

Dear President Bush, Vice President Cheney, and Secretary of State Designate Rice,

We send you this article entitled "Why Christians leave Mideast" written by a "CHRISTIAN Arab," not a Jew!
If you allow the Sharon/Peres government to continue with its suicidal plans for the Jews in Israel,
the rest of the "CHRISTIAN World," including those in the United States, will most probably
suffer the same fate as the Christian Arabs of Bethlehem.

Please read:
Why Christians leave Mideast
By Joseph Farah
BETWEEN THE LINES

Just before Christmas, the New York Times figured out a way to blame Israel for the exodus of Christians from Bethlehem.

This is called journalistic gymnastics.

The story by Greg Myre began:

In the town where Christians believe Christ was born, the Christians are leaving. Four years of violence, an economic free fall and the Israeli separation barrier have all contributed to the hardships facing Palestinian Christians in Bethlehem, one of the largest concentrations of Christians in the region.

There you have it. Why are the Christians leaving Bethlehem? At least partly, according to the New York Times, because of the Israeli security fence.

Now, ask yourself a question: Why would the security fence disproportionately affect Christians? If the security fence were contributing to the exodus, it should be causing an exodus of Muslims as well, right?

Why is the New York Times lying?

Because, for the life of this reporter and his editors back home, they can't think of a single legitimate way to blame Israel for the Christian exodus.

In fact, if you read between the lines, as patrons of this column are expected to do, you will notice that the New York Times actually gives away the reason for the exodus. But it requires background knowledge of the situation. It requires context not provided in the story.

Before I give you that context, let me say this is a real problem. Sometimes – often – the New York Times creates problems out of whole cloth. Not this time. As the story points out, Bethlehem, once a majority Christian town, now only claims 21,500 of the 60,000 Arab residents – about 35 percent.

They haven't left for no good reason. They have left for very good reasons. In fact, knowing the conditions these Christians face today, it's surprising there are still 21,500 there.

But does it have anything to do with the Israeli security fence? No.

Four years ago, when this exodus began, the Israelis had not even started construction of the security fence. But the New York Times story correctly shows that's when the mass exodus began.

"Bethlehem was more than 90 percent Christian until the middle of the last century," the story continues. "Then the Arab-Israeli war of 1948, begun by Arab states in response to the founding of Israel, brought an influx of Muslim refugees to the Bethlehem area and signaled the start of a demographic shift. But what began as a steady emigration of Christians accelerated into a relative flood with the onset of violence four years ago."

Here's a key paragraph buried in this story:

In the early days of the uprising, Muslim gunmen in the Bethlehem area took hilltop positions in Beit Jala, which is predominantly Christian. That afforded them a clear firing line at the

southernmost part of Jerusalem. When the Israeli military responded, Beit Jala residents found themselves on the front lines of the conflict, and occasionally among its casualties.

Muslim terrorists have intentionally placed Christians in the crossfire between them and Israel. They did that when they seized the Church of the Nativity, nearly destroying it, defecating in the hallways, smashing statues and stealing precious objects. The Israelis, for their part, negotiated an end to the standoff rather than destroy the church that represents so much to the Christian world.

If the Israelis contributed in any way to the exodus of Christians it was by withdrawing from Bethlehem and the so-called "Palestinian territories" in the West Bank. Since they left, the Palestinian Authority has waged a jihad against the Christian community, raping women, extorting businessmen, lynching "collaborators" and seizing homes.

That's why the Christians have left and continue to leave. They enjoyed life while their towns were under the control of Israel. Once they were turned over to the terrorists, there wasn't much left to keep them in the areas in which their families lived for generations.

That's the story the New York Times, the "newspaper of record," dares not tell.

This article first appeared as a WorldNetDaily.com Exclusive Commentary on Dec. 30, 2004 and has been reprinted with permission of WorldNetDaily.com.

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