



**Scottish Council of
Jewish Communities**

The Rev John Chalmers
Principal Clerk
Church of Scotland
121 George Street
Edinburgh
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25th October 2012

Dear John,

Some time ago, I wrote to Ewan Aitken as Secretary of the Church and Society Council, to advise him of our concerns about the Church's support for an event organised by the "Balfour Project", at which one Rev Stephen Sizer is to deliver the "keynote" speech. (See http://www.balfourproject.org/?page_id=522) After he consulted Ian Alexander of the World Mission Council, we received a response from Ewan which dismissed our concerns as "an issue of perception", despite the clear evidence we had provided of Sizer's unsavoury views and activities.

Having consulted with colleagues, I now write to advise you that we are unanimous that for the Church of Scotland to provide a platform for this speaker would be perceived as highly offensive throughout the Jewish community. We are sorry to say that Ewan's response to the concerns we expressed about Sizer's activities entirely misses the point, and is simply not acceptable.

The information contained in my original message was not about Sizer's "criticism of the actions of the state of Israel", as Ewan suggested, or his views on the middle east, but his repeated flirtations with supersessionism, Holocaust denial, right-wing extremism, and unabashed antisemitism. An expanded list of examples of these is attached.

As for "the company he appears to keep" (as Ewan puts it), once can be a mistake; persistence can not, nor can taking 3 months to correct it when it is drawn to his attention. Let us be clear: linking to another web-site is advertising its content. He is thus advertising the advertising of the Protocols, antisemitic conspiracy theories, and Holocaust denial. As a consequence, he has been condemned publicly by the CCJ for "conduct unbecoming of a clergyman". (See http://www.ccj.org.uk/Articles/304111/Council_of_Christians/News/CCJ_Statement_About.aspx).

Since my earlier exchange with Ewan, we have discovered that in fact the "Balfour Project" is simply a front for Sizer: it has no postal address, and it's domain name is registered to him. Our concern is therefore no longer merely about the Kirk sponsoring

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an event at which he happens to be a speaker, but about your public support for an organisation that openly promotes his obnoxious views. You may have been misled by his appropriation of a famous Scottish name, but its "project" is in fact for the UK to "apologise" for Balfour's facilitating the autonomy of the people of the Bible in the land of the Bible – in effect a denial of the historical narrative of the New Testament.

I should also alert you also to the fact that the Board of Deputies is preparing a formal disciplinary complaint about him to the Church of England. Their dossier is likely to be submitted next week, and it will be made public. It would be very surprising indeed if the media were not to make the connection with Sizer's event in Scotland the very same week.

We would therefore urge you as a matter of urgency to reconsider the Church's support for his organisation and to dissociate yourselves unambiguously from the activities of this serial second-hand peddler of hatred. I cannot overstate the seriousness of this matter, and I am therefore copying this letter both to the Moderator and to David Gifford at the CCJ.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ephraim Borowski', written in a cursive style.

Ephraim Borowski
Director