industry. The US coup reinstalled monarch Mohammad Reza Pahlavi as Shah. Then US and Israeli intelligence officers worked with the Shah to set up SAVAK, an Iranian intelligence organization later blamed for the torture and execution of thousands of political prisoners and violent suppression of dissent. This kept the oil industry in British hands until the Shah was overthrown for a second time in 1979 by the present leadership, and Iran recovered control of its oil industry. It has remained a top target of US Regime Change ever since.

The more basic Christian issue in the Middle East is not Israel's part in Regime Change, but is more directly both the issues of war and peace, and of Israel's role in causing serial wars. The Palestinians, whom we like to call by their ancient biblical name "Philistines," are the first, but not the only victims.

The several mainline churches which have called for peace have not yet attempted to tell the story of US instigated revolutions in the Middle East, nor is it their job to do so; It is ours. Church leaders should know about Regime Change if they listen to Middle Eastern missionaries, many of whom have honestly reported back the bloody results of Regime Change witnessed first hand. I first learned of it from a Baptist Missionary! Each of the five mainline churches we have mentioned as standing for peace, has correctly asserted that the political state of Israel is an illegal and brutal occupier and oppressor of Palestinian rights. We must also give credit where due to the smaller but never deviating Quakers and Mennonites who have burned the peace candle for long before there was a State of Israel. I apologize to any we have missed, and we ask readers to respond if they know of any others.

We pointed out that the restoration movement for peace is alive and growing among mainline ELCA Lutherans, United Methodist,

Presbyterians (PCUSA), United Church of Christ and The Episcopal Peace Foundation, which movements did not exist in any significant way, ten or even five years ago . [We applaud the work of a few of God's people in each of these major sects](#), who are now influencing others.

Let us look at the 64 dollar question. Why and how is this wide divergence among professing Christ followers possible, don't they follow the same bible? Why do Lutherans and Methodists say "no" to Israel, but many Southern Baptists, with the same information on the ground, say "Yes, you may occupy Palestine!" The answer is, they do not read the same bible!

Bruce Kugler, a trial lawyer and a Southern Baptist pastor led the charge for the Illinois resolution at the National Meeting in St. Louis. Kugler was asked: why did SBC pass a resolution in support of Israel? He replied:

"What is important to understand is that each Southern Baptist church functions independently and can accept or reject policies or positions of its leadership, especially on political or non-core biblical interpretations."

"There was vocal opposition on the floor of the Southern Baptist Conference national convention. In fact, Pastor Jamal Bishara of the [First Arabic Baptist Church](#) in Phoenix, Arizona argued that parts of the resolution are both biblically and factually incorrect." "Many Southern Baptists Christians have a distorted view of Israel. Many have never taken the time to study in-depth what the Bible says about God's righteousness and love for all people and do not understand the dynamics of the Palestinian & Israeli conflict. There is a lack of education."

"It is also unfortunate that verses from the Bible are often taken out of context by a vocal minority to support a political agenda."

**Author Carlson interjects:**

In these few words Kugler explains the error of Dispensationalism that makes the Southern Baptist Convention "Neo-Christian" or Zionist in doctrine. Its theology dates back to the 1850s writings of John Nelson Darby and Cyrus I. Scofield, which are not traditionally Christian in doctrine. In contrast, the several denominations that have passed resolutions in support of Palestine **are all traditional in doctrine**. Specific examples of this false theology are covered in [We Hold These Truths](#) videos, including [Christian Zionism, The Tragedy and the Turning](#), (29 minutes award winning video).

I was once an active member of the SBC. To those less than familiar with the Southern Baptist Convention, the only "theologically based" support for war in the Biblical Land of the Philistines, now called Palestine, has come from a movement [We Hold These Truths](#) has dubbed "Neo-Christian". Some of the more fanatical members in it, including John Hagee and Pastor Rob Parsley, call themselves "Christian Zionists". Members usually consider themselves Dispensationalists or Evangelicals but few admit to being Christian Zionists, correctly considering it an oxymoron.

Neo-Christian or Zionist theology has been led by and much of it framed by a 150 year old Southern Baptist Convention leader. John F Walvoord, former President of the SBC's Dallas Theological Seminary, is listed on the Authors' page as one of the Editorial Committee members of the Scofield Reference Bible in its 1967 edition. It is the fulcrum of dispensational teaching. At one time, the SBC boasted of 21 million US members, but it now claims 15.6 million members, and 46,000 congregations nation wide. In recent decades the SBC has lost some five million members. Some have flocked to unaffiliated, Neo-Christian mega churches that borrowed their doctrine from the SBC, adding embellishments and entertainment of their own. But others have left for the more traditional mainline churches (I was one of these). And, still others are now to be found among the rolls of "none of the above" or atheism. The various Neo-Christian sects, after these losses, still constitute roughly 1/3 of all church goers in the USA. This makes it one of the most powerful political blocks in the world. Fortunately, education from within is bringing change.

The defining belief of Neo Christians must be exposed in its error : "The political State of Israel is the fulfillment of God's prophesies" (found mostly in the Old Testament and the Book of Revelations). Scores of popular books have supported the Neo-Christian hodge-podge and cut-and-paste theocracy, taught at Dallas Theological Seminary and other Southern Baptist schools like Baylor University and at most of its churches. We are grateful for the many Southern Baptist exceptions, and we paraphrase the assessment by Mr. Kugler of his fellow Southern Baptists in one line: Most hold to the belief that the State of Israel is the fulfillment of biblical prophesy, and is therefore untouchable no matter what evil it commits.

When asked before the first war on Iraq about Occupied Palestine, Richard L Land, a past policy leader in the SBC, is famous for saying of the 3-4 million Palestinians in Israel: "It's God's way or the Highway". His meaning: Do what the Israelis say or get out, and he did not say where the millions should go, some of whom are Arab Christians. Pastor Jamal Bishara, [First Arabic Baptist Church](#), Phoenix, AZ, grew up as a Palestinian Christian. He teaches that recognition of the Palestine plight is the first step toward

understanding why wars in the Middle East should be opposed everywhere, and that every war will eventually come home to haunt us.

**In his presentation of the Palestinian Church Resolution** before the National SBC in June 2016, Bruce Kugler made this significant statement (in part):

"I want to thank you for the honor and the privilege to be able to meet with you today and speak before this honorable body. The Illinois Baptist State Association (?IBSA?) which comprises more than 900 Southern Baptist churches and has 200,000 members passed a resolution in support of the Palestinian people and the Palestinian Church.

"I am formerly a Trial Lawyer with United States Department of Justice. Currently, I am a lawyer in private practice in the USA. I am also an ordained Southern Baptist Minister and member of the Conference of Southern Baptist Evangelists...

"I am proud that the IBSA adopted this resolution unanimously. This is a historic resolution because Illinois is the first state within the Southern Baptist Convention to take such action. This resolution has been forwarded to the other states for their consideration.

"The Resolution provides an acknowledgment that Palestinians including Palestinian Christians have suffered under many forms of social injustice including restrictions in travel, discrimination, confiscation of property, and other forms of persecution.

"One of the greatest powers on the earth is prayer. Prayer can change lives. It can change societies. It can change countries. We believe that God answers prayer. Christians have a duty to also pray for governmental leaders that God's hand might be with them, that God would grant them wisdom, and discernment. Our prayers are with you as you seek to address political, moral and religious issues.

"In the resolution, our prayers are with the Palestinian people that they might achieve peace, but not peace at any cost. There must be peace, with Palestinians obtaining respect, equity, and dignity, and include freedom of religion."

**In closing**, we refer you to the conclusion in our part I of this paper: Mainline Protestants Awaken to Their Peacemaker Calling, which holds that the responsibility to restore peace must first be recognized in churches. We, who worry about the next and bigger war, must remain focused on strengthening the words from the pulpit through education. And some very important and large US Christian denominations are now calling for peace not only in Palestine, home of the first war in the Middle East, but for peace everywhere! Please join us not because of what we say, but for what Jesus said: Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called the Children of God. Mt 5