Clergy Discipline Measure 2003

In the Clergy Discipline Tribunal – Diocese of Winchester

Re the Reverend Dr Stephen Robert Sizer

WITNESS STATEMENT OF
COLIN GILBERT CHAPMAN

I, **COLIN GILBERT CHAPMAN**, of 12 Daniels Park, Milton, Cambridge, CB24 6UD **WILL SAY** as follows:

1. I make this statement on behalf of the Reverend Dr Stephen Sizer ("**Stephen**") in support of his Answer to a Complaint made against him by the Board of Deputies of British Jews ("**the Board of Deputies**").

Biography

2. I am an Anglican priest, in retirement since 2004. I was ordained in the Scottish Episcopal Church in Edinburgh, and after a curacy in Edinburgh worked with the Church Mission Society, first for five years in Cairo at the Anglican Cathedral and at the Coptic Evangelical Seminary, and later for eight years based in Beirut, working with Christian students throughout the Middle East. After seven years teaching at Trinity College, Bristol, I was principal of Crowther Hall, the CMS training college in Selly Oak, Birmingham for seven years. My last job before retirement was teaching Islamic Studies for four years at the Near East School of Theology in Beirut. My wife and I have served for a total of eighteen years in the Middle East.

3. I first visited Israel/Palestine in 1960, the year I graduated with an honours degree in Greek and Hebrew from St Andrews University. Since then I have followed events in the Middle East with close interest, and made many visits to Israel/Palestine, where I have taught at Bethlehem Bible College and the Nazareth School of Theology. It was the experience of living through part of the civil war in Beirut between 1975 and 1983 which enabled me to understand the roots of the Israel-Palestinian conflict and encouraged me to write about the conflict from a Christian perspective. My last visit

to Israel/Palestine was in February 2019, when I gave lectures in Nazareth and Bethlehem.

4. My book *Whose Promised Land?* was published by Lion in 1983, and has been through three revisions, the latest in 2015. *Whose Holy City? Jerusalem and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict* was published in 2004. Inter-Varsity Press published *Cross and Crescent: responding to the challenges of Islam* in 1995, with a revised edition in 2007. Recent published articles include "Christianity in the Middle East – Past, Present and Future" and "Can Religion and Politics Be Separated in the Middle East Today?"

How I know Stephen

5. I was first in contact with Stephen in the early 1990s when he was working on his MPhil dissertation, which was completed in 1994. Since then we have attended many conference together, and have both given lectures at the bi-annual "Christ at the Checkpoint Conferences" in Bethlehem, and at meetings of "Building Bridges" for dialogue between Muslims and Evangelical Christians, sponsored by the world Islamic Call Society, and held in Tripoli, Libya, Pasadena and Toronto.

6. Stephen's 1994 MPhil thesis was a study of the way the political situation in Israel/Palestine has affected Christian pilgrimages to the Holy Land, noting in particular the effects of the tighter control of the tourist industry by the Israeli Ministry of Tourism. His doctoral thesis was on the history of Christian Zionism, and was published in 2004 as *Christian Zionism: Road-map to Armageddon?* Some of this material was worked into a more popular book, *Zion's Christian Soldiers* (2007). He has also contributed articles to many symposia. I myself have greatly appreciated his writing and am aware that he is recognised world-wide as an authority on the subject of Christian Zionism.

7. From his rigorous research and his frequent visits to Israel/Palestine, I believe he has developed a very clear understanding of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and demonstrated a real appreciation of the many biblical, theological, social and political issues involved. I have admired his willingness to engage with these issues in the public sphere where they are so hotly contested.

8. I have followed Stephen's work with the Peacemaker Trust with great interest, and see it as a natural expression of his passion for combining peace-making with a real concern for issues of justice.

Church of England and Anti-Semitism

9. If the Church of England prides itself on being a church that is broad enough to hold together people with different views on sexuality and a whole variety of other ethical, social and political issues, one would expect it to be broad enough to hold together people who have different approaches to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. I would suggest that the issues which Stephen raises – and the particular viewpoint which he brings - need to be openly discussed both within the church and in the context of Jewish-Christian relations.

10. As an ordained Anglican priest myself, and as someone who has written on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, I find it hard to understand how Stephen's writing and his advocacy on this issue show any evidence of antisemitism. Drawing attention to the fact that most of the world – apart from Israel and its supporters – regard the continuing occupation of the West Bank, East Jerusalem and Gaza since 1967 as a violation of international law and regard the building of all the Israeli settlements as a violation of the Geneva Convention can hardly be dismissed as anti-semitic. The criticisms of Israeli government policies over many decades which have been voiced by Stephen are no different from those that have been repeatedly expressed by a considerable number of Jewish people in Israel, the UK and the rest of the world.

Statement of truth

11. I believe the facts and matters in this statement to be true.

COLIN CHAPMAN	Colin G. Chapman
Date:	19 October, 2020