

Selected from the 'Palestine Kairos'.

A moment of truth: from the Introduction

We, a group of Christian Palestinians, after prayer, reflection and an exchange of opinion, cry out from within the suffering in our country, under the Israeli occupation, with a cry of hope in the absence of all hope, a cry full of prayer and faith in a God (...), in God's divine providence for all the inhabitants of this land. (...) we proclaim our word based on our Christian faith and our sense of Palestinian belonging a word of faith, hope and love.

We call out as Christians and as Palestinians to our religious and political leaders, to our Palestinian society and to the Israeli society, to the international community, and to our Christian brothers and sisters in the Churches around the world.

1. The reality on the ground

(...):

1.1.1 The separation wall erected on Palestinian territory, (...) has turned our towns and villages into prisons, separating them from one another, making them dispersed and divided cantons. (...)

1.1.2 Israeli settlements ravage our land in the name of God and in the name of force, controlling our natural resources, including water and agricultural land, thus depriving hundreds of thousands of Palestinians, and constituting an obstacle to any political solution.

1.1.5 Religious liberty is severely restricted; (...) our Arab clergy are regularly barred from entering Jerusalem.

1.2 (...) part of this reality is the Israeli disregard of international law and international resolutions, as well as the paralysis of the Arab world and the international community..

1.2.1 Palestinians within the State of Israel, (...) still suffer from discriminatory policies.

1.3 The absence of any (...) spark of hope (...) pushes young people, both Muslim and Christian, to emigrate.

1.4 (...), Israel justifies its actions as self-defence, this ... is a reversal of reality.

(...) we repeat and proclaim that our Christian word in the midst of all this, in the midst of our catastrophe, is a word of faith, hope and love.

2. A word of faith

We believe that every human being is created in God's image and likeness and that every one's dignity is derived from the dignity of the Almighty One. We believe that this dignity is one and the same in each and all of us.

2.2.1 We, Christian Palestinians, believe, like all Christians throughout the world, that Jesus Christ came in order to fulfil the Law and the Prophets. (...) the error in fundamentalist Biblical interpretation (...) brings us death and destruction (...)

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 (...) we know that certain theologians in the West try to attach a biblical and theological legitimacy to the infringement of our rights (...) The "good news" in the Gospel itself has become "a

harbinger of death"

we renew our faith in God because we know that the word of God cannot be the source of our destruction.

2.4 (...) we declare that any use of the Bible to legitimize or support (...) injustice, (...) strip(s) the Word of God of its holiness, its universality and truth.

2.5 (...) the Israeli occupation of Palestinian land is a sin against God and humanity

3. Hope

3.1 Despite the lack of even a glimmer of positive expectation, our hope remains strong (...) because it is from God. God alone is good, almighty and loving and His goodness will one day be victorious over the evil in which we find ourselves.

Signs of hope

3.3 The Church in our land, (...) despite her weakness (...) does show certain signs of hope. Our parish communities are vibrant and most of our young people are active apostles for justice and peace.

3.3.2 (...) There is also dialogue among the three religions, Judaism, Christianity and Islam, as (...) (t)hey all try to breach the walls imposed by the occupation and oppose the distorted perception of human beings in the heart of their brothers or sisters.

3.3.4 (...) we see a determination among many (...) to be ready for reconciliation once justice has been restored. (...) these forces for justice and reconciliation have not yet been able to transform the situation of injustice,

The mission of the Church

3.4.1 The mission of the Church is prophetic, to speak the Word of God courageously, honestly and lovingly in the local context and in the midst of daily events.

3.4.2 The mission of the Church is to proclaim the Kingdom of God, a kingdom of justice, peace and dignity.

3.4.3 Our Church points to the Kingdom, which cannot be tied to any earthly kingdom. (...) Therefore, religion (...) must (...) promote justice, truth and human dignity.

3.4.4 Jesus Christ said: *"The Kingdom of God is among you"* (Luke 17:21). This Kingdom (...) is the presence of God among us and our sense of that presence in everything we do and say.

3.4.5 The cruel circumstances in which the Palestinian Church has lived and continues to live have required the Church to clarify her faith (...) We will remain a witnessing, steadfast and active Church in the land of the Resurrection.

4. Love

The commandment of love

4.1 Christ our Lord said: *"Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another"* (Jn 13:34). He has already showed us how to love and how to treat our enemies.

Resistance

4.2 (...). Love is the commandment of Christ our Lord to us and it includes both friends and enemies.

4.2.1 (...) Every person is my brother or my sister. (...) seeing the face of God in everyone does not

mean accepting evil or aggression (...) love seeks to correct .. evil and stop .. aggression. (...) love puts an end to evil by walking in the ways of justice. (...) international law regulates relations between peoples today. (...) the perpetrators of the injustice; (...) must liberate themselves from the evil that is in them and the injustice they have imposed on others. (...)

4.2.3 .. Resistance is a (...) duty for the Christian. (...) resistance with love as its logic. (...)

4.2.4 Christ our Lord has left us an example we must imitate. We must resist evil but he taught us that we cannot resist evil with evil. (...)

4.2.5 (...) We can resist through civil disobedience. (...)

4.3 Through our love, we will overcome injustices and establish foundations for a new society both for us and for our opponents. (...). The roots "terrorism" are in the (...) injustice committed and in the evil of the occupation. (...). We call on the people of Israel to be our partners in peace

5. Our word to our brothers and sisters

5.2 We say to our Christian brothers and sisters: This is a time for repentance. (...) if my brother is a prisoner I am a prisoner; if his home is destroyed, my home is destroyed; when my brother is killed, then I too am killed. This is a time of repentance for our silence, indifference, lack of communion (...)

5.4.1 Our message to the Muslims is a message of love and of living together and a call to reject fanaticism and extremism. (...)

5.4.2 Our message to the Jews tells them: (...) we are able to love and live together. (...)

5.4.3 (...). It is not permitted to hate,

6. Our word to the Churches of the world

6.1 Our word to the Churches of the world is firstly a word of gratitude for the solidarity you have shown toward us in word, deed and presence among us. It is a word of praise for the many Churches and Christians who support the right of the Palestinian people for self determination. (...), it is also a call to repentance; (...) It is a call to stand alongside the oppressed (...) Our question to our brothers and sisters in the Churches today is: Are you able to help us get our freedom back, (...)

6.2 ... to understand our reality, we say to the Churches: Come and see. (...)

6.3 We condemn all forms of racism, whether religious or ethnic, including anti-Semitism and Islamophobia, and we call on you to condemn it and oppose it in all its manifestations. At the same time we call on you to say a word of truth and to take a position of truth with regard to Israel's occupation of Palestinian land. As we have already said, we see boycott and disinvestment as tools of non violence for justice, peace and security for all.

7. Our word to the international community

7. Our word to the international community is to stop the principle of "double standards" and insist on the international resolutions regarding the Palestinian problem with regard to all parties. Selective application of international law threatens to leave us vulnerable to a law of the jungle.

10. Hope and faith in God

10. In the absence of all hope, we cry out our cry of hope. We believe in God, good and just. We believe that God's goodness will finally triumph over the evil of hate and of death that still persist in our land. We will see here "a new land" and "a new human being", capable of rising up in the spirit to love each one of his or her brothers and sisters.