

Church paper slammed

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A VICTORIAN church newspaper has come under fire for presenting “inaccuracy” and “malicious distortion” in a travel piece about Israel and the West Bank.

Crosslight, a Uniting Church of Victoria and Tasmania community publication, published an article by its executive editor, Kim Cain, in this month’s edition, under the headline, “A pilgrim’s regress in the Holy Land”.

In a 1400-word feature in the Melbourne-based magazine, Cain chronicled a tour of Bethlehem and commented on the Israeli government’s determination to “minimise any appearance or concept of political oppression of a people”.

He also lamented Palestinians “losing their houses, lands and hope ... to the Jewish extremists”, referred to Jesus as a Palestinian, and described “peaceful protests” at the town of Bil’in – without citing reports of 100 Israeli soldiers having been injured during demonstrations at the site earlier this year.

Zionist Council of Victoria

(ZCV) president Dr Danny Lamm said the article was riddled with “inaccuracy, prejudice and malicious distortion”.

“We are extremely concerned that members of the Uniting Church reading material of this nature will be given a completely distorted view of the reality of life in Israel and the West Bank,” he said this week.

“The Jewish community has had formal dialogue with the Uniting Church over many years, and this is a particularly disappointing result,” Dr Lamm said.

When contacted by *The AJN*, however, Cain denied the article was one-sided. “I believe it’s balanced,” he said. “The article was a reporting of my experience, and it’s more a look at what happens when tourists or pilgrims go to the Holy Land.”

Cain added he had been in contact with the ZCV and encouraged the organisation to make a written submission to the newspaper. In addition, he has also agreed to meet with them to discuss their grievances.