



Rabbi Marvin Hier
Founder and Dean

March 3, 2010

Rabbi Abraham Cooper
Associate Dean

Rev. P. Verhoeff
President of the Board of the General Synod
The Protestant Church of the Netherlands

Dr. A.J. Plaisier
General Secretary of the Board of the General Synod
The Protestant Church of the Netherlands

Dear Sirs:

It is not customary for us as an international human rights organizations and NGO to address the leadership of the PKN by means of a letter. Nevertheless we take the liberty for this unusual step and hope that the content of this epistle explains the reason.

As the Protestant Church in the Netherlands, we know you to be historically connected with the Jewish people. You have spoken of an “unrelinquishable solidarity” in your church order. You have found in your faith that G-d has pursued a special course with Israel ever since the calling of Abraham.

You witnessed the genocidal consequences of anti-Semitism in your own country, during the Second World War. You watched the return of many of our people to the land of the ancestors after the Shoah, and accepted the founding of the State of Israel as a special sign of G-d’s faithfulness. Until now, there was some degree of solidarity with and love of Israel.

Precisely on account of this, we address you to ask you to rescind your recent move that erases with a strong hand all the solidarity and goodwill built up over in decades since the demise of Nazism.

Your letter to the Israeli Ambassador does nothing less than that.

Any party that takes a position on the conflict in the Middle East has its own responsibility to pursue peace and justice in word and action; in this letter we want to talk to you about yours.

The first rule of ethical response is *primum non nocere*: first, do no harm. You wrote to the Ambassador as a response to the document that you name in your letter – the *Kairos Palestine Document*. Your embrace of this document is a refutation of all the conciliatory points you wrote about in your opening paragraphs. Kairos is nothing less than a frontal attack on the legitimacy, viability and existence of the State of Israel. It calls for boycott and divestment. It makes a mockery of the idea of a land of Jewish ancestors, by starting Israel’s clock *only* in the aftermath of World War II, where a place of refuge for Holocaust survivors was carved out by guilt-ridden Western powers. It explicitly denies any connection between the Jewish people, the Bible, and the return in modern times. It references the “right of return,” meaning that Israel would be quickly overwhelmed by an influx of millions of third-generation progeny of those who fled the fledgling state sixty- two years ago. Such transfer would quickly turn Israel into yet another Muslim state,

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thereby eliminating the only Jewish state on earth. The document makes no mention of the quest and right of the Jewish people to return to its ancestral home. Kairos rules - and you as well by embracing it - that Christians have a sacred obligation to support the “underdog” Palestinians against Israel. Kairos justifies suicide bombing and terrorism, and takes absolutely no responsibility for the decades of Arab warring against Israeli civilians or the Palestinian campaign of anti-Jewish indoctrination of the next generation, which further delays the day that the peace we all pray for, will come.

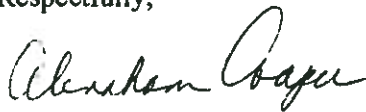
The Jewish community in the Netherlands did not consult with us about its response to your letter to the Ambassador. Had they done so, we would have told them that a letter threatening to end dialogue with the PKN is superfluous. There is simply no possibility of, and no room for, dialogue with those who are deaf to the security, the central beliefs and most entrenched aspirations of the Jewish people – and who are working to defeat those aspirations!

The Jewish Community in the Netherlands and around the world still reels from the loss of Anne Frank, her family and seventy-five per cent of Dutch Jewry during the Nazi Genocide. More Dutch have been honored by *Yad Vashem* as righteous gentiles than citizens of any other country. The February Strike by municipal workers of Amsterdam in 1941 in response to growing oppression against Dutch Jews remains the only general anti-pogrom strike to have occurred in Nazi-occupied Europe. The gratitude of Jews world-wide to the Dutch people will endure. Today, the few remaining survivors and their descendants are appalled by the loss of the moral compass of your church. We do not expect or demand a moral blank check for Israel, nor do question your desire or right to speak up for the aspirations of the Palestinians. Truth and decency, however, demand that you have at least as much respect for the narrative of the nearly six million Jews of the democratic state of Israel.

We hope that you will take this letter seriously, and understand it, despite the harsh words, as a token of our respect and our trust that you will recall the ill-advised letter to Israel’s Ambassador. Like you, we will not stop praying for peace in the Middle East, for the Jewish and Palestinian peoples, a peace which will come when all sides of the conflict can at least hear, understand, and respect the position of the Other.

Become a part of the solution, not a facilitator of the delegitimizing and demonizing of the legitimate historic aspirations of the people of Israel and their Zionist supporters.

Respectfully,



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Associate Dean



Rabbi Yitzchok Adlerstein
Director, Interfaith Affairs

AC:YA/sg