

THE LUTHERAN

HEDGEHOG

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Song & Dance

Student folk dancers from Palestine are being used to give a false picture of the plight of Christians and Jews in the Middle East.

They're young! They're dancing! They're enthusiastic! Muslims and Christians together! Male and female together! Isn't that great!

Who are "they"? The Al Raja Palestinian Folkloric Dance Troupe from the Lutheran School of Hope in Ramallah, Palestine. They are coming on a six-week tour to congregations, schools, and a mosque in cities across USA this summer. Isn't this a good thing?

For starters, sources report that **16 dancers are Muslim**. Only 2 are Christian. Yet they represent a **Lutheran** school and the **Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land** (ELCJHL). Still, isn't this a good thing? Interfaith peace, love, and all that?

Lutherans bow to Islam. Muslim students at a Lutheran school, learning about Christianity – isn't this a good thing?

Doesn't happen. Muslim students do not learn about Jesus Christ at the Lutheran school. To the contrary, they are taught by a Muslim Imam about Islam.

The Lutheran school and the Lutheran church in Palestine accept a wide range of Islamic restrictions in return for being allowed to

operate; to get along they have to promote a pro-Palestinian Authority political agenda.

Demonizing Israel. The subliminal message of the Dance Troupe is: "Look at the smiling youth." "Most Muslims are moderate." "Everything is fine." "The only problem is Israel – if only Israel would stop doing what it's doing, all would be well."

The song and dance is a bait and switch. First the dance, then the message. First a nod to "fault on both sides," then attack Israel.

The dancers report that they long for "the freedom and mobility known to us in the United States." But "road closures and checkpoints" put up by the Israelis hem them in.

The dancers tell how they recently went on a picnic in Jericho – "one of the few places the youth can go without a special permit." But they were "stopped three times and had to stand outside the bus in the winter cold." Who's to blame? The unmentioned villain – Israel.

In short, the dancers are being used to give a false picture of life in the Holy Land. They are being used to promote the myth of Muslim victimization. They are being used to stir up anti-Israel sentiment

among US Lutherans.

What's missing? Any mention of Palestinian terrorism. Any mention of the Islamist plan to exterminate the Jews. The "Lutherans" dance and whine about picnics – with striking disregard for suffering and deaths of Israeli civilians.

And with the Palestinians smuggling large amounts of war material into Gaza following Israel's pullout, it's likely that intensified attacks against Israel are immanent. Yet the "Lutheran" message is that the biggest threat to peace is Israel itself.

Muslims persecute Christians. Muslims are persecuting Christians, too, but US Lutherans seldom hear

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**"The fox
knows many
things, but the
hedgehog knows
one big thing."**

- Archilochus, 7th Century BC



**Our "one big
thing"
is to lift high
the Cross.**

about this suffering. Here are a few examples of what's happening to Christians in Palestine:

Marginalization. Gerry-mandering combined with Muslim immigration are being used to break up formerly majority Christian areas: In 1990 Bethlehem was 60% Christian. Today it is 20% Christian and declining.

Loss of Property Rights. Palestinian Land Law prescribes the death penalty to anyone selling land to Jews. In some places Christians cannot sell land to other Christians. Muslim gangs vandalize churches and Christian holy sites without fear of arrest or consequences.

Rape of Christian Women. Before the Palestinian Authority took over in 1993, Christian women could walk the streets in safety. Not any more. Now Christian women are advised to dress like Muslim women to avoid trouble. Even so they can and are attacked and raped without consequence.

Some Christian women are even being forced into marriages with Muslims.

Extortion. Christians in business in the Palestinian Territories are harassed, beaten, and robbed by the PA police – simply because they are Christian. Islamic militants have forced about 90% of the Christian businesses in Bethlehem to close.

Co-opted Christians. Some Christian leaders are willing tools of the Palestinian Authority and minimize the persecution of Christians in order to retain their privileges; for example, permission to travel and access to the media – privileges that are granted in exchange for denouncing Israel and promoting Islamist propaganda.

Follow the Money. The ELCJHL receives money from many countries and churches, and it is always asking for more. Where is the money going?

Where is there any accountability for all the money? There is none. An audit? There is none.

Accounting for the money should not be hard because the church is quite small. Bishop Munib Younan claims the ELCJHL has 3,000+ members, but others report that there are only about 1,600. Many of these people are very poor and suffer extreme hardships under Muslim rule. Nevertheless top church leaders live in lovely homes – to entertain foreigners – and fly business class.

What Can I Do? An excellent resource is: "Human Rights of Christians in Palestinian Society" by Prof. Justus Reid Weiner, published by the Jerusalem Centre for Public Affairs. It is available through www.Amazon.com and may be downloaded for free from www.jcpa.org/christian-persecution.htm. (See also "Islamic Pogrom..." News Archive, December 2005, at www.crossalone.us, and www.radiofreelutheran.com.)

If you want to help Palestinian Lutherans in real need, call us at 952-442-4134 for trustworthy contacts in Palestine.

CrossAlone Lutheran Churches are centrist Lutherans affiliated with Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ (LCMC).

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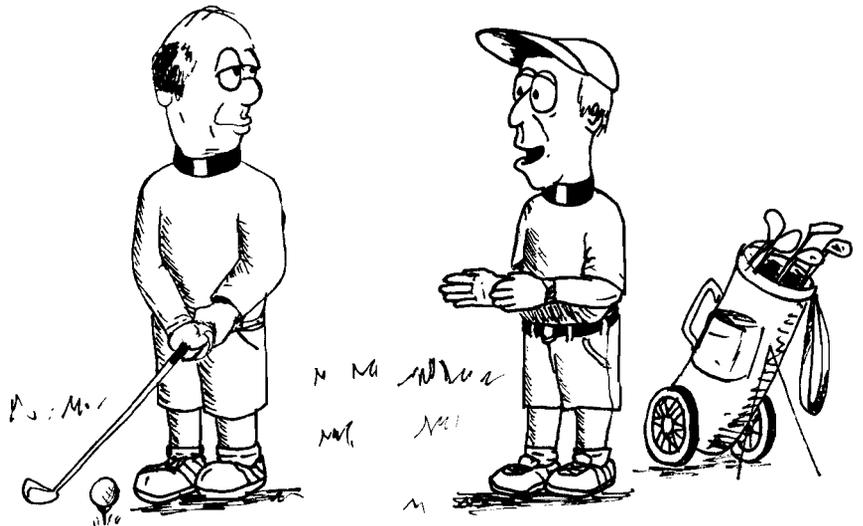
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"We went from 12 committee meetings a year to 6 and solved half of our problems."