

CORNERSTONE

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION BY SABELL ECUMENICAL LIBERATION THEOLOGY CENTER

A Word of Faith, Hope and Love From the Heart of Palestinian Suffering



Photo by: Sami Wakileh

Palm Sunday, Procession, Mt. of Olives, Jerusalem

IN THIS ISSUE

The Israeli Occupation and Theological Thinking <i>by Naim Ateek</i>	1
Theology and the Unfolding Tragedy of the Palestinians <i>by Mary Grey</i>	5
The Sabeel 3rd Ecumenical Clergy Conference	9
Reflections on the Palestinian Kairos Document <i>by Patriarch Emeritus Michel Sabbah</i>	10
Glimpses of our Activities	12-13
Our Land has a Universal Mission Excerpt from the Kairos Document	14
Ana Falastini Yahudi <i>by Mark Braverman</i>	16

The Israeli Occupation and Theological Thinking

by Naim Ateek

The political and religious background

The conflict over Palestine can be described as a Greek tragedy composed of two Acts. The first Act happened in 1948 when over three quarters of the land was lost and over 750,000 Palestinians (Muslim and Christian) were ethnically cleansed. In fact, 60% of the Christian community was displaced. They were scattered throughout the Middle East and to the different corners of the globe. The second Act took place in 1967 when the rest of Palestine was occupied by the Israeli army and several hundred thousand Palestinians were dislocated (both Muslim and Christian). By the time the

second Act was over the catastrophe of Palestine had become complete.

In this article I am focusing briefly on the effect of the Israeli occupation on the Christian community and the response of Palestinian Christians.

The loss of Palestine and the dispersion of the Palestinian Christian community throughout the world created a physical and a spiritual tragedy. In fact the spiritual impact has been no less traumatic than the physical uprooting of the Palestinians. For Muslims and Christians, the loss of Palestine in 1948 was the result of the interplay of world politics among the western powers, the victorious allies of WW2. Although by then Zionism had been in existence for over 50 years and the British Government was already conditioned and influenced by the ideology of Zionism, it was the impact of the holocaust that facilitated and accelerated the creation of the "Jewish" state.

The religious background and dilemma

From the perspective of most Palestinians who were totally unaware of some western Christian thinking, the loss of Palestine seemed an immoral and unjust act that was inspired and guided by a colonial spirit and western political interests. At the same time, the perspective of some western fundamentalist Christians regarding what ensued was believed to be a divine act inspired and guided by God. For these Christians, the creation of Israel was a fulfillment of biblical prophecy. God was active through their political leaders to bring into fruition his purposes for the Jewish people in order to prepare for the Second Coming of Christ and the End of the world. Put sarcastically, such a momentous event



was of greater significance to God than worrying about the rights and interests of 1.3 million Palestinians who were the indigenous people of the land.

I must emphasize that most Palestinians did not have the vaguest idea about any religious significance of the Jewish return. Some might have been rudimentarily aware of the suffering of European Jews under the Nazis, but such knowledge had no relevance to their everyday life. The simple logic for the average Palestinian stated that British colonialism was being replaced by a Jewish form of colonialism. From one angle, there was nothing new in all of this. After all, Palestine has been occupied and governed by foreign powers for thousands of years. It was not directly related to religion. It simply had to do with politics, military power, and political interest.



The loss of Palestine and the dispersion of the Palestinian Christian community throughout the world created a physical and a spiritual tragedy.

As for Palestinian Christians with their simple honest faith, they continued to trust God and to pray for God's mercy and protection. They prayed for justice that would allow them to return to their homes and businesses. They simply waited on God in hope. Others, especially younger men, wanted to do something about it. They joined resistance groups that were anxious to reverse the injustice and retrieve Palestine from its captors.

For those Christians who knew their Bible well, it was the most confusing time. They were shocked at what happened. Religious and theological questions proliferated. These were the recurring old questions that have been repeated millions of times by oppressed people throughout the centuries. The new situation in Palestine, now largely Israel, raised questions and demanded answers. In fact it demanded a new theology, because the old theology for Palestinian Christians did not work anymore. In light of the establishment of the new state, the word "Israel" itself needed a new definition. Is the new Israel an extension of biblical Israel? Is the new state really the fulfillment

of biblical prophecy? Does the Bible have anything to say about what was happening in the country? Where was God in all of this? Did God condone what happened? How can one reconcile what was happening with the justice and goodness of God? Many questions were asked but the answers were few and unsatisfying.

After the 1967 occupation of the rest of Palestine, some of these theological questions were compounded. As the Israeli army clamped down with an iron fist and as the occupation became more entrenched, the confiscation of Palestinian land spread, the illegal settlements multiplied, the settlers became unruly and fierce, the oppression of the Palestinians became noticeably clear, the situation became helpless and desperate, and the international community including the United States was unable to pressure the Israeli government to respect and implement international law. Again the questions were plentiful.

How does God see the oppression of the Palestinians? Since religion has been hijacked by the extremists, what can one do? Are we witnessing not only the corruption of religious faith,



In the midst of the oppressive situation, the Christian community was able to produce a document boldly called, “A Moment of Truth.”

but perhaps the end of religious faith as we know it? And what about Christian Zionism that seems to be totally blind to what the government of Israel and its settler population are doing? Have they too become totally absorbed by an Old Testament war-ethic that has lost the spirit, love, and peace which Jesus Christ stood for?

The voice of the church during most of this period was faint. Indeed, there were individual voices against the injustice and the oppression but the collective voice was weak. One notices that most of the churches of the land seemed to be satisfied with the celebration of their liturgies and masses on Sundays. However, the sermons that were preached, most of the time, had no relevance to people’s daily life. The Bible studies that took place, generally, emphasized the private spiritual faith

of the individual but there was seldom any discussion about issues of justice and peace. There was no word about what it meant to be a peacemaker today, or what the church could do to resist the violence of the occupation and take a stronger stand against the injustice. Indeed, the church’s rituals and ceremonies continue as usual but is the prophetic word missing? Have we neglected the “weightier matters of the law” as Jesus criticized the religious leaders of his day, “justice and mercy and faith?”

The years have been rolling by, the occupation is more entrenched, and the church is hiding behind its liturgy and remains lethargically silent.

The above analysis has described the church’s situation for most of the previous years. It is, however, important to state that since the first intifada three important developments have taken place within the Christian community of the land:

FIRST: The rise of Palestinian liberation theology. This phenomenon took on different shapes. Palestinian clergy from Israel and the West Bank -- Orthodox, Catholic, and Protestant -- began to articulate contextual theologies that addressed the political, social, and religious situation in the country from their position of faith. These theologians emphasized the justice of God as well as God’s inclusive love for all people. They condemned the Israeli occupation and the oppression of the Palestinian people. They condemned both the violence of the occupation as well as the violence of extremist Palestinian groups. At the same time, they emphasized the importance of nonviolence in resisting the illegal occupation.



Through their books and publications, these theologians have been able to influence the thinking and theology of many people in the world regarding the predicament of the Palestinians. Moreover, through their exegeses of biblical texts from both the Old as well as the New Testament, they have been able to critique the exclusive ideology and theology of the government of Israel and its religious settler population as well as that of Christian Zionism. These theologians continue to lift up a vision of peace and reconciliation that is based on a faith in the God who loves all people equally and who wills that all the people of the land live together in peace and harmony.

SECOND: There was a voice for peace and justice that was heard intermittently in the country that came from a few bishops. It was not, however, the concerted voice of all the patriarchs and bishops. Neither the Christians in the land nor the Israeli government heard a concerted, loud, and clear voice about the oppression of the Palestinians and the need to stop it. For various reasons, rightly or wrongly, the church leaders failed to speak unanimously against the injustice and the oppression of the Palestinians. When they spoke, it was never candid or forthright.

THIRD: Recently, another voice is being heard from the Christian community of the land. It is the voice of the Kairos Palestine Document. In the midst of the oppressive situation, the Christian community was able to produce a document boldly called, "A Moment of Truth." It is a document that speaks primarily to the Christian community of the land. It also speaks to Christians and churches abroad. At the

same time, it addresses people of other faiths as well as the political situation in the country and more specifically the Israeli government. The document considers the occupation a sin and calls for the use of nonviolent methods to resist it. In fact, this issue of Cornerstone is intended to introduce people to this new important document.

One of the significances of this document is its ecumenical nature since those who worked on it belonged in their church membership to the various churches of the land. So it is a Palestinian Christian voice that seeks to speak truth to power and to witness to the possibility of peace with justice.

Conclusion

Looking back at the last 62 years since the creation of the state of Israel one can say that the Christian community was slow to address the pertinent questions that had arisen from the aftershock of the loss of Palestine. But many of us are thankful to God that in spite of the sluggish beginning, the faith and resilience of the Christians have prompted them to raise their voice and to bear an important testimony before the whole world. Through this document they lift the banner of peace and reconciliation, and willingly accept Christ's call to be peacemakers and commit themselves to witness to the love and justice of God.

Patriarchs and Heads of Churches

Jerusalem

We hear the cry of our children.

We, the Patriarchs and Heads of Churches in Jerusalem, hear the cry of hope that our children have launched in these difficult times that we still experience in this Holy Land. We support them and stand by them in their faith, their hope, their love and their vision for the future. We also support the call to all our faithful as well as to the Israeli and Palestinian Leaders, to the International Community and to the World Churches, in order to accelerate the achievement of justice, peace and reconciliation in this Holy Land. We ask God to bless all our children by giving them more power in order to contribute effectively in establishing and developing their community, while making it a community in love, trust, justice and peace.

His Beatitude Theophilus III, Greek Orthodox

His Beatitude Patriarch Fouad Twal, Latin Church

His Beatitude Patriarch Torkom Manougian, Armenian Orthodox

Very Revd Father Pierbattista Pizzaballa, Custody of the Holy Land

H.E. Archbishop Dr Anba Abraham, Coptic

H.E. Archbishop Mar Swerios Malki Murad, Syrian Orthodox

H.E. Archbishop Paul Nabil Sayah, Maronite

H.E. Archbishop Abba Mathaios, Ethiopian

H.E. Archbishop Joseph-Jules Zre'i, Greek Catholic

Bishop Gregor Peter Malki, Syrian Catholic

Bishop Munib A. Younan, Lutheran

Bishop Suheil Dawani, Anglican

Bishop Raphael Minassian, Armenian Catholic

Jerusalem – December 15, 2009

Theology and the Unfolding Tragedy of Palestinians

by Mary Grey

The theological and biblical reaction of Western Churches to the unfolding tragedy of Palestinians from 1948 onwards has been shamefully slow. Three distinct periods can be discerned:



1. 1948-1962

Both Western Europe and N. America were in a state of recovery from World War II. Economies had collapsed and the industrial base had to be rebuilt. As details of the systematic persecution of the Jews in the Holocaust/ Shoah became more widely known, there was collective horror, guilt, shame and a general sense of the need for repentance at what Europe had inflicted on the Jewish people over two thousand years, and especially at the

escalation of atrocity in the previous ten years. At least some of the support for Zionism (before and after the Holocaust) and for the State of Israel (after 1948) derived from anti-Semitism and was from anti-Semitic Western leaders who were trying to get rid of European Jews. (Often support for Zionism and anti-Semitism went hand in hand). It was mainstream British Christian Zionists, not only fundamentalist Christians like the liberal (and reformist) Prime Minister Lloyd George, who were behind

the Balfour Declaration in 1917 with devastating consequences for Palestinians. Support for Zionism originated in Britain and came from mainstream leaders (like Winston Churchill and Harold Wilson). To some extent this explains, but does not exonerate, the general European support for the founding of the state of Israel and support for the kibbutzim and the Israeli focus on farming the (confiscated) land. For example, the Jewish psychiatrist Bruno Bettelheim's book, *Children of the Dream*, portraying the story of the kibbutz in a heroic manner, was a best-seller in the US and UK. The novels of the Auschwitz survivor Eli Wiesel and many other Jewish novelists, highlighting Jewish suffering in the camps, became enduringly popular throughout the period and beyond. Theologically speaking, Christians began to examine their collective conscience as to how anti-Semitism and anti-Judaism had taken such a thorough grip on Christian theology for two thousand years. The Council for Christians and Jews was founded in 1942, by the Chief Rabbi Joseph H. Hertz and Archbishop William Temple, thus during the war and Nazi persecution. The Sisters of Sion changed their original focus from conversion of the Jews, the idea of their founder, to working for understanding, respect and friendship between Christians and Jews. It was a Sister of Sion, Charlotte Klein, who would write a key book exposing anti-Semitism, called *Anti-Judaism in Christian Theology*. The International Fellowship of Reconciliation was also founded at this time, but reconciliation was then perceived as

being needed between Germany and the rest of the world. Other groups like the Taizé Community in France, founded by Brother Roger Schutz also had the same inspiration, even if all would expand their focus. Pax Christi International is an outstanding example of this. Beginning in 1945, in a similar post-war context, it is now active in fifty countries, with activities ranging from conflict transformation to intercultural cooperation for peace and is particularly active in connection with Palestine. The World Council of Churches from its inception in 1948 has continued to challenge racism and all forms of apartheid.

During this period there was little or no perception, understanding or action with regard to the sufferings of the Palestinians, driven from their own land and homes at the founding of the state of Israel (al Nakba). There is some anecdotal evidence from British soldiers and police and others who witnessed the suffering but which did not make its way to mainstream consciousness. Atoning for anti-Semitism, urgently needed, apparently blocked a wider perception of the truth, and meant that this incipient interfaith dialogue could not operate on the basis of the reality of the situation. Rashid Khalidi called this “a non-recognition of our national agony,” writing the Palestinians out of history, with the names of hundreds of ancestral villages erased.¹

There was at least some concern and compassion shown especially for refugees. The UN was heavily involved in setting up refugee camps and still is to this day. Pius XII, in 1948, wrote an encyclical called “In Multiplicibus Curis”. In this document he looked for justice and peace for Palestinians and organized charities for refugee relief. (Successive popes would also show concern). The World Council of Churches had shown concern from the beginning. National

sub-groups of the WCC (for example, the British Council of Churches) have been effective on the ground. Equally, the World Lutheran Federation, founded in Lund Sweden in 1947, has from its beginnings in the forties been serving the suffering communities of both Jewish and Palestinian people. The Augusta Victoria Hospital in Jerusalem has played a key role. This accompaniment has also more and more included the Palestinian Lutheran Churches in Jerusalem, Palestine, Jordan and Israel.

Yet elements of Christian theology of the period, both inward looking and conservative, clung to replacement theology or ‘supersessionism’. This is a view in which the church is seen as the ‘new’ Israel, perhaps even the ‘true’ Israel, which means that the promises in the Bible to the ‘old’ Israel are now transferred to the church. The Jewish people, according to this view, missed their chance as the special people of God but, like any other person, the offer of salvation is open to them through Jesus Christ. For adherents to this view, the modern state of Israel has no special theological significance. It is a state like any other, which happens to be Jewish at present, and is called to the same basic communal obligations as any other. At its most extreme, replacement theology, which has never become the mainstream view, has been responsible for the belief



Atoning for anti-Semitism, urgently needed, apparently blocked a wider perception of the truth, and meant that this incipient interfaith dialogue could not operate on the basis of the reality of the situation.

that the Jews are now actually rejected by God.²

The ecumenical movement was weakly supported by the Catholic and Orthodox Churches, but this would change with the Second Vatican Council (1962-65). This acted as a catalyst both for Ecumenism (Constitution on Ecumenism 1964), and on Interfaith relations (Nostra Aetate). Whereas the latter encouraged new thinking about the Jewish and Muslim peoples, no document addressed the suffering of the Palestinian people. Yet major achievements were a rethinking of the nature of Church and a real engagement between the Church and the actual social and political contexts, (Gaudium et Spes), and the encouragement of critical thinking vis-a-vis the Bible.

2. 1962- 1989

This period is characterised by a new openness of church and theology towards the real world, the incipient stirrings of both Liberation and Political Theology. The Latin American Bishops had encountered each other for the first time in Rome at the Second Vatican Council, returned home and at their conference at Medellin, Columbia 1968, made a shared commitment to Liberation Theology.³ The key concepts of Liberation Theology – solidarity, option for the poor, action from below rather than a “top-down” theology, a focus on “base” communities and a complete re-reading of the Bible and theology on the basis of these principles, then spread to other continents – to Africa and Asia - as well as inspiring many European and American indigenous movements for social justice. Its outreach and aims could never be limited to one continent.⁴ Its methodology influenced Rosemary Ruether, for example, when she wrote Faith and Fratricide, examining the roots of anti-Semitism in 1974. The first

books on Liberation Theology became widely-known, e.g., Gustavo Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, 1974.

Contemporaneously, the Church and theologians now engaged in justice struggles against poverty and economic injustice, for example, the “War on Want” campaign, and more importantly for this theme, anti-apartheid in S. Africa. New Christian NGO’s were founded—Christian Aid, Cafod, Trocaire in Ireland, Misereor in Germany - and Christian Aid would play a significant role in conscientisation and theological development with regard to Palestine.

At the same time as these positive developments, particularly after the Israeli success in the 1967 war, the growth of Christian Zionism through the American Right, followed by other European countries, has continued to have a devastating effect on world consciousness as to the rights and oppression of the Palestinians, because of its stress on the importance of the State of Israel for the return of Christ and dawn of the end times. This kind of theology is happy to turn a blind eye to “tribulation” and oppression as preparing the way to the ultimate victory of Christ. So, despite the six-day War in 1967, widely covered in the western press, and the consequent driving out of thousands more refugees, there was still no widespread sensitivity as to the plight of the Palestinians. Sensitivity to gender issues (Feminist Liberation Theology) and the beginnings of an ecological liberation theology⁵ would both come before the rise of Palestinian Liberation Theology. At the end of this period we can discern a slow beginning of a new consciousness, awakening and conversion to what had been going on for forty years: the oppression and suppression of any awareness of the suffering and denial of the rights of Palestinians.



There is an increasing number of Jewish people, who, confronted with the suffering of the

Palestinian people, long for the restoration of justice, are convinced that Israel has lost its soul, and want a theological way forward.

3. Palestinian Liberation Theology and the founding of Sabeel, Jerusalem, 1989- to the present

It is this period that is crucial for the development of Palestinian theologians of liberation and social justice. To the readers of *Cornerstone* there is no need to stress the importance of the first book of Naim Ateek, *Justice and Only Justice*.⁶ Whereas his more recent book is important, (as are other publications of Sabeel, colleagues of Sabeel, plus the resources of all Sabeel Conferences since 1990, and the writings of theologians like Pastor Mitri Raheb in Bethlehem, Zoughbi Zoughbi- also in Bethlehem -Archbishop Elias Chacour, Jean Zaru, the Quaker theologian based in Ramallah, Jonathan Kuttub and Munib Younan), this book is recognized as a ground-breaking book in the establishing of theological thinking about Palestine as a Liberation Theology. But in this recognition lie both differences and similarities.

First, there has been little recognition in Latin America of Palestinian theological reflection counting as Liberation Theology. This is partly because of the uselessness here of the Exodus as a paradigmatic symbol, the most popular symbol in Latin America; it is precisely the claim to the land of indigenous Palestinians that is the issue. People need to stay, not to go! The

anti-apartheid struggle had also rejected the exodus paradigm. It is vital to see that from the beginning, Liberation Theology struggled with a diversity of issues like race, class, sexism, land and a variety of root causes of poverty.

Secondly, there is always a fear of being classed as anti-semitic if anything is said against the Jewish people, a fear that still haunts many contexts. The inability - or unwillingness - to separate widespread anti-semitic attitudes and prejudices from the actions and policies of the Israeli Zionist government is constantly cited as a pretext for the church’s silence. Thirdly, some argue that there is not a sufficient level of poverty in Palestine/Gaza to form the basis of a Liberation Theology. The response to this takes different forms, always asserting the uniqueness of what it means to develop a Liberation Theology in a Palestinian context.

First, the economic situation of the Palestinians (even in Israel), is on a downward spiral. Nearly 60% of Palestinians exist on £1.10 or below a day, which is below the UN defined poverty level. This contrasts with 20% in 1998. But poverty is not the worst aspect of the situation (which is more about a bitter oppression of 6 decades), although it is this aspect that continues to evoke compassionate, humanitarian responses worldwide. A large range of Christian Churches have initiated and supported campaigns of boycotting settler goods, disinvestment, initiated protests and campaigns against the occupation, the settlements and the security wall, supported actions for the rights of Palestinians and tried to import crafts and olive oils specifically to support the economy. The WCC has been active most recently in the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme, sending selected volunteers to Palestinian villages to accompany farmers to their farms, children to school,

and a range of small journeys to hospitals, doctors appointments or anywhere that might evoke hostile encounters with Israeli soldiers.

Many of these actions are inspired and supported by Sabeel Liberation Theology which, to give one example, specifically calls for action to oppose corporations who provide products, services or financial backing to groups that commit violence against innocent civilians, or who provide finances or assist in the construction of Israel's separation wall or settlement infrastructure.

Through its theological stance Sabeel has succeeded in establishing networks of Friends of Sabeel, for example, in the US, Britain, the Netherlands, Scandinavia, and Australia. Sweden, a country which was strongly pro-Zionist in the past, manifests strong support. A leading Swedish Christian aid organisation, Diakonia is closely associated with Sabeel.

Several features make this theology alike yet distinct from other types of Liberation Theology. Whereas, in a Latin American context, the biblical texts with a bias to the poor are called on to critique the powerful, here the Bible is called on to critique itself. (This was true in South Africa too.) For example, to counteract the apparent injunction to possess the land and kill the indigenous peoples (for example, the Book of Joshua), Naim Ateek calls on alternative strands of inclusive theology, showing God's love for all peoples. This is where we can begin to discern the effectiveness of such a theology. It is especially where theologically-nuanced critique of certain Biblical texts have been developed (for example, through Rosemary and Herman Ruether's *The Wrath of Jonah*⁷), and evoked strong criticism, that Sabeel Liberation Theology can be judged as having a strong impact. Naim Ateek's tireless teaching and analysis in the USA have evoked strong criticism from the

Zionist lobby and conservative evangelical Christians alike. Yet many Christian communities – globally speaking- still avoid difficult Old Testament texts, thus ducking the crucial issue of two peoples claiming the same land.

Secondly, Palestinian Liberation theology, (itself inclusive of different interpretations) stands at the crossroads between a theology of social justice and a call for interreligious dialogue and cooperation. Gustavo Gutiérrez, called theology a second act, a reflection on liberating praxis: there is a strong argument in this context that theological and biblical analysis have priority here, since the pretext for seizing ever more tracts of land is made on biblical grounds, and because the conflict is an interreligious one. Thus the solution must have a basis in three faiths.

The third quality of Palestinian Liberation Theology, like that of South Africa, is that it is a theology for peace and reconciliation based on non-violence. This is not a passive stance, but an active theology of non-violent struggle. The comparison with Gandhi and with Martin Luther King is well-made. It is a mark of the way Sabeel operates that makes it gather together supporters from across religious and secular divides, based on this inclusive vision of non-violent reconciliation.

Finally, the uniqueness of the theology emerging from Sabeel, and all who

support the organization, is that it is a theology with a challenge to all contemporary theology. All theology seeks reconciliation from a conflict-torn world to God's fulfillment for creation. There is an increasing number of Jewish people, who, confronted with the suffering of the Palestinian people, long for the restoration of justice, are convinced that Israel has lost its soul, and want a theological way forward. Increasing numbers of people have made pilgrimages to the Holy Land, with Sabeel or other organizations, and the experiences of checkpoints and Wall have opened eyes and hearts. The invasion of Gaza (2008) is seen by many as a turning point, particularly in the US, and there is now a broad social movement pushing change. The tasks are many, differing according to constituency. The US has to stop being Israel's banker; that is urgent. Churches have to be true to their calling to speak out. It has never been more important for Sabeel not only to continue to explore the roots of a visionary, prophetic theology of a God of justice, who wants the wellbeing of all peoples, but also to work with peace-loving Jews to tease out core notions of Judaism like election and covenant in a way that brings to birth the reality of peace and a just sharing of the land.

1 Rashid Khalidi, "50 Years after 1948: a Universal Jubilee?" in *Holy Land, Hollow Jubilee: God, Justice and the Palestinians*, eds., Naim Ateek and Michael Prior, (London: Melisende 1999), p.91.

2 Source, *Christian Aid, One Land, Many Voices*, (London 2002).

3 This is a commitment that has never been revoked, despite opposition.

4 EATWOT, the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians was founded, and many other groups were added to its number. After a struggle, "the irruption within the irruption", (Virginia Fabella), women became included.

5 This happened after the Earth Summit at Rio de Janeiro, 1992.

6 *Orbis* 1989.

7 Augsburg 2002.

Mary Grey is a Professorial Research Fellow at St Mary's University College, Twickenham, London, UK and Chair of the Theology Group of FOS UK. She is now part of a new venture, InSpiRe, at St Mary's. InSpiRe is an acronym for Centre for Initiatives in Reconciliation and Spirituality - launched this year.

The Sabeel Third Ecumenical Clergy Conference:

“Challenges Facing Today’s Pastors”

February 8-10, 2010 / InterContinental Hotel, Jericho

Sabeel held its third ecumenical clergy conference in Jericho from February 8 to 10. Inspired by passages from 1 Peter 5: 8-11, and John 10:11-15, the theme of the conference was “Challenges Facing Today’s Pastors.” More than 60 clergy from the Occupied Palestinian Territories, the Galilee, and Jerusalem attended the conference. Lay people took part in several sessions.

On the first day, the participants heard presentations about the challenges facing the clergy and the church, as well as the challenges facing the Christian family. Following each session, participants divided into discussion groups to explore how these subjects affected their own congregations. In the evening, patriarchs and bishops from Jerusalem and throughout the Holy Land joined the participants for a dinner and informal get-together.

On the second day of the conference, approximately 35 Muslim clerics joined the clergy in focusing on Christian-Muslim relations. The day’s sessions were led by well known Muslim and Christian lecturers. The sessions focused on coexistence and practical ways of cooperation between our communities.

During the last day of the conference, Patriarch Emeritus Michel Sabbah

presented the Kairos Document (www.kairos-palestine.ps) and led a discussion among the participants about its contents. The recently released Kairos Document states, “Palestinian Christians declare that the military occupation of our land is a sin against God and humanity, and that any theology that legitimizes the occupation is far from Christian teachings because true Christian theology is a theology of love and solidarity with the oppressed, a call to justice and equality among peoples.” Rifat Kassis, coordinator of the Kairos Committee, spoke about the international response to the document.

Throughout the conference, participants joined together for daily ecumenical prayer services. The closing session focused on the actions and steps needed to face the challenges of the new decade.

Easter Blessing

How beautiful is the blossom
spilling from the tree,
the hidden primrose
and the bluebell
ringing out the new.
He is risen
he is alive
we shall live
for evermore.
The dark winter is past,
the slow, cold, foggy days
are over.
May the warmth
of your resurrection
touch our hearts and minds
as the warmth of the sun
blesses our bodies.

Kate McIlhagga

*from “Lent and Easter Readings
from Iona”, Neil Paynter, ed.*



Reflections on the Palestinian Kairos Document

by His Beatitude Patriarch Emeritus
Michel Sabbah

1. This document is the fruit of the reflection of an informal group of Christian Palestinians, lay people and clergy, on the present political situation that affects all aspects of their daily life, lived under Israeli occupation and subject to military oppressive laws. In addition, the World Council of Churches has shared in the reflection.

2. In the introduction, the document gives the basic components of the Christian vision. This vision is “inspired by the mystery of God’s love for all, the mystery of God’s divine presence in the history of all peoples and, in a particular way, in the history of our country”. Two consequences derive from this assertion: first, history is not just a result of acts of humanity, Israeli or Palestinian, but of God’s Providence as well. Therefore, we have to deal not only with the mistakes, errors or injustices of humans, but with the Providence of God. There is another basic component of this vision which is a normal consequence of the first: a Christian does not lose hope. Though humanly speaking our situation is hopeless, and no solution seems to loom on the horizon, our cry is a “cry of hope in the absence of all hope, a cry full of prayer and faith in a God ever vigilant”.

3. The first section speaks about the different aspects of the oppressive reality we are living: occupation, separation wall, settlements and settlers, political prisoners, refugees, inequality and discrimination, internal divisions

among Palestinians, etc ...

Then follow three sections that describe the Christian attitude facing such reality: faith, hope and love, all of them concepts that may make no sense to political leaders. For some, these might even be considered as naïve, or hypocritical or even dangerous, since religion combined with politics may bring with it religious fanaticism and holy war.

But Christian Palestinian faith together with politics cannot lead to holy war, neither to fanaticism, for this simple reason: the truth of a true faith is love. It is this faith that overcomes the power of evil by seeing the goodness of God in all men alike, including the Israelis who impose the occupation, which is referred to in the document as “a sin”.

4. The document affirms that all human beings are created in the image of God. Despite the evil they may commit, they remain bearers of this divine image. Therefore they are not only seen as an enemy but also as a person created and

loved by God. Hence our dealing with them must be like our dealing with God their Creator.

Why is occupation referred to as a sin? Occupation after a war is understandable. It remains in effect until both sides come to reconciliation. But, in our case, Israeli occupation of Palestinian Territories has become a permanent situation in which orders and laws have been made by the occupier according to its interests, not necessarily in conformity with the natural law or the human dignity of the occupied. For example, laws have been implemented to transform all Palestinians from normal residents in their land to foreigners allowed to live there, thanks to military documents called Identity Cards. Other laws have been made to render legal the demolition of Palestinian homes or the confiscation of their lands. Military laws have been enacted which allow the legal killing of a Palestinian if Israeli soldiers find themselves in the slightest danger when sent on a mission to pursue the




 Document

Qalandya checkpoint

Palestinians in their own territory. Laws are made to maintain family separation if for any reason they were separated at the time of the occupation, making normal natural family life or marriage impossible. All of these laws are sinful laws or measures imposed under the pretext of security.

The most significant sinful aspect is to subject a human being created in the image and likeness of God to conditions of servility and humiliation. It is enough to simply stand one day at a checkpoint to see how Palestinians are treated as they pass through, and how human dignity is violated. This is the sin of the occupation: to disrespect the image of God and the dignity God has given to every human person, to the Palestinian as well as to the Israeli.

When there is a sin harming a human being there is also a sinner, and both need to be freed from this evil for the sake of their own dignity, equally given to both by God. Therefore, to act against occupation is to act for the moral and human benefit of both the

Israeli and the Palestinian. When sin is not individual, but rather structural (e.g., a social sinful structure, like occupation and the desecration of the human being, under the pretext of security), then all Churches must do everything they can to put an end to this sinful structure.

5. This action against occupation is an act of love, love for both sides, for the sinner (the oppressor) and the victim of the sin (the oppressed). This is expressed in the section which speaks about the commandment of love: “love each other” and “love the enemy”. Therefore, political resistance against occupation is an obligation coming from this same commandment. When Jesus said: “love your enemy”, he did not say: “love the evil or the sin that is in your enemy”, but: “love the human being who is doing you wrong”, because loving them you love God their Creator and you liberate them from their sin. True love has a difficult task: to free the enemy from the evil within. The occupied has to help the occupier to be freed from the sin of occupation in order to preserve the image of God and God’s dignity. This is the meaning of political non-violent resistance to occupation.

The document ends with a series of appeals to all leaders and people of good will, and to the Churches to take every possible and legal measure that can contribute to the end of occupation. With the end of occupation, security, justice and peace are guaranteed to all, to the Israelis and to the Palestinians alike.

His Beatitude Michel Sabbah, Patriarch Emeritus of the Latin Church, Jerusalem.

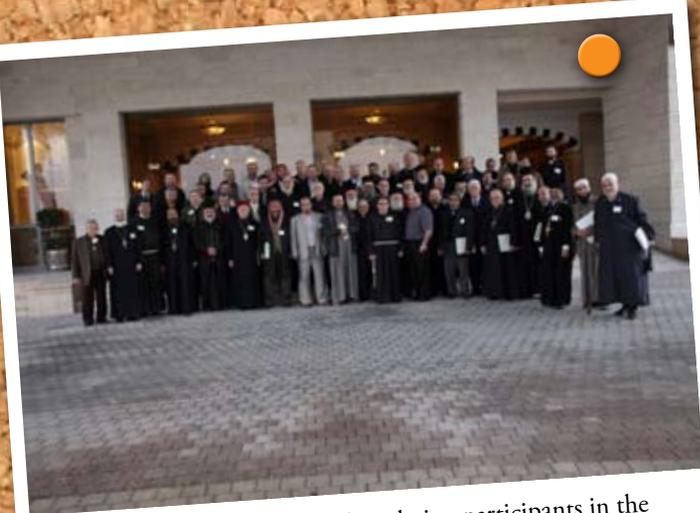
Prayer for Easter Saturday

God of all creation –
 who cannot be contained by
 our boundaries
 or our definitions –
 light from beyond galaxies,
 sea without a farther shore;
 you are present in every
 distinct place,
 in every moment of history.
 You are here and now.
 Help us to understand
 that those from whom we are
 separated in life
 by distance, by sea and land;
 those from whom we are
 separated
 by difference, by prejudice,
 by language, by lack of
 communication;
 and that those from whom
 we are separated in death,
 by its long silence, its aching
 absence –
 are each of them in your
 presence;
 that beyond our horizons,
 beyond our boundaries,
 beyond our understanding,
 they are in your embrace.
 Amen.

Jan Sutch Pickard

from “Lent and Easter Readings from Iona”, Neil Paynter, ed.

Glimpses of Sabeel Activities



Christian clergy and Muslim clerics, participants in the 3rd Ecumenical Sabeel Clergy Conference in Jericho



Some of the participants in the Lenten Program during a visit to the Roumanian Church in Jericho with Bishop Atallah Hanna on February 18 2010.

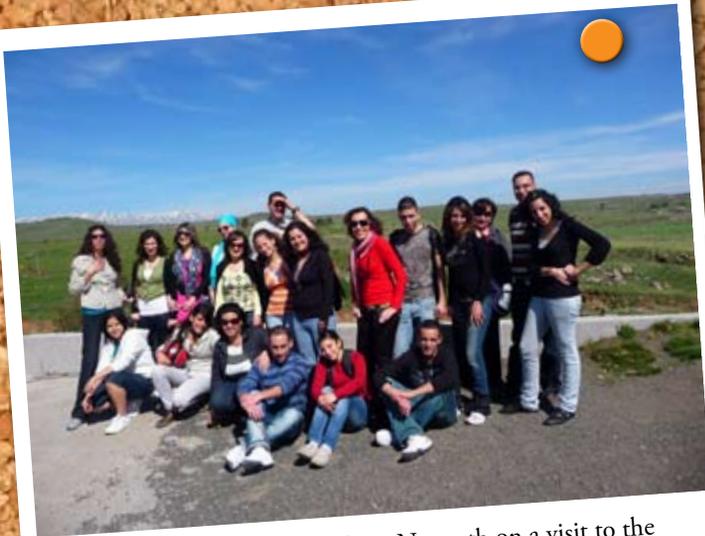
Jerusalem



Youth Bible-study group



Sixty-seven participants in the Open Forum program discuss the Kairos Document, «A Moment of Truth,» on February 2, 2010.



A group of Sabeel youth from Nazareth on a visit to the occupied Golan Heights.



A Sabeel Christmas gathering at the Church of "Jesus the Adolescent" in Nazareth, entertained by singer Mary Menassah.

Nazareth



Families from Nazareth visiting the village of Taybeh - a Christian village near Ramallah – where they visited the different churches and factories and learned about its historic and religious significance.



Celebrating the 16th anniversary of the establishment of the Sabeel Nazareth Branch.



Lecture in Nazareth by His Excellency Bishop Emeritus Butrus Mu'alleem about his book, "Inspirations from the Olive Trees of Galilee"

Excerpt from the Kairos Document

Our Land has a Universal Mission

2.3 We believe that our land has a universal mission. In this universality, the meaning of the promises, of the land, of the election, of the people of God open up to include all of humanity, starting from all the peoples of this land. In light of the teachings of the Holy Bible, the promise of the land has never been a political programme, but rather the prelude to complete universal salvation. It was the initiation of the fulfilment of the Kingdom of God on earth.

2.3.1 God sent the patriarchs, the prophets and the apostles to this land so that they might carry forth a universal mission to the world. Today we constitute three religions in this land, Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Our land is God's land, as is the case with all countries in the world. It is holy inasmuch as God is present in it, for God alone is holy and sanctifier. It is the duty of those of us who live here, to respect the will of God for this land. It is our duty to liberate it from the evil of injustice and war. It is God's land and therefore it must be a land of reconciliation, peace and love. This is indeed possible. God has put us here as two peoples, and God gives us the capacity, if we have the will, to live together and establish in it justice and peace, making it in

reality God's land: "The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it" (Ps. 24:1).

2.3.2 Our presence in this land, as Christian and Muslim Palestinians, is not accidental but rather deeply rooted in the history and geography of this land, resonant with the connectedness of any other people to the land it lives in. It was an injustice when we were driven out. The West sought to make amends for what Jews had endured in the countries of Europe, but it made amends on our account and in our land. They tried to correct an injustice and the result was a new injustice.

2.3.3 Furthermore, we know that certain theologians in the West try to attach a biblical and theological



The West sought to make amends for what Jews had endured in the countries of Europe, but it made amends on our account and in our land. They tried to correct an injustice and the result was a new injustice.

legitimacy to the infringement of our rights. Thus, the promises, according to their interpretation, have become a menace to our very existence. The "good news" in the Gospel itself has become "a harbinger of death" for us. We call on these theologians to deepen their reflection on the Word of God and to rectify their interpretations so that they might see in the Word of God a source of life for all peoples.

2.3.4 Our connectedness to this land is a natural right. It is not an ideological or a theological question only. It is a matter of life and death. There are those who do not agree with us, even defining us as enemies only because we declare that we want to live as free people in our land. We suffer from the occupation of our land because we are Palestinians. And as Christian Palestinians we suffer from the wrong interpretation of some theologians. Faced with this, our task is to safeguard the Word of God as a source of life and not of death, so that "the good news" remains what it is, "good news" for us and for all. In face of those who use the Bible to threaten our existence as Christian and Muslim Palestinians, we renew our faith in God because we know that the word of God can not be the source of our destruction.

2.4 Therefore, we declare that any use of the Bible to legitimize or support political options and positions that are based upon injustice, imposed by one person on another, or by one people on another, transform religion into human ideology and strip the Word of God of its holiness, its universality and truth.

2.5 We also declare that the Israeli occupation of Palestinian land is a sin against God and humanity because it deprives the Palestinians of their basic human rights, bestowed by God. It distorts the image of God in the Israeli who has become an occupier just as it distorts this image in the Palestinian living under occupation. We declare that any theology, seemingly based on the Bible or on faith or on history, that legitimizes the occupation, is far from Christian teachings, because it calls for violence and holy war in the name of God Almighty, subordinating God to temporary human interests, and distorting the divine image in the human beings living under both political and theological injustice.

Taken from Section 2:
A Word of Faith

To read the entire document, go to
www.kairospalestine.ps



A PALESTINIAN CHRISTIAN CRY FOR JUSTICE

SABEEL'S 5th INTERNATIONAL YOUNG ADULT CONFERENCE:

July 21st – August 1st
Jerusalem 2010

Our Vision: To provide young adults (18-35)
with an alternative pilgrimage experience
that emphasizes active engagement with both the people and the land.

Apply Now!

*Visits to Palestinian and Israeli Communities ~ Cultural Activities ~
Contextual tours of Holy Sites ~ Volunteering and Activism ~
Worship and Bible Study ~ Panel Discussions and Advocacy Workshops*

12 Days in Palestine and Israel
Total Cost: \$1100

Not including airfare or transport from airport
Contact us for info on Sponsors and Financial Aid

Application Deadline: June 1st

Learn about Sabeel and Liberation Theology at www.sabeel.org
Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center
Email us at: youth@sabeel.org or call: Tel: 972.2.532.7136



Ana Falastini Yehudi: I Am a Palestinian Jew

A response given by Dr. Mark Braverman at the Launching of the Palestine Kairos Document in Bethlehem

December 2009

Masa al kheir – good afternoon.

I want to express my gratitude to the World Council of Churches for inviting me to participate in this historic and critically important gathering, to Reverend Mitri Raheb and the Bethlehem International Center for your hospitality, to the distinguished guests and participants assembled here today, and most of all to you, my brothers and sisters in the Holy Land, for welcoming me into your midst.

Ana falastini yehudi.

I am a Palestinian Jew. My grandfather was born in the Old City of Jerusalem in the year 1900. My prayer is that someday, the phrase “Palestinian Jew” will not sound strange to the ear. It does not sound strange to me. In the short time allotted to me I want to talk about the journey that has brought me here, the issue of interfaith dialogue, and my conviction that the path to peace in historic Palestine lies in the actions of the global church.

As a Jew born in America in 1948, I was raised in an amalgam of rabbinic Judaism and political Zionism. I was taught that a miracle had blessed my generation and redeemed my people from the suffering of millennia. Over the years, living for a time in Israel and visiting frequently, I became increasingly concerned about Israel’s treatment of the Palestinians and about its illegal settlement activity. Still, I held to the

Zionist narrative: Israel’s militarism and expansionism were the price of security. Then I went to the West Bank. I saw the separation wall and knew it was not for defense. I saw the damage inflicted by the checkpoints on Palestinian life and on the souls and psyches of my Jewish cousins in uniform. I saw the Jewish-only settlements and the restricted roads. I witnessed the vicious acts of ideological Jewish settlers. I learned that the events of 1948, what I had been taught to call the War of Liberation, was for Palestinians the Nakba. As my defenses against the recognition of Israel’s crimes crumbled, my fear for my own people grew. It grew in proportion to my horror, anger and sadness over the injustice that was being perpetrated in my name.

When I returned home and began to speak about justice for Palestine as the



**Christianity’s
correction of its
historic anti-Judaism
is in itself laudable**

**– but there is a problem
with this new theology: it
incorporates a real estate deal.
Christians were now being
asked to support the superior
right of the Jewish people
to the territory of historic
Palestine.**

only path to peace, Christians, across denominations, received my message warmly and gratefully. But I also found that many of these same Christians felt constrained from speaking out, for two reasons: 1) their sense that the Jewish people were owed a state because of their history of suffering and 2) their feeling of responsibility for having caused that suffering. In fact, I discovered that for Christians, a new theology had grown up after WW II in an effort to reconcile with the Jews and to atone for the evil of anti-Semitism. This revisionist theology exalted the Jews as God’s chosen and lauded our quest for safety and self determination. In this view, the Jews were no longer condemned to wander the earth. In fact, we had been reinstated as God’s elect — the original covenant between God and Abraham was in force. Christianity’s correction of its historic anti-Judaism is in itself laudable – but there is a problem with this new theology: it incorporates a real estate deal. Christians were now being asked to support the superior right of the Jewish people to the territory of historic Palestine.

Examples of this tendency abound among contemporary Christian theologians. James Carroll writes in *Constantine’s Sword*: “The God of Jesus Christ, and therefore of the Church, is the God of Israel. The Jews remain the chosen people of God. And with this comes the Land.” In a

May 2009 article, John Pawlikowski, a progressive Catholic theologian, wrote that the Vatican's 1993 recognition of the State of Israel was pivotal in correcting Christianity's historic anti-Judaism. With that act, he wrote, "the coffin on displacement/perpetual wandering theology had been finally sealed." I find this an astonishing argument: recognizing the Jewish state corrects Christian theology! Just as astonishing, Pawlikowski goes on to repudiate a core feature of Christianity: its spiritualization of the land by lifting it out of the original tribal context of the Abrahamic covenant. In the original Christian revisioning – and this was a revolutionary and critically important development — Jerusalem itself became a symbol of a new world order in which God's love was available to all of humankind. But Pawlikowski was now maintaining that this spiritualization of the land was a betrayal of God's covenant with the Jews – that it had deprived us of our birthright! It was now, therefore, incumbent upon Christians to honor the claim of the Jewish people to the Holy Land, and indeed to Jerusalem itself.

We have to be very concerned about this — generations of mainstream pastors and theologians in the West have been educated in versions of this revised theology. Vigilance against anti-Semitism has trumped prophetic opposition to injustice. The Christian impulse for reconciliation has morphed into theological support for an anachronistic, ethnic-nationalist ideology that has hijacked Judaism, continues to fuel global conflict, and has produced one of the most egregious, systematic and longstanding violations

of human rights in the world today.

But this is where we are today, and here is why the Kairos statement is so important. Christians in the West today are in a bind. They are caught between the desire to preserve over 60 years of interfaith reconciliation and their mounting awareness that all is not right with the Jewish national homeland project. To be in such a bind is not comfortable – but the times call for hard choices. Because of the well-intentioned and confessionally-based desire to atone for Christian anti-Judaism, Christians, individually and institutionally, have been muzzled from principled criticism of Israel's human rights violations. This is a disaster for Christianity and for world peace. Never before has it been so urgent for Christians to hold fast to their faith in pursuing the clear social justice imperative of justice for the Palestinian people. The Kairos statement shines the brightest when it talks about the universal mission of the land. Christianity's spiritualization and universalization of the land, so clearly articulated in the document, is the clearest example of how the new faith came to fulfill the prophetic message of the Bible.

This is the theology that must be lifted up today. And this should not be seen as Christian exceptionalism or triumphalism. Rather, the faithful Christian witness to the urgent need for justice for the Palestinian people represents a challenge to Judaism and to the Jewish people. Judaism is the faith from which Christianity sprang. Universal justice is where Judaism was always headed in its depiction of a God who brought the Jewish people out of slavery. This same God requires

us to do justice for all of creation — without preference or particularity. In the words of the Kairos document: "the meaning of the promises, of the land, of the election of the people of God [is to] open up to include all of humanity" (emphasis added). It is urgent that my people embrace this fundamental principle. For it is clear to me that Israel has lost its way. We brought to the world the teaching of one God, a God who seizes us by the arm, binds us to his covenant, and demands justice – but now we are enacting the creed of a tribal God who commands conquest. We have yielded ourselves up to tribalism and exceptionalism in the most profound and destructive way. And the evidence is before us: the checkpoints of Bethlehem, Nablus and Jenin, the blackened olive trees of Bil'in, the empty marketplaces of Hebron, the devastation of Gaza, and the evictions in Sheikh Jarrah and Silwan.

The Kairos document talks about the unity of the scriptures. Theology too should unite, not separate. I am grateful to Naim Ateek for lifting up for me the passage from Ephesians chapter 2 about humankind united in the household of God, with Jesus as the cornerstone of the Temple:

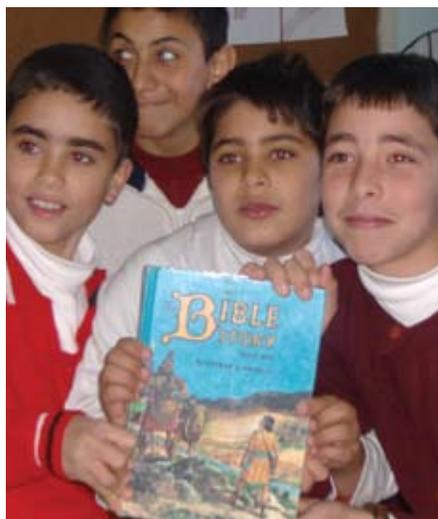
You are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets...In him the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple of the Lord. Ep.2:19-21

We know that it was not a physical temple nor a city of stone and mortar that Paul was describing. But the new "interfaith" theology represents a U-turn: a turning back from the vision

of a single community of humankind united in pursuit of social justice. It affirms not a universal vocation for the land, but an idolatry of land possession. It reaffirms particularism and the election of the Jews – going so far as to say that God always intended, through his grace, to fulfill his goal for humankind through the election of the Jews. This can be argued theologically, but the question is what is the use that is being made of this theology today? And the answer is – stated bluntly — this theology is being promoted as a guilt offering, to help make Christians comfortable with the more than uncomfortable reality of the human rights abuses of the State of Israel. But I have found that Christians are not comfortable with the actions of the State of Israel. They know what is right and what they are called to do about the injustice they see before them.

The church is poised to fulfill its calling, as it did against Apartheid on a global basis and as it did in the U.S. against the institutionalized racism of Jim Crow segregation. Engaging in the struggle for justice in historic Palestine is the most important thing that the church, on a global basis, can do today. Gathered here today in support of this historic document, we call to mind the words of Reverend Martin Luther King, responding to his fellow clergymen who were urging him to delay his plans for nonviolent resistance:

“The judgment of God is upon the church as never before. If today’s church does not recapture the sacrificial spirit of the early church, it will lose its authenticity, forfeit the loyalty of millions, and be dismissed as an irrelevant social club with no meaning for the twentieth century.”



» **“The judgment of God is upon the church as never before. If today’s church does not recapture the sacrificial spirit of the early church, it will lose its authenticity, forfeit the loyalty of millions, and be dismissed as an irrelevant social club with no meaning...”**

What is needed to bring peace to this land is not negotiations between politicians but a broad, global social movement that will change the political wind. And it is in the church that this movement will be initiated, led, and grow in strength. You are here – wide, deep, strong, organized — with the scriptures pointing you directly to the divine imperative to do justice. And we Jews, who have suffered too long,

must turn away from our history of suffering and dedicate ourselves instead to a process of reformation in which we purge ourselves of the exceptionalism and triumphalism that has brought us to this perilous pass.

I know that for Christians in the U.S. today, taking this prophetic stance puts the interfaith reconciliation work of decades at risk. Professional, personal and family relationships are on the line. That is painful and that is hard. But as Walter Brueggemann reminds us, the prophetic requires us to deal with the full range of emotions, especially those we want to avoid — sadness and grief chief among them. Only by acknowledging what has been broken can we be open to the new.

I close with words from the final book of the Bible, words that stirringly call on us to commit ourselves to the work we have gathered here today to undertake, united in hope and in faith:

I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, ‘See, the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them...’ as their God; they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them; And the one who was seated on the throne said, ‘See, I am making all things new.’

Rev. 21:1-3,5

Mark Braverman, a clinical psychologist, now devotes himself full-time to the cause for peace in historic Palestine. He serves on the advisory board of Friends of Sabeel North America and on the Board of the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions-USA. He is the author of Fatal Embrace: Christians, Jews, and the Search for Peace in the Holy Land. Information and additional writing at www.markbraverman.org.

Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center
 P.O.B. 49084 Jerusalem 91491
 Tel: 972.2.532.7136 Fax: 972.2.532.7137
 E-mail: cornerstone@sabeel.org

Sabeel-Nazareth
 PO Box 50278 Nazareth 16120 Israel
 Tel: 972(4)6020790
 E-mail: nazareth@sabeel.org

General E-mail: sabeel@sabeel.org;
 Clergy Program: clergy@sabeel.org;
 Youth Program: youth@sabeel.org;



Visit our website at:

www.sabeel.org

Local Programs: community@sabeel.org;
 International Programs: world@sabeel.org;
 Public Relations: pr@sabeel.org

E-Mail addresses:

Friends of Sabeel North America (FOS-NA)
 (U.S. and Canada)
 Canon Richard Toll
 PO Box 9186, Portland, OR 97207
 USA
 Tel: (1)-503-653-6625
 E-mail: friends@fosna.org
www.fosna.org

Friends of Sabeel Canadian (CFOS)
 3 Sandstone Court
 Nepean, Ontario, K2G 6N5
 Canada
 E-mail: cfos@ca.inter.net
 Website: www.sabeel.ca

Friends of Sabeel United Kingdom (FOS-UK)
 Jennifer Oldershaw
 8 Silver Street, Dursley
 Gloucestershire, GL11 4ND
 U.K.
 Tel: 01453 544655
 E-mail: info@friendsofsabeel.org.uk
www.friendsofsabeel.org.uk

Friends of Sabeel Ireland (FOS-IR)
 9 Sycamore Road, Dublin 16
 Ireland
 Tel: 00-353-1-295-2643
 E-mail: moynandg@iol.ie

Friends of Sabeel Scandinavia (FOSS)
 Reverend Marianne Kronberg
 Centralvägen 21 A
 S - 135 51 Tyresö
 Sweden
 Tel: +46 70 609 5010
 E-mail: mkronberg1951@yahoo.se
www.sabeelskandinavien.org

Friends of Sabeel (Les amis de Sabël) France
 Gilbert Charbonnier
charbonnieri Gilbert@hotmail.com

Friends of Sabeel The Netherlands
info@vriendenvansabeelnederland.nl
www.vriendenvansabeelnederland.nl

Friends of Sabeel Oceania
 Greg Marsh (Secretary)
 E-mail: sabeel@sabeel.org.au
 Website: www.sabeel.org.au

Friends of Sabeel Germany
 Canon Ulrich Kadelbach
 Tel: +49 711 857 841
 E-mail: ukadelbach@web.de

PURPOSE STATEMENT *f* SABEEL

Sabeel is an ecumenical grassroots liberation theology movement among Palestinian Christians. Inspired by the life and teaching of Jesus Christ, this liberation theology seeks to deepen the faith of Palestinian Christians, promote unity among them, and lead them to act for justice and love. Sabeel strives to develop a spirituality based on justice, peace, non-violence, liberation, and reconciliation for the different national and faith communities. The word 'Sabeel' is Arabic for 'the way' and also a 'channel' or 'spring' of life-giving water.

Sabeel also works to promote a more accurate international awareness regarding the identity, presence, and witness of Palestinian Christians as well as their contemporary concerns. It encourages individuals and groups from around the world to work for a just, comprehensive, and enduring peace informed by truth and empowered by prayer and action.

For more information on Friends of Sabeel groups in your area please contact our international representatives or the Sabeel Center in Jerusalem.