



**KAIROS PALESTINE**  
**CHRISTMAS 2012**



In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them. And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.” Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favour rests.” When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.” So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. (Luke 2:1-20, NIV)

# KAIROS PALESTINE

## CHRISTMAS 2012

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Dear Sisters and Brothers,

We, Kairos Palestine and ARIJ, send you greetings from Bethlehem, the city to which Christians around the world turn their eyes during the season announcing the birth of the Savior, Jesus Christ.

We live in the Middle East at a time in which the drums of war beat constantly. While Israel raises the alarm about Iran, claiming that its nuclear threat is the main source of instability in the Middle East, reality shows otherwise: indeed, the illegal Israeli occupation is the root cause of unrest in our region. It must end as quickly as possible.

Palestinian Christians are concentrated in an area referred to as the Christian triangle: Bethlehem, Beit Jala, and Beit Sahour. This area is being strangled – in terms of access to land, water, health services, education, general mobility, and all related rights – by the unabated wave of settlement construction. Moreover, the forcible isolation of the triangle with its center, Jerusalem, is damaging both to people in Jerusalem and in the Bethlehem area.

The facts on the ground are bleak. Land confiscation, as well as the influx of Israeli settlers, suggest that there will be no future for Palestinians (whether Christian or Muslim) in the triangle area. In this sense, the prospect of a clear “solution” grows darker every day.

However, there is still a chance to solve this conflict peacefully: if, and only if, the international community courageously stands for a just peace.

Today, even more than at any other moment, you – our sisters and brothers around the world – have the opportunity and the obligation to demand justice. By refusing to condone and perpetuate Israeli impunity, by declining to

support companies that fund the Israeli occupation, by insisting that Israel comply with international law, and by pressuring Israel to grant Palestinians their rights, you can make a crucial difference. Time is running out. But with your strength, solidarity, commitment, and compassion – with your bold, public, united refusal to accept any outcome other than an end to oppression – together, we can turn the tide.

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

We count on you. With this Christmas Alert we are asking you to turn the tide by getting involved through the following tasks:

Please distribute and study the information material as well as the theological reflections each Sunday in Advent in your own churches to inform and educate your sisters and brothers in church about the situation of your Palestinian brethren under Israeli occupation.

1. Please share the alert with congregations and dioceses around your country.
2. Please send letters of solidarity and support for justice in Palestine/Israel to the Israeli embassies in your own country. For further information see [www.allembassies.com/israeli\\_embassies.htm](http://www.allembassies.com/israeli_embassies.htm)
3. Please inform your Palestinian brethren about the way you have been involved in the Christmas Alert.

We can finally live in peace with justice, the peace that all peoples aspire to, Peace that was announced in Bethlehem.

**Rifat Odeh Kassis, Kairos Palestine**

**Dr. Jad Isaac, ARIJ**

*“Our question to our brothers and sisters in the Churches today is: Are you willing and able to work with us to restore our freedom? Our freedom will be the only sustainable foundation for both Palestinians and Israelis to live in love, justice, peace and security.”*

*(From the Kairos Document ‘A Moment of Truth’, Chapter 6.1)*

*“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”*

## ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS AND ISRAELI OUTPOSTS IN AND AROUND BETHLEHEM

**Bethlehem, 2nd of December 2012** – Currently there are 179 settlements with more than 628,000 settlers (civilians) in the total area occupied by Israel, including 257,000 in occupied East Jerusalem. In addition, Israeli settlers have established 232 illegal Israeli settlement outposts in the occupied West Bank.<sup>1</sup>

Today, there are 20 Israeli settlements accommodating more than 107,000 Israeli settlers infringing on Palestinians' lands in Bethlehem Governorate. These settlements are built on a total area of 19.1 km<sup>2</sup>, which constitutes around 3.1% of the Governorate's area. Furthermore, in the years between 1996 and 2007, the Israeli settlers established in the Bethlehem area 14 locations, which came to be known as settlements' outposts.



Moreover, the Israeli occupation enforced 114 km of bypass roads in Bethlehem Governorate, both constructed and planned, to comply with the Israeli settlements program and to facilitate movement of the settlers with Israel. The inhabitants of Bethlehem today are denied access to certain sections of the bypass roads network and are blocked from them with cement blocks, trenches, earth-mounds, barbwire and iron gates – all under the pretext of military and/or security purposes.

<sup>1</sup> Richard, Matthew, Issac Jad: The Water Regime in the West Bank, in: This Week in Palestine, Issue No. 174, October 2012, p.4-10.



To give you a concrete example: Ush Ghurab is the name of a high hill which lies in the eastern part of Beit Sahour city in the Bethlehem Governorate. For many years, it has been coveted and targeted by army and settlers. Now, an Israeli extreme right-wing settler's organization called "Women in Green" is planning to build a settlement called "Shdema" in this area. <sup>2</sup>

This will have a deep impact on the Palestinian population from Beit Sahour, one of the last Christian majority towns in Palestine.

### **THE SON IS COMING (MATT 21: 37)!**

Written by Rev. Yohanna Katanacho

The parable of the vineyard and the tenants (Matt 21:33–45) is fascinating to Palestinian readers. Its components are very familiar to us. It mentions the owner of the land, a wall, watch towers, violence, bloodshed, land disputes, injustices, and getting rid of the true owner of the vineyard. It is like a Palestinian contemporary movie videotaped in the West Bank. The owner of the land provided all the needed tools. He built a fence and a tower to protect his land, and a winepress to enjoy its fruits (v. 33). He trusted others and wanted to share the goodness of the land by providing jobs and allowing others to work together for the common good. He wanted the fruit of his own land.

However, a group of farmers stole the land and transformed the fence of protection into a wall of an illegal empire. The watchtowers became the place in which the farmers saw the servants of the owner of the land and decided

<sup>2</sup> For further information please go to <http://www.poica.org/editor/case studies/view.php?recordID=2397> (New Israeli Attempt to resettle in Ush Ghurab area in Beit Sahour)

to get rid of them (vv. 34-36). These illegal settlers of the vineyard used every possible means to keep the land in their hands. They were willing to use escalating violent measures starting from beating, to stoning, to killing the messengers of justice who wanted to return the land to its true owner. Eventually, the owner of the land sent his son but when they saw the heir of the land, they conspired to kill the son of the owner and seize the inheritance (vv. 37-38). In other words, the text brings together Christmas and Easter. The coming of the son and the killing of the son are succinctly juxtaposed to each other. Both are intimately related to bringing about the Kingdom of God.

The time of the fruit or better the Kairos, using the Greek text, has come. The appointed time in which we are expected to give an account to a just God has come. This appointed time reaches its climax in the coming of the son who is the legal owner of the vineyard. He is coming to restore the vineyard to his father, its legal owner. He is a messenger of justice and judgment. He will bring justice for the owner and judgment upon the wicked farmers. However, Christmas is transformed into Easter. The good news about the coming of the son is transformed into an ugly scene. The wicked farmers killed the son (v. 39) yet they are not able to escape the appointed divine moment. For in their persistent unjust actions they have rejected the will of God.

No one can twist the arm of God. Killing the son transformed him into a crushing stone. This stone is the true owner of the land who has been rejected. He is going to be the foundation of a new reality (v. 42). God will restore the stolen vineyard. The death of the son outside the vineyard (or Jerusalem if you wish) and his resurrection created a new people. The unjust settlers will lose the land. The land will be given to a new group of people who are willing to serve God and give the fruits back to Him (v. 43).

This biblical parable has a lot to say to Palestinians. First, we are like the servants of the owner of the land. We

obediently march towards the illegal settlers with a prophetic divine message. Palestinian Christians in particular can be divine messengers who proclaim that God owns the land. God, not the Jews or the Palestinians own the land. We can also proclaim that the land of God cannot be seized by oppression or violence or illegal actions.

Second, Palestinian Christians should be willing to suffer in order to proclaim the prophetic divine message. It is a salvific message full of justice and love, a message that is rooted in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the saviour of the world. When we suffer as a result of proclaiming the prophetic divine message then our suffering is similar to the servants or prophets who insisted on justice and righteousness. It is also similar to the suffering of the son of Jesus Christ who was drawn outside his land (v. 39) and killed. We will be a blessed people. The Bible says, “Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you” (Matt 5:11-12).

Third, Palestinian Christians should remember that the owner of the land is the winning party. His plan will be accomplished and His Kingdom will continue to grow. God will accomplish his just will through our Lord Jesus Christ. We need to put our faith in the power of Jesus Christ and his message. He was fully committed to loving the wicked farmers and was equally committed to bring about justice. He was born the first time in Bethlehem to bring about the Kingdom of God and was born the second time in Jerusalem (cf. Ps 2:7) to establish this eternal impeccable Kingdom. His Kingdom is not only the antidote of every evil but is also the incarnation of God’s love, Justice, and Grace. It can be fully seen in the face of Jesus Christ. The vineyard will always belong to the Son. Its farmers, however, will stay in it as long as they honor the principles advocated by the Kingdom of God, a kingdom of justice and righteousness. It is the Kingdom of Jesus Christ.

In this Christmas, we celebrate that Christ is coming. He comes to bring about the Kingdom. May we all follow him, be faithful citizens of His Kingdom, and proclaim his message with a heart full of faith, love, hope, righteousness, and justice.

**Rev. Yohanna Katanacho, PhD**

Rev. Dr. Yohanna Katanacho is a Palestinian Evangelical. He has earned his M.A. from Wheaton College and his Master of Divinity as well as his Ph.D. in the Old Testament from Trinity International University. He is now serving as the Academic Dean of Bethlehem Bible College and Galilee Bible College. He is a co-author of the Kairos Palestine Document.

“ *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).* ”

**LAND CONFISCATION IN AND AROUND BETHLEHEM**

**Bethlehem, 9th of December 2012 –**

Israeli authorities issued orders on the 19th of September 2012 to confiscate 60 dunums of the land in Wadi Fukin village west of Bethlehem. The land areas set to be confiscated are planted with trees and vegetables, with farmers tending them daily. Wadi Fukin is located next to Israel’s separation wall and is overlooked by the Israeli Betar Ilit settlement.

*(Source: <http://www.maannews.net/eng/ViewDetails.aspx?ID=521454>)*

On February 8, 2012, resident Khalid Naji Mahmoud Masha’leh, from Al-Jab’a village southwest of Bethlehem Governorate received an Israeli military order to evacuate his 16 dunums land within 45 days and remove all what exists on it. This includes (but not limited to) trees, infrastructure installations, or anything else, under the pretext that the lands are classified as “State Land.”

*(Source: [http://www.poica.org/editor/case\\_studies/view.php?recordID=4248](http://www.poica.org/editor/case_studies/view.php?recordID=4248))*

Israeli authorities issued a confiscation order on the 12th of June 2012 for 5 dunums of land in the Bethlehem-area village of al-Khader. Confiscation of this land means that owner Rana Tabileh and other local farmers will be unable to access their other lands in this area.

*(Source: <http://alternativenews.org/english/index.php/news/news-updates/4508-israel-confiscates-palestinian-owned-land-south-of-bethlehem.html>)*

left in the Bethlehem district, is under threat. Israel has announced that it will disconnect this area from the rest of Beit Jala by constructing the Segregation Wall, effectively annexing parts of Cremisan. The Cremisan valley lies between the illegal settlements of Gilo and Har Gilo. The Wall will provide Israel more land to expand both illegal settlements on privately owned Palestinian land. This plan will devastate 58 Palestinian Christian families, who will be unable to access their land, which Israel plans to have on its side of the illegal Wall. Cremisan also has a Catholic seminary and a kindergarten for the children of the town, run by nuns.

As a response, the Beit Jala community has been organizing a weekly open air mass on Fridays to protest against the confiscation. Churches from across the world have joined the prayers, which have also attracted attention from international media.

*(Source: <http://www.nad-plo.org/userfiles/file/BETHLEHEM%20AND%20JERUSALEM%20ISRAEL%E2%80%99S%20POLICY%20OF%20ISOLATION%20AND%20DISCONNECTION.pdf>)*

## **A BIBLICAL REFLECTION ON LAND CONFISCATION FOR THE CHRISTMAS SEASON**

Written by Munther Isaac

Land confiscation is not a new phenomenon. In the biblical tradition, perhaps no other story illustrates this abuse of power by the “king” with regards to the land than the story of king Ahab and the vineyard of Naboth (1 Kings 21). The relatively large space this narrative received in the book of Kings is an indication that the narrative demands special attention. Ahab, king of the northern kingdom, saw the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, coveted it, and presumed that he had divine entitlement to ask from Naboth to sell it to him (21:2). Naboth, on the other hand, rejected this – based on his belief that this is a land entrusted to him by God as an inheritance and therefore he

could not sell it (21:3).

The infamous queen Jezebel intervened in the story, and reminded Ahab that, as king of Israel, he was entitled to take the vineyard (21:7). The assumption is simple: “Just because you can, then you should!” A plot was made, Naboth was killed, and Ahab received the vineyard (21:16). No apology was made. Power and manipulation were at play here. The victim in this narrative was Naboth, who represents the powerless peasants of Israel then. The way in which Naboth and Ahab related to the land manifested a startling contradiction. One treated it as a gift, the other as an entitlement. One believed that it belonged to the community; the other wanted it for his empire.

The attitude of Naboth is similar to that of many contemporary Palestinian farmers. It is no surprise that Palestinians take the olive tree as a symbol, for it reminds them of their rootedness and belonging to the land. This attitude can be summarized by the words of Brueggemann:

*Naboth is responsible for the land, but is not in control over it. It is the case not that the land belongs to him but that he belongs to the land.*

Because the Bible is a book of hope and justice, that was not the end of the story. The story concluded with judgment on Ahab. He was found guilty for murder and “taking possession”.

The king, who was supposed to be the guardian of justice in the land (Psalm 72), instead was responsible for inflicting injustice on the people of the land. God intervened and brought justice, for he is a God who is concerned for justice. Ahab had forgotten that:

*“Justice, and only justice, you shall follow, that you may live and inherit the land that the LORD your God is giving you”. (Deuteronomy 16:20)*



In this Christmas season, let us remember that our biblical hope was revealed in the child of Bethlehem, who promoted and incarnated a new way of kingship. Jesus is the ultimate just and humble king. Of him the prophet Jeremiah said:

*“Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land”. (Jeremiah 23:5)*

As his followers today, Jesus invites us to promote his kingdom and his vision for the land. The righteous king of Bethlehem rules with justice and righteousness, and so justice and righteousness should characterize our ministry.

### **Munther Isaac**

Munther Isaac is an Instructor, Vice Academic Dean and Choir director at Bethlehem Bible College. He is also the director of the College’s International conference, Christ at the Checkpoint. He is currently a PhD candidate at the Oxford Center for Mission Studies. His research is on biblical theology of the land, with a special reference to the Palestinian Church.

*“Reality is the daily humiliation to which we are subjected at the military checkpoints, as we make our way to jobs, schools or hospitals.*

*Reality is the separation between members of the same family, making family life impossible for thousands of Palestinians, especially where one of the spouses does not have an Israeli identity card.”*

Kairos Palestine Document, Chapter 1.1.3 and 1.1.4

## THE SEGREGATION WALL AND CHECKPOINTS IN AND AROUND BETHLEHEM

**Bethlehem, 16th of December 2012** – In 2002, the construction of the Segregation Wall started west of Jenin. The wall is still under construction and when completed, its length will total approximately 774 kilometres. The route of the wall is in no accordance with the so called “Green Line”, cutting deep into the occupied West Bank. <sup>3</sup>

Overall, the Segregation Wall in the Bethlehem Governorate will end up amputating some 159,793 dunums of lands behind the Wall, and threatens crucial supply areas containing artesian wells and main water basins that provide Bethlehem Governorate with water as the path of the Wall is designed to enfold the groundwater locations within Bethlehem.

Prior to the year 2000, Bethlehem Governorate had only 2 permanent checkpoints located at the outskirts of the Governorate, on the entry points to Jerusalem. The obstructions multiplied over the past 12 years to 35 different forms of obstructions.

The consequences of these actions on the economy of Bethlehem have been devastating; businesses have been forced to close and unemployment has increased to unprecedented levels, particularly the tourism sector, which is a major source of livelihood for many of the Bethlehem’s residents.



Photo by Michael Jacaman, the icon on the wall was done by the Iconographer Ian Knowles

Status of the Israeli Segregation Wall in Bethlehem Governorate	
Wall Status	Length (Km)
Existing Sections	30.5 (Km)
Planned Sections	39 (Km)
Under Construction Sections	5.5 (Km)
<b>Total Wall Length</b>	<b>75 (Km)</b>

## **BREAKING DOWN DIVIDING WALLS OF HOSTILITY**

Written by Archbishop Atallah Hanna

During these sacred days in which we get ready to receive the divine child born for our salvation, the Church, with all its various traditions and denominations, helps the faithful gradually enter into the atmosphere of this celebration. In some traditions, there is a period of fasting and special prayers intended to purify the faithful in order to welcome the Savior as their hearts become the manger, the cave that enfolds the Savior, who has come to elevate them into a life of grace and blessings.

The coming of the Messiah into this world is to unite all humanity for He has come to instill love in people's hearts and to build bridges of understanding and togetherness among all.

Anchored in our faith, we totally reject the construction of discriminating and racist walls that separate human beings from their brethren and imposes a feeling of living in a large prison.

Our Palestinian people suffer because of this discriminating separation wall that deprives access of movement. As Christians, believers in the values of the Holy Book, we demand the dismantling of the separation wall. The world is in need of bridges and not walls; bridges of love and cooperation.

As Christians, we lift up prayers asking Jesus Christ to remove the yokes of injustice and all expressions of oppression, not excluding the wall that each visitor to Bethlehem observes as contrary to the message that came out from Bethlehem, the message of the divine child born in a manger to unite and not to divide human beings.

We pray for peace based on justice and the elimination of all aspects of racism and discrimination, starting with the separation wall.

**His Eminence Archbishop Atallah Hanna**

### **CHRISTMAS, PEACE AND THE WALL**

Written by Rev. Mitri Raheb

Few years ago while traveling in China, I was asked by a student in one of the schools: “What if Jesus was to be born today?” I replied: “If Jesus were to be born this year, he would not be born in Bethlehem. Mary and Joseph might not be allowed to enter from the checkpoint, and so too the Magi, while the shepherds will be stuck inside the walls and can’t leave their little town. Jesus might have been born on the checkpoint like so many Palestinian children while the Magi and shepherds would be on both sides of the wall.”

Am I confusing you with the “nice” Christmas story? Christmas has become a “nice” feast of “a sort of peace” that no one really can fully describe. In fact, it is kind of a “cheap peace”, which is something to preach about when one is not well prepared, or a bit of wishful thinking, when one is not ready to do much. Christmas has become a season for “joyful peace talkers,” rather than “blessed peacemakers”.

In our Palestinian context, “peace talk” is often a good recipe for managing the conflict rather than resolving it. As the world continues to talk peace, Israel continues to build the wall and while Christians continue singing “O little town of Bethlehem”, Israel makes sure that this town stays as little as possible. As little as a 2 square miles open air

prison surrounded with walls, fences and trenches with no future expansion possibilities whatsoever.

No one understood peace as did St. Paul. He, a former Jewish leader, a zealot, a persecutor, and a hard liner, committed himself to making sure that a wall of separation was built and kept between his community and its enemies. He was ready to attack and even terrorize whoever dared to question the importance of this wall for the security of his community. However, this same radical person was radically transformed. He had a unique encounter that made him discover the real meaning of peace, and he described it as “breaking down dividing walls of hostility.” (Ephesians 2, 14) From that moment, the zealot Saul became the passionate apostle Paul. His great discovery was that if God himself in Christ has broken the walls of hostility between the human and the divine, then there is no place for walls between peoples, tribes, cultures and nations. For his conviction, he was ready to pay a heavy price.

At a time when a wall of hostility has been built around our little town, we all need to commit ourselves anew to breaking down all walls of hatred and hostilities, be they concrete walls or ideological, racial, political, social, and economical ones. From the hometown of Christ, we have no other message this year but that of St. Paul: “For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us”.

**Rev. Dr. Mitri Raheb**

Rev. Dr. Mitri Raheb is the Pastor of the Christmas Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bethlehem. He is the president of the Diyar Consortium and the President of the Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan & The Holy Land.

*“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.”*

Kairos Palestine Document, Chapter 2.5

## THE WATER SITUATION IN THE BETHLEHEM AREA UNDER THE ISRAELI OCCUPATION

**Bethlehem, 23rd of December 2012** - The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends 100 litres per capita per day. Average Palestinian consumption of water is of 50 lpcpd. In contrast, the average Israeli daily per capita consumption is at least four times the Palestinian average from available fresh water.

The Palestinian Authority, only able to use 20 percent of all underground and surface water resources in the West Bank under a 1995 agreement with Israel, is forced to buy extra supplies from the Israeli National Water Company “Mekorot”.

24 Around 200,000 Palestinians in the West Bank have no access to water network connections. As a result they have to travel long distances to the nearest water source and to pay high amounts for water from tanks of dubious quality. Furthermore, the ability of Palestinians to reach sources of water is obstructed due to movement and access restrictions such as checkpoints, earth mounds and the separation wall, imposed by the Israeli military.<sup>4</sup>



In summer 2012 rural villages near Bethlehem were facing a severe water crisis. Seven villages had not had running water for more than 15 days, in an area with a population of 30,000.<sup>5</sup> According to the Bethlehem Joint services Council for Planning and Development, Israel’s National Water Company has ignored the area’s increase in population for 25 years, which has now reached 30,000.

4 See <http://www.ewash.org/en/?view=97YOcyonNs3D76juyAnkDTT>

5 See <http://maannews.net/eng/Print.aspx?ID=494331> (“Officials call for action as Bethlehem villages run dry”, 13.06.2012)



## AN ADVENT MEDITATION

Written by Patriarch Emeritus Michael Sabbah

Lord, here, in Bethlehem, you were born.

Here, you wanted to manifest yourself to all peoples of the earth, to give them back the joy of life. You wanted to give them “abundant life” (John 10:10).

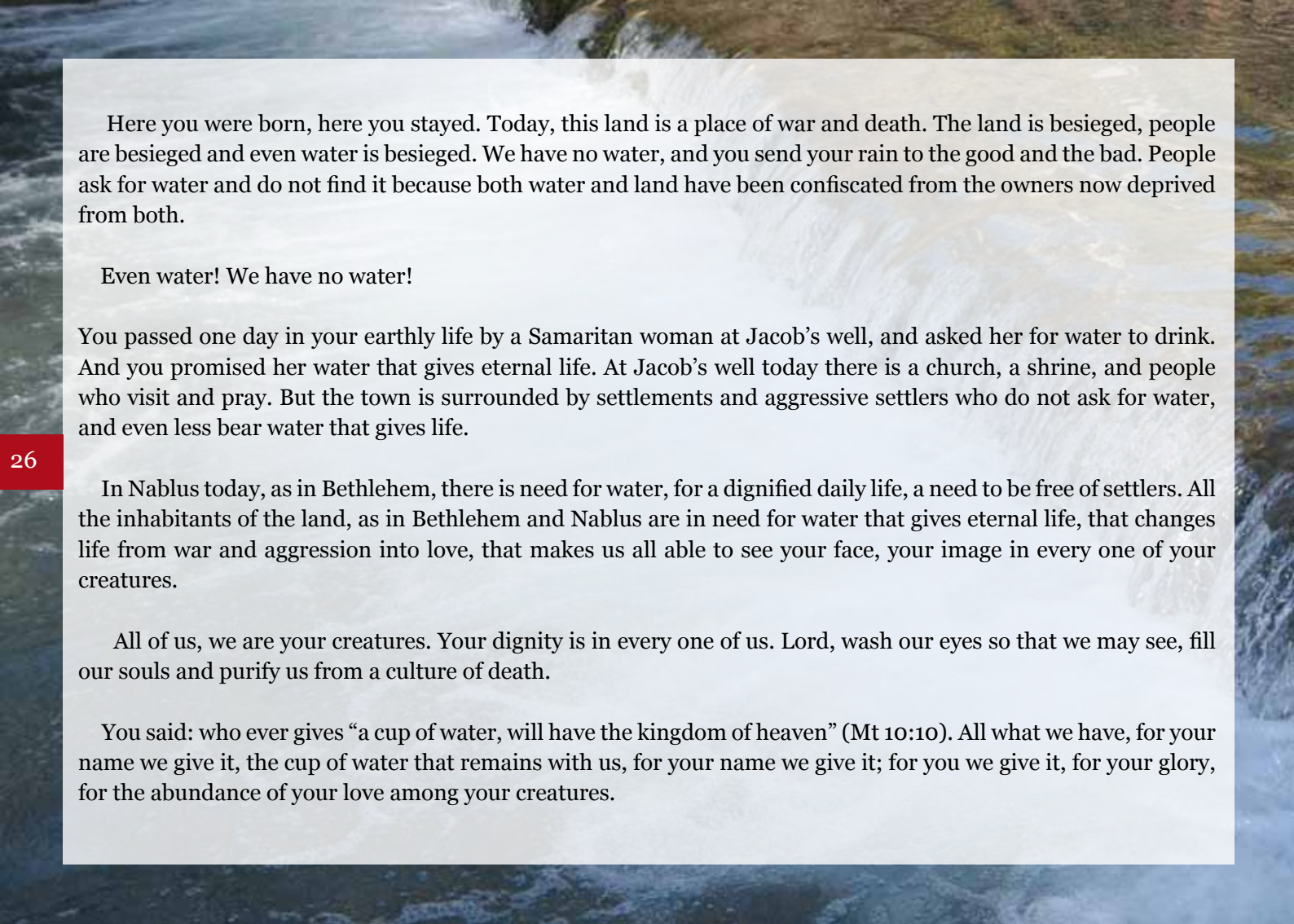
But Cain is always among us.<sup>6</sup> Killers of their brothers are always among us. And those who profane your image in those whom you have created in your image are still among us.

Here you were born, here you lived, and you remain with us through your mystery of love, through your existence that sustains our existence you still send your rain and make your sun rise on the good and the bad (Mt 5: 45), on the oppressed and the oppressors.

You still send you rain and make your sun rise on the good and the bad because, perhaps, they do not know what they do.

But some of them do know. They think they claim the life that you gave them while destroying the life of those they kill, life that you gave to all.

We are all your children, but all of us do not see this same truth.



Here you were born, here you stayed. Today, this land is a place of war and death. The land is besieged, people are besieged and even water is besieged. We have no water, and you send your rain to the good and the bad. People ask for water and do not find it because both water and land have been confiscated from the owners now deprived from both.

Even water! We have no water!

You passed one day in your earthly life by a Samaritan woman at Jacob's well, and asked her for water to drink. And you promised her water that gives eternal life. At Jacob's well today there is a church, a shrine, and people who visit and pray. But the town is surrounded by settlements and aggressive settlers who do not ask for water, and even less bear water that gives life.

In Nablus today, as in Bethlehem, there is need for water, for a dignified daily life, a need to be free of settlers. All the inhabitants of the land, as in Bethlehem and Nablus are in need for water that gives eternal life, that changes life from war and aggression into love, that makes us all able to see your face, your image in every one of your creatures.

All of us, we are your creatures. Your dignity is in every one of us. Lord, wash our eyes so that we may see, fill our souls and purify us from a culture of death.

You said: who ever gives "a cup of water, will have the kingdom of heaven" (Mt 10:10). All what we have, for your name we give it, the cup of water that remains with us, for your name we give it; for you we give it, for your glory, for the abundance of your love among your creatures.

But we have no water.

Lord, “look down from heaven and see”. Instill love in your creatures. Bring back righteousness and justice. “Rain down, heavens, from above, and let the cloud pour down saving justice” (Is 45:8), and love and water that fills the need of all, that makes the life of all the inhabitants of this land, a journey towards eternal life.

Lord, soon it will be Christmas, a feast of joy for all, joy for a new life, for a new humankind that hears the new song: “Glory to God and peace on earth.” This land and all its inhabitants, those who enjoy water oppressively and those who have no water, are in need of the water that gives true life on this land and in the kingdom of God.

Lord, “look down from heaven and see”. “Rain down, heavens, from above, and let the cloud pour down saving justice” (Is 45: 8).

**Michael Sabbah, Patriarch Emeritus**

Patriarch Michel Sabbah, born in March 19th, 1933 to a Palestinian Christian family in Nazareth, Palestine, is the Latin (Roman Catholic) Patriarch Emeritus of Jerusalem. Patriarch Sabbah, co-author of Kairos Palestine, has been involved in various organizations promoting peace with justice.

## **Kairos Palestine – A moment of truth**

Bethlehem, Palestine

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Kairos Palestine is a group of Palestinian Christians who authored “A moment of Truth” – Christian Palestinian’s word to the world about the occupation of Palestine, an expression “of faith, hope and love from the heart of Palestinian suffering”, and a call for solidarity in ending over six decades of oppression. The document was published in December 2009.



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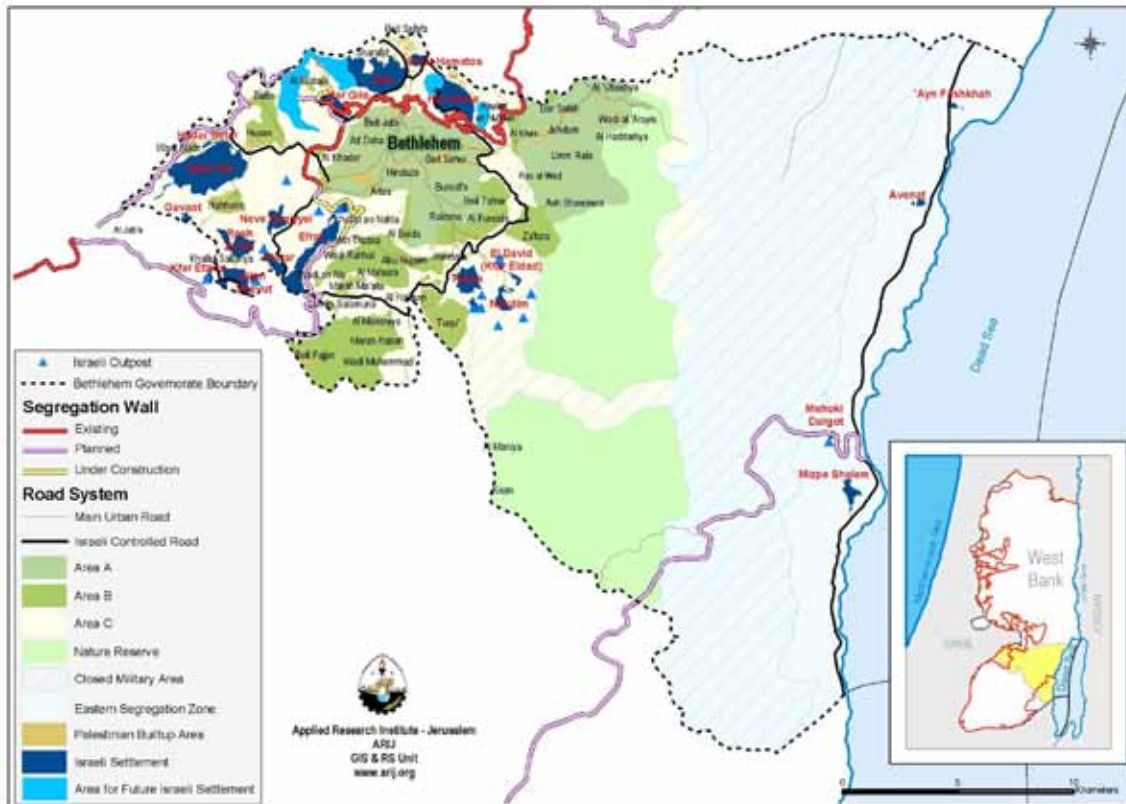
<http://www.youtube.com/arijvideos>



ARIJ represents 20 years of combined organizational experience in the Palestinian Territory in the fields of economic, social, management of natural resources, water management, sustainable agriculture and political dynamics of development in the area. ARIJ plays an active role in the local community as an advocate for greater cooperation among local institutions as well as international and non-governmental organizations.



Map II: Bethlehem Governorate and the Israeli Segregation Wall Plan





# Kairos Palestine

## A Moment of Truth

A word of faith,  
hope and love  
from the heart of  
Palestinian suffering



We proclaim our word based on our Christian faith  
and our sense of Palestinian belonging.

Are you able to help us get our freedom back?  
for this is the only way you can help the two  
peoples attain justice, peace, security and love.

[www.kairospalestine.ps](http://www.kairospalestine.ps)