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"Let us be alert to the season in which we are living. It is the season of the Blessed Hope, calling for us to cut our ties with the world and build ourselves on this One who will soon appear. He is our hope—a Blessed Hope enabling us to rise above our times and fix our gaze upon Him." Tozer

BBC: Leading the World Against Israel

by **Richard Kemp** **August 15**

More than any other media organization, the BBC is responsible for inciting hatred against Israel — not just in Britain but globally. Its agenda helps to ensure continued aggression against the Jewish State; fuels violence by Hamas and other terrorist groups; feeds the boycott, divestment and sanctions movement; encourages distorted condemnation of Israel by human rights groups and international bodies; and provides material to be exploited by activist university professors and students.

All of this not only seriously harms the reputation of the State of Israel and stimulates antisemitism around the world, it also worsens the suffering of Palestinians by uncritical coverage of the leadership that is responsible for their plight.

Plenty of other media organizations and propagandists contribute to this malevolent narrative, but the BBC is more influential than any of them because of its widely perceived objectivity, respectability and reliability, combined with unrivalled reach. It operates under a contract with the British government and is bound by a Royal charter, together requiring accurate and impartial news and analysis of current events and ideas. In its own words: "BBC News is respected both in the UK and around the world for the strength of its journalism and impartiality".

It is the largest broadcaster on the planet, with over 35,000 staff. Last year it boasted that on average 438 million people around the world came to the BBC each week.

Following accusations of slanted reporting of the second Palestinian intifada, which began in 2000, and the rise in Jew-hatred caused by it, in 2004 the BBC was pressured to open an inquiry into its coverage, by Malcolm Balen, a former BBC News editor. For 17 years Balen's findings have been kept under lock and key by the BBC, which admitted to spending \$500,000 of public funds in a series of legal battles to prevent its release. Efforts are now being made by filmmaker Hugh Kitson and others to have the report made public. In parliament this June, Conservative peer Lord Polack urged the government to compel the BBC to release it. "What is it they are hiding and what are they afraid of?", he asked. Responding, the Minister for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport said that "in some instances it [the BBC] has fallen far short" of the required standards.

In the wake of the Balen report, in 2005 the BBC created a Middle East Editor to add context to coverage of events on the ground. Experienced reporter Jeremy Bowen was given the assignment and has been in the job ever since. Bowen had been BBC Middle East Correspondent from 1995-2000. In

May 2000, while covering the IDF withdrawal from Lebanon, his driver was killed by IDF tank fire, an event he described as the pivotal moment in his life.

An IDF investigation concluded this had been a tragic mistake. Bowen however seems to have no doubt the IDF intentionally attacked him, a BBC journalist. In a tweet last year, on the anniversary of the incident, he wrote: "They were close enough to see us clearly with the sophisticated optics in a Merkava tank."

I have fought in a comparable British tank and know that, no matter how sophisticated the optics, mistakes often happen in the innate confusion of war. A Challenger tank in my brigade during the 1991 Gulf war opened fire on a British Warrior armoured vehicle and in the 2003 Gulf war one British tank attacked another, killing two crewmen.

There have been many other similar incidents involving tanks. Would Bowen argue that these were also deliberate? In 2003, BBC journalist John Simpson was wounded in a US "friendly fire" air strike that killed his interpreter and 17 others. He did not suggest this was a deliberate action by the Americans, but concluded: "these things happen in a war".

Whatever the reality, no-one could blame Bowen for feeling the way he does about the May 2000 incident, and some might find it hard to retain their objectivity. But the wisdom of appointing a man with this experience to a role intended to address accusations of biased reporting must be questioned.

Three allegations that Bowen breached BBC guidelines on accuracy and impartiality were fully or partially upheld in 2009 by the BBC's Editorial Standards Committee, which also said that he had failed to acknowledge there were views contrary to his own. Bowen rejected this censure, branding complainants "the enemies of impartiality".

The BBC's reporting on the Gaza conflict this year typifies its long-term bias against Israel. It constantly drew moral equivalence between Israel, a Western liberal democracy, and Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad, both proscribed terrorist organizations, whose status I never saw mentioned in BBC reports. There was no acknowledgement that the conflict had been initiated by these groups that openly seek the destruction of Israel or that without their violent actions, no Palestinians in Gaza or civilians in Israel would have died. Instead the BBC maintained the fiction — pushed by the Palestinian side — that Israel's actions in Jerusalem were the cause. Nor did they mention that Hamas misappropriated millions of dollars of international aid to construct tunnels, rockets and other engines of war to attack Israeli civilians.

This biased journalism was crowned by commentary direct from Jeremy Bowen, whose report from Gaza at the end of the conflict looked more like pro-Hamas propaganda than objective reporting. This was true to form. In an article written by Bowen after the last major conflagration in Gaza in 2014, he said: "I saw no evidence... of Israel's accusation that Hamas uses Palestinians as human shields". This despite universally recognised evidence that human shields are Hamas's consistent tactic against Israel, as proudly admitted on more than one occasion by Hamas leader Fathi Hamad and confirmed again in May in a speech to the UN Security Council by Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process Tor Wennesland.

Why so much emphasis on Bowen's role? Because all BBC reporting on the Israel-Palestinian conflict for more than 15 years has been driven, above all, by his editorial influence. According to British newspaper *The Independent*:

"As Middle East editor of the BBC, he holds a position of such importance that people from all over the world look to him for an understanding of the course of international affairs."

Bowen says of his role: "to try to explain the most complex and newsworthy place in the world is a hell of a big job, really."

I do not blame Bowen for the influence he wields, I blame the BBC executives that allow him, with his history, to hold a position that dominates the coverage of the world's largest broadcast media corporation. But of course he fits well into an organization infected with such a blatantly biased agenda on Israel. During the 2021 Gaza conflict, according to the UK's Jewish Chronicle, following complaints the BBC had to issue corrections eight times in their Arabic news coverage alone.

Over the years, many BBC staff have betrayed their own bias both in their reports and on social media. For example, this year the BBC was forced to fire journalist Tala Halawa after a tweet she had written before being hired by the BBC was brought to their attention by media watchdog *Honest Reporting*. She wrote: "Israel is more Nazi than Hitler! Oh, Hitler was right, IDF go to hell".

Senior BBC producer Alaa Daraghme recently shared a video on Twitter which he wrote was "An Israeli settler ramming a Palestinian man near the Lions Gate." In fact the video showed a car being driven onto the sidewalk after an attempt by Palestinians to lynch the driver, who then lost control. There are many other such cases of bias and distortion among BBC staff.

In May, during the Gaza conflict, the UK charity Campaign Against Antisemitism (CAA) called on the BBC to dismiss Bowen following a tweet he posted on his official BBC twitter feed instructing "every Jew" to read an "exploration of Judaism" that claimed that "Racism, hate and violence are Jewish values too". Gideon Falter, CAA Chief Executive, commented:

"As antisemitic incidents against Jews in Britain surge, Mr Bowen has chosen this moment to order all Jews to read an article that most people will have taken to be an analysis of why Judaism is a religion of racism, hate and violence. He will have known the feelings towards Jews that this would incite and recklessly added fuel to the fire."

Last year, CAA complained to the BBC about a report marking the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz by Orla Guerin, veteran BBC international correspondent. She was accused of linking the murder of six million Jews during the Holocaust to Israel's treatment of Palestinians, a comparison that is antisemitic under the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism, adopted by the British Government. Following her report, historian Simon Sebag Montefiore wrote:

"This BBC News commentary on Yad Vashem by Orla Guerin linking the Holocaust to Israel's West Bank occupation is truly foul — managing to be both shamefully amoral and historically inaccurate, utterly cynical and complacently selfrighteous all the same time [sic]".

In 2006, Guerin, who had succeeded Bowen as BBC correspondent in Jerusalem, was moved to Africa after allegations of bias in her reporting on Israel. In 2015, a former BBC Chairman complained about Guerin's Middle East reporting, saying she had implied "equivalence between Israeli victims of terrorism and Palestinians who have been killed by Israeli security forces in the act of carrying out terror attacks". Perhaps, like Bowen, Guerin has a personal axe to grind?

Like many others, the BBC rejects or ignores historical reality in order to portray Israel as an illegal occupier of Arab lands. To underpin its false narrative, for many years the BBC has repeated Palestinian propaganda, ignored violence against their own people, and whitewashed their Jew-hate. This is sometimes blatant, sometimes subtle and often emphasised in reporters' body language. But always the message is clear and consistent. Anecdotally, I can remember only one or two positive reports about Israel in the last 20 years. Even reports about the country's remarkable success against Coronavirus must be tainted by false allegations about depriving Palestinians of vaccines. Israel's

contributions to disaster relief and other humanitarian actions around the world are almost always ignored.

There are some expectations that the corporation's new Director General, Tim Davie, will end the BBC's heavily slanted coverage of this issue as well as many others. He recently told staff: "If you want to be an opinionated columnist or a partisan campaigner on social media then that is a valid choice, but you should not be working at the BBC". But he has an uphill struggle against institutional bias. In reply to a recent complaint made to him about Jeremy Bowen, Davie's staff wrote:

"We are confident in his ability to provide analysis of this often complicated situation with his own insight and knowledge... We do not agree Jeremy displays a bias against Israel".

There is little likelihood, without firm intervention by the British government, that the BBC will relinquish its leadership of the global anti-Israel movement that has contributed to so much suffering, misery and bloodshed. As British journalist Melanie Phillips writes: "It is no exaggeration to say that when it comes to Israel, the issue is not BBC bias. It is BBC incitement to baseless hatred".

Bennett's Rosh Hashanah Threat: If People Don't Get Vaccinated, They Won't Hear The Shofar



Israeli prime minister Naftali Bennett at the Israeli parliament during a plenum session in the assembly hall of the Israeli parliament, in Jerusalem, on August 2 2021. Photo by Yonatan Sindel/Flash90

Did Naftali Bennett just threaten to cancel the Messiah?

Israel's Prime Minister called for all Israelis to get vaccinated but implicit in his words was a message that non-vaccination would postpone the Messiah.

At Sunday's cabinet meeting Naftali Bennett discussed the current spike in the pandemic. He threatened a new shutdown, saying, "If we get vaccinated in Elul, we can hear the shofar in Tishrei."

The Hebrew month of Elul began this week, marking a period of intensified repentance in preparation for the Jewish high holiday period in the month of Tishrei when the shofar (ram's horn) is blown on Rosh Hashanna.

Headlines

Raptureready.com

Palestinians set Star of David with swastika alight near illegal West Bank outpost

Palestinian rioters early Sunday set on fire a wooden Star of David with a swastika in its center near the illegal outpost of Eviatar in the West Bank. Palestinians have in recent months been staging violent riots in the area on a nightly basis in an attempt to cause the settlers – who have moved illegally into the contentious outpost in May – to leave.

Turkey Drifts From The West Into The Arms Of The Magog Coalition

Turkey's self-alienation from the West and Western institutions is not unrequited. New research in Europe shows how Europeans, once enthusiastic about Turkish membership in the EU, now feel Turkey does not belong with their political culture. In April, the European Council on Foreign Relations surveyed more than 17,000 people in 12 European countries. The survey found that: "Turkey is the only country that more Europeans see as an adversary than a necessary partner."

Violent M7.2 earthquake hits Haiti, causing widespread damage and leaving hundreds dead, injured and missing

A violent earthquake registered by the USGS as M7.2 hit Haiti at 12:29 UTC on August 14, 2021. The agency is reporting a depth of 10 km (6.2 miles). EMSC is reporting the same magnitude and depth.

Very strong mag. 6.9 earthquake – Gulf of Alaska, 111 mi east of Sandpoint, Aleutians East, Alaska, USA, on Saturday, 14 Aug 2021 3:57 am

This quake was likely an aftershock of the 8.2 quake Chignik Earthquake, Gulf of Alaska, 29 July 2021 06:15 GMT, which had occurred 2 weeks earlier.

The Sinking 'LGBT Inclusive' Protestant Churches

BY EVANGELICAL FOCUS AUGUST 12, 2021

In many Western countries, evangelical churches who persevere in a historical teaching on issues such as family, marriage, the protection of the unborn, and the rights of freedom of conscience, speech and religion; do not have a good press.

In contrast, Protestant denominations that defend 'inclusion and plurality' with LGBT priests and the blessing of same-sex unions are presented as a faith that has understood the social reality well.

Among many mainline Protestant circles, it is argued that Christianity needs to attract people with an open-minded approach to the Bible that reinterprets certain texts accommodating them to the trends and thinking of the social majority. In the past, the Bible and the 'sola fide and sola scriptura' may have said one thing about human identity, but today they say another.

The reality, nevertheless, is that the church attendance and membership in theologically liberal churches that support the LGBT agenda is not growing, quite the opposite.

Often those who leave their congregations are the most committed believers, and those who have small children and look for a spiritual education based on biblical values.

These churches are often not active in evangelism and therefore do not reach unbelievers with the message of salvation. Many others just become nominal believer as they stop attending church services.

Let's look at the statistics of 7 big mainline Protestant churches in 4 countries, all of which have embraced a 'LGBT inclusive' theology and practice in the last decades.

1. Church of Sweden

It is the largest Lutheran church in the world. Linked to the state until the year 2000, it is hegemonic in the country although it coexists with other smaller free evangelical churches who are theologically conservative.

Officially, 55% of the population is member of the church, although only 2% of these members attends church with some kind of regularity.

The Church of Sweden accepts homosexual marriage since 2009, and appointed the first openly lesbian bishop in Stockholm that same year. In the last months, they have moved towards pro-transgender positions.

These are data from recent years.

2005: 6,967,000 members (77% of the population)

2010: 6,590,000 (70%)

2015: 6,225,000 (63%)

2018: 5,899,000 (58%)

2020: 5,729,000 (55%)

2. Church of Scotland

The 'Kirk', as it is known, is a Presbyterian Church. It is the national and majoritarian church in Scotland since 1560. After decades of debates in their General Assemblies and a growing liberal sector, the 'kirk' voted in 2009 to allow their ministers to have same-sex relationships (the Scott Rennie case).

Since 2015, civil unions of homosexuals are approved, and it is expected that in 2022 the Church of Scotland will adopt marriage rites for same-sex partners. A smaller Free Church of Scotland left the congregation and maintains an evangelical.

These are the figures of membership of the Church of Scotland, in a country of 5.5 million people.

2000: 607,000 members

2006: 504,000

2013: 398,000

2017: 336,000

2018: 325,000

3. Anglican Church of Canada

It was never the biggest church in the country but it has a large presence throughout the country. Always seen as more liberal than other Protestant groups, it started celebrating religious gay marriages in 2016. A first gay bishop married his partner in 2018, and in 2019 the church allowed all dioceses to perform same-sex marriages.

This is the evolution of the Anglican Church of Canada's membership.

1961: 1,360,000 members

2001: 640,000

2017: 360,000

4. United Church of Christ (UCC) in the US

Another mainline Protestant church with a mix of Congregational, Lutheran, Calvinist and Anabaptist roots. It was the church of former US President Barack Obama and is known for its progressive approach to social and ethical issues. Although it defines itself as a "extremely pluralistic and diverse denomination", only 5% of its local churches are formed by a majority of non-white people.

Already in 2005, the UCC declared itself in favour of same-sex marriage. They celebrate gay marriages and they are expected to vote a ban on any therapy or pastoral accompaniment that implies the modification of a person's attraction to the same sex.

Is this denomination filling the pews? Not really, according to their statistics.

1995: 6,145 churches, 1,472,000 members

2005: 5,633 churches, 1,230,000 members

2015: 5,032 churches, 915,000 members

2019: 4,852 churches, 802,000 members

5. Episcopal Church of the USA

Traditionally described as the US Anglicans and the religion of the Anglo-Saxon socio-political elite in the country, they are not in their best moment. Over twenty years ago, the Episcopalians gave their 'ok' to sexual relationships before or outside of marriage. In 2003, the case of Gene Robinson, a divorced man with two children who was in a partnership with a man, was ordained bishop, causing a large controversy.

In 2006, the ECUSA officially said yes to gay marriage, and the year after, around 240 theologically conservative communities left the Church to form the Anglican Church of North America (which now has around 1,000 churches in the US and Canada).

Has the theologically liberal approach of the Episcopal Church helped increase its membership? No. In fact, the denomination has lost one third of its members in only 20 years.

2000: 2,329,000 members

2005: 2,205,000

2015: 1,779,000

2019: 1,638,000

6. Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (ELCA) in the US

A Church born in 1988 when three Lutheran streams united. In summer of 2009, the ELCA accepted the ordination of practicing gay and lesbian pastors, as well as the blessing of homosexual unions. In the beginning of 2021, the denomination went a step further and ordained its first transgender bishop.

Thousands of conservative Lutherans left the Church to join other congregations. Others stayed with a critical approach. Nonetheless, ELCA's membership has diminished. Ten years after the decision on LGBT matters and a continuous radicalisation of positions, the ELCA has lost one third of its members.

1988: 5,288,000 members

2000: 5,126,000

2007: 4,709,000

2011: 4,059,000

2019: 3,265,000

7. Presbyterian Church USA (PCUSA)

It is the largest Presbyterian church in the US, born in 1983 with the merging of two large denominations. In 2012, it approved the ordination of homosexual priests and in 2014 the PCUSA redefined marriage as a union of "two people" (instead of "a man and a woman").

One decade later, they have lost one third of their members.

1984: 3,100,000 members

2000: 2,525,000 members

2005: 2,316,000 members and 10,959 congregations

2010: 2,016,000 members and 10,560 congregations

2016: 1,483,000 members and 9,451 congregations

2020: 1,245,000 members and 8,925 congregations

A not so 'proud' reality

The images of rainbows in church buildings, Pride celebrations and messages such as "love is love" seem to distract from the crude reality of the "LGBT inclusive" Protestant churches. Below the celebration of tolerance and diversity, there is the statistical reality of a heavy fall in membership, church attendance, influence, as well as a worrying shortage of church ministers.

It is obvious that many causes could be included in the analysis of the complex evolution of dying churches, but statistical evidence shows that embracing dominant ideologies in society such as the LGBT agenda is certainly not filling the churches with new believers.

Theologically conservative Protestant churches may also have their own issues and challenges, but most of these are growing both in Global South countries and many Western countries, or remain stable with high church attendance rates.