



“Towards humanity with a Kairos consciousness”

OPEN letter to Rev Meshoe and the ACDP

20 June 2012

Dear Rev Meshoe and members of the ACDP

Re: Your support for the racist apartheid State of Israel

Greetings to you.

We write to you at this moment not merely because we feel that we wish to, but because it is becoming increasingly clear to us that we have to address you, particularly since you claim to be Christian. Silence on our part might be construed by you and others as acceptance of your views, which we increasingly do not share.

1. You claim the title “Christian” in the name of your political party in the same way that the previous regime claimed the word “God” in a Constitution that was clearly ungodly. As we addressed the previous regime, we now also address you and ask that you consider carefully how you use the word “Christian” and how you are being misused by others because of the title that you claim. Lobby groups for the state of Israel are increasingly on the lookout for people, particularly Christians, who are willing to do their work for them.
2. Over the last few months we have seen how you, Rev Meshoe, have given your uncritical support to this apartheid state of Israel and how you bluntly ignore facts and figures on human rights abuses given by international organisations. As South Africans, we understand this completely. Bantustan leaders and some Church leaders in apartheid South Africa were blindfolded and corrupted by the previous regime in much the same way and you are unfortunately falling into this same trap, and we regard it as our duty to warn you against this.
3. Do you know, Rev Meshoe, that this state of Israel that you support so uncritically was the last to support the apartheid state of South Africa (even with nuclear technology), even when the USA had already begun to implement sanctions against apartheid? Do you know, Rev Meshoe, that Jerusalem Christians are being displaced,

that their homes are being taken over by settlers and that many Jerusalem Christians and other Jerusalemites have had their citizenship taken away from them through a mere administrative act?

Do you know the pain of families whose land is confiscated for the illegal wall or an Israeli-only road? Have you looked into the eyes of a scared child who is held captive or searched by soldiers? Have you seen the faces of farmers whose water wells or cisterns were destroyed by bulldozers, or a woman who wanted to save her furniture before her house was levelled to the ground? Do you know what the weariness of workmen who queue up from 2:00 at a check point to get to work on time look like? Have you seen fields of Palestinian olive trees destroyed at the hands of Israeli settlers? Do you know the fear of rural people who were held at gunpoint and instructed to flee from their village? Do you know that whole Palestinian towns are threatened with demolition and how your words of support for the present state of Israel provide oxygen to the fire of violence?

Do you not know, Rev Meshoe, how hope is being sucked from young Palestinian Christians by the illegal Occupation and how they rather choose to emigrate with their young families than live in Palestine, thereby robbing Palestine of one of its most important natural resources?

Why do you not support the right to own property, the right to equality, the right to an adequate standard of living, the right to freedom of movement, to self-determination and the right to live free of harassment and violence for all in Israel and Palestine? Are you not aware of these illegalities and many other inhuman abuses by the state of Israel? If you are genuinely not aware of the things we write in this letter, we are more than willing to supply you and your party with all these facts.

4. Also, do you not know, Rev Meshoe, that this place we generally call the “Holy Land” and the “Holy City” (because it is of special significance to Christians, Jews and Muslims) is being claimed exclusively for the Jewish state of Israel and that it gives Christians only limited access to the holy sites? If you do not know this, it is important that we tell you about this so that you know what it is that you are supporting. You belong to a group who believes in evangelism and the freedom to share the gospel with those who do not believe in Jesus, but do you know that this is illegal in Israel? We find it strange that you can support such a State?
5. If you say to us, Rev Meshoe, that you are supporting Israel “because the Bible says so”, we will remind you how (a) the Bible was used to justify apartheid in South Africa as well and (b) that justice is Biblical because God is a God of justice, peace and love. Rev Meshoe, why do you not distinguish between the modern state of Israel and the Israel of the Bible? Do you realise that your viewpoint is in stark contrast with Christians throughout the world who have been actively monitoring the situation in the occupied territories of Palestine for at least ten years? Do you understand how much it hurts your fellow Christians and South Africans, those who

witness how Israel infringes upon the Palestinian peoples' most basic human rights, to read your views in the media? We urge you to reconsider your theological interpretation in light of Christ's message to the world.

6. **The only Israel that can be supported is a just Israel**, one who cares for all its citizens including Arab Christians and Muslims, the stranger, the widow and the orphan. The only Israel we will support is the Israel who adheres to international law such as the Geneva Convention and applicable rulings by the Hague Convention, UN resolutions and the International Court of Justice, one who lifts the yoke of the Occupation and its multiple systemic illegal practices off the neck of our Palestinian sisters and brothers. Rev Meshoe, we urge you to familiarise yourself with the applicable international law.
7. We now understand that you and others will be marching against the labelling of products from the Occupied Palestinian territories? By marching against such a measure, do you not understand that you are marching against the right of ALL consumers in South Africa to know where the products on our shelves come from? Do you realise that you will be marching AGAINST Articles 46 and 55 of the Hague Convention? As a political party, you should surely understand the implications of such a step? Otherwise **how seriously should we take you as a political party?**
8. One of the big ironies is that you are marching in South Africa in support of the state Israel at about the same time that Israelis are engaged in what seems to be state-sanctioned xenophobic actions against fellow Africans, followed by the deportation of hundreds of Africans from the State of Israel.
9. One of the arguments that we often hear is that "we are singling out Israel". This is said more out of ignorance on the part of those who say it and as a way to divert our attention. Many of us are involved in several other international and African struggles and at another time we can let you know about our work and efforts in other places. **Israel unfortunately singles itself out**, with the support of the USA, as the state that wilfully ignores international law and whose acolytes organise across borders, including in our own country. We often find it ironic that they fight for a state but refuse to actually go and live there. We also notice that many of the worst racists in South Africa have now converted to Judaism and have gone to illegally settle in the West Bank. They must understand that those of us who fought against apartheid will also fight against apartheid wherever it rears its head, whether in Israel or anywhere else.
10. We wish to make it clear that this is not a mere disagreement or a difference of opinion. This goes much deeper than that. This is about whether we are following the teachings of Jesus the Christ, whom we meet in the Bible and whom you publicly claim to follow in matters of public policy. By using the name "Christian" in your name, you must accept that you will be called to different and higher standards,

much higher than mere political or Constitutional standards. You will be judged according to the standards of the life and teachings of Jesus the Christ.

Our view that the present State of Israel is a racist, apartheid State is in the best traditions of both Judaism and the Christian prophetic tradition and we support and work with all Jews and others who support a non-violent, just peace in Israel and Palestine.

We therefore call on you to re-think your uncritical and unbiblical support for the State of Israel and to support the correct labelling of products so that it truly reflects its origin, for the sake of the rights of all consumers in South Africa. Please do not allow your party and your faith to be misused by those who have supported and continue to support an Apartheid state.

We would like to stress that we can supply you with facts and figures on the human rights abuses in the occupied territories of Palestine. If you choose to do your own research, you can simply visit websites such as:

The website of the World Council of Churches' Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel: www.eappi.org

The website of the United Nations Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs in the Occupied Territories of Palestine: www.ochaopt.org

Please open yourself up to the plight of **all** people.



Edwin Arrison (Rev)

General-secretary

On behalf of the Kairos SA leadership: Rev Moss Ntlha, Ms. Marthie Momberg, Ms. Dudu Masango, Rev Dix Sibeko and Dr Stiaan van der Merwe.