

## Responding to Palestine Kairos

The Palestine Kairos speaks of hope, of prayer and of faith in God. They speak of the injustices experienced by Palestinians, and they remind us that the attempt to put right the many centuries of European persecution of Jews created injustice for the people of the land, the Palestinian Arabs.

We read something of their suffering; lacking the freedoms we take for granted. Freedom of movement, family life, freedom of worship. Although lacking the "faintest glimmer of positive expectation", yet their faith and hope in God remains strong. The Palestinian church cries out to us in their need; they are entitled to a response; indeed Christian Fellowship demands a response; what should that response be?

Many who visit the holy land in situations where we meet Palestinians and see their situation, return angry, frustrated and hopeless. The Palestine Kairos challenges us:

- with regard to hopelessness - in their hopelessness, Palestinian Christians retain hope in a just and loving God.
- with regard to frustration - it is their daily, even hourly, experience as they wait at checkpoints knowing
  - they may lose their jobs,
  - they may lose their land
  - that the Olive trees they and their families have tended may be destroyed.
- And with regard to anger - that anger is not the way. Anger feeds hatred that feeds terrorism: which is the way to death and destruction.

We cannot call ourselves Christian and justify oppression, we cannot call ourselves Christian and justify the daily humiliation experienced by others. We are called to hope, not hopelessness; to patience, not frustration; and to love, not anger and hatred. That is the Christian 'Way'

### So, how should we respond ?

- Palestinians urge you "come and see". Look for a tour/pilgrimage where you will meet 'the Living Stones' of the Holy Land, the Palestinian Christians. (links on the website)
- get the facts. The situation is complex – made more so by our insistence on 'potted history'. The media often get it wrong. There are ways of finding out. (again – see links on website)
- How's your theology ?– if it seems to justify injustice, it's not 'fit for purpose. Contact us with your questions; if we can't answer we can find someone who can. remember- to elevate a nation, any nation, above God's Kingdom, is idolatry. Jesus is the fulfilment – of everything, nothing else necessary!
- Pray
  - for Palestinian Christians: they are our brothers and sisters in Christ
  - For Israeli-Jews and Arabs
  - for Muslims
  - for the wider Islamic world
  - for national and international leaders, that they may be guided by principles of justice
  - for Jews in Israel & the diaspora who, often at some cost, seek peace with justice for Palestine.

What you can do:

- Write to your MP, MEP, Prime Minister, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. Urge them to have full regard for international law; and to ensure that there are no double standards in our dealings.
- Lobby your MP, MEP; go and visit them, they don't (normally) bite. Go with a group.
- Link up with one of the organisations involved in Palestine.

Consider BDS – Boycott, Divestment, Sanction; with heavy heart, but conscious of double standards. Despite assertions Israel is not a 'Western-style' democracy, as any serious analysis will demonstrate. Again – check links on the website.

Finally - experience shows that it is only when ordinary people engage over the long term, (Apartheid South Africa, Black equality in USA, Fair Trade, Poverty) that governments make the changes necessary. We have to be willing to be God's agents for change to be Kingdom people here, now.

