

THE ETHICAL MANAGEMENT OF PILGRIMAGES TO THE HOLY LAND

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Outline of the area of research.

This research was instigated following several years of organising pilgrimages to the Holy Land and a growing sense of unease over the lack of any real contact between pilgrims and the local indigenous Christians. This appears to have historical, theological as well as political causes which seem to have determined, in general terms, the way pilgrimages are conducted.

This research therefore specifically seeks to investigate the degree to which Western Christian involvement, principally through pilgrimages, has exacerbated the already difficult conditions under which the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem serves the predominantly Palestinian Christian community in Israel and the Occupied Territories.

Israel is a unique country, born out of the ravages of war and the Holocaust, its 20,000 square miles of territory, claimed by two peoples, the Israelis and Palestinians, its holy sites shared uneasily by three religions, Jewish, Moslem and Christian, often in close proximity as at the Temple Mount in Jerusalem or the Tomb of the Patriarchs at Hebron. According to Tuchman, "more blood has been shed for Palestine than for any other spot on earth" (1957:viii).

To Protestant England it was not only, as Lord Curzon said, "the holiest space of ground on the face of the globe," the land of the Scriptures, the land of the Crusades, the land "to which all our faces are turned when we are finally laid in our graves in the churchyard." It was also the geographical junction between East and West, the bridge-head between three continents, the focal point in the strategy of empire... (Tuchman, 1957:viii)

Few countries attract so much media coverage, or arouse such intense religious feeling and political controversy. In the midst of all this exists a small, diminishing and ageing indigenous Palestinian Christian community.

Bishop Kenneth Cragg has eloquently summarised some of the tensions which threaten its existence.

What Israeli Zionism has meant, and means, for Arab Christianity is rarely understood in its full implications by Western reading of the Middle East, characterised as that reading is, by the long ambivalence of Zionist intentions and by religious predilections that either ignore or override the ethics of politics. Arab Christianity and Christian Palestinianism in particular suffer what all other Christianities in the West, in Africa, and in far Asia can escape, namely, the ambiguity between biblical loyalty to Hebrew scriptures as part of Christian heritage and the actualities of contemporary Israel with its enmity to Palestinianism *per se*. (1992:preface)

The proportion of Palestinian Christians within the overall Arab population is about 10% and declining as a result of voluntary or enforced emigration, and higher birth rates among Moslem families. Furthermore, 70% of the Arab population is under 30 years of age, having only known of Israeli occupation. In areas such as Gaza, Palestinians face unemployment levels as high as 80%. Those fortunate enough to live in Israel are treated at best as second class citizens in what is unashamedly a Jewish State, while those living in the West Bank face the constant denial of the most basic of human rights under military occupation. Their plight is exacerbated by the fact that they are largely ignored and misunderstood by the wider international community. (Eber, 1989:preface).

The unity of the Church in the Holy Land appears further debilitated and compromised by the polarisation of Western Christian theological and political affiliations. This tension is reflected in the sometimes partisan approach of the denominations, missionary societies and charities working in the Holy Land who tend to side either with the Jews or Palestinians.

This is perhaps predictable given the tendency of people to become imprisoned by their ideologies (Witvliet, 1987:258). As Roberts has observed,

When lines of differentiation between people in racial characteristics, cultural backgrounds, language, religious orientations, and economic self interests are coextensive and mutually exclusive, antipathy is likely to occur. Although religion is one cause, it is not necessarily the primary cause. However, religion may be used as a primary justification for hostility. (1990:278)

The pilgrimage and tourist industry, which brings just under two million people from around the world to the Holy Land every year, (303,222 from Britain in 1993 of whom 21% or 63,676 were pilgrims), is both a microcosm and

perpetuator of these tensions and divisions (Israel Government Tourist Office, 1994). Some Operators, for example, overtly identify with the Churches Mission among the Jews (CMJ) or the International Christian Embassy, Jerusalem (ICEJ), while others are wholly owned by the Israeli Government Ministry of Tourism. The indigenous Church is largely ignored by the many thousands of Christian pilgrimage groups whose itineraries involve visiting a predictable succession of archaeological sites and Christian shrines, which vary only according to the denomination of the group and number of days present in the land.

That so many Western Christians visit the Holy Land and yet have little or no contact with the indigenous Christian community, is a serious pastoral issue with important theological implications not only for the unity and vitality of the church, but also for its very survival in Israel and the Occupied Territories.

Many Western pilgrims appear not only ignorant of recent Middle East history but surprised to find an Arab Christian presence at all.

Even where Christian visitors are aware of this fact, their behaviour obliterates it. Worshipping with their own priest or minister in a closed chapel or shrine, their pilgrimage would be no different if the oldest Christian communities in the world had been physically obliterated long ago. (Macpherson, 1993:12)

The ethical issues involved in promoting pilgrimages to the Holy Land and their impact on the Palestinian Christian community are therefore considerable (CCBI 1992:3-4). Typical Western perceptions of Orientals still appear to be based on 19th Century colonial stereotypes, formed at a time when Europe controlled 85% of the world (Eber, 1993:3).

These are further reinforced and exploited by contemporary Zionist propaganda (Said, 1979:166). The Palestinians, whether Moslem or Christian are often branded as terrorists because of their support for the Intifada and opposition to Israeli settlement of the Occupied Territories.

Western Christians have for a variety of reasons tended to show greater sympathy for the State of Israel than for the condition of the Palestinian people. At the same time, during the cold war and subsequently, American and British foreign policy has consistently viewed Israel as an important ally in the Middle East. With the demise of Soviet Communism, the new enemy for both right wing religious Fundamentalists and politicians alike is militant Islam. These perceptions inevitably exacerbate the vulnerability of Palestinian Christians, since they are a minority among Moslem Arabs as well as among the Jews within a Zionist state. For Moslem Fundamentalists who equate "Arabism" with Islam, Palestinian Christians are an anomaly, guilty by association with European imperialism dating back to the Crusades.

It is in this context that a unique Palestinian Liberation Theology has evolved coinciding with a more assertive and articulate indigenous Christian witness. The collaborative solidarity achieved between Moslem and Christian Palestinians in seeking political autonomy, together with the developments in the Palestinian/Israeli peace process have also had a bearing on the changing relationship between Christian pilgrims and Palestinians who regard themselves as the "mother" church and "Living Stones" of the Holy Land (El-Assal, 1993:8).

Contemporary pilgrimage research suggests that in this century there has been a gradual decline in the level of contact between pilgrim parties and Palestinian Christians (Ekin, 1990:25). This has in part been due to tighter control of the pilgrimage industry by the Israeli Ministry of Tourism, especially since 1967, when the main sites of biblical significance were appropriated by Israel from Jordan, along with the registration of Palestinian guides, hotels and travel agencies (Bowman, 1992a).

The effect of these events has been devastating for the shrinking indigenous Christian community. Given the fact however that pilgrimages have the potential for exposing large numbers of Christians from abroad to the adverse conditions under which fellow Christian Palestinians live and witness, there remains the possibility of significant and radical change.

Pilgrimages could for example, if organised more responsibly, easily include opportunities for direct personal contact and worship with indigenous Christians. Palestinian Christians claim that this alone would be a great encouragement and would go a long way to ensuring their survival in what is a hostile religious and political environment not renowned for its sympathy for, or protection of, minorities.

1.2 Precise Statement of Scope

This dissertation attempts to reflect critically upon the practice of Christian ministry in relation to pilgrimages. The methodology used seeks to observe, compare and contrast the theological and political views of a group of British Anglican pilgrims with those of a similar group of Palestinian Anglicans on the perceived effect of contemporary pilgrimages, and their potential contribution in enhancing ecumenical and inter-faith relations.

This empirical research has been set in the context of the dominant theological perspectives and historical events that have influenced the contemporary pilgrimage movement and the ministry it fulfils.

The opinions of a number of senior expatriate Christian leaders who are serving or have served in Israel and the Occupied Territories were also elicited in order to interpret the historical, political and theological matrix of British involvement in the Holy Land and in pilgrimages in particular. The views of several pilgrimage

Tour Operators, both British and Palestinian were sought since these agencies are to a large degree responsible for determining the nature of pilgrimages, the itineraries followed and the extent to which contact between Christians from Britain, Israel and the Occupied Territories is encouraged or facilitated. It is often said that a visit to the Holy Land is like discovering a "fifth" Gospel, one that interprets and brings alive the other four.

This dissertation will seek to highlight deficiencies in the present practice of pilgrimage which militate against this experience, and suggest ways in which pilgrimages have the potential for a more significant ministry to both pilgrims and indigenous Christians alike.

1.3 Procedures Followed in this Investigation.

This research was based on documentary sources together with empirical material gathered through a series of small scale opportunity samples of individual Christian clergy and laity and also Tour Operators, in Britain, Israel and the Occupied Territories. The empirical information was gathered mostly through in-depth, semi-structured interviews with British and Palestinian Christians although some additional data was gained through the use of a questionnaire among pilgrims from around Britain who responded to an advertisement in an independent pilgrimage journal.

Three separate visits were made to Israel and the Occupied Territories to conduct interviews with Palestinian Christians and Tour Operators in September 1993, and in February and May 1994.

The overall emphasis of the empirical research has been primarily explorative, reflective and descriptive, taking a relativist rather than positivist approach, while also recognising that the observations made are neither capable of generalisation nor necessarily representative (Bell, 1984:22).

It was further recognised that there are certain hazards inherent in conducting this kind of research, not least for those co-operating from among the Palestinian community. It was appreciated that Tour Operators could have been placed at an economic disadvantage due to the potentially sensitive information requested concerning their operations and the content of their itineraries. More seriously the Palestinians interviewed risked arrest and deportation since their views could be regarded as critical of, or even a threat to, Israeli State security. Care was therefore taken to ensure confidentiality and anonymity, where requested, in the process of recording, transcribing and the attributing of views.

For the purposes of identification, individual pilgrims have been assigned consecutive numbers [Pilgrim, 1993:1.1] and [Pilgrim, 1993:1.2], etc; Tour Operators in a similar manner, [Operator, 1993:2.1] and [Operator, 1993:2.2], etc; and Palestinians by [Palestinian, 1993:3.1] and [Palestinian, 1993:3.2], etc. Expatriates have been quoted by name, for example [Grosso, 1993:4.1] and [Bunting, 1993:4.2], etc.

It was also recognised that there are inevitable difficulties inherent in undertaking research into what is a contemporary and changing phenomenon. In particular it has been difficult to assess the effect of the peace negotiations and the mutual recognition of the State of Israel and the PLO on the perceptions of both British and Palestinian Christians. This research has therefore concentrated on the historical development of pilgrimages and the implications for the future direction of this significant ministry, noting the major theological and political perspectives that make it what it is.

CHAPTER 2. THE BACKGROUND TO THE INVESTIGATION

Apart from the writings of Turner & Turner (1978) and Davies (1988) there appears to have been little substantial theological reflection on the significance of pilgrimages to the Holy Land, whether in terms of history or spirituality and still less of their impact on the indigenous Christian community. Indeed the importance of Christian pilgrimage as a form of, and catalyst to, Christian ministry appears to have been ignored or marginalised in many of the principal works on the psychology of religion (Meadow & Kahoe, 1984, & Wulff, 1991); the sociology of religion (McGuire, 1987); the study of liturgy (Dix, 1945, & Jones et al, 1992); the study of spirituality (Jones et al, 1992); and even in some of the standard works on church history (Latourette, 1943 & 1962; Bainton, 1967; Jedin, 1981; Manschreck, 1964 & Dowley et al, 1990).

Several collections of papers on pilgrimages have appeared recently which address the issue from an anthropological and sociological perspective (Eade & Sallnow et al, 1991 & Morinis et al 1992), most notably those of Bowman (1991, 1992a, 1992b). Some of these form the basis for this introduction together with the views of expatriate British Christians who have or are currently living in the Holy Land.

2.1 The Historical Context of Pilgrimages to the Holy Land

An analysis of the historical development of Christian pilgrimages is beyond the scope of this dissertation, as is an appraisal of the history of the Christian church in the Holy Land. Others however have done so comprehensively (Cragg, 1992, Davies, 1988 & Idinopulos, 1991). This study is limited to an assessment of specific historical events and theological developments which have contributed to contemporary attitudes of, and approaches to, Protestant pilgrimages.

The interpretation of recent historical events as they relate to pilgrimages, is made exceedingly complex since two peoples, Jews and Palestinians, each claim the same land, endowing the same locations with different place names and religious significance while promoting rival and contradictory histories about the same events. As Bowman points out,

Most tourists, in accord with the Israel Ministry of Tourism, call the land "Israel", but in United Nations terminology the land is "Israel and the Occupied Territories". This variance in nomenclature reflects a deeper issue of identity; Israel and the area it occupied in the 1967 "Six Day War" constitute a deeply, and violently, divided country. (1992a:121)

The founding of the State of Israel in 1948, was clearly regarded by most Zionists, whether Christian or Jewish, as signalling the end of a 2000 year exile and as the return to their promised homeland in fulfilment of biblical prophecy and Divine mandate. Palestinians however, regard this traumatic experience as having resulted in the violation of their fundamental human rights to exist autonomously in the land of their birth and forefathers. Since 1948 each community has disputed the grounds under which the other may remain.

Examples of these contested and contradictory histories include those of Palumbo (1992) and Said (1992a) who give a Palestinian view point, and Tuchman (1957) and Peters (1984) who offer alternative perspectives, the latter, overtly Zionist. Peters, for instance, claims that Arab population growth in late nineteenth century Palestine was caused by immigration from other Arab countries making their prior claim to the land less credible. This kind of assertion has been refuted by other historians including the Israeli, Yehoshue Porath (1986:36-38). Another historian claims Peters' work to be propaganda based on "spurious scholarship" (Finkelstein, 1988:33-70). The tension is focused on the mutually exclusive claims over Jerusalem. Little has changed since Cragg wrote,

Jerusalem...is still bitterly the symbol of confronting defiance and dismay, its centrality to both parties ensuring that the obdurate loyalties it commands continue to forbid the peace to which its name is dedicated. All visions of a federal constitution, a mutual destiny, a bi-communal possession, have thus far been fruitless. The city remains the indivisible, inalienable Jewish symbol Zionism cannot allow itself to share, except in the free access of tourism and the tolerance of religious devotion. It is, therefore, a painful sign of irreconcilability-and steadily more so as the years pass. (Cragg, 1982:47)

2.1.1 The Origins of Christian Pilgrimage

The word "pilgrimage" comes from the Latin *peregrinus* which means a foreigner or traveller, and describes a journey to some place regarded as holy, undertaken for a religious purpose and in the hope of receiving spiritual or material blessing (Lambert, 1933:507).

In both Islamic and Hebrew traditions, pilgrimage is regarded as a religious obligation imposed on the entire faith community and taught in their sacred scriptures. For the Christian however there is no such emphasis or

requirement. Jesus taught instead that the sacred is located not in a place but in the body of the believer, and worship is something to be offered to God anywhere and everywhere (John 4:21-23).

In the earliest days of the Christian Church therefore, there does not appear to have been any perceived benefit from undertaking a pilgrimage. But the desire to visit the scenes associated with the birth, life and death of Jesus grew partly from natural interest and partly through the influence of superstitious beliefs the Church inherited from the surrounding pagan religions. Initially the idea of pilgrimage was seen as something voluntary and optional (Zander, 1971:5).

Vigorous opposition to the growing popularity of pilgrimages for superstitious reasons can be found in a number of the Church Fathers. Jerome (345-413), in common with most Protestant pilgrims today, regarded pilgrimages to Palestine as an essential way of gaining a greater understanding of the Bible, just as a visit to a foreign country might enhance the appreciation of its literature.

Judea with our own eyes....(Zander, 1971:7)

However, Augustine (354-430), John Chrysostomus (349-407) and especially Gregory of Nyssa (335-394) recognised the dangers of locating the sacred at particular shrines. Consequently they actively discouraged Christians from undertaking pilgrimages to Palestine.

God is indeed everywhere, and he who created all things is not contained or shut in by any one place. (Augustine in Zander, 1971:8)

The task is not to cross the sea, nor to undertake a lengthy pilgrimage....both when we come to church and when we stay at home, let us earnestly call on God. (John Chrysostomus, in Zander, 1971:8)

Despite this concerted attempt to check the growth of pilgrimages, and dampen speculation that they were a means to salvation, the idea of meritorious value in a journey to the Holy Land caught the popular imagination. Few of these early pilgrims appear to have shared Jerome's concern to study the geographical and historical context of the Bible. Instead they were drawn by the mysterious association with the incarnation, and with the miracles of Jesus in particular.

Empress Helena's visit to Palestine toward the end of the fourth century ensured that a pilgrimage to the Holy Land became a fashionable as well as a religious duty (Lambert, 1933:507). Despite the costs, hazards and arduous nature of such a journey, pilgrims increasingly travelled to the Holy Land to do penance, to obtain redemption from serious crimes, and to secure relics for their churches (Zander, 1971:9). In a desire to create greater unity within his empire,

Constantine did much to encourage pilgrimages by building large churches in Jerusalem and Bethlehem which became foci for devotion and worship. Eusebius for example, claimed divine inspiration was behind Constantine's desire to make the Church of the Resurrection "a centre of attraction and venerable to all" (Davies, 1988:10). Centuries later, fermenting millennial expectations and belief in the imminent return of Christ to Jerusalem was another powerful incentive for visiting the Holy Land.

The growing passion for relics of dead martyrs provided another motivation, in part fuelled by commercial interest and the exploitation of a gullible populace by an increasingly hierarchical, authoritarian, and corrupt Church. Centuries before, Augustine had castigated this practice clearly emerging even in his day,

monks, who go through the provinces...Some sell the relics of martyrs or so-called martyrs. (Davies, 1988:4)

Increasingly the shrines of saints came to be seen as, "a potentially active source of spiritual energy" (Davies, 1988:5). A visit to those sites associated with the life and miracles of Jesus Christ became therefore the ultimate pilgrimage, and those in Jerusalem of greatest appeal. A Russian abbot named Daniel who visited Jerusalem in 1106-7 spoke of his joy at visiting the sites "which Christ our God pressed with his feet" (Davies, 1988:10).

2.1.2. The Middle Ages and the Impact of the Crusades

By the 13th century the penitential pilgrimage had become fully institutionalised in a religious system in which good works were esteemed more highly than ascetic practices (Davies, 1988:15). Several historians examine in detail the lasting impact of the Crusades and trace the devastating consequences of the "sacralising" of Mediaeval European military designs on the "Holy Land" (Runciman, 1954 & Armstrong, 1988).

The attempt to liberate the Holy Land from Moslem control was seen by many as a sacred endeavour and even as a form of pilgrimage. When Pope Urban II launched the First Crusade in 1095 he gave several reasons for this "holy pilgrimage".

doing so heal the schism between East and West; second, to be a repentant act of faith that would culminate in the moral reformation and total renewal of Christendom; third, it was to be a mass pilgrimage of believers united in the expectation of the imminent return of Christ. (Davies, 1988:18)

How far this aspiration was shared by the Crusaders themselves is debatable. Zander seriously questions whether the Crusades ever really had anything to do with "defending" the Church. (1971:10). Robert the Monk, commenting on Pope Urban's mobilisation speech, gave much more provocative reasons.

Let the Holy Sepulchre of the Lord our saviour which is possessed by unclean nations, especially incite you, and the Holy Places which are now treated with ignominy and irreverently polluted with their filthiness....Enter upon the road to the Holy Sepulchre; wrest that land from the wicked race, and subject it to yourselves....This royal city, therefore, situated at the centre of the world, is now held captive by his enemies, and is in subjection to those who do not know God, to the worship of the heathens. (Zander, 1971:13)

For over a century, Bishops, clerics and Kings repeated the call "to avenge the injury which had been inflicted upon Christ" (Zander, 1971:15). This explains how some Christians came to regard the land, rather presumptively, as their exclusive inheritance being the "true" Israel. The theological justification for the Crusades went through significant and progressive stages. To begin with the motivation was simply to liberate the Holy Land as a means of achieving salvation and of hastening the apocalypse. Having conquered and settled the land and created Christian kingdoms, when Jerusalem was once again threatened by infidels, it was an opportunity for sacrifice. After Jerusalem was lost, the Muslim presence was seen as an insult to God, and the later Crusades were justified to avenge the injury to God. Toward the end of the Crusading era the Crusaders saw themselves as the successors of Israel; their duty to claim Christ's patrimony and inheritance. (Zander, 1971:18-19)

Such religious arrogance and the consequent extermination of the inhabitants of Palestine by the European Crusaders unleashed a spiral of barbaric savagery between Jew, Christian and Muslim alike which has fermented for a thousand years, each side locked in what Armstrong calls "a murderous triangle of hatred and intolerance...." (1988:xii).

Cragg draws some important conclusions about the effect of the Crusades and their religious imprimatur on the Arab psyche.

The Western, Latin Rome saw the Christian East in terms of judicial dominance and ecclesiastical power....The Crusades became an enduring symbol of malignancy as well as heroism, of open imperialism and private piety...They left noble piles of architecture on the eastern landscape but seared the eastern soul. They gave Arab Muslims through every succeeding century a warrant of memory to hold against Christian Arabs as, by association, liable to pseudo-Arabness or worse. What the crusaders did to the eastern psyche, long outlived their tenure.... The image of them is one no century since has been able to exorcise. (1992:23)

2.1.3 The Reformation and Protestant Attitudes to Pilgrimages

"All pilgrimages should be stopped" wrote Martin Luther (Davies, 1988:vii). Luther and other leading Reformers condemned pilgrimages because they were seen as evidence of a Church which had relapsed into Judaistic legalism and pagan superstition. Pilgrimages encouraged heresies and abuses inherent in such practices as indulgences, relics, and veneration. Luther warned that,

The simple and superstitious are beguiled.....true Christian pilgrimage is not to Rome or Compostella, but to the Prophets, the Psalms, and the Gospels. (Bainton, 1978:127,367)

In England, Wycliffe also spoke out against the veneration of relics and saints, a practice integral to pilgrimages, since he claimed they perpetuated,

of relics cause the people to fall into gross error.....the practice itself is a pharisaical one. (Lechler, 1878:301)

The Lollards who were the successors of Wycliffe, equally and unequivocally condemned indulgences, image worship and the veneration of relics associated with pilgrimages. In a tract entitled *The Lanterne of Light* dated 1409, they argue,

moment of birth on the way to the heavenly city; we are pilgrims when we go to church, when we visit the poor and distribute arms, studying holy writ and then going to proclaim it is another manner of pilgrimage...; the sixth pilgrimage is that upon which we enter at death "to bliss or pain"....there is no other pilgrimage that may please God... (Davies, 1988:91)

Pilgrimages continued to be conducted however, by the Latin, Russian Orthodox, Greek Orthodox and Coptic Christian communities, who invariably stayed with members of their own faith community. The leaders of the newly emerging Protestant sects and denominations such as Huss, Calvin and Luther, who had no personal contact with the indigenous Christians of the Holy Land, dissuaded their members from undertaking pilgrimages to a region untouched by the Reformation. It was not until the 19th Century and the combination of colonialism, missionary endeavour, archaeological exploration and more advanced forms of transportation, that interest in visiting the religious sites in Palestine became popular among Protestants. However, the legacy of the Reformation expressed in a repugnance for Catholic and Orthodox ritual and liturgy still pervades much Protestant pilgrimage.

2.1.4 The 19th Century Resurrection of Protestant Pilgrimages

In the 19th Century there was a considerable thawing in Protestant attitudes toward the idea of pilgrimage. This was part religious, part political and largely due to a succession of archaeological discoveries in the Near East, military adventurism and the growing number of travelogues which fired the imagination. One of the most popular was Dean Stanley's Sinai and Palestine which went through four editions within a year of its publication in 1856 (Stanley, 1871).

According to Davies, between 1800 and 1875, approximately 2,000 authors wrote about the Holy Land, and by the 1830's a visit to the Near East formed part of the grand tour taken by most young European gentlemen (Davies, 1988:140). The majority of pilgrims continued to be Armenian and Greek while Protestant pilgrims, who tended to be Evangelical, increasingly became uncomfortable with, and vocal about, the unfamiliar style of worship they found.

In particular they found the emphasis on relics and the denominational rivalry present at the traditional holy places in Bethlehem and Jerusalem reprehensible. Alexander Kinglake, writing his travelogue in 1835, noted this tension.

Many Protestants are wont to treat these traditions contemptuously, and those who distinguish themselves from their brethren by the appellation of "Bible Christians" are almost fierce in their denunciation of these supposed errors. (Davies, 1988:141)

Harriet Martineau, another writer, referred to the services at the Holy Sepulchre as "...mummeries done in the name of Christianity....idolatrous nonsense..." (Davies, 1988:141). It was this dissatisfaction with the Eastern Churches' monopoly on the traditional sites and a repugnance for their garish shrines which fuelled interest among Evangelicals in such ventures as the archaeological work of the Palestine Exploration Fund, the alleged discovery of the true Calvary in 1883 by General Gordon and the subsequent funding by public subscription of the Garden Tomb Association (McBirnle, 1975:40).

Protestant pilgrims, while not wishing to appear superstitious or overly emotional, were nevertheless often moved by their first sight of Jerusalem. Robert Curzon described what happened in his party.

Everyone was silent for a while, absorbed in the deepest contemplation. It was curious to observe the different effect which our approach to Jerusalem had upon the various persons who composed our party. A Christian pilgrim, who had joined us on the road, fell down upon his knees and kissed the holy ground, two others embraced each other, and congratulated themselves that they had lived to see Jerusalem. As for us Franks, we sat bolt upright on our horses, and stared and said nothing, whilst around us the more natural children of the East wept for joy, and, as in the army of the Crusaders, the word Jerusalem! Jerusalem! was repeated from mouth to mouth; but we, who consider ourselves civilised and superior beings, repressed our emotions; we were above showing that we participated in the feelings of our barbarous companions. (Davies, 1988:143)

Curzon's account also reveals the condescending prejudice commonly felt by Europeans toward Orientals, a related issue which will be developed in the next chapter. While the theological reservations of the Reformers were quietly forgotten in the growing fascination with things Oriental, the real breakthrough in the rise of popular pilgrimage came as a result of innovations in transportation.

In 1869 the Suez Canal was opened, coincidentally the same year Thomas Cook led his first tour group to Jerusalem, made up of 16 ladies, 33 gentlemen, and two assistants. By the end of the 19th Century, his company had arranged for 12,000 pilgrims to visit the Holy Land.

It is not an exaggeration to say that Thomas Cook probably did more than any other person to facilitate and shape the re-emergence of Protestant pilgrimages. His reputation as an organiser grew after he was invited in 1882 to arrange the visit by Prince Edward, later Edward VII, and his son Prince George, later King George V. In 1872 Cook wrote the following analysis of his new enterprise.

The educational and social results of these four years of Eastern travel have been most encouraging. A new incentive to scriptural investigation has been created and fostered; "The Land and the Book" have been brought into familiar juxtaposition, and their analogies have been better comprehended; and under the

general influence of sacred scenes and repeated sites of biblical events, inquiring and believing spirits have held sweet counsel with each other. (Davies, 1988:148)

In 1891 Cook's influence was further enhanced by the publication of Cook's Tourist Handbook for Palestine and Syria. This was designed to be read on horseback or by tent light and contained all the essential scriptural references associated with each location visited thereby reinforcing the educational nature and biblical basis of his pilgrimages. Cook also pioneered what he termed, "Biblical Educational and General Tours" designed especially for clergy, Sunday school teachers and "others engaged in promoting scriptural education." (Shepherd, 1987:180)

Cook's tours were notable in that they combined visits not only to the Holy Places and excavations, but also to Protestant missions, hospitals and schools. This was an innovative and radical idea when compared with most contemporary itineraries (Shepherd, 1987:180). In the port of Jaffa for instance, which Cook used as his base in Palestine, he donated the sum of £500 to build the Tabeetha mission school for Arab girls, later to come under the auspices of the Church of Scotland. It is probably the only school in the world to have been founded with the proceeds of tourism and pilgrimages [Crawford, 1994:4.11].

It is possible to gain some idea of the influence Thomas Cook must have had on pilgrimages to the Holy Land in the fact that by 1898 his company was the largest employer of labour in Egypt. (Swinglehurst, 1982:105)

Cook's tours proved popular for a number of other significant reasons which have a bearing not only on the development of Western pilgrimages in the 20th Century, but also, ironically, on the decline in contact between pilgrims and the indigenous Christian communities. Although there was little difference in price between Cook's tours and those of his competitors, middle-class Protestant clientele from America and Europe were attracted to Cook's tours because they wanted the type of pilgrimage, and above all, the kind of services he alone offered. For example, payments were made in advance obviating the need for pilgrims to carry large sums of money, and thereby risk robbery. Cook also hand-picked and employed the "dragomen" or local agents who in effect became his sub-contractors. Those who were unwilling to co-operate soon went out of business. In May 1874 they complained in a letter to the *Times* that Cook had destroyed their livelihood and the local economy, commandeering all the horses, while insisting on bringing all his food, tents and supplies from England.

The established dragomen were put out of business almost immediately. In May 1874 they complained bitterly in a letter to the London *Times* that their living had been taken by Cook. They argued that Cook's prices were higher than theirs, that the whole price had to be paid in advance, that Cook commandeered all the horses in the region, and that his agents did not provide fresh local food for their clients but preserves brought from England.

But this was exactly the point. Cook's tourists did not want local guides who might raise the stated price at will and whose patter reproduced what they regarded as "pious frauds". They were attracted to the portable accommodation which was preferable to convent rooms or verminous khans. Instead of suspect Oriental food, Cook's tourists had English ham and Yorkshire bacon, pickles, potted salmon and Liverpool sardines. Boatmen were engaged, under a Cook's flag, to row out to the tourists on the deck of the ship and, relieve them of Arab rabble, and conduct them through Custom house annoyances. (Shepherd, 1987:177)

Because Cook's middle class pilgrims were not used to riding horseback, in 1874 Cook contracted the German Templars to transport his tour groups from Jaffa to Jerusalem in their rather primitive stage coaches, further distancing pilgrims from any personal contact with the local Christians. Whether these were an improvement on the horse is questionable, but they were an early prototype for the modern air conditioned coach. (Shepherd, 1987:179)

Tensions over the provision and competence of local guides, the quality of local hotels and food, the suitability of transportation and general fear of the indigenous population are not new, nor the product of the Intifada or Israeli security measures. These frictions and prejudices so often present among contemporary pilgrims were clearly evident in the 19th Century. They epitomise the inability or unwillingness of Europeans generally, when abroad, to identify with indigenous peoples and in the Middle East, with the Arab Palestinian community in particular.

2.1.5 The Anglican Church in Palestine

In the 19th Century, coinciding with world-wide Western missionary endeavours, improvements in transportation, and paralleling European Colonial expansion in this strategic staging post to Africa and Asia, there was a renewed interest in Palestine among the major Protestant denominations. At the beginning of the 19th Century the only representatives of Western Christianity to be found in Jerusalem had been the Franciscans and only the Orthodox and Armenian traditions were resident in significant numbers. From the mid 19th Century, Protestant denominations began to found their own churches, not so much from a separatist spirit but because of the animosity and ostracism of the Eastern traditions. Their reformed theology, emphasis on personal conversion and lay leadership were anathema to Eastern Orthodoxy (Cragg, 1992:24).

This ecclesiastical fragmentation coincided with increasing inroads from Western Europe into the politics, economy, and culture of the Ottoman caliphate and of those parts of it which enjoyed varying degrees of independence. After the arousal that accompanied Napoleon's invasion of Egypt, the Western scramble for influence, and competition to wield it, quickened in the apparent, or actual, deterioration of Ottoman imperial competence in the nineteenth century. (Cragg, 1992:24)

The Church Missionary Society (CMS) was among the earliest to show an interest from 1821, but it was the London Jews Society (LJS) who established the first permanent mission station in 1831. Their aim was the conversion of Jews to Protestant Christianity. The British Consul was also the first to be appointed in Jerusalem in 1838, and the Anglican church, Christ Church, was dedicated in 1845.

A Protestant bishopric under joint British and Prussian auspices had been founded in 1841. Solomon Alexander, the first bishop and a former Jewish rabbi did not survive long in the post and was succeeded by Samuel Gobat, a Swiss Lutheran. The arrangement with Germany then lapsed and the bishopric became solely Anglican in 1881 (O'Mahony, 1993:470). Initially Alexander and Gobat co-operated with the Eastern Churches, concentrating on the circulation of the Scriptures and opening what were termed "Bible schools". As Eastern Christians bought the Bibles and sought help in reading them, teachers were supplied and more schools opened. The first two CMS missionaries arrived for this purpose in 1851 and were based in Jerusalem and Nablus. The local leadership of the Eastern Churches felt threatened and excommunicated those who read the Scriptures offered by the Anglicans.

Consequently Bishop Gobat felt compelled to protect them and from the 1860's small Anglican congregations based on a loose parish structure and led by Palestinian clergy were formed in Jerusalem, Nazareth, Jaffa, Haifa, and Salt. The transition from a colonialist Anglican church dominated by expatriates to a Palestinian Anglican church was a significant but slow process which is still continuing. According to Bishop Rennie MacInnes, writing in 1925,

The work of the CMS in all its missions is to train those who join her in the doctrine and discipline of the Church of England, with the ultimate object of aiding in the establishment of a self-supporting, self-governing and self-extending system. (MacInnes, 1925:4)

The self-governing Palestine Church Council, also known as the Episcopal Evangelical Church in the Holy Land was officially established in Jaffa in 1905. By then it already included twenty Palestinian clergy serving in Jaffa, Kefr Yasif, Bir Zeit, Ramleh, Shefaamr, Nablus, Acca, Salt, Nazareth and Jerusalem. However, it was not until 1958 that the first Palestinian Bishop was appointed.

For all their will to autonomy, the local recruits to Protestant mission were beholden in various ways to its Western sources, beneficiaries of its educational investments and conditioned by the vicissitudes of external politics. (Cragg, 1992:134)

However far this process of assimilation has come and still needs to go, is a matter of healthy debate within the Diocese. Unfortunately this commitment has sadly been misunderstood and maligned by many, especially by Christian and Jewish Zionists.

Crombie's history of the Anglican Church in the Holy Land, under the provocative title For the Love of Zion, is an example of this. Throughout the book he is patently unsympathetic to the present Anglican Palestinian leadership. The final chapter of his book is entitled "The antithesis of Alexander - a PLO Bishop" (1991b:237ff). The book, not surprisingly has aroused a good deal of criticism among leading Palestinian Anglicans.

I found reading it that it was written by a person who really harbours resentment against the Arabs and against Palestinian Christians...it reflects his prejudice, his resentment, his deep dislike of the local Christians as if they really have nothing to say. Anything that Jews do somehow is always put in the right light and anything Arabs would do is somehow always judged as being wrong.....why doesn't he see the presence of so many Zionist Bishops and clergy, those are OK but once you have any person who loves the land God has chosen to give him, an indigenous Palestinian, that's taboo. [Palestinian, 1993:3.12]

The same kind of Zionist prejudice from a Jewish perspective can be seen in the views of Teddy Kolleck the mayor of Jerusalem. He recently criticised the Church of England for allowing the Diocese in Jerusalem "to fall into the hands of the Arabs." (Duggan, 1992).

The termination of the British Mandate in 1948 further accelerated the transition from expatriate to Palestinian control of Anglican mission schools, hospitals and other church assets. The elevation of the Anglican episcopate in Jerusalem to the status of an archbishopric in 1957 and its renaming as the "Episcopal Church in the Middle East" was another important step in this process of naturalisation (Latourette, 1962:292).

The Christian witness in the Holy Land, especially that of the Anglican Church, has been hindered and compromised by the vagaries of international politics, and British foreign policy in particular.

2.1.6 The Legacy of the League of Nations Mandate

On the 9th December 1917, British troops occupied Jerusalem, "and the Holy City passed into Christian hands for the first time since the rule of Frederick II as King of Jerusalem." Her future, "now lay with the Western powers and was to all intents and purposes bound up with the question of harmonising their interests in Palestine as a whole." (O'Mahony, 1993:471)

General Edmund Allenby however, broke with more than military custom when he walked into Jerusalem through the Jaffa Gate in order to identify with Jesus Christ, two days later on December 11th 1917. In a speech given later that day Allenby indicated something of his own respect, and his administration's intentions regarding the toleration and protection of the religious rights of the indigenous population.

Since your city is regarded with affection by the adherents of three of the great religions of mankind, and its soil has been consecrated by the prayers and pilgrimages of multitudes of devout people of these three religions for many centuries, therefore do I make known to you that every sacred building, monument, holy spot, traditional shrine, endowment, pious request, or customary place of prayer, of whatsoever form of the three religions, will be maintained and protected according to the existing customs and beliefs of those to whose faith they are sacred. (Idinopulos, 1991:283)

It was clearly Allenby's desire to maintain good relations with both Arabs and Jews. According to Idinopulos, it was actually the Mandate officials who encouraged the early development of indigenous Arab churches, especially among the Anglicans, and fixed the rights and responsibilities of the various denominations with regard to the sacred shrines (1991:283). However, Anglo-French diplomacy and strategic self interest concerning the possession of territory gained from the Turks led to duplicity over the Balfour Declaration, and partisan support for the Jews.

The League of Nations mandate was a double blow to the Arabs because it not only denied them their promised independence, despite their having assisted in the overthrow of Ottoman rule, but endorsed a Jewish national homeland on what had once been Arab soil.

In response to the Arab backlash the British placed severe restrictions on Jewish emigration right up to the declaration of independence in 1948 thereby iting antipathy and terrorist attacks from both sides (Idinopulos, 1991:286,291). In the Balfour Declaration, the British tried to be even-handed, stating,

His Majesty's Government views with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done, which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of the existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country. (Idinopulos, 1991:286)

What the Balfour Declaration left unclear was the meaning of a "national home". Was this synonymous with sovereignty or statehood and if so what were to be the borders? In all of Palestine or just a portion? What was to be the status of Jerusalem? Furthermore, while it stated that "the civil and religious rights of the existing population" were to be safeguarded and the territory was designated "Palestine", there was no reference to Palestinians. "They were an actual, but awkward non-identity" (Cragg, 1992:234). These questions were left unanswered and it is these ambiguities which have plagued Middle East peace negotiations and divided Christians ever since. The 1936 Peel commission which recommended the partition of Palestine between Jews and Arabs stated,

The partition of Palestine is subject to the overriding necessity of keeping the sanctity of Jerusalem and Bethlehem inviolate and of ensuring free and safe access to them for all the world. That is "a sacred trust of civilisation", a trust on behalf not merely of the peoples of Palestine but of multitudes in other lands to whom these places, one or both, are Holy Places... (Idinopulos, 1991:294).

The division of Palestine would therefore appear to have had more to do with maintaining access for Western pilgrims than with settling any territorial rights or providing safeguards for the indigenous communities. The local Christians are now living with the consequences.

2.1.7 Orientalism and Cultural Imperialism

Pilgrims from America and Europe often appear to share with many Israelis not only a cultural antipathy toward Palestinians (Green, 1987:15) but also pejorative political assumptions about Arabs of the Middle East generally. (Eber, 1991:4). Said claims this prejudice, or "Orientalism" is a peculiarly European way of dealing with foreigners. His book, *Orientalism*, eloquently demystifies romantic European notions of the Orient. In it he exposes the reality and intensity of European hostility and cultural imperialism toward the East in which the strengths of the West are magnified and contrasted with the supposed weaknesses of the Orient.

Such bias and contrived generalisations have had the effect of polarising West from East, limiting the "human encounter between different cultures, traditions and societies." (Said, 1978:45) At its most mundane it surfaces in views and phrases that highlight the fact that Arabs are different from Europeans, whether in skin colour, dietary preferences or personal habits. At a more profound level Orientalism has also had an impact upon contemporary American and European foreign policy.

Said offers evidence from an essay by Dr Henry Kissinger entitled "Domestic Structure and Foreign Policy". In it Kissinger relies on what linguists refer to as "binary opposition", in which, like Orientalists, he divides the world into two halves, the developed post-Newtonian and the developing pre-Newtonian world.

And like Orientalism's distinction Kissinger's was not value-free, despite the apparent neutrality of his tone. Thus such words as "prophetic," "accurate," "internal," "empirical reality," and "order" are scattered throughout his description, and they characterise either attractive, familiar, desirable virtues or menacing, peculiar, disorderly defects. Both the traditional Orientalist...and Kissinger conceive of the difference between cultures, first, as creating a battle front that separates them, and second, as inviting the West to control, contain, and otherwise govern (through superior knowledge and accommodating power) the Other. (1979:47-48)

Said gives further examples of "respectable" Orientalism in the writings of Harold Glidden, an advisor on American foreign policy to the United States Department of State Bureau of Intelligence and Research, whose views were published in the American Journal of Psychiatry in February 1972.

absolute solidarity within the group, it at the same time encourages among its members a kind of rivalry that is destructive of that very solidarity; in Arab society only "success counts" and "the end justifies the means"; Arabs live "naturally" in a world "characterised by anxiety expressed in generalised suspicion and distrust, which has been labelled free-floating hostility"; "the art of subterfuge is highly developed in Arab life, as well as in Islam itself"; the Arab need for vengeance overrides everything, otherwise the Arab would feel "ego-destroying" shame. Therefore, if "Westerners consider peace to be high on the scale of values" and if "we have a highly developed consciousness of the value of time," this is not true of Arabs. "In fact," we are told, "in Arab tribal society, strife, not peace, was the normal state of affairs because raiding was one of the two main supports of the economy." (Said, 1979: 48-49)

For the Orientalist the West is seen as liberal, peaceful, rational and capable of embracing "real" values whereas the Oriental is not. Kenneth Cragg who has lived in the Middle East for many years, and has closely identified with the Arab culture, both Moslem and Christian, concurs with Said's criticism of Orientalism, for its "crude stereotype imaging of the East", and for being,

literature and a scholarship that imposed its own false portrayal on the East and refused to care sensitively for the East's own evaluation of itself. By distortion it had its own way with its eastern versions and made these the instrument of control and, indeed, of denigration....19th and 20th century Western Orientalism is thus found uniformly culpable, and a conniver with misrepresentation. (Cragg, 1992:297)

This indictment of the West falls as much upon the Church as it does upon politicians since it has contributed to the divisions among Protestant Christians in places like Jerusalem where Hebrew Christians gravitate toward Christ Church, Palestinians to St George's, while expatriates invariably end up at the Garden Tomb, each community worshipping separately, attracting their own following in varying proportions from among pilgrims.

Edward Said, although himself a nominal Anglican, crystallises the issue at a more profound level.

I consider Orientalism's failure to have been a human as much as an intellectual one; for in having to take up a position of irreducible opposition to a region of the world it considered alien to its own, Orientalism failed to identify with human experience, failed also to see it as human experience. (1979:328)

Eber concedes that it is perhaps inevitable that we find it hard to cope with the "foreign" because of the weight of our emotional "baggage" carried when travelling abroad, since we cannot avoid "refining and redefining ourselves, confirming and reconfirming our individual and collective identities" in the light of this encounter. Nevertheless it is, she argues,

voice-overs and editing processes can we bring into sharper focus the images that we see. (1993:3)

Similarly Cragg calls unambiguously for "imaginative, uninhibited and uninhibiting sympathy between Arab and Western Christians" (1992:297).

These are however lone voices and there remains a pervasive and arrogant racism implicit in much that goes under the name of Christian pilgrimage since the presence of a Palestinian Church is ignored or denigrated, and their continued existence threatened (Roberts, 1990:262). This is the result not only of historical processes, but is also

compounded by theological controversies concerning the Holy Land, the rights of its citizens and future in God's purposes.

2.2 The Theological Controversies Affecting Pilgrimages to the Holy Land

It is through pilgrimages that Eastern and Western Christendom meet, two traditions with long histories of cultural adaptation and integration, yet largely isolated from one another. According to Bosch,

The role of religion in society is that of both stabiliser and emancipator; it is both mythical and messianic. In the eastern tradition the church has tended to express the former of each of these pairs rather than the latter. (1991:121)

This observation goes a long way to explaining the tension many Western Protestant pilgrims experience as they are confronted by an indigenous Eastern faith. Cragg has succinctly highlighted the crux of the theological tension.

The whole enterprise...turns on concepts of covenant and chosenness, of prophecy and return, which concern Christian theology and the interpretation of its scriptures...The feasible interpretations of biblical meanings have to be reached in loyalty both to the ethics of justice and equality before God and to the reverent concern of the New Testament for these and for a due indebtedness to the Judaic within a universal Christ. (1992:28)

The history of the Anglican church in Israel, a Western denomination planted within an Eastern culture, is a subject which causes deep division and polarisation within Christian circles (Crombie, 1991b, Ateek, 1990a & 1990b, Reuther, 1989 & Chapman, 1991). There are numerous examples of this profound theological disagreement. Two of the Anglican societies, the Church Missionary Society (CMS) and the Churches Ministry among the Jews (CMJ) are a case in point. CMS works closely within the Anglican diocesan structures, primarily among the Palestinian community and has concentrated on issues of justice, development and reconciliation. CMJ on the other hand, known locally as the Israel Trust of the Anglican Church (ITAC), is largely independent of any local ecclesiastical accountability, actively supports the restoration of the Jews to Zion, on occasions defends the State of Israel and identifies closely with the small separatist Hebrew Messianic community who believe Jesus is their Messiah yet are reluctant to be known as Christians.

There was also a recent acrimonious debate between Restoration Magazine, published by the Harvestime House Church movement, and Shalom Magazine published by CMJ. In 1991 the editorial boards of the two magazines disagreed with each other over whether Israel was the last bastion of South African apartheid or the epitome of European democracy and on whether the Church is the successor to Israel, and "New Israel" or merely its servant and poor step-sister. (Matthew, 1991, Scotland, 1991a & Sawyer, 1991).

The 1988 Lambeth Conference Declaration of the Bishops of the Anglican Communion similarly aroused controversy for including a specific resolution on the Palestinian issue, entitled "Palestine/Israel". The Declaration explicitly affirmed the existence of the State of Israel and its right to be recognised within secure borders, and emphasised the need to pray for peace and reconciliation. Nevertheless the declaration also went on to say that the Bishops,

Affirm the right of the Palestinians to self-determination, including choice of their own representatives and the establishment of their own state. (Anglican Consultative Council, 1988:167, 220)

Tony Higton, a member of the Council of CMJ, criticised the Bishop's Declaration in the most strident terms,

It...includes an unbalanced resolution on "Palestine/Israel" which makes no specific reference to Palestinian terrorism and shows insufficient sympathy and understanding for the Israelis. This could well be because there is no bishop from that area who represents an Israeli perspective on the situation (Higton, 1988).

The theological controversies affecting pilgrimages lie deeply embedded in entrenched positions which surface in the language used, the presuppositions assumed, and the hermeneutic employed to interpret the Bible.

2.2.1 Language and Presuppositions

The contested claims to the land and the contradictory histories are most evident in the language chosen by the various interested parties, whether government departments, pilgrimage guides, Tour Operators or individuals. Cragg shows how the semantic ground has shifted in Israel's favour since the Balfour Declaration.

There is no such illusionary benediction now, whether for Arabs in juridical Israel or for those on the West Bank in its indeterminate status as neither annexed nor negotiable. This Israel presents itself to Arab Palestinian experience as inveterate enemy, with a vested interest in the political non-existence of Palestinians. Warning in 1969 against the very "concept of Palestine" Menachem Begin wrote: "If this is

Palestine and not the land of Israel then you are conquerors and not tillers of the land. You are invaders. If this is Palestine then it belongs to the people who lived here before you." (Cragg, 1992:241)

For the majority of secular Jews, the land and its present borders including Gaza and the West Bank are simply and conveniently called "Israel"; to religious Jews and some Christians it is called "Zion"; for the Palestinians however it is "Palestine". For Christian Zionists "Israel" is a positive biblical description synonymous with the land promised to the twelve tribes, whereas "Palestine" is regarded as a pagan term imposed by the Romans to suppress Judaism. Most Tour Operators try and avoid the political connotations of language, hiding behind a kind of neutrality by calling it the "Holy Land". In rare instances they do so out of deep conviction. For many years for instance, following the 1967 war, the leading Christian pilgrimage agency in Britain, Inter-Church, refused to call the land "Israel", as a matter of company policy. For the same reason they would not use El Al airlines but only British Airways. [Operator, 1993:2.3].

To Zionists the events of 1967 were a long awaited "return" and "reunification", whereas to the Palestinians it was and remains an illegal "occupation". The West Bank is now invariably referred to as "Judaea & Samaria" by Zionists (ICEJ, 1988) following Menachem Begin's attempt to rename it (Servan-Schreiber, 1988:13), or simply as "the Territories". For the Palestinians however, and the United Nations, under international law it remains strictly speaking the "Occupied Territories" (Eber & O'Sullivan, 1989).

Eber's Rough Guide is unique in that it is the only tourist guidebook to use the term "Occupied Territories" in its title. It is perhaps not surprising that it is unavailable in Israel, although copies are relatively easy to come by in Palestinian East Jerusalem.

This controversy over language and image extends even to the design of book covers. Audeh Rantisi's book about the Palestinian Christian community is entitled Blessed are the Peacemakers. The British publishers commissioned a photographer to take pictures of the boys at Ramallah Boys Home where Rantisi is the director, for the front cover of the book. Photographs were taken of the boys seated on the school wall, which, like every other wall on the West Bank is covered with graffiti critical of the Israeli occupation. When the book was published in Britain, the boys were present but the graffiti had mysteriously disappeared (Rantisi, 1990).

Neutrality is so often difficult to sustain since language is a subtle indicator of presuppositions and a powerful tool of propaganda. As Francis Schaeffer put it,

The language we use actually forms the concepts we have and the results these concepts produce. (1980:87)

Bishop Samir Kafity recently offered a solution to this impasse. In a sermon given at St George's Cathedral on 21st September 1993 just a few days after the Peace Accord had been signed, he said he would in future refer to "Israel and Palestine". The controversy however, lies deeper than semantics.

2.2.2 Principles of Biblical Interpretation

Cragg challenges Western Christians to comprehend the Palestinian psyche, faced, as Palestinians are, by the weight of biblical argument used against them. This has led inexorably to the progressive denial of their fundamental human rights by fellow Christians and Jewish Zionists alike.

We need to grasp the mystique by which it is opposed, the divine mandate which-in the eyes of many in the West and in Christian quarters-its adversary commands and wields. The sense of what Palestinians are up against in the massive yet elusive sanction Israel enjoys is no small part of their travail. How it may be demystified, how spiritually counterbalanced by more prosaic meanings of justice and peace, is a profound problem for the Palestinian soul-a problem that leads back into vexed areas of biblical interpretation and theology. (Cragg, 1992:235)

For many Christians and Jews, the term Palestinian is still associated with the Philistines, who were always viewed as an obstruction, the implacable enemies of the people of God, who thwarted their plans to claim their inheritance in the promised land. With such an infamous heritage, however distant or misapplied, the Palestinians continue to be portrayed as a thorn in the side of Israel. Equally, Palestinians find it hard to equate the Israel of the Bible with the Israel of Menachem Begin, Moshe Dyan and Rabbi Kahane (Cragg, 1992:237).

Central to the Fundamentalist interpretation of the Scriptures is the belief that contemporary events are the fulfilment of biblical prophecy and in particular that the State of Israel is mandated by God. Such views are the product of a literalistic interpretation which, when applied to prophecy, largely ignores both the context and the original prophetic intention. Instead they concentrate, often retrospectively, on speculative and futurist predictions which, it is claimed, have now come true, or are about to do so. While it is often the case that the

writings of the Prophets do contain promises about the restoration of the land to Israel, these were given, as in the case of Jeremiah, when they were on the verge of exile to encourage them that God's judgment would not be final, and later when in exile, as with Ezekiel, to reassure them that God still had a future for them.

So when a prophet promises that the desert will bloom, he could not have been referring to agricultural "miracles" that Israelis have performed in the Negev...when the prophet talks about the earth shaking or about fire and brimstone, he cannot have been referring to nuclear explosions. Ezekiel would not have been pleased at the suggestion that his prophecies had been fulfilled 2500 years after they were given, (Goldingay, 1983:7)

The error, often made by Fundamentalists, is to fail to see that these prophecies were not unconditional or deterministic statements about dim and distant future events that were bound to take place. Instead these promises were invariably conditional promises and warnings, dependent upon the response of God's people in their covenant relationship with God. The Prophets consistently teach that God deals with his people according to whether they treat one another with justice and compassion, and in particular, the poor and vulnerable, the stranger and foreigner (Jeremiah 18:1-11, Ezekiel 33:1-20). It is erroneous therefore to assume that promises and warnings made to a people living two or three thousand years ago can be "transferred" directly to people alive today. That is to ignore the fundamental issue that these statements were made in the context of a personal, loving, moral relationship between God and his covenant people. (Goldingay, 1983:7).

The scriptures then should always be interpreted within their cultural and historical context; in a way that maintains internal consistency; emphasising that which would have been understood by those to whom they were originally given. At the same time it is necessary to distance oneself as the interpreter from presuppositional "instincts and sympathies" recognising the ease with which scripture can so easily become victim to entrenched theological positions.

Only in a compassionate will to such honesty can the tangled issues of biblical meanings in the current scene be resolved. The plea made here will not deny to Zionism the readings it cherishes but it will subject them to the ultimate themes of the sources they inherit. It will certainly deny to Christians any pro-Zionism, alien alike to the Prophets and Apostles. (Cragg, 1992:240)

Three distinct theological perspectives have emerged which affect the Palestinian church. These are Christian Zionism, Liberation Theology and the Living Stones movement.

2.2.3 The Development of Western Fundamentalist Christian Zionism

Probably the most influential body of Christian opinion in the world today, and certainly that which most directly affects the Palestinian church is that of Western Fundamentalist Christian Zionism. Christian Zionism is a rather broad label for a wide range of individuals, organisations and missions who support or defend the State of Israel, especially the policies of its government, or the actions of the Israeli Defence Force, in the continued occupation of the West Bank. Christian Zionists see themselves as advocates and apologists for Israel abroad. This involves opposing those it deems as critical or hostile toward Israel, invariably because they speak up for the Palestinians. Christian Zionists also encourage and help facilitate the return or "restoration" of Jews from around the world to Israel, especially those living in Russia and Eastern Europe. (Riggans, 1988:19).

Christian Zionist organisations include the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem (ICEJ); the Churches Mission Among the Jews (CMJ or ITAC), the Christian Friends of Israel (CFI); the Council of Christians and Jews (CCJ), and the Evangelical Sisterhood of Mary. These organisations, in varying degrees and for a variety of reasons, some contradictory, are part of a broad coalition, which is shaping the content of the Christian Zionist agenda today. British Christian leaders such as Derek Prince (1982) David Pawson, Lance Lambert (1980), Americans like Jerry Falwell, Pat Robertson, Hal Lindsey (1970) and John Walvoord (1967), and the German, Basilea Schlink (1991) have all had considerable influence in popularising a Zionist vision among British Christians.

Contemporary Western Christian support for the State of Israel is rooted in the theological concepts of premillennialism and dispensationalism (Reuther, 1989:173), which see in contemporary events in the Middle East, the hand of God protecting his chosen people, Israel, in the "Promised Land" which is deemed her divine right, in perpetuity.

These views can be traced back to the Montanist controversy in the 2nd Century, to the Protestant Reformation, to the Jewish mystical Kabbalist and Revivalist and Apocalyptic writings which were popular in 19th century Europe and America (MECC 1988:5).

During the 1940's both prior to and after the founding of the state of Israel, liberal Protestant Christians such as Reinhold Niebuhr were the principle allies of Israel (Reuther 1989:173). However with the annexation of the West Bank in 1967, Liberal Protestants and organisations such as the World Council of Churches increasingly distanced themselves from Zionism, while at the same time Fundamentalism grew both in political power and identification with Israel.

2.2.3.1 Evangelicalism

The term "Evangelicalism" denotes a very broad spectrum of theological opinion arising out of the Reformation, Puritanism and Revivalism and the desire to return to the simplicity of the New Testament church. It is represented, and generally accepted, within all the main Protestant denominations. In Britain an increasing number of senior ecclesiastical posts are now held by evangelicals including Archbishop George Carey. Its distinctive emphasis lies in a belief in the supreme authority of scripture over tradition, in the literal interpretation of scripture, the adherence to the historic creeds, the need for personal conversion and holiness, and a belief in the imminent return of Jesus Christ (Bebbington 1989:1-19).

2.2.3.2 Fundamentalism

Within Western Evangelicalism there are many strands including liberal, conservative, charismatic and radical, sometimes simplified by the three categories of, right, centre & left (Quebedeaux, 1978). The fastest growing of these three, especially in North and South America, is called fundamentalism also known as the "Evangelical Right" which is made up predominantly of Baptists and Independent Bible churches such as those of Jerry Falwell and W. Criswell (Wagner, 1992:3).

The term "fundamentalist" derives from a series of tracts entitled "The Fundamentals" published from 1910 onwards in an attempt by American conservative evangelicals to defend the basis of historic Christianity and repudiate what they saw as "modernism" and theological liberalism. The term "fundamentalism" was first used by Curtis Lee Laws, the editor of the Baptist Watchman Examiner, in 1918 to describe the movement within Baptist circles dedicated to such a position (Shelley, 1974:397).

Contemporary Fundamentalism is the most active, exclusive, intolerant, and conservative wing of Evangelicalism, both theologically and politically. Its popularity is, in part, due to its near monopoly of television and radio evangelism; its espousal of a success orientated "health and wealth" theology; its sacralising of the "American Way"; its anti-Communist, Xenophobic and anti-Moslem paranoia; and propensity to provide infallible biblical proof text panaceas to the world's problems (Bruce, 1990). Within Fundamentalism the most influential theological interpretation of history is known as dispensationalism.

2.2.3.3 Dispensationalism

Dispensationalism attempts to describe the way in which the purposes of God in human history were unfolded in a series of stages. Each is defined according to the distinct way in which God responded to humankind. These dispensations began with Creation and will end, it is claimed in the Millennial kingdom (MacReady, 1993:2). The Book of Revelation, along with other Old Testament apocalyptic writings are interpreted literally, within this dispensational scheme. These dispensations are seen as "providing us with a chronological map to guide us..." (Dyer 1991:189). Dispensationalism was popularised by C.I Schofield, especially in America from 1909 through the publication of the Schofield Reference Bible in which a dispensationalist interpretation was provided in notes accompanying the text. Wagner claims that it became the leading bible used by American Evangelicals and Fundamentalists for the next sixty years. (1992:4). Dispensationalism claims that in this present sixth dispensation, God has two separate but parallel means of working, one through Israel, the other through the Gentile Church (Ryrie, 1965:48). Thus there remains a distinction, "between Israel, the gentiles and the church." (Ryrie, 1965:137)

This view is convenient for those who, for what ever reason, wish to perpetuate a separate or even superior identity for the Jewish people apart from the church, which is sometimes relegated to the status of a parenthesis in God's future and literal kingdom rule centred on Jerusalem for a millenium. Often this kind of dogma is also asserted by those who are uncomfortable with or disillusioned by Jewish resistance to proselytism and who believe "all Israel will be saved" when Christ returns. (Derek White: 1991).

2.2.3.4 Premillennialism

A further refinement of fundamentalist Dispensationalism relates to its interpretation of Revelation 16, God's millennial rule and the events which will occur before the return of Christ. Traditionally there have been three interpretations, namely, amillennial, postmillennial, and premillennial. It is the latter which appears to be the most commonly view held today among evangelicals, the one which seems to excite fundamentalists the most, and ironically causes the greatest headache for Palestinian Christians.

For most Premillennial Dispensationalists the contemporary state of Israel is equated with biblical Israel; the Jews are still regarded as God's "chosen people" despite the fact that the apostle Peter applies the term to the Church (1 Peter 2:9); and consequently the Jews have a divine right to the land in perpetuity.

Crucial to the Premillennial Dispensationalist reading of biblical prophecy, drawn principally from Daniel and Revelation, is the assertion that the Jewish Temple will be rebuilt on the Temple Mount as a precursor to the Lord

can return to restore his kingdom centred on Jerusalem (Lindsey 1983:20-30). This pivotal event is seen as the trigger for the start of the war of Armageddon.

Clearly such views, whether promulgated by respectable Christian theological institutions, Jewish fanatics such as Baruch Ben-Yosef and the Temple Mount Yeshiva (Pevtzow, 1994:6), or simply by naive members of pilgrimage parties, are anathema to Moslems for whom the Dome of the Rock is the third most holy shrine in the world. Even more tragic, these beliefs sour relations between Moslem Arabs and Christian Arabs, and perpetuate fears of a revived Western military adventurism dating back to the Crusades. According to Armstrong, who traces the legacy of the Crusades on the contemporary Middle East, Fundamentalists "have returned to a classical and extreme religious crusading" (1988:377).

Ominously, Charles Colson, a former aide to president Richard Nixon, claims that the United States Government has contingency plans for just such a scenario, and would use force to disarm Jewish fanatics from destroying the Dome of the Rock if Israeli forces were unwilling to do so (1988:preface).

It is often only when Christians visit the Holy Land on a pilgrimage and by chance meet Palestinian Christians that they begin to realise the devastating consequences of such theological views on the indigenous church.

2.2.4 The Roots of Christian Zionism

A Jewish homeland in Palestine had been anticipated by R. Joseph ben Caspi in the thirteenth century, and advocated by the Puritan clergyman Thomas Brightman, as early as 1585, and by Sir Henry Finch M.P. in 1615. Other scholars and intellectuals who espoused the idea of the return of the Jews to Israel included John Locke, Isaac Newton, and Rousseau (Brearley, 1992:110) although it was really not until the 19th century that premillennial dispensationalism became systematised as a discreet theological tradition known as "restorationism" (Brearley, 1992:108) in which a link was drawn between biblical prophecy and the creation of a modern Jewish state.

Key advocates included the Rev. Louis Way, who directed the London Jews Society from 1809, and who forcefully articulated Christian Zionist views some ninety years before the World Zionist Congress (MECC 1988:6). Brearley claims that leading figures in British society who were sympathetic to restorationism included the Duke of Kent, Bishop Manning, the Earl of Shaftesbury and Gladstone, and that the writings of a number of significant literary figures also reflected a sympathy for restorationism. These included George Elliot, William Blake, Lord Byron, William Wordsworth, Walter Scott and Robert Browning (Brearley, 1992:110). John Newton Darby (1800-82) who founded the Plymouth Brethren was probably the most significant individual in the growing Fundamentalist Christian Zionist movement on both sides of the Atlantic. In America the Bible and Prophecy conference Movement brought thousands into contact with Darby's novel teaching about "the rapture".

Among his disciples were Dwight L. Moody, C. I Schofield and William E. Blackstone who were all dedicated to Darby's brand of premillennial dispensational Christian Zionism. Moody went on to found the Moody Bible Institute, Schofield to produce his annotated Schofield Reference Bible, and Blackstone to publish a bestselling book entitled "Jesus is Coming" in which he asserted Zionism to be the fulfilment of biblical prophecy (Wagner 1992:4). In Britain, Lord Shaftesbury campaigned, amongst other things, for a Jewish restoration and homeland in Palestine (Tuchman 1957:115). In 1838 for example he persuaded Palmerston to appoint the fellow restorationist William Young as the first British vice-consul in Jerusalem. He wrote in his diary,

What a wonderful event it is! The ancient City of the people of God is about to resume a place among the nations; and England is the first of the gentile kingdoms that ceases to "tread her down". (Pragai, 1985:45)

In 1865, James Finn, the British Consul in Jerusalem and another leading restorationist, established the Palestine Exploration Fund for the purpose of encouraging scientific exploration, archeological research and the mapping of the Holy Land. The founder of the Red Cross, the Swiss Christian philanthropist, Henri Dunant, was the first gentile to be called a "Christian Zionist" by Theodor Herzl, and one of only a handful to be invited to the First Zionist Congress held in Basle in 1897 (Brearley, 1992:112). Finally, and probably most significantly of all, Lord Arthur Balfour who pioneered the Balfour Declaration in 1917, which gave the Jews the promise of a homeland, was himself also a premillennialist and Christian Zionist (MECC 1988:7).

2.2.5 The Marriage of Religious and Political Zionism

There are a number of similarities between 19th century British and 20th Century American attitudes to Israel. In both, as the international power broker of their day, the blend of religion and politics became inextricably entwined. In the closing decades of the 19th and early 20th Century, there was a convergence of British strategic colonial interests and Christian Zionism within significant segments of the intellectual and political intelligensia. Likewise current American foreign policy in the Middle East largely coincides with that of the powerful Christian Zionist lobby (Chomsky, 1993). Both parties, now as then, favour a strong and dominant pro-American presence in the Middle East whether for pragmatic reasons of military strategy, or because it conforms to their particular eschatology. Among a consensus of American Christian Fundamentalist leaders, these twin motives, religious and

political are unashamedly connected and intrinsic to a predicted apocalyptic scenario which one writer has gone so far as to describe as, "Operation Desert Storm II" (Dyer, 1993:232).

In 1976-77 several events occurred simultaneously which had the effect of accelerating the influence of Christian Zionism as a political phenomenon in America.

A religious and political marriage was consummated between American Zionist organisations, Israeli leadership, and Fundamentalist Christian Zionists. (MECC 1988:9)

In 1977 the Likud party under Menachem Begin came to power on an expansionist Zionist platform using biblical phraseology to justify the settlement of the West Bank. It was Begin for example who first renamed Israel and the Occupied Territories as Judaea and Samaria (Servan-Schreiber, 1988:13). In America the Jewish lobby realised the potential significance of wooing the political endorsement of the powerful 50-60 million Evangelical block vote through their fundamentalist leadership. With this in mind, in 1979, the Israeli government honoured Jerry Falwell with the Jabotinsky Award in appreciation of his support of Israel. They also provided him with a Lear jet to assist in his work on their behalf (Wagner, 1992b:5).

The downfall of President Carter, in part due to his support for a Palestinian homeland and consequent loss of the Fundamentalist block vote; the exploitation of the media by a group known as "Evangelicals' Concern for Israel" including well known figures as Pat Boone and Vernon Grounds; the rise of Moral Majority as a political campaigning organisation under Jerry Falwell; and the election of Ronald Reagan as a President who publicly subscribed to a Fundamentalist premillennial dispensational theology, all combined to give a considerable boost to the Zionist cause. In the 1980 presidential elections, Wagner claims that 80% of Evangelicals supported the conservative wing of the Republican party, and Ronald Reagan in particular.

The election of Ronald Reagan ushered in not only the most pro-Israel administration in history but gave several Christian Zionists prominent political posts. In addition to the President, those who subscribed to a futurist premillennial theology and Christian Zionism included Attorney General Ed Meese, Secretary of Defence Casper Weinberger, and Secretary of the Interior James Watt....Once the Reagan Administration opened the door, leading Evangelical Christian Zionist televangelists and writers were given direct access to the President and cabinet members. Rev. Jerry Falwell, Christian Zionist Televangelist Mike Evans and author Hal Lindsey among them. (Wagner, 1992b:5)

"White House Seminars" became a regular feature of Reagan's administration bringing Christian Zionists into direct personal contact with national and Congressional leaders. In a conversation reported in the Washington Post in April of 1984, Reagan told the chief Israeli lobbyist, Tom Dine,

You know, I turn back to the ancient prophets in the Old Testament and the signs foretelling Armageddon, and I find myself wondering if-if we're the generation that is going to see that come about. I don't know if you've noted any of these prophecies lately, but believe me they certainly describe the times we're going through. (Dugger 1984)

For Fundamentalists such as Falwell the two nations of America and Israel are like Siamese twins, linked not only by common self interest but more significantly by similar religious foundations. Together they are perceived to be pitted against an evil world dominated by Communist and Islamic totalitarian regimes antithetical to the values of America and Israel. (Simon, 1984:63-64,71-72). For Reuther, the danger of this kind of Christian Zionism represented and promoted by Falwell is its, "dualistic, Manichaeic view of global politics. America and Israel together against an evil world." (1989:176)

2.2.6 The Revival of Fundamentalist Christian Zionism

According to Wagner, Christian Zionism did not become a well defined coalition until the 1970's. By then the combination of the founding of the state of Israel in 1948, the capture of Jerusalem and the West Bank in 1967, and the defeat on both occasions of the combined Arab armies, increasingly came to be seen as significant fulfillments of biblical prophecy by a new generation of American and European dispensational premillennialists (1992:4).

Billy Graham's father-in-law, Nelson Bell, the editor of the prestigious and authoritative mouthpiece of conservative Evangelicalism, Christianity Today, appeared to express the sentiments of many American Evangelicals when, in an editorial in 1967 he wrote,

That for the first time in more than 2,000 years Jerusalem is now completely in the hands of the Jews gives a student of the Bible a thrill and a renewed faith in the accuracy and validity of the Bible. (Wagner, 1992:4)

The most influential of all Fundamentalist writers is probably Hal Lindsey, whose book The Late Great Planet Earth has sold over 25 million copies and was made into a screen film in the 1970s. He has since become a consultant on Middle Eastern affairs to both the Pentagon and Israeli Government (Wagner 1992:4).

This particular kind of reading of history, coloured by a literal exegesis of selected biblical scriptures, is dualistic, triumphalist and confrontational. It asserts that the world is degenerating and that the forces of evil manifest in godless Communism and militant Islam are the real enemies of Israel. Various speculative apocalyptic scenarios are postulated, centred upon a great battle at Megiddo between massive armies that will attempt but fail to destroy Israel. These will only hasten the return of Jesus Christ to be the King of the Jews who will rule over the other nations from the rebuilt Jewish temple on the site of the destroyed Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem. (Lindsey, 1983:31-48).

Jerusalem will be the spiritual centre of the entire world...all people of the earth will come annually to worship Jesus who will rule there. (Lindsey, 1983:165)

One of the reasons Fundamentalists appear so enthusiastic about such a terrible scenario may have to do with their doctrine of the secret rapture. Just before the final conflagration they believe Jesus will,

humankind, was being slaughtered below. 144,000 Jews would bow down before Jesus and be saved, but the rest of Jewry would perish in the mother of all holocausts. (Mahoney, 1992:2)

Authors such as Lindsey and also Goldberg, a professor of Theology and Jewish Studies at the Moody Bible Institute, offer detailed illustrated plans ostensibly showing future military movements of armies and naval convoys leading up to the battle of Armageddon (Lindsey, 1970:155, & Goldberg, 1982:172).

The Moody Bible Institute and Dallas Theological Seminary have played no small part in promoting a Fundamentalist and Zionist eschatology among thousands of American ministers and missionaries (Walvoord 1988, & Dyer 1991 & 1993). Charles Dyer, a professor of Bible exposition at Dallas even includes photographs allegedly showing Saddam Hussein reconstructing Babylon to the same specifications and splendour as Nebuchadnezzar (1993:128-129). Dyer warns that this is evidence that Hussein plans to attempt to repeat Nebuchadnezzar's conquest of Israel, the only Arab ever to have done so.

The Middle East is the world's time bomb, and Babylon is the fuse that will ignite the events of the end times. (1991:rear cover)

An indication of how seriously Fundamentalists take the military aspect of their apocalyptic scenario can be seen from the content of the itinerary used by Jerry Falwell in his Friendship Tour to Israel in 1983. It included meetings with top Israeli government and military officials and an,

Israeli defence installation...strategic military positions, plus experience first hand the battle Israel faces as a nation. (Wagner, 1992b:3)

The demise of the Soviet Union, the rise of militant Islam, the "success" of the Allies in the Gulf War, and the approaching third millennium have only fuelled more imaginative speculations among Fundamentalists (Dyer 1993), while the same anti-Arab prejudices and Orientalist stereotypes persist.

Long ago the psalmist predicted the final mad attempt of the confederated Arab armies to destroy the nation of Israel...The Palestinians are determined to trouble the world until they repossess what they feel is their land. The Arab nations consider it a matter of racial honour to destroy the State of Israel. Islam considers it a sacred mission of religious honour to recapture Old Jerusalem. (Lindsey, 1983:38-39).

Following the Gulf War, the Israeli Ministry of Tourism hired the Fundamentalist musician Pat Boone to promote pilgrimages in North America through a series of costly advertisements in Evangelical journals and on television. (Wagner, 1992b:9). According to Wagner there are a number of Evangelical Christian Zionist leaders even more right wing than Falwell and Robertson, who in the 1980's had direct access to Reagan and the White House. These include Terry Risenhoover and Doug Kreiger who were very influential in gathering American support for the Jewish extremist organisation, the Temple Mount Faithful (Pevtzov, 1994:6). These particular Christian and Jewish Zionists believe that the Moslem Dome of the Rock must be destroyed and the Third Jewish Temple built in order to ensure the return of Jesus (Wagner, 1992b:6).

To such Fundamentalists the existence of a Palestinian Christian church is either ignored completely, or maligned as theologically Liberal and spiritually dead, an irrelevancy in the inexorable movement of world history leading to the imminent return of the Jewish Messiah. Basilea Schlink, for example, berates the Palestinian Intifada as "terrorism....aimed solely at destroying Israel" (1991:29). Her uncompromising views are typical of many other Zionists who elevate the State of Israel to a privileged status far above any human sanction or criticism.

Anyone who disputes Israel's right to the land of Canaan is actually opposing God and his holy covenant with the Patriarchs. He is striving against sacred, inviolable words and promises of God, which He has sworn to keep. (Schlink, 1991:22)

The founding of the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem in 1980 represents in some senses the coming of age of Christian Zionism as a high profile concerted international movement. The ICEJ was opened with the express intention of bringing comfort and support to the Jewish people and the State of Israel. It was built at a time when other governmental embassies were being moved out of Jerusalem to Tel Aviv in protest at Israel's occupation of East Jerusalem. Their promotional material includes the following explanation.

When the vision of the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem was first given it was expressed in the following concerns; to care for the Jewish people, especially for the newborn State of Israel which includes standing up for the Jews when they are attacked or discriminated against, and for Israel to live in peace and security....to care that the world wide body of Christ will be rightly related to Israel in comfort, love and prayer for her well-being; to care for the nations whose destinies will be increasingly linked to the way in which they relate to Israel: the care and preparation for the coming of the Lord. (MECC, 1988:11)

Among other things the work of the ICEJ specifically includes promoting Zionist pilgrimages, and imposing a Zionist agenda on pilgrimage itineraries. ICEJ are not alone in offering explicit support for Israel. The Israel Trust of the Anglican Church (ITAC), as CMJ are known in Israel, sponsors a Messianic Hebrew-Christian ministry in Jaffa, much to the embarrassment and sufferance of the local Palestinian Christians. Their material states,

ITAC, as the London Jews Society is known today, has always believed, proclaimed and worked towards the return of the Jewish people to Zion. This policy is rooted in a firm belief in the message of biblical prophecy which has accurately foretold these things. (ITAC, 1990)

2.2.7 A Critique of Christian Zionism

Clearly such views, whether promulgated by politicians, theological institutions, missionary societies, Jewish fanatics such as Baruch Ben-Yosef and the Temple Mount Yeshiva (Pevtzow, 1994:6), or simply by naive members of pilgrimage parties, are anathema to Palestinian Christians.

Armstrong is not alone in tracing here evidence of the legacy of the Crusades. Fundamentalists have, she claims, "returned to a classical and extreme religious crusading" (1988:377). Reuther also sees the danger of this kind of Christian Zionism in its, "dualistic, Manichaeic view of global politics. America and Israel together against an evil world." (1989:176). This "simple dualism" and "highly dogmatic thinking" is something a number of sociologists have observed as common to much American Fundamentalism in particular (Roberts, 1990:272).

It is so; God chose the Jews; the land is theirs by divine gift. These dicta cannot be questioned or resisted. They are final. Such verdicts come infallibly from Christian biblicists for whom Israel can do no wrong-thus fortified. But can such positivism, this unquestioning finality, be compatible with the integrity of the Prophets themselves? It certainly cannot square with the open peoplehood under God which is the crux of New Testament faith. Nor can it well be reconciled with the ethical demands central to law and election alike. (Cragg, 1992:238)

The Middle East Council of Churches (MECC), representing the indigenous and ancient Oriental and Eastern Churches, has been highly critical of the activities of Christian Zionists, and the ICEJ in particular. They assert, for instance, that the ICEJ has aggressively imposed an aberrant expression of the Christian faith and an erroneous interpretation of the Bible which is subservient to the political agenda of the modern State of Israel. Indeed they represent a tendency to,

nationalism on the Middle East...(rejecting)..the movement of Christian unity and inter-religious understanding which is promoted by the (indigenous) churches in the region. The Christian Zionist programme, with its elevation of modern political Zionism, provides the Christian with a world view where the gospel is identified with the ideology of success and militarism. It places its emphasis on events leading up to the end of history rather than living Christ's love and justice today. (MECC, 1988:13)

In 1988 the MECC went further insisting that Christian Zionism had no place in the Middle East and should be repudiated by the universal Church because it was "a dangerous distortion" and significant shift away from orthodox Christocentric expressions of the Christian faith (MECC 1988:preface).

(This is) ".....a fundamental disservice also to Jews who may be inspired to liberate themselves from discriminatory attitudes and thereby rediscover equality with the Palestinians with whom they are expected to live God's justice and peace in the Holy Land (MECC 1988:preface).

Jesus is de-emphasised, as is his death and resurrection, while salvation and judgement are redefined.... Christians will be judged solely according to their actions on behalf of the State of Israel. True Christians are those who leave their Gentile background and become "Israelites of God". (MECC, 1988:preface)

Although ICEJ's support for Israel is primarily political, MECC has been concerned more with its theological basis, and ICEJ's attempt to sacralize a political ideology beyond human criticism or ethical standards and to treat the

security of a Jewish State within the entire land presently occupied as a fundamental axiom of their supra-historical eschatology. (MECC 1988:preface)

The declarations following the first and second Christian Zionist Congresses, organised by ICEJ in 1985 and 1988, according to MECC show a significant shift away from orthodox Christocentric expressions of the Christian faith. Based on the writings of ICEJ's spokesman, Rev. Jan Willem van der Hoeven, MECC argue that the "Christian Zionist",

designed to bring "comfort and support" to modern political Israel. Accordingly, Jesus is de-emphasised, as is His death and resurrection, while salvation and judgment are redefined.... Christians will be judged solely according to their actions on behalf of the state of Israel. True Christians are those who leave their Gentile background and become "Israelites of God" (MECC 1988:preface).

It is therefore perhaps not surprising that among the Middle East churches generally, Christian Zionism is regarded as a devious heresy and an unwelcome and alien intrusion into their culture, which advocates an ethnocentric and nationalist political agenda running counter to their work of reconciliation, and patient witness among both Jews and Moslems. (MECC 1988:1)

As one leading Anglican cleric described it, "Making God into a real estate agent is heart breaking...they are not preaching Jesus any more" [Palestinian, 1993:3.9]. They are, in the words of another Palestinian clergyman, "instruments of destruction" [Palestinian, 1994.3.23]. Another senior churchman was equally forthright,

Their presence here is quite offensive....projecting themselves as really the Christians of the land... with total disregard for the indigenous Christian community. [Palestinian, 1993:3.12]

Similar criticisms of the Israel Trust of the Anglican Church (CMJ) have been made by Palestinian Anglican clergy.

CMJ are propagating Zionism rather than Christianity. It is working against the interests of the Anglican Church in Israel. [Palestinian, 1994:3.23]

Essentially, Christian Zionism fails to recognise the deep seated problems that exist between Palestinians and Israelis; it distorts the Bible and marginalises the universal imperative of the Christian gospel; has grave political ramifications and ultimately ignores the sentiments of the overwhelming majority of indigenous Christians (Chapman, 1992:277).

It is a situation that many believe Israel exploits to her advantage, cynically welcoming American Christian Zionists as long as they remain docile and compliant with Israeli government policy. Consequently,

Local Christians are caught in a degree of museumization. They are aware of tourists who come in great volume from the West to savour holy places but who are, for the most part, blithely disinterested in the people who indwell them. The pain of the indifference is not eased insofar as the same tourism is subtly manipulated to make the case for the entire legitimacy of the statehood that regulates it. (Cragg, 1992:28)

Cragg offers this final condemnation of Christian Zionism,

The overriding criteria of Christian perception have to be those of equal grace and common justice. From these there can be no proper exemption, however alleged or presumed. Chosenness cannot properly be either an ethnic exclusivism or a political facility. (Cragg, 1992:237)

Christian Zionism therefore stands condemned for its uncritical endorsement of the Israeli political right and its inexcusable lack of compassion for the Palestinian tragedy. In doing so it has legitimised their oppression.

It is perhaps not surprising then that Palestinians have looked for solace from Liberation Theology, since in so many other parts of the world, it has championed the cause of the oppressed and those denied justice, and provided a theological justification for restitution, if not revolution.

2.2.8 Liberation Theology: The Embarrassing Silence

Liberation Theology emerged from Latin America in the mid-1960s as a reaction to much European theology which had failed to engage in the political and social struggle many were now facing under oppressive military regimes, but instead had settled for a privatised, individualised and intellectualised faith. Liberation theology is essentially a "critical reflection on Christian praxis (action) in the light of the Word" (Kirk, 1994). Liberation theology, with its bias toward the poor and resistance to imperialism, has subsequently been adopted by other sections of the universal church, especially where it is suffering under poverty or injustice. The development of an indigenous Palestinian liberation theology is a relatively recent phenomenon. Coincidentally, three significant works were published in the same year (Ateek, 1990a; Rantisi, 1990; Chacour, 1990). However, there has apparently been little enthusiasm

among other liberation theologians around the world to enter into dialogue with their Palestinian counterparts. Notable exceptions include Rosemary Ruether (1989 & 1992), Don Wagner (1992a) and Marc Ellis, who is a Jewish theologian (1992:135-139).

In 1989 the Maryknoll Fathers organised a month long symposium entitled "The Summer Justice and Peace programme". The purpose was to consider the international significance of the writings of Gustavo Gutierrez on the 20th anniversary of his seminal publication. A total of 49 theologians from around the world contributed and their papers were subsequently published. (Ellis & Maduro, 1989). Palestinian theologians were conspicuous by their absence. None had apparently been invited. Another major work on contemporary international liberation theology likewise completely ignores the existence of a significant Palestinian perspective (Andelson & Dawsey 1992). A year after the Maryknoll symposium, in 1990 the First International Symposium on Palestinian Liberation Theology was held at the ecumenical centre at Tantur. Invitations were sent to liberation theologians all around the world but, according to Reuther,

Palestinian issue on their agenda. No Latin American theologian came. (1992:xi).

While Africa was represented by three theologians, only one came from Asia and one from Europe. This apparent ostracism may be due to the centrality of the "Exodus" theme in much traditional Liberation Theology. While a popular motif among oppressed communities in other parts of the world, it has alienated the Palestinian church who have experienced the effects of its use against them by Zionists (Uris, 1958; Kirk, 1979:95-105; & Gutierrez, 1974:158-159).

Despite this discouragement there has been some constructive critical reflection and dialogue between Palestinian and Western theologians, notably between Naim Ateek and Rosemary Ruether (Ateek, 1990a:86-92, & Ruether, 1992).

2.2.9 The Living Stones Movement: A Third Way

The Middle East Council of Churches (MECC), World Vision and the Church Missionary Society (CMS) are among a number of agencies that have done much to encourage direct personal contact between Western and Palestinian Christians. This has resulted in a growing understanding of, sympathy for and solidarity with the Palestinian Church in their struggle for peace through justice. Those within the "Living Stones" movement recognise the distorting effects of cultural perceptions in the process of theological reflection and therefore are concerned that Western Christians listen to what Palestinians have to say about themselves (Witvliet, 1987:258).

Research suggests that some leading Evangelicals have re-thought their views on Zionism and in particular on "the morality of paying for the dehumanisation of millions of Palestinians" (Wagner, 1992b:1). Following a Jerry Falwell sponsored "Prophecy Trip" to Jerusalem for instance, John Mahoney, Executive Director of Americans for Middle East Understanding, observed,

Flying out of Tel Aviv I asked the young minister next to me if he had spoken to any Palestinians. "No," he said, "But I think I saw one or two from the bus." What has happened since the early 1980s is that some Evangelicals have gotten off the bus and have ventured out into the West Bank and Gaza. What they have seen - and in some cases personally felt - is the dehumanisation of an entire people....they have recalled what Jesus told them they should do as they waited for his Second Coming: visit the imprisoned, comfort the afflicted, strive for peace, love one another. (Wagner, 1992b:2)

Such a process of conscientization among a small but increasing number of Evangelicals has not been without its critics. When greater contact with Palestinians is urged, other voices are quick to condemn. In a controversial book entitled *The Forgotten Faithful*, Said Aburish, himself a Moslem, castigates the leadership of the Western Churches for their "malevolent detachment" (1993:157) and culpable acquiescence in the face of the Israeli government's,

curriculum, the prevention of priests from reaching their churches...and the desecration of Anglican churches in Awe and Ramleh by Zionist extremists. (Aburish, 1993:104)

In a fierce rebuttal of Aburish's book, published in the Church Times, a representative of the Council for Christians and Jews (CCJ), criticised him for being "part of a major campaign now being waged to win over Christians in the West to the Palestinian cause, and ensure that Israel loses Western Christian support.". When challenged, the person could not substantiate these claims, but made further allegations less credible.

Militant Palestinian groups - PLO, Hamas - are using the churches. It is very easy to identify this - same vocabulary, same phrases, same stories. Our friends in Israel see this at first hand. [Expatriate, 1993:4.9]

These three theological positions, Christian Zionism, Liberation Theology and the Living Stones have had the greatest impact on the Palestinian Christian community. How these and other theologies determine the nature of pilgrimages will be considered further.

2.3 The Political Ramifications of Pilgrimages to the Holy Land

Tourism to Israel grew significantly in the late 1950s and 1960s. Cheaper and faster travel opened up the possibility of a holiday or pilgrimage to the Holy Land to a much wider body of people.

Shrewd marketers tapped into this new reservoir and the era of wholesale mass tourism emerged. These new tourists, a great many of them from the United States, had little knowledge or even interest in the churches of the Middle East. They stayed in hotels rather than in homes or convents, stayed for a shorter period of time.....and measured the quality of their experience by the quantity of sites visited and souvenirs accumulated. (Ekin, 1990:27)

Pilgrimages are essentially a specialised form of tourism and are seen as a lucrative but small niche market by many secular tourist agencies and in particular by the Israeli Ministry of Tourism. According to Shabtai Shay, senior deputy director general and head of their tourism marketing administration, following Jewish tourism, the pilgrimage market,

abroad. It is a very important market, reliable throughout a broad range of circumstances, and much less affected by political developments than standard tourism. Pilgrimage tourism generates approximately \$400 million annually, a figure which represents an average per-pilgrim expenditure of \$800 to \$1000. (Israel Travel News, 1993:7)

2.3.1 The Socio-Ethical Impact of Tourism in the Holy Land

Israel and the Occupied Territories are usually perceived as one country by pilgrims, unaware that to travel between the major pilgrimage sites in Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Jericho or Nazareth involves passing through disputed territory. This is a view which the Israeli government is anxious to perpetuate. The myth that there is one unified and democratic Israel, from the Mediterranean to the Jordan, and from Eilat to Mt Hermon is cultivated on everything from maps to souvenirs, from flags to road signs, while the UN Green Line demarcating the 1967 borders of Israel and Jordan, and the existence of a West Bank is all but ignored. This is despite the fact that they are two very different regions politically, culturally and economically.

The Israelis, who represent 60% of the population, are essentially "First World" and European in origin and identity, language, culture and political aspiration. The Palestinians, who make up 40%, are predominantly Arab orientated, "Third World" and regard the Intifada as their national struggle for liberation and autonomy from Israeli oppression.

The civil strife between the two populations, like the gross inequalities of standard of living, political representation, and civil rights underlying it, is in large part rendered invisible to the touristic gaze. (Bowman, 1992a:121)

Probably the most blatant attempt by Israelis to superimpose their political and economic agenda in the quest for tourist dollars can be seen in Gaza. Most people would not equate Gaza with exotic holidays but with refugee camps. However, in spite of the September 1993 peace accord, Israeli entrepreneurs with the support of their government are transforming Southern Gaza into a lucrative tourist resort. New roads have been built avoiding Palestinian camps turning Gush Katif from a collection of Israeli settlements into a tourist centre complete with 24 hour military protection. In a [Time](#) article entitled "Holidays in Hell", Fedarno describes how, with its unspoiled beaches and hot southern Mediterranean weather, the aim is to create a resort to rival Eilat. (1993:42-43).

It is perhaps therefore inevitable that pilgrims, ignorant of these realities or traumas are likely to misunderstand what they encounter, display insensitivity toward those they meet, and return home with experiences which are likely to confirm the presuppositions and expectations they held before going,

imaginings of the "Bible land" or with a sense of "Israel" as an oasis of Western democracy surrounded by bellicose wastes of "Arab" tyranny. (Bowman, 1992a:121)

Cragg concurs with this view arguing that,

Sharp moral issues are easily submerged by outsiders in archaeology or tourism, while the local Christianity is relegated to sentiment and the museum. (Cragg, 1992: 235).

2.3.2 The Control of Pilgrimages by the Israeli Government

Israel clearly relies heavily on American aid and Western tourism to sustain its continued military occupation of the West Bank and Gaza along with Southern Lebanon and the Syrian Golan Heights. Without such funding it would be unable to pursue its aggressive immigration and settlement policy, especially of Russian Jews into West Bank settlements. Tourism and pilgrimages are therefore a vital source of this revenue, especially since pilgrims tend to continue to visit Israel even in times of political tension. Therefore it is in Israel's interest to nurture support from those Christian constituencies showing sympathy for Israel as well as to create an image in which everything "is under control and quiet on the Eastern front" (Eber, 1991:4).

Beside the powerful biblical images of Israel as the "Chosen People", there are therefore also strong political and economic incentives in portraying Israel as the bastion of Western democracy, "a defenceless Israeli David pitted against a ruthless and tyrannical Arab Goliath" (Eber, 1991:4). It would appear part of the Israeli strategy to exploit the "aversive racism" of Western Fundamentalist Christians, to reinforce their own "dominative racism" through which they control the land and its economy (Roberts, 1990:265). Shabtai Shay, head of the tourism marketing administration of the Israeli Ministry of Tourism admitted that they had surveyed the market in the United States and,

strongest potential for traffic increases. We're concentrating our efforts in the 12 states that constitute the "Bible Belt", and we're promoting heavily and intensively there. We're advertising in that region and are taking the fullest advantage possible of media which is read or viewed specifically by the Southern Baptist population. For the past two years, Pat Boone and other "high profile" figures have worked with us to promote Israel through the appropriate media. (Israel Travel News, 1993:8)

Perhaps it is no coincidence that the Southern Baptists have recently ceased funding the only free and charitable hospital for Palestinians in Gaza, the Ahli Hospital [Palestinian, 1994:3.34]. As one Palestinian put it,

They stress this is a small country. The Arabs have 22 countries. We are giving the Christians and Moslems freedom to pray when before there was no freedom. It is very politicised and aims to dehumanise the Palestinians and at the same time present the Israelis as the protectors of the Holy Places. [Palestinian, 1994:3.27]

In wishing to cultivate tourism and Western funding, the Ministry of Tourism seeks to propagate a "benign image" concentrating on the location of Israel, as a fun loving, sun drenched Mediterranean holiday destination, while at the same time exploiting its unique "added value" attraction as the archaeological, historical and religious home to the world's three monotheistic religions. With the occupation of the West Bank in 1967, and especially of the old city of Jerusalem, Bethlehem and Jericho, Israel appropriated what Eber calls "a touristic gold mine" (1991:4). A representative of the MECC Liaison Office in Jerusalem is in no doubts about the agenda of the Israeli Ministry of Tourism,

I think its difficult for the Jewish State to understand spirituality here. That's been entirely overlooked in the name of mass production and the best way to mass produce these tours and get as many people here and as many dollars and pounds here as possible. [Palestinian, 1994:3.22]

It does not appear that the Israeli Ministry of Tourism distinguishes between pilgrims and tourists, and that Israel's political agenda determines the way pilgrims are viewed and treated.

They would like to convince everybody who comes to visit this land that the land is Jewish, the culture is Jewish, and that everything done by the Jewish authorities is justified by the Bible. So we are facing more than one problem. First that the Bible is used as a political issue, and secondly the land is reduced to one part of its inhabitants. They try to avoid all references to the Christian culture or non-Jewish culture in the country. [Palestinian, 1994:3.26]

Based on 25 year's experience, one particular Palestinian tour guide is convinced that it is Israeli government policy to ensure all visitors, whether tourists or pilgrims, visit the three key sites of Yad Vashem, the Wailing Wall and Masada, in order to perpetuate a favourable image of Israel, stifle criticism and reinforce their claim to the land.

The Holocaust Museum reminds those who come that Christians are guilty of what happened to Jews in history, and to represent Israel as a victim. The Wailing Wall is the religious place where they speak about waiting for the coming of the Messiah, and Masada represents a nation struggling for life and freedom. The whole story of how Masada should never fall again. This is the famous idea of being free, being independent and being ready to die for freedom rather than as slaves in their own country. [Palestinian, 1994:3.26]

Clearly the images of the Holy Land which pilgrims bring with them are essentially confirmed or modified by the people and agencies they meet. Inevitably, Israeli and Palestinian guides will offer pilgrims very different interpretations of the same places and the events associated with them. The Israeli Ministry of Tourism has therefore actively worked to gain full control of every aspect of the business, whether Tour Operators, hotels, guides or transport companies. One Palestinian Travel Operator epitomised the feelings of all those interviewed,

Throughout the years the Israelis have tried, not to abolish but suppress the Palestinian tourism sector, they try to let their Operators have all the business, particularly their guides. [Operator, 1994:2.15]

For Jewish guides who invariably and increasingly lead Christian pilgrimage groups, there is an inextricable link between both Roman and Nazi genocide and those forces that allegedly continue to threaten Israel wishing to "drive Israel into the Sea". One Palestinian Operator described her repeated experience,

I employ Israeli guides, the moment they go into the bus they speak about the state of Israel, about the Holocaust. [Operator, 1994:2.11]

Inevitably Palestinian guides interpret the significance of Yad Vashem very differently, comparing, if brave enough to do so, Nazi atrocities against the Jews with Israeli treatment of Palestinians [Palestinian, 1994:3.26].

the time to worship with the indigenous Christians on Sunday mornings. I've seen many itineraries where pilgrim groups spend their Sundays at Yad Vashem Holocaust Museum or Tel Aviv University. [Palestinian, 1994:3.22]

The most insidious means by which the Israeli authorities seek to control pilgrimages is in the exploitation of language and propaganda.

2.3.2.1 The Use of Language and Israeli Propaganda

Language is a powerful tool of propaganda. As has already been noted, the contested claims to the land of Palestine are demarcated through the careful use of labels with which to describe the land and its people. Inevitably the Israeli establishment have made careful use of language to enhance and reinforce their claim to the land. Consequently, the generic term "Arab" is always used in preference to the specific "Palestinian", other than in the context of terrorism.

Supporters of Israel torture, mangle and disguise the English language to keep from saying the dreaded "P" word....Reagan once gave Israel fits because he used the words "Palestinian" and "Homeland" in the same sentence. (David, 1993:105)

As recently as the autumn of 1993, the Israeli Ministry of Tourism tried to erase the use of the term "Palestinian Christian" from publicity material, preferring to equate "Arab" with Moslem, and "Christian" with sites of antiquity. It is clearly not in their interests to perpetuate the fact that there exists an ancient and indigenous Christian Palestinian community [Expatriate, 1994: 4.12].

One particular Messianic Israeli guide used every opportunity during a particular pilgrimage to present a Zionist perspective. On being asked about the claims of the Palestinians he gave to members of the tour group a leaflet entitled "Palestinians". In it he attempted to deny the existence of a Palestinian people, culture or identity, equating them with ubiquitous Arabs who could live anywhere other than Israel.

I am convinced that there is not and never has been a "Palestinian" people. Nevertheless there is someone who wants to create a "Palestinian" people in order to eradicate the people of Israel from the Land of Israel. (Anon, 1991)

This experience would tend to confirm the claim made by Eber and Bowman, that there is a definite "mobilising" of racist Orientalist assumptions about Arabs in touristic material and discourse which is aimed at influencing Western visitors. It is repeatedly alleged, for example, that Jewish guides warn groups against visiting the Old City or dealing with Arab traders.

It is also repeatedly insinuated that Arabs are different or dangerous and cannot be trusted whereas Israelis are "just like us" [Operator, 1993:2.6].

Then along with that goes the indoctrination, the wilful ignorance of the Palestinian side. How many guides point out that Bethlehem is in the West Bank, or that when they are driving up the Jordan Valley that they are in the West Bank, that the area is in dispute, that there is a living church here, etc, etc? Not very many. The Jewish guides tell their groups not to go into the Old City, not to go over to East Jerusalem, the Arab terrorists will get you and so on. We have this problem, people who won't come 100 metres across the Green Line to worship at St George's. [Palestinian, 1994:3.20]

It is often implied that Western Christians and Jews share the same ethical and political values, facing together the mutual enemy of Islamic, meaning Arab, Fundamentalism. Zionists like to repeat the bogus cry of Islam, "First the Saturday people, then the Sunday people".

By contrasting Israeli familiarity with an unseen but allegedly primitive and threatening Palestinian culture, travellers are encouraged to feel they are "in good hands" with their Israeli guides. (Bowman, 1992b:126)

Bowman further claims that the Israeli authorities seek to inculcate the belief that continued access to religious sites by foreign Christians is in some way dependent on the protection of the Israeli authorities.

The rhetoric that aligns Jewish settlers, members of the Israeli Defence Forces, Christian tourists and God is not however something reserved only for Fundamentalists and Charismatics. (Bowman, 1992a:126)

The Director of the Israeli Ministry of Tourism made such an equation at a conference for Western travel agents called "Pilgrimage 1984",

There is a dark wave of fanaticism which we as children of God will fight. We will fight to squash the fanaticism which threatens freedom of access to holy places. The more pilgrims, the more chance that peace will come. There is no tolerance for human lives in the lands around us. You are carrying on a mission of peace, understanding and love between people and land - a torch to assure that our people can live in the land in peace and tourism. (Bowman, 1992a:126)

In 1992, a series of provocative advertisements were placed in the Christian press by the Israel Ministry of Tourism, ostensibly to promote pilgrimages.

These adverts used a photograph of the Old City of Jerusalem taken from the Mount of Olives, both of which are in disputed territory. Underneath the photograph was the bold caption, "It could only be Israel".

A more recent and insensitive example is contained in the April/May 1994 edition of Holy Land: Biblical Past and Modern Israel, a free newspaper produced by the Israeli Ministry of Tourism for pilgrims and made available at most religious sites. Just weeks after the Hebron massacre the paper included a major article entitled "Hebron and Kiryat Arba: Jewish Presence Creates Headlines - Settlements Have Historical Basis". The article expressed no regret at the slaughter of so many Palestinians while praying in their mosque. Instead it justified the Israeli settlements on the grounds that Abraham once lived there, so, "Abraham becomes the first "Jew" to own a land "legally" in the Holy Land". The settlements are allegedly, "the continuation of tens of generations of Jews living in the land of their fathers". Pilgrims are even invited by the settlers to come and meet them "and see for yourselves" (Whitaker, 1994:6). Cragg explains why this kind of language and approach is so controversial and divisive.

Confronting them (Palestinians) is the expertise of Israeli propaganda and image projection. The fact that it all transpires around "the holy land" only makes an honest objectivity more difficult to reach and daunting to sustain. It is urgent for outsiders to reckon perceptively with the contradictions between spiritual ancestor and political enemy under which Christians suffer in the Middle East. For Israel is both. The very name is double edged. So is the query so often addressed to Palestinians: Why not peace with Israel? Which Israel? Territorially there are several...Spiritually the dimensions are no less indeterminate...Zionism has often utilised ambiguity. Its intentions and measures to fulfil them have been deliberately shrewd and flexible. (1992:235,240)

This issue of language and propaganda will be explored in more detail in the fourth chapter of this dissertation through an analysis of the language used by Tour Operators in their pilgrimage brochures and itineraries.

Clearly, guides have great influence through their personal contact with pilgrims and can authoritatively tell the "story" of the land, its history and contemporary meaning. It is therefore in the interests of the Israeli government to ensure a "politically correct" image is communicated.

2.3.2.2 The Eradication of Palestinian Guides

In 1967 when Israel took the Occupied Territories they also acquired the Arab tourist agencies and most of the sites of Christian antiquity which had formerly been in Jordanian hands. It was soon realised how strategic the role of the tour guide is in determining what tourists and pilgrims experience.

The "place" tourists see is not simply a reified image of their expectations, or a real terrain, but the result of a dialogue between tourists and those persons and institutions which mediate between the tourist gaze and its objects. Tourist experiences of Israel and the Israeli Occupied Territories are discursively structured not only by touristic pre-dispositions to "see" a particular holy land, but also by the strategies of tour guides who fashion tourist's experiences of sites and of the land as a whole. While introducing tourists to particular sites, guides also provide interpretive frameworks which tourists use in determining the significance of those sites and in constructing generalised images of the character of the land and its people. (Bowman, 1992b:134)

Moshe Sharon, Begin's Arab Affairs Advisor, in an article entitled "The Propaganda War" published in the Jerusalem Post in 1983, insisted that since Palestinian guides were liable to spread propaganda, they must be "neutralised" (Bowman, 1992b:131). The promotion of sympathy for Israel was and continues to be seen as a vital role of tour guiding. Moshe Dayan is attributed to have once said, "I'd rather have an Arab bomber pilot over Tel Aviv than an Arab tour guide" (Bowman, 1992b:131).

Clearly Palestinian guides are seen as a threat since they are able to expose foreign pilgrims to aspects of life in the Holy Land which contradict the benign, peace loving image, which the Israeli Ministry of Tourism wishes to perpetuate.

It is a legal requirement that any tour group using commercial transport must have a registered Israeli guide.

In 1967 there were 260 Arab guides licensed by the Jordanian Ministry of Tourism to lead pilgrimage groups through the sites of Jerusalem and the West Bank. By 1984 only 38 Palestinian guides held equivalent Israeli licenses and most of these were in their late 50s or 60s and nearing retirement. In the same year, according to the Israel Central Bureau of Statistics, there were 3,356 Israeli guides. By 1984 therefore, Palestinian guides constituted one tenth of one percent of the available guides leading tourist and pilgrimage groups in the Holy Land (Bowman, 1992b:131). Based on Arab statistical sources, Ekin draws similar conclusions.

Jerusalem Palestinians also cite systematic obstacles as proof that the Israeli government discourages contact between foreigners and Palestinians and exercises favouritism in the market at their expense: since 1967, no new Palestinian Tour Operator has been allowed to open; only those agencies in existence prior to 1967 have been allowed to operate....In 1984, for example, the Arab Guide Union reported a total of 99 Arab tourist guides. Many were near retirement and only 42 had Class A licenses. By contrast, nearly 3000 Israelis possessed the Class A license. (Ekin, 1990:27)

Bowman goes on to describe in detail the tremendous difficulties which Palestinians experience when trying to gain a tour guide licence or survive the training course. He concludes with the opinion that, "the guiding course...is a closed shop for the Jews." (1992b:133). The consequence of this is that increasingly Christian pilgrimage groups are unable to obtain the services of a Christian guide, and instead must rely on Jewish guides who may or may not be sympathetic or cognizant with Christian beliefs [Operators 1993:2.6; 1994:2.11].

That Palestinian Christians must sit by and watch the fleets of tour buses bring Christians from overseas to their homeland, and are denied the right to guide these fellow believers to the sites and shrines they and their ancestors have worshipped at for centuries, is deeply offensive. They are particularly upset on hearing frequent instances of insensitive Jewish guides.

A Jewish guide told him in Bethlehem "Here was born Mr Jesus". A Christian would not say "Mr Jesus". The guide will go to the Holy Sepulchre and say "Here died Jesus", a Christian will say "here is the tomb of the Living Jesus". [Palestinian, 1993:3.7]

He said "it is a legend". This is a Jewish guide leading a Christian group to pilgrim sites, saying it is a legend. It's a legend because he is showing them stones but not a legend when he shows them the Christians, the Living Stones, that live there. This is one of the examples I have experienced. [Palestinian, 1993:3.4]

They stopped one of my tour guides near the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and asked him for his licence. He didn't have one, so they ordered him not to continue with the tour. The group of tourists with him protested saying that they needed him, but it was no use. The Israeli army officer who was in charge told the tourists that "a tour guide needs a licence to visit Mr Jesus" and our tour guide didn't have one. Can you imagine it? Only Jewish tour guides can visit Mr Jesus. (Jabra Khanu, Guiding Star Tours, in Aburish, 1993:31)

The attempt to eradicate Palestinian guides is seen as part of a concerted strategy to ensure "the political non-existence of Palestinians" (Cragg, 1992:241) and that pilgrims and tourists leave with a favourable, albeit distorted image of Israel. Over the past three years Bethlehem University have run a course in hotel management and tour guiding in an attempt to reverse what will otherwise result in the inevitable extinction of Palestinian guides by the year 2000. In 1992, a group of 12 students were trained and since 1993 a further eight are currently undergoing training. The Israeli authorities have so far however refused to grant licenses that would enable these Palestinian guides to operate in Israel as well as the Occupied Territories [Expatriate, 1994:4.12]. The excuse given, it is claimed, has to do with the security of the State.

2.3.2.3 The Abuse of Security Measures

The Israeli authorities further influence the content and scope of pilgrimage itineraries by exploiting the security situation. They do this in several ways.

The most direct means is by restricting access to such places as Gaza, Upper Galilee, East Jerusalem, and the West Bank towns such as Bethlehem, Jericho and Hebron, through curfews or by imposing a closed military area order. The emergency regulations in effect turn the whole of Israel and the West Bank into a military state for Palestinians, who suffer from such expedient measures as detention without trial, house demolitions and deportations which were first introduced by the British, ironically, to combat Jewish terrorism. (Morley, 1994:5) If pilgrimage groups have a Jewish guide or are using a yellow plated Israeli bus there will be additional reluctance on the part of the guide or driver to visit such places.

Robert Fisk, the journalist, described what happened to him on a recent journey to Gaza.

In Gaza, a "curfew" exists whenever an Israeli officer produces a piece of paper and scribbles a name, date and hour on it. It happened to us yesterday when we tried to visit.....Quick as a flash, out came a printed

sheet from the pocket of the green uniformed policeman....who swiftly filled in the words "Jabaliya", "21 April" and "0600 hours" beneath the title "closed military area". Would we like to take a picture of him signing the piece of paper? Of course we would. Kafka had nothing on this (Fisk, 1993a).

Even under the 1993 Peace Agreement, the Israeli military retain the right to enter, restrict access, or close Gaza, while maintaining full control of the one third of Gaza occupied by Jewish settlers. Bethlehem, and the surrounding settlements of Beit Sehour and Beit Jala, continue to suffer from the effects of Israeli security measures, probably more than any other site of Christian pilgrimage in the West Bank. In one such incident,

A visitor to Bethlehem this Christmas reported that while the worshippers at the Anglican Christmas Eve service numbered about 450, the Israeli soldiers assigned to the area numbered about 900. Every worshipper was bodily searched by them before being allowed to enter the church. (Ekin, 1990:27)

Another pilgrim described a Christmas service in which armed Israeli soldiers walked up and down the aisles of the Church of the Nativity during the midnight service [Pilgrim, 1994:1.7].

A further security measure used is the sometimes lengthy and intimidating interrogation of pilgrims on departure from British and Israeli airports, ostensibly on the grounds of airline security, but which are in reality an important means of gathering intelligence data. Tourists and pilgrims alike are asked for the names and addresses of any Palestinians they know living in Israel or the Occupied Territory. Greater scrutiny and questioning then ensues if it is suspected, or admitted, that contact with Palestinians has, or is, likely to occur. For the naive or novice, such questioning, in the name of security, is an effective means of discouraging casual contact with Palestinians.

For the recalcitrant, or those of Palestinian origin, strip searching and other humiliating practices are used to intimidate and coerce. (Chacour, 1990:1-5)

Bowman describes a more serious and devious strategy of Israeli intelligence to sour relationships between tourists and Palestinians. In August 1989, an Israeli newspaper reported on covert operations undertaken by the Israeli Defence Force (IDF) in Bethlehem, entitled "Israeli agents disguised as tourists shoot Arabs." The incident, in which it is claimed IDF agents dressed as tourists, shot and killed a Palestinian demonstrator, will ensure that in future tourists are viewed with suspicion by Palestinians.

Such suspicion will poison relations between Palestinian residents and those few tourists who, disregarding warnings of ministry of tourism handouts and the statements of Israeli guides, enter Bethlehem city. This will strangle one of the few remaining channels of communication between indigenous Palestinians and foreign visitors. (Bowman, 1992a:134)

Such arousal of fear and insecurity inevitably leads to a decline in contact between pilgrims and Palestinians. In times of political tension or as in the Gulf War, it is the Palestinian economy which suffers most acutely, and the tourist sector the greatest.

During the Gulf War, for nearly a year and a half there wasn't a single tourist. Here it is a problem when there are no tourists. On the Israeli side it is not such a problem because they depend on local tourism also. When the tourists are not here, the hotels close, because they cannot afford to keep their staff on. They have to close, so it's difficult to renew or invest. [Palestinian, 1994:3.31]

Looking to the future some Palestinians believe that the psychological propaganda war will not diminish even if there is progress in the peace negotiations.

In terms of the tourist industry the ultimate impact of the peace process will be to step up the rhetoric because if there is going to be a Palestinian tourist authority there will be real competition to lay hands on these pilgrims. [Palestinian, 1994:3.22]

Following a pilgrimage conducted in May 1994, a journalist contacted the Israeli Embassy in London to discuss "atrocities" he had witnessed or heard about.

When I first contacted the Israeli embassy they were laughing at my suggestions of human rights abuses, because I would not give them specific details of who, where, why, what, when, etc.....So, I checked with the people in Israel and faxed a three page dossier of information on thirteen human rights abuses/terrorist attacks to the Israeli embassy. It was then that I was asked if I would like to visit the embassy to discuss the matter with them. I was also asked which tourist guides we used? Which tour company arranged our visit? (only because many people might want to visit the Gaza Strip and he wanted to know where to point people in the right direction!). My lips are sealed. [Pilgrim, 1994:1.42]

As long as the bulk of the West Bank remains under Israeli military occupation they retain in effect a touristic monopoly on its religious sites, on promotion, access, guiding and accommodation, as well as a tight rein on what

pilgrims get to see or whom they meet. The Palestinian tourist economy on the other hand lacks direct and independent access to pilgrims, and therefore remains largely stagnant, frozen at pre-1967 levels (Amad, 1994:14).

2.3.3 The Decline in Pilgrim Contact with Indigenous Christians

The survival of indigenous Christian communities in the Holy Land has always depended to a great extent on personal contact and revenue from visiting pilgrims, especially when living under Moslem, Turkish and Jewish rule. Economically, the presence of literally millions of pilgrims encouraged the development of the service sector, providing food and accommodation, particularly in Jerusalem. Delegations of devout pilgrims from remote villages in Turkey and Syria, for example, would bring expensive gifts given on behalf of their entire community to one of the churches in Jerusalem. Prior to the 1917 Revolution, Russians were among the most numerous and generous of pilgrims. Reports indicate that as many as 12,000 to 15,000 pilgrims would travel every year from remote parts of Russia, congregate in Odessa and then travel together in giant caravans. (Ekin, 1980:26)

Given the duration and arduous nature of such a pilgrimage, they genuinely were seen as a "once in a life time" journey. Russian Orthodox pilgrims for example would be baptised in the Jordan in their burial shrouds, since they were now ready to die. Most pilgrims would stay in the Holy Land for both Christmas and Easter, a four month stay, hosted by members of their ethnic community or denomination. The Russians, Syriacs, Abyssinians, Franciscans, Americans and Anglicans were among those who developed "colonies", purchasing properties in and around Jerusalem to accommodate fellow pilgrims. Many more pilgrims would stay in the homes of local Christians, and this face to face contact strengthened and reinforced ties between hosts and visitors.

From a cultural perspective, contact with pilgrims from such diverse ethnic and denominational backgrounds invigorated the spiritual life of the Church in the Holy Land. It gave the indigenous Christians an appreciation of their own spiritual traditions but also the wider ecumenicity of the church. This is how one Palestinian living in Jerusalem described the preparations his family made to receive pilgrims, a practice which still continues among the Greek and Cypriot communities.

We would start preparations weeks ahead of time. The family would cram themselves and all our belongings into 2 rooms and we would put 5-6 beds in the other rooms. You could rent these beds and the mattresses to put in your home. Then we would rent the space to Copts or Greeks. They would rent the space for the entire 15 days around Easter. We would provide the water and the kerosene for cooking. For every bed you would charge something like \$30 for the whole period which in those days was a big amount. But the more important implication of this was the connections and relations among the people was strengthened. (Ekin, 1980:26-27)

With the establishment of the State of Israel, a radical and progressive change occurred in the organisation and pattern of pilgrimages such that today the majority of pilgrims appear largely ignorant of the presence of a Palestinian church. The development of cheaper packaged holidays, the aggressive marketing strategies of Israeli tourist agencies, the building of more modern Jewish hotels in places like West Jerusalem, Netanya, Tiberias and Tel Aviv, together with Israeli government restrictions placed on Arab agents and hotel development in East Jerusalem, Bethlehem and Nazareth has resulted in a decline in direct personal contact between pilgrims and Palestinians. The number of hotel beds available for pilgrims in Arab hotels in East Jerusalem and Bethlehem has remained static at the 1967 figure of around 900 beds [Operator, 1994:2.14]. Local Christians, not unnaturally, feel isolated and abandoned.

The thousands of visitors who came to Jerusalem every year used to be a source of spiritual invigoration and rejuvenation for the local people. Now, we have all these tourists, and the local community, particularly the Christians, are dying from lack of spiritual water. (Ekin, 1990:25)

Following the 1967 and 1973 wars, and more recently the Gulf War, unresolved political tensions have made it extremely difficult, if not impossible, for Arab and Palestinian Christians living in the Middle East to visit Jerusalem. This has merely exacerbated the sense of isolation felt by the local community. At the same time the proportion of pilgrims visiting from Europe and America has increased. Their theological perspective tends to be unfamiliar with the predominantly Orthodox Palestinian Christian culture and has also increasingly become sympathetic toward the State of Israel and the Jewish people. Consequently a significant rift has developed between the local Palestinian Christian community and the majority of pilgrims (Ekin, 1990:27).

2.3.4 Different Types of Pilgrimage: Contrasts & Conflict

Although literally hundreds of thousands of Christian pilgrims from all over the world travel to the Holy Land each year, and although the majority may visit the same locations, they do so for very different reasons with varying intentions and aspirations. Bowman has conducted an illuminating anthropological study of the significance of Jerusalem in what he terms the "various Christianities" (Bowman, 1991).

The Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Churches have traditionally seen pilgrimage as a work of supererogation; a conscious acquisition of merit by individuals already justified and placed in a state of grace

by the saving action of God in Christ. With this perspective, the primary focus of pilgrimage was sacred sites, (usually with basilicas built over them!) Protestant and most Western Roman Catholic pilgrimages have developed another, primarily educationally-imaginative approach, centring more on the experience of the land itself. The Judean desert; the hills above the Sea of Galilee; the river Jordan; all these *geographical* features are seen as helpful in bringing the Gospel story alive to the devotional imagination (Macpherson, 1993:12).

Both Orthodox and Catholic approaches to pilgrimages have a bearing on the Palestinian church, if only because their local leadership remains largely, if not exclusively, expatriate and the focus of their devotion is on the sacred shrines rather than the Living Stones. However, it is more usually pilgrimage groups of the Protestant tradition, with their pietistic "educationally-imaginative approach", which seem to affect the local Christian communities the most adversely. Ateek distinguishes between three types of Protestant pilgrim [Ateek, 1993:3.12]. These may be classified as the Evangelical centre, the Fundamentalist right and the Radical left.

2.3.4.1 The Evangelical Centre and the Sites

The vast majority of Christian pilgrims to the Holy Land travel on packaged tours which follow predictable itineraries centred around archaeological sites and sacred shrines. These pilgrims tend to know little about the local political situation and are unaware of the presence of a Palestinian church. The recommended "Evangelical Holy Land Itinerary" produced by The United Christian Council in Israel and promoted by the Israeli Ministry of Tourism, is an example of the kind of itinerary which reinforces this ignorance. It invites,

Evangelical Believers to visit the places where biblical events took place. To stand on the Mount of Olives where Jesus wept over Jerusalem...to worship the risen Lord in the Garden of the empty Tomb (where 200,000 visitors come annually). To increase in knowledge and understanding of the Bible by walking where He walked and taught. To meet and worship with fellow believers in local churches and assemblies. (UCCI)

The UCCI later defines "fellow believers" as "selected Israeli/Christian leaders", while "local churches" is understood to mean the Garden Tomb. This has become for large numbers of Evangelicals and Fundamentalists a substitute shrine for the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. The way in which it was "discovered" is very significant.

In the 19th Century when Protestant missionaries arrived, they found the major biblical sites already saturated with churches of the Orthodox and Catholic traditions. General Gordon convinced himself and others that a quarry wall to the north of the Damascus Gate looked remarkably like Golgotha, so that when in 1867 a tomb was conveniently discovered just to the north, this seemed to be what Evangelicals were looking for. In 1892 an appeal was made through the Times Newspaper and £2,000 was raised by public subscription to purchase the land, and the Garden Tomb Association (GTA) was formed. Using what looks rather like circular reasoning, the GTA recently described the significance of the tomb in the following way,

The tomb must be seriously considered because its age and character meet scriptural requirements. Its authenticity does not indeed altogether depend upon the validity of the claims of Gordon's Calvary, but obviously its nearness to this place gives it an additional credibility. Along with those who have made their claims on archaeological and scriptural grounds have been a large number of people who would hold the Tomb sacred because of its spiritual value. (The Garden Tomb, 5th Edition)

Given that as Robin Green asserts, liturgy is "the primary way in which faith is communicated or appropriated" (1987:12), it is not surprising that the Garden Tomb has proved so popular as a place of worship for Protestant pilgrims.

A Protestant background isn't at home with Eastern types of worship. This is how the Garden Tomb came about, because the 19th century Protestants just couldn't believe... all that festooned with lamps and clouds of incense, holy dust and that sort of thing, just was not their kind of worship at all. They reacted against it quite violently. [Dewey, 1993:4.3]

If Evangelicals often appear unconsciously oblivious to the presence of an indigenous Christian community, Fundamentalists seem to ignore them intentionally on theological grounds.

2.3.4.2 The Fundamentalist Right and Their Signs

As has been noted, the Israeli Ministry of Tourism has actively subsidised the promotion of pilgrimages from the American "Bible Belt" States, heartland of the Southern Baptists and Fundamentalism. Several British Tour Operators show evidence of holding similar Fundamentalist theological views or demonstrate Zionist sympathies. Their pilgrimages tend not only to ignore but actually malign the Palestinian church, whether implicitly or explicitly, by their choice of guide, itinerary and hotel locations. Jerry Falwell's Friendship Tour of Israel may be untypical, but it is nevertheless highly influential, at least in American circles, since he takes upwards of 600 pilgrims at any one time. His 1983 pilgrimage itinerary, for instance, offered the following programme of events.

1. An Israeli American Friendship Banquet in Jerusalem with Dr Jerry Falwell and Prime Minister Menachem Begin.
2. Meetings with top Israeli Administration officials and Knesset Members.
3. Luncheon with Major Saad Haddad, Commander of Christian forces in Southern Lebanon.
4. Participating (particularly for pastors and other Christian laymen) in a transatlantic, live TV satellite program...
5. On-site tour of modern Israeli battlefields. (Hear military experts describe those battles and how they were decided.)
6. Official visit to an Israeli defence installation by a top military leader. (This tour is rarely offered.) You will see strategic military positions, plus experience first-hand the battle Israel faces...
7. A Bibleland tour that avoids ancient Byzantine churches while emphasising the places where Jesus Himself, Moses, Abraham and other Bible Greats lived and walked. (Wagner, 1992:3)

The order of priority is most significant - Falwell and Begin first and Jesus and other "Biblical Greats" last. According to Ateek, this kind of pilgrimage includes,

has made the desert bloom. They will visit some kibbutz, they would obviously see Yad Vashem. Things like this guide them into an even deeper Israeli point of view. [Ateek, 1993:3.12]

Because Fundamentalists are largely unwilling to meet with or listen to Palestinian Christians they have become imprisoned within their narrow ideologies.

The other's otherness is suppressed and there is inevitably an ideological distortion in which one's own partial experience of reality is taken to be the whole truth. (Witvliet, 1987:258)

A third and much smaller category of pilgrimage tries to counter the ignorance of Evangelicals and the damage caused by Fundamentalists. These offer what might be termed as a "liturgy of reconciliation" between Western pilgrims and Palestinian Christian communities (Westerhoff, 1980:156-157)

2.3.4.3 The Radical Left and the Living Stones

The Middle East Council of Churches, in particular, is concerned that pilgrims have the opportunity to meet indigenous Palestinian Christians, and their Jerusalem office regularly arranges day tours to Gaza, for instance, to visit the refugee camps and hospitals. The Anglican Church has also recently set up a pilgrimage department at St George's Cathedral to provide advice, speakers and guides to pilgrimage groups.

The Amos Trust and Living Stones are two British charities which actively promote what might be termed "responsible" pilgrimages. Their desire is that Western Christians meet with Palestinian Christians and, if possible, representatives of the Jewish and Moslem communities (Prior, 1993a). A "Living Stones" pilgrimage not only includes visits to sites of biblical significance but also addresses and interacts with the contemporary political situation, and with the related issues of justice, peace and reconciliation.

In addition to these essential elements of all Christian pilgrimages to the Holy Land, any *Living Stones* pilgrimage includes at least one indispensable event; the opportunity to worship with an Arabic speaking Christian community, to speak and socialise with the worshippers afterwards...Sharing much of the concerns and interest of any Christian Pilgrimage, the *Living Stones* group will find the Christian and human meetings to be as important to their visit as any monument or shrines. (Macpherson, 1993:12-13)

From a Palestinian perspective this kind of pilgrimage offers the greatest hope that the very real threat of spiritual and cultural obliteration may be averted.

The next chapter investigates the theological and political views of a sample of British pilgrims to discover their views about Israel, Palestinians and pilgrimages.

CHAPTER 3. SURVEY OF BRITISH CHRISTIAN OPINION

A pilot survey was conducted with a group of pilgrims to clarify the most appropriate means of approach and which questions to ask. A group of 21 pilgrims broadly sympathetic toward the Palestinians were interviewed in depth to discover something of their theological and political presuppositions about the Holy Land and its people, past and present, and their personal experiences of pilgrimage. Given that they were drawn largely from Evangelical circles, their attitudes toward the Bible, Israel and the peace process were of particular interest. A further 21 pilgrims completed a questionnaire containing similar questions to those asked at the interviews. For analytical purposes the two groups were combined making a total of 42 pilgrims surveyed. Not all those questioned answered each question, and some questions allowed for more than one answer. Since this was a relatively small sample group, greater emphasis has been placed on descriptive analysis rather than on any particular statistical significance.

3.1 Perceptions on the Meaning and Purpose of Pilgrimage

The survey began with some general questions about the meaning of pilgrimage. Half of the group [20], understood this to involve a journey with a purpose, although 18 different reasons were given ranging from "faith development" to a "seeking after light". Two thirds gave an external or objective definition, while one third offered internal or subjective descriptions. Virtually all described pilgrimage in personal terms and only one made specific reference to worship with indigenous Christians. This individual highlighted what he regarded as the superficial nature of many pilgrimages.

It tends to be about looking at old stones and having a spirituality there. But it seems to me to be more to do with our sort of church and a fantasy, rather than seeing the terrific spiritual lessons that are born out of meeting the local Christians and the local struggle, the local peacemakers and so on. [Pilgrim, 1993:1.7]

When asked why they wished to go on a pilgrimage, a two-thirds majority [23] understood pilgrimage in terms of their own personal faith development with particular emphasis on attaining a biblical understanding of the life and times of Jesus. This is perhaps not surprising in a sample group made up predominantly of Evangelicals. Only three made reference to meeting with the indigenous Christians, and three saw pilgrimage as a shared experience. The following views were typical.

"To try and capture something of the biblical feel and ethos and situation - to have the feel that Jesus was here in particular." [Pilgrim, 1993:1.4]

"I just wanted to see where Jesus lived and walked. That's basically why I wanted to go." [Pilgrim, 1993:1.17]

3.2 Theological and Political Presuppositions

The return of Jews to the Holy Land and the founding of the State of Israel had a profound effect on Evangelicals who have largely seen in these events the fulfilment of biblical prophecy and evidence of Divine favour. A small majority of this sample group were in agreement with this interpretation, although as a whole they were fairly evenly divided. When asked specifically to identify from recent history which events might be interpreted as the mechanism by which prophecy was supposedly fulfilled, the majority of pilgrims did not regard the founding of the State of Israel in 1948 as evidence. Even fewer were willing to recognise the military victories against the Arab nations which culminated in the occupation of the West Bank in 1967 in this way. There appeared therefore a credibility gap between what was perceived in general terms to be the fulfilment of biblical prophecy and a willingness to translate this belief into historical reality. It seemed sufficient for many to believe that it had happened without being too specific on the necessary historical process. One pilgrim demonstrating this kind of fatalistic reasoning answered,

Well it is prophesied that the Jews would inhabit the land and it is the chosen land of the Jews, so yes I would think that that is so....I think it should happen as prophesied, I think that every thing that God prophesies should happen. You can't go against it. [Pilgrim, 1993:1.17]

While this sample group held typically orthodox biblical views when defining the term "Israel", they were ambivalent on whether the Christian Church had actually replaced the Jewish nation as God's "chosen people", and almost totally rejected the notion that biblical Israel could be equated with the contemporary State of Israel. There was also a strong rejection of the popular notion among Fundamentalists and many Evangelicals that contemporary Israel has a Divine right to the land, and an equally trenchant conviction that Palestinians born in Israel should have the right to return. This is a controversial issue, since at present Palestinians are not entitled to do so, whereas under the Law of Return, Jews born anywhere in the world have the automatic right of return irrespective of existing nationality. One respondent demonstrated a typical Zionist opinion, arguing that the problem of Palestinian refugees was an Arab responsibility.

heard that the reason the Palestinians were in camps so much was because the other Arab nations would not accept them....after all they were their own kin...[Pilgrim, 1993:1.12]

The conviction that the Moslem Dome of the Rock will be destroyed and the Jewish Temple rebuilt is a view often propagated by Fundamentalists (Pevtzov, 1994:6). However, out of this survey group, only four agreed with this view compared with 20 who were against. The following opinion was typical.

I think that would be a very destructive act...in the process the aspirations of millions of Moslems would be smashed and it would be far from establishing God's kingdom. It would promote alienation from the vast majority of people in the Holy Land and countries around and it would ultimately bring in Armageddon just as soon as the nations of the Arab countries could get their ammunition together. [Pilgrim, 1993:1.13]

The pilgrims were also asked whether there were any particular passages or stories in the Bible that best described what is happening in contemporary Israel. Most had difficulty with this question, unable to relate the Bible to present events. Those giving answers compared Israel to "Goliath", the "dry bones", and the "Golden calf", while the Palestinians were likened to "David", "Naboth", "Jeremiah", and the victim of the parable of the Good Samaritan. Generally these answers indicated negative attitudes toward the policies of the State of Israel.

The other important question to do with political presuppositions concerned the perceived impact of British foreign policy on the Arab-Israel question.

The overwhelming majority thought Britain's involvement had been negative, the most frequently used words being "disastrous" and "unhelpful". Other descriptions included, "ineffective", "ill-informed", "colonising", "duplicitous", "imperialistic". Only two respondents had anything positive to say, and these were both qualified. The following views were representative.

Disastrous. Partly because the British Government was absolutely duplicitous around the time of the First World War where they promised the Arabs and the Palestinians that they would have their own land, and they also promised the same land to the Jewish people. I don't think our hands are clean in any way on this. [Pilgrim, 1993:1.7]

I wrote to the Times in 1935 saying British official policy has always been against the Arab cause and that it was understandable because we depended on Jewish money for ending the war, and I don't think that was ever forgotten. I don't think we have ever been even-handed, we certainly weren't when I was there. [Pilgrim, 1993:1.18]

Helped create the problem, then ignored it. Currently wondering how to take the credit for the peace initiative. [Pilgrim, 1993:1.32]

The extent and severity of the criticism expressed is significant, given that it came from a group of British pilgrims and was levelled at successive British governments over a period of 80 years. Their views appeared to have nothing to do with party politics.

3.3 Attitudes toward Arabs, Jews and Palestinians

One of the most significant aspects of this survey was the evidence it revealed of destructive stereotyped images, and the prevalence of prejudice toward the Arabs, Jews and Palestinians. Pilgrims were asked to indicate which words they associated with the terms, Arab, Jew and Palestinian. It is recognised that there is a degree of subjectivity involved in classifying whether answers have neutral, positive or negative connotations, especially since some respondents used both positive and negative words. However, there did appear to be noticeable differences in this particular survey group's perceptions of Arabs from Jews and from Palestinians. (figure 1)

3.3.1 Arab Images

The majority of neutral terms used to describe Arabs had ethnic, religious or geographical connotations. Those of a positive nature referred to personal qualities and Arab culture, such as hospitality and friendship. The most significant stereotype of Arabs was that of nomadic Bedouins. Negative terms related largely to social custom, personal behaviour and political systems - such as "arrogant race", "corruption", "totalitarian rule", "terrorism", "male superiority", "poor conditions for women." Of the three ethnic groups, the Arabs had the most neutral and least negative image. The following description of Arabs was typical of this survey group.

I largely think of Bedouins, of itinerant, nomadic Arabs, in traditional costume, in deserts, with animals and tents...[Pilgrim, 1993:1.11]

3.3.2 Jewish Images

The majority of neutral terms describing Jews had either biblical, religious or ethnic connotations. Those of a positive nature had to do more with aptitude than character. Words such as "ability", "talent", "skills", "intellect",

"brilliant" were used. Those of a negative nature related primarily to politics and history, particularly with the Holocaust and anti-Semitism. A small number of the sample group displayed Zionist sympathies as the following answer reveals.

Yes, very special. A race on its own, a chosen race. I think a Christian Jew must be the most satisfying, wonderful feeling in the world. [Pilgrim, 1993:1.17]

3.3.3 Palestinian Images

Compared with the connotations associated with Arabs and Jews, those words used to describe Palestinians were the least positive, the least neutral and portrayed the most negative image of the three. This perhaps reflects the emotive and controversial nature of the Palestinian issue. Those terms of a positive nature like those used to describe Arabs generally, referred largely to personal qualities such as "hospitality", "resilience", and "kindness". Those of a negative nature, like those describing Jews, were not necessarily pejorative and referred as much to their condition or circumstances as to a Palestinian reaction to it. Words such as "terrorism", "PLO", and "refugee" were common. The following is a typical response,

You do always think of violence in connection with Palestinians. That is all you ever hear about Palestinians, that they have bombed or shot somebody or have been bombed or shot. [Pilgrim, 1993:1.12]

Attitudes toward the Palestinians were explored in another question which sought to show the level of solidarity felt by British Christians for the Palestinians and how far they are justified in their resistance to Israeli control of the Occupied Territories (figure 2). Overall, this survey group, while broadly sympathetic toward the Palestinians, were nevertheless reluctant to support the use of force in pursuit of justice. While there was almost unanimous endorsement of the right to conscientious objection there was progressively less and less support for more overt forms of force. There was also a division of opinion over the perceived legitimacy of the Intifada, that is, the popular uprising against Israeli occupation. One respondent in particular crystallised the tension felt by many.

When I answered the Intifada bit it did not bother me - it bothered me afterwards in that I was thinking, Yea, I go for that, rather than as a Christian you turn the other cheek. How do I equate my faith with my gut feeling of Yea, I go along with the Intifada...the question is, if I were there, would I be joining in? [Pilgrim, 1993:1.5]

This view "if I were there..." in many ways summed up the dilemma faced by most of this sample group. Given their detachment from the controversy it is perhaps not surprising that most preferred a passive non-violent approach to resolve the issue.

I would draw the line at stone throwing and things. It doesn't get you anywhere. If they have a grievance and feel that they are being hard done by, then talk about it and put it right, come to some sort of agreement about it.

It's a case of agreeing...you come to a peaceful settlement, talk things over and come to a nearest settlement. You compromise, that's the word compromise. That would be far better than all the stone throwing. [Pilgrim, 1993:1.17]

Clearly the image of the Palestinians portrayed in the Western media is very influential, and this is explored in the conclusions to this survey.

3.4 Attitudes Toward the State of Israel

Several questions were designed to discover how this group of pilgrims viewed the contemporary State of Israel. They were asked whether they regarded Israel as a democratic society, a religious, nationalist or colonialist State, recognising that these options were not necessarily mutually exclusive. Significantly, Israel was seen by a clear majority as a nationalist state [22]; a religious state [18]; and a colonialist state [17]; but most emphatically not a democracy [2] (figure 3). The following sentiment was representative.

It is definitely practising apartheid and it is colonialist when it has gone into occupied territory. [Pilgrim, 1993:1.5]

The group were also asked which borders Israel should have. Four alternatives were offered ranging from the 1948 UN plan through to Eretz or greater "Biblical" Israel which would encompass the land assigned to the 12 tribes of Israel in Deuteronomy. In this group of pilgrims, the majority regarded the present borders as unacceptable, favouring the pre-1967 borders. The survey group were also almost unanimous, favouring a two-state solution as the best option for peace [28], although a significant majority also hoped ultimately for one democratic state where Jews and Arabs were equal [17].

While a majority felt Israel should withdraw from the Occupied Territory unconditionally and unilaterally [13], a larger number recognised that a more pragmatic negotiated settlement trading land for peace was more likely [19].

The group were equally opposed to the incorporation of the West Bank into Israel (figure 4). Those showing Zionist sympathies were the most reluctant to be specific about actual borders, admitting for example, "I am agnostic about boundaries" [Pilgrim, 1993:1.9] and preferring to "leave it to the negotiators" [Norman, 1993:4.9].

3.5 Attitudes Toward the Church in Israel

The survey group were asked about the role of the Church in the Holy Land. The options were broad, ranging from preserving the shrines through to political involvement, and actively assisting in the return of the Jews to Israel which is the approach of the Churches Mission among the Jews (ITAC, 1990). This particular sample unanimously rejected the last option. They were also hesitant about preserving the shrines or witnessing to Jews and Moslems. The highest priorities were pastoring the indigenous Christian community and pursuing charitable work in schools and hospitals. Given the peculiar circumstances of the Church in the Middle East, the following expressed what many saw to be a sensible role.

Because of the delicate nature of this context, I think the primary role of the church is to make a relationship with Jews and Moslems. I don't think, actually, in this context, its primary role is evangelism. I think it's to do with making a relationship and dialogue, and who knows where that would lead. [Pilgrim, 1993:1.7]

3.6 Views on the Ethical Issues Related to Pilgrimages

On this issue there were both the widest range of views - 20 different but related issues were raised - and some of the strongest language expressed in the entire survey. The most frequent answers had to do with the need to recognise the way pilgrimages either perpetuate or challenge the political situation [17]; the need for solidarity with Palestinians [16]; and the importance of recognising that tourism in a variety of ways favours the Israelis [15].

I think that they do involve some sort of support for the Israeli State, because you play it according to their rules.....being subjected to one-sided propaganda from the Israelis. [Pilgrim, 1993:1.4]

It's essential that you visit the people. I think there's a moral problem in going to a place where there are suffering people, where the Christian church - 99% of the church in that area is Palestinian - and then ignoring them. That would be morally unacceptable....there is a modern crisis going on and to ignore that would be actually, I think, profoundly immoral. [Pilgrim, 1993:1.7]

Unless wilfully blind, one is involved passively or actively as a witness of injustice. [Pilgrim, 1993:1.23]

The Jews are repeating what the Nazis did to them. [Pilgrim, 1993:1.29]

Another common opinion expressed, which to some extent runs counter to the above views, was the peculiarly British view that pilgrims need to "listen to all sides", keeping an "open mind", finding a "balance", and not showing "partiality".

3.7 Perceptions as to the Impact of Pilgrimages

Pilgrims were then asked in what ways their views about the Arab-Israeli conflict had been affected as a result of visiting the Holy Land. There were some significant answers given. All those interviewed said that their views had changed as a result of the pilgrimage. How far these opinions had merely been reinforced is hard to estimate.

Ironically only one respondent said that they felt more compassion for the Jewish people. Witnessing the presence of heavily armed soldiers in such incongruous places as the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem or at the Wailing Wall, clearly disturbed many of these pilgrims. The majority had become much more critical of what they saw as Israeli aggression, and more sympathetic toward Palestinians as a consequence.

Many of the pilgrims confessed to having been naive and ignorant about the Palestinian issue before visiting Israel. Several pointed out how significant meeting Palestinian Christians had been in the crystallising of their views. The following are representative.

I suppose I was wishy-washy about it before. I just didn't really take an interest until I could see the obvious divisions. Even to the city of Jerusalem where the Arabs are pushed into...second class housing and your heart goes out to the Palestinians... [Pilgrim, 1993:1.2]

My view of what I knew about the Israeli unfair treatment of the Arabs I think that was reinforced by seeing it. So I feel more strongly anti-Israel having been there. [Pilgrim, 1993:1.4]

I think I was naively pro-Jewish before I ever went there. [Pilgrim, 1993:1.12]

Meeting the Christians of the land was the main influence...like the congregation of Nazareth, they were very heart-rending, they said "Come and see us, we want you to visit us, nobody comes to see us, we want you to join us in the services. [Pilgrim, 1993:1.18]

Painful slow realisation of the injustice incorporated into the State of Israel" [Pilgrim, 1993:1.23]

The survey group were also asked to recall which experiences remained with them from their pilgrimage. It is significant to compare the answers given with their original motives for undertaking a pilgrimage. The majority had gone primarily to visit the biblical sites associated with the life of Jesus, and to strengthen their personal faith. However, on their return it was the political situation which they remembered most vividly [14]. Once back only a third spoke of the significance of having visited the religious sites. The most frequent and graphic images mentioned were of Israeli soldiers and Palestinian suffering. The following quotations are representative.

[Speaking of Yad Vashem] A tremendous amount of bitterness always, a terrible bitterness, the terrible places we went to see, pictures in the museum. That I felt was a shrine of bitterness it's the only way I can describe it. They almost worship the bitterness that was in there. It affected me with horror. It was so un-Christian. [Pilgrim, 1993:1.17]

Soldiers in Bethlehem [Pilgrim, 1993:1.5]

The capacity of Palestinians to suffer and the Israeli army and settlers to cause suffering. [Pilgrim, 1993:1.26]

The similarity with apartheid. [Pilgrim, 1993:1.31]

Images of a soldier about to shoot a child. Road blocks, refugee camps. Gazan desolation, the religious kaleidoscope, the Jerusalem skyline. [Pilgrim, 1993:1.32]

3.8 Assumptions Regarding the Significance of Pilgrimages

The final question put to the survey group was whether they felt pilgrimages by Western Christians could help contribute anything to the peace process. A wide diversity of answers were given, some imaginative, some naive, some pessimistic. There was a preoccupation with "balance" and "impartiality". The most frequent answers had to do with what might be termed "passive" responses to the situation. [18]. These included gaining a "balanced view" [7]; "praying" [6]; "listening" [4]. A significant number advocated more direct proactive involvement in diverse and imaginative ways [17]. These included a variety of options that could be described as "political action" [11]; "meet Living Stones" [5]; "Solidarity with Palestinians" [3]; "involvement with peace makers" [6]; and putting "pressure on the Israeli government" [2].

A small minority seemed paralysed by the experience, or appeared to want to detach themselves from the pain. They were consequently pessimistic about pilgrimages having anything to contribute at all. One individual, for example, concluded,

I don't think we, as visitors, can make any difference, or have the right to, as we do not have to live there with the problems. We can pray for this with greater feeling and understanding after our visit. [Pilgrim, 1993:1.6]

It might be reasonably asked why bother praying if there is no expectation that the outcome of the visit will make any difference. A number of respondents offered more constructive suggestions, raising the point that Israel would have to respond to international pressure, and that Tour Operators should take more responsibility in ensuring pilgrimage groups meet the indigenous Christians as well as visiting the sacred shrines.

Any country that is aware the world is watching and asking questions has to learn to limit its behaviour and start to become self-conscious about what it's doing, and I think this is part of the process. [Pilgrim, 1993:1.7]

Solidarity is crucial. People need to be affirmed, they need to know they're not isolated or alone. Any group of Christians who go to the Holy Land and don't go to see the local church, are themselves missing having their visit enriched. [Pilgrim, 1993:1.15]

3.9 Conclusions on the Views of Pilgrims

Despite the fact that this survey group were broadly sympathetic toward Palestinians, it is notable that the connotations associated with Palestinian were still predominantly negative; that Israel was seen largely as a colonialist state; and that there was strong criticism of British foreign policy on the Middle East. There was also a general lack of sympathy for, or at least understanding of, Palestinian attitudes toward Israeli military occupation; an ambivalence toward the PLO and a reluctance to identify with the Intifada or the use of force to end the occupation. There was also a disdain for Zionism and Fundamentalism in particular (figure 5).

It is difficult to assess how far these views are representative of Christians generally, although it is likely that the evidence of political naivete, and the failure to grasp the link between faith and political action is not untypical. There was a marked shift in their political opinions as a result of visiting the Holy Land and they are now much more sympathetic toward the Palestinians and critical of Israel, something the Israeli Ministry of Tourism would clearly wish to avoid. The first hand experiences of military occupation were clearly unsettling and left a lasting impression. Although there was little consensus as to how pilgrimages could play a more constructive role, there was a genuine desire for greater contact between the faith communities and the willingness to do something to nurture it.

It is now necessary to consider the influence which Tour Operators have on the kind of pilgrimages organised and the itineraries used, since these to a large degree determine the extent to which Christians are brought together.

CHAPTER 4. SURVEY OF PILGRIMAGE TOUR AGENTS AND OPERATORS

Following a pilot survey of two Tour Operators, McCabe Travel and St Paul's Tours, together with the advice of an independent pilgrimage consultant, David Praill, a list of essential questions was devised. The purpose of the survey was to observe the attitudes of British Tour Operators on the Arab-Israeli issue and to determine the extent to which they perpetuate, exacerbate or ameliorate the conditions of Palestinian Christians.

4.1 Analysis of 25 British Operators and Their Approach to Pilgrimages

Of 35 British Tour Operators listed by the Israel Ministry of Tourism, 25 responded to a request for a brochure and sample of their itineraries. These were then analysed noting the places visited and the assumptions that were implicit in the language used to describe the inhabitants and sites. Of particular interest were the kinds of extra-biblical sites or "added value options" included in itineraries, and also the extent to which contact or worship with indigenous Christians was encouraged or facilitated. A group of 14 employees working for 12 different Tour Operators, both British and Palestinians, were then interviewed. Their views were used to amplify and interpret the findings from the broader survey of Operator brochures and itineraries. The detailed analysis of the 25 Tour Operators' published brochures is included in the Appendix to this dissertation.

4.1.1 Analysis Procedures

A number of research procedures were followed. The investigation was based on a composite of the pilgrimages promoted by each Operator including options offered. It was based on their published itineraries recognising that these represent marketing intentions and not necessarily actual pilgrimages. Some Operators provided several examples of itineraries although only sites specifically mentioned were recorded. Some itineraries reflected individual tour leaders' preferences which were not necessarily those of the Tour Operator. The list did not include charities and organisations such as Living Stones or the Council for Christians and Jews who organise specialist tours for their own members.

There was a degree of reluctance on the part of some Tour Operators to be interviewed about their company's policy or approach to pilgrimages. Six British and Six Palestinian Tour Operators were interviewed. All six Palestinian companies were very co-operative, as were four of the British companies. Two were reluctant and a further two - both leading companies - each made excuses on several occasions for not being interviewed. One of these companies is known to hold Zionist views, the other to have recently been taken over by a secular parent company more interested in tourism than pilgrimages. Only one company refused to provide a sample itinerary which it regarded as "sensitive material" [Operator, 1993:2.2].

4.1.2 Brochure and Itinerary Analysis Results

4.1.2.1 Language Used

All 25 British Tour Operators referred to the "Holy Land". Only 15 described the land as "Israel". None however alluded to the Occupied Territories or Palestine. To do so could, according to one Israeli Operator, "worry people...and make them unnecessarily fearful." [Operator, 1993:2.4]. Five Operators used maps showing the West Bank absorbed within Israel. The decision on whether to refer to the land as "Israel" or not has been seen by some Operators as an issue of significant political and theological importance. It was for example, the policy of Inter-Church Travel, not to use the name Israel in their brochure or publicity material [Operator, 1993:2.3]. Their 1994 brochure does now contain one reference to Israel, which may reflect the recent change of ownership of the company. A former employee, now working for another company, expressed the dilemma succinctly,

We were never to use the word Israel in our brochures and I've always stuck with that....We always use the word Holy Land. Palestine is equally emotive. Our people are not going there for political reasons, they're going to the holy places. The place has always been called the Holy Land and we try to keep to that. [Operator, 1993:2.3]

It might be considered just as political however to avoid using the term "Palestine" as it is to use the term "Israel", especially when referring to the West Bank.

4.1.2.2 Itineraries Offered and Locations Visited

A very wide diversity of pilgrimage itineraries were offered by the 25 British Operators reflecting their denominational, political and theological agendas. Among the more bizarre options included a visit to the Bahai Temple in Haifa, an opportunity to celebrate Yom Kippur, a tour of Jerusalem from the air, a torchlight procession at night to the Garden of Gethsemane, and a ride across the Sea of Galilee on a replica first century fishing boat.

Just under 200 separate locations and activities were offered. Of particular interest to this study were those which might be termed "extra-biblical", giving pilgrims an insight into Jewish and Arab history and culture.

A total of 22 Operators offered 33 different locations of Jewish culture or tradition, 86 times. This means that were a pilgrim to visit the Holy Land with each Operator, he would visit 33 locations a total of 86 times, some only once, while others several times. In contrast only three Operators mentioned locations associated with Palestinian or Arab culture and tradition. These offered only three different locations a total of five times (figure 6).

The most frequently included extra-biblical locations were all Jewish sites. The most popular were Masada (24); the Wailing Wall (23); a visit to a Kibbutz (14); Yad Vashem (13); the Model of Jerusalem (11) and the Knesset (10). This would appear to confirm the claim made by the Pilgrimage Office at St George's that it is Israeli Ministry of Tourism strategy to ensure all tourists visit the three specific sites of Yad Vashem, the Wailing Wall and Masada to evoke sympathy for Israel and stifle criticism of her occupation of the West Bank [Palestinian, 1994:3.26].

4.1.2.3 Degree of Contact with Indigenous Christians

This is to some extent dependent on where pilgrims stay. All but one Operator booked hotels or hospices in Jerusalem, although it is not possible to ascertain how many of these are in East (Palestinian) or West (Israeli) Jerusalem. Only two British Operators made use of hotels in Nazareth and Bethlehem which are exclusively Palestinian communities. The most popular, after Jerusalem, are Tiberias (21); Tel Aviv (10); Netanya (7); and Eilat (4), all Israeli locations.

A proportion of Operators specified places of Christian worship in their recommended itineraries. Of these the most frequently mentioned were the Garden Tomb (7), and St George's Cathedral (4), both of which cater primarily for expatriate European Christians. Of 21 references to an act of worship, only two were explicitly with Palestinian Christians, at Christ Church, Nazareth. Those that gave the opportunity for contact with Christians in Israel and the West Bank were small and similarly biased in favour of expatriates and Messianic Christians (figure 7). The most popular were the CMJ hostel at Stella Carmel (3) and the Edinburgh Medical Mission Hospital in Nazareth (2). Only six out of 25 Operators offered such an initiative however, suggesting that the overwhelming majority of pilgrims visiting the Holy Land in organised tours are given no encouragement to meet local Christians during their stay.

4.2 The Ethical Issues Involved in Organising Pilgrimages

It was admitted by several British Operators that the temptation was to,

get from this site to that site, lunch here, next site, next site. Its much more complicated when you are trying to link people with people. [Operator, 1993:2.5]

Some British Operators were very reluctant to recognise that their work had any ethical implications at all, other than that of "giving value for money" [Operator, 1993:2.5]. Several stressed that they did not want to appear "biased either way" on the Arab-Israeli issue. When it came to the choice of a guide they wanted someone who "can represent us in a good way and gives a balanced view of the land." [Operator, 1993:2.9].

In contrast, all the Palestinian Operators interviewed without exception gave explicit examples of profound and fundamental ethical issues they face on a daily basis which most of their British counterparts seem oblivious to. One British Operator in particular criticised the survey for being too "political" since it implied,

responsibility. This is difficult - people pay us money and we have to spend most of our time worrying about airline/hotel reservations etc. [Operator, 1993:2.4]

The brochure of that same British Operator gave some evidence of their ethical approach. They were, they claimed,

quality Jewish hotels (and Kibbutzim), which, politics aside, are in nicer locations and therefore more expensive than Arab run hotels used by other Operators. [Operator, 1993:2.4]

Although the approach of the majority of British Operators seems to be governed more by economic considerations than ethical constraints, following the occupation of the West Bank in 1967, the two main British Operators did take very different stances.

The first policy of Inter-Church Travel 15 years ago and prior to that, was that we were not allowed to use El Al. It was against Company policy to use El Al (Israel Airlines) because they were Israeli. We used British Airways exclusively and there were no charter flights at that time. The company we were competing with was Israeli owned and all their trade went to El Al. It was black and white. [Operator, 1993:2.3]

That same Operator highlighted what is becoming probably the most serious ethical dilemma facing all Christian Operators.

The biggest ethical problem that I have with pilgrims personally...I think it's almost immoral for a Jew to lead a Christian pilgrimage. And we've been forced into the situation more and more, where we have Jews

leading Christian pilgrimages which I have great moral difficulty with. Previously we had no problems, we had Christian guides leading Christian pilgrims. There are not enough Christian guides now. The Jews would certainly not have a Christian leading a Jewish pilgrimage....We've been forced into a situation where Christian pilgrimages will very very shortly be exclusively run by Jews. [Operator, 1993:2.3]

Some other Operators preferred to ignore the question claiming they had "no view" on the subject [Operator, 1993:2.1], or that "it's a shame" [Operator, 1993:2.4], or that they "leave it up to the agent" to choose a guide [Operator, 1993:2.9].

The majority of British Operators seemed oblivious of the fact that Palestinian agents, hoteliers and to a lesser extent restaurateurs depend "totally...on Christian pilgrims for their revenue." [Operator, 1993:2.3]

4.3 Contact with Indigenous Churches Encouraged

The Palestinian Operators interviewed indicated that they received very few requests from groups wishing to meet local Christians.

Except for the local contact with the guide and the driver, and possibly some hotel staff, that's about all they're going to be in contact with. [Operator, 1993:2.6]

While large numbers of pilgrims spend at least one night in Tel Aviv, and visit the old city of Jaffa, the Palestinian Anglican vicar of Jaffa stated that he has never been approached by tour group leaders wishing to meet his congregation. [Palestinian, 1993:3.4]

There was an attempt some years ago to facilitate meetings between pilgrims and Palestinians, but it failed through lack of interest.

There was a programme that was being offered called "Visit the Arab at Home"....and it was all people that would just be willing to take families and host them and give them coffee and tea and cake, but then there were so few people that were interested that eventually it just fell through....but to visit the Israeli at home is a popular and on-going thing. It never stops....but it's always propaganda. [Operator, 1993:2.6]

Of the three British Operators who included contact with the Arab Palestinian church within their recommended itineraries, only one brochure in 25 went as far as to make an explicit statement encouraging "pilgrim groups to meet with Christians living in the Holy Land." [Operator, 1993:2.3]

This particular Operator has also taken the unprecedented step of suggesting that all their tour group leaders include a visit to a hospital, school or clinic within their itinerary, with the purpose of developing a long term relationship between Christians in Britain, Israel and the Occupied Territories.

They have also recently written to former pilgrimage tour leaders asking for suggested projects and will be including these in their 1995 brochure. [Operator, 1993:2.3].

4.4 Impact of Israeli Control of the Pilgrimage Industry

Among the British Operators there seemed little awareness of the level of control the Israeli Ministry of Tourism exerts, apart from an awareness in the decline in the number of Palestinian Christian guides available. There was however one exception.

The reality is that about half the pilgrims go to Israel with the Israeli companies masquerading as Christians. Israeli backing is really Israeli directors employing Christian managers and Christian frontmen to deal with the pilgrims. So the actual revenue from Christian pilgrimages from the very start is going into Israeli/Jewish hands, which I think is a shame, when the church is crying out for money. [Operator, 1993:2.3]

The same Operator also claimed that "Israel is....not happy with the Arabs controlling anything in the State so they are gradually pushing them out." [Operator, 1993:2.3]. There did appear a good deal of evidence to substantiate this. All six Palestinian Operators interviewed gave graphic examples of the ways in which the Israeli Ministry of Tourism controls the industry.

The licensing and monitoring of guides is the most obvious means. It is exceedingly difficult for a Palestinian to obtain a licence to guide. One Operator shared her own experience,

One time I was interested myself and everyone tells me "don't waste your time, they're just gonna take your money and you're gonna fail. I know of only about three or four East Jerusalem guides and....rumours always abound as to how you were able to get that licence, everybody knows that you don't readily get it.

Sometimes it's a question of if you know somebody in authority who will sort of...But, in a way, it's also a sort of target...it's like when you come here with the mentality of the informant. They may not be, but they are treated like that. [Operator, 1993:2.6]

Even those small diminishing number of Palestinians who have a licence to guide are restricted in what they can say with regard to the present political situation. While an Israeli guide might draw parallels at Yad Vashem between the Nazi Holocaust and Israel's enemies, for a Palestinian guide to compare what happened to the Jews with the treatment of Palestinians would be suicidal.

They're not allowed to, basically, go beyond the history and the Bible, into anything. I mean, except just to say that there was a 1967 or 1948 war and that's about it. They're really not supposed to talk. When a group is interested, and if the guide does feel safe, he might be willing to talk, but he'd be the judge. [Operator, 1993:2.6]

The Ministry of Tourism takes steps to ensure only licensed and compliant guides are allowed to operate, and give what one British Operator called "sanitised tours" [Operator, 1993:2.1]. A representative at the Anglican Pilgrimage Office at St George's claimed that Israeli guides often use a variety of excuses to discourage pilgrims from visiting locations in East Jerusalem such as St George's Cathedral, usually on the grounds that it would be dangerous to do so [Palestinian, 1994:3.14].

The issue becomes much more serious however when a tourist or pilgrim, usually with Jewish connections, complains to the Ministry of Tourism about an incident, or a remark made by the guide or even by a Palestinian they were introduced to. As one Operator said, "It only takes one person to really give him a very, very hard time." [Operator, 1993:2.6].

In one such incident which occurred in June 1993 a pilgrimage group visited the Bethlehem Arab Centre for Rehabilitation at Beit Jala, near Bethlehem. They were introduced to staff and patients including many Intifada victims. One of the pilgrims was so distressed to be told that a child patient had been shot by an Israeli soldier that she complained to the Ministry of Tourism about this "anti-Israeli propaganda". Subsequently, the guide and the Palestinian Tour Operator were severely reprimanded by the Israeli authorities. A letter to the Palestinian Tour Operator from the Director of the Ministry of Tourism included the following,

Your letter did not give a good enough answer...regarding the attitude of the Israeli authorities to the Arab-Israeli situation. The complaint is serious and relates to the State of Israel and the Israel Defence Forces. [Operator, 1993:2.3 & 11]

A licence to guide or operate has been revoked for less [Operator, 1993:2.6]. Furthermore, despite the fact that virtually all Palestinian businesses are family run, it is not possible to pass such a licence from father to son or daughter. When the father dies, the family lose the right to continue to operate unless a son or daughter can become a travel "expert" [Operator, 1994:2.11]. Another way in which it is claimed that the Israeli government exerts control occurs in the designation and promotion of particular tourist centres.

It is the policy of the Israeli Government to marginalise places like Nazareth, which are not part of the development plan. This is the reason why Nazareth is unable to attract or sustain a pilgrimage industry. [Palestinian, 1994:3.4]

They have very specific tourism places, they do not develop or direct pilgrims to visit our places. They direct them to Akko, to....Jerusalem without meeting anyone, and then after that you have Tel Aviv and Haifa and Tiberias and that's it. You've got to dig deeper and go inside the Arab villages. [Palestinian, 1994:3.16]

Although of great biblical significance to pilgrims, the predominantly Arab city of Jaffa has seen serious economic decline since 1948 with little or no tourist investment, apart from in the old quarter which has been turned into a kind of museum. Instead Jaffa has been virtually swallowed up by the nearby Israeli municipalities of Tel Aviv to the north and Bet Yam to the south, both of which attract large numbers of tourists and pilgrims to Israeli owned hotels because of their proximity to the sea and airport.

They come to Tel Aviv. They are fascinated with Tel Aviv city and metropolis...fascinated with the hotels...[Palestinian, 1994:3.4]

Another Operator gave an historical appraisal of the decline in the Arab tourist industry. Apparently until as recently as 15 years ago, the majority of pilgrims were accommodated in, or near, the Old City of Jerusalem in Arab hotels. During their stay in Galilee, Christian hospices took a large proportion of pilgrims, as well as the Arab hotels of Nazareth. Prior to 1967 when Bethlehem and the Old City of Jerusalem were in Jordanian hands, Nazareth was in fact an important centre for Christian pilgrims staying in Israel. Now it is in serious decline through lack of investment in hotels and infrastructure.

Increasingly pilgrims are accommodated in Netanya or Tiberias, locations with no religious significance but central to the Israeli tourist economy.

Tiberias has been completely transformed, the hospices going down in standard, the hotels going up in standard. We're at the position now where 90% of our people stay in Israeli hotels in the Galilee. That a major change. [Operator, 1993:2.3]

Hotels and Operators working in East Jerusalem experience similar discrimination. One Operator in particular was quite explicit,

I think they want an excuse to put us out of operation. To get a licence you have to have a travel expert and in order to have a travel expert you have to have a minimum of five years experience, and then you have to go through a year's course, and then you have to go through a rigorous exam. From 1967 to 1983 they didn't even give an exam, for any East Jerusalem office...Then they made a concession, and they allowed one group to sit for this exam, from which only three passed of about twenty or thirty who sat for it. And, I mean, people are not that idiotic. And then they come and they say, O.K. you need to have like half a million dollars in a bank account, sitting as a guarantee, if you are going to be able to pay your debts. Then of course if you have half a million dollars, where did you get the half a million dollars...The next thing you are going to find yourself is in jail. [Operator, 1993:2.6]

It is an often repeated fact that since 1967 no new tourist agencies have been allowed to open in East Jerusalem. By comparison, it is claimed that in West Jerusalem, several such Israeli run offices are opened virtually every month and that the authorities, in the eyes of the Palestinians, "are not as strict in applying the letter of the law as they are with us." [Operator, 1993:2.6]

If you interview any hotelier in East Jerusalem, they will not get any planning permission to add any further bedrooms, to add an extra floor, to build a swimming pool, to upgrade their dining rooms etc, etc, etc. Money is incredibly tight in East Jerusalem and the West Bank because of the Intifada. The whole of the East side of Jerusalem is shrinking dramatically, especially in the Christian side. [Operator, 1993:2.3]

At a more mundane level, even if pilgrims do decide to stay in Arab hotels in East Jerusalem, it is often difficult for them to get back from other locations in Israel or from West Jerusalem, especially when alone and at night. This is because Israeli drivers of yellow plated taxis are unwilling to take them back to their hotels despite the fact that it is supposed to be a united city. According to one Operator, it's all "a form of psychological warfare." [Operator, 1993:2.6]

4.5 Conclusions on the Influence of Tour Operators

British pilgrimage Tour Operators appear to fall into one of four categories. There are a number of secular tourist agencies who offer pilgrimage packages in the same way that they target other niche markets, such as skiing or scuba diving holidays. Some of these are Israeli owned companies operating in Britain [Operators G & U]. These Operators have no particular reason to encourage contact with the indigenous Church and offer standard itineraries which follow a fairly predictable pattern. The largest group of Christian pilgrimage Operators fall into the second category offering what might be termed "biblical-educational tours". These essentially offer a pietistic religious experience at particular sites associated with the life of Jesus. As one Palestinian Operator put it, they are "here for the Bible experience" [Operator, 1993:2.6]. The emphasis of this kind of pilgrimage is on a predictable string of archaeological sites, church buildings and optional pseudo-religious "entertainment" extras such as a visit to Masada, a swim in the Dead Sea or an evening of Israeli culture and music [Operators T & Y]. One Operator described the kind of experience they try to facilitate,

I really believe that Jesus' spirit is alive there. I really believe that He's there, you can feel it, you can almost grab it by the hand. [Operator, 1993:2.1]

This group of Operators, while wishing to avoid controversy or become involved politically, are nevertheless responsible for perpetuating a situation where the Palestinian Church is ignored and marginalised.

A third category might be termed "Zionist" Operators. These tend to view their work as a ministry, and see the pilgrims by their presence, as serving a higher calling. These agencies actively encourage contact with Messianic believers and seek to give pilgrims an appreciation of the Jewish origins of Christianity [Operators P & T].

The following comments are typical of this kind of approach.

Your questionnaire is very political - if you included too, a Scriptural dimension, the prophecies for example.....about the Jews eventually returning from all over the world (not just Babylon), then speaking personally, it becomes very interesting - in that modern pilgrims in visiting Jerusalem, represent the "advanced guard" to do with the Second Coming. [Operator, 1993:2.4]

In the sense that we are very much in the end times and that part of the end time prophecy really is for the Jews to be restored to their land and for the Spirit to be poured out upon the Jews. Then eventually there will be an end gathering. [Operator, 1993:2.5]

Inevitably this third group cause the greatest embarrassment and even harm, whether intentional or not, to the life and witness of the indigenous Church, ecumenical relations and interfaith dialogue.

A fourth, and much smaller group of Operators actively encourage contact with the indigenous Palestinian Church [Operators E & K]. Although reluctant to be known as a "Living Stones" Pilgrimage Operator, one in particular claimed that 90% of their groups visited a local church, either in Jerusalem or Nazareth [Operator, 1993:2.3]. This last group appear to offer the only hope of genuine dialogue between pilgrims and the Palestinians.

Speaking of pilgrims generally, several Palestinian Operators recognised that,

The majority..they come and they go, with whatever preconceived notions they have. Very few modify, very few see and go on. It's a pity. [Operator, 1993:2.6]

As the analysis of pilgrimage itineraries has shown, to a large extent this is a consequence of the kind of pilgrimage offered by Tour Operators; their failure to recognise the ethical issues inherent in their work; or to appreciate how they are manipulated by the Israeli political agenda and economic interests. The results also show how the Palestinian economy suffers as a consequence and ultimately what the effect has been of their actions on the indigenous Christian community. In the next chapter, the opinions of Palestinian Christians will be explored in more detail.

CHAPTER 5. SURVEY OF PALESTINIAN CHRISTIAN OPINION

Empirical material of Palestinian Christian opinion was gathered through three visits to Israel and the Occupied Territories, each of two weeks duration, in September 1993, February and May 1994. A total of 34 Palestinians were interviewed, including Bishops, clergy, Tour Operators and MECC staff, lawyers, students, a journalist, accountant and a money changer. A full list of those interviewed is provided in the Appendix. None of those approached was reluctant to be interviewed or to have their views tape recorded. The views of those living on the West Bank tended to be more radical, polarised and sharply focused as might be expected given the oppressive military situation and living conditions experienced there.

5.1 Problems Experienced by the Palestinian Church

The problems facing the Palestinian community today, especially in East Jerusalem and the West Bank, although primarily political in origin, are in part a consequence of, or are at least exacerbated by, the loss of revenue previously gained from servicing the needs of pilgrims and tourists, since the Israeli Ministry of Tourism took control of the industry in 1948. Ekin has described the situation prior to that date.

Thirty to forty years ago, thousands of Coptic Christians, Assyrians, Armenians, Eastern Orthodox, and Greek Catholics thronged into Jerusalem, particularly during the Christmas and Easter seasons. These pilgrims sought out the convents and communities of their own traditions, furthering relationships and strengthening worship. Their presence rejuvenated these communities by rekindling their pride in the uniqueness of Jerusalem and their presence in that ancient city. It encouraged them to feel connected, culturally and spiritually, to part of a larger world-wide community.

Today, the local Christian community languishes, pockets of isolated communities cut off from their roots and largely neglected by the broader international Christian community. Jerusalem's Christian communities are drying up. (1990:28)

The annexation of East Jerusalem and the West Bank in 1967 afforded the Israeli government the excuse to control and restrict the licensing of Arab guides and the registration of Arab hotels and travel agencies. Since then, as has been noted, Arab hoteliers in East Jerusalem have found it difficult if not impossible to undertake renovation work or extend their buildings, and Palestinian travel agents have not found it easy to pass on their licences within families or sell their businesses. Israeli hotel owners and Tour Operators on the other hand, in places such as West Jerusalem, Netanya and Tiberias have been heavily subsidised and promoted abroad by the Israeli government's ministry of tourism. Based on interviews with Palestinians living in Israel and the Occupied Territories, five key areas of tension emerged, namely dispossession, apartheid, invisibility, misrepresentation and emigration.

5.1.1 Dispossession

The creation of the State of Israel as a sovereign and safe homeland for Jews in 1948, just three years after the Holocaust, was seen by many as one of the greatest achievements in human endeavour of the twentieth century. Yet paradoxically, despite suffering persecution for so long, Israel was only established at the expense of another people, the Palestinians, and the enforced creation of another Diaspora, and what Cragg calls "the slow but sure Judaization of their homeland." (1992:248). The occupation of the West Bank in 1967 merely added to the number of Palestinians dispossessed. Since that date the Israeli government has planted 140 illegal settlements in the Occupied Territories appropriating 60% of the land (Helm, 1994e:18).

The Anglican community in Jaffa, for instance, has suffered acutely since 1948. Several members lamented losing the use both of the Anglican school and church building. The following information was confirmed by several leading members of the local Anglican community.

We understand the circumstances but we cannot understand the rejection, the refusal to let back the refugees to their homes after 45 years.....99% of the Arabs of Jaffa were driven out, literally driven out...they put them in ships, they put them in other vehicles, they drove them out of Palestine saying "you had better go because of the war." [Palestinian, 1993:3.7]

Access to church land and property seized in 1948 is still the subject of legal wranglings.

The municipality took the building to use for a Jewish school and they have used it for nearly 35 years...but recently in the last 15 years they just abandoned it, without giving it officially over to the church, and they left the building this way, this miserable way...when the church tried to claim it back they said "you have to pay us money to give you it back" and then our lawyer got in touch with the Council and said, "but you have destroyed the building"...the cost of the damage was much higher than the municipality asked for compensation....Immediately they said "we will confiscate it, we'll appropriate the piece of land", they don't give a reason. They can just do that, by threatening the church...raping property. [Palestinian, 1993:3.7]

Similar stories were shared by Palestinians interviewed in Bethlehem, Ramallah and Jerusalem. That such a process of massive dispossession could be justified eschatologically, on biblical grounds by Christians, is in the words of one Palestinian cleric, "a horrible thing to do" [Palestinian, 1993:3.1].

I do not want the Jews to come back to the Holy Land to take what remains of my ancestral land, under the pretext that they will return and when they are all there they will convert. [Palestinian, 1993:3.1]

Inevitably the Palestinian community has opposed this process of progressive dispossession, more recently through the Intifada, and their support of the PLO. However, by doing so they have, according to Cragg,

the Holocaust, a logic that must implacably demand capitulation to its case. The Holocaust thus becomes, in Israeli thinking, a warrant of innocence-or, if not innocence, exoneration.....That ineluctable situation entails on the Palestinian people a strange vicarious destiny impossible either to escape or to sustain. (1992:28)

Arab Christian vocation in Israel is thus a prisoner of Zionist prerequisites, which are "submission." Positive spiritual rapport has either to concede this or to imply it. Either way it cannot be authentic. To behave in neighbourly terms is to imply that neighbourhood exists. The implication would then be to condone, until the scene of the forgiveness is ready for amends. (1992:224)

One Palestinian Tour Operator put it like this,

People say "I just want to go to Yad Vashem". Go, by all means. I don't deny what happened. Why should I suffer because it happened? I didn't do it to you. But I'm paying the price...I don't deny that it was bad - it was bad, it was inhuman - and we're suffering the consequence. [Operator, 1993:2.6]

Fundamentally, Cragg asks, "Should Palestinians be immolated for the sins of Hitler?" (1992:254), and one might add, for how much longer?

5.1.2 Apartheid

While Israel presents itself as a Western democracy, supposedly respecting and protecting the rights of ethnic and religious minorities, the Palestinian experience appears very different. Eber, in her controversial Rough Guide, speaks of the "undeclared apartheid" which disadvantages Palestinians living in Israel whether in education, housing, social services or employment (Eber, 1989:vi). Davis, in Israel, an Apartheid State, traces evidence of systematic political repression and the abuse of the "Defence Emergency Regulations (1945)". He contrasts the "right of return" and right to citizenship given to any Jew born any where in the world with the denial of the same right of citizenship even to Palestinian children born in Israel (Davis, 1987:64).

With regard to access to education, it is a well known fact that the Anglican schools which serve the Palestinian communities in places like Jerusalem and Nazareth receive no state funding even though this is supposedly guaranteed under the Israeli constitution [Palestinian, 1993:3.9]. The same applies to the provision of health care for the handicapped at Beit Jala [Palestinian 1994:3.28].

One clergyman in particular was quite adamant that his people, "as a minority....have got less rights, much less rights than Jewish rights here." [Palestinian, 1993:3.4]. A group of students in Lod were also vociferous in expressing similar views.

The Israelis will say we have equality, we have rights, we vote. I just want to tell you one thing. There is no democracy in Israel. Democracy does not exist in Israel. What exists is the strong. If you are strong you are right. If you are weak you are wrong. That's the law in Israel.

The people on the West Bank have suffered. They are being shot, humiliated, every day the army are hitting old men and old women, shooting and killing small children. How can a normal mind expect these Palestinians to say "OK we will live with the Jews". They are not going to forget because they have suffered. They want a State of their own. They don't want 18 year old soldier boys with a big gun to tell them what to do, to walk on that street or not walk on that street, or to go out at night or not to go out at night. [Palestinian, 1994:3.16]

A Tour Operator working in East Jerusalem, itself disputed territory and tightly controlled by Israeli border guards, lives in a nearby West Bank village. He described the problems he experiences simply getting to work each day.

As someone living on the West Bank, I have to get a special permit to come and work in Jerusalem. I have to go to the administration to get that permit, and it will be valid for two months. This permit will be valid from 7am to 7pm, after 7pm I can't be in Jerusalem, so I have to go home before then, otherwise if the Israeli soldiers saw me in the street and asked me what are you doing here, and saw my permit they would make problems for me, maybe put me in jail or to pay 500 or 1000 shekels. [Operator, 1994:2.13]

Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza claim that their lives are no better than those of black South Africans who used to live under white rule in the townships. The evidence would tend to confirm this, and comparisons between South Africa and Israel were expressed by several of those interviewed [Palestinian, 1994:3.30]. This kind of discrimination is exacerbated by the fact that many Palestinians perceive themselves to be "invisible" to the touristic gaze of foreign pilgrims who seem preoccupied only with photographing ancient church buildings and buying souvenirs.

5.1.3 Invisibility

Largely cut off from personal or meaningful contact with Western tourists and pilgrims, the local Palestinian Christian community feels isolated, indeed invisible. "People who come here wear dark glasses. When the sun comes out they see nothing." [Palestinian, 1994:3.16]. Sometimes this "invisibility" is orchestrated by those whose interests lie in perpetuating the myth that there are no indigenous Christians present.

The impact of Zionist propaganda and Christian Fundamentalist theology has had the effect of making the Palestinians "non-people" in their own land.

If you hold to that theology, either they don't exist or they need to go. It has the same impact as apartheid. [Pilgrim, 1994:1.7]

The staff at the Pilgrimage Office at St George's recounted several instances of pilgrim groups being obstructed from visiting the Cathedral.

A group phoned to say they wanted to come and pray at St George's. When they didn't show up we phoned. They said that their guide had told them the church wasn't big enough for the group. [Palestinian, 1994:3.14]

Christians in Nazareth shared similar experiences of Jewish guides.

Lots of Jewish guides who work with pilgrims brainwash their groups. I don't think they tell the truth about the history of this land, and about the Christians. Once I met a visitor who came to our church who told me that they had a Jewish guide and he told them that there are no Christians in Nazareth. There are just churches to visit, but there are no Christian groups. This is just one way to brainwash groups. [Palestinian, 1994:3.24]

A member of the staff at Bethlehem University claimed that this was a definite strategy of the Israeli Ministry of Tourism. He described how a priest at the monastery at Ecco Homo in Jerusalem wrote a pamphlet sponsored by the Israeli Ministry of Tourism about Jerusalem. The Ministry of Tourism however insisted on deleting all references to Christian Arabs. This took place in November 1993. He believes that the Israelis would prefer to perpetuate the myth among pilgrims, that all Arabs are Moslems, rather than admit that a sizable proportion of Arabs have remained loyal to an ancient Christian tradition predating the rise of Islam.

There clearly is that kind of cancelling out of the Christian community. When ever it is printed or mentioned that the Christian community here can trace its origins back to Christ, this is always denied. This is very common. [Expatriate, 1994:4.12]

Cragg concludes that,

Local Christians are caught in a degree of museumization. They are aware of tourists who come in great volume from the West to savour holy places but who are, for the most part, blithely disinterested in the people who indwell them. The pain of the indifference is not eased insofar as the same tourism is subtly manipulated to make the case for the entire legitimacy of the statehood that regulates it. (1992:28)

Much of the isolation Palestinians experience is due to the misrepresentation and propaganda directed against them.

5.1.4 Misrepresentation

Palestinians are deeply upset at their image as portrayed in the West. They believe there is much blatant misrepresentation which extends not only to Palestinians as a people and to the designation of their home land but also as an ancient Christian community. They are convinced that the impression given to pilgrims exploits Orientalist prejudices and polarises ethnic and cultural differences, while "magnifying the achievements of modern Israel" in a land "empty for 2000 years" [Palestinian, 1993:3.1]. They feel they are always portrayed as "troublemakers" or "terrorists" [Palestinian, 1994:3.23].

A leading cleric in Nazareth claims the intention is to make pilgrims feel unsafe and insecure in their presence. He frequently hears guides say "We are coming now to Nazareth, watch for your wallets, or stick together" [Palestinian, 1993:3.9]. One irate student put it like this,

Look at me. Do I look to you like a monster? Lion? Did I bite you? You are a visitor in my house. I respect you. I don't think there is any problem with pilgrims visiting Arab villages or Arab places. We are not demons. [Palestinian, 1994:3.16]

This defamation of the Palestinian people is something that has gone on for many decades, long before the Intifada. An elderly Palestinian from Jaffa described his experiences back in the 1950s and 1960s when pilgrim groups came to his community led by Jewish guides.

They told them "good man is Jewish, bad man is Arab". The guides proclaimed us as bad human beings. I was feeling I was making a revolution. I and my father we say "come and see us in our homes, see our suffering from this kind of teaching". We say to the guide "Get aside, don't teach them horrible things about us." [Palestinian, 1994:3.17]

Others drew attention to the fact that this prejudice is actually a form of "anti-Semitism" since Arabs are a Semitic race [Palestinian, 1993:3.4]. A Palestinian student described how he thought Westerners viewed him and his culture.

They tend to look at Arab culture and Palestine as an exotic one, as a strange one, something they need to see like they are watching a movie. Now the Israeli culture or society is as normal as can be, they can feel more relaxed in Israeli society. For them the Old City with its bazaars and its shops, it's like being on a different planet. [Palestinian, 1994:3.24]

Usually this is based, sadly, on repeated personal experiences. In 1993 a group of young volunteers travelled from Norway to help with the reconstruction and renovation of the Anglican centre near Tel Aviv.

They started asking questions, sometimes very stupid questions, likeif I go there is it safe for me... are they going to rape me or shoot me? I was shocked. I said "who told you this?" [Palestinian, 1994:3.16]

Palestinians believe that this kind of ignorance is common among Western visitors. Very often it is only when pilgrims return to the Holy Land, whether on their own or when they choose to leave their party and the well worn pilgrimage path, that they discover the presence of a Palestinian Christian community.

When tourists come on their own a second time, they say "we didn't see that, we didn't know about that, how come?" I said "If you come like sheeps you left like sheeps" [Palestinian, 1994:3.28]

This ignorance extends to a lack of understanding and sensitivity about the history of the church in the Holy Land. Several Palestinians described the amazement and embarrassment they feel when asked about when they had "converted" to Christianity.

I was often asked "when did you convert to Christianity?". I was amazed at this question. I am a Christian before the United States was born. Jesus Christ was born in Bethlehem not in New York or England. They think Arab = Moslem. They think that we are converted to Christianity but we were Christians here from the first Pentecost. These ideas that many people have in their minds about Arabs. [Palestinian, 1994:3.24]

When the Israeli Ministry of Tourism does have to acknowledge the presence of indigenous Christians, according to Archdeacon Riah, they refer to them as "Greek Orthodox", "Roman Catholic" and "Anglicans", terms which suggest they are remnants of European civilisation rather than something indigenous.

The Greek Orthodox, none of them is of Greek background, the Anglicans, none of them is of English background, we are all Arab Palestinians. [Palestinian, 1993:3.9]

This misrepresentation extends not only to the people and their faith but also to their homeland and its designation. A spokesman for the Middle East Council of Churches claimed,

Even the Israeli guides they come to the West Bank or Gaza they won't say "this is the Green Line" or "Occupied Territory", they will say "it is Eretz Israel". Many times we go and listen to guides. We cannot say anything because we might endanger our office and its work. What we offer is the opportunity to hear from both sides. [Palestinian, 1994:3.27]

A clergyman on the West Bank pointed out that few groups visit his town, "because they are intimidated by the Israelis who say "The West Bank is dangerous, keep out, we are not responsible." [Palestinian, 1994:3.23]. Some radical Palestinians even argue that to speak of the West Bank as "Occupied Territory" is to have already made a significant concession since they believe that the whole of Israel is occupied territory [Palestinian, 1994:3.23]

Confident that their negative image abroad is superficial and has no factual basis, Palestinians repeatedly gave the same invitation, "come and see for yourself."

Propaganda is the art of conning people about something that doesn't exist. Don't use propaganda. We say, "come and see and decide for yourself. [Palestinian, 1994:3.23]

Look, you come and see the people for yourself. We're not terrorists. We're not blood-thirsty, knife wielding, terrorists or hooligans or barbarians. We're just a people and we love our families, we love our children, we want to live a good, decent life. We're reputed to be something we're not and the only way to find out, is to see....we're just as human as they are. I mean, when you cut us we bleed and our blood is red...we hurt too. [Palestinian, 1993:3.5]

The principal means by which Palestinians have coped with the trauma of creeping annexation, land confiscation, detention without trial, deportations, misrepresentation and invisibility has been through emigration.

5.1.5 Emigration

Emigration is the critical issue facing the Christian Palestinian community, and is, according to many, entirely a consequence of antagonistic and repressive attitudes and actions on the part of the Israeli authorities (Cragg, 1992:110). As one journalist from Jaffa put it,

It's like living in jail here. We want to feel free. Many people like my brother therefore emigrated to Canada to be free. 80% of the Christians have left Israel to go to places like Canada and the United States. [Palestinian, 1994:3.15]

O'Mahony notes four key periods of emigration from the Holy Land (1993:474). The fourth period began in 1967 with the occupation of the West Bank. Aburish records an interview with Bernard Sabella, a Palestinian sociologist at Bethlehem University and a leading expert on Palestinian emigration.

Oh, there will be a Christian presence in the Holy Land; this is not the point really. The issue is what kind of presence, how big, small, integrated, local or foreign it will be. Having a single church is a Christian presence, but is it acceptable? (Aburish, 1993:61).

There are now, it is claimed, only 12,000 Christians in greater Jerusalem out of a total population of 368,000. Those of Jewish origin number 267,000 together with 101,000 non-Jews (Cragg 1992:110). Based on similar trends, Bethlehem has become a predominantly Moslem community for the first time in its history. Most of the Palestinians interviewed were pessimistic about any reversal of this ethnic dispersion and local obliteration of the Christian community.

Some Palestinian church leaders have called for the return of Palestinians to the Holy Land from the West, arguing that it is their moral responsibility [Palestinian, 1993:3.9]. Others believe it will take "tremendous effort" from the churches and will not be possible without co-operation and "partnership" from Christians in the West [Palestinian, 1993:3.4]. Cragg reinforces this depressing conclusion by quoting the words of Archbishop George Khodr of Hadeth in Beirut, spoken as long ago as 1971,

According to our knowledge, after four more decades of the rhythm of evacuation, no Christians will be left in Jerusalem. The result will be that the Holy Places will remain without the presence of the people. It will be an assemblage of churches....viewed in that land as a pre-Israeli relic...It will be like visiting Baalbec when you see the Temples of Bacchus and Jupiter and then without any emotion except the aesthetic emotion...Some religious influences will be left, some nuns...and highly qualified professors of theology, and archeologists from the Protestant world who will serve as natural guides for tourists. (Cragg, 1982:110)

Cragg argues that Western Christians should not leave the responsibility of rectifying such a situation to the Israeli authorities, since they are only concerned with maintaining access to shrines, exploiting Western Christian tourism and bringing in "lucrative foreign exchange". The absence of Palestinian Christians simply makes the realisation of this objective less complicated (1982:110).

If Christian minorities suffer...it is no more than unfortunate. The Christian museum will be in safe hands. (Cragg, 1982:111)

5.2 Biblical Hermeneutic

As Robin Green observes, "inappropriate liturgy can strip us of our sense of worth and dignity" (1987:5). Palestinian Anglicans have felt this increasingly over the "inappropriateness" of many of the lectionary psalms which they are expected, like all good Anglicans, to use to praise God for blessing Israel. Strong feelings were equally expressed about the way some Western Christians use the Bible to justify Zionism, while ignoring the social and political imperative to defend the oppressed and root out injustice. As one Palestinian clergyman put it, "do not kill us with your biblical interpretation" [Palestinian, 1994:3.1]

Whereas British pilgrims generally found it difficult to relate specific biblical themes, stories or characters to the contemporary situation in Israel, Palestinians had no such problem. The pattern that emerged was one in which they found solace from or identified with individual Old Testament victims of suffering or injustice such as Job, Nathan, David and most commonly Naboth. Interestingly, in this story the roles are reversed, so that Ahab becomes the wicked Jewish king who has the Palestinian Naboth killed in order to steal his land. [Palestinian, 1993:3.1] Another application of the story included the following. "Elijah said to Naboth, "you killed to inherit", I feel they did this to us since 1948" [Palestinian, 1994:3.17] These are examples of the way in which Palestinian Christians have learnt to use the Hebrew scriptures to provide their own environment of meaning, history, belonging, and the opportunity to "tell" their story (Green, 1987:12-18). This is because the story has been denied them by the exclusive myths of origin and "conceptual models" imposed by both Jewish and Western Christian interpretations alike (Kraft, 1980:41). What is significant is that the Palestinians interviewed tended to identify with biblical individuals, who were either passive or demoralised.

We feel here as Job, that we suffer and nobody can give us sympathy. Only God. Because everyone is speaking about the security of Israel and nobody recognises we have a right to be here. [Palestinian, 1994:3.17]

The story of David and Goliath has been reversed. The Jews are like Goliath and we are like David, except I don't believe we will do what David did. Because it needs courage and that's what the Arabs here don't have. They lost it. [Palestinian, 1994:3.16]

Clearly Palestinian Christians feel very deeply they are the victims of injustice perpetrated in the name of the same God they worship.

We feel like the victim in the parable of the Good Samaritan, who has been left by the roadside, ignored by the buses full of pilgrims who do not stop to help. [Palestinian, 1994:1.3]

5.3 Views about Britain

Views about Britain tended to vary significantly depending on the age of the respondent. The older Palestinians were much more sympathetic toward Britain, and thankful for her involvement in the defeat of the Ottoman Empire, and the ending of Islamic domination in the region.

The West has caused a revolution here in the Middle East. Since Allenby came in 1916 he gave us Christians here in Israel a new spirit to be a Christian. Before they came here there were no schools. They teach us to read and write and also about our religion clearly because it was forbidden before that time to read the Bible. It was only for those who were clergy. Allenby was a good man. [Palestinian, 1994:3.17]

The younger Palestinians, especially those born since 1967, in common with British pilgrims, were far more critical of Britain and the West generally.

Negative, pure negative. Since we were born we were told that the British gave our land to the Jews, our jobs and everything we had, and this would not have happened without the British help. That's what the Arabs were told since 1948 and I don't think they are wrong. You are naive. You look at us as second class citizens. [Palestinian, 1994:3.16]

As another put it succinctly, "How can you give away what you don't own?" [Palestinian, 1993:3.7]. Criticisms were often made about the inconsistency of British and Western foreign policy. In particular, Palestinians were angry at Western acquiescence during decades of Israeli aggression compared with the eagerness to retaliate against Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait. While generalised views about Britain tended on the whole to be negative, Palestinian Christians were much more positive and open toward British Christian pilgrims.

5.4 Attitudes Toward Pilgrims

Among younger Palestinians there was a degree of cynicism expressed toward many pilgrims who are seen as "naive" and "brainwashed".

Most of them are nice people. They take lots of nice pictures as if we were in a zoo. Pictures of our small kids, like what the Israelis do when they go to the Far East. So it's like the stages, the lowest is the Far East and we are the second lowest. These pilgrims who come from the West, they say "what nice churches you have, and what a nice country you have", and they don't really ask and dig deeper and understand what the people believe and what the people feel. [Palestinian, 1994:3.16]

As the analysis of pilgrim opinion showed, British Christians are often preoccupied with the need for "balance" and impartiality when reflecting on issues such as the Arab-Israel controversy, or the status of the West Bank. Palestinian Christians have little patience with such attempts at "objectivity".

I do feel that this is cowardice. When you know the truth you should stand with it. You are not coming to compare and then go back and keep quiet. People here are under occupation...if we keep quiet we are going to land with double guilt consciences. The church should speak up against atrocities. Therefore we are suffering because of the quietness of the Christians. [Palestinian, 1994:3.23]

Essentially Palestinian Christians, frustrated at what they see as systematic brainwashing, long for meaningful contact with fellow believers who visit their country, not just to communicate the facts but also for mutual encouragement.

Some Christians, and I'm happy to say mainly in England also, were able to break through these barriers and discover that there are 125,000 Palestinian Christians, who are waiting for acts of solidarity from their Christian brothers all over the world. [Palestinian, 1993:3.1]

Palestinian Christians also recognise the profound privilege and responsibility of having lived for centuries in the land of Jesus Christ, and what this means in relation to fellow pilgrims from abroad.

The local church is determined to be a church of hospitality as it was through the centuries and ages, we are so proud we are the land that hosted Jesus Christ as a human being, and following in his steps we would like to host those who want to come to the Holy Land, so if you don't meet with them, we can't be hosts. That's why we feel frustrated when we see our brothers and sisters coming to the Holy Land, but don't meet with us. [Palestinian, 1994:3.26].

Some feel that the Anglican church and other Protestant church authorities should take more initiative and responsibility for pilgrimages, "directing" pilgrim groups to meet with indigenous Christians in the Holy Land.

They should not simply visit the sites or leave the arrangements and content of itineraries to religious or secular travel agents [Palestinian, 1993:3.4]. Their hope is that the day will come when "we can speak for ourselves...and carry on pilgrimages in a more serious and honest way" [Bishop Faek Haddad, 1993:3.2]

5.5 The Effect of the Lack of Contact Between Pilgrims and Palestinians

Palestinians regard the decline in contact with pilgrims associated with the rise of modern secular tourism, Western support for Israel, and the strategies of the Israeli Ministry of Tourism, as having had a devastating effect on their life and economy. Repeatedly the most common sentiment expressed was of being "ignored". They are depressed that their story is not heard by the very people with whom they have a religious affinity. "The effect is we have been time and again discouraged, especially by these pilgrims who come and never visit us." [Palestinian, 1994:3.23]. Another Palestinian put it very simply, "If you can't come to my house and I don't tell you what I feel, how do you know?" [Palestinian, 1994:3.17]. Essentially, many Palestinians hold the Western Church responsible because of its silence.

We as a community would never have reached this stage had Christians in the West been a lot more alert to the predicament of the Palestinians....and specifically, had the British Christians been much more aware of the responsibility of the United Kingdom...for the misery of the last 70 or 80 years. [Palestinian, 1993:3.12]

Lack of genuine contact means that both sides miss out, a state of affairs that persists "primarily because of the economic and political benefits to certain third parties..." [Palestinian, 1994:3.22]. Said Aburish's investigation into the life of the Palestinian Christian community could not have had a more appropriate title than, The Forgotten Faithful (1993).

5.6 The Benefits of Greater Contact Between Pilgrims and Palestinians

The unanimous opinion of Palestinians interviewed was that the first benefit of greater contact would be that more people would hear their story, see the reality of what is happening, and realise the justice of their cause. The need to be "heard" was very important to them, and for pilgrims to "unlearn" the negative and destructive images often portrayed of Palestinians in the Western media. "The benefit is that they would know about our cause, the Palestinian cause" [Palestinian, 1994:3.21], "It is valuable because we want the whole world to know the story about the Palestinians" [Palestinian, 1994:2.13], "through our words and mouths rather than through the media" [Palestinian, 1994:3.27]. Many felt that it is ignorance itself which perpetuates and shields injustice.

First of all we will learn to know each other. They will know what I think about them, and I will know what they think about me. I don't think that it will solve the world's problems.....it will help because most of the things they see here are lies, lie after lie. [Palestinian, 1994:3.16]

One clergyman described his experience of the small number of groups that occasionally come and visit a local orphanage.

There is a difference between a pilgrim and a tourist. A tourist comes to see ruins and they go back ruined, a pilgrim comes in order to see the living and see the places too, so he goes back with a burden after he has met us. [Palestinian, 1994:3.23]

Similarly in May 1994, a pilgrimage group visited the Prophet Elias School in Ibillin, where despite persistent opposition from the Israeli authorities, Jewish, Moslem and Christian teachers and pupils learn to live and work together. Elias Chacour, who founded the school responded by saying,

Your visit to Ibillin was not just a courtesy visit but an act of solidarity with your brothers and sisters in Christ. We need to know that you care and we are not forgotten. We have been deprived for 50 years.

Personal contact with increasing numbers of Christian pilgrims is something Canon Naim Ateek sees as "wonderful in itself", since as hosts, they long to welcome believers from all over the world.

We could begin to really break many barriers, the barriers of falsehood, of wrong information, of stereotypes, and then to open up to the truth, the truth of the life of the Christian community.

Since Palestinians are a double minority both as Arabs living in Israel, and as Christians within the Arab family, greater contact with Christians abroad would also lessen the sense of isolation many feel.

They are very few here, they feel always as a minority, but when they see that they have other brothers outside coming to encourage them, it is not a church behind locked doors...the doors will open to the whole world. [Palestinian, 1993:3.7]

Despite being a small minority, Palestinians tend to be well educated and given their cultural, ethnic and religious links with both East and West, they have played a significant part in the peace process so far. Robert Assally, director of the MECC office in Jerusalem highlighted the wider and strategic value of greater contact between pilgrims and Palestinians.

Contact between visitors and the local church can only serve to strengthen the local Christian position which is a minority among three religions, yet very much involved in the peace process long before the formal peace process was made public. They are in a good position to mediate between East and West, what pilgrims are doing is strengthening the hand of the peace makers and that can have a terribly important impact here.

The benefit of greater contact is not all one way. Archdeacon Riah of Nazareth described the mutual enrichment both receive, as pilgrimage becomes a living experience, not so much a journey "to" a place but a travelling "with" fellow believers, "not only a pilgrimage to the stones but a pilgrimage with the Living Stones" [Palestinian, 1993:3.9]. Pilgrim groups are encouraged to visit the Anglican school in Nazareth.

I allow the teachers a few minutes to welcome our brothers and sisters from the U.K. or America and they go and sit with the kids and share...You are building a relationship, you are seeing human beings of the same family of Christ, with a different colour, or a different ethnic background, with a different language....and yet they are praising the same Lord. [Palestinian, 1993:3.9]

Prior to the rise of modern tourism, it was the indigenous Palestinian Christians who guided pilgrims around the Holy Land sharing their intimate knowledge of the land and its customs and culture, unchanged for centuries. Kamal Farah of the Anglican Pilgrim Office intends to revive this tradition.

We were used to having a special house to give hospitality, to serve the work of God, to share with those who come, to have a local reading of the Bible, experience of the Bible. This is one of our aims, to restore this local tradition to share not only bread but also the word of God, and not only to speak about political and social issues but also spiritual issues....to have an Oriental spiritual reading of the Bible, social and biblical background so that you can understand how it was in the first centuries.

5.7 Conclusions on Palestinian Opinion

Based on these interviews it is clear that the Palestinian Christian community is suffering under enormous pressure, living at best as second class citizens in Israel, and at worst denied the most basic of human rights. The confiscation of land continues, in spite of the 1993 Peace Agreement, and in places such as Gaza and the camps of the West Bank, the majority remain refugees, still dependent for their survival on the humanitarian work of the United Nations. It is clear that a large chasm of ignorance, fear, prejudice and misunderstanding still remains between the majority of British Christians who visit the Holy Land as tourists or pilgrims, and the indigenous Christian community.

In general terms Palestinians hold the Western Church culpable for their continued marginalisation. Individuals varied considerably in their views, depending on their age and place of residence. Those living in Israel tended to be most optimistic, those on the West Bank, pessimistic, and those forced to live in refugee camps, the most antagonistic.

Among those who have regular contact with pilgrims there appeared a tempered optimism, that a gradual return to more traditional approaches to pilgrimage has begun and will grow, bringing lasting benefits to both pilgrims and indigenous Christians. In Beit Sahour for example, the Palestinian Centre for Rapprochement, in 1993, began to offer "alternative tourism programmes" which include the opportunity to meet or even stay with Palestinians in their homes, as well as visit local initiatives such as the YMCA medical centre. They will also arrange lectures on subjects such as the effects of Christian emigration in Palestinian society, Christian and Islamic co-operation, and Palestinian Liberation Theology.

Before the 19th Century when people had to walk from one place to another and they had no alternative but to stay with Christian families even if they were not able to speak the language, yet they were able to detect the homes of the Christians from the sign of the cross on the front of the house. Pilgrims dined with them and stayed with them overnight, and they were guided by people from one place to another and that is what we are trying to get back to...whereby the pilgrim will be a real pilgrim. [Palestinian, 1993:3.9]

Meeting with the Living Stones, with the element of risk, discomfort and hardship this can involve, nevertheless brings a unique historical and theological "authenticity" to pilgrimages, a cross-cultural exchange and a genuine spiritual encounter with believers who have worshipped, suffered and witnessed in the wounded land of Jesus for two thousand years. [Palestinian, 1994:3.22]

The constant plea uttered by many Palestinians interviewed was simply, "Tell people in the West what you have seen." [Palestinian, 1994:1.3]

CHAPTER 6. CONCLUSIONS

6.1 Summary of Findings

This research set out to investigate the reasons why so few pilgrims meet with the indigenous Palestinian Christians when visiting the Holy Land, and the degree to which pilgrimages by Western Christians, whether intentionally or unintentionally, have exacerbated the circumstances under which the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem serves the predominantly Palestinian Christian community in Israel and the Occupied Territories.

The preliminary research into documentary sources concentrated on the historical context, the theological controversies and political ramifications of pilgrimages. The history of Western involvement in the Holy Land over the last millennium has been dominated by the spectre of the Crusades, Colonialism, Orientalism and cultural imperialism.

The desire of individual Christians from the West to visit the Holy Land on a pilgrimage cannot be divorced from these broad historical movements, which if nothing else, have determined how Orientals view Westerners. The theological controversies surrounding "Israel" and the "Holy Land" are an overlay to the history of Western involvement. The entrenched positions held by Christians are reflected in the emotive use of language, the presuppositions assumed and biblical hermeneutic employed. Is the "Holy Land" Palestine or Israel, and if Israel, which Israel? Neutrality is a rare luxury, and difficult to sustain, linguistically or ethically, given the Palestinian's call for justice and Israel's need for security. More so since language is both a subtle indicator of presuppositions and remains a powerful tool of propaganda.

At least three distinct theological perspectives compete for the moral high ground regarding the status and future of the Palestinian Church in Israel. The Christian Zionists, who include many Evangelicals and also most Fundamentalists, have the greatest impact and are the least sympathetic in so far as they largely ignore or malign the Palestinian Church. Zionists see themselves as the advocates and protectors of Israel who are seen as "God's people" living in "God's Land". From the Zionist's perspective such biblical "logic" and historical imperative can neither be questioned nor resisted. Christian Zionism has caused great problems for the Palestinian community over the last 100 years through its distortion of the Bible in two essential areas; the marginalisation of the universal imperative of the Christian gospel of equal grace, and the denial of the Palestinian's right to common justice. These errors have led to the perpetuation and "Christianisation" of an ethnic and cultic Jewish exclusivism which has lent uncritical support to Israel politically and denied Palestinians justice and compassion.

Palestinians might legitimately have looked for a champion to the second main theological perspective, Liberation Theology, since it emerged out of painful contact with acute human suffering and situations of intense political injustice. Sadly there has been what can only be described as a deafening and embarrassing silence on the part of most liberation theologians toward the Palestinian cause in general and Palestinian Liberation Theology in particular. This has probably to do with the centrality of the "Exodus" theme in much traditional liberation theology, which, while it may have brought solace and given strength to other marginalised Christian communities in Latin America and Asia, has had nothing constructive to say for the people suffering the effects of a latter day "Exodus" into the so called "Promised Land" by Israel.

The Living Stones Movement, which is a broad coalition of Evangelicals, Liberals and Catholics sharing a common sense of solidarity with the Palestinian Church is the third main theological perspective to have emerged comparatively recently. This movement has done much to publicise the plight of the Palestinian community, challenging both Christian Zionism and Israeli government policy, and promoting more responsible pilgrimages which interact with the Palestinian Christians of the Holy Land. The Living Stones movement have also exposed the fact that the pilgrimage ministry cannot be divorced from the political and ethical impact of tourism. It is evident that the Israeli government through the Ministry of Tourism has a clear political agenda in portraying Israel as the protector of Christian shrines, perpetuating the myth that the land was and is devoid of any ancient Palestinian Christian community. Israel looks for support from American Fundamentalists and Southern Baptists in particular, heavily promoting pilgrimages from this sympathetic and influential quarter. Israel further seeks to monopolise and censor the pilgrimage industry through the use of propaganda, the eradication of Palestinian guides, the partisan licensing of Israeli hotels and travel agents in preference to Palestinian owned ones, and through the exploitation of localised security measures.

These strategies have contributed to a steady decline in contact between pilgrims and the indigenous Christian community, with deleterious consequences for the Palestinian tourist economy as well as to their spiritual isolation and alienation. What is needed instead, according to Kenneth Cragg, is nothing less than, "imaginative, uninhibited and uninhibiting sympathy between Arab and Western Christians" (1992:297).

In the light of these historical, theological and political factors, distinct kinds of pilgrimage emerge. Generally speaking, there appear to be three broad varieties of Protestant pilgrim.

Evangelicals come essentially to visit the sites of biblical significance on what are primarily educational tours. These in themselves will only perpetuate and reinforce a pietistic faith rooted in the 1st Century, without addressing either the present Middle East conflict or engaging in theological praxis. The presence of an ancient and Oriental Christianity is either ignored, misunderstood or criticised for desecrating the archaeological sites with what appear no different to pagan shrines.

Fundamentalist pilgrims visit the Holy Land for similar reasons but with the added eschatological dimension, believing themselves to be witnessing and indeed participating in the will of God, at work within Israel in these "end times". They believe they have a divine mandate to support the political state of Israel.

The third, most recent and smallest category of pilgrimage to emerge is associated with the term "Living Stones". These pilgrimages in contradistinction seek to counter the ignorance of many Evangelicals and the harm caused by Fundamentalists, by engaging in acts of solidarity with the Palestinian church. These pilgrimages include opportunities to meet and worship with, listen to and learn from the spirituality and experience of the indigenous Christians.

Three distinct but related pieces of empirical research were undertaken in order to elucidate and critically reflect upon the practice and impact of Protestant pilgrimages in relation to the Palestinian Church.

The first enquiry was a survey of British Christian opinion which focused on their perceptions as to the meaning, purpose and ethical issues related to pilgrimages. The intention was also to reveal the nature of their theological and political presuppositions about the people and territory associated with the Holy Land. Although this opportunity sample was drawn from among those known to be broadly sympathetic toward the Palestinians, they nevertheless continued to associate the term Palestinian with predominantly negative connotations. In comparison with images used to describe Jews and Arabs, those describing Palestinians were the least positive, the least neutral and the most negative. This group of pilgrims were also generally reluctant to identify with the PLO, justify the Intifada or the use of force to end the occupation of the West Bank, although there was evidence that they were grappling with the ethical issues involved.

In common with most Evangelicals, the majority of this sample spoke of their initial motivation in terms of personal faith development, and the desire to visit the historic places associated with the life of Jesus Christ. Significantly however, their lasting memories of the Holy Land were of Palestinians suffering and of Israeli military aggression. A degree of concientization appeared therefore to have occurred during their pilgrimages. This transforming experience enabled them to become better informed about the political situation, led to a closer solidarity with the Palestinians, and greater antipathy for the Israeli authorities than before. The strongest language was used to express their views on the ethics of pilgrimages. Most now felt it was imperative for pilgrims to meet with indigenous Christians, and that failing to do so was deeply immoral. If this sample was typical of Protestant Christians undertaking pilgrimages, it indicates on the one hand a disturbing level of ignorance concerning the existence and plight of the Palestinian Church prior to their visit, but on the other hand, evidence that once exposed to the reality of the situation, that Western Christians are willing to take a stand in support of Palestinian Christians. The crucial factor seems to depend on whether, during their pilgrimage, they are given an opportunity to meet Palestinian Christians to hear their story.

The second survey of Pilgrimage Tour Operators was designed to take this investigation one stage further to discover whether those involved in the travel business are aware of the ethical issues involved, the kind of language used to describe the Holy Land, and how far they consciously or unconsciously determine the level of contact between pilgrims and Palestinians through the marketing strategies employed and itineraries recommended. Of the 25 companies investigated none referred to Palestine or the Occupied Territories and five used maps showing the West Bank as part of Israel. The overwhelming majority offered itineraries which included several visits to many places of Jewish significance.

The most frequently visited extra-biblical sites were Masada, Yad Vashem, the Wailing Wall, a Kibbutz and the Knesset. In so far as these places are all emotively associated with the Jewish psyche and national identity, this evidence would appear to confirm the claim that itineraries are largely structured and promoted by the Israeli Ministry of Tourism to instil in visitors a positive image of Israel. In contrast only one Operator explicitly recommends pilgrims meet with Palestinian Christians. The evidence accumulated showing the difficulties that pilgrimage groups have in meeting Palestinians, visiting their communities or in obtaining the services of a Christian Palestinian guide would again suggest that this is part of a definite strategy of the Israeli Government to thwart such contact.

With few exceptions, British Tour Operators appeared largely oblivious to and untroubled by the serious political pressures their Palestinian counterparts face, how the exploitation of Christian tour guiding benefits the Israeli economy at the expense of the Palestinian church, and the means by which the Israeli Ministry of Tourism seeks to direct the pilgrimage industry toward Israeli locations, guides, hotels and facilities. Instead, most Operators appeared to prefer to avoid the ethical issues, offering uncontroversial educational tours appealing to and reinforcing pietistic Western religious fantasies, while maintaining a compliant relationship with the Israeli Ministry of Tourism. Four categories of Pilgrimage Tour Operator emerge: First, a small number of secular companies offer what are really religious tourist package holidays; second, the majority of companies offer biblical-educational tours;

third, a small but influential group of Zionist or Israeli owned companies concentrate on the Jewish dimension to the Christian faith, and fourth, only a handful of Operators who actively encourage contact with the Palestinian church. In terms of comparative influence, if the first group are benign, and the second blind, the third appear bigoted, and only the fourth offer any genuine dialogue or intercourse between pilgrims and Palestinian Christians. The majority of Operators appear ignorant of the ethical issues implicit in their business, fail to recognise how they are manipulated by the Israeli authorities, and how detrimental their trade is to the indigenous Christian community. Based on this evidence it is not surprising that so few pilgrimage groups ever meet with Palestinians.

The third empirical survey conducted was of a group of Palestinian Christians. This enquiry traced the consequences of the ignorance or indifference of British Christians and Tour Operators, and the resulting isolation felt by Christians living in the Holy Land. The deleterious consequences experienced include the dispossession of their land by quasi-judicial confiscation; a pervasive racial discrimination inherent in what is an apartheid system denying basic human rights to Palestinians; an invisibility, hidden from the touristic gaze of Western pilgrims and a persistent misrepresentation through the Israeli exploitation of the media and propaganda.

These taken together have resulted in massive emigration and the depletion of the Palestinian Christian community in Israel and the West Bank to dangerous levels which now threaten their very survival in the Holy Land. Palestinian Christians are also acutely aware of the ways in which the Bible is misinterpreted and used against them by Zionists and Fundamentalists, and find solace in many of the biblical stories of injustice with which they closely identify.

Attitudes toward Western Christians were generally warm and forgiving, allowing for their age and place of dwelling. Not surprisingly those living in Israel and of an older generation were the most conservative and appreciative of the West while the younger Palestinians and especially those living in the Occupied Territories were the most radical and critical. All those interviewed however were enthusiastic at the possibility of greater contact with pilgrims, believing this could have only positive consequences, so lessening their isolation and suffering.

The combined results of these three surveys would suggest that the deficiencies inherent in the majority of Protestant pilgrimages undertaken to the Holy Land are essentially threefold - first, their preoccupation with a pietistic religious experience based upon visits to locations of biblical significance which perpetuate the separation of Christian faith from practice; second, the absence of any contact with the indigenous Christian church reinforces the ignorance of, and stereotyping by, each community of the other; and third, the failure of pilgrims to question or challenge the causes of the deep suffering and injustice Palestinians continue to face in the very land where Jesus Christ came. This surely contradicts his work of bringing peace and reconciliation to the world.

For pilgrimage groups and organisers, to continue to ignore the presence of a local Christian community, is a perversion of what pilgrimage could and should be about. The lack of contact between Christians perpetuates ignorance and complacency for pilgrims and injustice and despair for Palestinians. It is ultimately to treat the Holy Land as nothing more than an entertaining religious theme park, and will only hasten the day when Palestinian Christians become extinct in the Holy Land, their heritage forgotten and their churches closed or turned into museums.**6.2 How Should the Practice of Pilgrimages Change?**

The findings of this research raise a number of vital questions. Cragg has put it succinctly,

How should Christians respond to this situation? What are the final criteria by which to judge? Are they ethical or dogmatic, spiritual or merely textual, and, if textual, in what terms? And what of those Christians who have not come to the point of asking any questions at all? The emotions that accompany these issues are as painful and as stressful as the questions themselves. (Cragg, 1992:236)

The Anglican church has, despite its faults, played a significant part in the "evolution of Arabism" and in the development of a positive Palestinian identity through its schools, hospitals and churches, out of all proportion to its relative size. (Cragg, 1992:134).

The results of this research would suggest that pilgrimages could share in this constructive role in that they have the potential, if undertaken responsibly, of greatly enhancing contact and understanding between Christians. They can help affirm Palestinian identity, stimulate the Palestinian tourist economy, and encourage Palestinian autonomy. Pilgrims can also expose the injustice of the political and military occupation of the West Bank by Israel, speaking on behalf of this ancient Church, as their voice around the world.

On their return home, pilgrims can convey the story of the Living Stones abroad, show solidarity, share skills and resources, and challenge their own government's foreign policy on the Middle East.

The results of this research would appear to indicate however that the majority of pilgrims remain largely ignorant or indifferent about the very real threat to the existence of a Palestinian Christian presence in Israel.

This is the ultimate challenge and the primary ethical issue facing pilgrimage Operators and tour leaders in the immediate future, and surely constitutes the agenda for "responsible tourism" to the Holy Land.

Thus, an essential task of the ecumenical movement is to face the twofold challenge of discovering the ways and means to enable Middle Eastern Christians to re-establish their fraternal links and receive nourishment from their roots and, at the same time, break down the barriers of neglect and misunderstanding... In short, it is a time for these communities to be given spiritual water and, in turn for Jerusalem's Christians to offer their own unique witness to the world, enriching the rest of us. (Ekin, 1990:28)

6.3 Specific Recommendations

A number of specific and practical recommendations for pilgrimage Tour Operators, leaders and guides follow as a result of this research:

1. They are urged to ensure that within itineraries adequate time is given for meetings with Palestinian Christians, especially those in the Occupied Territories, and that long term reciprocal relations are nurtured between their churches.
2. To ensure travel on Sundays is avoided and time is taken to worship with indigenous Christian communities, under their local leadership.
3. Itineraries include visits to Christian charitable and humanitarian projects such as hospitals and schools, particularly those in the Occupied Territories such as at Ramallah, Beit Jala and Gaza, and pilgrims be encouraged to initiate long term relationships between their churches and these charities.
4. Opportunities are made where possible to meet with Jewish, Moslem and Christian peace makers, such as at Neve Shalom, Beit Sehour and through organisations such as Clergy for Peace, the MECC and the Beit Sehour Centre for Rapprochement.
5. Where ever possible Christian Palestinian agencies, buses, hostels and hospices be used in locations such as Jerusalem, Bethlehem and Nazareth which will bring revenue to the Palestinian economy, in preference to those agencies of a purely tourist nature which are under Israeli control.
6. Tour groups insist on being led by Christian Palestinian guides, and the Israeli government be petitioned to licence sufficient Palestinian Christians to guide all Christian groups who wish them, and that they be pressured specifically to recognise the tour guiding course at Bethlehem University.
7. Prior to departure, Anglican pilgrim groups contact the Anglican Department for Pilgrims at St George's in Jerusalem to inform them of the pilgrimage and to seek advice on the local conditions prevailing, requesting them to arrange meetings with the local Christian communities.
8. Groups be prepared with information on the historical and political background to the Middle East such as that produced by CMS (Clark) and CCBI (1992), and offered a reading list of writings by Palestinian Christian leaders.
9. The Archbishops and Bishops of the Church of England be asked, in view of the vulnerability of the Palestinian Christian community, to appoint Diocesan Advisors on Pilgrimage to inform and direct clergy who are considering organising pilgrimages, in responsible ways, as outlined above.
10. Regular and independent meetings be arranged by and for British and Palestinian Tour Operators and Agents in Israel to consider ways of encouraging better communication and greater co-operation, which will promote the Palestinian tourist economy, affirm the indigenous church, and serve the best interests of pilgrims, free of control or interference from the Israeli Ministry of Tourism.
11. The Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem and the Middle East consider the pattern set by the Roman Catholic church, and train and ordain additional clergy with the specific responsibility of acting as pilgrimage guides to Anglican groups.
Whereas the Roman Catholic church employs expatriate clergy to fulfil this role, it is recommended that local Palestinian men be ordained for this ministry.
Their stipends could be financed entirely from tour guiding fees and not be a burden on the Diocese. Such an imaginative scheme could also allow for clergy to work part time as tour guides while continuing to perform their parish duties. This would enable many more Palestinian clergy to be placed in smaller parishes, or Diocesan posts which at present cannot be justified because of financial constraints.
12. That further research be encouraged into the impact of pilgrimages; the effect which the theological and political views of pilgrims have on the indigenous Christian community of the Holy Land; and how pilgrimage itineraries might be modified to enhance and enrich the experience of both pilgrims and the Palestinians. With this in mind, Bowman offers some suggestions for starters,

The "place" tourists see is not simply a reified image of their expectations, or a real terrain, but the result of a dialogue between tourists and those persons and institutions which mediate between the tourist gaze and its object. The study of such "places" should enquire carefully into what takes place in such dialogue and who is excluded by them. (1992a:121)

6.4 A "Responsible" Pilgrimage Itinerary - Resulting from this Research

As a consequence of this research a pilgrimage was arranged with the Revd Garth Hewitt in May 1994 with the specific purpose of bringing together pilgrims and Palestinian Christians in Israel and the West Bank.

The aim was to attempt the kind of pilgrimage more commonly undertaken before the rise of modern tourism, where pilgrims consciously went to live and worship with, and be guided by, the indigenous Christians on the significance of the Holy Places.

The hope was to experience something of the ancient spirituality of the Holy Land. The purpose was to learn from this suffering church how they witness to the Christian faith in relation to justice, peacemaking and inter-faith dialogue, while living as a minority among Moslems and Jews.

This particular itinerary included a day in Gaza visiting the Jabalia refugee camp, the Ahli Anglican hospital and the MECC centre for rehabilitation. Another day was spent with Elias Chacour visiting the Christian school in Ibillin where Jews, Moslems and Christians teach and learn together. Other visits included a tour of the village of Baram demolished by the Israelis in 1948, meeting villagers in Beit Sahour, students and faculty at Bir Zeit University, the staff and children of the Evangelical Boys Home in Ramallah, the UN work in Jalazone Camp and other humanitarian and inter-faith projects. Meetings were arranged with Jewish, Moslem and Christian leaders including a Palestinian attorney involved in the recent peace negotiations and a Jewish Rabbi similarly involved in the peace process. Opportunities were also provided for times of worship with local Christians. The accommodation, agents and guide were chosen specifically in order to bring benefit to the local Christian church and Palestinian tourist economy.

The impact was very significant, attracting in Gaza, quite unintentionally, the interest of a number of international journalists and film crews. According to the Palestinian guide, it was the first visit of its kind by such a large group in five years or more [Palestinian, 1994:3.33].

Initial feedback from the 45 participants has been immensely encouraging, and the following sentiments reflect the lasting impressions of the group as a whole,

I can close my eyes and see the people of Gaza, of singing together, of crying together, memories of people rather than places.

This is the kind of experience that makes other trips seem superficial and rather dull.

The people we met. Unsung heroes and heroines who all deserve a peace prize. The vision, hope and faith in spite of adverse conditions.

Of the suffering of the Palestinians, the degradation of Gaza and the faith, courage and love of Christian leaders who have truly been raised to new life with Christ.

It is intended that this research and model pilgrimage provide a modest contribution, within the context of a continuing process of reflective practice, of how pilgrimages can participate in a unique and vital ministry of enriching and deepening the faith of both pilgrims and indigenous Christians, as well as advancing the cause of peace through justice, enhancing ecumenical relations and inter-faith dialogue.

The pilgrimage inspired by this research is itself part of a continuing process of learning and reflection, which, it is already intended, will lead to a similar pilgrimage in 1995.

The findings of this research have shown that for Christians to attempt a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, yet fail, for what ever reason, to meet with the local Christians in such a troubled situation, where they are ignored, abused and maligned, is not only deeply offensive to them, it is surely a contradiction of what a pilgrimage should be, and ultimately immoral before God.

It is nothing less than to perpetuate the evil of the Levite in the Parable of the Good Samaritan who walked by on the other side. He should have known better.

Stephen Robert Sizer
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