FORM 3 (Rules 6 and 17)

Clergy Discipline Measure 2003

Statement in support of a Complaint, or in support of an Answer to a Complaint

Box for use only by the Registrar of Tribunals	*Statement submitted by:* *Name of maker of statement:* *Date of statement:*

In the matter of the complaint

Enter the name of the complainant.
Enter the name of the member of the clergy about whom a complaint is made.

made by The Board of Deputies of British Jews

against: Rev Dr Stephen Sizer

My full name is: Dr. Gary M. Burge

My contact address, including postcode, is: Dept. of Theology, Calvin Seminary, 3233 Burton St SE, Grand Rapids MI 49546, United States

***Telephone & e-mail details are optional, but it could be helpful to the registrar and bishop to have them.*

**My telephone number is:

**My e-mail address is: gary.burge@calvinseminary.edu

The matters in this statement to which I refer are all within my own knowledge, except where I indicate otherwise. If anything is not within my own knowledge then I set out the source of any matters of information and belief:

*You must explain in your statement how you know about each of the matters you describe, **unless** you know about them because you have **personally** seen or observed them.*

To Whom It May Concern:

Dr. Stephen Sizer has supplied to me details of the complaint lodged against him. He has also supplied the original complaint. With this in hand, I also can draw from my many years of working with Stephen (perhaps 25 years) to say that I find the complaint remarkable and difficult to believe. But also I find them predictable – which I will explain below.

I am a professor theology at Calvin Theological Seminary and ordained in the Presbyterian Church (USA). I have also had extensive experience in this volatile theological and political debate surrounding Israel and Zionism. Dr. Sizer is in fact an international authority on Christian Zionism and this has not only led to his important academic contributions, but this has made him highly visible to those who promote Zionism as a matter of orthodox Christian belief. He has also been public about his criticism of Israel's domestic policies with regard to Palestinians living in the country.

All of this together has made Dr. Sizer's career a flashpoint for criticism. One of the unusual features of this topic is that unlike other theological disagreements, this subject has many passionate though untrained laity who promote Christian Zionism and when they encounter serious historical analysis or incisive political commentary, they do not engage the author of these views but instead try to sabotage or discredit them. In my own research on this debate, I have found it remarkable and astonishing how volatile these critics can be. This complaint is simply one more example.

The present set of complaints therefore fit into a pattern that many of us have seen countless times. Dr. Sizer is saying nothing that has not been said before by both Jews and Christians. And his writing is not anti-Semitic. Simply put, public criticism of Israel is not a form of anti-Judaism. It is simply a form of political discourse that can be heard about any country today. But for some, his success at winning an audience has made his views intolerable. This is unfortunate and I am confident that cooler heads in the Church of England will see such criticisms for what they are.

Sincerely,

Gary M. Burge, Ph.D.
Calvin Theological Seminary
Grand Rapids, MI USA

I believe the facts in my statement to be true. I am aware that the contents of this statement may be made public

You must sign and date this statement.

Signed:



Dated: 29 Nov 2018