

# Clergy Discipline Measure 2003

## In the Clergy Discipline Tribunal – Diocese of Winchester

Re the Reverend Dr Stephen Robert Sizer

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**WITNESS STATEMENT OF  
REV'D DR STEPHEN ROBERT  
SIZER**

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I, **STEPHEN ROBERT SIZER**, of 39 Bevan Close, Southampton, SO19 9PE, **WILL SAY** as follows:

1. I make this statement in response to the Complaint against me by Marie van der Zyl on behalf of the Board of Deputies of British Jews dated 15 October 2018 (henceforth “the Complaint”).
2. Ms van der Zyl, on behalf of the Board of Deputies of British Jews, alleges “*Stephen Sizer’s history of antisemitism extends back the better part of a decade and involves close association with and promotion of terrorists, far-right personalities, and Holocaust deniers, not only in Britain but across the world.*”
3. In this statement I will provide evidence to refute the allegation. I repudiate antisemitism and all forms of racism, terrorism, fascism and Holocaust denial. I have never had any “close association” with or promoted terrorists, far-right personalities or Holocaust deniers.

### **Biography**

4. My *Curriculum Vitae*, revised in March 2020 is included at Exhibit "A". In summary, I gained his BA in Geography from Sussex University in 1976, a Diploma in Higher Education (Dip HE) in theology from Trinity College, Bristol in 1983. I was awarded an MTh (with distinction) from Oxford University in 1994. My thesis examined the ethical management of pilgrimages to the Holy Land. In 2004 I was awarded a PhD by Oak Hill College and Middlesex University. My thesis examined the historical roots, theological basis and political consequences of Christian Zionism in Britain and the USA from 1820.

5. I have served as an external examiner for post-graduate degrees (MPhil and PhD) awarded by the University of Wales, the Oxford Centre for Mission Studies (OCMS) and also Tyndale-Carey Graduate School, Bible College of New Zealand – now Laidlaw College.
6. I was ordained in 1983 and served as a curate in St Leonard's on Sea, Sussex (1983-1986). I was appointed Curate-in-Charge, then Rector of St John's, Stoke, Guildford in Surrey (1986-1997) and then I was appointed vicar of Virginia Water in 1997 where I served for 20 years until 2017.
7. For over 25 years, I was a trustee of Biblica Europe, International Bible Society, and have served as a trustee, director or committee member of Friends of Sabeel UK, Highway Trust, Interfaith Group for Morally Responsible Investment, Christ at the Checkpoint conferences, and the Balfour Project.
8. I am the founder and director of Peacemaker Trust, a registered charity dedicated to peacemaking, especially where minorities are persecuted, where justice is denied, human rights are suppressed or reconciliation is needed.
9. I am a trustee of Southampton and Winchester Visitors Group (SWVG), a charity who befriend and support asylum seekers and refugees in the Southampton area. I am also a trustee of Sabeel-Kairos UK.
10. I am a trainer for the Christianity Explored Course and have assisted with the launch of the Buganda, Swahili and French translations in Uganda, Tanzania, Kenya, Burundi, Rwanda and South Sudan, as well as the launch of the Arabic edition in Egypt, Lebanon and Morocco and the Polish translation in Katowice, Poland.
11. I am a trustee of the Living Stones of the Holy Land Trust. Living Stones is an ecumenical charity with the primary aim of advancing education about Christianity in the Holy Land and countries around, by:
  - raising awareness in Britain and elsewhere, educating and informing the public concerning Christians in the Holy Land, through our website, lectures, newsletter and a yearbook of academic theological articles;
  - promoting contacts between Christians (and others) in Britain and in the Holy Land, e.g. through pilgrimages promoting encounter, reflection and witness;
  - cooperating with other charities and groups with similar aims, by sharing activities and information.
12. I have held a number of other roles over the years including: trustee of Amos Trust; trustee of Highway Journeys Trust; producer of 'Enlightenment' a weekly book review

programme for Aletejah TV; committee member of The Balfour Project; one of the founders of Institute for the Study of Christian Zionism (ISCZ); a member of the advisory council of Evangelicals for Middle East Understanding (EMEU) and member of the UK board of reference for Mar Elias Educational Institutions, in Ibillin, Galilee.

13. In 2004, I co-authored the statement Challenging Christian Zionism endorsed at the 5<sup>th</sup> International Sabeel Conference in Jerusalem. In 2006, I debated Neville White of the Ethical Investment Advisory Group and was instrumental in the Church of England General Synod's decision to divest from Caterpillar.
14. In 2006, I co-authored the Jerusalem Declaration on Christian Zionism for the Heads of Churches in Jerusalem. In 2010 I co-authored the Bethlehem Evangelical Affirmation, endorsed by participants at the Christ at the Checkpoint conference sponsored by Bethlehem Bible College. In 2011 I co-authored the Seven Affirmations of Bethlehem Bible College and in 2012, the second international Christ at the Checkpoint Conference Statement and Manifesto. In 2012, I was a member of the Kairos Britain drafting committee which published 'Time for Action'.
15. I am the author of three books, In the Footsteps of Jesus and the Apostles, (Eagle, 2004) Christian Zionism: Roadmap to Armageddon (IVP, 2004) and Zion's Christian Soldiers: The Bible, Israel and the Church (IVP, 2007). These books have been translated into Arabic, Farsi, Korean and Spanish.

### **The Complaint**

16. One of the allegations within the Complaint is made in respect of a link to an article on a website named The Ugly Truth. This is a matter which was the subject of a previous Complaint to Bishop Christopher Hill and to the Police and which was resolved in my favour, the Police having concluded that there was no evidence of any criminal conduct.
17. This Complaint follows a ten year campaign of intimidation and harassment which began with the anonymous blog Seismic Shock in 2008, a series of inflammatory articles published on the internet, intimidating emails sent to my staff, a failed attempt by the Council of Christians and Jews to bring a Complaint against me in 2012, an equally fruitless attempt to bring a criminal prosecution for 'race hatred' and CDM the same year which was resolved by conciliation.
18. Unfortunately, the Board of Deputies seek to support the assertions made in their Complaint by quoting directly from the work of individuals who have routinely misrepresented and distorted my views in the past. The Complaint appears to have

taken at face value these misrepresentations and to this extent, the Complaint is misconceived.

19. Other aspects of the Complaint are based on assertions that are factually wrong and are similarly misconceived. An analysis of the content of my website provided in my 2012 CDM Response, for example, demonstrates that I cite overwhelmingly from mainstream news sources. The websites mentioned in the Complaint form a tiny minority of the sites to which I have linked, and it is not suggested that I have linked to any of these sites on more than one occasion. It is asserted that by linking to an article (which is not in itself said to be antisemitic) on a website which contains other material that may be antisemitic, I am in some way endorsing or seeking to publicise that other material. Yet it is absurd to suggest that citing a particular article from a newspaper or website implies agreement with every other article in that newspaper or website or even that one necessarily has knowledge of that other material. It certainly does not amount to “promoting” that material.
20. The Clergy Discipline Measure 2003 and the Code of Practice accompanying the measure specifically excludes from the definition of conduct unbecoming or inappropriate to the office and work of the clergy “lawful political opinions or activities”. In this, the Clergy Discipline Measure is written so as to give effect to rights protected by Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights. These rights cannot be suppressed other than on strong grounds.
21. The only exception to the protection afforded to the “lawful political opinions or activities” of clergy that the Clergy Discipline Measure 2003 provides is where a minister has promoted, or expressed or solicited support for, a political party or other organisation whose constitution, policies, objectives, activities or public statements are declared in writing by the House of Bishops to be incompatible with the teaching of the Church of England in relation to the equality of persons or groups of different races. As my response has set out I have not promoted or expressed or solicited support for a political party or other organisation which comes within that category. Indeed, as I later set out I have expressly repudiated and opposed racism, the British National Party (BNP) and English Defence League which are proscribed.
22. It is a matter of fundamental principle that a member of the Clergy should be entitled to express legitimate political opinions. Freedom of expression has been held by the European Court of Human Rights to apply not only to ideas or information “that are favourably received or regarded as inoffensive or as a matter of indifference, but also to those that offend, shock or disturb the State or any sector of the population” (*Handyside v. United Kingdom* 5493/72).

23. Therefore, even if the content of my Facebook or website was offensive to some readers (which I do not accept) it would be subject to the protection of Article 10 and therefore fall outside the definition of unbecoming or inappropriate conduct as set out in clause 8 of the Clergy Discipline Measure 2003. For this reason, I submit that the matters complained of do not come within the jurisdiction of the Clergy Discipline Measure 2003 and in making this submission draw attention to the fact that the police have already determined in the course of a previous Complaint that I have not committed any crime.
24. However, in reality, the content of my website and Facebook cannot be characterised as either offensive or shocking. I have done nothing more than express legitimate political opinions, based on reasoned argument.
25. The Complaint alleges that the Board of Deputies of British Jews “represents the British Jewish community”.
26. A number of Jewish organisations in Britain do not affiliate to the Board of Deputies as their representatives and are, on occasion, critical of their actions. These include Jewish Voice for Labour, Union of Orthodox Hebrew Congregations, Jews for Justice for Palestinians, Jewish Socialist Group, Jewdas and Independent Jewish Voices.
27. I have worked closely with several international Jewish organisations including Jewish Voice for Peace (JVP) and the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions (ICAHD) combatting both antisemitism as well as defending the human rights of Palestinians.
28. I have also worked with several other Israeli NGO’s including, Rabbis for Human Rights, Breaking the Silence, Women in Black, +972 and B’Tselem.
29. The Peacemaker Trust Board of Reference includes three Jewish academics, Dr Mark Braverman, Dr Ilan Pappé and Peter Cohen. These three, together with Rabbi Professor Dan Cohn-Sherbok and Rabbi Dr Stanley Howard Schwartz have publicly rejected the allegation that I am antisemitic.
30. The Board of Deputies is entitled to disagree with my opinions and to do so publicly. However, to misrepresent my views as antisemitic and invoke the Clergy Discipline Measure, has the effect of threatening my right to freedom of speech. If I have caused offence, this is because of expressions of “lawful political opinions or activities” genuinely held and compassionately argued in defence of vulnerable minorities and human rights.
31. I deny the allegation of conduct unbecoming or inappropriate to the office and work of a Clerk in Holy Orders.

## Background

32. The factual background to the Complaint is as follows.
33. In September 2008, an anonymous 'Mordechai Maverick' sent a defamatory message about me individually to everyone on our Church Facebook page. The message drew attention to an anonymous blog entitled Seismic Shock, which described me as a "dangerous anti-Semite" and promised to publish articles to expose me.
34. Ignoring several invitations to meet, the anonymous author began to write articles about me on a weekly basis, sometimes daily. These were subsequently re-posted on other websites such as Rosh Pina Project and Harry's Place. In a one-year period September 2008-to July 2009 well over one hundred articles about me were published on the Seismic Shock website.
35. Because the anonymous attacks were persistent and increasingly associated me with Holocaust denial, antisemitism and terrorism, Surrey Police began an investigation out of concern for my safety. They visited me on several occasions in 2008 and 2009 and gave advice on improving the security of our home as well as our family. They also tagged our postcode in case of emergencies. Based on a search of IP addresses of those who visited my website, it was discovered that one or more persons associated with Seismic Shock had been using a Leeds University computer for extensive periods of time in order to search my site. The times also coincided with the publication of articles about me on the Seismic Shock website. Leeds University information security policies as well as JANET acceptable use policy prohibit their use in this way.
36. On 10th July 2009, I therefore wrote a formal Complaint to the IT security coordinator to advise that Leeds University IT equipment was being used to harass me. The IT Co-ordinator at Leeds University subsequently confirmed to me that the individual's activities were in breach of the University's Use of Computer Systems Policy and that the consequences of this had "brought the University into disrepute".
37. On 29th November 2009, I received a report from West Yorkshire Police to advise that they had visited an individual and asked him to desist writing defamatory material about me and remove from his website material of that nature. I was asked to contact them if I became aware of further articles by the same individual "causing you harassment".
38. Despite the fact that at the time we did not know the author, a Mr Joseph Weissman, subsequently admitted being the owner of the website, and then accused me of using the police to suppress free speech on the internet.

39. On 30th June 2011, Mr Weissman also wrote to each of my staff, but not me personally, drawing their attention to three defamatory videos about me on YouTube <http://youtu.be/vi5l6rpjgRo> : <http://bit.ly/mMoRHH> : <http://bit.ly/kXY2zC> . He stated,
- "I am concerned about the way your church is being used to form ties with extremists. I will be making a formal Complaint to the Bishop of Guildford, but I want to alert your church leadership to these facts beforehand. I am keenly aware of how the Incumbent reacts to lay criticism."*
40. I believe Joseph Weissman has continued to write articles about me under the name 'Joseph W' for Rosh Pina Project and Harry's Place as well as also occasionally on his own Seismic Shock until he apologised to me in 2017, for contacting members of my church family and causing harassment.
41. On 23 November 2018, Joseph Weissman wrote to apologise for creating the blog Seismic Shock to attack me and said he was taking steps to remove it from the internet. He wrote,
- "Previously I was only sorry, I suppose, about the approach that I took. But having given this much thought, I now believe I was wrong to have started the blog in the first place. It is no way to react to someone's opinions and influence. I had no proper authority from which to start writing. It is also no way to act towards an elder. I do not believe that it is fair to judge you based on whose article you shared. I do still seek your forgiveness."*
42. In their evidence, the Board of Deputies rely upon two documents published by Mr Weissman anonymously on his blog Seismic Shock, from January and March 2009 (4 & 6), adopting wholesale what I consider to be a gross mischaracterisation of my motives and words.
43. Following the Facebook link to an article by Ray McGovern on the website The Ugly Truth, in October 2011, Complaints were made to Bishop Christopher Hill by Revd Nick Howard and Mr James Mendelsohn.
44. The Council of Christians and Jews also made a separate complaint about the Facebook link to Surrey Police. I was exonerated. Despite this, the same allegation has been cited yet again in this Complaint, as it was in the 2012 CDM (5).
45. In November 2014, I attended a conference in Iran. A press release issued by the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), critical of my participation, was then republished by the Board of Deputies in the Jewish press. It was based entirely on speculative information derived from the internet and not from the actual conference or first-hand testimony.
46. My primary objective in participating was to offer a Christian perspective on peacemaking, to advocate for Iranian Christians, help normalize relations with Iran and

make informal contact with Anglican colleagues, liaising with the Anglican Bishop of Iran, the Right Revd Azad Marshall, as I have done on previous visits to Iran.

47. On my return I was advised by my Archdeacon, the Venerable Paul Bryer, that Mr Arkush had complained about my visit to Iran. He threatened to bring another CDM against me unless I agreed not to attend future conferences in Iran. Ven. Bryer agreed with me that it was unacceptable for a leader of another faith community to dictate where a Christian minister could or could not go in the world to fulfil Christian ministry.
48. Mr Arkush did not first seek to resolve his concerns “informally by personal contact” as had been specified in the Conciliation Agreement he and I had previously signed. Instead, he went public before seeking clarification from me or the Diocese. I offered to meet privately with Mr Arkush, as we had done once before, in line with the Conciliation Agreement, to listen to and answer his concerns. The Conciliation Agreement is included in the supporting written evidence.
49. In the week of the appointment of the new Bishop of Guildford, the Right Revd Andrew Watson, in January 2015, Mr Arkush made another Complaint. I understand a dossier of “evidence” was sent to Bishop Andrew. I was never advised of the substance of the Complaint, except for the one hyperlink on my Facebook concerning 9/11.
50. Again, Mr Arkush broke the Conciliation Agreement, making no attempt to resolve his concerns with me directly.
51. On 30 January 2015, the Diocese published a press statement on my behalf in which I asserted, *“I have never believed Israel, or any other country was complicit in the terrorist atrocity of 9/11, and my sharing of this material was ill-considered and misguided.”*
52. At a subsequent late night meeting in February 2015, the Bishop of Guildford requested I sign an undertaking to refrain from writing, advocating or speaking on themes relating to the current situation in the Middle East and to its historical backdrop, for as long as I remained a parish priest in the Diocese of Guildford.
53. In his press statement of February 2015, Bishop Andrew said *“Having now met Stephen, in my brand-new role as Bishop of Guildford, I do not believe that his motives are anti-Semitic...”*
54. Subsequently, Bishop Andrew gave me permission to continue ministry in the Middle East when invited by a local Bishop (which I did on several occasions), and to attend events relating to the Middle East in the UK where prior approval was sought and given.
55. Notwithstanding his public rebuke for posting the one disputed Facebook link concerning 9/11, Bishop Andrew was supportive of me.



56. In the preliminary scrutiny of the Complaint by the Diocesan Registrar, it is claimed that, *“The Respondent was obliged to resign from his office in the Guildford diocese from office (sic) as a result of his inability to restrain his unacceptable behaviour in accordance with his agreement with the Bishop of Guildford...”* This is not true. I did not resign as a result of my “inability to restrain” my behaviour.
57. On 21 September 2016, I wrote to Bishop Andrew informing him of my resignation. *“I am writing to advise you of my decision to retire 30th April 2017. Easter Sunday 16th April will be my last day as Vicar of Christ Church. I will be taking the rest of April as holiday entitlement due for a third of the year. Joanna and I will vacate the vicarage before the end of April. I would be grateful if you or Paul can advise me of any further steps I need to take to facilitate this, such as informing the Pensions Board. We have reached this decision after many months of prayerful deliberation with the Church Wardens and PCC and the timing is largely driven by the desire to make the succession and interregnum as smooth and short as possible, without of course having any involvement in the process. Having agreed the wording with the Church Wardens, I will be making the announcement public at Christ Church on Sunday 2nd October.”*
58. On the 22 September 2016, Bishop Andrew replied, *“Dear Stephen, Many thanks for this email, and for giving notice of your retirement next Easter. I will ask Paul to let you know the process from now on in. I am sorry that our working relationship got off to a difficult start, but am very grateful to you for all that you've built up in Virginia Water, and for your passion for evangelism and social justice. I hope that your retirement from parish work will enable you to explore other aspects of your ministry both positively and fruitfully. With all good wishes, +Andrew.”*
59. From late 2015, friends and also members of Christ Church, Virginia Water, had encouraged me to consider retiring early so that I could focus on wider opportunities for Christian ministry, addressing issues of justice, peace and reconciliation, especially where minorities are persecuted, where justice is denied, human rights are suppressed, or reconciliation is needed.
60. In January 2017, Peacemaker Trust was registered with the Charity Commission.
61. Archbishop Henry Orombi of the Diocese of Uganda and Archbishop Mouneer Anis of the Diocese of Jerusalem and the Middle East, became Patrons. An international Board of Reference was formed including five Bishops - the Right Revd Riah Abu El Assal, Right Revd John Gladwin, Right Revd Michael Langrish, Right Revd Bill Musk, and Right Revd Azad Marshall.
62. The launch took place at Christ Church, Virginia Water a few days after my retirement. Bishop Michael Langrish kindly spoke of his support for my ministry and the new charity and a message was read from the former Bishop of Jerusalem, Bishop Riah Abu El Assal.

63. In September 2016, having agreed a timescale with my Church Wardens and PCC to ensure a smooth transition in the appointment of my successor, I wrote to Bishop Andrew advising of my resignation, with the intention of retiring at Easter 2017.

64. In his statement of 2 November 2016, Bishop Andrew acknowledged that I had kept my agreement with him for a full 21 months *“in letter and spirit”*, and,

*“Until now, this agreement has been upheld in letter and spirit, however Dr Sizer recently attended an event which clearly engages in these themes, and around which there has subsequently been understandable controversy. Additionally, Dr Sizer published a social media post relating to the event, also contravening his agreement.*

*Dr Sizer has already given notice of his resignation as vicar of Virginia Water from Easter 2017, and said that he attended the event in question on the understanding that our agreement no longer stood now that his resignation had been tendered. This is certainly not the case. I have spoken with Dr Sizer to make clear that I am disappointed by his actions and to clarify that our agreement categorically must run until the end of his tenure of office.*

*Dr Sizer is aware how seriously I view this and has stated to me that it was not his intention to break the agreement which he has upheld until now. However, with its terms now clarified beyond any doubt, Dr Sizer has been warned that any further breach of the agreement must result in his tenure of office ending with immediate effect.”*

65. I retired as vicar of Virginia Water, after serving for 20 years to the day, with the full support of my PCC. They continue to support Peacemaker Trust as one of their mission partners.

## **Refutation of the accusation of antisemitism**

### Defining antisemitism

66. In the Complaint, Ms van der Zyl on behalf of the Board of Deputies accuses me of antisemitism, yet she fails to provide a definition.

67. The Encyclopaedia Judaica (2007) defines antisemitism as:

*“a term coined in 1879, from the Greek ἀντί = anti, and Σημ = Semite by the German agitator Wilhelm Marr to designate the then-current anti-Jewish campaigns in Europe. “Antisemitism” soon came into general use as a term denoting all forms of hostility manifested toward the Jews throughout history. It is often qualified by an adjective denoting the specific cause, nature or rationale of a manifestation of anti-Jewish passion*

*or action: e.g., "economic antisemitism," "social antisemitism," "racial antisemitism," etc."*

68. The Oxford English Dictionary defines antisemitism as: *"Antisemitism is theory, action or practice directed against the Jews."*
69. Dr Bryan Klug at St Benet's, Oxford, defines antisemitism as *'a form of hostility towards Jews as Jews, in which Jews are perceived as something other than what they are'*
70. The Community Security Trust (CST) defines antisemitism as *"hatred, bigotry, prejudice or discrimination against Jews."*
71. I accept these historic definitions.
72. The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition, recently accepted by the British government, reads:  
  
*"Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities."*
73. The IHRA acknowledge that *"criticism of Israel similar to that levelled against any other country cannot be regarded as antisemitic."* However, following the IHRA definition, examples of how the definition may be applied include *"but are not limited to,,, denying the Jewish people their right to self-determination, e.g., by claiming that the existence of a State of Israel is a racist endeavour...drawing comparisons of contemporary Israeli policy to that of the Nazis... holding Jews collectively responsible for actions of the state of Israel."*
74. On 11th September 2018, the College of Bishops adopted the IHRA working definition of antisemitism, including all examples, without qualification or exemption. Given that the last incident complained of occurred in August 2018, it is unreasonable for this definition to be applied retrospectively.
75. The adoption of the IHRA definition of antisemitism is according to legal opinion, deeply problematic.
76. Leading lawyers have described the new IHRA definition as having a "chilling effect" on free speech.
77. Hugh Tomlinson QC was asked to give legal opinion on the impact the new definition could have on freedom of expression and assembly, by Jews for Justice for Palestinians (JfJfP), Independent Jewish Voices (IJV), Free Speech on Israel (FSOI) and the Palestine Solidarity Campaign (PSC).

78. Tomlinson stressed that the definition is not legally binding and public bodies are under no obligation to adopt it. Indeed, those that do so must take care in applying it or risk, *“unlawfully restricting legitimate expressions of political opinion in violation of statutory duties to ensure freedom of expression and assembly...”*
79. Tomlinson further argues, *“Properly understood in its own terms the IHRA Definition does not mean that activities such as describing Israel as a state enacting a policy of apartheid, as practising settler colonialism or calling for policies of boycott divestment or sanctions against Israel can properly be characterized as antisemitic. A public authority which sought to apply the IHRA Definition to prohibit or sanction such activities would be acting unlawfully.”*
80. Tomlinson insisted that the new definition could *“not be used to judge criticism of Israel to be antisemitic, unless the criticism actually expresses hatred towards Jews.”*
81. Geoffrey Robertson, a legal scholar with expertise on human rights and free speech, was commissioned by the Palestine Return Centre to review the IHRA definition and its adoption by the UK government. He argues that the IHRA definition is *“not fit for any purpose that seeks to use it as an adjudicative standard.”* And has *“no legal effect.”* His conclusions summarise his legal opinion as follows:

*“It is my opinion, for the reasons set out above, that:*

*The IHRA definition of anti-Semitism is not fit for any purpose that seeks to use it as an adjudicative standard. It is imprecise, confusing and open to misinterpretation and even manipulation. It does not cover some insidious forms of anti-Semitism.*

*It was originally drafted, in the absence of any other definition, as a tool for collecting data and is useful for purposes of discussion but should not be used (or be used with great caution) as a measure for discipline or in ways which have consequences for political speech.*

*The UK Government was wrong to adopt it without the “caveat” recommended with reason by the Home Affairs Committee, namely: “It is not anti-Semitic to criticise the Government of Israel, without additional evidence to suggest anti-Semitic intent.” Any public body or other organisation (including the Labour Party) that is contemplating adoption of the IHRA definition in full should add this provision to it.*

*As a matter of internal construction, the examples appended to the IHRA core definition should be read as incorporating a) the fact that they “could not” amount to anti-Semitism and b) in particular, unless they exhibited to reasonable people a hatred of Jewish people.*

*The Governments “adoption” of the definition has no legal effect and does not oblige public bodies to take notice of it.*

*The definition should not be adopted, and certainly should not be applied, by public bodies unless they are clear about Article 10 of the EHCR which is binding upon them, namely that they cannot ban speech or writing about Israel unless there is a real likelihood it will lead to violence or disorder or race hatred.*

*Universities and Colleges should be particularly careful about adopting or using the definition, as they have a statutory duty to protect freedom of expression.”*

82. A particular problem with the IHRA definition is that it is likely in practice to chill free speech, by raising expectations of pro-Israeli groups that they can successfully object to legitimate criticism of their country and correspondingly arouse fears in NGOs and student bodies that they will have events banned or else have to incur considerable expense to protect themselves by legal action Either way, they may not organise such events.
83. Whether under human rights law or the IHRA definition, political action against Israel is not properly characterised as anti-Semitic unless the action is intended to promote hatred or hostility against Jews in general.
84. Frances Webber, of the Institute for Race Relations, raises a more fundamental concern that antisemitism is now being seen as not just about racist actions but also about prejudicial attitudes. In effect, he argues, the IHRA definition operates within the realm of ‘thought policing’.

*“... what particularly concerns us here is the way that the definition of anti-Semitism is moving from deed to thought, from the objective to the subjective, from action to attitude. The IRR has always maintained that it was important to distinguish between prejudices – the subjective – and the acting out of those prejudices – the objective – in discriminatory acts, physical attacks, government edicts etc. Penalising people for racist feelings or attitudes leads to thought-policing, whereas racist acts are measurable and therefore prosecutable before the law if needs be. And there are specific laws relating to incitement to race hatred, the committing of racially-motivated crimes, discrimination in provision of goods and services whether direct or indirect. But, recently, emanating in part from cultural/identity studies in academia, a kind of victimology, a subjectivism is creeping into policy. Anything that is said or might be said that upsets people, gives hurt, merely makes them uncomfortable, is becoming equated with outright discrimination and liable for a prohibitive ban.”*

85. Referring to the IHRA definition adopted by the Conservative government, Webber emphasizes that causing offence is not synonymous with racism.

86. *“The conceptual flaw underlying Pickles’ definition is to equate racism with anything that gives offence. For while racism is offensive, not everything which gives offence is per se racist. Objections to cartoons depicting the Prophet Mohammed as a terrorist or paedophile are made not on grounds of their offensiveness – although they undoubtedly are – but on the grounds of the use of crude racist images to depict a religious minority as quintessentially evil. Although it might cause offence to some, it is no more inherently racist to attack Israel’s policies than it is to demand that ‘Rhodes must fall’ or to denounce US or British imperialism or these states’ complicity in torture. So, Pickles’ definition not only appears to make an exception of Israel but also to close down on freedom of speech and of expression when it comes to defining what it is permissible to say about a particular country.”*
87. Sir Geoffrey Bindman, until recently chair of the British Institute of Human Rights and a former legal adviser to the Race Relations Board and the Commission for Racial Equality, stressed that Israel cannot claim to represent all Jews in its unjust treatment of Palestinians.
- “Antisemitism is hatred or disparagement of Jews. Israel is an independent political entity. We cannot permit the IHRA definition being used to close meetings critical of Israel on the grounds that such criticism is directed at Jews. It is not.”*
88. Sir Stephen Sedley, a former Lord Justice of Appeal, expressed his concern about misuse of the concept of antisemitism for the political purpose of prohibiting or inhibiting *“discourse or action inimical to the state of Israel.”*
89. Sedley noted two “backstories” underpinning this misuse. One is the attempt over some years to uncouple antisemitism from racism in general. The other is the claim that Israel represents all Jewish people in the world. *“Nothing suits Islamic fundamentalism better, than the idea that all Jews are equally implicated in the excesses of Zionism.” “The adoption by government of the IHRA’s ‘working definition’ does not clothe it with any legal force.”*
90. In July 2018, a worldwide coalition of Jewish groups issued a joint statement<sup>1</sup> condemning attempts to stifle criticism of Israel with false accusations of antisemitism.
91. The Independent reported, *“The statement, which 40 Jewish groups from 15 different countries have signed, could not have been more timely. In the UK, the Labour Party is*

*currently under pressure<sup>2</sup> to adopt the full guidelines accompanying a definition of antisemitism<sup>3</sup> from the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA)."*

### **Evidence of opposition to antisemitism**

92. I have repeatedly and unequivocally repudiated racism, antisemitism and Holocaust denial in my lectures, books and website articles.

### **Repudiation of antisemitism and Holocaust denial**

93. In October 2008, I wrote about the arrest of an alleged Holocaust denier at Heathrow airport, Alleged Holocaust Denier Arrested at Heathrow<sup>4</sup>, I concluded,

*"Holocaust denial has no place what so ever in contemporary political, social or religious discourse. Good resources are to be found here and here. A recent gathering of Nazi sympathisers at a pub in Redhill, Somerset, is also to be deeply deplored. See here for the BBC Report."*

94. In December 2008, I wrote about a new book by Denis MacShane, the Labour MP for Rotherham, and former Minister of State for Europe at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office entitled, "Globalizing Hatred: The New Antisemitism" "This week Newsweek published an article by MacShane entitled, 'Europe's Jewish Problem' It makes sober reading."

95. I referred readers to reviews by Rafael Behr in the Observer/Guardian, Alasdair Palmer, in the Telegraph, and Geoffrey Alderman in the Jewish Chronicle. I concluded:

*"While MacShane does not address the correlation between Antisemitism and anti-Zionism, or with criticism of Israel's policies in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, at least not in the Newsweek article, the two issues are clearly linked. But legitimate criticism of Israeli policies toward the Palestinians must not be used as an excuse for racism or attacks against Jewish people. Whatever the causes of the rise of the new Antisemitism, it is totally unacceptable and must be repudiated unequivocally."*

96. In June 2010, I wrote about a recent visit to Auschwitz and published a video entitled Walking the Wire,

*"My first visit to Auschwitz was in 1976. It was then under (Russian) Communist control. In my early twenties, my understanding of the events of World War 2 were largely shaped by William Shirer's The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich. On that occasion, the*

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/labour-party-anti-semitism-jewish-jeremy-corbyn-policy-a8450346.html>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.holocaustremembrance.com/working-definition-antisemitism>

<sup>4</sup> <http://stephensizer.blogspot.com/2008/10/alleged-holocaust-denier-arrested-at.html>

*propaganda about Russia's role in liberating Poland and Europe from Nazi domination was very obvious. The Allies it seems had played little part in the defeat of Hitler. Returning last weekend, 35 years later, it was still just as sobering to visit the two death camps of Auschwitz and Birkenau as it had been the first time. As I walked the wire, it was sobering to reflect on how a democratic European country had so easily tolerated, acquiesced and then endorsed the ethnic cleansing of Jewish people, Gypsies and dissidents on such a vast scale. This time, a Polish perspective and the role Europeans and American's played in helping to defeat Fascism was more evident. Russia's complicity in its alliance with Nazi Germany was faithfully recorded. Have we learnt the lessons of history? I think not."*

97. In November 2010, I wrote A Symphony of Anti-Semitic Dog Whistles, about a controversy between George Soros and Glenn Beck.

*"Michelle Goldberg writes a spirited defence of George Soros and searing rebuke to Glenn Beck for his anti-Semitic rants on Fox last week. She described the Fox host's stunning two-day tirade against George Soros as a "symphony of anti-Semitic dog whistles." and "a new low on American television." I concluded, "Repugnant it is indeed."*

98. In December 2010, I wrote Building Community to Defeat Extremism for our parish magazine in which I asked,

*"Remember Oswald Mosley and his Black Shirts that fed off the back of the Great Depression? How do we avoid it ever happening again? If we are tempted to think it could never happen here, we need to think again. I was pleased to see that the Holocaust Research Centre of Royal Holloway University are collaborating with German educational institutions in a conference this month in Berlin on holocaust perpetrators. The conference will address how and why 'normal' people become genocide perpetrators."*

99. In March 2011, I highlighted a story by Stefan Theil in Newsweek about a group of Far Right European politicians who visited Yad Vashem, Israel's Holocaust memorial, met with members of the Israeli Knesset and with Jewish settlers in the West Bank. I concluded "A step indeed 'too far to the right', even for Israel."

100. In January 2012 I reported the proceedings of the Annual General Meeting of the Palestine Solidarity Campaign. Holocaust denial and antisemitism have no place in PSC (or anywhere else)

*"Tony Greenstein has written a brilliant defence of the Palestine Solidarity Campaign and its stand against racism, Islamophobia and antisemitism. In his latest blog article,*

*"Holocaust Denial and antisemitism Have No Place in PSC", published on Monday, he*



*explains why several motions on racism are being debated at the upcoming PSC AGM on 21st January. Motion 10, for example, defines racism, anti-Jewish prejudice and Islamophobia "as the belief that inherent different traits in human racial groups or Jews or Muslims respectively, both as individuals and collectively, justify discrimination. These terms apply especially to the practice or advocacy of discrimination of a pernicious nature i.e. which harms these groups." Greenstein rightly insists, "Opposition to all forms of racism is a core principle of Palestine solidarity". In case there is any doubt, I will be supporting the motions. Read more here."*

101. John Stott, the former Rector of All Souls Church, Langham Place, commended all three of my books. I fully concur with his sentiment,

*"Away then with antisemitism! It has been an appalling scandal in the history of Europe, and even the Christian church has been implicated. Christians should be 'pro-Semitic', in the sense that we recognize how the people of Israel have been highly favoured by God. We Gentiles are their debtors, Paul wrote (Romans 15:27). We owe them a huge spiritual debt, especially in their bequest to the world of both the Scriptures and the Christ."*

102. Rabbi Professor Dan Cohn-Sherbok is a rabbi of Reform Judaism, a Jewish theologian and a prolific author on religion. He is Professor Emeritus of Judaism at the University of Wales, Honorary Professor at the Aberystwyth University, Visiting Professor at St Mary's University College, York St John University and the University of Wales Trinity Saint David, and Visiting Research Fellow at Heythrop College, University of London.

103. He is a prolific writer, the author and editor of over 80 books, three of which deal explicitly with antisemitism, *Understanding the Holocaust* (1989); *Antisemitism* (2002); and *The Paradox of Antisemitism* (2006). He has also served as an expert witness on antisemitism for the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS). In a letter to Bishop Christopher he wrote,

*"No doubt Stephen Sizer's detractors are acting in good faith, and I agree with them that antisemitism must be confronted. But they are regrettably misguided in their allegations about Stephen Sizer. He is in no sense antisemitic, and instead is fully in sympathy with those who seek to eradicate all forms of Jew-hatred in the modern world... it would be a travesty of justice to construe Stephen Sizer's mistake in linking an offensive website to his Facebook and not removing it immediately as a deliberate attempt to encourage racial hatred."*

104. Professor Ilan Pappé is an Israeli historian and socialist activist. He is a professor with the College of Social Sciences and International Studies at the University of Exeter in the United Kingdom, director of the university's European Centre for Palestine Studies, and co-director of the Exeter Centre for Ethno-Political Studies. He has written or co-written 14 books including *A History of Modern Palestine: One Land, Two Peoples* (2004); *The*

Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine (2006) and The Bureaucracy of Evil: The History of the Israeli Occupation (2012). In a letter to Bishop Christopher he wrote,

*“I was shocked to read the very recent allegations made against Revd. Dr Stephen Sizer – a recent wave in a never-ending campaign to try and silence a human Christian voice. As someone who is a victim of a similar campaign, indeed by the very same people, I am only too familiar with the potential damage such a sinister enterprise can cause in the long run. I have read all of Stephen’s works and participated with him in numerous panels and seminars. Quite often in churches and community centres all over the country. The audience was always mixed: people of all religions and persuasions were present on such occasions. If there was a dividing line it was between the humane, peaceful and inclusive message of Stephen and those who sought to challenge him in the name of religious, national or ethnic eccentricity and false purity. There was not a hint of antisemitism in anything Stephen wrote or spoke about. On the contrary, the message was always clear – a concern that some of Israel’s policies and ideologies can create a misguided association of Judaism with dispossession, colonisation and discrimination. This is why there are always many Jews, like myself, who work in close association and collaboration with Stephen for the sake of a universal goal of bringing peace and justice to Israel and Palestine. This is also why many progressive Jews read and rely on Stephen’s scholarly work and come in great numbers to attend his talks.”*

### **Repudiation of racism, the British National Party (BNP) and English Defence League**

105. In December 2008, following the leaking of the names, addresses and occupations of the 12,000 members of the British National Party (BNP), I wrote The Church and the BNP,

*“While I deplore the threats and attacks that ensued, I am encouraged by two aspects of the incident. Membership of such parties is still perceived to be an embarrassment to the majority of people in Britain. Given legitimate concerns over evidence of institutional racism and antisemitism within the Church, I am relieved that so few Christian leaders were listed. Ekklesia claims five were identified. It has been previously suggested that the BNP is seeking to gain ground by playing on false fears about race and immigration, and by seeking to exploit the mythology of a white ‘Christian Britain’. The BNP has also attempted to exploit hard-line Christian conservatism by seeking to set up a body claiming to be a ‘Christian Council of Britain’, by scaremongering about Muslims, and by getting in on anti-Jerry Springer opera protests promoted by the controversial group Christian Voice – which has since distanced itself from them.”*

106. According to Haroon Siddique, writing in the Guardian,

*“Ben Wilson, a spokesman for the Church of England, which is not a public body under the Race Relations Amendment Act, said it had seen “no evidence” that any serving vicars were on the list, despite media reports.*

*The church’s General Synod passed a motion in 2004 stating that any political movement that seeks to divide our communities on the basis of ethnicity is an affront to the nature of God revealed in creation and scripture and is a grave danger to harmonious community relationships; consequently, voting for and/or supporting a political party that offers racist policies is incompatible with Christian discipleship. “It would be difficult to take any formal action against a vicar on the basis of their alleged membership of the BNP, as membership of any lawful political party is excluded from the grounds for Complaint under the clergy discipline measure.”*

107. I pointed out that the best piece of reporting on the relationship between the BNP and the Church has been written by Richard Bartholomew. I concluded,

*“There may indeed be others who were ‘relieved’ that they too were not outed. Nevertheless, the tally of church leaders associated with the BNP, while just a handful, is, in my opinion, one handful too many.”*

108. In April 2012, I wrote Counter-Jihad Report from Hope not Hate. Formed in 2005 as a positive antidote to political extremism with the support of the Daily Mirror, trade unions, celebrities and community groups across the country, Hope not Hate, in particular, mobilises opposition to the British National Party’s (BNP) and English Defence League’s (EDL) politics of hate.

109. In October 2012, I reported the publication of Faith Hate and The English Defence League by Faith Matters, a counter-extremism organisation. The 51-page report answers two important questions: "What Draws People of Faith to Right Wing Organisations?" and "What Effects Does the EDL Have on Interfaith Relations?"

110. I have consistently exposed and refuted the racism of the BNP and EDL

### **Distinguishing anti-Zionism from antisemitism**

111. In April 2012, I wrote a positive review of Rabbi David Goldberg’s new book, This is Not the Way: Jews, Judaism and the State of Israel. I pointed out:

*“Goldberg argues that many of the shibboleths of the Jewish establishment, especially in the USA, are exaggerated or false. It is wrong automatically to equate anti-Zionism with antisemitism: one can be a trenchant critic of Israeli policies without being hostile to all Jews: ‘Zionism as an ideology should no more be protected from critical analysis than capitalism, socialism, colonialism or Islamism.’ Israel is often treated too indulgently, he argues, by the Diaspora. It is becoming an alien place for secular or*

*religiously liberal Jews who find its aggressive nationalism and assertive fundamentalism increasingly difficult to take. And the axiomatic identification of Israel with the Holocaust - always using the enormity of the latter to justify the actions of the former - has had baneful results for both."*

112. I also quoted favourably Gerald Jacobs' review for the Telegraph,

*"One of Goldberg's prime targets are "knee-jerk" defenders of modern Israel. People who insult the intelligence of their fellow Jews and gentiles alike, thoughtlessly stigmatise opponents (not to mention Palestinians) and promote an obdurate, self-righteous and dangerous attitude to peace negotiations. Goldberg's strongest condemnation is for those who, he says, deflect criticism of Israel by calling it antisemitism in anti-Zionist clothing."*

113. In August 2012, I reported the intervention of Rabbi Goldberg, defending the Church of England General Synod against accusations of "endorsing an 'Israel hate agenda'" Rabbi David Goldberg Defends Church Synod. The quote is taken from an interview by Robert Cohen with Rabbi David Goldberg published in the Church Times.

*"Rabbi Goldberg has always been a champion of interfaith dialogue, but he now believes that the Israel question has contaminated Jewish-Christian relationships that have been built up over decades. He recognises that centuries of anti-Semitism, with its origins in Christian teaching, have left Christians in an ethical bind. Who are they to lecture Jews on morality? On the other hand, how can Christians stand by when they see an injustice being committed against the Palestinians?"*

114. *"Israel as a state has become politicised," he says. "When it comes to interfaith dialogue, it's become the elephant in the room, because those Christian organisations that have dared to voice criticism of what goes on in the Occupied Territories suffer the full force of the Jewish community bearing down on them, and risk the ultimate sanction, and ultimate deterrent, of being accused of antisemitism."*

115. Cohen says, "He is "not optimistic" that the situation can be unlocked,

*"because it requires honesty on both sides, and I have to say that organisations like the Council of Christians and Jews are too timid to grasp the nettle. They always look for the anodyne consensus that will please nobody. Ultimately, they can't confront the situation, because there is a lack of real openness."*

116. To clarify my own position, in the introduction to my book, Zion's Christian Soldiers: The Bible, Israel and the Church, I wrote the following:

*"It is true that at various times in the past, churches and church leaders have tolerated or incited antisemitism and even attacks on Jewish people. Racism is a sin and without*

*excuse. Antisemitism must be repudiated unequivocally. However, we must not confuse apples and oranges. Anti-Zionism is not the same thing as antisemitism despite attempts to broaden the definition. Criticising a political system as racist is not necessarily racist. Judaism is a religious system. Israel is a sovereign nation. Zionism is a political system. These three are not synonymous. I respect Judaism, repudiate antisemitism, encourage interfaith dialogue and defend Israel's right to exist within borders recognised by the international community and agreed with her neighbours. But like many Jews, I disagree with a political system which gives preference to expatriate Jews born elsewhere in the world, while denying the same rights to the Arab Palestinians born in the country itself."*  
(p. 15)

117. I continue to hold this view.

118. Anthony Julius is chairman of the London Consortium and a Visiting Professor at Birbeck College, University of London. His book, *Trials of the Diaspora*, is a magisterial 800-page examination of the history of Antisemitism in England, published in 2010 by Oxford University Press.

119. The final chapter includes an analysis of the distinction between antisemitism and anti-Zionism. In it, Julius writes of me,

*"He has recently explained, however, that he 'categorically reject[s] any position that threatens the territorial integrity of Israel as a sovereign nation.... Stephen Sizer's work has the merit of clearly setting out the issues that divide the two sides, and furthermore doing so without the rancour or sheer nastiness of tone typical of the polemics in the conflict."* (p. 571)

120. As pointed out above, Ms van der Zyl fails to define antisemitism in her Complaint.

### **Response to the specific Complaints**

#### Islamic Human Rights Commission conference, 15 July 2005 (1)

121. The Complaint notes that I attended an IHRC conference entitled, "Towards a New Liberation Theology," 14 years ago, speaking on a panel "The right to resist" alongside Hezbollah representative Rima Fakhry.

122. The Complaint does not explain how my participation in the conference is in any way evidence of antisemitism, or how I am alleged to be in "close association with and promotion of terrorists".

123. The conference was organised by IHRC which has observer status in the United Nations. The conference was hosted by the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London.
124. Other speakers included two Jewish rabbis, Rabbi Avri Cohen and Rabbi Yisroel Weiss, the Jewish academic, Dr Ilan Pappé of Haifa University, and Greek Orthodox Archbishop Attallah Hanna.
125. I gave a paper on “The Right of Resistance: A Christian Palestinian Perspective” based on the Sabeel Palestinian Liberation Theology Centre booklet, “A Non-violent Approach to the Occupation: A call for morally responsible investment”.
126. I concluded by saying, *“Yet as peace-makers, following in the footsteps of the Prince of Peace, Christians are called to the path of non-violent resistance in hope and anticipation, with determination and zeal to work for a better world where people can experience these essential qualities of life.”*
127. Rima Fahkry was granted permission to enter the UK because the British government does not regard the Political Council of Hezbollah as a terrorist organisation.
128. On 27 September 2018, Patrick Wintour, writing in the Guardian observed
- “Hezbollah is a Lebanese-based political party and militia, and since 2008 the UK has banned only Hezbollah’s military wing or apparatus, not its political arm. The call to ban the group has been a longstanding demand of the British Jewish community, and many Tory MPs are eager to use an outright ban to contrast the Conservative approach to antisemitism with that of the Labour party. Until recently the government has argued that the political wing is not proscribed because ministers, acting on security service advice, have to strike a balance and maintain contact with the Lebanese government, of which Hezbollah is a member. The security minister Ben Wallace has said the police have sufficient powers to prosecute cases of racial hatred.”*
129. My participation in the conference could not possibly be construed as evidence of antisemitism, nor evidence of any “close association with and promotion of terrorists”.

Accompanied and defended Islamic Movement leader Raed Salah in the UK (2)

130. The Complainant alleges, “Saleh is known for spreading the blood libel claim against Jews and otherwise inciting antisemitism and is convicted of funding Hamas and working with Iranian intelligence agent Nabil Mahzouma.”
131. No evidence is offered for these allegations.

132. My article published in June 2011 simply reported the views of human right activists who had condemned the unjust detention of Sheikh Raed Salah after he had already spoken in Parliament and various universities.
133. I visited Sheikh Raed Salah once while he was under house arrest in London awaiting a hearing. I did so as an expression of my Christian ministry. I was disappointed that his local parish priest had not done so.
134. In September 2011, a High Court judge ruled that Sheikh Raed Salah was detained unlawfully by the Home Secretary and was entitled to damages. Having been exonerated, on 19 April 2012, in a Guardian article, Sheikh Salah wrote,

*"After a 10-month legal battle, I have now been cleared on "all grounds" by a senior immigration tribunal judge, who ruled that May's decision to deport me was "entirely unnecessary" and that she had been "misled". The evidence she relied on (which included a poem of mine which had been doctored to make it appear anti-Jewish) was not, he concluded, a fair portrayal of my views. In reality, I reject any and every form of racism, including antisemitism. I have no doubt that, despite this, Israel's cheerleaders in Britain will continue to smear my character. This is the price every Palestinian leader and campaigner is forced to pay."*

Met with senior commander of Hezbollah forces in southern Lebanon Sheikh Nabil Kaouk, as well as other Hezbollah operatives (3)

135. The Complaint is somewhat ambiguous as to what misconduct the third evidence is alleged to prove.
136. The matter complained of refers to a meeting with Sheikh Nabil Kaouk. The list of written evidence in support of the Complaint under 3. However, refers to Jeremy Corbyn and 9/11. The attached evidence is an untitled Mail Online article.
137. The Complaint cites a Daily Mail article dated 9 August 2015, written by Jake Wallis Simons.
138. The Daily Mail article makes several statements about me which are untrue. For example, Al Etejah is not a "Hezbollah television channel". It is an Iraqi TV company based in London. For two years, I hosted a weekly book and film review programme for their English channel.
139. I have never suggested "that Israel was responsible for the 9/11 attack".
140. I have not used my internet accounts to "spread ideas" that were "clearly antisemitic."

141. I was not “banned by Church authorities for six months.” As has been shown, I voluntarily agreed to cease using social media for six months.
142. On 30 January 2015, in a statement approved and published on the Diocese of Guildford website, I wrote, “At the request of the Diocese, I will be suspending my use of all social media and blogs with immediate effect and until further notice.”
143. More pertinent to the Complaint, the Daily Mail conflates the support Jeremy Corbyn gave me in response to the Board of Deputies Complaint in 2012 when he was a back bencher, with the second Complaint made against me in 2015 after he had become leader of the Labour Party, which is the subject of the article.
144. The Daily Mail alleged “Corbyn wrote to the Church authorities at the time suggesting Sizer had been victimised...” This is untrue. Mr Corbyn’s statement of support was not made in 2015. The article appears to cite my association with Mr Corbyn in an attempt to discredit him.
145. The photo of me with Sheikh Nabil Kaouk, published in the Daily Mail, was taken from my own website.
146. This is the context of my visit to Lebanon in 2006.
147. When my PhD thesis was published in the Arabic edition of Christian Zionism: Roadmap to Armageddon, I was invited to attend the book launch at the Hagazion Christian University in Beirut.
148. During the week I was invited to be interviewed by Al Manar TV and also to meet Sheikh Nabil Kaouk.
149. I used the opportunity to intercede for the release of Israeli soldiers held captive after Israel had invaded and then withdrawn from Southern Lebanon.
150. When asked “What do you advise Hezbollah?” I said, “Release the Israeli soldiers. You worship a compassionate merciful God. Show compassion and mercy. Do not trade them like animals for Lebanese prisoners. Release them unconditionally and challenge the Israelis to reciprocate.”
151. I did not meet with any other Hezbollah operatives as the Complaint alleges and for which no evidence is provided.
152. The meeting with Sheikh Kaouk could not possibly be construed as evidence of antisemitism nor indeed of evidence of any “close association with and promotion of terrorists”. On the contrary, I used the opportunity to intercede for the release of Jews.

Spoken alongside Australian Holocaust denier Fred Tobin at a conference in Indonesia (4)



153. The Complaint cites an anonymous 2009 article from the blog, Seismic Shock.
154. Referring to an early article by Melanie Phillips, I am quoted as saying,  
*“For starters, I have never said that I wish Israel, to use her words, “will disappear just as did the apartheid regime in South Africa.” I have never believed this and categorically reject any position that threatens the integrity of Israel as a sovereign nation.”* I continue to affirm this position.
155. The writer then claims, “Yet evidence suggests that Rev Sizer is not so quick to distance himself from such positions as he claims on his blog.” He refers to a conference held in Jakarta by Voice of Palestine (VOP) at which I was invited to give a presentation on Christian Zionism.
156. The writer cites friends who allegedly quote me as saying “Palestine needed to be liberated from the Jews.” He concludes by deducing, “Now, Rev Sizer, surely adopting a position which calls for Palestine to be free of Jews and Zionists threatens the integrity of...”
157. In the Complaint, evidence 4 cuts off the rest of the sentence so it is not clear what I am alleged to have said.
158. The anonymous blogger has caricatured and misconstrued my views. I have never believed or said what he alleges.
159. I accepted the invitation to speak at the VOP conference in Jakarta in 2008 without knowing who else had been invited. I attended to present a Christian perspective on resolving the Arab-Israeli conflict peacefully and diplomatically.
160. When I and other speakers, including Revd Alex Awad, of Bethlehem Bible College and Rabbi Yisroel Weiss of Natura Karta, became aware that Mr Tobin had also been invited, we expressed our disapproval to the organisers and disassociated ourselves from him.
161. Mr Tobin’s presentation was actually more embarrassing than offensive as it consisted of a video of German male gymnasts performing to the theme music of the film, 1492: The Conquest of Paradise, by Vangelis. I do not recall him actually saying anything.
162. It is unreasonable of the Complainant to deduce that participation in a conference indicates acceptance of the views of all the other participants. No reasonable person could possibly infer this.
163. It is regrettable that the Complainant uses an anonymous article believed to be written by Joseph Weissman, published on his blog, Seismic Shock in 2009. As explained above,

Joseph Weissman consistently caricatured and misconstrued my views in his blog articles over a period of eight years ignoring a police warning to stop harassing me.

164. I therefore find it both surprising and disappointing that the Complainant should rely on Mr Weissman's report as a reliable source.

Posted links to antisemitic websites including 'The Ugly Truth'... as well as linking to even worse websites – and Veterans Today (5)

165. As indicated above, this is a matter which was the subject of a previous Complaint to Bishop Christopher and to the Police and which was resolved in my favour, the Police having concluded that there was no evidence of any criminal conduct.

166. The Complaint cites an article 'UK Jews complain to Church of England over 'anti-Semitic' vicar' without indicating the source.

167. The Complaint refers to 'even worse websites' but does not specify which. The article cited refers only to one link to one article on the blog 'Ugly Truth'.

168. The Facebook link which the Complaint draws attention to here was previously the subject of Complaints to Bishop Christopher made by Revd Nick Howard and Mr James Mendelsohn, then by the Council of Christians and Jews who also made a separate Complaint to Surrey Police. I was exonerated on each occasion. The Board of Deputies included it in their 2012 CDM. I am therefore not sure why it is being raised once again.

169. Given the seriousness of the Complaint, however, it is important to present the facts again.

170. Ray McGovern, an ex-CIA analyst, wrote an article entitled "Israel's Window to Bomb Iran" for www.Consortiumnews.com on 3rd October 2011. The 6 page exclusive was headed:

*"Israeli leaders continue to pound the drum about taking out Iran's nuclear program – and some hardliners may want to strike soon, fearing the window of opportunity will close if President Barack Obama wins re-election and is less susceptible to political pressures, as ex-CIA analyst Ray McGovern observes."*

171. In the opening paragraph, McGovern warned, *"There are mounting signs that the right-wing Israeli government may think the timing is right for an attack on Iran, with growing alarms inside Israel about alleged Iranian progress on building a nuclear bomb – and with President Barack Obama fearing loss of key Jewish political support in 2012 if he doesn't go along."*

172. Within days it had been re-posted on hundreds of other websites. A colleague sent me a link to the article on the website The Ugly Truth on 4th October. I read the article, found it helpful and posted a link on my Facebook without checking other material on the website itself. I regularly read posts on a blog called The Ugly Vicar<sup>5</sup> and may subconsciously have linked the two.
173. On 16th November 2011, Bishop Christopher received a Complaint from Revd Nick Howard insisting I be suspended for posting a link to the article by Ray McGovern "Israel's Window to Bomb Iran"<sup>6</sup>. Bishop Christopher rejected the suggestion.
174. At no time did I scroll down and read the original Complaint. I get criticised for my views on a weekly basis. I considered this to be just another example in a long and concerted campaign of harassment from a small group of Messianic believers who disagree with my theology and who oppose my views on how to resolve the Israel-Palestine conflict based on international law. I simply no longer read threatening or abusive correspondence, especially when sent to others rather than personally to me.
175. Bishop Christopher did not ask me to do anything specific at that time. I maintain that citing an article does not necessarily indicate endorsement of everything else by an author, let alone everything else on a particular website.
176. On 22nd November 2011, I wrote to Bishop Christopher,
- "I am embarrassed and sorry that I have caused you this concern. I will be more careful in what I allow to be posted on my Facebook. I normally take great care to avoid material that promotes racism or violence and have in the past 'unfriended' people who abuse my trust. I am very relieved this does not constitute cause for discipline and am grateful for your patience as well as support. Criticism of the stand I am taking, along with others, in support of the church in the Middle East is becoming almost a daily event.
177. Around 29 November 2018, Joseph Weissman on Seismic Shock made selective use of an interview I made with Brother Andrew to suggest we advocate violent Jihad. Nothing could be further from the truth but I don't intend responding to him. The full interview is here <http://vimeo.com/10224645>
178. I gave a paper on the "Christian Jihadist" <http://www.stephensizer.com/2010/05/the-christian-jihadist/> at a Christian-Muslim Dialogue conference in Toronto in May last year. This expresses my views on what the New Testament has to say about the inner struggle for holiness. I emphatically repudiated violence as a means of achieving God's purposes. Thank you once again for your support."

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<sup>5</sup> <http://ugleyvicar.blogspot.co.uk/>

<sup>6</sup> <http://consortiumnews.com/2011/10/03/israels-window-to-bomb-iran>

179. During October and November 2011, I was also away from my parish for considerable periods of time, travelling to Palestine twice, for a planning conference (3-6th October), then leading a pilgrimage for 44 people (21-30th October). I also travelled to the USA for the EMEU annual conference in Washington (14-17th November). During this period, I also spoke at conferences in Hammersmith and Alresford as well as participated in a controversial debate with Dr Calvin Smith, live on Revelation TV. In early December I also gave two presentations in Belfast. This heavy schedule inevitably meant that I was unable to give as much attention to non-parochial email correspondence during this period as I might have wished.
180. On 27th December 2011, Revd Howard then wrote a six page critique of my ministry entitled "The Church of England must take action against Revd Stephen Sizer"<sup>7</sup> on the website Harry's Place.
181. He accused me of "explicit anti-Semitism, implicit anti-Semitism; and complicity with anti-Semites." The same day he wrote to all 13 of my staff individually asking them to read his article, but not to me personally:
- "Since then I've continued to keep an eye out for any information about Stephen which might put me at ease or confirm my suspicions. Very sadly, I've come to the view that the evidence is now so overwhelming and undeniable that it would be wrong not to take action against his continuing in Christian ministry. I contacted the Bishop of Guildford (copied into this email) but was very disappointed by his response..."*
182. On 30th December 2011, Bishop Christopher received a similar Complaint from Mr James Mendelsohn, this time insisting there might be grounds for legal action. This too was copied in all my staff on 4th January 2012, but not to me personally. I therefore did not read it either.
183. On New Year's Eve, 31st December 2011, Revd Howard telephoned my curate, to persuade him to disassociate from me. My curate subsequently told me "he applied pressure to me by saying that when you were ousted then people would be asking what I had been doing as your fellow clergyman."
184. On 3rd January 2012, Bishop Christopher received an enquiry from the Jewish Chronicle about the Facebook link. I initially could not find it and assumed I had already removed it in the Autumn. The next day, 4th January, the link was found and I removed it straight away.

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<sup>7</sup> <http://hurryupharry.org/2011/12/27/rev-nick-howard-the-church-of-england-must-take-action-against-rev-stephen-sizer/>

185. I removed this particular link as soon as I found it. Although one of my critics has claimed otherwise, I have not yet found a simple method of finding a link from several months ago on Facebook.
186. The article itself that I linked to was about Israeli threats to Iran. No one has actually criticised the article itself, merely the link to a website on which it was hosted. At the time I linked to the website, I was not aware of the nature of other material posted on it.
187. As a result of a Subject Access Request (SAR), I obtained correspondence pertaining to me from the Council of Christians and Jews (CCJ) which reveals how the Complaint was made.
188. On 5th January 2012 I spoke with David Gifford, CEO of the Council of Christians and Jews, by telephone and I explained the reasons for the apparent delay in removing the link. He asked if I would be willing to explain that to representatives of CCJ and I indicated that I would be pleased to meet with them.
189. Instead, on 12th March, David Gifford wrote to Bishop Nigel McCullough drawing his attention to the article Nick Howard had published on Harry's Place.
190. "This is the article that Michael's son, Nick wrote:  
  
*<http://hurryupharry.org/2011/12/27/rev-nick-howard-the-church-of-england-must-take-action-against-rev-stephen-sizer/> Nick believes that this shows and points to the anti-Semitism of the website that appeared on Sizer's Facebook. As I can ascertain there was not one particular article but the whole website itself was the offending piece... Like you I think we must be certain that we consider the site antisemitic and incite full of race hatred."*
191. The same day, Bishop Nigel McCullough advised David Gifford,  
  
*"I am persuaded that, with the attachment added, there is sufficient reason for it, with our statement, to be forwarded to the Chief Constable. Remember we must get it all to the Church Times and CofE Newspaper tomorrow morning – as well as the Chief Constable. Once I know that has happened I will tell the Bishop of Guildford out of courtesy (but not send him the statement itself or attachments). I would be grateful if you would copy to Michael Howard (the trustee who raised it) and to our two vice-presidents. Then you can escape abroad and I will take the flack."*
192. The Bishop of Manchester appears to have intended to publicize the Complaint at the same time as making the Complaint to the police while concealing the facts from my own Bishop. I understand this resulted in a CDM being taken out against the Bishop of Manchester although I am unaware of the detail.

193. Toby Howarth, Secretary for Inter Religious Affairs for the Church of England, based at Lambeth Palace, wrote a letter to CCJ concerning letters received by the Archbishop of Canterbury concerning the controversies

194. In a strongly worded response Bishop Nigel McCullough insisted,

*"But its CCJ's reputation, not the Board of Deputies' reputation, that is at stake in all this – and so events have overtaken us. With the greatest respect (so you know the tone of what is coming next!), the kind of emollient letter you have written is probably the sort of letter that came from various church learner's offices in Germany and across Europe during the 1930's. CCJ was founded and was continued precisely to nip that kind of response in the bud and to be seen to stand up for Jewish communities when they were subjected to the kind of anti-semitic bilge that Stephen Sizer has, I believe, for far too long been promoting."*

195. Revd Toby Howarth replied on the 14th March to say

*"As for the emollient email being likened to a 30s German response, I would strenuously refute that. I have taken this matter with the utmost seriousness and I wrote that letter because I do not believe that Stephen is anti-Semitic."*

196. On the 20th March, Bishop Nigel McCullough wrote to Bishop Christopher Hill, copying in Toby Howarth and David Gifford, and admitting,

*"Among our own trustees are some who know Stephen Sizer and do not regard his writings as being anti-semitic. But that wasn't the point. The point was that he had, albeit unintentionally, referred people to something that was felt to be anti-semitic – and that he compounded that by not doing anything for a couple of months. And, as some saw it, that the Christians had not made a sufficient response. I note your point about Michael Howard and the role of his son. But when the whole matter escalated further after our trustees meeting, it was not Michael Howard who was taking the lead in urging that CCJ should act."*

197. Yet, the same week Nick Howard was advising not only the CEO of the Council of Christians and Jews on what to include in their press release, as well as preparing a briefing paper for the Board of Deputies of British Jews meeting with Bishop Christopher Hill, he was also publishing yet another article on Harry's Place, When Will the Diocese of Guildford Stop Defending Rev. Sizer?<sup>8</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup> <http://hurryupharry.org/2012/03/15/when-will-the-diocese-of-guildford-stop-defending-rev-sizer/>

198. On 14th March, I wrote to David Gifford, “Just to reassure you, following your telephone call recently, I am still willing to meet with you and/or Jewish leaders if you or they so desire.”
199. His Administrator, Lindsay-Jane Smith replied the same day, “Thank you for your email. David Gifford is currently in Israel leading a group of Christian Clergy on a 9 day Study Programme at Yad Vashem. He is trying to pick up emails when he can while he is out there. He will get back to you in due course.”
200. Surprisingly, therefore, the day before, on 13 March 2012, someone else at CCJ posted a statement on their website entitled “CCJ Statement About Anti-Semitic Website.”<sup>9</sup> It stated that CCJ had “drawn the attention of the Surrey police to what they claim was an action tantamount to encouraging race ‘hatred’.” The CCJ said that I was “alerted to the anti-Semitic nature of the website in November and again in December, but only removed the link in January when contacted by the Jewish Chronicle.”
201. The CCJ article did not identify the alleged circumstances in which I was alleged to have been alerted to the link or seem aware of the explanations already given them, in writing and by telephone.
202. Given that I spoke with David Gifford by telephone in January and gave an explanation for the delay in removing the hyperlink, it is surprising that despite this, they still chose to make a public statement critical of my actions some two months later.
203. More specifically, it would have been helpful if the Bishop of Manchester had consulted the Bishop of Guildford before making his allegations that “The content and the delay in removing the link from Mr Sizer’s Facebook page was disgraceful and unbecoming for a clergyman of the Church of England to promote.”
204. The Bishop of Manchester appears to have deduced, without checking and quite wrongly, that the delay in removing the link was intentional.
205. In response to adverse criticism CCJ received as a result of publishing their Complaint against me, on 10th April, Bishop Nigel McCullough wrote to David Gifford,
- “I would avoid any reactions at all at this stage until we know what the Board of Deputies is doing. They may need to be made aware of the Sizer hyping of his case. We also need to await the police outcome... We will need to produce a statement in Thessaly of whatever happens. But I rather hope the Board of Deputies doesn’t leave us isolated.”*

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<sup>9</sup> [http://www.ccj.org.uk/Articles/304111/Council\\_of\\_Christians/News/CCJ\\_Statement\\_About.aspx](http://www.ccj.org.uk/Articles/304111/Council_of_Christians/News/CCJ_Statement_About.aspx)

206. Surrey Police subsequently advised me that they were not going to prosecute me because there was no evidence that I had committed any crime.
207. On 23rd April, CCJ issued a second statement saying, "The Council of Christians and Jews has now received the advice of the Surrey Police, together with that of the appropriate legal authorities".
208. The CCJ is a venerable organisation with distinguished supporters. I would have hoped that, having accused me of serious criminal conduct, it would want to make it clear that the police investigation has revealed no evidence to support my prosecution.
209. If the CCJ does not feel able to make it clear that its allegations were ill founded it will, I hope, reflect on the reliability of its informants and think very hard before naming people who might in the future be the innocent victims of ill-considered Complaints.
210. Phil Groom is a member of CCJ. He took exception to their behaviour and wrote a blog article about the affair entitled Jeremiah's Underpants. Accepting my explanation, he observed, "*... which to me, as another heavy facebook user, makes perfect sense; and I wonder if that is part of CCJ's problem: they simply don't get social media? Be that as it may, however, as a member of CCJ, I find the way they have elected to handle this situation extremely disappointing on two particular fronts: First of all, the announcement itself seems disingenuous at best: entitled "CCJ Statement About Antisemitic Website" it is, in fact, nothing of the sort: it is rather a direct, personal attack on Stephen Sizer. Far better, I suggest, to thank Stephen for drawing attention to the site and then go, with even greater determination, after the people who run The Ugly Truth website. Next, one thing that I've always admired about CCJ, one of the things that makes me proud to be a member, is its commitment to dialogue: making dialogue make a difference is one of CCJ's straplines, used on almost every poster we produce at CCJ Hillingdon, where I'm the webmaster. What, I wonder, has happened to the dialogue process in this instance? Stephen removed the link as requested; and at CCJ CEO David Gifford's invitation he met with some Jewish leaders where, in Stephen's words, "we had a heart to heart about what had happened, but nothing materialised except this press release." Why, I ask, some two months on, have CCJ now chosen to pursue the matter in this way rather than engage in further dialogue with Stephen, or indeed with CCJ's wider membership?"*
211. If Revd Howard, Mr Weissman or Mr Mendelsohn had contacted me personally about the Facebook link rather than called for my dismissal, copied their Complaints to all my staff, and publicized their grievances on the internet, I would have substituted an alternative link to Ray McGovern's article much sooner. I welcome dialogue and constructive feedback on my web articles and links.



Cited Holocaust deniers and far-right figures like Dale Crowley, who was deeply involved in the Far Right publication The Barnes Review, which promoted white supremacy and defended Nazi Germany. Sizer refers to him merely as a “religious broadcaster” (6)

212. The Complaint once again relies on an article from 2009 written by the anonymous blogger behind Seismic Shock who caricatured and misconstrued my views over a period of eight years, ignoring a police warning to stop harassing me.

213. The Complaint does not specify which Holocaust deniers and far-right figures I am alleged to have cited apart from Dale Crowley.

214. I am alleged to have cited Dale Crowley in a TV interview, but no quote, source or date is given in the evidence 6.

215. In my doctoral research, later published as Christian Zionism: Roadmap to Armageddon, (InterVarsity Press, 2004), I estimated the size of the Christian Zionist movement in the USA using numerous sources. The four-word quote of Dale Crowley was taken from Grace Halsell’s book, Forcing God’s Hand, (Washington, Crossroads International, 1999). It appears in this paragraph,

*“Estimates as to the size of the movement as a whole vary considerably. While advocates such as Robertson and Falwell claim the support of 100 million Americans with whom they communicate weekly, Crowley’s own estimate is more cautious. He suggests there are between ‘25 to 30 million’ Zionist Christians in America, a number that is growing, led by 80,000 fundamentalist pastors, their views disseminated by 1,000 Christian radio stations and 100 Christian TV stations. Doug Kreiger lists over 250 pro-Israeli organisations founded in the 1980s alone.”*

216. I have never knowingly cited Holocaust deniers or far-right figures.

217. Assuming Dale Crowley is what the anonymous blogger claims, my citation of a four word statistic estimating the size of the Christian Zionist movement in my doctoral dissertation can hardly be construed as evidence that I am promoting Holocaust deniers or far-right figures.

218. Dale Crowley was a conservative Christian missionary, broadcaster and evangelist, well respected within Christian circles in the USA. He was also a vocal critic of Israel’s policies toward the Palestinians which resulted in his vilification.

219. As shown above, I have repeatedly repudiated both Holocaust deniers and the far-right.

Promoted Holocaust denier and antisemitic conspiracy theorist Michael Hoffman (7)

220. The document cited is an Associated Press article from 2008, about police indifference to the treatment of Israel's Messianic Jews.
221. It appears to have been posted by someone on a public blog run by Palestinian Orthodox Christians based on an email I circulated, as part of "An informal network of friends of the indigenous Christian community promoting justice, peace and reconciliation in the Middle East."
222. The Associated Press article reflects my belief that Messianic Jews in Israel do indeed suffer harassment and persecution.
223. I do not agree with the views contained in the afterword by Michael Hoffman who is critical of Messianic Jews.
224. I reject the assertion that I have ever 'promoted' Michael Hoffman.
225. Nothing in the article indicates my personal views. As shown above, in other articles, I have made my repudiation of both Holocaust denial and antisemitism quite explicit.

Has repeatedly promoted the idea that Israel was behind the 9/11 attacks (8 & 12)

226. The Complaint alleges that I have repeatedly promoted the idea that Israel was behind the 9/11 attacks.
227. I have not done so on any occasion, let alone 'repeatedly'. On the contrary, I have made it clear that I repudiate any such notion.
228. Whether intentionally or not the Complainant has misrepresented the facts, implying that in my post I was claiming Israel's involvement in 9/11. I was not. In posting the hyperlink, I simply asked "Is this antisemitic?.. it raises so many questions."
229. On 30 January 2015, the Diocese published a press statement on my behalf in which I asserted,
- "I have never believed Israel, or any other country was complicit in the terrorist atrocity of 9/11, and my sharing of this material was ill-considered and misguided."

The Complainant offers as evidence an article "Vicar gets social media ban for 9/11 Israel Facebook post" dated 9 February 2015 (8).

230. The Complaint does not indicate where this was published, or who it was written by.
231. The Diocesan Registrar has stated, the evidence accompanying the Complaint is "hearsay, rather than primary evidence."

232. Further, article (8) is incorrect in claiming that I was “banned from using social media for six months”.

233. In a statement welcomed by the Diocese of Guildford and published on their website on 30 January 2015, at the request of the Bishop of Guildford, I voluntarily gave up using social media. Bishop Watson suggested six months. I waited nine months before resuming use of social media.

234. The statement said, “At the request of the Diocese, I will be suspending my use of all social media and blogs with immediate effect and until further notice.”

235. With specific reference to evidence 8 & 9, the Diocesan Registrar has declared that these,

*“cannot themselves be the subject of a Complaint as the complainant was not party to the agreement, has insufficiently close connection to that agreement to have a proper interest and in any case the breach occurred over twelve months ago, and the agreement lapsed since the Respondent left the Diocese of Guildford on his resignation from office at Easter 2017.”*

236. The Complaint also cites a 2010 post from my blog (12) in which I quote the conclusion of an article by Eric Margolis.

237. Margolis is an award winning, internationally syndicated columnist. His articles appear in the New York Times, the International Herald Tribune, the Los Angeles Times, the Times and the Gulf Times.

238. The conclusion Margolis reaches contradicts the interpretation the Complainant has taken.

*“But I’ve seen no hard evidence to date that 9/11 was a plot by America’s far right or by Israel or a giant cover-up.”*

239. The Complaint further alleges that the agreement I signed was “drawn up after he repeatedly shared antisemitic material on social media”. This is untrue.

240. In his press statement of 9th February 2015, Bishop Andrew Watson said of me, “I do not believe that his motives are anti-Semitic”. He went on to say,

*“material he has chosen to disseminate, particularly via social media, some of which is clearly anti-Semitic. By associating with or promoting subject matter, which is either ambiguous in its motivation, or (worse still) openly racist, he has crossed a serious line. I regard his actions as indefensible.”*

241. The statement also said, “The Diocese of Guildford has been in close contact with the Board of Deputies of British Jews throughout this matter.”
242. I was advised by a senior member of the Diocese that several versions of the draft press statement were shared with the Board of Deputies before final publication. I was given two hours to comment before it was issued.
243. After the statement was issued, I wrote to Bishop Andrew on several occasions asking which articles I had published that he regarded as antisemitic so that I could correct or remove them.
244. When we met in September 2015, for my annual appraisal, I asked again. Bishop Andrew said that in his press statement he was referring to the one Facebook post of January 2015.
245. I requested that he revise his press statement because, he had claimed I had published antisemitic articles on more than one occasion, but he declined.
246. Notwithstanding my personal views, clearly enumerated in the Diocesan press statement above, on 29 March 2018, Chris Baynes, wrote an article in the Independent, “US Court allows 9/11 victims’ lawsuits claiming Saudi Arabia helped plan terror attack”.
- “District judge George Daniels said there was “a reasonable basis” to allow legal action seeking billions of dollars in damages for victims... Lawyers representing the families of those killed and about 25,000 people who were injured, as well as businesses and insurers affected, filed 25 lawsuits against the Saudis in New York last year.”
247. On 2 May 2018, Juliane Helmhold, wrote an article in the Jerusalem Post, entitled, “Iran ordered to pay billions to families of victims of 9/11 terror attacks” In the article, Ms Helmhold reported,
- “US federal judge in New York in a default judgment late on Tuesday ordered Iran to pay billions of dollars in damages to families affected by the September 11 terror attacks. US District Judge George Daniels ruled that the Islamic Republic and other institutions must pay \$12.5 million per spouse, \$8.5m per parent, \$8.5m per child and \$4.25m per sibling killed in the incident... The lawsuit is a sideshow to a parallel case against Saudi Arabia for the 9/11 attacks, but creates further momentum against the Saudis. That case had been stalled for years by a legal ban on suing countries, but was approved to go forward to trial in March after a new 2016 law paved the way for specific terror cases against countries.”*
248. The two evidences cited in the Complaint (8 &12), one of which contradicts what is claimed, do not demonstrate that I have “repeatedly promoted the idea that Israel was

behind the 9/11 attacks.” On the contrary, I have unequivocally repudiated the allegation.

#### Statement on Stephen Sizer (9)

249. The Complaint refers to a public event in the House of Lords chaired by Baroness Jenny Tonge in October 2016 concerning the Balfour Declaration, and which I briefly attended.
250. The Complaint alleges, “Sizer earned a stinging public rebuke from his Bishop.”
251. In his statement of 2 November 2016, Bishop Andrew acknowledged that I had kept my agreement with him for a full 21 months “in letter and spirit” and that I had not intended to break the agreement on this occasion.

*“Until now, this agreement has been upheld in letter and spirit, however Dr Sizer recently attended an event which clearly engages in these themes, and around which there has subsequently been understandable controversy. Additionally, Dr Sizer published a social media post relating to the event, also contravening his agreement.”*

*Dr Sizer has already given notice of his resignation as vicar of Virginia Water from Easter 2017, and said that he attended the event in question on the understanding that our agreement no longer stood now that his resignation had been tendered. This is certainly not the case. I have spoken with Dr Sizer to make clear that I am disappointed by his actions and to clarify that our agreement categorically must run until the end of his tenure of office.*

*Dr Sizer is aware how seriously I view this and has stated to me that it was not his intention to break the agreement which he has upheld until now. However, with its terms now clarified beyond any doubt, Dr Sizer has been warned that any further breach of the agreement must result in his tenure of office ending with immediate effect.”*

252. I had sought and obtained permission from my Archdeacon to attend a similar event in Parliament on the Balfour Declaration just a month before.
253. On this second occasion, I wrongly assumed that, having informed Bishop Andrew of my resignation, I was now free to attend.
254. I stayed for less than half an hour because the room was crowded and hot. I was not present when the incident the Complaint alleges occurred.
255. The Diocesan Registrar has acknowledged that evidence 8 & 9, “cannot themselves be the subject of a Complaint as the complainant was not party to the agreement, has insufficiently close connection to that agreement to have a proper interest and in any

*case the breach occurred over twelve months ago, and the agreement lapsed since the Respondent left the Diocese of Guildford on his resignation from office at Easter 2017.”*

ABC’s Good Friday guest slammed (10)

256. The Complaint alleges, “In an Australian radio interview on Good Friday 2018, Sizer doubled down on his past controversial statements, claiming that Zionists have “diluted the definition of anti-Semitism to include criticism of Israel. (10)”
257. The Complaint does not indicate what was antisemitic about my statement.
258. The source is an article published by the Australian Jewish News which criticises the Australian Broadcast Corporation for providing me “with a credible platform to spew his anti-Israel venom.”
259. I reject the assertion that my views are anti-Israel or venomous.
260. On the contrary, in my book *Zion’s Christian Soldiers*, I insist that it is vital to distinguish between Judaism, Israel and Zionism.
261. *“Judaism is a religious system. Israel is a sovereign nation. Zionism is a political system. These three are not synonymous. I respect Judaism, repudiate anti-Semitism, encourage interfaith dialogue and defend Israel’s right to exist within borders recognised by the international community...”*
262. The Complainant also alleges that I have “doubled down” on my views regarding 9/11. The term is usually understood as a euphemism for when people tell lies and then when confronted with contradictory statements, not only fail to retract their claims but instead express increased certainty in their veracity.
263. I reject this interpretation of my answer. I have always believed that equating antisemitism with criticism of Israel to be dangerous and counterproductive. I do not believe that stating such a view is itself antisemitic.
264. In my book *Zion’s Christian Soldiers?* published in 2008, I wrote  
*“It is lamentably true that in the past, church leaders have indeed tolerated antisemitism and incited racist attacks on Jewish people. Racism is without excuse. Antisemitism must be repudiated unequivocally. However, anti-Zionism is not synonymous with antisemitism. Judaism is a religious faith. Israel is a largely secular and multi-ethnic nation state. Zionism is a political system. These three are not synonymous.”*
265. In May 2018, I published an article “The New Antisemitism” expressing concern over pressure imposed on political, religious and educational institutions to adopt the IHRA definition of antisemitism, reiterating this belief. I continue to fear that by broadening

or diluting the definition of antisemitism, people may become complacent or immune to genuine antisemitism and not repudiate it as they should. I have not changed my opinion on this.

266. As indicated above, Geoffrey Robertson QC has recently given legal opinion that, *“The IHRA definition of anti-Semitism is not fit for any purpose that seeks to use it as an adjudicative standard. It is imprecise, confusing and open to misinterpretation and even manipulation. It does not cover some insidious forms of anti-Semitism.”*
267. Hugh Tomlinson QC has insisted that the new definition could, *“not be used to judge criticism of Israel to be antisemitic, unless the criticism actually expresses hatred towards Jews.”*
268. Sir Geoffrey Bindman has stressed that Israel cannot claim to represent all Jews in its unjust treatment of Palestinians. He emphasized, *“Antisemitism is hatred or disparagement of Jews. Israel is an independent political entity. We cannot permit the IHRA definition being used to close meetings critical of Israel on the grounds that such criticism is directed at Jews. It is not.”*
269. The Complaint also alleges, based on a report in the Australian Jewish News, that in the interview *“Sizer went on to defend his 2014 Facebook post...”* claiming I said, *“so far no one has come back to me and contradicted anything that was in the article.”*
270. In the hour-long interview with the Radio National host, David Rutledge, the Australian Jewish News acknowledges, I was *“closely questioned on his views throughout the interview, including a detailed exchange about the accusations of antisemitism made against him (which he denies).”*
271. In regard to the specific issue complained of, I was not *“defending”* my Facebook post but simply answering a question put to me.
272. The AJN article concedes that in the interview I said, *“With hindsight, I probably wish I hadn’t put a hyperlink to an article about 9/11.”*
273. In my statement published on the Diocese of Guildford website on 30th January 2015, I made my views on the matter clear.

*“I very much regret and apologise for the distress caused by the sharing on Facebook of a link to an article about 9/11 from Wikispooks. It was particularly insensitive in that last week coincided with Holocaust Memorial Day. I removed the link as soon as I received adverse feedback, and realised that offence had been caused. I have never believed Israel or any other country was complicit in the terrorist atrocity of 9/11, and my sharing of this material was ill-considered and misguided.”*

274. That was my belief when I was interviewed by the Australian Broadcasting Corporation in April this year and this remains my belief now. It was never my intent to endorse the article's antisemitic tone, and in this sense my comments to ABC have been taken out of context and therefore misunderstood.
275. David Rutledge defended the interview claiming, "This sort of thing has happened before and wasn't entirely unexpected this time, the complaints being the work a small group of highly motivated people who spend an inordinate amount of time monitoring the ABC for perceived anti-Israel bias."

Facebook post by Stephen Sizer (11)

276. The Complaint alleges that "Most recently, in August 2018, Sizer has promoted the idea on Facebook that Jeremy Corbyn is a victim of the hidden hands of the Zionists. Sharing a conspiratorial article entitled "Is Israel's hidden hand behind the attacks on Jeremy Corbyn."
277. The Complaint does not explain how posting a link to the article is in any way antisemitic.
278. Significantly, the Complaint also neglects to add the question mark which appears in the title of the article cited.
279. Middle East Eye (MEE) is an independently funded online news organisation that was founded in February 2014. Their vision statement is: "Middle East Eye aims to stand apart in coverage of the region by offering readers independently produced news, analysis and opinion generated by expert voices and fearless reporters. Our agenda is led by events, not political leanings."
280. The article cited was written by the respected British author and journalist, Jonathan Cook, who lives in Israel. It was published on MEE on 24 August 2018.
281. Mr Cook's subtitle elaborates, "Israeli group submits freedom of information request as evidence grows of meddling by Netanyahu government in UK politics."
282. Mr Cook asks, "*Has Israel been covertly fuelling claims of an "anti-Semitism crisis" purportedly plaguing Britain's Labour Party since it elected a new leader, Jeremy Corbyn, three years ago?" That question is raised by a new freedom of information request submitted this week by a group of Israeli lawyers, academics and human rights activists.*



*They suspect that two Israeli government departments – the ministries of foreign affairs and strategic affairs – have been helping to undermine Corbyn as part of a wider campaign by the Israeli government to harm Palestinian solidarity activists.*

*The Israeli foreign affairs ministry employs staff of the country's embassy in London, which was at the centre of suspicions of meddling in UK politics provoked by an Al Jazeera undercover documentary aired last year.*

*Eitay Mack, an Israeli lawyer, has written to both ministries requesting information on Israel's contacts and possible funding of anti-Corbyn activities by pro-Israel lobby groups in the UK. The letter specifically seeks information<sup>10</sup> on possible ties with the Board of Deputies of British Jews, the Community Security Trust, Labour Friends of Israel and Conservative Friends of Israel.*

*It also requests information on any efforts by the two Israeli ministries and the Israeli Embassy to influence journalists and civil society groups in the UK.*

*The move follows an outburst by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on social media<sup>11</sup> last week, in which he accused Corbyn of laying a wreath at a cemetery in Tunisia in 2014 for a Palestinian faction that took hostage Israeli athletes at the Munich Olympic Games in 1972. Eleven Israelis were killed<sup>12</sup> during a bungled rescue bid by the German security services.”*

283. Nothing in Mr Cook’s article could be construed as either conspiratorial or antisemitic.
284. The reason why the Israeli government has an interest in discrediting Mr Corbyn is because of his long-standing support for the human rights of Palestinians and his declared intent to recognise the State of Palestine if he becomes Prime Minister.
285. An editorial in Haaretz published 26 September 2018 was headed, “U.K. Will Immediately Recognize Palestine if Labour Elected, Says Corbyn”
286. Manfred Gertenfeld, wrote an article in the Jerusalem Post, 21 October 2018, headed, “Battling Corbyn, Israel’s main British enemy.”
287. Evidence of Israeli lobbying in British politics is overwhelming. The most influential organisations operating in the UK on behalf of Israel are:

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<sup>10</sup> <https://files.acrobat.com/a/preview/d97808f3-e31a-444d-8e85-c18b0767c03b>

<sup>11</sup> <https://twitter.com/netanyahu/status/1029046307481153542>

<sup>12</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/One\\_Day\\_in\\_September](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/One_Day_in_September)

The Board of Deputies of British Jews (BoD); the Zionist Federation (ZF); the Jewish Leadership Council (JLC); Community Security Trust (CST); Britain Israel Communications and Research Centre (BICOM).

288. The Zionist Federation is itself an umbrella organisation for the Zionist movement in the United Kingdom, representing more than 120 organisations, with over 50,000 affiliated members.

289. The Britain Israel Communications and Research Centre (BICOM) was founded in 2002 after leaders of the Jewish community in Britain decided to adopt a more aggressive media strategy to defend Israel and attack its critics.

290. Modelled on AIPAC in the US, BICOM has become Britain's major pro-Israel lobby. According to their website,

*“BICOM, the Britain Israel Communications & Research Centre, is an independent British organisation dedicated to creating a more supportive environment for Israel in Britain. We do this by trying to create a more complete understanding of Israel and its situation. We believe in the right of the State of Israel to live in peace and security, just as we believe in the rights of the Palestinians to statehood. We support a close relationship between Britain and Israel, based on shared values and interests. BICOM pursues its objectives through a range of activities:*

*Providing daily, expert news summary and analysis of events in Israel and the region through our online publications.*

*Taking British journalists and opinion formers to Israel and the Palestinian territories to learn about the issues first-hand.*

*Bringing analysts, journalists and politicians from the region to Britain, to share their insights with their British counterparts.*

*Promoting a balanced discourse about Israel in the British media by creating opportunities for a wide range of voices to be heard.*

*Organising events and seminars in the UK aimed at deepening the discussion about Israel in Britain.*

*Engaging in dialogue with British opinion formers and the media on issues of importance to Israel and the Britain-Israel relationship.”*

291. Peter Osborne is the former chief political commentator of the Telegraph and reports for Channel 4's Dispatches and Unreported World. He has written a number of books

identifying the power structures that are influencing political discourse. He explains the role of BICOM,

*“BICOM performs a similar role to the parliamentary groups: building relationships with key journalists and editors, taking them on paid-for trips to Israel, and setting up high level meetings in Israel and the UK. They also provide journalists with daily briefings and suggest stories and angles to friendly contacts. During key periods, like Operation Cast Lead, BICOM goes into overdrive... Two months after the end of Operation Cast Lead in Gaza, BICOM sent half a dozen journalists on a free trip to Tel Aviv to talk to Israeli defence analysts. The message BICOM wanted to get across was that they should pay more attention to Iran than to the Palestinians.”*

292. In January 2009, Rajeev Syal, wrote an article in the Guardian entitled, “How the pro-Israel lobby in Britain benefits from a generous London tycoon.”

*“Britain's most active pro-Israeli lobbying organisation - which flies journalists to Israel on fact-finding trips and organises access to senior government figures - has received nearly £1.4m in two years from a billionaire donor whose father made a fortune manufacturing arms in Israel.*

*The British Israel Communication and Research Centre, known as Bicom, has been one of the most active organisations behind the scenes in the UK during the present Gaza offensive, organising briefings and interview opportunities with senior Israeli spokesmen.*

*Its biggest funder is Poju Zabłudowicz, a London-based tycoon, who has underwritten its campaigning since 2007. The disclosure comes amid an intense struggle in Britain between lobbying organisations working for both sides in the conflict. Foreign affairs specialists say that the injection of funds has ensured that Bicom has become one of the most persistent and slickest media operations in the battle for influence over opinion formers.*

293. *Bicom, which claims to be an independent organisation devoted to seeking a more supportive environment for Israel, is at the forefront of the campaign to win over the British media. Foreign reporters are bombarded with press releases and invitations to interview senior Israeli ministers and advisors at top London restaurants. Set up in 2001, it has regularly flown journalists to Tel Aviv.”*

294. In September 2011, the CEO of BICOM, Lorna Fitzsimon, the former Labour MP, sent an email intended for donors to the press by mistake instead. Joseph Millis wrote an article, ‘Bicom ‘embarrassed’ by misdirected email’ in Totally Jewish, September 22, 2011. The email from Ms Fitzsimon described the influence of BICOM on the British media,

*“Throughout the weekend, BICOM staff were in contact with a whole host of BBC and SKY news desks and journalists, ensuring that the most objectively favourable line was taken, and offering talking heads, relevant to the stories unfolding. BICOM’s Senior Analyst Dr. Noam Leshem, briefed the BBC World News Editorial Board on Saturday afternoon regarding the fall-out from the Israel Egyptian Embassy siege. After contact with the BICOM Media Team, SKY News changed their narrative in explaining the prior events in the region which led up to this weekend, eventually acknowledging that both Egyptians AND Israelis were killed in Sinai a fortnight ago.”*

*“BICOM has one of BBC News’ key anchors on a bespoke delegation. When planning her very first trip to the region, Sophie Long got in touch with BICOM to see if we could help her out with meeting in the region. Sophie is now spending three days of her trip with BICOM Israel, taking a tour around the Old City, meeting Mark Regev and Dr. Alex Yacobsen, as well as visiting Ramallah and Sderot.”*

295. In November 2009, Channel 4’s Dispatches programme investigated the influence of the Israel Lobby in the Conservative and Labour Party. Mr Osborne’s findings were later published in *The Pro-Israel Lobby in Britain*.

296. In the Channel 4 Dispatches programme, Osborne revealed how the Israel Lobby influences BBC reporting on Israel. His analysis is both thorough and disconcerting.

*“The case of the BBC is extraordinary. The organisation has become a hate figure for pro-Israel groups, who resent its global reach and supposed sympathy for the Palestinians. We have spoken to BBC journalists and recently departed staff who say that rarely a week goes by without having to deal with Complaints about their coverage of the Middle East. This year has been particularly difficult for the Corporation. The BBC refused to screen an aid appeal from Britain’s top charities for the people of Gaza, resulting in millions of pounds less money being raised. It reacted to pressure from pro-Israel pressure groups by publishing a report, which criticised its own Middle East editor, Jeremy Bowen. Finally, it refused to disclose a report by Malcolm Balen into its Middle East coverage, which cost of hundreds of thousands of pounds to the licence fee payer. Through a Freedom of Information request we discovered the BBC had spent over a quarter of a million pounds on legal fees relating to the case.*

*It is no surprise that at the start of the year the culture secretary, Ben Bradshaw, himself a former BBC reporter, remarked that “I’m afraid the BBC has to stand up to the Israeli authorities occasionally. Israel has a long reputation of bullying the BBC.” Bradshaw added that “I’m afraid the BBC has been cowed by this relentless and persistent pressure from the Israeli government and they should stand up against it.”*

297. This report has its origins in the spring of 2003, when the BBC's relationship with Israel completely broke down. The Israeli government imposed visa restrictions on BBC journalists and refused access to Israeli government figures after a documentary about its nuclear weapons entitled "Israel's Secret Weapon" was shown on BBC World. The Israeli Government press officer, Danny Seaman, compared it to "the worst of Nazi propaganda".
298. For a time Israel joined a small band of countries, including North Korea, Zimbabwe and Turkmenistan, which refused the BBC free access. When Ariel Sharon visited London in July 2003, BBC journalists were in the ludicrous position of being banned from attending the press conference."
299. In 2010, Jeremy Corbyn gave a speech via video at a Palestine Solidarity Campaign meeting. In the video, Mr Corbyn said,
- "[British MPs] all turned up [to the debating chamber] with a pre-prepared script. I'm sure our friend Ron Prosor (the Israeli ambassador) wrote it. 'Because they all came up with the same key words. It was rather like reading a European document looking for buzz-words. 'And the buzz-words were, "Israel's need for security". And then "the extremism of the people on one ship". And "the existence of Turkish militants on the vessel". 'It came through in every single speech, this stuff came through.'*
300. In April 2016, Asa Winstanley wrote an article for the Electronic Intifada<sup>13</sup>, entitled, "How the Israel Lobby manufactured UK Labour Party's anti-Semitism crisis". He cites the influence of Alex Chalmers, former co-chair of Oxford university Labour Club who resigned over alleged antisemitism within the club.
301. Mr Winstanley wrote, "The Electronic Intifada can reveal for the first time evidence that Chalmers himself has been part of the UK's Israel lobby, Chalmers has worked for BICOM<sup>14</sup>, the Britain Israel Communications and Research Centre. Funded<sup>15</sup> by the billionaire Poju Zabłudowicz, BICOM is a leading pro-Israel group in London.
302. More recently, in 2017, Al Jazeera Investigations exposed how the Israel lobby influences British politics. A six-month undercover investigation, extensively reported in the UK media, revealed how Israel penetrates different levels of British democracy. In one episode their undercover reporter joined a delegation from the Israeli embassy at the Labour Party Conference. In another, the senior political officer at the Israeli embassy in London discussed how to 'take down' British politicians – including a minister."

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<sup>13</sup> <https://electronicintifada.net/>

<sup>14</sup> <https://electronicintifada.net/tags/bicom>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2009/jan/04/biscom-israel-lobby-poju-zabludowicz>

303. On 6 September 2018, Jonathan Cook wrote a further article for Middle East Eye entitled, 'The Israel lobby's non-stop attacks on Corbyn will backfire'. In the article Mr Cook referred to the Al Jazeera programmes

*"Mounting evidence in both the UK and the US, where there has been a similar escalation of attacks on pro-Palestinian activists, often related to the international boycott movement (BDS), suggests that the Israeli government is taking a significant, if covert, role in coordinating and directing such efforts to sully the reputation of prominent critics.*

*Corbyn's supporters have argued instead that he is being subjected to a campaign of smears to oust him from the leadership because of his very public championing over many decades of the Palestinian cause.*

*Al-Jazeera has produced two separate undercover documentary series on Israel lobbyists' efforts in the UK and US to interfere in each country's politics – probably in violation of local laws. Only the UK series has been aired so far.*

*It showed an Israeli embassy official, Shai Masot, both plotting to "take down" a Conservative government minister seen as too sympathetic to the Palestinian cause and helping to create an anti-Corbyn front organisation in the Labour party.*

*Masot worked closely with two key pro-Israel groups in Labour, the Jewish Labour Movement and Labour Friends of Israel. The latter includes some 80 Labour MPs."*

304. Mr Cook concludes, "...until the broadcasting of the Al-Jazeera documentary last year no comparable effort had been made to shine a light on the situation in the UK. In fact, there was almost no discussion or even acknowledgment of the role of an Israel lobby in British public and political life. That is changing rapidly. Through its constant attacks on Corbyn, British activists are looking less like disparate individuals sympathetic to Israel and more recognisably like a US-style lobby – highly organised, on-message and all too ready to throw their weight around.

*The lobby ... as in the US, it embraces a much wider body of support than right-wing Jewish leadership organisations like the Board of Deputies and the Jewish Leadership Council, or hardline lobbyists such as the Community Security Trust and BICOM."*

305. My Facebook comment, linked to Mr Cook's article, "Is Israel's hidden hand behind the attacks on Jeremy Corbyn?", can be corroborated from my personal experience.
306. Twelve newspaper articles were published between March and September 2018 in which Jeremy Corbyn is criticised for his association with me.

307. In the written evidence in support, I have included a list of these newspaper articles showing the similarities in phrases and words.
308. Eleven articles refer to me as “spreading”, “suggesting” conspiracy theories that Israel was behind 9/11.
309. More than three years ago, on 30 January 2015, the Diocese of Guildford published a press statement on my behalf in which I asserted,
- “I have never believed Israel, or any other country was complicit in the terrorist atrocity of 9/11, and my sharing of this material was ill-considered and misguided.”
310. Six articles also incorrectly refer to me as having been “banned” from using social media. The Diocesan press release stated that I had been requested to do so.
311. Eight articles appeared in August and early September alone, and repeat allegations made by Gideon Falter of the Campaign Against Antisemitism (CAA) in April and August.
312. On 1 April 2018, Mr Falter wrote, *“Mr Corbyn has spent his political life seeking out and actively defending antisemites like Revd Stephen Sizer who claimed that Israel was behind 9/11 (Mr Corbyn defended Rev. Sizer: “I do admire the excellent work that he does and personally, I would give no credence at all to any claims that he is antisemitic”)*”
313. I regard the accusation that I am an “antisemite” as defamatory.
314. On 3 August 2018, Mr Falter wrote a further article about me published by CAA. It said,
- “Disgraced conspiracy theorist Rev. Dr Stephen Sizer, who claimed that an Israeli conspiracy was behind 9/11, has been announced as a speaker at the annual pro-Hizballah “Al Quds Day” parade through Central London on 10th June... the Daily Mail revealed that Jeremy Corbyn wrote to the Church defending Revd Dr Sizer, saying he was being victimised because he “dared to speak out against antisemitism.”*”
315. Eight newspaper articles making similar allegations were subsequently published in the Jewish Chronicle, Jewish News, Sun, Spectator, Guardian and New Statesman, in the following three weeks.
316. I contend that this corroborates the simple assertion made in my Facebook post and in Mr Cook’s article.

**317.** I reject the notion that posting a comment and link to Mr Cook’s article about the campaign to discredit Jeremy Corbyn is in anyway antisemitic.

### **Summary**

318. The Complaint brought by Marie van der Zyl, on behalf of the Board of Deputies of British Jews, has ignored the terms of the Conciliation Agreement signed by her predecessor who agreed that in any future disputes, resolution should be sought “by personal contact such as a telephone call or a meeting.”

319. The Complaint contains twelve supporting documents.

320. In the preliminary scrutiny by the Diocesan Registrar, she acknowledges that they are “hearsay, rather than primary evidence”, that ten of the twelve incidents, “relate to events occurring over twelve months prior to the date of the complaint” and that two (8 & 9), “cannot themselves be the subject of a complaint as the complainant was not party to the agreement, has insufficiently close connection to that agreement to have a proper interest and in any case the breach occurred over twelve months ago, and the agreement lapsed since the Respondent left the Diocese of Guildford on his resignation from office at Easter 2017.”

321. The Registrar also believes, “There would not appear to be evidence in this Complaint of any action or behaviour which is sufficiently clearly published with intention to stir up racial hatred rather than debate by the Respondent himself...”

322. On the contrary, I have repeatedly demonstrated that I care passionately about the safety of the Jewish people and the right of Israel to exist within internationally agreed borders.

323. It is said in the Complaint that I have a “history of antisemitism”. On the contrary, my history of opposing racism and antisemitism is consistent and clear.

324. The question is: how does one judge whether a statement is antisemitic? If one concludes that a statement can be interpreted as antisemitic, can one necessarily go on to conclude that the person who made the statement intended it to be antisemitic? There may be a risk that the reader or listener will ascribe to the maker of the statement a motivation that he did not possess or views that he does not actually hold. Where it is not immediately obvious from the statement itself, one might be expected to look at the context in which the statement was made (e.g. by reference to a wider text). One might then expect to examine the statement in the context of other statements made by the writer or speaker: has he or she said similar things in the past? Is this someone who subscribes to familiar antisemitic themes or tropes?



325. As a basic matter of fairness, any analyst should seek to guard against any misrepresentation of what has been said or written and should try not to extrapolate too far from the text.
326. Whether a statement is antisemitic may be a matter of opinion. Definitions of anti-Semitism vary. The concept of antisemitism has, sadly, been exploited by those who seek to use it to silence legitimate criticism of the State of Israel. For this reason, it is important to refer to definitions that are both academically rigorous and widely accepted, as I have endeavoured to do in this Response.
327. Furthermore, I would have expected the Board of Deputies to have taken into account my publicly stated views on antisemitism before coming to the conclusion that my words were antisemitic – indeed, reading into them the most extreme antisemitic meaning possible. The fact that I openly repudiate such attitudes and have publicly opposed antisemitism on many occasions must surely be relevant yet has apparently been ignored without explanation.
328. There is no evidence that I have intentionally “introduced” my readers to antisemitic material. Had this been my intention, I would surely have published articles that were themselves antisemitic. It is also absurd to suggest that citing an article from a particular website or newspaper implies agreement with every other article in that newspaper or website and even more ridiculous to suggest that by publishing a photograph that originates from a particular website, one is endorsing that website or its contents. This would be the case even if one was aware that the site in question contained material that was objectionable (for example, because it is racist or antisemitic). However, the reality of the internet is that one can easily provide a link to a website without knowing that the site in question contains material that is objectionable. For this reason, it is dangerous to assume the person providing the link necessarily knows what other material may be posted on that site.
329. In June 2012 I wrote, *When Zionists promote Anti-Semitism*. I concluded,
- “It is ironic that those who claim to oppose anti-Semitism the strongest sometimes, however unintentionally, appear to be the ones who actually promote it the loudest. I have never knowingly and intentionally cited or drawn attention to antisemitic material, but some who disagree with me have repeatedly done so. But then what can you do when you don't want to address the message (the resolution of the Israel-Palestinian conflict by peaceful and diplomatic means based on the rule of international law and UN Resolutions)? Simple, deflect attention from the message by discrediting the messenger. See here, here and here for recent examples.”*

330. In October 2012, I appeared on the 4Thought programme aired by Channel 4, which addressed the question, ‘Are Jews still persecuted in Britain today?’ I conceded that lamentably, antisemitism does still occur in Britain. However, I also pointed out that some people fail to distinguish between critics who are opposed to the Israeli government’s policy towards the Palestinians, and fascists and racists who are simply antisemitic. In the feedback left after the programme was aired, seven out of eight people agreed with me. (365 agreed while 47 disagreed = 88% to 12%).
331. In their Complaint, the Board of Deputies have not sought the opinions of any independent or authoritative sources in support of their allegations. Instead, critical articles, written by the very people guilty of pursuing a politically motivated vendetta against me, frequently anonymously, have been cited to prove their case. This is circular reasoning at its worst. As has been demonstrated above, the agenda of these individuals has been to deliberately misconstrue my views in such a way to corroborate their allegations.
332. It is my concern that in avoiding any definition of antisemitism, the effect of the Complaint is to conflate antisemitism with anti-Zionism and thereby silence legitimate criticism of the State of Israel.
333. In the conclusion, the Complaint alleges, “Revd Dr Stephen Sizer openly flouted the terms of his previous agreement with the Church of England”. I have shown conclusively that this is not true, rather that I have sought in good faith to keep to the agreement reached by conciliation and with my former Bishop.
334. The Complaint further alleges that I continue “...to provoke and offend the Jewish community on every platform he has access to.” While I sincerely regret any offence taken by members of the Jewish community to my published views, it is patently untrue to claim that I have sought to provoke Jewish people “on every platform he has access to.”
335. On the 9 November 2018, Ms van der Zyl’s use of provocative language was criticised by Stephen Pollard, the editor of the Jewish Chronicle, in a leader column entitled “Bad language, Good, bad, silent.”

*“The specific words used by antisemites matter — as do the words used by those who fight antisemitism. At a time when hatred of Jews is once again on the rise, and when one of our main parties is refusing to do anything more than mouth platitudes about antisemitism within its own ranks, it is all the more vital that we are precise, specific and careful with language.*

*Which is why it is so worrying that Marie van der Zyl, President of the Board of Deputies, appears to have such a tin ear for the language she uses. On Sunday, on a panel*

*discussing antisemitism, Ms van der Zyl responded to a question about Labour by suggesting that, “We have seen the warning signs of genocide before.”*

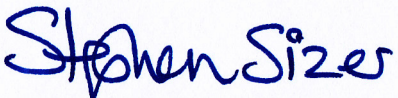
336. *This is not merely hyperbole — it is a grotesque warping of history, as our coverage this week of the 80th anniversary of Kristallnacht shows. Ms van der Zyl’s remarks were later “clarified” (the word used by spin doctors to pretend that someone did not say something that they did say) by an aide.*
337. *But no clarification is needed to understand what was meant. Unfortunately, a pattern is emerging. In October 2018, Ms van der Zyl told the Board of Deputies’ plenary meeting that, “we would lose all our power” if the Board stopped engaging with Labour.*
338. *It is astonishing that any communal leader could be so unthinking as to link the word “power” with the representative body of the Jewish community, employing one of the most oft-repeated antisemitic memes. There are other such instances of what one might call, in an understatement, injudicious language.”*
339. I contend that Ms van der Zyl has used similarly inflammatory language in this Complaint.
340. My own website [www.stephensizer.com](http://www.stephensizer.com) as well as that of our charity [www.peacemakers.ngo](http://www.peacemakers.ngo) demonstrate that I have not sought to provoke Jewish people “on every platform he has access to.”
341. On the contrary, I have consistently repudiated racism and extremism in all forms and demonstrated my commitment to justice and peace especially where minorities are persecuted, where justice is denied, human rights are suppressed, or reconciliation is needed.
342. In 2018, I presided and preached at 38 Sunday services in the Diocese of Winchester. In August 2018, the Bishop of Southampton wrote to express his appreciation “You and Joanna remain a gift to this Diocese – and, more importantly, to the Kingdom!”
343. In 2018, I made four visits to Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda and Kenya, to train clergy, lay leaders and youth pastors in Christian ministry, pastoral care and conflict resolution. The communities visited are remote rural districts with among the lowest levels of education, highest levels of poverty and where the need for godly leadership is among the greatest. During the year I have also spoken at conferences and theological colleges in Singapore, Australia and USA on ways to resolve the Middle East conflict. I have participated in a reconciliation initiative in Rostrevor, bringing together Unionists and Republicans, Catholics and Protestants to strengthen the Good Friday Peace Agreement. I have also made two visits to Palestine supporting local NGOs committed to justice, peace and reconciliation.

344. I care passionately about the safety of the Jewish people and the right of Israel to exist within internationally agreed borders. I repudiate unequivocally racism, antisemitism and Holocaust denial. I also repudiate Islamophobia and the denial of the Palestinian right to self-determination. This is because the Christian gospel repudiates racism, emphasizing God's love for all people. Jesus calls his followers to be peacemakers and to fulfil a ministry of reconciliation. The New Testament assumes and reinforces the mandate of the Jewish prophet Micah, "And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God." (Micah 6:8)
345. I am committed to seeking justice for Palestinians, peace and security for Israelis and reconciliation between both, either in two independent, sovereign, contiguous states based on the 1967 borders, or in one state encompassing Israel and Palestine with full and equal rights for both Jews and Palestinians.
346. The allegations made by Ms van der Zyl on behalf of the Board of Deputies, that I have made antisemitic statements and promoted antisemitism, are unsubstantiated because they are without foundation. Ms van der Zyl, alleges "Stephen Sizer's history of antisemitism extends back the better part of a decade and involves close association with and promotion of terrorists, far-right personalities, and Holocaust deniers, not only in Britain but across the world." On the contrary, I repudiate antisemitism and all forms of racism, terrorism, fascism and Holocaust denial. I have never had any "close association" with or promoted terrorists, far-right personalities or Holocaust deniers.
347. The allegations are largely a repeat of earlier allegations under the Clergy Discipline Measure 2003 arising before a period of 12 months. Under the Measure such allegations are out of time and to the extent that they demonstrate a pattern of behaviour which comes up to more recent times, it is a pattern of behaviour of "lawful political opinions and activities" based upon my Christian beliefs and calling. To the extent that they have been described in the Complaint as offensive is largely to misconceive my writings and conduct, and to the extent that they may genuinely offend is an unfortunate by-product of meaningful political discourse.
348. Meanwhile, the harassment of me continues. Last week, on 21 October 2020, morning I received an email from a member of our Peacemaker Board of Reference, Steven Paas. He is a Dutch theologian serving in Malawi. He had been contacted by a colleague drawing attention to Nick Howard's article in Medium from July. Subsequently Steven was contacted by James Mendelsohn who asked him to refute the allegations. I have advised him not to get drawn into debate with them.
349. That afternoon I received a phone call from John McDowall, a Board member of Christianity Explored Ministries. We have worked together on several CE projects in East Africa. He said that Nick Howard and James Mendelsohn had written to all the CE Board

members asking them to disassociate from me. He did not elaborate other than to say that they were discussing as a Board how to respond and were concerned that adverse publicity could negatively impact their income. John referred to six organisations including the EA, suggesting they had been approached or would be named if they did not cut links with me. It appears to be the same strategy used to intimidate Church Society into making a statement earlier this year.

350. I hope that the rejection of the charges of antisemitism by the Tribunal will go some way to dampening the relentless thirst of certain individuals and bodies to discredit me and label me an antisemite.
351. I reiterate my submission that the Complaint amounts to a wholly disproportionate and unreasonable interference with my right to freedom of speech and as such falls outside the definition of unbecoming conduct as set out in paragraph 8 of the Clergy Discipline Measure 2003. No evidence has been adduced of unlawful conduct on my part.
352. I do not believe my criticisms of Zionism and some Israeli policies constitute “conduct unbecoming or inappropriate to the office and work of a clerk in Holy Orders.” On the contrary, I believe they are entirely consistent with the Ordinal and our calling to be faithful ministers of the gospel. I therefore call for the dismissal of this Complaint.

**I believe the facts in my statement to be true.**



Stephen Sizer

Date 26 October 2020

# **Clergy Discipline Measure 2003**

**In the Clergy Discipline Tribunal – Diocese of Winchester**

**Re the Reverend Dr Stephen Robert Sizer**

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**WITNESS STATEMENT OF  
REV'D DR STEPHEN ROBERT  
SIZER**

**"Exhibit A"**

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# Stephen Robert Sizer

## PERSONAL DETAILS:

39 Bevan Close  
Southampton  
SO19 9PE

**Date of Birth** 27th July 1953

**Marital Status** Married

**Nationality** British

E-mail: [stephen@sizers.org](mailto:stephen@sizers.org)

Web sites: [www.peacemakers.ngo](http://www.peacemakers.ngo)

[www.stephensizer.com](http://www.stephensizer.com)

## EDUCATION:

**Ph.D** Theology: Oak Hill College & Middlesex University. (1995-2003)

**M.Th (Distinction)** Applied Theology: Westminster College, Oxford. (1991-1994)

**Dip. Higher Ed** Theology: Trinity College, Bristol. (1980-1983)

**BA. (Honours)** Geography (African & Asian Studies): University of Sussex. (1973-1976)

**"A" Level GCE** Geography, Sociology, Economic History, General Studies  
(Politics & American Literature), Art. (1971 & 1973)

## EMPLOYMENT:

**Director** Peacemaker Trust (2017-)

**Vicar** Christ Church, Virginia Water. (1997-2017)

**Rector** St. John's, Stoke-next-Guildford. (1989-1997)

**Curate in Charge** St. Saviour's with St. John's, Stoke-next-Guildford. (1986-1989)

**Assistant Curate** St Leonard's, St Leonard's on Sea. (1983-1986)

and Assistant Chaplain, Hastings College of Technology.

**Campus Director** Universities of London, Liverpool and Sussex. (1976-1980)

Working as a student counsellor with Agape.

**Executive Officer** Department of Health and Social Security. (1971-1973)

Supplementary Benefits Visiting Officer in East London.

## WIDER RESPONSIBILITIES:

**Founder & Director** Peacemaker Trust

**Advocate - Trainer** Christianity Explored

**Trustee** Living Stones of the Holy Land Trust

**Trustee** Southampton & Winchester Visitors Group (SWVG)

**Visiting Lecturer** Kagera Theological School, Tanzania and Cyanguu Theological School, Rwanda

## FORMER ROLES:

**External Examiner** Post-graduate degrees (MPhil and PhD) University of Wales and the

Oxford Centre for Mission Studies (OCMS) and also Tyndale-Carey Graduate School, Bible College of New Zealand.

**Vice Chair & Trustee** Biblica Europe – International Bible Society

**Trustee** Amos Trust  
**Director & Trustee** Highway Trust, *organizing youth projects and educational pilgrimages to the Middle East.*  
**Trustee** Friends of Sabeel UK  
**Committee** The Balfour Project  
**Committee** Christ at the Checkpoint Conferences, Bethlehem Bible College  
**Producer** 'Enlightenment' weekly programme Aletejah TV  
**Tutor** School of Theology, Oxford Brookes University, *Masters degree programme in Applied Theology.*  
**Patron** The Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions  
**Patron** Sadaka – The Ireland Palestine Alliance  
**Founding Member** Institute for the Study of Christian Zionism (ISCZ)  
**Advisory Council** Evangelicals for Middle East Understanding (EMEU)  
**UK Board of Reference** Mar Elias Educational Institutions, Ibillin, Galilee

## **PUBLISHED WORKS**

2003 *In the Footsteps of Jesus and the Apostles* (Swindon, Eagle, 2003).  
2004 *Christian Zionism: Road-map to Armageddon?* (Leicester, IVP, 2004).  
2007 *Zion's Christian Soldiers?* (Leicester, IVP, 2007).  
2007 *Christian Zionism: Road-map to Armageddon?* Arabic edition (Beirut, AGCMD, 2007)  
2009 *Sionismo Cristiano: Christian Zionism: Road-map to Armageddon?* Spanish edition (Madrid, Bosforo libros, 2009)  
2009 *Christian Zionism: Road-map to Armageddon?* Farsi edition (Tehran, IRIB, 2009)  
2013 *Zion's Christian Soldiers?* Korean edition (Seoul, CLC, 2013)  
2014 *Zion's Christian Soldiers?* Arabic edition (Cairo Episcopal Publishing House, 2014)

## **PUBLISHED ARTICLES**

1994 "A word after a word after a word is power": With Semantics and Scripture, Zionists have crafted a peculiar and powerful labyrinth of belief" *Living Stones*. Autumn (1994) No. 11, pp. 5-6.  
1995 "The Peace of Jerusalem: Interview with Garth Hewitt and John Tidy" *Evangelicals Now*, April 1995, p. 8.  
1995 "The Hope of Israel: An Interview with Riah Abu El Assal after Rabin's assassination" *Evangelicals Now*, December (1995) p. 1, 7.  
1996 "A Passion for Justice: Garth Hewitt gives the forgotten Christians in the Middle East a voice" *The Church of England Newspaper*, 2 February (1996), p.11.  
1996 "Israel's Elections and the Middle East Peace Process" *Evangelicals Now*, July (1996) p. 25.  
1996 "The Middle East Peace Process in the Light of the Israeli Elections" *Pilgrim*, Summer (1996)  
1996 "Where to find Christ in the Promised Land" *Evangelicals Now*, October (1996), p. 16.  
1997 'Eyeless in Gaza?' *Evangelicals Now*, January (1997), p.18.  
1997 'The Mountain of the Wall, The Battle for Jerusalem' *Evangelicals Now*, May (1997), p. 9.  
1997 'Pilgrimages and Politics, A Survey of British Holy Land Tour Operators' *Living*



*Stones Magazine*, Spring 1997, No. 14, pp. 14-17

1997 'The hidden face of Holy Land pilgrimage tourism' *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, Vol. 9, No. 1, (1997), pp. 34-35.

1997 'Jesus and the Holy City, New Testament Perspectives on Jerusalem' by P. W. L. Walker. Book review for *Evangelicals Now*, July (1997).

1998 "Render to Caesar" The Politics of Pilgrimage Tourism to the Holy Land'. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management* Vol. 10, No. 1 (1998), pp. 39-41.

1998 'Jesus and the Holy City, New Testament Perspectives on Jerusalem' by P. W. L. Walker. Book review for *Cornerstone*, Sabeel Liberation Theology Centre.

1998 'Building Site Shatters Peace: Stephen Sizer explains the background to Robin Cook's visit to the disputed fields of Har Homa.' *Church Times*, 20 March 1998.

1998 'Anti Missionary Law Will Ban Christian Witness in Israel' *Evangelicals Now*, August (1998), p. 19.

1998 'Legitimising Oppression in the Name of the Gospel: Christian Fundamentalism and the Holy Land' *Social Justice Desk Newsletter*, December 1998. Issue 46. Conference of Religious in England and Wales. pp. 14-19

1998 'Christian Zionism: True Friends of Israel?' *Living Stones Magazine*, Autumn 1998, No. 16. pp. 18-24.

1998 Christian Zionism: A British Perspective *Al Aqsa Journal* Vol. 1. October 1998, pp. 19-24.

1999 "Christian Zionism: A British Perspective" published in *Holy Land - Hollow Jubilee*, Ed. Naim Ateek & Michael Prior (London, Melisende, 1999) from the 3rd International Sabeel Conference.

1999 'Travelling through the Holy Land': by Donald Bridge. Book review for *Al Aqsa Journal*, Vol. 1, No. 2, April 1999.

1999 "Ethics in Tourism" *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*. MCB University Press. Vol. 11. No. 2/3, 1999. Edited by Stephen Sizer. Based on proceedings of Global Internet Conference held in 1998.

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## **SUMMARY**

### **Peacemaker Trust**

Stephen is the founder and director of Peacemaker Trust, a registered charity dedicated to peace making, especially where minorities are persecuted, where justice is denied, human rights are suppressed or reconciliation is needed.

### **Anglican Church**

Stephen was ordained in 1983 and served as a curate in St Leonard's on Sea, Sussex (1983-1986). He was appointed Curate-in-Charge, then Rector of St John's, Stoke, Guildford in Surrey (1986-1997). He was appointed vicar of Virginia Water in 1997 where he served for 20 years until 2017.

### **Southampton and Winchester Visitors Group**

Stephen is a trustee of Southampton and Winchester Visitors Group (SWVG), a charity who befriend and support asylum seekers and refugees in the Southampton area.

### **Christianity Explored**

Stephen is a trainer for the Christianity Explored Course and has assisted with the launch of the Buganda, Swahili and French translations in Uganda, Tanzania, Kenya, Burundi, Rwanda and South Sudan, as well as the launch of the Arabic edition in Egypt, Lebanon and Morocco and Polish translation in Katowice, Poland.

### **Living Stones of the Holy Land Trust**

Stephen is a trustee of the Living Stones of the Holy Land Trust. Living Stones is an ecumenical charity with the primary aim of advancing education about Christianity in the Holy Land and countries around, by:

- raising awareness in Britain and elsewhere, educating and informing the public concerning Christians in the Holy Land, through our website, lectures, newsletter and a yearbook of academic theological articles;
- promoting contacts between Christians (and others) in Britain and in the Holy Land, e.g. through pilgrimages promoting encounter, reflection and witness;
- cooperating with other charities and groups with similar aims, by sharing activities and information

### **Human Rights**

In 2004, he co-authored the statement Challenging Christian Zionism endorsed at the 5<sup>th</sup> International Sabeel Conference in Jerusalem. In 2006, he debated Neville White of the Ethical Investment Advisory Group and was instrumental in the Church of England General Synod decision to divest from Caterpillar.

In 2006, he also co-authored the Jerusalem Declaration on Christian Zionism for the Heads of Churches in Jerusalem. In 2010 he co-authored the Bethlehem Evangelical Affirmation, endorsed by participants at the Christ at the Checkpoint conference sponsored by Bethlehem Bible College.

In 2011 he co-authored the Seven Affirmations of Bethlehem Bible College and in 2012, the second international Christ at the Checkpoint Conference Statement and Manifesto.

In 2012, Stephen was a member of the Kairos Britain drafting committee which published Time for Action.

### **Academic**

Stephen gained his BA in Geography from Sussex University in 1976, a Diploma in Higher Education (Dip HE) in theology from Trinity College, Bristol in 1983. He was awarded an MTh (with distinction) from Oxford University in 1994. His thesis examined the Ethical Management of Pilgrimages to the Holy Land. In 2004 he was awarded a PhD by Oak Hill College and Middlesex University. His thesis examined the historical roots, theological basis and political consequences of Christian Zionism in Britain and the USA from 1820. Stephen has served as an external examiner for post-graduate degrees (MPhil and PhD) awarded by the University of Wales, the Oxford Centre for Mission Studies (OCMS) and also Tyndale-Carey Graduate School, Bible College of New Zealand – now Laidlaw College.

### **Wider Ministry**

For over 25 years, he was a trustee of Biblica Europe, International Bible Society, and has served as a trustee, director or committee member of Friends of Sabeel UK, Highway Trust, Interfaith Group for Morally Responsible Investment, Christ at the Checkpoint conferences, and the Balfour Project.

### **Author**

He is the author of three books, In the Footsteps of Jesus and the Apostles, (Eagle, 2004) Christian Zionism: Roadmap to Armageddon (IVP, 2004) and Zion's Christian Soldiers: The Bible, Israel and the Church (IVP, 2007). His books have been translated into Arabic, Farsi, Korean and Spanish. He also writes occasionally for various journals and magazines.

### **Photography and Press**

He has Press Accreditation as a freelance photographer from the Palestine News Network (PNN) and Holy Land Trust.

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