

Vatican Synod Calls For End to Israel's 'Occupation'

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At conference on Christians in the Middle East, US Melkite archbishop says: "There is no longer a chosen people."

Note from Pastor Kevin: For several centuries, the Catholic Church ruled over Europe with tyranny and murder, showing they knew nothing about being true Christians. Praise God, the Reformation exposed them for the tyrants that they were. But the popes and their bishops have not relented in their quest to wield ungodly control over the world. After contributing to the horrors of the holocaust, Pope Pius the XII fought the formation of the Jewish state in 1948 in violation of God's prophetic word declaring that God would bring the Jewish people back into the land of Israel in the last days (Ezekiel 36-37 and many others). The Catholic bishops and their pope are now poking their finger in the eyes of God by stating the Bible does not support the Jewish people being the rightful owners of the land of Israel. They are lying and will experience the judgment of God as a result. True Christians are Biblical Christians; they accept God's view about the Jewish people and the land of Israel. Those who doubt that God cares about the Jews should read Romans chapters 9 through 11, the book of Revelation, and the major and minor prophets of the Old Testament. The world says ignorance is bliss. However, ignorance of the Word of God is eternally deadly.



ROME – Bishops from the Middle East who were summoned to Rome by the pope demanded on Saturday that Israel accept UN resolutions calling for an end to its “occupation” of Arab lands.

In a final joint communique, the bishops also told Israel it shouldn't use the Bible to justify “injustices” against the Palestinians.

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The bishops issued the statement at the close of their two-week meeting, called by **Pope Benedict XVI** to discuss the plight of Christians in the Middle East amid a major exodus of the faithful from the region.

The Catholic Church has long been a minority in the largely Muslim region but its presence is shrinking further as a result of war, conflict, discrimination and economic problems.

“The Holy Scriptures cannot be used to justify the return of Jews to Israel and the displacement of the Palestinians, to justify the occupation by Israel of Palestinian lands,” Monsignor Cyril Salim Bustros, Greek Melkite archbishop of Our Lady of the Annunciation in Boston, Massachusetts, and president of the “Commission for the Message,” said at Saturday's Vatican press conference.

“We Christians cannot speak of the ‘promised land’ as an exclusive right for a privileged Jewish people. This promise was nullified by Christ. There is no longer a chosen people – all men and women of all countries have become the chosen people.

“Even if the head of the **Israeli state** is Jewish, the future is based on democracy.

The Palestinian refugees will eventually come back and this problem will have to be solved,” the Lebanese-born Bustros said.

Mordechay Lewy, Israel’s ambassador to the Holy See, told The Jerusalem Post that Bustros, in saying that Jesus nullified God’s covenant with the Jewish people, was “returning to successionist theology, contradicting Second Vatican Council teaching and Pope Benedict himself – who has welcomed the return of Jews to their ancient homeland.”

“Also,” added the ambassador, “by inviting all Palestinian refugees to return and denying Israel’s right to define itself a Jewish state – the only such in the world – he is regressing to hard-line positions that deny Israel’s right to exist.”

During the meeting, several bishops blamed the Israeli- Palestinian conflict for spurring the flight of Christians from the Middle East – a position echoed in their final paper. While the bishops condemned terrorism and anti-Semitism, they laid much of the blame for the conflict squarely on Israel.

They listed the “occupation” of Palestinian lands, Israel’s West Bank security barrier, its military checkpoints, “political prisoners,” demolition of homes and disturbance of Palestinians’ social and economic activities for making life increasingly difficult for Palestinians.

They said they had “reflected” on the suffering and insecurity in which Israelis live and on the status of Jerusalem, a city holy to Christians, Jews and Muslims.

“We are anxious about the unilateral initiatives that threaten its composition and risk to change its demographic balance,” the bishops said in a joint statement.

They called on the international community to apply UN Security Council resolutions adopted in 1967, which called on Israel to withdraw from Arab land conquered in the Six Day War that year.

“The Palestinian people will thus have an independent and sovereign homeland where they can live with dignity and security, while Israel will be able to enjoy peace and security,” they said.

In their “Appeal to the International Community” the bishops expressed “hopes that the two-state solution becomes a reality and not only a dream.”

The document calls for “taking the necessary legal steps to put an end to the occupation of the different Arab territories” as well as “an end to the consequences of the deadly war in Iraq” and promotion of “basic public freedoms” and “sovereignty” in Lebanon.

Violence, terrorism, religious extremism, racism, anti-Semitism, anti-Christianism and Islamophobia are all condemned, while “the religions” are called upon “to assume their responsibility to promote dialogue between cultures and civilizations in our region and in the entire world.”

AP contributed to this report.