

# REMEMBER JERUSALEM THIS EASTER



The people of Palestine, including those “Living Stones” of the shrunken Christian Community, have been suffering a long and cruel military occupation by Israel since 1967. And the ancient city of Jerusalem is at the heart of the dispute. Still the streets of the old city within its ancient walls echo with the footsteps of tens of thousands of pilgrims along the Via Dolorosa this Easter. But how many are aware of the denial of basic human and religious rights to both the Christian and Moslem Palestinians who live there, and to Palestinians living in the occupied West Bank who are denied access but look with longing to Jerusalem as their religious, economic and cultural centre?

## KAIROS – PALESTINE

In 2009 the ecumenical Christian Palestinian community sent an appeal to the Christian churches and church leaders of the West:

“Kairos Palestine, A Moment of Truth - A cry of hope in the absence of all hope”

Jesus still weeps over Jerusalem through the cries of ordinary Christian and Moslem Palestinians and his anguish is expressed in these quotations from the document:

- “We call the occupation of Palestine a sin and a crime and we reject any theological or political justification for it.
- We insist on the reinforcement of international law and the fulfilment of the legitimate demands of the Palestinians.
- We commit ourselves to the dismantling of Israeli apartheid.
- We uphold the principle of compassion toward the oppressor. We acknowledge and understand their experiences of oppression, their fears and insecurities.
- We resist being party to any church-related organisation offering tours to the Holy Land that do not include an encounter with local Palestinians. Alternative tourism groups are now available.
- We challenge any church which invests in companies supporting the occupation. We challenge unethical financial investments and spending practises.
- We reject the silence of the church. . . Silence is an opinion; inaction is an action.”





These words are a call to the West to recognise “a moment of truth” and to speak this truth prophetically and fearlessly. Confronting the root causes of the conflict, it urges us to help end the occupation that deprives Palestinians of their rights and condemns both people, Israelis and Palestinians to a distortion of their humanity.

*“How long, O God, will they steal our livelihood? Oppress, imprison and humiliate our people? Deprive our children of their childhood? How long, O God, will the multitudes of Christians of the world ignore the anguish of our Palestinian sisters and brothers?... Come and see. Come and see the olive groves, the bulldozers, the ancient terraces, the segregated cities...”*

## **KAIROS – BRITAIN**

Time for Action (2012) is the ecumenical response of a group of committed British Christians, theologians, clergy and lay people, to their Palestinian brothers and sisters.

In the words of their preface:

“We commend the document with humility and confidence to the Churches of Britain, to all who long for a just peace in Israel/Palestine, praying that it will be a means of re-awakening in us the urgency of this kairos moment and spur us to action in response to the ‘call from the heart of Palestinian suffering’.”

Many Christians have witnessed the suffering for themselves, examples of which include: the daily humiliation of people at the checkpoints, the deaths of civilians, demolished homes, the ethnic cleansing of East Jerusalem, the plight of thousands of refugees, the relentless confiscation of land, the brutality of administrative detention and the continuing construction of illegal settlements.

“We seek a just and lasting peace in the region based on the realisation of full human and political rights for all.”

Some words from the 1982 Christian Conference of Asia Prayer:

*“Give us, O Lord, churches that will be more courageous than cautious; that will not merely “comfort the afflicted” but “afflict the comfortable”; that will not only love the world but also demand justice; that will not remain silent. . . that will send us out to witness, and that will follow Christ even when the way points to a Cross.”*

**The supportive prayers and action of your church are needed this Easter time to bring justice and peace to the Holy Land and to its heart, Jerusalem.**

Both documents can be obtained at [www.kairosbritain.org.uk](http://www.kairosbritain.org.uk)