

Samuel J. Kuruvilla completed his PhD in Political Theology at the University of Exeter in 2009. He is Post-Doctoral Fellow at the School of International Relations and Politics of Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam, Kerala as well as Lecturer at Government College, Kottayam, Kerala.

RADICAL CHRISTIANITY IN PALESTINE AND ISRAEL

Liberation and Theology in the Middle East

SAMUEL J. KURUVILLA

I.B. TAURIS

LONDON • NEW YORK

Published in 2013 by I.B.Tauris & Co Ltd
6 Salem Road, London W2 4BU
175 Fifth Avenue, New York NY 10010
www.ibtauris.com

Distributed in the United States and Canada
Exclusively by Palgrave Macmillan
175 Fifth Avenue, New York NY 10010

Copyright © 2013 Samuel J. Kuruvilla

The right of Samuel J. Kuruvilla to be identified as the author of this work has been asserted
by the author in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patent Act 1988.

All rights reserved. Except for brief quotations in a review, this book, or any part thereof,
may not be reproduced, stored in or introduced into a retrieval system, or transmitted,
in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or
otherwise, without the prior written permission of the publisher.

Library of Modern Religion 19

ISBN 978 1 84885 551 9

A full CIP record for this book is available from the British Library
A full CIP record for this book is available from the Library of Congress

Library of Congress catalog card: available

Typeset by Newgen Publishers, Chennai
Printed and bound by CPI Group (UK) Ltd, Croydon, CR0 4YY

²¹ *Be not afraid, O land; be glad and rejoice. Surely the LORD had done great things.*

²² *Be not afraid, O wild animals, for the open pastures were becoming green. The trees were bearing their fruit; the fig tree and the vine yield their riches.*

— Joel 2:21–22

The Bible shows how the world progresses. It begins with a garden, but ends with a Holy City.

— Phillips Brooks

CONTENTS

<i>Acknowledgements</i>	xi
<i>Glossary and List of Abbreviations</i>	xiv
1 The Historical Background	1
The Religious Importance of Jerusalem	2
Muslim and Turkish Rule in Palestine: Impact on the Christians of the Holy Land	8
The Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem	11
The St. John's Hospice Incident	14
Greek-Palestinian Clergy-Laity Issues	16
The Early History of Christian Zionism in the Holy Land	20
The British Mandate Period	24
The Jordanian Period	28
The Church and the Israeli State	30
The Church and the Palestinian National Struggle	31
The Christian Interest in Jerusalem	35
Palestinian Protestant Church History Since 1948: The Anglicans and Lutheran Protestants of the Holy Land	38
Land and the Question of the 'Holy' Land: The Land of Palestine	47
The Land and Justice	49
Impact of the 1967 War on Palestinian Christians: Christian Demographic Decline	52

VIII RADICAL CHRISTIANITY IN PALESTINE AND ISRAEL

Post-1967 Changes in the Land of Palestine: The Impact of Islamism	53
2 Political and Liberation Theologies: Implications for Israel-Palestine (The Theo-Political Context of Ateek and Raheb's work)	64
Political and Liberation Theologies in Latin America and Asia: The Rise of Liberation Theology	65
The Main Emphases of Liberation Theology	66
Liberation Theology in Palestine	71
Contextual Theology: A Definition	72
Early Influences in Contextualization of Theology in Palestine, the Fountainhead of Contextualization:	
Al-Liqa Centre in Bethlehem	75
Patriarch Michel Sabbah	85
Archbishop Elias Chacour: Reconciliation through Education	88
Bishop Riah Abu El-Assal (Former Anglican Bishop of Jerusalem)	91
The Concerns of Palestinian Theology	93
Western Theological Thought and the Question of Palestine-Jewish Theology of Liberation: Rabbi Marc Ellis	94
Rosemary Radford Ruether and the Theology of Christian Anti-Semitism in the West	96
3 The 'Sabeel' Ecumenical Liberation Theology Centre in Jerusalem: A Study of the Theology and Praxis of Naim Ateek	104
The Origins of Liberation-Theological Attitudes towards Palestine	105
Impact of Arab Nationalism	112
Role of Arab Christian Identity in the Middle East	114
Early Historical-Conflictual Experience of Naim Ateek	118
The Birth of the Palestinian Ecumenical Liberation Theology Centre: Sabeel	120

Use of the Exodus Narrative in Palestinian Liberation/Contextual Theology	123
The Old Testament and Palestinian Liberation Theology	125
The Adoption of Utilitarian Ideals	136
Election and Universalism	138
The Problem of Land	141
4 The Politics and Praxis of Naim Ateek and Sabeel	145
Sabeel and Jerusalem	145
Sabeel and the Peace Process	156
The One-State Solution	162
Sabeel and Human Rights	164
Sabeel and Women's Rights	168
Sabeel and a Christian Theology of Islam	169
Sabeel's Theology of Engagement with the State of Israel	172
The Palestinian Jesus: Using Crucifixion Imagery Amidst Accusations of Deicide	173
Use of 'Liberation Theology' in the Politics of the Israel-Palestine Struggle	178
Sabeel and the Question of Divestment	182
Sabeel's Divestment Strategy	184
Responses to Sabeel's Call for Divestment	188
5 Contextual Theology in Palestine: The Theological and Political-Cultural Practise of Mitri Raheb	192
Palestinian Contextual Theology: The Roots	194
'Palestinianism' as an Integral Part of Biblical Interpretation	196
Raheb's Contextual Theology	198
Raheb's Cultural Theology and Praxis	201
Raheb's Critical Theological Concepts: The Bible and Palestinian Christians	207
Raheb's Reading of the Prophet Jonah	213

6	Palestinian Theological Praxis in Context: An Analysis of the Approaches of Ateek and Raheb from a Comparative Perspective	227
	Al-Liqa, Sabeel and <i>Dar Annadwa</i>	228
	Relevance to Palestinian Christians	230
	The Value to Muslims	231
	The Approach of Sabeel	233
	An Estimation of Raheb's Approach	239
	<i>Appendix A: Palestinian Loss of Land 1946–2000</i>	245
	<i>Appendix B: The Old City of Jerusalem</i>	246
	<i>Appendix C: Palestine Under the British Mandate, 1923–1948</i>	247
	<i>Appendix D: Palestinian Villages Depopulated in 1948 and Razed by Israel</i>	248
	<i>Appendix E: Population Movements 1948–51</i>	249
	<i>Appendix F: Palestinian Refugees, 2001</i>	250
	<i>Appendix G: The Near East After the 1967 June War</i>	251
	<i>Appendix H: The Allon Plan, July 1967</i>	252
	<i>Appendix I: Israeli and Palestinian Security-Controlled Areas</i>	253
	<i>Appendix J: Projection of the West Bank Final Status Map Presented by Israel, Camp David, July 2000</i>	254
	<i>Appendix K: Final Status Map Presented by Israel–Taba, January 2001</i>	255
	<i>Notes</i>	256
	<i>Bibliography</i>	292
	<i>Index</i>	308

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This book grew out of my desire to explore my own identity in the light of my experiences as a minority person of South Asian origin in the UK. The Western colonialist-missionary enterprise had a special impact and emphasis on minority Christian populations in the non-Western world. One of the results of this missionary intrusion into Eastern cultures was the overt and sometimes 'excessive' orientation of Christians in these countries towards the West and Western Christendom. This was a cause of tension and sometimes conflict within Eastern societies, often to the detriment of the status of Eastern Christians in their own societies. In turn, this has resulted in an excessive tendency among Eastern and Oriental Christians to migrate in search of greener and safer pastures in the West. Excessive Westernization among both minority Christians as well as majority non-Christians in the non-Western world has resulted in major identity issues emanating from these societies, again a consequence of the impact of imperialism and colonialism in these regions.

This work would not have been attempted without my temporary uprooting from my homeland of Kerala in the hot tropical southwestern-most extremity of peninsular India, for the purposes of higher study, to the cold, temperate and oftentimes sunny climate of Exeter, the largest city of Devon, in the UK. The composite 'orientalist' identity issues faced by me as an Indian Christian in a society where all South Asians seemed to be generally and uniformly viewed as being of the Islamic persuasion and hence somewhat 'suspect' in the light of

XII RADICAL CHRISTIANITY IN PALESTINE AND ISRAEL

then present and still prevailing security considerations compounded the sense of alienation felt by me in the UK. This in turn fed on Saidian sentiments of sympathy for other minority Christians facing similar situations of alienation in other parts of the world and within their own homelands. The Saidian complex inherited by Palestinian Christians is a good example of this kind of mentality in the modern world.

This book primarily details the motivational development and rise of liberation modes of radical Christian theo-praxis in Israel-Palestine. It focusses on a number of actors but primarily on two protagonists, the Anglican cleric and self-confessed 'liberation' theologian Naim Ateek and the Lutheran pastor and 'contextual' theologian Mitri Raheb. By focussing on these two clerical academicians in particular, I have sought to reveal the differences as well as broad similarities in the practise of liberation/contextual theology in Israel-Palestine.

On the academic side, I must always remain exceedingly grateful to my supervisors, both present as well as past, for their perseverance in guiding me into hoping for a positive outcome to my work. Professor Nur Masalha, Director of the Centre for Religion and History and Holy Land Research Project, School of Theology, Philosophy and History, St Mary's University College (University of Surrey), played an important role in guiding and encouraging me during the crucial fieldwork periods in Israel-Palestine as well as during my transition from a purely politics-driven approach to that of a historical, theological and politically-oriented approach within the University of Exeter. I remain grateful to him for all his help and support as well as the crucial links he provided to suitable resource persons and academics within the Israel-Palestine and UK spectrum. I also remain very grateful to him for his continued encouragement of my academic-publishing development through the medium of the *Holy Land Studies Journal* of which he remains the editor.

Finally, all credit is due to my doctoral studies supervisor, Professor Timothy J. Gorringer of the Theology department in Exeter, for his kind help and sound academic critique that guided me through the perilous shoals of liberation/contextual theological debate. Thanks to him alone that I have been able to finish this work in a creditable fashion. I would, in particular, like to thank him for his encouragement of my own

critical faculties and ability to think independently. The staff at Exeter University libraries helped me considerably during the course of this work, and special mention must be made of the help rendered by Paul Auchterlonie of the Arabic (Middle Eastern Studies) collection in the Old Library. Extensive reference work was conducted at the Orchard Learning Resources Centre in the Selly Oak Campus of Birmingham University and many thanks are due to the very helpful staff at this institution. Mention cannot but be made here of the hospitality and generosity shown me by the directors, staff and associates of my two main topical research centres in Israel-Palestine: The Sabeel Centre for Ecumenical Liberation Theology in East Jerusalem and Dar Annadwa Addawliyya (The International Centre of Bethlehem (ICB)) in Bethlehem-Palestine.

Many people, who for reasons of space will remain unnamed, supported me in Exeter until I got married to Saira, who then went on to become the love of my life and my boon companion. Her coming into my life helped me in my weakest moments and ultimately contributed in a remarkable measure towards my finishing this work. The birth of our baby Rachel during the course of this work was a great blessing that enlivened the finishing stages of this book in no small measure! Finally, I cannot end this acknowledgement without mentioning with deep gratitude the financial, moral, emotional and spiritual support that my family and fellow Christians gave during the course of my research work in Exeter. To God alone, through Jesus Christ, be the glory, for ever and ever.

Many thanks to the editorial team at I.B.Tauris who very kindly agreed to publish this first book of mine that grew out of an idea as a result of my doctoral research at the University of Exeter. My gratitude goes to Jenna Steventon who guided me through the initial phases of setting this work into a publishable format. Last, but not least, many thanks to my present editor Maria Marsh for her kindness and forbearance in putting up with so many inordinate delays in getting the book into shape and for her close cooperation with me in the final stages of editing and indexing of the text. I'm extremely grateful to all the concerned staff at I.B.Tauris who helped and stood by me in the production of this work. Any errors in the production of this work can be attributed to me alone and I take full responsibility for any and all of the views expressed in this book.

GLOSSARY AND LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ADL: Anti-Defamation League. The chief North American Jewish organization against discrimination and anti-Semitism.

Al-Gama'at al-Islamiyya: Arabic term for the Islamic Groups, umbrella organizations for all the major Islamist-oriented militant groups in Palestine.

Al-Haram al-Sharif: Arabic for the 'Dome of the Rock', the great Umayyad mosque situated on the Temple Mount, and adjacent to the Masjid al-Aqsa.

Al-in 'izal al-shu 'uri: Arabic for 'sensory isolation'.

Al-Jihad al-Islami: Arabic for Islamic Jihad; Palestinian Islamist militant political party.

Al-Liqa: Ecumenical and inter-faith centre based in Bethlehem, West Bank of Palestine and with regional centres in the Galilee area of Israel.

Al-Masjid al-Aqsa: Arabic for the 'Furthest Mosque,' believed to be the place where the Prophet Mohammed was carried on his night journey from Mecca.

Al-Qaeda: The worldwide Islamist network of militant groups that seek to establish Quranic rule based on fundamental Islamic principles that act in opposition to modern Western civilization and hence result in war and conflict mainly in the Middle East and in Central Asia.

Al-Quds: The Arabic for Jerusalem.

Al-Ta'ifa al-Injiliyya al-Usqufiyya al-'Arabiyya: The Arabic term for the Evangelical Episcopal Arab Community (EEAC).

Amutah: An Israeli non-profit organization.

Anastasis: Greek term for the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem.

ANC: African National Congress.

Arab Masibioun: In Arabic, meaning Arab Christians.

Ateret Kobanim: Hebrew for 'Crown of the Priests,' a Zionist Jewish group primarily concerned with preparing the ground for the expected building of the third Jewish Temple on the site of the present al-Aqsa mosque.

Ba'ath: The pan-Arabist (Socialist) party that originated in Damascus and spread across the Syrian Levant and North Africa.

Balfour Declaration: The 1917 statement made by the then British Foreign Minister, Lord James Balfour, declaring the British government in favour of establishing a National Home for the Jews in Palestine, provided this did not compromise the rights of the native Arab inhabitants of the land.

Bantustanization: The process by which the Palestinian people were being confined and restricted in their movements within certain fixed areas or cantons in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. A process also referred to as Cantonization.

CMJ-ITAC: Church Mission to the Jews-Israel Trust of the Anglican Church.

CMS: Church Missionary Society.

CofE: Church of England.

Comunidades di base: In Spanish, the base communities of Latin America that sought to practise liberation theology.

Corpus Separatum: A UN-sponsored international regime, whose main job would be to administer the Old City-Holy City basin so as to ensure unimpeded access and functioning of the Holy Places.

Dar Annadwa Addawliyya: Arabic for the International Centre of Bethlehem, Mitri Raheb's flagship institution dedicated to the

XVI RADICAL CHRISTIANITY IN PALESTINE AND ISRAEL

development and propagation of the Arts and Culture in Bethlehem and the West Bank of Palestine.

DFLP: Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, Marxist-oriented Palestinian liberation movement that split away from the PFLP and is a constituent member of the PLO. Its most famous member was founding leader Nayef Hawatmeh.

Dhimmi: The secondary and oppressed status that minority communities were relegated to during the period of Islamic rule in the Middle East.

EIAG: Ethical Investment Advisory Group of the Church of England (CofE).

Eretz Yisrael: The entire historic biblical land of Israel (in Hebrew).

Fatah: The main Palestinian nationalist organization (also referred to as *Fateh*) constituent of the PLO and long led by Yasir Arafat, now by Mahmud Abbas.

Firman: Turkish Ottoman law passed as per the command of the Sultan.

FOSNA: Friends of Sabeel in North America. Sabeel's main support network spread across the USA and Canada.

GOC: Greek Orthodox Church.

Haganah: Hebrew term for the *Yishuv* defence force that later became the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF).

Harakat al-Muqawama al-Islamiyya: The full Arabic name for the Islamist political movement known by the more popular acronym of Hamas, which grew out of the work of the Egyptian Islamic Brotherhood in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank of Palestine.

ICEJ: International Christian Embassy of Jerusalem. Influential Zionist Christian body in charge of pro-Israel and pro-Jewish support activities worldwide and especially in the Western world.

Injil: Arabic term for the Gospel stories about Jesus Christ of Nazareth.

Intifada: Arabic term for the first major uprising by the Palestinians against the Israelis in Gaza and the West Bank. The *intifada* started in

Gaza and quickly spread to the West Bank. It lasted from 1987 almost right up to the signing of the Oslo Peace Accords in September 1993.

ISM: International Solidarity Movement.

Jabiliyya: The state of ignorance, perceived to be the situation in Arabia before the birth of Islam under the Prophet Muhammad in the seventh century CE.

Jihad: Arabic term for holy war.

Kanizat ar-Rum al-Katulik: Arabic for the Melkite Greek Catholic Church of Antioch.

Knesset: The Israeli Parliament that is situated in Jerusalem on land owned by the GOC of Jerusalem.

Laissez-Faire capitalism: Free Western capitalism that was held responsible for ensuring the wealth and prosperity of Western elite societies at the expense of deprivation and poverty in much of the rest of the world.

IJS: London Jewish Society, the forerunner of the Church Mission to Jews (CMJ).

Maronites: Those Levantine Christians who swore allegiance to the pope while following the rite of the Eastern Syriac tradition of Antioch.

MECC: Middle East Council of Churches.

Melkites: In Arabic, *Malki* or the 'King's men.' The reference here is to the Uniate Greek Catholic Church of Antioch and the entire East. Melkite comes from the Syriac word *Malko* which means 'imperial.' In Arabic, the term used can also be *Maliki* which means the same as the Aramaic-Syriac root word.

MRI: Morally Responsible Investment, an initiative of the Anglican Church in the UK, to put their money only under sound ethical guidelines.

MRTI: Committee for Mission Responsibility Through Investing. The ethical committee in charge of Church monies investment by the Presbyterian Church USA.

Nakba: The Palestinian catastrophe of 1948 that resulted in the mass exodus of Arabs from historic British Mandate Palestine and the birth of the 'new' Jewish state of Israel.

XVIII RADICAL CHRISTIANITY IN PALESTINE AND ISRAEL

OIC: Organization of Islamic Conference. Premier ecumenical and political Islamic grouping with worldwide reach and influence both in the Islamic world as well as in the UN.

OYM: Orthodox Youth Movement, predecessor of the MECC, the Middle East Council of Churches, premier ecumenical body of main-line churches in the Middle East and regional body of the WCC, the World Council of Churches.

Propst: Provost, the traditionally German Lutheran cleric in charge of the foreign non-Arabic faithful of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL).

Palmach: The early commando core of the Israeli *Haganah* defence force.

PCUSA: Presbyterian Church USA.

Pentateuch: The first five books of the Bible, the Mosaic Law, known also as Torah in Hebrew and Taurat in Arabic.

PLO-PNA: Palestine Liberation Organization-Palestinian National Authority.

PLP: Progressive List for Peace. Now defunct Israeli-Arab political party that was active during the 1980s and early 1990s.

PLT: Palestinian Liberation Theology.

Populorum Progressio: Paul VI's Encyclical *Populorum Progressio* was concerned with the question of worldwide poverty and development, particularly in the 'two-thirds world.' It traced 'Third World' poverty to the impacts and continuing end-results of colonialism, neo-colonialism, unfair trade practices and the great inequality in power among the nations.

Qaumi: In Arabic, nation or country.

Qibla: The reputed 'journey' of the Prophet Mohammad from the 'Temple Mount-Dome of the Rock' precincts to 'heaven,' via the medium of a mythical white horse.

Quadragesimo Anno: Pius XI in 1931 issued *Quadragesimo Anno* which affirmed certain Christian attributes in Socialism such as the sharing

of property for the common good, something long advocated by Christian reformers over the ages.

Qur'an: Religious holy book of Islam.

Rerum Novarum: Leo XIII's *Rerum Novarum*, promulgated in 1891, condemned the bad living conditions of the urban poor of Europe. Since then, successive Popes had taken it upon themselves to condemn European liberal capitalism while taking a stand in favour of the poor and the downtrodden.

Rum Urthuduksiya: The Roman Orthodox (in Arabic), reference to Arab Orthodox of both the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem as well as the Antiochian GOC of the Levant, headquartered in Syrian Damascus at present.

Sabra: Hebrew term for native Palestinian and Israeli-born Jewish citizens of the state of Israel.

SACC: South African Council of Churches.

Salah-al-Din: Saladin, the great Kurdish warrior-leader who founded the Ayyubid dynasty and was known as the nemesis of the Western Crusaders.

Shalom: In Hebrew, peace. *Salam*, in Arabic.

Sharia: Islamic law.

Shi'ism: The second major variant of Islamic theology that mainly emanates from Iran.

Shulmanu: The Canaanite term used to refer to the ancient deity that contributed to the evolution of Jerusalem from a little village that contained a cultic shrine to a major Holy City at the centre of three of the world's major faiths.

Shura: Consultation among elders as mandated by the tenets of Islam.

Sitz im Leben: German term meaning 'setting in life.'

State-apparatchiks: Those organs and servants of the state that sought to carry forward the purposes and aims of the nation that gave birth to them.

Status quo (in the Holy Places): The unwritten agreement promulgated by law of the Ottoman Sultan that controls the ground position between the various sects that share the main Holy Places in Israel-Palestine.

Takfir wal-Hijra: Islamist organization in Palestine that was an offshoot of the Muslim Brotherhood and which was committed to achieving the Islamic state by violent and immediate means, thereby forsaking the gradualist approach of the parent organization.

Tenakh: The Bible in Hebrew: initial letters of the Law, the Prophets, the Writings.

UCC: United Church of Christ.

UCCI: United Christian Council of Israel, a body that was active within the state of Israel during the 1970s and was a predominantly Protestant conglomerate body.

UDHR: Universal Declaration on Human Rights (United Nations).

Umayyad: Arab Muslim ruling dynasty that was originally based in Damascus in the Syrian Levant.

Ummah: brotherhood among those of the Islamic faith.

UNSCOP: The United Nations Committee on Palestine; UN Committee set up in 1946 with the aim of achieving a permanent and lasting solution to the vexed issue of the governance of Palestine after the proposed departure of the British in May 1948.

Via Dolorosa: Latin term commonly used to refer to the 'stations of the cross' pathway that leads through the Old City of Jerusalem commemorating the life and sacrifices of Jesus Christ.

Waqf: Muslim religious trust.

Watan: Arabic term for homeland or motherland.

WCC: World Council of Churches.

Yerushalayim: In Hebrew, Jerusalem.

YHWH: Initials usually used to denote Yahweh, God of the Hebrew people and of the Universe.

Yishuv: The Jewish pre-state set-up that sought to lay the framework for a future state of Israel in British Mandate Palestine.

Zabur: Arabic term for the Psalms of David.

ZOA: Zionist Organization of America. Now defunct early Zionist lobbying organization in the US, superseded by influential lobbying groups like the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC).

CHAPTER 1

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

This book has been a study of liberation and contextual theology in Israel-Palestine, seeking to understand this phenomenon in its historical, political, theological, ideological and internationalist context. The two main organizations concerned within this study are the Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Centre in Jerusalem, headed by the Palestinian Anglican Naim Stifan Ateek, and the ICB (Dar Annadwa Addawliyya), led by the Palestinian Lutheran Mitri Raheb.¹ Sabeel had sought to develop a critical Christian response to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict using liberation theology, albeit with a strong Western ecumenical focus. The ICB had an ecumenical Lutheran perspective, with a strong tendency towards politico-cultural and theological contextualization. Raheb had tried to develop a contextual theology that sought to root the political and cultural development of the Palestinian people within their own Eastern Christian context and in light of the effects of the Israeli occupation.

Sabeel and the ICB had sought to transplant politico-theological doctrines developed in other nations of the 'South' to the conflict in Israel-Palestine. The phenomenon of Christian Zionism had contributed to the development of 'liberation theological' approaches in Israel-Palestine. Christian Zionists refused to acknowledge or deal with Christian Arabs and offered outright support to the Israelis. This had generated a reaction both within Palestine and in the West.

The first chapter deals with the historical background of the Palestinian people, which was considered essential to understand the present. The second chapter seeks to trace the ideological framework adopted by the two main subjects of this study, namely liberation theology as well as to a certain extent, contextual theology. Chapters three and four examine Sabeel in detail looking at theology and praxis (chapter three) and the role of Sabeel as a political and advocacy organization for Palestinian rights (chapter four). The next chapter examines the work of Mitri Raheb looking at his theology and his praxis (chapter five). The concluding chapter attempts evaluation in the light of all that has been discussed so far on Palestinian liberation/contextual theology. In the best of interest, this has been the first attempt by a researcher, to critically analyse the work of these two Palestinian theologians in comparison with each other and others, and in the light of the individual and respective theological, political and socio-economic approaches that both of them rely on.

The Religious Importance of Jerusalem

Jerusalem (*al-Quds*), 'the City of God,' as it was known in the terminology of the religious, was an important centre since David's capture of it from the Jebusites in approximately 1000 BCE.² It was the symbol of Jewish hopes for a homeland since the dispersion and a great pilgrimage centre for both Christians and Muslims. Since the fall of Jerusalem to the Babylonians in 587 BCE, the city was ruled by countless non-Jewish regimes right up to 1948. Its importance as a Christian pilgrimage centre began with the almost mythical journey of the mother of Emperor Constantine, Queen Helena, from the imperial capital of Byzantium towards Jerusalem to identify the important sites of the crucifixion and resurrection.

It was as a result of this journey that Constantine authorised the building of the most famous Church in Jerusalem, namely the *Anastasis* (also known as the Church of the Holy Sepulchre to Westerners or the Church of the Resurrection to local Arabs) in 335 CE.³ Christian shrines and institutions multiplied during the roughly three hundred

years of Byzantine Christian rule in the Holy City, so that by the time of the Muslim conquest of Jerusalem, the city had been transformed into a Christian city with representation from almost all parts of the Romano-Christian world. Palestinian Aramaic and Byzantine Greek were the predominant languages in use in the Holy Land during the early Byzantine era. It was interesting to note, in this context, that for the present-day 'Greek' Orthodox clerical hierarchy of the Holy Land, the local 'Arab' Orthodox laity were often referred to and considered as Arabic-speaking Greeks. The implication was therefore that the local population of Palestinian Christians were Greek in origin and could legitimately be ruled over by an ecclesiastical hierarchy, comprised almost exclusively of Greek priests, monks and bishops from Cyprus, Greece and the Aegean islands.⁴

Islamic Jerusalem or *al-Quds* derived its legitimacy from its identification with al-Masjid al-Aqsa (The Further Mosque), considered to be the place where the Prophet Mohammed was carried on his night journey from Mecca.⁵ Muslim conceptions about the holiness of Jerusalem resulted in the building of impressive Mosques and the endowments of *Waqfs* (Muslim religious trusts) all over the city, and particularly on the elevated platform that had once held the Jewish Temples. This building project would prove fatal for the later peace of the Holy City as an area that had been historically avoided by Christians as undeserving of any sanctity was henceforth pushed into the focal point of conflict among all the three main Abrahamic faiths. Many of the greatest works of Islamic architecture surviving from the early Islamic Umayyad period, such as the Dome of the Rock (al-Haram al-Sharif) on the Temple Mount could not had been built without the expertise and help of Byzantine-Christian craftsmen, some possibly attracted to come from the Byzantine capital Constantinople (present day Istanbul) itself.⁶

The arrival of Islam in the Levant resulted in a radical change for the Christian communities of Palestine as they lost legal ownership over all the religious buildings and institutions that they had accumulated during the previous three centuries. Islam, as the second 'hegemonic' monotheistic faith to emerge in the Middle East after Byzantine-Roman oriented Christianity, held that legal and

jurisdictionary ownership over all religious buildings and institutions – *Waqf* of all faiths within the territories under the banner of the crescent belonged to the state.

As a result, the Islamic state possessed the 'sovereign' and indisputable right to close, allocate or confiscate religious buildings within their own dominions at will. Obviously such buildings could not be repaired and rebuilt without prior permission. The building of entirely new Churches within the province of Islam was very difficult to achieve indeed. It was in pursuit of this policy that Saladin closed the Church of the Holy Sepulchre (Church of the Resurrection) in 1187 till he could decide to which Christian faction he could present the keys of the Church to. Much of the struggles between the various Christian factions over status, position and ownership in the Holy Places can be traced, not only as a result of the basic rivalry between the different Christian groupings, but also to the apprehensions about the legal status of their positions and properties under Islam.⁷

The Crusader rule of Jerusalem saw the widespread rebuilding and beautification of the city of Jerusalem, with a great increase in properties owned by the Latin (Roman) Catholic Church.⁸ The Crusader era also saw the displacement of the Byzantine Greek Patriarch in favour of the Rome supported Latin Patriarch in 1099.⁹ The former returned with the re-conquest of Saladin. Saladin (Salah-al-Din), the great Kurdish-Egyptian warrior was the nemesis of the Western Crusaders for many years and the person who ultimately and decisively defeated the Frankish armies of the Crusaders at the Horns of Hattin in 1187 CE. This was also the year when Saladin captured Jerusalem from the Crusaders. History records that Saladin did not repeat the mistake of the Crusaders in committing mass slaughter in the city of Jerusalem. He instead provided the option for the defeated Crusader knights and their followers as well as the clerical, monastical and lay representatives of the Roman church to leave the city in peace, after paying the necessary tribute and ransoms.

Saladin's rule was again beneficial to the Eastern Christian communities who were able to reinstate their privileges lost during the years of Western Crusader rule. The departure of the Latins was followed by the arrival of the Byzantine-sponsored Greek Patriarch to take up

his old forfeited seat in Jerusalem. Saladin was particularly generous to the Eastern Christian representatives, having long noted the emerging and deep schism between Eastern and Western Christians in the Mediterranean region.

Eastern Christians had served on both sides of the Saracen-Crusader divide, and they had fared little better, if not worse under the Western Crusaders than under the Islamic regime preceding them. The Crusaders had, after all, utterly refused to distinguish between Jew, Eastern Christian and Muslim in their initial conquest of the city of Jerusalem, massacring all indiscriminately in a bloodbath so epochal that it was still remembered with popular revulsion in the Arab Levantine consciousness and enshrined in their folklore. Eastern Christians, whether Byzantine Greeks and Arabs, Syrians, Armenians, Copts or Ethiopians found themselves sidelined under the Crusader regime. This Crusader policy was fraught from the very start as local Christians had formed a majority of the native population in Palestine as well as in neighbouring Syria, before and after their invasion of the area.

Among the Eastern Christians, the Maronites alone succeeded in establishing a lasting relationship with the Crusaders, that culminated in being formally accepted into communion with the Latin Church just before the fall of the last Crusader 'kingdom' of Acre, on the coast of Palestine, in 1291. While some Christians (Syrian Maronites and Armenians), particularly those situated along the mountain and coastal route which, the Crusaders had to take to reach Jerusalem from northern Syria (Antioch and Tripoli) aided the Latins in their journey to the 'holy city,' many became quickly disillusioned with their refusal to reinstall the traditional Byzantine clergy in the territories conquered by them from the Muslim rulers.

It was the Crusader interlude that sounded the death knell of the 'majority' Christian populations of the Syrian Levant and of Palestine. Native Syrian Christians never recovered their 'loyalty' in the eyes of their fellow Muslim brethren and rulers, thereby exposing them to intense pressure to convert to Islam, after the final departure of the Latin Crusaders from Palestinian and Syrian soil. The Christian proportion of the population of these regions started to fall drastically

after the Crusader era.¹⁰ The loss of Jerusalem by the Crusaders in 1187 resulted in the gradual restriction of European Christian possessions in Palestine to the coastal strip, ultimately culminating in the successful Arab and Muslim siege of the last Crusader stronghold of Acre in 1270.¹¹

The Third Crusade failed to recover Jerusalem and Pope Innocent III authorised the Fourth Crusade that instead of attacking Palestine and Jerusalem, besieged and occupied Constantinople, thereby inaugurating Latin rule there from 1204 to 1261. No other Crusade succeeded in capturing or retaining Jerusalem for the Western Latins, thereby leaving it to St. Francis of Assisi to cement a bond of trust with Saladin's successors (such as his nephew, al-Malik al-Kamil in July 1219), that would ensure the insertion of his Franciscan friars into the pilgrim towns of Palestine to safeguard Western Latin interests.¹²

From 1250 till about 1675, the Orthodox Patriarch was back in Jerusalem before departing again for Istanbul until the middle of the nineteenth century.¹³ In contrast, the so-called Latin Patriarchate was based in Rome from the fall of the Crusader kingdoms till about 1847 when it was re-established in Jerusalem.¹⁴ This period also coincided with the start of the Protestant mission to the Holy Land and the inauguration of the short-lived Anglo-Prussian Bishopric as a result of the early pioneering work of the joint Church Missionary Society (CMS) and Lutheran mission in Palestine. It was the Anglicans who showed the first expression of interest in establishing a Protestant mission in Palestine. The CMS had plans to establish a permanent mission post in the city of Jerusalem as early as 1821.

The London Jewish Society (LJS), the fore-runner of the later CMJ-Church Mission to the Jews, also had an early interest in the Holy Land from the point of view of converting Palestinian Jewry to Protestant Christianity. The Western Protestant organizations had to wait till the capture of Jerusalem by Mohammad Ali of Egypt in 1831 before they were allowed to enter and establish a permanent mission in 1833. The first British Consul took residence in Jerusalem in 1838 and the first Protestant bishopric was established in Jerusalem under joint British and Prussian supervision in 1841.

Given the fact that the Church of England was Episcopal and the established Lutheran Church in Prussia was not, it was mutually agreed between these Churches that the bishop in Jerusalem would be an Anglican chosen by rotation from the Anglican and Prussian side. It was not until 1845 that the first Anglican Church in the city, Christ Church on Jaffa Road was dedicated.¹⁵ These two nationally supported mission organizations later agreed to mutually split their work in the Holy Land, thereby giving rise to the two separate Anglican and Lutheran dioceses currently present in Israel-Palestine.

The CMS and the Berlin Missionary Association were supported by Great Britain and Prussia (later the Bismarck-unified Germany) respectively as the respective national and established Church missionary organizations of each major European state. The so-called dual bishopric split in 1881. It was estimated that by the 1880s, there were over a hundred schools and educational institutions belonging to various mission organizations in the Holy Land. These schools were attended by pupils belonging to all the communities in Palestine.

As it was often a part of the role of teachers in these mission schools which were run by the missionaries themselves, to engage in proselytisation, the school and orphanage movement directly resulted in the growth of various Protestant congregations in the Holy Land. This ensured that the mission organizations and by implication, schools and charitable institutions would run foul of the predominant GOC in Palestine and the Levant.¹⁶ Again, so as not to run foul of the feelings of the Greek Orthodox Patriarch and Bishops resident in the Holy Land, it had been earlier decided that the Anglican bishop in Jerusalem would be known under the title of the 'Bishop in Jerusalem,' instead of the usual 'Bishop of Jerusalem,' so as not to clash with the recognized Ottoman-era supreme bishopric of the GOC in Jerusalem.¹⁷

In spite of centuries of Islamic rule, Jerusalem, unlike contemporary early Christian cities like Antioch (in today's Turkey, Antakya) and Constantinople (today's Istanbul on the Bosphorus) was able, by and large, to maintain its Christian character. An obvious reason for this was the importance of the city as a pilgrimage destination for

European (Western) Christians through the ages.¹⁸ In addition to the not inconsiderable military power that the Europeans could focus on the Holy Land as and when they wished, the considerable revenues that the Muslim-Turkish rulers of Palestine accrued as a result of Christian pilgrimages to Jerusalem convinced them of the necessity of allowing the Christian Holy Places to function without significant interruption.

In this context, even the victorious return of Saladin could be seen as a justification of this policy, as he very diplomatically refused to exact tit-for-tat revenge on the Crusader occupiers of Jerusalem, offering them very favourable terms of withdrawal and ensuring that Christian holy places and historic Churches were protected, including those institutions built up during the Crusader period. Arab chroniclers had described how Crusader Jerusalem was transformed into a lovely garden city by the money and skills of the Western Franks. Local Arab tribes would have been well aware of the wealth possessed by the Europeans as well as the economic potential to be gained by continuing to allow pilgrim flows to Jerusalem from the West.¹⁹

Muslim and Turkish Rule in Palestine: Impact on the Christians of the Holy Land

The early Arab-Muslim rulers and later Ottoman Turks gave rights of privilege and access to three main Christian groups in Jerusalem, namely the Greek Orthodox, the Armenian Orthodox and the Latin Catholics who were mainly represented since the Middle Ages by the Franciscan Order. *Rum Urthuduksiya* was the term used widely in the Ottoman Empire and even among modern Levantine Arabs to refer to the Greek Orthodox Christians of both Greek and Arab origin in their midst. The term 'Rum' as well as 'Rumi' obviously indicated the relationship of these people with Rome and the Western Christian world in general. A similar usage was the pejorative reference to Levantine Orthodox Christians as 'Melkites' or 'King's men,' as people still loyal to the old order of Byzantine predominance and followers of the 'Roman' Christian faith.²⁰ In 1384, it was recorded that there were

seven different Christian communities resident in the Holy Land.²¹ For geopolitical reasons, the GOC managed to emerge as the pre-eminent ecclesiastical grouping among the varied Christian groups of the Holy Land. The GOC under the 'Ecumenical' Patriarchate of Constantinople was the main and most populous Christian grouping among varied Christian and non-Christian subjects of the erstwhile Ottoman Empire. Hence it was natural for the Ottoman authorities to favour this 'home-grown' Eastern Christian group over 'foreign' Western origin Catholic and Protestant Christianity. In addition, the Ottoman Emperor as successor to the Byzantine Greek Emperor was legally bound to support the GOC in preference to any other in the Empire.²²

It was the Byzantine Patriarch Sophronius who represented the Church when the city capitulated to the Abbasid Caliph 'Omar in the year 637 CE. Many Arab historians and commentators have described in close detail this meeting, which took place after the successful Abbasid campaign to conquer Palestine. Kenneth Cragg reported an interesting apocryphal story from that era that described how the Caliph 'Omar refused to pray within the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, even when invited to do so by the Patriarch Sophronius, as he was afraid to create a situation where future Muslims would lay claim to the territory of the Church and seek to convert it into a mosque in memory of the Caliph.²³ A *firman* was then purported to have been obtained by the Patriarch that gave the possession and protection of the Christian Holy Places to him and his church.²⁴ The need to come to terms with Islam resulted in a peculiar reformulation of Arabic Christianity that superseded the previous Greek form. This would result in ethno-linguistic clashes and political controversies between the Arab laity and the Greek dominated clergy that have continued to the present day.²⁵

It was only after 1516 CE that Jerusalem became part of the Ottoman Empire which by then included Constantinople (later Istanbul), taken by the Turks in 1453 CE. The Ottoman Sultan in his new role as successor to the title of Byzantine Emperor had to contend with the various controversies and infighting of the myriad Christian cults of the Holy Land. The Churches tended to spend more time fighting each

other than they did in countering the ruling authorities in Istanbul. The different Churches and Christian groups of Jerusalem spent most of their time poisoning the ears of the Ottoman authorities in Istanbul, as regards the activities and aspirations of their rival fellow-Christian groups in the Holy City.

The two main sites that were most often fought over in Palestine were the Church of the Holy Sepulchre (The Church of the Resurrection) in Jerusalem and the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem. This was in addition to the myriads of holy places spread throughout the land that were either equally venerated by the different sects, religions and groups or else were in shared custody or were either in one or other's custody, whose ownership rights and management were disputed by other religious and sectarian groups in the land. It was such inter-Church fighting that resulted in the development of the status quo, the set of Ottoman *firman*s that sought to lay out the agreed position with regard to inter-Church relations in Palestine.²⁶

This gave autonomy to Christian communities and allowed them to run their own internal affairs, especially those relating to religious and civil matters. The entire period of Turkish rule lasting 400 years saw the three main churches, namely Greek Orthodox, Armenian Orthodox and the Latin Catholic jockeying for power and recognition. The high-water mark of Catholic influence was reached in 1740, when Bourbon France managed to sign a Capitulation Treaty with the Ottomans by which the superior position of the Franciscans in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre was confirmed. This position was strongly opposed by the other established Churches and in 1757 a new *firman* was promulgated by Sultan Abdul Majid that saw the re-establishment of the pre-eminence of the Orthodox and created the situation which had largely continued to the present day.²⁷

Before the Ottoman conquest of Palestine in 1517 CE, Palestinian Christians had an identity that was Arabic in their outlook and mentality. After reunification of the Asian Levant with Constantinople via the Ottoman Empire, the Patriarchate of Constantinople again emerged as the political centre of Orthodoxy. This meant that the Greeks again acquired supreme influence over the Jerusalem Patriarchy, as the Ottoman rulers preferred to deal with a centralised authority

in Istanbul than with an assortment of Patriarchs and Bishops scattered across their Empire. This induced the Orthodox Patriarchs of Jerusalem to shift their place of residence to Constantinople, so that they could be near the all-powerful Ecumenical Patriarch and his secular Greek allies.²⁸

A decree by Patriarch Germanos of Constantinople after the Ottoman conquest of Syria, which also included Palestine, was that henceforth no native-born Syrian and by extension any Arab Orthodox should be allowed into Orthodox monastic life, which ensured that there would be no Arab bishops in the whole of the non-Greek Levant for a period of 400 years from that date. This policy was to have grave consequences for Orthodox pastoral and communal life in Palestine.²⁹

The rapid development of Jerusalem as well as the other port cities of Palestine in the later nineteenth century ensured greater prosperity for the Christians of Palestine as they started becoming more active in the municipal affairs of various Palestinian cities and Jerusalem in particular.³⁰ Christian Arabs were involved in the rise and development of Arab nationalism.³¹ Michel Aflaq, a Syrian Christian, established the pan-Arabist Ba'ath (Socialist) party in Damascus that was aimed at the secular regeneration of the Arab people.³² After the widespread Muslim, Turkish and Druze massacres of Christians in the Syrian Levant during the period from the 1840s to the 1860s, local Christians came to view secular, progressive and liberal 'Arab Nationalism,' as the only suitable weapon in their hands against Islamic irredentism.³³

The Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem

The GOC had always been the oldest of Jerusalem's churches and it was referred to as the 'mother of all churches' in the Holy Land. The Jerusalem Patriarchate traced its origins to St. James, brother of Jesus Christ. This was a practice claimed by most of the historic churches of Palestine. Most Palestinian Christians and indeed most Palestinian people today, irrespective of religious affiliation, owed their origins to the Greco-Roman Church within the early Roman Empire as well as the later Byzantine Empire. As the GOC was the mother church of the

Eastern Roman (Byzantine) Empire, this church became the major stake-holder in Greco-Roman Palestine.³⁴ It had pride of place as one of the largest and wealthiest of denominations. One of the most recent counts of Orthodox faithful in Israel, Palestine and Jordan reckoned on a population of 300,000. This would include the recent Russian-origin migrants to Israel, a good number of whom did not possess sufficient Judaic heritage and were seen as Orthodox.

Purely Arabic-speaking Orthodox, generally known as *Rum Urthuduksiya* (in Arabic) would number probably slightly more than 100,000 in the combined territories of the Holy Land. In the city of Jerusalem, the church was one of the main property owners with even the Israeli Knesset (parliament) being located on land leased from the church.³⁵ In the West Bank of Palestine and Jerusalem in particular, the Arab Orthodox had always formed the largest Christian community. The GOC in the Holy Land (comprising Israel, Jordan and the Palestinian Territories) was made up of 25, 30 and 15 parishes respectively. The Church had about 100 married parish priests as well as 113 monks and bishops associated with the governing body of the Church, known as the Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre.³⁶

The period of the British mandate, generally seen as the crux of all future socio-political developments in Palestine, was considered a good period for the Churches in general. A 'Christian' regime was in power, for the first time in more than six hundred years. This period saw the revival of the clergy-laity controversy in the GOC between the Greek and Cypriot-origin clergy and monks on one side and the Palestinian Arab laity on the other. The mandate authorities tried to keep a neutral stand, but under pressure from the Hellenic republic seemed to favour the status quo in the holy places and the situation where the Greek origin clergy were on top.³⁷

In spite of constant appeals from the 'pro-Arabist' lobby within the British establishment as well as from the prominent Arab citizenry of Palestine, the mandate authorities did not feel the need to interfere in the status quo in the holy places and consequently the conditions remained as they were favouring the Greeks in the Brotherhood of the

Holy Sepulchre, the pre-eminent Greek monastic group in Palestine. The commission of enquiry appointed by the British Mandate high commissioner in Palestine, headed by Sir Anton Bertram and J. W. A. Young in 1924 to look into the conflict within the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem recommended modifications in the internal structure of the Patriarchate and greater participation by the Arab laity, but its recommendations were never carried out, again due to British fears about large-scale resistance from the Greek-speaking monastic fraternity within the Church.

This failure of the then-Palestine government to arrive at a mutually acceptable solution to the vexed issue of the GOC meant that the Orthodox Arabs were forced to rely more and more on the emerging Arab national movement in the region, and to seek sympathy and collaboration with their Muslim co-nationals within Palestine, to further their aims. The fall of imperial Russia during the First World War and immediately after, meant that the Orthodox Arabs of the Levant lost their one main external patron. The Greek clerics of Palestine, meanwhile, were careful not to antagonise their British overlords, while maintaining links with the Hellenistic world. Their support, on various occasions, for British policies in Palestine, contrasted with the increasingly nationalistic overtones and approach adopted by the native Palestinian Orthodox people and leadership, and this served to further entrench the British desire not to force through a solution unacceptable to the 'Greek' Orthodox hierarchy of the Holy Land.³⁸

Israel had also sought to continue the 'status quo' in the Holy Places. The 1990s and the mid-2000s saw major issues of disagreement breaking out between the Greek monastic community and the ethnic Arab Orthodox community as well as the Israelis on the other side, over the take-over of church property in the Old City. The infamous St. John's Hospice issue served to antagonise the 'Greek' Orthodox clergy and hierarchy as well as serving to create a sort of temporary truce and unity between the estranged clerical and laity factions within the GOC in the Holy Land.³⁹ The St. John's Hospice incident and resultant revelations of the extent of Israeli government support for the settlers caused a lot of heart-searching among the

church groups, particularly those that had not been averse to dealing with the State authorities in the past.

That these incidents should have taken place during the Easter week of 1990, was another cause for shame and alarm. It was understood then that if the Israelis would not hesitate to conduct such outrages during a period when the attention of the worldwide Christian community was focused on Jerusalem, then there could be no time when the property and wealth of the Churches could possibly be safe from attack and confiscation. This act of aggression against the 'status quo' also helped to change the attitude of the clergy of the Brotherhood towards the Israeli state. After this incident, the Church was forced to take a more serious note of the nationalistic aspirations of the Palestinian people who formed the laity of the Church.⁴⁰

The St. John's Hospice Incident

St. John's Hospice was a building owned by the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate near the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Through a series of 'offshore' transactions, Jewish settlers, aided by the State of Israel, managed to 'acquire' ownership of this building. It eventually emerged that *Ateret Kohanim* (Hebrew for 'Crown of the Priests,' a Zionist Jewish group primarily concerned with preparing the ground for the expected building of the third Jewish Temple on the site of the present *al-Aqsa* mosque), the right-wing settler group mainly based in the Old City of Jerusalem, had bought the property from a Panamanian registered company, F.D.C, Ltd. The original Jerusalem-based 'protected' lessee of the property, an Armenian man named Mardiros Matossian, was supposed to have 'sold' it to the above-mentioned company for a huge sum, estimated to be within the range of US \$3.5 million to \$5 million. The lessee however had no legal right to 'sell' the property that had been leased to him or his family by the GOC.

The Patriarchate thus insisted that what had transpired between Matossian and the Panamanian company was way beyond the rights invested with the former lessee of the property, who had no 'rights' to sell the leased building. The incident took place on April 11, 1990, in the middle of the Holy Week, the most important week in the

Christian calendar of the Holy City. One hundred and fifty armed settlers pushed their way into the St. John's Hospice building and proceeded to celebrate the Passover in the immediate vicinity of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Their forceful take-over of the building accompanied by police and other security services precipitated and created a major incident in the Old City of Jerusalem and among the Christians therein. It soon transpired that the Ministry of Housing of the Government of Israel had financed this operation to the score of 40 per cent of the total budget. The deal had also been 'encouraged' by leading figures in the then Israeli administration such as the highly hawkish (and militarily notorious) former Israeli Army chief Ariel Sharon.

The official government line was that the Hospice was not a holy site and that Jews had a right to settle anywhere they wanted in the Old City of Jerusalem by legal means. The then Mayor of Jerusalem, Teddy Kollek, strongly objected to the development, which had apparently gone ahead without his knowledge. He argued that the sale undermined the delicate relationships between the various Old City communities, and also pushed Christians into further identifying with the Palestinian national struggle. While, for many Palestinians, what had happened appeared to be plain provocation on the part of the ruling authorities, the Israelis themselves seem to have misunderstood the overwhelming sensitivity of the whole issue and its ramifications for Christians worldwide.

The issue was immediately referred to the Israeli High Court of Justice, but subsequent judgements by the court in favour of evicting the settlers were never carried out completely with the matter still remaining in litigation and settlers still occupying the building, pending a verdict on its final status. The St. John's Hospice incident revealed a hitherto not often seen aspect of international politics with respect to the Christians of Israel-Palestine. American politicians, Congress members and Church leaders were particularly irritated by the revelations of the extent of covert government funding for the fundamentalist Jewish group to take over the building situated right next to the Holy Sepulchre Church in the heart of the Old City. It was quickly understood from this move that any covert

or in this case rather circumstantially public action by Israel to alter the mosaic that made up Jerusalem's multi-religious character would have repercussions in the US and this in turn might cast a shadow on the ability of the American state to bankroll the Jewish state.

The US Administration under President George H. W. Bush actually did show their protest at the incident in the early 1990s by symbolically deducting the exact sum believed to have been allocated by the Israeli ministry of Building and Housing to the settler group, for the purpose of purchasing the custodial rights over the building from the former lessee. They deducted this sum from the annual general foreign aid package to Israel.⁴¹

Greek-Palestinian Clergy-Laity Issues

A peculiarity of the Greek Church was that whereas the clergy was preponderantly of Cypriot-Greek origin, the laity was Palestinian Arab in ethnicity. This was often an occasion for conflict within the church itself. The Church leadership, being composed almost entirely of Greek clergy, had often felt that cooperation and even compromise with the ruling authorities was better to the path of confrontation followed by the Palestinian Arab laity. The Greek conception of local laity was as Arabic-speaking Orthodox which was in keeping with the Eastern Orthodox world view of the common brotherhood of all people of Byzantine origin. The laity, on the other hand were always determined to exert their identity and separation from the Greeks as Arabs.⁴² In the early twentieth century, there was an overwhelming demand by the local population for a greater say and control in the affairs of the Patriarchate.

The laity as loyal Palestinians had never been able to isolate themselves from general Palestinian aspirations which included liberation struggles against the British, partially against the Jordanians, and later, with full vigour against the Israelis. Memories of the 1948–1967 Jordanian era certainly remained fresh in the minds of many Greeks when the Jordanians sought to indigenise the Church leadership. The Jordanians in 1958 tried to indigenise the GOC leadership by passing

laws that stated that the newly appointed Greek bishops had to be Jordanian citizens and conversant in Arabic while Arab bishops must be ordained and appointed to the synod of the Church.

As a result of these laws, the first ever Arab bishop was elected to the Confraternity that controls Greek Orthodox religious interests in the Holy Land. The Greeks got around these laws by a series of diplomatic manoeuvrings, and they were quite relieved when the Israelis replaced the Jordanians as the ruling authorities in Jerusalem. The Orthodox Church in Jerusalem remained the only Church that had refused to fully or at least partially indigenise itself in accordance with ground realities. The Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre, the pre-eminent Greek monastic order that controlled affairs of the Greek Church in Jerusalem was never entirely open to members of the Palestinian Arab community. The Clergy were even willing to appeal to Athens to support their position vis-à-vis certain political disputes that the Church was involved in with the Israelis as well as the Palestinian National Authority (PNA).⁴³

In fact, Orthodox Christians were often in the forefront of the nationalist struggle against the mandate as well as in exile as part of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) and other liberation organizations. The Greek Patriarch and clergy ruling in Jerusalem and isolated within the narrow confines of the Greek speaking Orthodox world, could often not understand or empathise with such radical aspirations on the part of their laity.

The laity, if allowed, would have been willing to set up an autonomous Arab Orthodox church controlled by local people, as was prevalent in other parts of the Middle East, notably Syria and Lebanon. The GOC of Antioch, the major Orthodox Church prevalent in Syria and Lebanon had been able to ensure that a cleric of native Levantine Arab origin would be at its head since the late nineteenth century. This Church as well as its sister Eastern Rite Catholic Churches had an upper hierarchy as well as clerical fraternity dominated by native Levantine Arabs.

The status of the Jerusalem Patriarchate within the Greek world as the first Patriarchate in Christendom, older even than Constantinople, and the monastic group known as the Brotherhood of the Holy

Sepulchre, always prevented the local Palestinian Arab laity from gaining control over their own church. All these factors contributed towards the Greek clergy adopting a decidedly unenthusiastic approach towards the rise of Palestinian nationalism as well as (in some cases) collaborating more than was necessary with either the Jordanians or the Israelis, who were equally, if not more willing to repress such a phenomenon.⁴⁴

The clergy were afraid that the development and growth of Palestinian statehood would naturally result in shifting the balance of power within the church from the Greek side towards the native Palestinian leadership. This had always been a perennial fear of the Church stretching right back to Ottoman times. The GOC, from the time that 'Greek' ascendancy had been ensured in the church, sought to maintain this dominance by all means at her disposal, fair and foul. The self-perceived pre-eminent duty of the Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre, the Greek monastic order that controlled the affairs of the GOC in the Holy Land, had always been to ensure that the Holy Places were open for pilgrims, Greeks and other Europeans and that religious service was conducted in Greek, the holy language of the church.

The needs of the indigenous Christian population had always played second fiddle to these grand aspirations on the part of the foreign clergy.⁴⁵ It was this division between the Patriarchate and the local Arab faithful that resulted in the growth of other denominations in Palestine, in particular the Melkite Greek Catholics, the Latin (Roman) Catholics and the various Protestant groups. The Greek Catholics, also known as the 'Melkites,' or 'King's men,' from the Arabic term for King (*Malki*), formed the majority among the Christians in the state of Israel proper today, mainly based in the Galilee region, in the north of the country. They had been since their formation in the eighteenth century, a Church entirely based on an indigenous clergy and hierarchy, while under the overall authority of the Vatican. The Latin and Greek Catholics in combination formed a majority of the local Christian population in the entire Holy Land.

These groups had the advantage of having substantial numbers of indigenous clergy, and a liturgy based on the local language as well.

It is interesting to note that on the political stage in Palestine, the clergy of non-Orthodox Melkite and Uniate (Eastern Rite Churches in communion with Rome-Eastern Catholic churches that follow Orthodox liturgy) Churches had traditionally been much more active as well as pro-Palestinian while the Orthodox Churches like the Greeks and Armenians had remained reticent in this regard. This in turn had contributed to a subtle shift in the political influence of the Uniate Churches, much in excess of their actual strength on the ground.

It was the lack of adequate reform within the 'mother' Orthodox Church of the Holy Land that forced many of this church's members to leave and join other more progressive religious groups in Palestine. This reason was also coupled with the insistence on the Greek hierarchy within the Holy Land to protect their own prerogatives, often at the expense of the welfare and legitimate aspirations of the native Arab Orthodox faithful of Palestine.⁴⁶ The Catholics of Palestine owe their present Patriarchal status to the Ottoman Statute of 1847 that re-established the Latin patriarchate of Jerusalem. The Latin Catholics developed rapidly after this development and by the early mandate period had become the second largest Christian community in the Holy Land. The end of the mandate saw the Latins poised as the community with the widest network of institutions among all the Christian Communities of Palestine.

It was only after the *Nakba* (Palestinian catastrophe of 1947–48 that saw hundreds of thousands of Arab Palestinian people driven into exile) that the indigenisation of the Latin Catholic clergy started to take effect. This was in part due to the exigencies of the new situation with an Arab nationalist government in power in Amman as well as the new guidelines that proceeded from Rome after Vatican II. Despite having a preponderance of Arab parish priests since the middle of the twentieth century, the Latin Patriarchate had to wait till 1987 for a native Palestinian (albeit, a heavily Europeanised Michel Sabbah), to become Patriarch. As in the case of the Greeks, the popular demand for an Arab Patriarch to lead the Catholic faithful in the Holy Land met with heavy opposition from the European Catholic orders based in Jerusalem and other parts of the Holy Land.⁴⁷

The Early History of Christian Zionism in the Holy Land

The ground for British rule in Palestine was prepared by a mixture of colonial politics as well as an ardent Protestant Judaeo-Christian restorationist belief on the part of many late nineteenth and early twentieth century British administrators and rulers. Belief that the Jews should be restored to Palestine was a recurrent theme in Protestant ideological debates in the early and late nineteenth century. Britain as the premier imperial nation of the nineteenth century had a special role to play in this context as she was the only nation capable of helping to establish Jewish rule in the Ottoman territories of Syrian Palestine. Ironically this attitude on the part of select members of the British establishment could have been triggered by the Egyptian invasion of Napoleon in 1799.

Napoleon's goal was to build an empire in the Middle East at the cost of the 'sick man of Europe,' the Turkish Ottoman Empire. He also had his eyes on the British Indian Empire and the vital sea routes through the Gulf of Suez. Napoleon's actions prompted the British authorities to take much more interest in the fertile Levant and in Egypt than they had previously thought necessary, culminating in the British protectorate over Egypt later in the nineteenth century. Napoleon also included a proclamation towards the end of his campaign (April 16, 1799 after a victory on Mount Tabor) in which he became the first political-military leader to advocate a Jewish state in the then newly liberated territories of Palestine. His proclamation, meant as it were, to secure the loyalties of millions of Sephardic Jews scattered across the Mediterranean, North Africa and India, came a hundred years too soon as there was no appropriate Jewish Zionist body that could have acted on his promise.

Napoleon, in this context, was mimicking Cyrus the Great of Persia who had issued an edict allowing the Jews in Babylonian exile to return to their homeland in 539 BCE.⁴⁸ It seemed doubly ironic that Napoleon, a confirmed atheist, should herald a proclamation for the return of the Jews to Palestine, a deed that would resound amongst Jewish, Zionist and Christian Zionist circles in the following century and a half to come. Modern Christian Zionism could be

dated precisely to the establishment of the London Jews Society (LJS) in 1809. The LJS, while first formed as a philo-Semitic organization, dedicated to humanitarian work among the oppressed and depressed Jews of London, later came to support Jewish restoration to Palestine. It was the LJS that first linked British missionary zeal and evangelical endeavour with the purposes of Jewish 'restorationism' in Palestine as the twin pillars which supported Christian Zionism in the UK. Early British Christian Zionists were united in their literalist belief in the reading of the Testaments, a 'covenantal premillennialist eschatology' and a very strong commitment to evangelise the Jewish people, wherever they were in the world.

While there were many significant early Christian Zionist leaders in the UK, the most prominent personality for the purposes of this study from both the religious as well as political view was Anthony Ashley-Cooper, the Seventh Earl of Shaftesbury, whose strong evangelical convictions also resulted in equally strong 'restorationist' views. Anthony Ashley-Cooper was a man intensely interested and active in many different facets of public life. He was more remembered for much legislation passed in mid-nineteenth century Britain towards factory reform and the poor laws. The focus of this work on Shaftesbury related to his advocacy of various evangelical and missionary views, particularly with regard to the Jewish 'restorationism' in Ottoman Palestine. As evidence for this, reference can be made to a famous quotation of Lord Shaftesbury:

The Turkish Empire is in rapid decay; every nation is restless; all hearts expect some great things ... No one can say that we were anticipating prophecy; the requirements of it (prophecy) seem nearly fulfilled; Syria 'is wasted without an inhabitant'; these vast and fertile regions will soon be without a ruler, without a known and acknowledged power to claim domination. The territory must be assigned to some one or other; can it be given to any European potentate? To any American colony? To any Asiatic sovereign or tribe? Were there aspirants from Africa to fasten a demand on the soil from Hamath to the river of Egypt? No, no, no! There is a country without a nation; a nation without

a country. His own once loved, nay, still loved people, the sons of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob.⁴⁹

Shaftesbury had influence with others in the contemporary British political establishment with similar political, if not religious views, such as Lord Palmerston (the then foreign secretary and a close relative of Shaftesbury's), David Lloyd George and Lord Balfour (two men who came to power in Great Britain well after the death of Shaftesbury, but who were responsible for translating his wishes regarding the Jewish colonisation of Palestine into actual political reality).⁵⁰ The seed sown by the intensely evangelical Shaftesbury and others had its flowering at the end of the First World War, when a letter was sent confirming what would be official British government policy for the next forty years. Arthur Balfour wrote to Lord Rothschild:

Dear Lord Rothschild, I had much pleasure in conveying to you, on behalf of His Majesty's Government, the following declaration of sympathy with Jewish Zionist aspirations which was submitted to, and approved by, the Cabinet. His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country. I should be grateful if you would bring this declaration to the knowledge of the Zionist Federation. Yours sincerely, Arthur James Balfour.⁵¹

Lord Walter Rothschild, the Second Baron Rothschild and son and heir of the first ever Jewish peer of the UK, was also an avid supporter of the Zionist enterprise as well as a close confidante and friend of Chaim Avriel Weizmann, the point man for all Zionist aspirations with the British Government, before; during and after the Great War of 1914–18. Rothschild was a Liberal Member of Parliament from

1899 to 1910. The letter quoted above was directly addressed to him at his London address and showed the importance that was given to this unassumingly shy man, more devoted to zoology and the collection of exotic animals than to the more mundane affairs of his family's historic banking business.⁵²

Weizmann was a chemist based at the University of Manchester who discovered how to synthesize acetone, used in the manufacture of cordite, an explosive substance crucial to the allied war effort in the First World War. Weizmann arrived in the UK in 1903, becoming a British citizen in 1910 and was the director of the British Admiralty laboratories from 1916–19, a critical period in the First World War. He was active in British Zionist circles, almost from the minute he arrived in the UK. Weizmann was involved with the Manchester Zionist Society, during the period of his residence at the University of Manchester. It was during this period that he got to know Arthur James Balfour, a local candidate for the Conservative Party during the British General Election of 1905–06. Balfour had previously been Prime Minister when the so-called Uganda Proposal was on the table, an idea put forward by the then British Government to set aside a piece of land in British East Africa (today's Uganda; again one must assume, without the permission or indeed knowledge of the native tribes and inhabitants of that region) for the purposes of resettlement of East European Jews.

Weizmann was strongly against this proposal; one of the original reasons for his coming to the UK had been to educate Jewish public opinion against this very English colonialist African settlement proposal. His contact with Balfour was meant to dissuade him from supporting this proposal, as well to seek to convince him of the need to facilitate the adoption of Palestine as a proposed 'national home' of the Jewish people of Europe. Weizmann's contacts with Balfour as well as somewhat later with David Lloyd George proved crucial to getting the war-time British Government to provide Cabinet sanction and approval to the plan of bringing Palestine within the post-war mandate of British influence as well as granting the European Jewish people the right to establish a national home therein. As David Lloyd George, who became Prime Minister of Great Britain in 1916,

somewhat cynically and realistically stated, 'Acetone converted me to Zionism.' This was the background behind the so-called 'Balfour Declaration' of November 2, 1917.⁵³

The British Mandate Period

The British occupied Jerusalem as part of the Palestine campaign against the Turks in 1917. They immediately inherited the mantle of the Ottoman Emperor as residuary custodians of the Holy Places in Jerusalem and Palestine. The Palestine Mandate was established by the authority of the League of Nations in 1922 and this was entrusted to the British as the ruling authorities in Palestine. While the so-called Mandate for Palestine was allocated by the League of Nations to the United Kingdom in 1920, the 'text' of the Mandate document was only approved by the League in July 1922, and was timed to come into effect formally in September 1923, two months after the signing of the treaty of Lausanne.

The British, meanwhile, had passed their own Palestine 'Order-in-Council' Act of 1922, which along with subsequent Orders-in-Councils as well as rulings of the Government of Palestine provided the constitutional framework within which the Christian communities in Jerusalem and Palestine functioned. Article 13 of the Mandate document stated clearly that the Mandate was solely in charge of 'all responsibility in connection with the Holy Places and religious buildings or sites in Palestine, including that of preserving existing rights and securing free access to the Holy Places.' Article 14 also spoke of the need to ensure the appointment of a special commission that would be charged with ensuring that the rights and claims of the different religious communities with reference to the Holy Places was properly studied and their rightful position determined and honoured. Proposals to get this commission going under League of Nations auspices never worked out due to deadlock in the Councils of the League over the ultimate composition and leadership of the proposed Commission and its various sub-committees. As a result, the ultimate authority responsible for solving disputes in the Holy Places devolved completely on the British Mandate power.

In accordance, in 1924, an Order-in-Council was published that sought to withdraw all cases from the law courts of Palestine that dealt with disputes in the Holy Places, and vested these powers in the High Commissioner. The British High Commissioner in Palestine would henceforth be responsible for monitoring the 'peace' in the Holy Places and appointing any future commissions of investigation into any issues so arising from conflict in the aforesaid Holy Places.⁵⁴

After more than seven hundred years, a 'Christian' power was in sole dominion of the Holy Land, and the British were perceived at first by the Arabs and Jews of Palestine as an army of liberation. The people were fed up with Turkish rule and the exigencies of the war in Palestine. Famine too was stalking the land. In addition, both Arabs as well as Jews believed that the British would help either community in establishing an independent state in Palestine. One of the mistakes made by the British in Palestine, in this context, was that they promised themselves to two brides, both of whom hated each other. As a result the bridegroom was made to suffer.⁵⁵ One of the first signs that the post-War British Government was committed to an essentially Zionist approach in the Mandate was the appointment of Sir Herbert Samuel (a committed Zionist Jew) as the first High Commissioner of Palestine (1920–25).⁵⁶

As far as the European Catholic powers were concerned, while they might not be entirely satisfied with British 'Protestant' control of the Holy Land, at least, in their view, the situation was better than when Jerusalem was under the Turks. The Catholic powers of Europe were committed to supporting the Latins in trying to improve their position in the Holy Places. Under the British, they could be at least sure that the position of the Latins did not get any worse. As far as the Orthodox were concerned, the status quo position in the Holy Places as established by the Ottoman *firman* of 1852, needed to be adhered to and they expected the British as the mandatory power to follow these requirements.⁵⁷

The Protestants, as one among the smallest of Palestinian Christian groups, certainly hoped for preferential treatment at the hands of the British, something that they were doomed to be disappointed in. The British tried to preserve a policy of strict impartiality, favouring

neither Jew, Arab, Christian nor Muslim on paper. While some British were known to have openly identified with and supported the Arabs of Palestine and still there were those who supported the Jews, the majority seem to have preserved a strict class consciousness and kept separate from the 'natives,' simply preferring to despise them all equally.

A common though probably not universal feeling among British civil servants and military men in the British Mandate government can be summed up in the statement:

I dislike them all equally... Arabs and Jews and Christian, in Syria and Palestine, they were all alike, a beastly people. The whole lot of them is not worth a single Englishman!⁵⁸

In practice, Western educated Jews and Arabs, mainly Christians as well as Muslims, prospered under British rule with the rapid expansion and modernisation of Palestine. Protestant Christians in particular benefitted from British rule. The good education that they received in CMS mission schools as well as the further education opportunities available further afield in Beirut or Cairo or at universities in the West, enabled them to return and pursue meaningful and rewarding careers in British Mandate government service in Palestine.

The League of Nations sought to wind up its mission in 1946, to make way for the formation of the United Nations. It recognized that by so doing, its mandate with regard to various 'mandated' territories would end. The UN system which followed the League provided for the establishment of an 'international trusteeship' system that would sought to take care of those territories that had been under some form of British Mandate government. While the British were willing to conclude individual agreements as regards trusteeship with most of the territories under its control, a special exemption was made as regards Transjordan and Palestine.

The British recognized the independence of Transjordan in the so-called Treaty of Alliance signed with the Hashemite monarchy on March 22, 1946. As regards Palestine, the British Government was unsure about the policy to be followed as there were two competing

nationalisms-that of the Palestinian Arabs as well as the Jewish pre-State *Yishuv* (Jewish community in Palestine, before independence in 1948), that were at war for supreme rights to the new state. As a result, in April 1947, the British Government referred the question of Palestine to the UN, with the understanding that they would ask the UN General Assembly to make any suitable recommendations as regards the future government of Palestine.

They admitted that their mandate in the Holy Land had become unworkable and they were powerless as to change the terms under which their rule had proceeded over the last thirty or so years. The UN, in accordance, set up the Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP) to look into the whole question. This commission which submitted its report within four months recommended by majority decision the partition of Palestine into two independent states, an Arab and Jewish one, with Jerusalem under a special regime. It was recommended that the two proposed states should, while being fully independent, also be united by a special economic union, after a transitory period of two years under so-called 'special arrangements.'⁵⁹

The UNSCOP proposals were adopted by the General Assembly on November 29, 1947. They provided for the maintenance of the status quo in all its various forms, as it had been understood by the various communities and religious groups of Palestine. The proposals for Jerusalem involved the establishment of a *Corpus Separatum* under an UN-sponsored international regime, whose main job would be to administer the Old City-Holy City basin so as to ensure unimpeded access and functioning of the Holy Places. The terms of the UNSCOP report were accepted by the *Yishuv*, but rejected by the Arab states. Late 1947 and early to mid-1948 were characterized by fighting in the Holy Land, as Jews and Arab forces fought each other for rights to the whole land.

The Mandate, meanwhile, expired on May 14, 1948 and the state of Israel was proclaimed with new Israeli as well as Trans-Jordanian forces occupying West and East Jerusalem respectively. Both sides had no interest in authorising an international regime to take charge of Jerusalem as a whole, with both sides eventually annexing their respective portions of East and West Jerusalem.

The Israelis formally proclaimed Jerusalem as their capital in January 1950 and in April 1950, the West Bank and East Jerusalem was annexed to Jordan. The competing interests of both states in securing the city of Jerusalem for either one proved disastrous for the interests of the Christians of Jerusalem. Many Jerusalem Christians became refugees, as their West Jerusalem quarters were confiscated by the Israelis. The Churches of Jerusalem owned much property in the Western parts of the city, now under the control of the Israelis. Christian holy places and monastic and priestly residences were almost entirely in the Jordanian half of the city. Jerusalem Christians therefore in many instances found themselves almost always in the line of fire as they sought to maintain ties between their properties in the West of the city and residences in the East.⁶⁰

The Jordanian Period

The Jordanian era on the whole was a period of mixed gains as well as losses for the Arab Christians of the Holy Land. Arab Christians as well as the majority Muslims were both part and parcel of the same Middle Eastern culture. Almost the entire inhabitants of the region had been of Greco-Aramaic cultural and religious background, before the proselytization policies of successive Islamic regimes compelled a majority of the population of the Levant to gradually convert over the passage of hundreds of years.

While they had the advantage of being able to live under a brotherly Arab compatriot regime, they also had to put up with suspicions directed against them because they were Christian and hence, by connotation, pro-Western. While Christians were wise enough to accept the imposition of Islam as the official faith of the Jordanian Kingdom, they also risked losing many of the privileges that they had become accustomed to over the past decades of British rule. One of the first repercussions was the loss of Christian holy days from the list of officially sanctioned public holidays.

Strict restrictions were placed on the activities of Western mission organizations in the West Bank and Jerusalem. A special feature of the Jordanian era were the series of laws passed by the State that sought to

limit the rights of Christians in the Kingdom to buy property, expand as well as engage in unrestricted social and charitable activities. Two laws introduced in the 1950s, the Charity Associations Law (No. 36, February 16, 1953) and the Law of Maintaining Properties by Religious Personalities (No. 61, April 16, 1953) were singled out for particular criticism and protest by the Christian authorities. Another very sensitive issue for Christians was the broad network of Christian schools and higher education establishments built across the West Bank and Jerusalem that were the target of control by the Jordanians in their Public Education Law, published April 16, 1955.

Many of the foreign mission organizations, Protestant and Catholic as well as the Orthodox, relied on the education network to spread their mission, message and values across to the next generation of Palestinian students and Christian schools had always been hugely popular as well as over-subscribed by members of all communities in Palestine. The Jordanian proposal to 'nationalise' the education curriculum so as to ensure 'Arabization,' meant a definite lowering of standards in the hitherto largely successful attempts at inculcating European values and culture as well as a European system of education in the state of Palestine.⁶¹

The growth of the ecumenical movement was fostered by resistance to the so-called Public Education Law that sought to nationalise the Christian public school education in the West Bank, thereby interfering with the Western Christian oriented scheme of teaching in these schools. The Jordanian era marked the growth of Arab nationalism in the Arab world and Jordan was not immune from these tendencies. It was expected that Arab Nationalism should have had a special relationship with Islam, a relationship that could also turn adversarial as witnessed in countries like Syria and Egypt. Political Islam in Jordan was always linked to the Hashemite monarchy that often used such mass-based forces such as the Muslim Brotherhood to counter the impact of Arab nationalists as a power behind the scenes in Jordan. As a result, 'secular' Arab nationalists also had to make an opportunist alliance with Islamist forces as and when they chose in the interest of overall stability in the monarchy. This phenomenon put an increasing amount of pressure on the Palestinian and East Bank Christians to conform

to the system or face the price of greater 'Islamist' scrutiny of their institutions and affairs. One advantage for the Christians was the close links maintained between Christian higher dignitaries in the trans-Jordanian Kingdom and the person of the Hashemite monarch in the role of the late King Hussein. Christians were also equally active in the opposition parties and organizations working against the one party state in Jordan.

The Jordanians did everything they could to dilute the sectarian identification of the Christians with their native towns and villages, seeking to change town and municipal borders in the West Bank so as to eliminate the danger of collective Christian 'political' pressure groups forming. This was particularly the case in the so-called Christian circuit of Ramallah, Bethlehem (Beit-Laham), Beit Jala and Beit Sahour, where a Muslim majority was sought to be created by integrating neighbouring refugee camps into the administrative and municipal framework.⁶² However the Jordanian period provided a major fillip to the various 'de-colonisation' and 'Arabization' moves underway in the various churches of the Holy Land. It was during the Jordanian era that both the Anglican as well as Lutheran communities in the Holy Land managed to get accreditation and recognition as full national churches with an Arab-oriented identity.

The Church and the Israeli State

The new state of Israel saw more advantage in cooperation than confrontation with the Church and forbore to antagonise the church leadership openly.⁶³ It sought to annexe and control church property and in this was assisted by the fact that most church leaders were expatriates who believed Israeli rule was in the Church's best interest. The legal position that guided Israeli policy regarding the Holy Sites and the Christian churches was set forward immediately following the 1967 War. While the Israelis immediately declared on assuming control of the Old City of Jerusalem with its numerous Christian sites and churches (most of the headquarters of the Christian churches in Palestine were located there), that a council of Christian clergy would take control for Christian and Holy Site affairs, in practise, this did

not immediately materialise as no Christian leaders wanted to show themselves as collaborating with the new Israeli authorities.

On June 27, 1967, the Israeli parliament-the Knesset, passed a law for the preservation of the holy sites, 'guaranteeing free access and their preservation against desecration or offence directed against the religious sentiments of the various religions towards their sacred places.' This Law was followed by an Israeli decision, again as the residuary or custodial de-facto ruler, to respect the status quo regarding the rights of the different churches in seven holy places in the Jerusalem-Bethlehem area, following the Ottoman *firman* of 1852. This decision was quietly acknowledged by all, but was only given a formal legally binding nature when the Agreement with the Vatican was concluded in 1993.⁶⁴

Change came with Vatican II in 1962 as the emphasis turned towards training indigenous leaders. Effects of this transformation were not only visible in the Latin Church, but also started to spread to the other major Protestant and Orthodox denominations. As more and more Palestinian clergy and bishops were created, the Church in the Holy land became more and more politically radical in its conception and worldview. Consequently, there would be more and more visions for conflict between the Church and state, particularly as the local clergy, on assuming positions of authority within the Church, came to realize how much the Church had compromised itself with an alien ruling establishment.⁶⁵

The Church and the Palestinian National Struggle

The rapid development of the Palestinian national struggle from a rebel, largely guerrilla movement in the 1960s and 1970s to an organization with almost all the attributes of an organized state (though, without adequate territorial space) in the 1980s and 1990s also contributed to the politicisation of the Church. During this period, certain Israeli policies that included land confiscations, church and property destruction, building restrictions and a consequent mass emigration of the faithful, all contributed to a new restrictive climate of political intolerance being faced by the churches. This period also saw the

establishment of full diplomatic relations between the pre-eminent politico-organization controlling the world's Catholic Christians-the Vatican and the State of Israel.⁶⁶

The two agreements signed between the Vatican and Israel as well as the Palestinian Authority, known as the Fundamental Agreement and the Basic Agreement respectively, did not do much to ease the difficult situation faced by Palestinian Christians during this period and later. Church-state relations plummeted to their lowest point in decades during this period. The Intifada period saw the churches and lay communities of Palestine become quite active in day-to-day politics. Many Christians took an active part in the Intifada. Since then, relations between the Church and the state have witnessed a steady fall.⁶⁷

The same period also saw a massive increase in the influence of Christian Zionist groups in Israel as they sought to occupy the vacuum created by the withdrawal of the mainline groups from the Israeli-sponsored politico-religious space in Jerusalem. Since 1967, Israel had progressively downgraded relations with the Christian churches in the land. It was understood that the Christian issue was pushed to the bottom of the list of priorities of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of Israel. Correspondingly, starting with the mid to late 1970s, Christian fundamentalist groups primarily from the Anglo-Saxon world had acquired more and more leverage with the Zionist Israeli State-apparatchiks.⁶⁸

Premier among these groups included the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem (ICEJ). Other groups that had to be mentioned in this context included the Church's Ministry among Jewish People, also known as The Israel Trust of the Anglican Church (CMJ or ITAC); Christian Friends of Israel (CFI); Intercessors for Britain (IFB); Prayer Friends of Israel (PFI) and the Council of Christians and Jews (CCJ). Christian Zionist groups in Israel, from the UK, the US, the Anglo-Saxon and Reformed Protestant European world in general were broadly coalesced into a number of organizations such as Bridges for Peace (BFP); The American Messianic Fellowship (AMF); The Messianic Jewish Alliance America (MJAA); Jews for Jesus (JFJ); and the above mentioned International Christian Embassy Jerusalem (ICEJ).⁶⁹

This period also saw an increase in mutual communication between the Churches as they sought to create a united platform from which

to confront the common danger faced by them all. It was in the mid-1990s that a regular monthly assembly of Palestinian Christian Church leaders started to take place. This innovation grew out of the frequent meetings conducted between the various church heads over the previous two decades, and as stated elsewhere, particularly after al-Liqa centre started in the early 1980s. Another body known as the Jerusalem Inter-Church Committee was responsible for the practical and logistical side of the Patriarchal committee and met fortnightly to debate issues of immediate concern to the Churches in Jerusalem. The churches were thus ecumenically well controlled at the organizational level. One of the most significant memorandums of this Patriarchal committee was the 1994 'Memorandum of Their Beatitudes, The Patriarchs and of The Heads of the Christian Communities in Jerusalem On The Significance of Jerusalem for Christians,' Jerusalem, November 14, 1994.

This memorandum sought to espouse the concerns that the main-line Christians of Jerusalem had as regards the Holy Old City of East Jerusalem and their desire for an inclusive vision of Jerusalem on the part of the authorities by recognising the sanctity of the city for Jews, Christians and Muslims. The Memorandum sought to affirm the 'status quo in the Holy Places,' while also calling for a 'Special Statute for Jerusalem,' a demand long put forward by the Vatican and the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem (this demand had now been withdrawn, as far as Jerusalem as a negotiating issue is concerned).⁷⁰ A new feature from this period was the regular release of letters by the eleven heads of churches in support of the legitimate Palestinian resistance and calling on the two warring parties as well as the West to negotiate a settlement that would be mutually agreeable to all parties and would also ensure the open character of Jerusalem.

Naim Ateek in his book *Justice and Only Justice: A Palestinian Theology of Liberation* had mentioned how the Intifada literally forced the churches of Palestine to take a united stand against the oppression and injustice unleashed with all impunity by the Israeli authorities. He referred to an incident that took place in January 1988 during the heights of the Intifada in the courtyard of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre (one of the holiest spots for Christendom on the surface of

the earth), where Israeli soldiers and border policemen massed and tear gassed as well as baton charged Palestinian worshippers as they were leaving after Sunday morning worship. This was an incident that had followed a similar incident at *al-Aqsa*, Dome of the Rock compound where Muslim worshippers were attacked following Friday noon prayers, again injuring many people.⁷¹

In reaction to these extreme provocations (and in the Christian case utterly without precedent), on January 22, 1988 the heads of the Christian communities in Jerusalem and the Holy Land issued a joint statement (one of the first of many such statements, a process then started that still continued today as a symbol of inter-church Christian cooperation and solidarity in the face of a common danger faced by all Christian mainstream groups in Israel-Palestine, and particularly in East Jerusalem and the West Bank), calling upon all Christians to fast, pray and give generously and open-heartedly to meet the needs of the many injured people and those refugees who had been blockaded in the various camps.⁷² The ecumenical movement came to be a force to be reckoned with on the Jerusalem politico-religious scene.

In this context, it could be argued that *al-Liqa* centre formed during the early 1980s before the outbreak of the Intifada, provided the necessary impetus and start (in addition to laying the preparatory foundation and venue for the various church and faith leaders, mainly Christian and Muslim, to meet and get to know each other as well as to begin to trust each other) for the development of broader and deeper ecumenical (inter-church as well as intra-church) relations between the disparate churches of Israel-Palestine, as well as between the different faith communities. Sabeel grew out of the Intifada (liberation theology in Palestine was initially conceived in reaction and as a Christian contribution to the Intifada), and took on an ecumenical organizational outlook towards the end of the first Intifada, when the present organizational shape and vocational outlook of the group crystallised. The Intifada can thus be said to have provided added impetus for inter-Church and faith ecumenical activism in Israel-Palestine, both on the level of clergy leaders and Patriarchs as well as on the laity-to-laity practical grassroots level at organizations like Sabeel and *al-Liqa*.

The Christian Interest in Jerusalem

As far as the mainline Churches of Jerusalem were concerned, their over-riding interest was to maintain the provisions of the status-quo as a means to securing unhindered access to the Christian holy places within and outside the city of Jerusalem and within the present political territory of the states of Israel, Palestine and Jordan. Divisions within the Christian groups as well as Churches on theological and political issues meant that different churches and groups had different views about how well the status quo under the Israelis was working. The Greeks had often indicated that they would prefer the continuance of the Israeli 'status quo' in the Holy Places, to any change that would endanger their traditional superiority in Jerusalem.⁷³

In short, the Greeks had fears that they would be faced with a 'Lebanon-like' situation, where they will have to forego their rights (like the Maronites of Lebanon, whose often 'assumed' rights of superiority had been seriously challenged and reduced by civil war and unrest in their traditional homeland, over the last couple of decades) as part of a general rearrangement of church and community rights in the Holy Land. The traditional fear of the much more powerful Roman Catholic Church was always there for the Greeks. This was one of the reasons for Greek Patriarchs often maintaining that the 'Vatican does not represent us.'⁷⁴

Questions were often raised in the Greek press and other media about the Catholic definition of the word 'Christian,' which when applied to the Holy Land, would it just include the Catholics of various rites, Eastern and Western or was it all-encompassing to include the whole gamut of Christianity, Orthodox, Protestant and Catholic. In 1995, Patriarch Diodoros even issued a call for an Orthodox agreement with the Israeli state, similar to that which the Israelis had with the Vatican, even though he was particularly careful to mention that there should be no interference with the status quo and established rights and practices. Possibly as a result of intense pressure from his Arab laity who were horrified at such a call, nothing came of it and the GOC to this day has no legal or political

understanding at an official level, with either the Israelis or for that matter, the Palestinians.⁷⁵

In a highly controversial statement released from London in 2001, Latin Patriarch Michel Sabbah revealed the long held Vatican view of the present unsuitability of the status quo when he called for it to be revised, should Jerusalem ever come into more quiet and peaceful times, with the rider that this should be done in a way that did not compromise or prejudice the rights and obligations of any party involved. He advocated the creation of new mechanisms to overcome the difficulties that arose when it became practically necessary to rebuild and repair buildings such as the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. It could not be said that the other church leaders quiescently accepted such out-rightly spoken views.⁷⁶ As far as modern Christian groups such as those espousing revisionist Christian Zionist views were concerned, the 'status quo in the Holy Places' would definitely not be a case of any concern at all, as they mostly operated outside and above the formal framework of church-state relations in the Holy Land.

In opposition to this, some mainline Christians had sought to unite on the basis of ecumenism as well as radical third world politico-theological concepts in their attempts to create a united base from which they could successfully confront the relatively new Christian Zionist movements that sought to support the Zionist state in taking sole control of the spiritual space of the city and the region at large. International cooperation between the mainly Palestinian Christian Churches in Jerusalem and their more mainstream US counterparts was made clear in March 1995, well after the St. John's Hospice incident, when eight leading US churches made an appeal to President Clinton to put pressure on the state of Israel to stop building Jewish-only neighbourhoods in East Jerusalem as well as to prevent the long-proposed move of the US Embassy in Israel to Jerusalem.⁷⁷

The imperatives for ecumenical activism in the Holy Land in the changed circumstances of the 1990s, following the first Intifada and the start of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process were made very clear by the threat posed to the 'status quo,' in July 2000. This was with regard to the Armenian community at the Camp David Summit meeting between former Israeli Premier Ehud Barak and Palestinian

National Authority (PNA) president Yasser Arafat in July 2000. The Armenians' existence as a separate ethnic community within an overwhelmingly Palestinian Christian setting almost cost them dear at the Camp David negotiations when there were moves to separate the well-defined Armenian sector within the walled city and combine it with the Jewish sector as part of the area that would be under Israeli sovereignty, pending division of the city in a future peace plan. None of the Jerusalem Patriarchs were briefed about the negotiation process or during the talks at Camp David in July 2000.

This move to separate the Armenians from their Palestinian and Christian brethren was alarming enough for the Joint Heads of the Christian Churches in Jerusalem to send a letter to the negotiating parties at Camp David protesting vigorously against any such move and asking that they also be involved in any future negotiations on the future of the city. The senior clerics demand to have representatives from the Churches at the Summit was never fulfilled. The Patriarchs made it very clear that they as well as their faithful, whether Christian Arab or Armenian, regarded the Christian and Armenian Quarters of the Old City as one and the same entity that were united by the same faith.

The Armenian Government at Yerevan in its position as protector of Armenian communities worldwide also made it clear that it fully endorsed that position of the Jerusalem Patriarchate in this regard. The Armenians were terrified by concern for their land and property, should they come under permanent Israeli rule, as portrayed by the failed settlement at Camp David. The Armenian sector had already suffered the most loss of the three non-Jewish quarters because of its proximity to the reconstructed Jewish Quarter. Barak's move to annexe the Armenian Quarter was seen in Armenian circles as just another ill-conceived plan to acquire some more land for the State of Israel in what must be the most contested piece of real-estate in the world. Given a choice, the Armenians, like the Catholics and other Christians, would prefer some sort of internationalised status for Jerusalem under the control of the UN, or other similar multinational entities. This call, of course, goes right back to the 1948 UN Partition Plan for Palestine that placed Jerusalem under a UN supervised 'International

Administration.' Instead, the city was divided and then, after the 1967 War, came under full Israeli sovereignty.

If internationalisation was impossible in the given circumstances, then the Armenians had no objection to some sort of joint Palestinian-Israeli Administration, but again with international guarantees for the Christians, like an international arbitration system that would ensure them impartial justice, should any form of irresolvable disputes break out with the authorities, whether Israeli or Palestinian. These innovative ideas for solving the Jerusalem tangle and ensuring equitable justice for all the factions were known as the 'Christian perspective' on peace in the Holy Land.⁷⁸

Palestinian Protestant Church History Since 1948: The Anglicans and Lutheran Protestants of the Holy Land

The nineteenth century saw a strong Western Christian mission in the Levant, with British missions concentrating on Palestine. One of their main strategies was the establishment of schools. One Ottoman Sultan even promulgated a law in retaliation, by which no Muslim subject of the Empire was allowed to study in the missionary schools, a decree that no progressive Muslims would take any notice of, as the best schools in the Empire were inevitably the missionary schools.⁷⁹

The Protestants of Palestine had a somewhat chequered existence over the years, with the Greeks and other older churches often grudging their growth and development. The CMS and other London-based missionary groups (as well as those from Germany) actively sought to 'reconvert the converted,' seeking members from the Orthodox and Catholic Churches in Palestine. This in turn proved controversial as two aforementioned mainline and established churches of Palestine fiercely resisted any attempt at proselytising members of their own communion. Bishop Gobat's original commission to these Christians had been that given their rather 'deprived' condition in Palestine plus their 'idolatrous' (in Western Protestant eyes) practices, Eastern Christians were totally incapable of carrying the Gospel to their fellow Muslim and Jewish compatriots in the Holy Land. However, once the Protestant Arab communities were

formed largely out of the existing Catholic and Orthodox groups, they stoutly refused to engage in proselytisation of Jews and Muslims in true Eastern style and out of fear of breaking the centuries old *Dhimmi* laws and bans on seeking to convert other 'people's of the book' to the Christian faith.

It was during the Mandate period that the Palestinian Native Church Council (PNCC) changed its name to the Evangelical Episcopal Arab Community (EEAC) or as it is known in Arabic, *al-Ta'ifa al-Injiliyya al-Usqufiyya al-'Arabiyya*. The term Anglican was voluntarily dropped as a 'colonial' terminology no longer suited to the self-confident stance of the indigenous Arab community. The PNCC was established in 1905 with the aim of the indigenisation of the church.

The CMS was under the impression that the native Christians of Palestine would be more successful in evangelising the Muslims than they (the foreign missionaries) had been. During the Mandate period, with the explosion in educational and generally beneficent business and developmental climate, the Anglican community grew exponentially with new churches and chapels being established in the various cities and towns of Palestine. The fact that the Anglicans of Palestine had long benefitted from the excellent educational opportunities provided by the CMS missionaries meant that they were uniquely fitted to take advantage of British rule in the Holy Land. The largely Protestant and Anglican religious nature of many of the British administrators and civil servants in Palestine was also an advantage and an added boon to the growth of the Episcopal Church in the Holy Land.⁸⁰

The events of 1948, known as the *Nakba*, created a void in this church as many wealthy Arabs were forced to flee leaving most of their property behind. The Church found itself divided between a Jordanian side and an Israeli remnant. There were tensions within the Church itself, with the hierarchy dominated by Anglo-Saxon clerics. It was the new realities that followed the establishment of the Hashemite Kingdom in the West Bank and Jerusalem after 1948 that made the Arab Anglicans of the region cognisant of the need to have a church organization more adapted to the national aspirations of the Arab Kingdom. In particular, they made Canterbury understand that they

were demanding nothing less than the appointment and development of an Arab bishop as well as an autonomous national church within the broad precincts of the worldwide Anglican Communion.

The Arab Anglicans were only asking the same of what had been taking place throughout the Anglican world, where before and after the Second World War, a rapid process of 'de-colonisation' was going on, with Church hierarchies becoming largely native and therefore more responsible to the local aspirations of the faithful. It was in 1952 that the first official demand for an Arab bishop was made by the Evangelical Episcopal Arab Church Council, meeting in Ramallah, May 18, 1952. The English bishop then present rejected this demand. Matters continued in similar fashion till 1957, when a major reorganization of the Jerusalem diocese of the Anglican community was effected. This was made possible through the appointment of an Archbishop, based in Jerusalem, to supervise all the activities of the Anglican Church in the Middle East.

This man, it was understood, would be an Englishman, with an Arab bishop also appointed to work under him, overseeing the Arab flock in Jerusalem and the Holy Land. It was also understood that this bishop would have authority over all Episcopalians in the diocese, including the English-speaking congregations. This arrangement did not however work in practice and the Arab bishop appointed in 1957, Najib Qub'ayn, found himself with no real authority over the Arab congregants in his midst. It took many years of further negotiations and parleying for this situation to be ameliorated, by a major re-arrangement of the diocese, this time on purely national lines. The present Diocese of Jerusalem was created in 1976, including the territories of the Old (Holy) City, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and the (then, and still almost wholly now) occupied Palestinian areas of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

The Diocese comprised of a bishop as head, a House of Clergy and a House of Laity, consisting of representatives from the 28 different congregations making up the Anglican Church in the Middle East, six of which were still mainly English-speaking. A new constitution was devised for the Church and approved in January 1976, further amended in 1978, with the new Church name of the Episcopal Church

in Jerusalem and the Middle East. The Church thus sought to become a wholly national church reflecting the desires and aspirations of the Palestinian Arab Anglicans of Jerusalem and the Holy Land.⁸¹ Even then a rider was attached, whereby the prestigious St. George's Cathedral and College as well as Christ Church (Jaffa Gate) and the institutes of the Church Mission to the Jews (CMJ) were granted a special status, bringing them under the General Synod of the Anglican Church in the Middle East and the Archbishop of Canterbury. Naturally the attitude of the Israelis to the Episcopal Church in the Holy Land underwent a change after 1976, as a local bishop could not be expected to be sympathetic to the aspirations of the occupying authority.

The CMJ was also known as the ITAC. This organization or trust was defined as the purely Israel arm of the CMJ, which originally had its roots in the UK. It was often considered to be the first Christian Zionist organization to start operating from the UK. The CMJ had worked in Israel-Palestine since the 1820s. It operated out of different centres in the state of Israel. The main centre of ITAC-CMJ had always been Christ Church (Jaffa Gate), the oldest Anglican Church in Palestine. This Church opened its doors in 1849 and was also the oldest Protestant Church in the entire Middle Eastern region. Christ Church (Jaffa Gate) was a church where many expatriates to Israel-Palestine worshipped in an overtly Jewish worship atmosphere, to reflect the original vision and burden of the founders of CMJ as the original mission to the Jews of the world, and in particular the Jews of Palestine. Many of the staff workers at the main Christian Zionist outreach organization in Jerusalem and Israel, namely the ICEJ, worshipped at Christ Church (Jaffa Gate), the CMJ-ITAC headquarters. Clergy associated with Christ Church generally refused to criticize the working of the ICEJ.⁸²

Stephen Sizer related how material obtained from the CMJ-ITAC outreach ministry, Emmanuel House in the city of Jaffa, clearly linked the organization with restorationist beliefs rooted in biblical prophecy, encouraging the movement and settlement of the Jewish people worldwide in the land of Israel-Palestine (to include the Occupied Territories, part of historic *Eretz Yisrael*).⁸³ The home page of the ITAC website clearly mentioned that 'ITAC is (was) an Israeli *amutah* (non-profit

organization) and, as such, is independent of the Anglican Diocese of Jerusalem. However it is (was) committed to close fraternal relations with the diocese, while fulfilling a distinct primary calling of standing with and ministering to Jewish people.⁸⁴ The website also contained the rider concerning the relationship between the CMJ (UK) and the ITAC to the effect that: 'CMJ (UK) and ITAC were legally independent sister societies with different methods of fulfilling a united aim of being a Christian ministry among Jewish people. References to each should not be understood as relevant to the other unless this is made explicit in official documentation.'⁸⁵

The Trust also made it clear in this website that their 'official' position was to regard both Jews and non-Jews as equal before God, in Christ, as reflected in orthodox Christian theology. They however maintained that they did not wish to rid the two groups, Jews and Gentiles, of their 'proper distinctiveness.' The society maintained that they had never worked 'exclusively' for the Jewish people, instead working for friendship and 'reconciliation' between all peoples, a demand that they believe lay at the very heart of the Christian Gospel.⁸⁶

The largest Protestant churches in the Holy Land were thus the Evangelical Episcopal Church of Jerusalem and the Middle East and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Jordan and the Holy Land. These churches, whose laity were mainly well-educated, but still relatively insignificant population-wise, and whose main activities centred on social service and education, did not have the scope for much conflict with the state. Members of the Anglican Communion in the Middle East had generally belonged to the well-educated segment of Palestinian society, as a result of their relatively easier access to higher education opportunities, both in the Middle East as well as abroad. People like Hanan Ashrawi, Amin al-Majaj; Jalil Arb, Nadim Zaru, Hanna Nasir and Raja Shehadeh had made their mark in the field of Palestinian politics, culture and history. Similarly prominent members of the Anglican clergy in the Holy Land, past and present, had made their mark as ardent nationalists.

These included one-time bishops, Samir Ka'fity, Riah Abu el-Assal and one-time secretary of the bishopric, Canon Naim Ateek, main founder and director of the Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology

Institute. Ecumenical endeavours had always been part and parcel of the Anglican Church in Palestine. The Church itself had grown out of the first mission of the CMS to the Jews and Muslims of Palestine. The fact that the Anglican heritage in the world of Christianity was situated somewhere midway between Catholicism and Orthodoxy on one side and the more radical Protestants such as the Presbyterians and the Baptists on the other side meant that they were particularly suited to be active in the field of ecumenism. Another feature of the work of the Anglicans and Lutherans of Jerusalem was their unwillingness from the very beginning to take part in the denominational feuds over the Holy Places that had plagued other more established and older churches in the Holy Land.⁸⁷

Both Anglicans as well as Lutherans in the Holy Land had developed a really cohesive internal organizational network that enabled the active participation of both clergy as well as laity on an almost equal basis. These churches had thus been among the most democratic in the Holy Land. It was therefore no wonder that quite a number of members of these denominations had sought to develop a radical interpretation of theology that would take into account the peculiar theo-political situation in the Holy Land. The obvious reference here was to people like Riah Abu el-Assal, Jonathan Kuttub, Naim Ateek, Cedar Duaybis, Jean Zaru, Mitri Raheb and others who had actively participated in socio-political oriented theology formulation as well as participation in theological oriented Christian groups and movements such as the Bethlehem and Galilee-based Palestinian contextual theology (PCT) movement al-Liqa and the Jerusalem-based Sabeel.

The Lutherans in Palestine and Israel also went through a similar experience as the Anglicans, though on a much more restricted scale. The latest constitution for the Lutherans in Palestine was approved in May 1979 and it provided for the election of an Arab bishop to look after issues relating to the local congregations in the Israel/Palestinian Territories/Jordan (IPJ) region.⁸⁸ Emphasis was on reducing the influence of the foreign *Propst* (Provost) as the ultimate caretaker of the Lutheran community in the Holy Land and to invest that authority in the local bishop. The *Propst* was reduced to dealing with the affairs of the European and American Lutheran communities in the IPJ area.

The Church has since 1979 been wholly Arab, headed by an Arab bishop with the rather controversial name of 'The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan.' Once Jerusalem and the West Bank came under Israeli rule, there was a lot of pressure from the state to change the name of the Church to eliminate the reference to the Hashemite Kingdom. After a lot of resistance, the name of the Lutheran Church in the Holy Land was slightly lengthened to take cognizance of new realities, becoming the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL). This Church was a close associate of various Evangelical Lutheran Churches worldwide and also of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF).⁸⁹ The Lutherans in Palestine had traditionally focused on providing quality education to the youth in the occupied territories. Their schools, just like those of the Anglicans, were open to all Palestinians, irrespective of confession or religion. The Lutheran Church in the IPJ area never established communal courts, possibly due to the relatively small size of a community that is today restricted to Jerusalem, the West Bank region and Amman. They had preferred to use the courts of the Evangelical Episcopal Church to solve issues of personal and communitarian status.⁹⁰

Both these churches along with many others (the total number of protestant groups in the city, ranging from the fiercely pro-Zionist evangelical cults to the moderate Episcopal churches numbers around fifty) were highly popular with the large numbers of western tourists that continually visit Jerusalem. The State strongly supported the so-called Christian Zionist groups that had made Jerusalem their home, anxiously waiting for the fulfillment of biblical prophecy in the Holy Land. Succeeding Israeli administrations had tended to see local Christians and their Western backers as a problem and had sought to encourage fundamentalist variants of the Christian faith, as well as their equally, if not more fundamentalist and biblically literalist supporters abroad.

The establishment of the state of Israel in 1948, seen by many fundamentalist Christians as well as Jews in terms of a re-establishment of the ancient Israelite state and kingdom, acquired new meaning after 1967 when the state of Israel acquired more territory towards the West, taking the entire West Bank of the Jordan as well as the (till

then) Egyptian-controlled Gaza Strip and the Sinai peninsula. Now the state of Israel broadly corresponded to the state of *Eretz Yisrael* (the land of Israel; in Hebrew) as defined by Numbers 34:1–12 and also Ezekiel 47:15–20. This new physical and political manifestation on the ground was enough evidence for Biblicists and fundamentalists of all hues to get a tremendous fillip as regards the workings of ‘divine’ manifestation and prophecy in today’s world.

These groups, led by the International Christian Embassy in Jerusalem (ICEJ), were often at daggers drawn with the mainline Churches, which in turn had very little in common with these mainly American-funded movements. The ICEJ established in 1980 (ironically and tragically, the ICEJ’s headquarters in Jerusalem was located in the former family home of the late great Palestinian nationalist-in-exile and academician, Edward Said), was the main right-wing evangelical Christian organization in Jerusalem and the Holy Land, that provides uncritical moral, political and financial support to the Zionist state and allied Christian and Zionist activities. The organization was formed in response and as a protest against the actions of many world nations in moving their embassies in Israel from Jerusalem to Tel Aviv, following the unilateral decision of the state of Israel to annex the whole of Jerusalem and declare it as the capital of the state.

The ICEJ sought to encourage and develop Christian, and particularly Western Christian support for the state of Israel. The theology and political orientation of the group was naturally fundamentalist and right wing, with a membership defined mainly by support and personnel from countries with a strong Calvinist and reformed Protestant heritage such as Holland, South Africa, Great Britain and the US. One of the main activities of the ICEJ was to bring thousands of fundamentalist Christians and their supporters to their annual Judaeo-Christian celebration, known as the Feast of the Tabernacles. This was a major programme on the Jerusalem Christian calendar, involving the arrival of thousands of people and the final day of this festival was always addressed by either the President or the Prime Minister of Israel.

The ICEJ had also been involved in plans to rebuild the Jewish Temple on the Temple Mount and had links to the oldest of the Jewish

radical societies entrusted with this vision, namely the 'Faithful of the Temple Mount.' The ICEJ was also credited with holding the first ever Christian Zionist Conference in Basle in 1985, emulating the first Zionist Congress held there in the late nineteenth century.⁹¹ In addition to all this, the intense suspicions with which the various churches, Catholic and various shades of Orthodox as well as old Protestant, had viewed each other through the ages, had made inter-church cooperation, a very difficult proposition to manage coherently.

Different calculated actions by succeeding Israeli administrations had raised doubts and allegations from the Christian side that there was an overall plan to slowly eat away at church and community owned land, either through outright buying where possible, through the covert manipulation of leases or if all else fails by outright expropriation in the name of state security. It was in this context that the state's ability to play off one faction against the other for the sake of acquiring these benefits came into being. The churches, on the other hand, had never been able to formulate a coherent policy with regard to territorial acquisition policies on the part of the Israeli State. What had followed in the last two decades or so was piecemeal policy mainly dictated at the personal initiatives of Arab land committees or concerned Palestinian individuals. In addition to this, outright lease and sale of church lands to the state as well as other Jewish authorities had always created tensions between the clergy associated with these policies and the lay people.

This had particularly been the case in both the Greek Orthodox as well as Armenian Church in the last two or three decades. The churches in the face of a joint threat from a common 'enemy' (the state of Israel); had learnt to adopt a common platform on major issues and to project a unified stand as necessary for their common survival. The World Council of Churches (WCC) had since its formation in 1948 played an active role in favour of the Palestinian cause and consequently had often been seen as an anti-Israeli organization. As evangelical and pro-Zionist Christian groups had acquired a lot of political and financial clout during the last quarter century, the worldwide Christian political scenario was getting increasingly polarized with the ecumenical movement poised against the evangelicals, primarily on the

issue of Israel-Palestine and Christian support for Zionist projects within Israel.

The various uncertainties faced by the churches of Palestine had served to recreate a sense of urgency as well as long-lost unity among them, as a realization dawned that ultimately, they may only have each other for real support. The decline in numbers of the local Christian population relative to the total Arab Muslim population in Palestine/Jerusalem was the most worrying issue concerning Church leaders over the last two decades or so. From a low of just over 2 per cent of the population, the relative ratio was projected to go further down over the next couple of decades, exposing the whole Christian heritage of the region to the danger of being considered just museum pieces for other people to come and admire in disconnection from the surroundings. The actions of the Israeli right wing and the settler lobbies, particularly in the last two or three decades, had seemed to threaten the very existence of the established churches in the Holy City.

The churches, concurrently, had also been in the process of consolidating themselves internally, as well as externally, networking to form stable international Christian partnerships that would act as buffers in any possible scenario of tension with the Israelis and the 'Zionist and Christian' lobby. The various Church groups had also been repositioning themselves to take into consideration the future prospect of a Palestinian national presence in the Old City and its environs.⁹²

Land and the Question of the 'Holy' Land: The Land of Palestine

Although Israel was allocated 54 per cent of the land of Palestine according to the UN plan of 1947, the plan would have given the Palestinian people the independence that they had long desired. From the Christian point of view, it would also have conferred a special international status on Jerusalem, which would have been particularly beneficial to the native Christians of the Holy Land. This, in turn, reflected the conflict and tension between Muslim and Christian

attitudes over the internationalisation issue, as Muslims were then and even now, strongly resistant to this issue. In the post-1967 period, there was consistent opposition of all communities towards the internationalisation of Jerusalem, with the overwhelming desire among Palestinians, Christian and Muslim, being for a division of the city between Israelis and Palestinians.

In fact, the war of 1948 resulted in the state of Israel controlling up to 78 per cent of the land of Palestine. 35 per cent of all Christians of the Holy Land became refugees. Individual Christians as well as Churches lost vast areas of land and property.⁹³ Many Christians were forced to emigrate thereby and the 1967 War caused further upheaval and dislocation as the Churches found themselves deprived of more land and more refugees were created (see appendices for a map detailing the Palestinian loss of land from 1946–2000).

Palestinians in general and Christians in particular in the Holy Land have suffered from the disputed interpretations regarding God's promise to give the land of Palestine to Abraham and his descendants for all time to come. The tendency among most Christians worldwide was to take at face-value the belief that the Holy Land of Palestine-Israel was promised to the Jews alone as descendants of Abraham through his second (legal according to the Old Testament of the Holy Bible, accepted equally as authoritative by Jews and Christians) son of Isaac. Many Palestinian theologians had written about the need to develop a consistent theology of the land, and the insistence that the land is a gift and does not belong to the Jewish people.⁹⁴ Palestinian commentators such as Ateek, Raheb, Sabah and others had emphasized the responsibilities of acquiring the land from God, which should be manifest in just behavior and just living.

As Bishop Younan stated,

As the land was a gift and a covenant promise, there were responsibilities for land tenure. It carried with it broad regulations for living in the land. There was a clear interdependence between moral behaviour and land. Obedience to Yahweh was fitting in the land, and disregard of Yahweh's instruction defiled the land. Continued occupancy of the land is conditioned by faithful

adherence to the admonitions. Motivation for observance of the law included the promise of continued residence.⁹⁵

Younan raised the question of the importance of two Old Testament regulations in dealing with the use of the land, namely the question of the Sabbath and the Jubilee. The Sabbath referred to the practice described in the Bible whereby the ancient Israelite people were to observe a voluntary resistance to farming the land in the seventh year. The land was to be left fallow so as to ensure its use and utility by the poor and the oppressed. All those who were in need were to have access to the land during this time. The same was applicable to the non-human occupants of the land who were also allowed free range during this time. Observing a Sabbath in the land bore witness to the Lord's ownership of the land. This was made manifest by not tilling the land. The Jubilee tradition described in Leviticus was concerned with the just division of the land.

The land of Israel was scripturally required to be redistributed every fifty years so that all could benefit from the fruits of the land. What was implicit in this was that the land could be redistributed among the twelve tribes of Israel according to the Will of God. This was a policy directed at the prevention of the creation of entrenched elites who might eventually out of their own self-interest; endanger the security of the state [Leviticus 25:10–14]. It was significant that this Old Testament tradition was never effectively practiced in the history of the ancient Israelite people or indeed in the history of any other people. In Isaiah 61, the author actually appealed to Israel to reinstate the practices of land Sabbath and the Jubilee year which were no longer been practiced in post-exilic Israel. Younan declared that the Jubilee tradition remained a yardstick by which one can judge a programme of land reform in today's world.⁹⁶

The Land and Justice

Many theologians considered the start of the conquest of Canaan to be the start of the fall of the Israelite people from grace. Many Palestinian theologians had advocated reading the conquest stories in accordance

with the prophetic narratives which cry out for a return to justice. For them, the God of justice as represented by the prophets desired goodness and mercy for the people of all lands.⁹⁷

Palestinian theologians had often made the connection between the experience of the ancient Hebrews in their journey to Canaan-Palestine and their frequent displacements thereof, with that of the modern-day Palestinians, a large number of who had been displaced multiple times within the course of a single life-time. It could be seen as the ultimate irony when Palestinian Christian theologians related the experience of the ancient Israelites to their own experience, a comparison that was vehemently rejected by modern day Israelis as well as their Christian Zionist and other right-wing Christian-Jewish supporters in the West.⁹⁸ The land which should have been a blessing to all, became a curse to all, including the 'promised people' themselves. It was in this context that the theologian Walter Brueggemann wrote in his landmark study on the Land, that the Bible itself was primarily concerned with the question of being displaced and the overwhelming desire to go back.⁹⁹

Gerhard von Rad made the same point in his book, *The Problem of the Hexateuch and other Essays* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1966), in which he mentioned that in the books of Moses, the Hexateuch; there was probably no greater idea than that expressed in terms of the promise of the land. Brueggemann himself agreed with this view in his work referred above.¹⁰⁰ For Palestinian Christians as well as Muslims, the land of Palestine, not only belonged to God, as does the whole earth, but was also their homeland.¹⁰¹

As a much-loved Palestinian bishop stated,

For Palestinian Christians, there is no other land for us than this land. It had molded our identity. The future of the Christian presence is in a just peace, not in occupation and war. We believe that we represent the continuity of the Old Testament and New Testament people's existence on the land. This is not merely an emotional attachment, but one that had geographical, historical, traditional, cultural, and social, as well as spiritual roots. We were tied to this land as the land belongs to us.

We will exist and coexist as long as the land is also our land of milk and honey.¹⁰²

Ateek also had written in similar form when he stated that the land of Palestine is the homeland (*watan*) of the Palestinian people. To quote him here:

This is the land of their birth. It is the land which God, in his wisdom, had chosen to give them as *watan*, in the same way as God had chosen to give you your own *watan*. They (the Palestinian people) were fighting to maintain the God-given right to their own land. Any *watan* is a responsibility given by God to all the people of that land and country. It is not that they own their country, for in the final analysis God is really the owner as God is the owner of the whole world. But because they had been given the land, they had a responsibility before God. They would like to live in dignity as human beings on their land and as good stewards of it.¹⁰³

Younan considered that it was the Christian theology of crucifixion/resurrection that was the most useful comparative framework for Palestinians.¹⁰⁴ For most Palestinian theologians, Israel's appropriation of the land of Palestine in God's name seemed to be justification by a sacred ideology. Palestinian Christians would like to see the issue of Palestine dealt in the political realm and not as part of a 'grand' theological framework.

Younan declared that,

Christians reading Paul's words in Romans 4 and Galatians 3–4 were given assurance that they were heirs of the promises to Abraham through faith in Christ. Yet heirs by grace, not by right. Thus, a reminder that our place in the land is not as a replacement for the people of the old covenant, but as co-heirs and co-inhabitants who were called to live together in peace. Language of 'claim,' 'entitlement,' and 'right' had no place in theological discussion. The land is the Lord's and we together were its tenants.¹⁰⁵

For Palestinian theologians such as Younan and Ateek, any suggestion that it was theologically and legally permissible to transfer land from one group of people to another group in the name of God, went against God's will for justice and peace.¹⁰⁶

Impact of the 1967 War on Palestinian Christians: Christian Demographic Decline

As noted earlier, the war of 1948 led to Christian migration from Palestine, with more than 50,000 Christians, been forced into leaving their homeland. Approximately 35 per cent of all Christians of the Holy Land were forced into refugee status losing most of their possessions, the land, work and dreams of life in their own land. Half of all Christians who left Palestine ended up in Lebanon, while the rest were scattered all over the world, but mainly in the West Bank and Jordan, whose urban Christian population increased as a result of this in-migration.

There was continuous migration from both Israel as well as the state of Jordan during the period of the 1950s and early 1960s, again as a result of the bad economic situation in these areas during this period. The main migrations in the post-Second World War period were to the United States, Australia and the Gulf states.¹⁰⁷ The 1967 War was a seminal event in the further dislocation and dispersal of Holy Land Christians, as thousands of Arab Christians who were away from the West Bank and Gaza region on purposes of work and study during the War period were prevented from returning to their homes, thereby effectively disinherit these people from their homeland.¹⁰⁸

The war resulted in a 'foreign' occupation force planting themselves solidly within a strongly Palestinian setting. The start of settlement building within the Occupied Territories in the 1970s slowly resulted in an intolerable situation for Palestinian Christians, as they were increasingly subject to an Israeli regime bent on ensuring that there would be a minimum of Palestinians in the land west of the Jordan River. Half of all Christians emigrated from the Territories since the inauguration of Israeli rule in the area in 1967. Between

1967 and 1986, it was estimated that around 166,000 Palestinians of all religious backgrounds left the West Bank and around 103,000 left Gaza.

During the same period, a total of 269,000 Palestinians left the region and this figure excluded those that left Israel as well as the East Bank of the Jordan during this same period.¹⁰⁹ Some 55 per cent of the total Palestinian Christian population and 57 per cent of all Palestinians had made their homes in the Diaspora. The corresponding figures were 175,000 of Palestinian Christians living in the Diaspora and 2,932,000 of all Palestinians, according to figures published in the mid 1990s. The corresponding figures for the present age were probably similar, without a wide variation.¹¹⁰

Post-1967 Changes in the Land of Palestine: The Impact of Islamism

The War of 1967 and its implications and consequences resulted in the death-knell for Arab nationalism as the pre-eminent 'ruling' ideology of the Middle East. Arab Christians had long contributed towards the development of a coherent and progressive Arab secular ideology of Nationalism as a viable alternative to Middle Eastern development in the end of the nineteenth century. As a minority in the Middle East and a largely secularized and progressive group with Western leanings, Arab Christians invested in a secular nationalistic ideology that would seek to ensure their own security and co-existence with their Muslim brothers in the region. Many Christian Arabs took a leading part in the development of various Arab nationalistic parties in the Levant. Men like Michel Aflaq, Antun Sa' Adeh and others took important roles in the establishment of secular Arab political parties such as the Ba'ath Party, the Syrian National Party and others. Even the Communist parties in the Middle East were largely controlled and managed by Arabs of Christian origin. The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), when established in 1964, had a strong early Christian leadership base.

Among the Palestinian resistance organizations, men such as George Habash, long-time Chairman of the radical leftist militant

organization, the Popular Front for the liberation of Palestine (PFLP) as well as Nayef Hawatmeh, again sometime Chairman of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) were Arab Christians of the Greek Orthodox persuasion.¹¹¹ It was Arab Nationalism that sought to define Palestinian Nationalism as the basis for a new Palestinian identity. The Palestinian National identity was comprehensively defined in the 1988 Independence Declaration which stated that Palestine was,

An Arab state, an integral and indivisible part of the Arab nation...in heritage and civilization. It is the state of the Palestinians everywhere where they enjoy their collective national and cultural identity...under a parliamentary democratic political system which guarantees freedom of religious convictions and non-discrimination in public rights of men or women, on grounds of race, religion, colour or sex.¹¹²

The PLO's aim was to establish a secular state in the entire present 'land' west of the Jordan, a land where Christians, Jews as well as Muslims would enjoy equal rights and be able to co-exist in peace.¹¹³

Ever since the fall of the Ottoman Empire, there was a movement in the Middle East that had sought to re-instate Islam as the main idea behind the modern Middle Eastern nation-state. One of the earliest of these organizations in the Levant was that of the Muslim Brotherhood, founded in Egypt in 1928 by Hassan al-Bana. He emphasized the link between faith and creation, something that Muslims in general took very seriously indeed.

All forms of secularization and westernization, particularly on the Turkish Ataturk model, were rejected as inconsistent with the true practice of Islam. There should be no separation between Church and State. Al-Bana revived the emphasis on a world-wide Islamic state or Empire. He stressed the 'international' bond of the Islamic *Ummah* (brotherhood). He exhorted his disciples to be willing to die for the actualisation of the Islamic Empire, thereby giving rise to the whole phenomena of Islamic Jihad. The rise of many independent Arab states after the end of the Second World War also resulted in the rise

of Arab nationalistic regimes in many Arab nations. The subsequent, successful attempts by the West to destroy Arab nationalism as a step towards Arab unity resulted again in a rise in Islamism in the Arab world.

The post-1967 revival of Islamist attitudes in the light of the Arab defeat of 1967 was also accompanied by a simultaneous emphasis on the modern-day validity of Islamic law or *Sharia* as the 'sine qua non' of Islamic rule in the Muslim world. The prime exponent of this ideology was the Egyptian ideologue Sayyid Qutb. Qutb was a revolutionary in the Arab and Islamic worlds in that he advocated the *Qur'an* and the *Sharia* as the sole basis on which modern rule may be maintained in the Arab-Islamic world. It was Qutb's call on the people of the Islamic world to confront and get rid of their individual oppressive and corrupt rulers that caused his ultimate death at the hands of the Egyptian ruler Nasser. Qutb emphasized the importance of the rule of Islamic Law, the *Sharia*.

He also produced a reworking of Islamic history while in prison in Egypt, arguing that the secularization of Egypt meant that it was not an Islamic state, but was still in a state of *Jabiliyya* (religious ignorance), approximately similar to the situation of the Arabs before the advent of Islam. He was strongly against any kind of individualistic rule, believing in the supremacy of the rule of God through the medium of God's Law. He declared that all problems in the Islamic world were because rulers did not act according to the rule of *Sharia*. Active steps should be taken to overthrow such rulers and the existing political order, in favour of a *Sharia*-based one.

Inspired by Qutb's teachings, two groups broke away from the mainstream Brotherhood to form the Takfir wal-Hijra and al-Jihad organizations, which were committed to achieving the Islamic state by violent and immediate means, thereby forsaking the gradualist approach of the parent organization. These two organizations were together known under the title of *al-Gama'at al-Islamiyya* (the Islamic Groups) and actively resorted to terrorist tactics to achieve the projected Islamic state. Their argument was that these were the only methods to lead from a state of *Jabiliyya* to a society controlled by *Sharia* law and *Shura* (consultation) between the leaders and the people.¹¹⁴

Palestine as an allied territory of Egypt, both largely controlled by the British after the First World War, was particularly susceptible to developments in Egypt. The Muslim Brotherhood established a Palestine branch rather late in 1946, towards the end of the British Mandate. The Brotherhood managed to spread quite fast, with chapters in many Palestinian cities, due to support from the Mufti of Palestine, Haji Amin al-Husseini, who was a close friend and confidante of the Brotherhood supreme Hassan al-Banna. Membership in the Muslim Brotherhood was a common bond that united many of the early leaders in the Palestinian national movement in exile. The Brotherhood was particularly active in Gaza, because of the Egyptian influence there.

Among the early Palestinian resistance leaders drawn to the Brotherhood in the first instance was a 20-year-old engineering student in Cairo University called Muhammad 'Abd al-Ra'uf al-Widwa al-Husaynni (alias Yasir 'Arafat, the future Chairman of the PLO) and another young man who would later become one of the lions of the Palestinian resistance movement, Khalil al-Wazir (alias Abu Jihad, murdered by the Israelis while in exile with the PLO in Tunis). The Brotherhood had a military wing, in keeping with its ideology listed above and this proved to be highly attractive as well as beneficial for many Palestinians in exile as well as those in Gaza and the West Bank.¹¹⁵ Later political Islamic organizations like the Brotherhood managed to get a considerable footing in the Palestinian refugee camps of Transjordan (including the West Bank) in the 1950s.

The Brotherhood's emphasis on *jihad* against the Israelis and the need for Palestinians to themselves take up arms in defence of their own country, without relying on outside support, struck a sympathetic chord in the hearts of many refugees. The Brotherhood in Palestine placed an emphasis on sports and scout activities, mock military training, and other such activities. This was based on their experience as a mass-based party in Egypt, whose main support base was among the rural peasantry and urban under-classes. The Brotherhood focused on Arabism and Arab unity, but only as a tool towards a greater Islamic unity. They were opposed to Arab nationalism, as a tool that was been

used by secularists so as to divide the Arab and non-Arab Islamic worlds. For the Brotherhood, it was anathema to worship the modern nation as a counterpart or even competitor to the attentions of the people, in place of God.

The so-called Islamic Liberation Party was another competitor for the attention of the Palestinian Muslim peasantry, which recognized Islam as the sole basis for statehood and taught that a unified Islamic state must be set up before a *jihad* against Israel could be launched. Both parties actively sought recruits among police and paramilitary forces in the West Bank and Jordan. Palestinian peasants of Muslim background readily accepted the 'fusion' of Arabism and Islam propagated by these respective political parties.¹¹⁶ Many of the traditionalist parties of the Arab world and of Palestine were unable to expand their base beyond the relatively restricted group of educated urban dwellers in the cities and towns of Palestine. One of the reasons for this was the considerable amount of segregation prevalent in Palestine and through out the Arab world, between 'educated' urbanites and the rural masses. In addition, many of the Arab nationalist parties had a disproportionate number of Christians in their membership as well as secularized urban elites.¹¹⁷ Coupled with all this was the fact that the Muslim Brotherhood was the only accepted socio-political organization that was accepted in Jordan, after the official banning of all political parties in April 1957.¹¹⁸

The 1967 War resulted in discredit to the concept of a transnational Arab state and gave a fillip to Islamist tendencies among the Arab masses. Coupled with this was the Oil Crisis of 1973–74 that propelled the oil-rich Arab states into the world limelight, with their use of oil as a bargaining tool in the political and military crises of the early 1970s. The Gulf Kingdoms and Emirates were all conservative Islamic Sheikdoms where the more austere Islam of the Arabian Desert was in practice.

Increased oil-money meant that these states were able to attract hundreds of thousands of Arab and other workers to their countries in search of work, which in turn meant a spread in radical Islamic values through these people further abroad. The 1970s saw the revival in calls for a worldwide Muslim state where the *Sharia* would be the sole

determining and controlling factor. There was a revival in grassroots work among Islamist groups and parties in the Palestinian territories and also within the state of Israel, which paved the way for the later formation of parties like Hamas and Islamic Jihad. There was tacit Israeli support for this as Islamists were regarded as a counterweight to the 'secular' Palestinian nationalist forces. The Islamic Revolution in Iran, while inaugurating a professedly *Shiite* regime, was an additional boost to the Islamists as they saw how Iran under the clerics managed to devise a completely new theocratic state, which nevertheless had democratic attributes.¹¹⁹

In 1988, the PLO as the premier organization, embracing many different factions working towards Palestinian liberation, took a public commitment towards accepting the so-called two-state solution as the basis for the resolution of the decades old Israel-Palestine imbroglio. The Islamist parties in Palestine and Israel, had on the contrary never accepted the reality of the state of Israel on the soil of the 'Holy Land,' made holy, according to them by the purported '*Qibla* of the Prophet Mohammad' (his reputed 'journey' from the 'Temple Mount-Dome of the Rock' precincts to 'heaven,' via the medium of a mythical white horse). The Palestinian political organizations espousing Islamist views such as Hamas and Islamic Jihad, in addition to a number of other organizations currently active (including those with supposed links to *al-Qaeda*) had also rejected the secular orientation of Palestinian national politics and struggle as it was historically practiced.

Hamas spent the entire period of the late 1970s and 1980s building up its social service network in the Occupied Territories and they were particularly well placed to render useful services to the people of Gaza and the West Bank during the First Intifada of 1987–1993. Palestinian Islamists had been widely noted as gaining in influence since the early 1980s. Hamas (Harakat al-Muqawama al-Islamiyya) which grew out of the work of the Islamic Brotherhood in the Gaza Strip had always been strong in this region, while the corresponding Islamist militia known as Islamic Jihad was strong on the West Bank. The founding head of Hamas was the late Sheikh Ahmad Yasin, who was a refugee in Gaza born in undivided Palestine in 1938. According to Hamas, Palestine was considered a Muslim land and the Palestinian problem a Muslim

problem of concern primarily to the Islamic world. Islamic Jihad too had a similar early development as an off-shoot of Palestinian Islamist activists that had grown close to the Muslim Brotherhood after the comprehensive Arab defeat of 1967.

Many of their early cadre had been born in Gaza and were educated in the Strip as well as in Egypt, where they came under the influence of the Brotherhood. The Islamic Revolution in Iran was a major influence on the Palestinian Islamists as they were increasingly disillusioned with the Brotherhood's resistance against organising armed activities against the state of Israel, probably in deference towards the wishes of the Egyptian state against needlessly provoking the Israelis. The early leaders of Islamic Jihad were influenced by *Shi'ite* Islamist theology coming from Iran, particularly the thought of Ayatollah Khomeini, with its emphasis on rebellion against tyrannical authorities.

Islamic Jihad grew through out the 1980s, thus making it a major influence poised to take an important role in the first Intifada, along with its brother Hamas organization. Both these groups made extensive reference to the writings of both Hassan al-Banna as well as Sayyid Qutb in their writings. They also made extensive references to Abd'al-Karim al-Qasim, the great Palestinian leader of the Arab Revolt of the 1930s. References to Qasim as well as Khomeini showed the reliance of these groups on Palestinian Nationalism as well as the Jihadist roots of political Islam. Islamic Jihad, in particular, was disillusioned with the Islamic Brotherhood over their espousal of 'faith' as praxis without *jihad* (holy war or struggle), while the PLO took the path of *jihad*, without sufficient faith and belief.

Both these groups took an essentially philosophical attitude towards the conflict with the Israelis, emphasizing the 'essentially unchanging' nature of conflict with the Israelis and seeking the destruction of the Zionist state as a corrupting influence in the heart of the Arab and Islamic world and its substitution with an Islamic state of Palestine. Both these movements drew their membership primarily but not exclusively from the lower middle class populations of Gaza and the West Bank, a population mainly scattered in the numerous refugee camps in the region. Hamas and Islamic Jihad had focused on the transformation of Palestine into an Islamic society as a preliminary

step in the liberation of the whole undivided land of Palestine from the Zionist Jewish forces. The two Islamic groups listed above had always emphasized the interdependence of faith and politics in every aspect of the life of the people of the country.¹²⁰

Palestinian politics had thus since the late 1970s been increasingly polarised between an upper and educated secularized and Westernized urban class that supported the PLO and other secular Palestinian and Arab Nationalist parties while, the lower classes, made of the large refugee populations, plus the rural residents and the urban 'uneducated' classes largely supported the Islamist parties such as Hamas and Islamic Jihad. Hamas was the more popular of these two groups having taken the pains to develop a vast social movement and base among the impoverished refugees as well as rural and poor urban Muslims of Palestine.

They emphasized a strict following of Islamic guidelines as regarding piety, good familial settings, a sound Islamic based education network and awareness of the need to supersede Israel with an Islamic state. When Hamas was first founded, they emphasized what was termed 'sensory isolation' in Arabic (*al-in 'izal al-shu'uri*), as a must for good Muslims to be able to live in a non-Islamic society. This was in deference to the Israeli occupied state of Gaza in the 1970s. Against a reflection on their Muslim Brotherhood roots, early Hamas activists sought to get involved in armed actions against Israel using the military-political framework of Fatah (the premier PLO organ).

The Muslim Brotherhood and Hamas kept out of direct military confrontations with the state of Israel (and as a result, were encouraged to function and grow by Israeli military commanders in the Occupied Territories, as a non-violent and anti-national counter to the influence of the PLO) till the outbreak of the First Intifada in 1987. This was in keeping with the prerogative of the Islamic Brotherhood to keep out of direct military action in the two decades after 1967. Hamas refused to cooperate with the nationalist leadership of the PLO and the First Uprising, on the grounds that it was focused on creating an Islamic state, and not a secular one, while refusing any kind of compromises with the Israelis.

In August 1988, when the organization openly published its founding charter for the first time, the Hamas Covenant called on all Palestinian Muslims to wage holy war on the state of Israel as the only solution to the Palestinian problem. The founding Charter of Hamas, a document that the organization had never changed since then or modified in any way, despite widespread demands from Israel and the West, over a proviso calling for the destruction of Israel, confirmed the movement as a branch of the Muslim Brotherhood. It was Islamic Jihad along with a faction within Fatah that professed Islamist leanings that was led by the one-time PLO Planning Centre director as well as Christian-born Munir Shafiq (a close relative of the former Anglican bishop of Jerusalem, Riah Abu el-Assal) that first started military actions against Israeli targets during the mid-to-late 1980s before the start of the popularly inspired First Intifada.

Armed attacks were initiated by the Hamas organization from August 1988 onwards and though severely suppressed by the Israelis, Hamas was able to survive due to their unprecedented network of social service organizations, based mainly in mosques and Islamic institutions that helped to maintain the momentum and Islamic ideology of the group, even when a majority of Hamas leaders were in jail or exile.¹²¹

It should be noted in this context that since March 1993, Palestinians both Christian and Muslim, from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip had been prevented from freely entering Jerusalem and the territories of the state of Israel in general, thereby inhibiting the rights of the people to worship freely at their holy sites such as the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and *al-Aqsa* Temple Mount Compound.¹²² This in turn had made its impact on the Christians of Palestine, especially in the wake of recent Hamas victories at the 2006 polls in Palestine, both on the West Bank and their own regional powerhouse of Gaza. Legislative and presidential elections had been held consecutively since 1996 in Palestine.

The first presidential election in 1996 was won by the late former Chairman of the PLO, Yasser Arafat. Following his fall from favour with the West and in particular with America and the state of Israel, the incumbent President Mahmud Abbas was first elected as

Palestinian Prime Minister and later on the untimely death of Arafat, was re-elected as Palestinian President. In 2005, Palestinian municipal elections to various town and area councils were held after a long lapse. The 2006 legislative elections were held on January 25, 2006. For the first time ever in the history of Palestinian democracy, the radical Islamist grouping Hamas won 74 seats out of the 132 seats in the Palestinian Legislative Assembly that were in the public electoral sphere.¹²³

Many Christians reported how Hamas operatives visited Churches and Christians institutions before the defining Palestinian parliamentary elections in 2006, reassuring them that if elected, the radical Islamist party would do nothing that would jeopardize their continued existence, lives and religious and social rights and status in the Occupied Territories as well as in any future state of Palestine, ruled by the group. Nationalist Christians did not express any surprise at the victory of Hamas, as the widespread disillusionment with the PNA was very evident in Palestine during this period. The overwhelming consensus was that the democratic decision of the people must be respected.

As a respected Palestinian nationalist Christian put it:

I am utterly confident that the Palestinian government headed by Hamas will not distinguish between a Christian and a Muslim. All citizens will be equal before the law and their religious freedoms will be respected as they were respected until now. Hamas will cooperate with them for the good of the homeland and the citizens. We were not afraid of those who believe in God, the compassionate, the merciful, but rather we were afraid of all those who wrongly exploit religion, politicise it and interpret it according their interests. This is what is practiced by many religious Jews. I am certain that the prophetic voice of we Christians will not be silent under any Palestinian government. Rather it will remain loud demanding right and justice and criticising falsehood. We will not be silent if injustice is done to anybody be he a Christian or a Muslim. At the same time, we had to cooperate with the authority and to help in building the bridges

of religious and cultural dialogue with the Western societies and with the Christians in particular.¹²⁴

The failure of secular nationalist Arab states to build viable and stable societies with responsible democratic frameworks had meant that a large proportion of the people of the region, and especially the vast majority of those who had not progressed materially under these regimes, had suffered disillusionment with these forms of regimes. The corresponding rise of Jewish fundamentalist forces after the 1967 War as well as the rise of Islamic fundamentalism coupled with the collapse of the Soviet Union left many secular or left-leaning Arab Christians in a quandary. After fighting for over 150 years for a separation of 'Church and State,' these people were faced with a novel situation demanding their adjustment to predominantly theocratic regimes in the region in the future. Faced with the Islamist current in the Middle East, with its insistence on combining religion and state so that each complements the other, Arab secularists and Christians had been faced with a stark choice of assimilation-coexistence and migration from the region.

The preceding has provided the historical and political background necessary to understand the development of Christian liberation and contextual theology in Palestine. After dealing with the initial historical and theological discussions regarding the growth and development of nationalism within the Palestinian Christian community, issues of land and the impact of British Mandate, Jordanian and Israeli rule on the Palestinian Christian populations in the West Bank and Gaza have been dealt with in some detail. This was essential to understanding why Palestinian theologians like Ateek and Raheb sought to develop a theology of action and praxis. Attention will now be turned from this political background to the ideological background, namely, the rise in liberation and contextual theology, from which both the two main subjects of this book have drawn.

CHAPTER 2

POLITICAL AND LIBERATION THEOLOGIES: IMPLICATIONS FOR ISRAEL-PALESTINE (THE THEO-POLITICAL CONTEXT OF ATEEK AND RAHEB'S WORK)

The emphasis has so far been on the historical and political context that fed the concerns of contemporary Palestinian Christian theology. Focus will now be on the theological context, which included three different strands. First, there was the development of liberation theology, within which Naim Ateek identified himself. Reference had also been made to a rather different understanding of contextual theology which was important for Raheb. Next, there was the theology of other Palestinian practitioners which raised various questions of interpretation and emphasis. Finally, there was the theology of two modern Western theologians, one liberal Jewish and the other a committed ecumenical Christian, who had reflected on the Jewish-Christian relationship and its implications for Palestinians.

Political and Liberation Theologies in Latin America and Asia: The Rise of Liberation Theology

Liberation theology had complex origins which included the tradition of the Church's thinking on politics and economics, going all the way back to the Church Fathers; more immediately Catholic Social Teaching and Catholic Action, which followed from that, with its motto of 'See, Judge, Act'; Vatican II and the ferment which followed from that; European political theology; the educational philosophy of Paulo Freire; and the 'Christian-Marxist dialogue' of the 1960s.¹

Catholic Social Teaching and the long tradition on which it draws such as Leo XIII's *Rerum Novarum*, promulgated in 1891, condemned the bad living conditions of the urban poor of Europe. Since then, successive Popes had taken it upon themselves to condemn European liberal capitalism while taking a stand in favour of the poor and the downtrodden. Pius XI in 1931 issued *Quadragesimo Anno* which affirmed certain Christian attributes in socialism such as the sharing of property for the common good, something long advocated by Christian reformers over the ages. All Popes since Leo XIII, while staunchly conservative and fiercely anti-communist, were still sympathetic to moderate versions of socialist endeavour.

Vatican II, called by Pope John XXIII in 1962, took the concern with peace and justice further. Paul VI's Encyclical *Populorum Progressio* was concerned with the question of worldwide poverty and development, particularly in the two-thirds world. It traced 'Third World' poverty to the impacts and continuing end-results of colonialism, neo-colonialism, unfair trade practices and the great inequality in power among the nations. It was critical of *laissez-faire* capitalism stating that it was responsible for ensuring the wealth and prosperity of Western elite societies at the expense of deprivation and poverty in much of the rest of the world. However, it spoke of 'development,' which still entailed capitalism, as a 'new name for peace.'²

When the conference was over, two conferences in Latin America, one in Medellin in Colombia and the other in Puebla, Mexico, took these ideas further and first came up with the phrase, 'theology of

liberation.' For theologians like Gustavo Gutiérrez, the term 'development' could not fully embrace the needs of the people and especially the poor of Latin America, who were being sidelined in the lop-sided development that takes place in most third world countries.

On the Protestant side, an organization known as 'Church and Society in Latin America' (popularly known by its Spanish acronym of ISAL), had been founded by Richard Shaull and supported by the WCC.³ This organization was involved in developing what they termed a 'theology of revolution,' as opposed to a 'theology of development.' As a protestant theological cum social action movement, ISAL, in its early days, was convinced that a gradualist approach to social transformation in Latin America was quite inadequate, given the entrenched and exploitative nature of the rule of dominant groups in these countries.

Shaull and his organization were interested in trying to develop a Christian basis for revolutionary socio-political transformation, one that would not necessarily involve the need for violence.⁴ The 'theology of revolution,' certainly made its mark on Latin American Catholic theologians who were already becoming more and more ecumenically-oriented as a result of the post-Second World War period changes and the Second Vatican council.

In the late 1960s, 'Church and Society in Latin America' (ISAL) began to feel that the terminology of a so-called 'theology of revolution' was not particularly appropriate to the Latin American situation and then the term 'liberation' began to be spoken of.

The works of European political theologians, in particular Jürgen Moltmann and Johann Baptist Metz, were also important. They regarded Christianity as a 'critical witness in society.'⁵ European political theology was very evident in the writings of all the main liberation theologians, especially those trained in Europe in the 1950s and 1960s. Both Moltmann and Metz sought to make theology responsive to its socio-political situation.

The Main Emphases of Liberation Theology

Liberation theologians had always insisted that their interpretation of theology was not just a 're-interpretation of what is generally known as

Western theology,' but an 'irruption' of God active and living among the poor.⁶ Liberation theology, at least in the way it was practised in Latin America, claimed to be a new method of developing a theology that would sought to address the 'seemingly hopeless' situation of the poor people of Latin America.

There were four key themes involved in the analysis of liberation theology. The first was the priority of praxis. For Gutiérrez, theology was a 'second step,' reflection on action. Hugo Assman argued that,

... the Bible, tradition, the magisterium or teaching authority of the Church, history of dogma, and so on ... even though they need to be worked out in contemporary practise, do not constitute a primary source of 'truth-in-itself.'⁷

Assman had also been critical of the hermeneutical approach of many so-called liberation theologians, critiquing the relevance and necessity of a biblical hermeneutics, without taking into consideration the masses of new techniques and data offered by secular and social sciences as well as the need to think practically about the situation at hand. He was equally critical of the 'Biblicists' as well as Marxist historians and analysts who sought in his view to impose a 'fundamentalism of the Left' by attempting to transplant biblical paradigms and situations into this world without understanding their historical context and situation. He saw the theology of liberation as a critical reflection on the present historical situation 'in all its intensity and complexity.' Instead of the Bible, the 'text' of current reality should be the situational précis point that requires analysis and theologising. As a result, the main issue for Assman was one of hermeneutical criteria. He had little use for those who claimed that the best sets of hermeneutics available to Christians were located in the 'sacred text,' arguing instead for an analysis of reality based on the circumstances of 'today.'⁸

Rather, it was liberative action which was the indispensable basis for reflection. Early on, the Exodus paradigm was normative: the poor were seen as engaged on a journey from slavery to freedom, escaping the bondage of class and debt. The theme of the kingdom of God was also prominent. All liberation theologians made a link between liberation and God's

justice as the primal theme in Christian theology. Gutiérrez denied wanting to fashion a theology from which political action was 'deduced.'⁹

What he wanted, rather, was 'to let ourselves be judged by the word of the Lord, to think through our faith, to strengthen our love, and to give reason for our hope from within a commitment which sought to become more radical, total, and efficacious. It was to reconsider the great themes of the Christian life within this radically changed perspective and with regard to the new questions posed by this commitment. This was the goal of the so-called theology of liberation.'¹⁰

The insistence on beginning with praxis led to a new hermeneutic. Juan Luis Segundo defined the hermeneutical circle as 'the continuing change in our interpretation of the Bible which is dictated by the continuing changes in our present-day reality, both individual and societal.' Segundo's method was made up of four steps that correspond to a kind of theological circle. The first step required recognition of reality on our part that automatically leads to ideological suspicion of that reality. Secondly, the application of 'ideological suspicion' entailed its application to the whole theological superstructure in general. Thirdly, Segundo called for a new way of experiencing and living theological reality, which would in turn lead us to a kind of exegetical suspicion (that would mean a suspicion that current biblical interpretation did not take into account important data). Fourthly, he recommended the development of a new hermeneutic that would provide a new way of interpreting 'our faith,' based on Scripture, with many of the new academic as well as critical-analytic techniques at our disposal.¹¹ Bible reading began with the experience of oppression, which led to suspicion of current Biblical interpretation, which led to new readings of Scripture, which led to new views of society.

Second, liberation theology sought to establish itself not in relation to the institutional church or the academy, but in relation to the *comunidades di base* (in Spanish, the base communities) of peasants and workers who constituted the church. These communities formed the root from which pastoral workers, priests and theologians sought to develop their theologies of liberation. Base communities had been described as 'grassroots communities where Christians sought to form and live out their Christian witness in their historical situation.'¹²

While present in all Latin American states, base communities became most popular in Brazil, where they at one time numbered in the hundreds of thousands. It was in recognition of this fact that the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians (EATWOT) Congress in Sao Paulo, Brazil in 1980 was focused on the ecclesiology of Base Christian Communities (BCC). BCC provides the basis for a historical praxis of liberation that comes before theological manifestation. They also acted as a source of ecclesiology as well as a place where the 'poor and the oppressed' manage to get a place of their own in the historical process. The BCC were always firmly located within the entrenched feudal and semi-feudal forces of bourgeois control in the Latin American nations.

The BCC owed their origin to a wide nature of factors, including the great shortage of priests in Latin America, the desire of the laity to be an active part of the church in the region and the natural desire on the part of the masses for a Latin American church that is responsive to their wishes and aspirations, in short BCC were a manifestation of the contextualization of Latin America's hitherto heavily Euro-centric church and religio-cultural sphere. As stated earlier, the necessity for social resistance can also have given rise to a group of people meeting to coordinate various policies of community action in the light of Gospel teachings. There had been frequent periods and places in the modern history of Latin American states when and where it was extremely dangerous for anybody to be part of a BCC, inviting almost certain incarceration and death, if detected.¹³

Thirdly, Liberation theology espoused the 'option for the poor.' Liberation theologians took as their starting point, the reality of social oppression and misery around them and as their end-goal, the elimination of this kind of misery and 'the liberation of the oppressed.'¹⁴ Christian Smith summarised liberation theology as an attempt to 'reconceptualise the Christian faith from the perspective of the poor and the oppressed.'¹⁵ For Jon Sobrino, the poor were a privileged channel of God's grace.¹⁶ According to Phillip Berryman, liberation theology was,

An interpretation of Christian faith through the poor's suffering, their struggle and hope, and a critique of society and

the Catholic faith and Christianity through the eyes of the poor.¹⁷

Fourth, awareness of the failure of development programmes led to the use of Marxist analysis to try and understand what was going on in society. Rebecca S. Chopp and Ethna Regan described this process thus:

Liberation theology is a critique of the structures and institutions that create the poor, including the primary identification of modern Christianity with the rich. In order to do this, liberation theology engages in dialogue not only with philosophy but also with the social sciences. As a theological discourse of critique and transformation in solidarity with the poor, liberation theology offers a theological anthropology that is political, an interpretation of Christianity that may be characterised through the term 'liberation,' and a vision of Christianity as praxis of love and solidarity with the oppressed.¹⁸

Again it was postulated that it might be best to think of liberation theology as an entirely new genre of theology based on a specific faith-praxis. Liberation theology was specifically focussed on Christian praxis amidst the poor, the oppressed and the deprived of this world.¹⁹

In its emphasis on analysis, liberation theology was a 'contextual' theology, albeit mainly in relation to the social, political and economic context. Eventually the option for the poor led to an awareness of the importance of native forms of spirituality in liberation theology.²⁰

This kind of analysis meant a different understanding of sin. No longer primarily moralistic, it looked first at sinful structures, the ways in which society was organized which more or less forced individuals into sinful action. What was called for, therefore, was not just personal change, but a change in social, political and economic structures.

Liberation theology was often criticized for being covertly political, but for Gutiérrez, liberation in its full form denoted salvation in Jesus Christ. In Gutiérrez's view, liberation in Jesus could be denoted as a single salvation process, which concerned the very identity of Christianity

and the mission of the Church.²¹ Gutiérrez constantly reminded First World Christians that the subject and ultimate goal of liberation theology was not 'theology,' but 'liberation.' The ultimate call of every 'servant of Christ' was to the task of liberation, and not to the task of theology, 'unless that theology is a servant of liberation.' A point frequently emphasized by Gustavo Gutierrez in the discussions leading up to the Third Latin American Bishop's Conference (CELAM III), as well as in his talk during the press conference after the Conference at Puebla, Mexico, February 1979.²²

The American Catholic feminist theologian Rosemary Ruether emphasized that there could be no neutral theology, anymore than there could be neutral sociology or psychology. 'Theology' could be used either as a good and positive tool on the side of all of humanity, by being on the side of the oppressed, or else it can be used 'as a tool of alienation and oppression,' by being on the side of the oppressors.²³

Liberation Theology in Palestine

Most Palestinian theologians were indebted to Latin American liberation theologians for the ideological background of their own political-theological contributions to the ongoing process of Palestinian liberation.²⁴ It was, however, only Naim Ateek who always used the term 'Palestinian Liberation Theology' to refer to his work.²⁵ At the same time, there were crucial differences between the Latin American and the Palestinian context. In the first place, Latin America was a continent where the vast majority of the poor were Christian. In Palestine, Christians were only a tiny minority. This meant that liberation theology could not simply be transposed from one situation to another.

Secondly, the option for the poor in Latin America was about class. In Palestine, all Palestinians were oppressed. Class in Palestine was largely focused on the difference between town and village dwellers in the Palestinian Territories and socio-religious differences between Arab Muslims, Muslim Bedouins, Druze, Arab Christians and other non-Arab Muslim groups dwelling in the territory of Palestine-Israel.

What was being dealt with was a perverse form of racism where Semites were discriminating against Semites.

Thirdly, it could be argued that the exodus paradigm did not play out in Palestine. Palestinians found themselves in the role of the dispossessed people. This raised acute difficulties for biblical study. Palestinian theologians had been much exercised on how to read the Hebrew bible.

Finally, Palestinian theologians did not have the background in Marxism which many Latin American theologians had. To them, it was an alien form of analysis and they turned elsewhere for understanding society.

The Arab psyche, and in this context, the Levantine Arab Christian psyche demanded recognition from Western Christians as one of the most western-oriented collective-minority group in the Eastern Mediterranean region. They saw this as a reflection of the historic ties that Arab Christians had had with Christians in the European West during the long centuries of Islamic rule in this region. Ties between Western and Eastern Christians were particularly cemented during the period of the Crusades, which saw a sustained Western intrusion into the region, both from a military, colonial and religio-cultural point of view. The Ottoman territories of the 'Near East' or 'Middle East' were also one of the first regions penetrated and influenced by Western Christian missionaries and administrators, thereby considerably culturally impacting the life and prospects of Arabic-speaking Christians in the area. Many Arab Christians migrated and settled in parts of Latin America, North America, parts of Europe and Australasia, thereby fueling ties between these largely 'developed' regions of the world and the Arab Christian homeland of Syria, Palestine, Lebanon and Egypt-Jordan.

Contextual Theology: A Definition

Naim Ateek used the term 'liberation theology' to describe what he was doing. Lutheran pastor and theologian Mitri Raheb as well as al-Liqa theologian Rafiq Khoury preferred the term 'contextual theology.' What lay behind this difference in terminology was essentially the need to engage with both Judaism and Islam.

'Contextual theology' could be said to have three meanings. In the first place it could simply be a synonym for liberation theology. Thus the Indian theologian K.C. Abraham wrote that,

The aim of contextual theology is not only to understand and interpret God's act, or to give reason for their faith, but to help suffering people in their struggle to change their situation in accordance with the vision of the gospel. Liberative praxis is the methodology for contextual theologies.²⁶

Occasionally, Raheb used the phrase like this. Secondly, the term was used to signify the recognition, originating in the sociology of knowledge, that all discourse is placed. There was 'no view from nowhere.' As Abraham, again, stated,

Creative moments in theology had arisen out of the church's response to new challenges in a given historical context. They bear the cultural and social imprints of the time ... Theologians of every age were committed to interpreting the Gospel of Jesus in a way (that is) relevant and meaningful to the realities around them.²⁷

Thirdly, it originated in the attempt first of missionary theologians, and then of indigenous theologians, to express theology in terms of the symbols and values of a particular culture. Stephen B. Bevans spoke of contextual theology as,

a way of doing theology in which one takes into account the spirit and message of the gospel; the tradition of the church; the culture in which one is theologising; and social change within that culture, whether brought about by western technological process or the grass-roots struggle for equality, justice and liberation.²⁸

The Christian faith could be understood and interpreted, according to Bevan, not only on the basis of 'scripture and tradition,' but also on the basis of 'concrete culturally conditioned human experience.'²⁹

Contextual theology reflected on the 'raw experience' of the people. It represented an amalgamation of Christian concepts, stories and symbols on the one hand, with the particular indigenous culture of the people on the other.³⁰

There was a growing realization worldwide that contextualized or local theologies were the key to the future appeal of the Christian faith. As Jose M. de Mesa commented,

Contextuality in the field of theology denotes attentiveness, the determination to listen to the voice of the poor; and conscious and intentional rootedness in the culture, in religion, in the historical currents, in the social locations and situations of people as well as in gender. It aims to alter conditions in the Church and in society that were counter to the deep intent of the Gospel and sought to include voices which had been excluded in the participative process of theologising.³¹

K.C. Abraham likewise argued that, 'Theologians of every age were committed to interpreting the Gospel of Jesus in a way (that was) relevant and meaningful to the realities around them.'³² Mitri Raheb sought to make the Christian faith relevant or contextual to the Palestinian faithful as part and parcel of their own culture. He wrote of the necessity for the Palestinian Church to be totally 'Arabized,' starting from the top of the ecclesiastical hierarchy, through the clergy and right down to the base-laity. This 'Arabization' of the leadership of the church should spread to include theology as well as education. In his view, only this kind of essential 'Arabization' would bind the native Arab Christian people of Palestine to 'their church, their society, and their country.'³³ Naim Ateek too wrote of the need for the (very Europeanised and Euro-centric) church in Israel-Palestine to 'contextualise its faith and theology,' thereby seeking to address and answer the important issues facing native Arab Christians and society in the region.³⁴ He declared that,

...the contextual concerns of the Church, although predominantly political in appearance, were deeply and ultimately

theological in nature. These needs were perpetually frustrated by the increasing complexity of the political conflict ... The duty of the Church in Israel-Palestine today is to take its own concrete and local context seriously. It (the Church) needs to incarnate itself in its context so that it can be the voice of the oppressed and the dehumanised.³⁵

Writing in 1989, Ateek acknowledged that the church in Israel-Palestine had hardly begun to contextualise. Palestinian Christianity had long roots dating right back to the time of Christ. Even during the Byzantine era, Palestinian Christians did not have any experience being part of the ruling party as the Byzantine Church in Palestine was ruled and controlled by Greeks and Cypriots.³⁶ During the Islamic era, the majority of the Palestinian people slowly converted over to the ruling faith and by the eve of the Turkish conquest of Palestine in 1519, the land had become majority Muslim.³⁷

Coupled with this was the almost continually disturbed nature of Palestinian society that resulted in large-scale emigration over the last 100 years or more.³⁸ Native Christians in Palestine today tended to worry more about whether they could ensure adequate quorum in their churches to make them practically viable as part of the 'living stones' of the Holy Land.³⁹ Though Palestinian Protestants were small in number, their contributions to society vastly exceeded their actual strength based on their numbers on the ground. Their institutions, schools and hospitals dotted the Holy Land and they were actively involved in rendering valuable social services to the Palestinian population at large.

Early Influences in Contextualization of Theology in Palestine, the Fountainhead of Contextualization: Al-Liqa Centre in Bethlehem

The Bethlehem-based organization known as al-Liqa (in Arabic; Encounter) was set up in 1982 with the aim of creating dialogue and understanding between Christians and Muslims. Initially, the organization formed part of the Tantur Ecumenical Institute for

Theological Studies, Jerusalem, and was actually part of one of their ecumenical outreach programmes. According to its website, Tantur was set up in 1971 after the Vatican bought and then subsequently leased the hill-top land between Bethlehem and Jerusalem on the old Jerusalem-Hebron road to the University of Notre Dame (USA) for fifty years to build and operate an ecumenical research institute in an internationalist, albeit Catholic ambience. The inspiration to form Tantur evolved from the Second Vatican Council where some of the Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant participants from the Holy Land asked Pope Paul VI to start an ecumenical research institute in Jerusalem.⁴⁰

Tantur's mainly international focus, in keeping with its use as an overseas research institute of the University of Notre Dame in the United States, meant that local Palestinians felt increasingly ill-at-ease there. Tantur's programmes were mainly focussed on Jewish-Christian dialogue, emphasizing the priorities of the American sponsors of this organization. Palestinians were looking for a centre that would address specifically the issue of Muslim-Christian dialogue and al-Liqa separated from Tantur and established itself as a separate centre in 1987. Al-Liqa was first set up in the mid-1980s in Beit Sahour (a suburban town close to Jerusalem and one of the Christian triangles in the West Bank comprising of Beit Laham-Bethlehem, Beit Sahour and Beit Jala).

Al-Liqa's striking success at that time (a tradition that it continues even now), was that it was able to bring together Christian and Muslim leaders and theologians in the land to explore issues of contention as well as agreement between them. This was crucial as it occurred during a period when there was a general tendency among people of all faiths in Israel-Palestine to look abroad for help towards other foreigners of similar faith, rather than spend time dialoguing with their own brothers and sisters of different religions at home. It was not to be expected that major issues (political and theological) of difference between the two faiths approaches could be solved easily, but the dialogue set up helped to ease built up misunderstandings as well as even certain theological misapprehensions and tensions, thereby creating channels for further communication and vital personal networks

of communication that could always be activated at will and when there was a crisis in inter-faith and inter-communal relations. Al-Liqa, in this sense, would always have a niche in the Palestinian faith landscape.⁴¹ Al-Liqa was not only dedicated to theological studies, but to research into all aspects of life, religious, cultural and secular, of the indigenous people of the Holy Land region.

Al-Liqa had developed a contextualized theology that took into consideration the existence, needs and cultural aspirations of the Muslim and Christian communities of Israel-Palestine-Jordan (henceforth referred to as IPJ). Al-Liqa Centre holds regular conferences on two major topics: 'Theology and the Church in the Holy Land,' and 'Arab-Christian and Muslim Heritage in the Holy Land.' Both Muslims as well as Christians participated in the activities of this centre. While Sabeel's main focus was on advocacy work in the West, seeking to make Western Christians understand the situation of Palestinian Christians, al-Liqa focussed on developing a sense of unity and purpose among Palestinians of all religious persuasions and inculcating in them a sense of purpose about their shared culture and socio-religious heritage. The document 'Theology and the Local Church in the Holy Land: Palestinian Contextualized Theology,' published by al-Liqa centre stated that,

Our contextualized Palestinian theology does not mean isolating ourselves, withdrawing within ourselves or writing a new theology developed outside the general trend of Christian thought or in contradiction to it. What we mean is a theology which can live and interact with events so as to interpret them and assist the Palestinian church in discovering her identity and real mission at this stage of her earthly life.⁴²

Dr. Gerjes Sa'ed Khoury was the founding director of 'al-Liqa Centre for Religious and Heritage Studies in the Holy Land.' Al-Liqa's main centre was in Bethlehem in the West Bank of Palestine, but it also had influence among the Palestinian Christians of the Galilee, particularly in the once largely Christian town of Nazareth, as well as in the upper Galilee region, with its large proportion of Palestinian

inhabitants. Geries S. Khoury himself was a Melkite Greek Catholic Christian from the Greek Catholic village of Fassuta in the Galilee. A recent Arabic language book by Geries Khoury, based on his extensive scholarship of the post-Islamic Christian Arabs and their contributions to the development of Arab civilization and culture as well as the present theological status and political issues of the Arab Christians of Israel-Palestine, was *Arab Masibioun* (Arab Christians).⁴³ For him, PCT should serve to inculcate a spirit of national awareness among Palestinian Christians. It should be a means by which the Palestinian national struggle became a common struggle of all Palestinian people for a free, secular and democratic homeland.

A common understanding and request of PCT in this context was the demand for achieving a secularized and nationally responsible education system in the Palestinian territories that reflected the sensitivities and aspirations of the Christian community within Palestine. In short, PCT, as propagated by al-Liqa centre in Bethlehem sought to develop a sense of awareness about the Christian Arab heritage of the Holy Land and its myriad facets, including theological, philosophical, historical and political factors that had contributed to the development of the unique identity and psyche of the Christian Arabs since the early Middle Ages of the European era. Al-Liqa centre sought to temper the overtly Islamic attitude of the Palestinian educational system, so as to create an awareness of the contributions made by Christian Arabs to the development of the Arab civilization.

Geries Khoury himself had stated how there were literally hundred of thousands of Arabic language Christian manuscripts stored in the libraries of various museums and patriarchates (various monastic as well as patriarchate libraries), awaiting detailed study and translation as well as an adequate imputing of this concealed knowledge into various publications, books, journals and otherwise, so that the scholarly world might be aware of the great contributions made by the Christian Arab sphere to the development of interreligious and other dialogue in the greater Middle Eastern region. He lamented the fact that this knowledge had so far, over the last thousand years or more,

been concealed and hidden from the popular eyes of both the East as well as understandably the West. Medieval Christian theologians in the so-called Arab world generally wrote their theology in the vernacular Arabic language, though other Semitic and Greek Languages were used in church and seminary services. Indeed, the Arabic language was a major factor fostering the unity of various theologians belonging to various competing Middle Eastern churches of different shades and variations of theological leanings.

Khoury himself, in the course of his extensive research into medieval Arabic Christian literature (he had two PhD degrees, both from Italian Universities in medieval Arabic philology), had discovered that the Arabic church theologians often acknowledged that the divisions among them were more due to linguistic differences, perpetuated among Christians from different 'national' church and sectarian traditions within the Middle Eastern region, than due to theology (which was and is generally the issue most highlighted among scholars and in the popular perception, to show the differences among various historic and present West Asian churches). PCT sought to highlight the contributions made by the Arab Christians to the development of an Arab Christian-Muslim dialogue during the time of the Islamic Caliphate in the Middle East and its potential lessons for the present period in the field of Islamic-Christian dialogue. After the arrival of Islam, it was a necessity for Levantine Christians to enunciate a theology that would be contextual, indigenous, and would appeal to the new Muslim rulers in the language of their choice, namely Arabic.

Non-Greek, non-Byzantine Christians of the territories conquered by the Muslim armies saw their arrival as a form of salvation against the totalitarian theocracy of the Byzantine Greeks. It could be argued that the Oriental church survived because it bothered to enter into a dialogue with the Arabs. Arabic was not the first language of choice for Christians when the Muslims arrived in the Levant in the seventh century CE. However, it rapidly became the lingua-franca as communication between the conquerors and the conquered was a must for both mutual as well as national survival. The Oriental church found better cause for survival under the Arabs than under the Byzantines,

who tended to be contemptuous of those Christians unwilling to accept the Greek language and Orthodoxy in toto.

In contrast, after centuries of living under Islamic and proto-Islamic rule, Levantine Christians were largely united among themselves and with other fellow non-Christians by virtue of their common culture and the Arabic language. The centre sought to make dialogue between Christians and Muslims in Palestine, the centre-piece of their efforts in favour of developing an all-encompassing national consensus on the Palestine problem.⁴⁴ Palestinian Christian Theology must be concerned with a dialogue with Islam as well as with Judaism.

Khoury related how Palestinians were a victim of an 'ideologized' reading of scripture that was used to argue that the land of Palestine was actually the 'Promised Land' of the Jewish people. He referred to Leviticus 25:47 with its theology of the 'resident aliens,' and stated that it would be impossible from a theological as well as political perspective, for the Palestinian people to accept such a claim to their land. Khoury made the specific claim that the Palestinian Christian claim to interpreting the Old Testament and the whole question of the 'holy' land must be done in a way that goes much deeper than contemporary Zionist Jewish political interpretations and definitions.⁴⁵

A Palestinian contextualized theology was 'a meeting place for East and West, for Christian and Muslim, for Christian and Jew, for Palestinian and non-Palestinian. It was the promise of a nation in the Holy Land. It was a theology of communication between peoples, cultures and religion.' Geris Khoury's preferred term for any nascent endeavour to develop a Palestinian theology of liberation was simply just 'Palestinian theology.' He was not against the term 'liberation theology,' but would prefer to call any theology that sought to root the local Palestinian church within its own local context and setting, by the seemingly nationalist term of a 'Palestinian theology.' For Khoury, liberation theology or Palestinian theology did not start yesterday or today.

Christianity was born in Palestine and Jesus Christ himself, born under the Roman occupation of the region, was in many respects the first preacher to speak and teach a Palestinian theology of liberation. This again was a point repeatedly made by Naim Ateek and other

Palestinian theologians and clerics interested in contextualising theological practise in Israel-Palestine. Geries Khoury emphasized that PCT was not a theology in any way against or in opposition to Islam. He quoted the historic experience of the Orthodox Patriarch of Jerusalem, Sophronius, who sought the middle path of coexistence and collaboration between the historic Christian community of Jerusalem and the Holy Land and the new Islamic conquerors of the region.

The contextualization of the Christian faith in the new Islamic settings in the Holy Land involved a theology of dialogue with Islam, through which Sophronius managed to save the mother church of Jerusalem, by a mixture of compromise, collaboration and astute diplomacy.⁴⁶ For Khoury, the indigenous Christian church in Palestine would not be able to survive unless it could consider itself an integral part of the Palestinian people in the Israel-Palestine region in general. Khoury, as a member of the old Palestinian fraternity within the state of Israel that was born within the British Mandate of Palestine (similar to Naim Ateek, Michel Sabbah, and others, with the possible exception of Mitri Raheb), gave a call in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict for the Israelis to leave the occupied territories. He exhorted Palestinian Christians to consider the Israeli occupation of their territory as a real 'sin,' the only solution which would be for the Israelis to vacate the 'occupation.'⁴⁷

A difference from Latin America was the emphasis on ecumenism. Geries Khoury emphasized the necessity of developing an ecumenical community theology that would reflect the richness and historical diversity of the different Christian faith traditions in the Holy Land. As he put it,

There is not a separate Orthodox, Catholic, Lutheran, or Anglican need for justice, or work, or land or identity. Different traditions should bring their riches not their arguments or anything which undermines the strength of our unity. For the contextualized theology is in the message of all the church together.... It is in an ecumenical theology through which we sought to encourage church unity of word and action.⁴⁸

Khoury was insistent that PCT should seriously consider more cooperation between the nations of the south, especially in the field of ecumenical exchange. He was certain that PCT was and had to be a theology of the Third World. In this context, he saw many similarities between the situation of the Palestinian people and that of the black South Africans during the Apartheid regime. For Khoury, the need of the hour was for the Palestinian Christians, whatever their denominational affiliation, to develop an 'ecclesiology of the local church' that would serve to overcome the historic fragmentation and divisions that the church had been exposed to over the ages, thereby enabling the Christian inhabitants of Palestine to speak with one voice. He felt that only in this context could the survival of the Palestinian Christian community as a coherent, sustainable and self-reliant Arab group in the region be ensured.⁴⁹

Fr. Rafiq Khoury, who also wrote in the *Al-Liqa Journal* (he should not be confused with the above-mentioned Dr. Gerjes Khoury), argued that Middle Eastern Christians had a special vocation for Islam and the Islamic world. Fr. Khoury had always been active in ecumenical circles in the Holy Land Christian circuit. His composite background, highly eruditely qualities and good scholarship had meant that he had played a vital anchor role over the past forty years (he was ordained priest in Jerusalem 1967) within and also outside the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem.

Khoury belonged to the earliest generation of Palestinian native priests with the highest level of educational accomplishment (he has a PhD in Catholic Education). As a result, he has been the leading light behind various activities at the Patriarchal headquarters regarding the Catechetical Centre and the Secretariat for Christian Educational Institutions in Jerusalem. Fr. Khoury has also been very active in the al-Liqa Palestinian Heritage study centre, and was on the board of directors from the very beginnings of the centre in the early 1980s. He was the Managing Editor of *Al-Liqa* quarterly review. He also functioned as Director of the Parish Synod in the Latin Patriarchate in Jerusalem.

According to Khoury, their relation with Islam and the Islamic world was what made Middle Eastern Christians 'unique' in the

Christian world. Middle Eastern Christians had a long history under Islam, for approximately three centuries as a majority in the region and later as a minority, though a relatively large one for centuries, until the turn of the twentieth century. The Constantinian 'acceptance' of Christianity as the official faith of the Roman Empire meant that Palestine became a 'Christian' land for roughly three centuries until the arrival of first, the Sassanid Persians and then shortly after that, the forces of the Islamic Caliphate.

There were however two Christian Empires, one in the East and the other in the West and as a result two 'versions' of the 'one and only' Catholic Christian faith developed. One point made repeatedly by Khoury in his analysis of the role and history of Middle Eastern Christian Churches was the fact that these Churches and the ethnic groups represented by them had never known the 'privilege' of having an ethno-political entity that corresponds to their wishes ruling over them. Native Arab as well as Palestinian historians and theologians, whether Christian or Muslim had never viewed the Byzantine Empire, while solidly Greek and Christian, as a 'localised' entity, preferring to see it as a foreign group. This was despite the fact that the predominant language of the Levant till well into the Arab Era was either Greek or Aramaic, the language spoken by Jesus Christ Himself.⁵⁰

The Islamic experience remained 'a decisive and rich experience' in the eyes of Middle Eastern Christians. Khoury warned that Christians in the Middle East should not seek to create an ethnically homogeneous and politically independent entity of their own in the region, as any attempt in the past to do so, had only resulted in catastrophe. He referred to the Christian political experience in Iraq under the immediate post-Mandate phase in the 1920s and Lebanese Christians' fateful dalliance with a controlling stake in political sovereignty during the second Lebanese civil war from 1975 to 1989 as examples. The Christian condition as a minority in the Middle East had seriously affected the social and psychological condition of Levantine Christians. Khoury quoted from various pastoral letters of the Council of Catholic Patriarchs in the Middle East to show how the status of a minority in the Middle East had negatively affected Christians in the Middle

East to the extent that they were being increasingly forced to migrate in large numbers, due to a crisis of confidence in their continued residence in the region.⁵¹

As Rafiq Khoury put it,

This (Islamic) history left an indelible imprint on the Christian Churches which makes of them not only Churches within Islam but also Churches for Islam. When we want to determine our vocation and mission, Islam is an obligatory path.⁵²

At the same time the Millet system under the Ottoman Empire served to solidify the differences between the people. In Rafiq Khoury's opinion, only the establishment of a truly ecumenical framework in the Middle East would ensure Christian survival.⁵³ He quoted from the statement of the Catholic Patriarchs of the East in their first common message in 1991, which maintained that, 'In the East, we will be Christians together or we will not exist.'⁵⁴

Rafiq Khoury maintained that the process of 'inculturation' in the Middle East was always an unfinished process. The Middle East today was characterised by the tendency towards Westernization and globalization on the part of an elite as well as largely secularized middle class, while at the same time, there was a deep appreciation and understanding of indigenous culture and religious identity on the part of a large mass of the population on the other side.⁵⁵ Because Christians were identified with the West, their Muslim neighbours sometimes distrusted them. Rafiq Khoury wished to address this suspicion.

The PCT Centre Al-Liqa has made it a major plank of its mission to seek reconciliations and common ground, both cultural and political, between Christians and Muslims in Palestine and the greater Levant in general. The Israeli scholar of Palestinian Christians, Daphne Tsimhoni (whose landmark PhD work from SOAS in the early 1970s was one of the first works to look in detail on the impact of Arab Nationalism on the Greek Orthodox of the early Mandate period) has referred to Rafiq Khoury as the most islamized of all Palestinian Christian scholars and theologians.⁵⁶

Patriarch Michel Sabbah

Patriarch Michel Sabbah, the first native Palestinian Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, was actively involved in questions of peace and faith in the Holy Land. In his pastoral letters he emphasized the need for Christians to follow peaceful paths, whilst endorsing the legitimacy of Palestinian struggle. The most important of his letters raised the question of biblical interpretation.

In his pastoral letter (November 1993) titled 'Reading the Bible Today in the Land of the Bible,' Sabbah urged a Christ-centred approach to reading Scripture.⁵⁷ He argued that difficulties with reading the Hebrew Bible as 'the Word of God' could lead to a new Marcionism.⁵⁸ He warned the faithful not to be influenced by their current socio-cultural and political position in making a reading of the Bible, particularly its most controversial sections, which might seem directly applicable to the present condition of the Palestinian and Israeli people. He was also concerned about 'unilateral or partial' interpretations of the Bible which might call into question the presence and status of the Palestinian people in their own homeland.⁵⁹

He asked,

What is the relationship between ancient Biblical history and our contemporary history? Is Biblical Israel the same as the contemporary State of Israel? What is the meaning of the promises, the election, the Covenant and in particular the 'promise and the gift of the land' to Abraham and his descendants? Does the Bible justify the present political claims? Could we be victims of our own salvation history, which seems to favour the Jewish people and condemn us? Is that truly the Will of God to which we must inexorably bow down, demanding that we deprive ourselves in favour of another people, with no possibility of appeal or discussion?⁶⁰

For Palestinian Christians who, after the Arab nationalist euphoria of the Nasser years, had generally held to concepts of non-violence, reading the Old Testament with its accounts of divinely sanctioned violence

against the non-Jewish population could be a traumatic walk in faith, especially when juxtaposed with an appropriation of violence by radical Islamist elements within the majority Muslim community in Israel-Palestine.⁶¹ Sabbah raised issues that had prominently figured in the theological writings of earlier as well as later Palestinian theologians, especially as regards the promises of God, the 'divinely ordained' gift of the land, the concepts of election and the divine covenant between YHWH (Jehovah: One God of the Hebrew people) and the Jewish people and its present repercussions for Palestinians and Israelis.

Sabbah emphasized that 'divine election' was a free and gratuitous move on the part of God by which He had called all people to walk according to His Law, through which ultimately one achieved salvation. God's Word told us that the Hebrew people were initially called so that through them many others would be called to faith in God. In time, God would send a messiah through the Jewish people who would be the Saviour of the world, for those who believed in Him. They would be known as Christians. Election therefore involved an 'act of love on God's part' and a corresponding act of responsibility on the part of the chosen people towards God and their fellow men.⁶² Sabbah emphasized that one was chosen, not because of any particular skill or merit on our part, but because of the great grace and mercy of God. Again he used the example of the eleventh hour labourers to illustrate that there was no space for jealousy or envy in the field of 'chosenness.' On the contrary, what was needed was humility, as both those 'chosen' as well as 'not chosen' should come together in a vision of 'love, justice and finally, reconciliation.'⁶³

Sabbah dealt in detail with some of the issues affecting Palestinian Christians and others in the Middle East in his analysis of controversial issues from the Bible. He first raised the issue of violence in both the Old as well as New Testaments. After providing a survey of texts that seemingly authorise and justify violence, he included a selection of texts which condemn it. In order to reconcile what must appear as two contradictory visions of 'divine' teaching as regards the use of violence in the Hebrew Scriptures; he appealed to the divine mystery that was God. He quoted Romans 11:33–34 to show that humans cannot understand the mind, the motives and the acts of God. God

alone is responsible for his 'divine' actions in this world. God's Will was also revealed to us as a progressive revelation. As divine revelation was progressive, one could not make sense of the Will of God without taking into consideration the entire sequence of prophetic scripture from the first book of the Bible in Genesis to the last in Revelation in the New Testament.

Old Testament violence as sanctioned by God often dealt with punishment for transgression of God's divine Commandments or Law. Sabbah emphasized this because the foundation of the state of Israel involved the uprooting and driving away of hundred and thousands of Palestinians from the former Palestine, acts that Israelis and Zionist rabbis often sought to justify on the basis of Old Testament practice and precedence. Right-wing religious rabbis often sought to justify the hard-fist policies of the Israeli military on the tactics and practice of ancient Israelite warrior heroes like Samuel, David, Gideon, Barak, Samson and Joshua.

It was in this context that Sabbah made reference to the so-called 'Law of Anathema' (total destruction) as applicable to the conquered non-Israelite (Canaanite) people in the Old Testament. Again his implicit reference was to the activities of Jewish right-wing terror groups' right from the time of the Irgun and Stern gangs during the Israeli War of Independence (Palestinian *Nakba* of 1948) and the subsequent activities of the so-called 'Kach' militant settler and terrorist movement (established to terrorise Palestinians and West Bankers in the late 1970s and early 80s), founded by the late Rabbi Meir Kahane, a disciple of revisionist Zionist revolutionary Vladimir Jabotinsky.

The Law of Anathema was pronounced in the case of the conquest of many Canaanite cities such as Jericho, Ai and others, with the order from God going out that all the people who did not believe in the one and only God (YHWH) must be killed. Sabbah also related how concepts of divine justice underwent evolution over the ages, becoming progressively more and more moderate until in the New Testament, we read about the divine exhortation through Jesus to love one's enemy and to pray for those who persecute us (Mathew 5:38, 43–44).⁶⁴ Divinely sanctioned violence in the Old Testament was always used as a means of protecting the Holiness of God.

Sabbah emphasized that each of the three main monotheistic religions had an equal right to remain in the land that was holy for each. However, the political rights of each of these religions could only be decided in the context of understandings reached with the current political authorities of the land. Sabbah also raised the point that God was no longer a God of just one people and a God of divinely sanctioned violence and war. God was today a God of all people, especially a God of peace, love and non-violence. In this context, it was optimal on the part of the present ruling authority in the holy land, namely the state of Israel, to be led by the eternal principles contained in the Word of God. These principles required a reference to justice and God's love for all people. God was not a God of just one people and a friend to only one people. God was not on the side of injustice committed against any one people.

Sabbah agreed that it was almost impossible to reconcile the political and military activities undertaken by various temporal powers with the Laws of God given to Moses on Mt. Sinai and the prophetic literature of ancient Israelite seers. He exhorted his readers to distinguish between the religious duties as embodied in the Jewish people and their political survival in a modern nation-state of their own making. He counselled that facts about the right to the land in Palestine must be submitted to the arbitration of International Law. The role of religion in the Israel-Palestinian conflict must be in the role of a moderator concerning the values inherent in all political action. Sabbah argued that whilst Christians accept the Old Testament as a form of revelation, this does not imply that modern Jews had political rights to the land. In his view there was nothing 'divine' in the creation of modern Israel, a nation founded by committed secular political Zionists in the colonial settler format.⁶⁵

Archbishop Elias Chacour: Reconciliation through Education

The life story of Archbishop Elias Chacour of Akko (Acre), Haifa, Nazareth and all Galilee of the Melkite Greek Catholic Church of Antioch, resembled that of other Palestinian clerics and ecclesiastics

in that he experienced the brutality and oppression of war at first hand as a child. Elias Chacour was born in 1939 in a village in the northern Galilee region of British mandate Palestine. His village was occupied and depopulated in 1948, during the first Israeli-Arab war that resulted in the formation of the state of Israel. Chacour was just a young boy of eight when his family was evicted from their home and became refugees in their own land, which had suddenly become an alien country to them. Chacour was ordained a priest in Nazareth in 1965. He became the first Palestinian and Arab student to get a higher degree from Israel's elite Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Chacour was a close friend of the late Archbishop Joseph-Marie Raya of the Melkite Catholic Church of Galilee, a fearless Lebanese-American fighter for the rights of the oppressed and the downtrodden, a man who had honed his skills in the Civil Rights struggle of the African-American people (as one of the right-hand men of Martin Luther King himself) in the 1950s and 1960s.

Naim Ateek too was influenced by Bishop Raya's tireless activities on behalf of the Palestinian residents of the state of Israel, during his tenure in the Bishopric of Haifa, Galilee, during the late 1960s and early 1970s. However, he also criticized Bishop Raya for a lack of clear vision and strategy to counter the oppression, very clearly evident against the Palestinian residents of the state of Israel, during his tenure in the Galilee Bishopric.⁶⁶ Chacour served as a vice-president of the Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Centre of Jerusalem. He was among the earliest of educated Palestinian clergy to realize the implicit importance of ecumenical endeavour in the changed and reduced circumstances that Palestinian Christians after 1948. Almost all the rehabilitation and developmental work he led in the northern Galilee was a testament to his appeal to ecumenical endeavour, whether local, international or indeed on an inter-faith level. Elias Michael Chacour was consecrated Archbishop of all Galilee and the Holy Land in 2006 at the Melkite Greek Catholic Cathedral in Haifa.

The Melkites (also called Melchites or Malkites) were those Byzantine Christians that opted to be in communion with the Church of Rome instead of the Eastern Byzantine Orthodox Church based at Constantinople (today's Istanbul in the Republic of Turkey). It was in

1724 that Rome and the Melkite Christians of the Middle East came into a formal union. The term Melkite came from the Syriac word *Malko* which means 'imperial.' In Arabic, the term used was *Maliki* which meant the same as the Aramaic-Syriac root word. The Melkite Greek Catholic Church known in Arabic (transliteration) as *Kanīsat ar-Rum al-Katulik* was an Eastern Rite Catholic Church. The original home of the Church lay in Egypt, Syria and Lebanon-Palestine, but the faithful were scattered through out the Western world and the Americas numbering about one and a half million souls globally. The main ethno-linguistic orientation of the Church was Levantine Arab. The Archdiocese of the Galilee, Akko, Haifa and Nazareth was once one of the largest and richest of all Melkite dioceses, but this was no longer the case due to outmigration as a result of the establishment of the state of Israel and the restrictive policies of the Israeli government against non-Jewish minorities.⁶⁷

Rafiq Khoury referred to Chacour's mode of writing and practice as 'narrative' theology.⁶⁸ Chacour focussed most of his energies on building up the educational infrastructure of this region, so neglected by the Israeli authorities. He was involved with building up the first Arab Christian University of Israel in Ibillin (the Crusader *Ibelin*) in the Galilee region. This University was defined as the Mar Elias University Project (MEU). No university was owned or operated solely by Palestinian Arabs in the Arab sector in Israel, nor did the Israeli authorities encourage such private ventures as a threat to the national higher education framework of the state of Israel, as well as a threat to the secular and state monopoly over higher education within the Jewish state.

The main purpose behind the educational institutions founded by Chacour was the desire to see the Jews, Christians, Muslims and Druze of Israel, study and cohabit together. Whereas the relationship between the Palestinians and Israelis, whether inside or outside Israel, continued to be tense and confrontational, Chacour hoped that his particular policy of educational co-optation and co-habitation might prove the seed to the solution of this vexed issue. As he commented,

International agreements, the signing of peace treaties between governments and heads of states, had proved to be shaky,

superficial, and easily damaged. At heart, they lack roots. They were only signatures on pieces of paper. Through the Mar Elias Educational Institutions, we want to reach agreement in the hearts of the younger generation, the leaders of tomorrow. These roots planted in the hearts of young Jews, Palestinian Christians, and Muslims cannot be easily destroyed.⁶⁹

As can be seen, his was a theology of reconciliation. It was a matter of building bridges among the members of the same family: Christians, Jews, Muslims, and Druze. This was the meaning of 'becoming Godlike.'⁷⁰ Chacour presupposed that liberation could only come through such reconciliation.

Bishop Riah Abu El-Assal (Former Anglican Bishop of Jerusalem)

Riah Abu El-Assal was one of the founding members of the Palestinian Liberation Theology (PLT) movement, but was sidelined from Sabeel because of his inability to get along with Naim Ateek and vice versa. He was among the few Palestinian Christians who actively got involved in politics in the state of Israel. El-Assal was one of the founding members of the Progressive List for Peace (PLP), a Joint Arab-Jewish party that stood for peace and reconciliation between the Arab and Jewish residents of the state of Israel. This party functioned between 1984 and 1992 and was credited with breaking many taboos, particularly on joint Arab-Jewish political participation, within the Israeli political spectrum. His book *Caught in Between*, (London: SPCK, 1999) was primarily a narrative work of recollection as the author sought to fashion his diverse experiences into a coherent theology of struggle.

This book, in common with many other Palestinian clerical theologians' works, started with an extensive narrative description of the background and early origins of Palestinian Christians and Christianity in the land that was called 'holy.' Most Palestinian theologians devoted considerable space to descriptions and explanations defining their ethnic origins and historic claim to being descendents of the earliest Christians of the land of Palestine. El-Assal too was a refugee in the

fighting of 1948, making his way back to Nazareth in the Galilee later after the founding of the state of Israel. He mentioned in his book how Nazareth was full of refugees in his youth from many towns and villages (such as Baysan, from where Ateek came) in the Galilee region that had been evacuated by the Zionist forces.⁷¹

While both Ateek and El-Assal had more or less the same background, having grown up in Nazareth under the Israeli state, the latter was different in the sense that he opted to live and serve within Israel proper and within the limits imposed by clerical membership within the Episcopal Church in Israel-Palestine. The clashes between Ateek and El-Assal were legion within the small Anglican circles of Palestine. While both were known to have been priests with a radical take on society, it was no secret that El-Assal was preferred for the Bishopric of Jerusalem over the American-educated and better theologically-trained Ateek. Ateek left the pastoral ministry, taking an early and pre-mature retirement and established the Sabeel Centre for Ecumenical Liberation Theology in Jerusalem, almost immediately upon leaving the Church. He was reputedly posted to Nablus in the northern West Bank, immediately on El-Assal taking office, a posting that he was not willing to fulfil, given the then very troubled and war-torn nature of the Nablus area during the period of the first Intifada. Ateek refused this reposting from the relative comfort of his Jerusalem job and resigned.⁷²

El-Assal too attempted to emulate Elias Chacour's activities in the Galilee, by seeking to upgrade the Anglican Christ Church School in Nazareth, the first school started in Nazareth in 1851, into a proposed private Arab University in Nazareth, again the first of its kind in the region. He had the school and institutions renamed Bishop Riah Educational Campus in Nazareth. The Episcopal Church based in Jerusalem and the present bishop Suheil Dawani, who succeeded Bishop El-Assal in 2007, waged a bitter legal battle (which had gone all the way to the Israeli High Court) to get the land and school back under the legal and administrative possession of the Jerusalem church. This controversy, not the first in the chequered history of the Anglicans, and particularly the 'native' Episcopalians in the Israel-Palestine region, revealed the petty infighting and rivalries-animosities among the Episcopal clerics and church hierarchy in the region.⁷³

Again like Ateek, El-Assal had emphasized on the importance of Christians in the Israel-Palestine region working together in an ecumenical framework, particularly because many of the churches in the region were quite small, numerically and thereby their collective impact on society would be much more than if they worked individually. In this context, he referred in his book to the fact that the Episcopal Church in the Middle East was one of the founding members of the Middle East Council of Churches (MECC), the regional body of the worldwide ecumenical group known as the WCC. El-Assal raised an interesting point towards the end of his book regarding the theological and doctrinal position of the Episcopal-Anglican Church, a church that found itself 'neither Catholic, nor wholly Protestant,' thereby enabling them to be a bridge between different branches and wings of the Christian world. This, in turn, would make the Episcopal Church and Anglicans in general in the Middle East to be ideal peace-builders and partners in the process of reconciliation and healing in the land called 'holy.'⁷⁴

El-Assal revealed how as a Palestinian Christian, he was often confused by the attitude of the Zionists towards God and the state of Israel. As a secular political ideology in the formation of the state of Israel, Zionist Jews were adept at utilising the ancient promises of God to the Hebrew people for their own political aims and policies. God was made into a 'real-estate agent' whose Name could be used to justify the Jewish presence in Israel-Palestine.⁷⁵ The establishment of the state of Israel was increasingly equated with the fulfilment of prophecy and the 'renewal of the covenant between God and His Chosen people.'⁷⁶ El-Assal recounted how the establishment of the state of Israel resulted in an identity crisis for him as well as many other Palestinian Christians, as all Palestinians were identified with ancient Israel's enemies.⁷⁷ This problem was a particular spur to the creation of an indigenous Palestinian theology.

The Concerns of Palestinian Theology

This brief look at some of the main practitioners of theology in Palestine reveals the overlaps, but even more the differences with liberation

theology. These theologians begin from the same place, oppression, but the different situation means they develop in a quite different way. Uniquely, in Palestine, Christians and Muslims were both part of an oppressed people. Palestinian theologians must understand Islam not as a precondition for mission, but for survival. All of these theologians took the gospel seriously and, in this situation of conflict, their emphasis was on peace and reconciliation, although they recognized the importance of the struggle to be free. For them, non-violence and dialogue was the way to liberation.

Western Theological Thought and the Question of Palestine-Jewish Theology of Liberation: Rabbi Marc Ellis

Marc Ellis was a well known and controversial American Jewish theologian who attempted to develop a Jewish theology of liberation. Marc Ellis was a young theologian in 1989–90, when the first symposium on PLT was held. Ellis worked during the 1980s at the Maryknoll School of Mission's Peace and Justice Programme, the only Jewish member of their faculty, a position that introduced him to the field of liberation theology as it was practiced across the developing world, and especially in Latin America.

Ellis had claimed that he persuaded Orbis to publish Ateek's first book.⁷⁸ By the invitation of Marc Ellis, Ateek was able to spend time at Maryknoll, New York, where he could finish writing his first book. This was duly appreciated by Naim Ateek in his acknowledgements to the book, *Justice and only Justice: a Palestinian Theology of Liberation*, (p. 15). Ateek first met Ellis in 1987, at the start of the first Intifada, a very volatile time indeed during the period of the 1980s. It was also the period when the first edition of Ellis's first and most important book, *Toward a Jewish Theology of Liberation*, was published. Ellis had continued to maintain links with the Sabeel Centre for PLT in Jerusalem and had presented frequent papers at their conferences and symposia.

Ateek was one of the people called to present a paper honouring the contributions of Marc Ellis (he spoke on Ellis's stand in favour of

the Palestinians and critical of the Constantinian power of the state of Israel in repressing them) in the field of American Jewish literature at a special session of the American Academy of Religion (AAR) Conference at Nashville, Tennessee, November 19, 2000. The latest edition of Ellis's premier work, *Towards a Jewish Theology of Liberation* (Waco, Texas: Baylor University Press, 2004) devoted space to analyses of the theologies of Naim Ateek as well as Rosemary Radford Ruether (pp. 155–160, 209–210).⁷⁹ In Ellis's personal view, he as an American citizen lived in a country with a powerful Christian and Jewish Zionist lobby, which had consistently persuaded the US government to give consistent support to Israel. Appealing to the prophetic tradition of ancient Israel, he critiqued present-day Israel's treatment of the Palestinians.⁸⁰ He recognized that the trauma of the Holocaust could lead to a determination never to be victimised again, but he insisted that the fact of the Holocaust did not justify injustice in return.⁸¹ Picking up the liberation theology critique, he talked of a 'Constantinian Judaism' which, according to him, was the main culprit in the Palestinian conflict.⁸² Both Jews and Arabs were, of course, Semites.⁸³

Any criticism of Israel was met with shrill accusations of 'anti-Semitism,' but he argued that Israelis had become anti-Semitic in their treatment of Palestinians.⁸⁴ Furthermore, the cry of anti-Semitism could be used as a shield to deflect consciousness of racism both within the United States, and in United States' foreign policy.⁸⁵ According to Ellis, a Jewish theology of liberation asked that the liberal analysis that supported our affluence be deepened with a liberationist economic and political critique that paradoxically had often been pioneered, nurtured, and expanded by secular Jews on the left.⁸⁶

Ellis wanted two things. First, he argued that the prophetic tradition calls for solidarity with 'other struggles for equality and liberation' going on around the world.⁸⁷ Jewish theology, he said, could not be divorced from the needs of 'other religious and humanist communities worldwide.'⁸⁸ For Ellis, this provided the only way that the Jewish people will forget their own fears and insecurities. Contemporary Jewish theology, he argued, was still that of a defensive ghetto.⁸⁹ Learning

from their Scriptures, Jews needed to reach out to the 'poor and the suffering' in Latin America and elsewhere and to listen to their stories and viewpoints.⁹⁰

Secondly, he wanted a dialogue with the Christian community, irrespective of the hurt done the community in the past.⁹¹ Looking at the early Jewish origins of the Christian faith, he asked whether it was not possible for both Christians and Jews to 'embrace both our differences and our commonality?'⁹² He wondered whether the Holocaust could not become 'a catalyst for healing a brokenness that had plagued both communities for almost two thousand years?'⁹³

The significance of Ellis was that he represented an American Jewish voice speaking up on behalf of the Palestinians, and critiquing Zionist views on the ground of Jewish tradition. He took the tradition of liberation theology and developed it within Judaism, easily done given the roots of social critique in the prophets of Israel. He was an illustration of the way in which liberation thinking, even when it comes from a Jewish source, was driven to support the Palestinian cause.

Rosemary Radford Ruether and the Theology of Christian Anti-Semitism in the West

Rosemary Radford Ruether specialised both in liberation theology and in the history of anti-Semitism. Rosemary Ruether was involved in the Civil Rights movement in the US, working first in Mississippi, and then nearer home in Washington, DC. It could be argued that it was this work of hers that opened her eyes forever to the world of discrimination and injustice. Her desire to understand more about the realities and impact of American White racism, as well as the ongoing and deeply rooted struggle for justice within the black community in the US, propelled her to a ten-year (1966–76) teaching stint at the Howard University School of Religion (a historically black school in Washington, DC).

It was here that she was exposed to the emerging literature on black liberation theology as well as liberation theology in general. Ruether was an active voice and presence in the Theology in the

America's Conference in Detroit (1975) that brought together both Latin American as well as North American practitioners of liberation theology, Black, Hispanic and White. During the mid-1980s, Ruether became involved in the Palestinian struggle for liberation, particularly after getting to know some of the highly vocal and Westernized (Americanized) practitioners and advocates of a liberation theology in the Israel-Palestine struggle, such as the Anglican Canon of St. George's Cathedral church in Jerusalem, Naim Ateek. Ateek was particularly indebted to Rosemary Ruether in the enunciation of his own theology. Ruether was actively involved in the first international symposium on PLT, held at the Tantur Ecumenical Liberation Theology Centre near Bethlehem during March 10–17, 1990.

She wrote the detailed preface (as well as a major article based on a paper she gave at the conference on 'Western Christianity and Zionism') to the main conference publication (*Faith and the Intifada: Palestinian Christian Voices*), which was also the first book jointly edited by the main Palestinian and American theologians involved in the conference (Naim S. Ateek, Marc H. Ellis and Rosemary Radford Ruether) and published by the main American Catholic missionary publishing house (NY: Maryknoll-Orbis) responsible for broadly encouraging and popularising liberation theological writings, predominantly from Latin America and the greater 'third world.' In the preface to the above work, Ruether specifically mentioned the need for calling the first PLT conference, based on the necessity of countering what Israeli and Diaspora Jews as well as Western Christians were doing by invoking Biblical themes from Judaeo-Christian religious imagery to justify a 'divinely-mandated right of the Jews to the land.' She also referred to the implications of the 1967 War (and the conquest of almost the entire Biblical land of Israel) in boosting the claims of the religious Zionists as regards their rights to the newly occupied territories of the West Bank (of the Jordan), East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip.

Ruether was well aware that it was almost impossible to develop a common theological 'conversation' among Christian Palestinians of the Levant. This was primarily because of the multiple churches and

theological streams, pre-Chalcedonic, Chalcedonic, and post-Chalcedonic, that Christians in the region belong to.⁹⁴ She argued that Christianity's theological evolution away from the Judaic doctrines of a God immanently manifest in a concept of 'law and justice' towards a concept of 'grace and redemption,' meant a radical severing of almost all links that the two religions had with each other.⁹⁵

The adoption of Christianity as the official religion of the Roman Empire in the fourth century CE, transformed this relatively new faith from being that of the victims to that of the oppressors.⁹⁶ Ruether made an impassioned plea for more understanding of Judaism, so that a 'new kind of dialogue,' reconciliation, and understanding could be established among Christians and Jews in their common fight against the 'Powers and Principalities.'⁹⁷

Ruether was critical of the 'Oppressor and the Oppressed' model of liberation theology.⁹⁸ She opposed all schools of liberation theology that made use of the 'Exodus' paradigm to the exclusion of caring for the oppressors. Both need liberation, and indeed they can only be liberated together.⁹⁹

In *Faith and Fratricide: The Theological Roots of Anti-Semitism*, Ruether sought to explain why anti-Semitism was such a prevalent part of Christian thought and practice over the ages.¹⁰⁰ She showed how the roots of Christian anti-Semitism can be traced right back to the period immediately after the death of Christ when the affirmation of Jesus Christ as the messiah played an all-important role in the way the ancient Christians read and understood the Hebrew Scriptures.¹⁰¹ The Church started to read the Holy Scriptures through the eyes of Jesus Christ and thereby started the difference in interpretations between the Jewish and Christian viewpoints on the question of the inspired literatures.¹⁰²

For Jews, the biblical promises were still to be fulfilled while for Christians they had already been fulfilled in the first arrival of Christ on earth. The affirmation of Jesus as Christ by a group of people, Jews and Gentiles, a group that later came to be called Christians, resulted in the negation of the traditional Jewish reading of the Holy Scriptures. This negation or 'refutation' as Ruether styled it was the 'left hand of Christology,' and the entire history of Christian anti-Semitism in the

early Roman and later Christendom could be traced to this theological fact.¹⁰³

Ruether's joint work with her husband, Herman J. Ruether (to date, her only major work dealing with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict), *The Wrath of Jonah: The Crisis of Religious Nationalism in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*, (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2002), looked at the messianic tendencies among Western Christians that had contributed to the establishment of the state of Israel and the subsequent terrorisation and disenfranchisement of the Palestinians. Ruether insisted that reference must be made to the earliest and the original majority inhabitants of the land when deciding what the past and present history of the land must be. Western Christians often forgot that the majority of Jewish settlement in what was known as Palestine was of relatively recent origin, whereas indigenous Arab people had been living on or near the land for millennia. She argued that the often down-right patronising attitude of Israelis to Palestinians originated in the colonial attitude of European Jews in their settlement of historic Palestine during the end of the Ottoman era and the later British mandate period.

Zionism was rooted in the colonialist-nationalist ideology so popular in Europe during the later nineteenth and early twentieth century, the ideology that in its most extreme version would result in two world wars and the Holocaust. Moreover, *Yishuv*-born 'Sabra' Jews who later became native-born Israelis when the state of Israel was formed, learned from the 'Iron Fist' policy of the 1930s, a tool devised by the British mandate authorities to quell and disperse the restive native Palestinian Arab population of Palestine who were impatient to get rid of British rule. Racism and colonialist ethno-political nationalism coloured *Yishuv* as well as post-state Israeli treatment of the Arab Palestinian population of the so-called 'Holy Land.'

Ruether made extensive references in her 2002 work to the writings of Naim Ateek, Mitri Raheb and Marc Ellis. Both Ruether's above work as well as Marc Ellis's *Towards a Jewish Theology of Liberation* had similar chapter sections towards the end of both books detailing Palestinian Christian theological writings, including the

work of Naim Ateek. Her other works on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict focus mainly on two jointly (with Naim Ateek and Marc Ellis) edited volumes, dealing mainly with the First Intifada, *Faith and the Intifada: Palestinian Christian Voices*, and *Beyond Occupation: American Jewish, Christian, and Palestinian Voices for Peace*. Ruether also published articles dealing with the situation of the Palestinian people, during the First Intifada, some of which appeared in the *National Catholic Reporter* as well as theological pieces and reviews in *Christianity and Crisis*.¹⁰⁴

In an important essay entitled, *Western Christianity and Zionism*, Ruether tried to set out what Western Christians and Jews need to do especially in the face of the continuing Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This essay is in an edited volume of conference papers, titled 'Faith and the Intifada: Palestinian Christian Voice,' from the first ever PLT Conference organized by what became known as the Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Centre in Jerusalem.

She started her essay by tracing out why Western Christians had tended to be uncritical supporters of the state of Israel. The historical affinity developed by the Western Protestant community with the historic Hebrew story in the Bible and with the Jewish people of yore, was precursor to the development of a strong theological link with the possible 'restoration' of the Jewish people to their ancient homeland. Christians in the West had been heavily influenced by the dispensational 'end-times' theology of Reformed Christianity, especially in its Calvinist version.

Reformed Christians, and especially in the modern context, Evangelicals, had long seen themselves as the 'new Israel' thereby inculcating in themselves a strong tendency to idolise the ancient Jewish people and their long held desire, manifested in song and prayer to return to their former homeland of Israel-Palestine. Protestant eschatology believed that the Jews must return to Palestine for the 'Kingdom of God' to come back, as manifested by their belief in the second coming of Jesus Christ and the inauguration of his millennial reign on earth.¹⁰⁵

Finally and most importantly, 'Protestant Christianity abandoned classical allegorical hermeneutics for a literal, historical interpretation

of the Bible.¹⁰⁶ Protestants were led by development within their own theology to start to believe in a restoration of the Jewish people to Palestine as their divinely-mandated land and territory in the mode of the ancient Biblical prophecies and revelations concerning the Jewish people. This was particularly true of the Anglo-Saxon world of England and the US where there were a plethora of preachers and evangelists who preached in the 'restorationist' mode.

Ruether considered the impact that protestant prophetic teaching had made on the American people. She quoted from a 1987 study which claimed that 57 per cent of American Protestants as well as 37 per cent of American Catholics actually agreed with the proposition that the foundation of the state of Israel in 1948 was a result of biblical prophecy. Western Christian collusion in the repeated persecution of the Jews in the European world as well as prophetic judgements against the Jewish people in the Old Testament were also invoked to convince people about the need to support a Jewish state as a possible bulwark against possible neo-fascist tendencies against the Jewish people in the world today.¹⁰⁷

In Ruether's eyes, those who categorised the founding of Israel as the 'fulfilment of prophecy and the beginning of redemption,' closed their eyes to the 'unmitigated catastrophe' that the founding of Israel was for the Palestinian people as well as tens of thousands of neighbouring Arab people and Israeli Jews. No act in history that resulted and still results in so much death, despair and suffering, could be called a 'redemptive act.'¹⁰⁸

Hence, it was a falsehood when Christians subscribed to the notion that the founding of the state of Israel was an 'act of God' designed to bring the kingdom of God closer to us than ever before in history. This, she believed, 'was a false messianism to which Christians themselves had been all too prone in the past, clothing their own evil-producing political projects with the garb of messianic fulfilment.'¹⁰⁹

Ruether denied that Zionism had always been necessary for Jewish religion and culture. Zionism was a political project conceived by non-religious Jews as a colonial experiment to create a nation-state for the Jewish people of Europe. This project did not have the support, at least

initially of most prominent Orthodox as well as Reform rabbis and groups in the Jewish world. Today, Zionism acted out in its pilot 'state of Israel' project as a state trying to fulfill a kind of 'religious-political exclusivism' that saw the Palestinian population of Israel-Palestine, which was more than 40 per cent, as an unwanted people that were a demographic threat to the Jewish state. Ruether believed that for peace and justice to reign in Israel-Palestine, the modern state of Israel must become an equal state for all its members.¹¹⁰

Ruether pointed out that Western Christian guilt feeling about the Holocaust was an underlying criterion for 'uncritical support' of the Jewish state of Israel.¹¹¹ Just as true repentance in the Christian context for a past evil or sin must involve genuine efforts to right that sin in any particular context, so also genuine Western Christian repentance over the evil of anti-Semitism must involve a move to 'purge' anti-Semitism' from 'Christian teachings' as well as Euro-American society in general. What had happened instead was that Western states and Christians had stood by in collusion while their original inspired 'sin' of anti-Semitism was transferred in effect to the Palestinians via Israelis and Western Jews. Ruether argued that both in the case of Jews as well as Christians, there must be a clear decision to distinguish and indeed separate between the issue of the Holocaust, with all the issues of injustice, reconciliation and repatriation raised by it, and the present moral and 'ethical' issue of the establishment of the state of Israel.¹¹²

Ruether ended her essay with a call to both Christians as well as Jews to recognize the need for repentance and that they both had misused power in their history, whether against each other or 'other' groups. Israeli Jews must recognize that they had not only been victims because of the Holocaust and historic anti-Semitism in Europe, but also perpetrators of violence and oppression through their colonisation of Palestine. Western Jews, Christians and Israelis needed to recover the 'prophetic' angle in their respective religious and political discourses. She looked for a change from 'competitive domination' to an 'ethic of co-humanity' that would enable people to live together as friends and 'neighbours' in 'one land and on one earth.' She made an appeal for the great Judaeo-Christian traditions of 'compassion, forgiveness, and

neighbour love,' to win over those religious-political 'ideologies' that tend to result in 'violence, hatred and mutual negation.'¹¹³ She said,

This means that both Jews and Western Christians must overcome their religious and ethnic hostility to Arabs and Muslim peoples. They must extend their embrace of solidarity to the Arab world as well, without in any way becoming sentimentally blind to parallel tendencies to violence and competitive domination in this culture as well.¹¹⁴

For Ruether, the critical issue that would bring about reconciliation between peoples would be the development of a 'breakthrough' group of people that would be willing to 'cross boundaries' and form relationships that would test the weight of inherited prejudices as well as condemn what was not right in inter-personal as well as inter-communal relations.¹¹⁵ She provided us with a way of reconciliation that was pre-eminently theological as well as spiritual in the sense that reconciliation can only be effected through friendship between the disputing people, friendship that will ultimately result in 'a love for your neighbour' that will enable the lowering of all kinds of barriers and the normalisation of political and economic relationships to the point where there is no dispute at all.¹¹⁶

Like Ellis, Ruether presented us with a Western voice which addressed the Israel-Palestinian conflict and tried to do so (given her previous research concerns and expertise in the history of Christian anti-Semitism), through bringing Jews and Christians together. Her drawing attention to the role of Holocaust guilt in Western attitudes was important, because this was something that could not be found in Palestinian theology.

CHAPTER 3

THE 'SABEEL' ECUMENICAL LIBERATION THEOLOGY CENTRE IN JERUSALEM: A STUDY OF THE THEOLOGY AND PRAXIS OF NAIM ATEEK

The previous chapters dealt with the historical, political and theological context from which a theology of liberation grew in the Palestinian Territories and the state of Israel. This theology (which derives from the oppression of the Palestinian people), was broadly influenced by political and theological developments abroad, such as Liberation Theology in Latin America and the Civil Rights movement in the US. More links can be traced between the then nascent PLT fraternity and the (both black and white liberal conscientious) anti-Apartheid struggle in South Africa. A team from the PLT centre (as the Sabeel centre was then known) went to immediate post-Apartheid South Africa (the team included Naim Ateek and Cedar Duaybis, both of whom have been active in Sabeel circles from the very beginning).¹

Liberation theology, like much else in the region's theology, arrived via the US. Many Palestinians, academics, theologians and social activists were educated in the US. At least half of all Palestinian youth that sought higher college education, did so abroad, due to a paucity

of world standard educational institutions within the region and the Arab world in general. Most of these ended up in US colleges and universities, making expatriate Palestinian students one of the most vocal group of foreign student activists in the US and the Western (mainly Anglo-Saxon) college fraternity. Ateek himself was educated in the US, finally gaining his PhD in the early 1980s from the liberal Presbyterian San Francisco Theological Seminary in Southern California. This chapter will be devoted to an analysis of the theology and praxis of the Rev. Naim Stifan Ateek of the Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Centre in Jerusalem.²

The Origins of Liberation-Theological Attitudes towards Palestine

All contemporary liberation theologies focussed on the need to fully liberate the oppressed and 'oppression' may be defined very broadly to include economic, political, gender, racial, cultural or religious discrimination, and now the misuse of the earth. In the Palestinian case, oppression included the loss of land, discrimination in access to education, health and water, and the inability to develop the political and cultural institutions associated with statehood. Failure to solve the occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip resulted in the outbreak of the first Palestinian Intifada in 1989, which not only added urgency to the search for a political settlement, but also prompted the Churches of the Holy Land to take an active stand against Israeli occupation and for Palestinian rights.³

It was just days after the end of the 1967 War that an initial working group of Levantine Arab Christian theologians, which included leading names such as George Khodr (former Greek Orthodox metropolitan of Mount Lebanon in Lebanon), Samir Ka'fity (former Anglican bishop of Jerusalem), Martine Albert Lahham (former Greek Catholic Archbishop of Jerusalem) and Jean Corbon, put their signatures to a memorandum asking what could be done from a Christian point of view about the Palestine problem. This platform of theologians and their deliberations proved important, as it occurred at a particularly crucial time in modern Arab history when the Arab Nationalism

experiment (started with much fanfare in the mid-nineteenth century, during the end of the Ottoman Empire), was progressively being discredited in the eyes of the Arab masses, under pressure from Western governments as well as the state of Israel.⁴

The massive victory achieved by Israel in the 1967 War was generally seen as the epochal event that cemented the final defeat of Arab nationalistic forces in the Middle East. The previously-mentioned memorandum sought to explain the 'new' situation in the region, engendered by the rise and territorial growth of the State of Israel on a clear platform of Zionism and anti-Arabism.

How could the ancient ideals of Judaism, the knowledge of which was so much available to Christians through the commonly accepted 'Hebrew Bible,' be used to justify the present territorial 'aggression' and anti-Palestinian policies of the modern Israeli state? Could such a state, established at the expense of so many Palestinian peasant farmers, both Christian and Muslim, be seen as direct successor of the ancient Israelite kingdom, established by the direct authority and permission of YHWH through his prophets such as Samuel and just rulers like David and Solomon? The Christian theologians directly linked the present situation between Palestinians and Israelis to the Roman destruction of the Herodian Jewish temple and consequent expulsion of the majority of the Jewish inhabitants of the then Roman Palestine.⁵

For the last two thousand years, Jews had incorporated the return to Jerusalem into their culture, prayer and daily life. It was the transformation of this religious-spiritual ideal into something political in the last part of the Nineteenth and early Twentieth centuries that culminated later in the Zionist Jewish take-over of Palestine, thereby inaugurating the massive refugee issue that still defied all attempts at solution.⁶

The Palestinian refugee issue not only soured relations between the new Jewish state and the former Palestinian Arab inhabitants, but also created massive political and refugee problems in all the neighbouring Arab states of the Levant, as well as spreading further afield. The Arab theologians agreed that it was the sin of anti-Semitism (that pervasive Jew-hatred for which the name of Europe became synonymous

with over the ages), that had forced European-origin Jews to seek to establish a separate state in their old historic homeland in the mode of various European colonialist experiments carried out worldwide during the last 300–400 years. They were quite clear that there was no historical or theological precedence for the transfer of the guilt of anti-Semitism from West to East. They exhorted Western Christians to find a solution for their own problem of anti-Semitism rather than to seek to transfer their problems to the East and in particular on to the shoulders of the innocent Palestinian people.⁷

The early Jewish settlers to Palestine from the West were welcomed as earlier migrants had been, seen as religious refugees, escaping the pogroms of Eastern Europe. However, once these very same settlers and the later migrants were progressively politically and militarily empowered as a result of the decline of the Ottoman Empire, the Balfour Declaration and the arrival (and pro-Jewish settlement) policies of the British mandate of Palestine, the situation and friendly attitude of the native Palestinian residents started to change. The above mentioned Arab theologians questioned why the Christians of Europe and America did not do anything to integrate European Jewish refugees after the end of the Second World War. Instead these refugees were encouraged to migrate and settle in Palestine, thereby exacerbating an already tense situation in this region, between native Arabs, settler-immigrant Jews and the then ruling British Mandate authorities. Meanwhile, the newly established state of Israel made the situation worse by refusing to apologise for the Palestinian refugee issue created by the War of Israeli Independence (which the Palestinians call *Nakba*), thereby rendering almost a million Palestinians stateless refugees.⁸

The Arab theologians were quite clear in condemning this policy of the Israeli state authorities as a racist policy that Christians could not accept. They exhorted all Christians to oppose the state of Israel as long as such discriminatory and racist policies were practised by this state. The 1967 War again only confirmed the violence inherent in the Zionist Jewish state, as something like three hundred thousand new Palestinian refugees were created. The theologians were clear in condemning anti-Semitism as well as anti-Arabism, wherever these evils occur. They claimed that anti-Semitism gave birth to Zionism,

which in turn produced further waves of anti-Semitism that gave more strength and vision to the continuance and propagation of Zionism *per se*.⁹

The theologians sought to answer the commonly asked question among their Arab Christian parishioners as to whether the present day Zionist colonialist state of Israel actually corresponded to the ancient Jewish state and whether, more importantly, the present well-being of the Jewish people corresponded to the strategic interests of the state of Israel. They were unanimous in their views, from the biblical perspective. The Jews were a people chosen by God, 'a consecrated people, a nation of priests,' whose job was to be a living conscience for the whole of humanity. They were a prophetic people, called to be 'a witness of God among the nations,' indeed 'chosen by God,' to be the beacon for salvation among humanity, instead of seeking to establish themselves as a national community within the borders of a modern nation-state. In this sense, the vocation of the Jews was very similar to that of the Church (also called to serve all of humanity, irrespective of race, caste or nationality).¹⁰

In their view, the creation of an exclusive state for the Jews went against the divine plan of God, just as the creation of exclusively Christian states went against the universalist calling of the Church (with its message of God's salvation through Jesus Christ to all the world). The theologians proposed a solution for the Palestinian issue that involved a true acceptance and integration of the Jewish people worldwide in their various countries of residence. They asked that all the inhabitants of Palestine, irrespective of race or religion—Christians, Muslims and Jews be accepted. They called for a pluralism that went beyond the 'simple tolerance of minorities,' towards universalism. They gave a call for Jews worldwide to embrace their true 'divinely mandated' vocation, that would in turn enable them to accept the Palestinian people (their blood brothers, in the words of Elias Chacour), and to integrate the refugees (many of whom were leading miserable lives in refugee camps in the West Bank and neighbouring countries like Lebanon and Jordan).¹¹

The Arab theologians recommended that just as Germany made reparations following the end of the Second World War, so also

the state of Israel should contemplate making reparations to the Palestinian refugees for the wrongs perpetrated on them during the course of the last two decades or more. According to them all inhabitants of Palestine, whether Muslim, Christian, Jew or Druze, should be accepted as full citizens with full civil and political state rights. They ended their theological-political statement with a call for the Jewish community within Palestine to promote the participation of all within the political life of Palestine, without countenancing any discrimination, using all available resources to encourage the development of all the citizens of the state, and included a final exhortation to the state of Israel to honour all decisions taken by bodies like the UN, as well as decisions in the field of international law that would have equal applicability on both the state of Israel as well as the Palestinians.¹²

This theological opposition to Israeli aggression had a major influence on the theology and politics of Naim Ateek and other supporters of PLT. As shown earlier, the MECC, first organized in 1974, was a major voice channelling Palestinian and Arab Christian aspirations along an orderly, documented and organized path, demanding peace and justice for all the Palestinian people. The MECC as a group was preceded by the Orthodox Youth Movement (OYM), again an important force during the early decades of the post-Second World War period that stood for and attempted to inculcate a sense of unity, cooperation and mutual understanding among diverse Orthodox world populations, spread across both sides of the then Iron Curtain as well as in the Middle East and the greater Orient. It was a strong force in the Middle East as many of the historic churches in this region as well as elsewhere in the Eastern world were of Orthodox origin.

The OYM played an important part in the post-War 'revitalisation' of the indigenous Middle Eastern churches, just emerging from their centuries of stupor, first under the Muslim Ottomans and then later under the international forces of colonialism. Metropolitan George Khodr was a founding member of the OYM and was its general secretary. He emerged during this period as a major spokesperson of Arab Christianity in general. He was again one of the authors of the 1967

statement that sought to give a theological, historical and political context to the Palestine problem.¹³

Another Arab Christian who played a major role in founding the MECC (he was later General Secretary of the MECC for many years and particularly during the Middle Eastern crisis years of the 1990s) was Gabriel Habib, a Lebanese clergyman who gave a call to the newly empowered Western Jewish community to rediscover the traditional Jewish ethos of the East, that had been lost after the post-War establishment of militant Judaism of the Zionist variant in Israel and the West. He felt as an Eastern Christian that it would only be possible for him and others like him to ally with those Jews who had the courage to reclaim their forsaken Eastern identity, a spiritual Zionist identity that had protected and remained with them for almost 2000 years. He called for a common Judaeo-Arab community that would be free of all discrimination, a union of blood brothers committed to live in peace and unity in one land, that was holy to both of them, as well as to many of their co-religionists worldwide.¹⁴

Habib, possibly one of the earliest Arab Christians to be exposed to Christian liberationist thinking, gave a call for the need to develop a critical conscience at the centre of world Judaism that would direct the flow away from an obsession with the 'Constantinian Judaism' of the present state of Israel and towards the traditional Jewish understanding and solidarity with the underdog and the oppressed.¹⁵ Habib was also one of the earliest Middle Eastern theologians to critically understand and call for the need for Western Christians to be in a dialogue with the great religions of the East and in particular, from a Levantine point of view, with Islam.¹⁶

Ateek in his book *Justice and Only Justice* had mentioned the impact that the late Melkite Archbishop Raya had on Palestinian Christians, especially from a civil rights-oriented non-violent agitationist point of view. Ateek argued that Raya lacked political acumen, while possessing enormous potential as a tireless campaigner and agitator for civil rights.¹⁷

Raya was particularly active during the early 1970s within the Christian community in the state of Israel. He was one of the first Arab Christian leaders to petition Israel's first woman prime minister

Golda Meir, insisting that there was a lack of justice, liberty or democracy within the country that would have particular repercussions not only for the Palestinian residents of Israel, but would also impact ultimately and directly for the security and stability of the state of Israel. Possibly as a result of this, Raya was heavily censured from Rome as well as from within the state, and was ultimately forced to resign his bishopric and leave Israel. Something similar happened to Ateek.¹⁸

Ateek also made reference in his initial work to the United Christian Council of Israel (UCCI), a body that was active within the state of Israel during the 1970s and was a predominantly Protestant conglomerate body.¹⁹ The majority of the constituents of the UCCI were indigenous Baptists and Anglicans resident within the state of Israel (the Baptists had historically had a relatively strong base within northern Palestine, and later Israel, with a Baptist missionary model village along with a school located at Petah Tikva, near Haifa). They also had congregations in many Galilean towns and villages as well as in the northern and central West Bank, around Jerusalem. In many ways, the UCCI was influential and its voice was respected in Israel during the period immediately before openly 'restorationist' fundamentalist Christians (such as the International Christian Embassy of Jerusalem (ICEJ) and allied bodies) acquired the power to supersede the older and more mainstream protestant voices within the Jewish state.²⁰

In Ateek's view, it was the minority influence, made up of expatriate, mainly Anglo-Saxon residents and Western missionaries in the UCCI, which made this organization influential within the Western-oriented state of Israel. This reflected the historic obsession within the ruling echelons of the state, who were always concerned about the so-called Western Christian influence and connections with the 'Holy Land' of Israel-Palestine. This was reflected in the relatively better treatment meted out to traditional Christian enclaves (such as Old Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Nazareth) in Palestine, during and after the 1948 War in the land. Ateek mentioned how the UCCI used to regularly speak out and lobby the Israeli state on behalf of native Christians, especially as regards their proposed status as a minority within the 'Jewish' state of Israel. However, he also mentioned how the expatriate identity of many of the UCCI activists tended to cloud their ability to function as

impartial and unbiased spokespersons on behalf of the rights of native Christians within Israel.²¹

Without naming any persons (for obvious reasons), Ateek referred to some 'native-born clergy,' who had been openly expressing themselves in favour of peace and justice within and without the state of Israel. This activity, he said, had resulted in tensions within the particular congregations of these clerics. No doubt Ateek here spoke from personal experience as he himself was involved in much the same activity. He clearly described the personal and public pressures involved in taking such a stand, particularly within the context of belonging to a very small minority confessional group.²²

Ateek analysed how most of the clergy that demand struggle and respect in society belonged to the new group of mainly Western theologically educated people, who would soon take over the various higher ecclesiastical positions within the region that had hitherto been occupied by various national-expatriate clergy. He mentioned how the mainly foreign-born clergy were intolerant of the political views of the new breed of educated Palestinian clergy. The laity meanwhile expressed itself in three ways towards the crises facing society, by emigration, by trying to get involved in local and consequently national politics, and finally and most importantly, supporting those clergy that had decided to raise their voice against the injustices that they perceived in society.²³

Impact of Arab Nationalism

In this situation, PLT developed on two fronts.²⁴ On the one hand, as long as Zionism had only a political agenda, it was easy to fight it politically under the banner of Arab Nationalism. It was mentioned that Arab nationalism (through its growth as a reaction against the rise of Turkish-sponsored irredentism and nationalism at the end of the nineteenth century), managed to separate the concept of the Arab nation from the religion of Islam, something that had been unthinkable since the rise of Islam in the seventh century CE. Arab nationalism just denoted one Arab nation, devoid of religion. This proved to be to the advantage of the Arab Christians as they could

then unashamedly apply themselves to the well-being of the Arab nation, without feeling that they had compromised their faith and its position or security within the Arab world in any negative way, whatsoever. Arabs, both Christians and Muslims could jointly fight against Zionism.

This cooperation, that lasted somewhat unbrokenly through the early and mid-decades of the twentieth century, was largely destroyed with the rise of militant Islam in the mid-1970s, as a reaction to the discrediting of the Nasserite revolution in the Arab world. Ba'athists and Nasserites claimed to be above the faith, appealing to the Arab *Qaumi* or nation above all. The rise of militant Islam also called for greater Muslim unity (exemplified in the rise in importance of the Arab League, the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) and other pan-Islamic world and regional bodies). It called into question the idea of the Arab nation since it prioritized faith. Arab Christians, already greatly reduced in number by emigration and a greater Arab Muslim birth rate since the later middle of the twentieth century, found little space to move in the midst of this contest for the hearts and loyalties of the Arab world.²⁵ Of course, it was a question how far Arab Christians could be regarded as true Arabs, but the issue was fundamentally secular.

The issue was also fundamentally a question of nationalism. After Arab nationalism had been effectively fragmented by the deliberate post-War 'peace' settlement following the First World War (the fragmentation of the Arab world into many artificially created nation-states, which in turn was a deliberate process of 'divide and rule,' initiated by the European colonisers to control and manipulate the Arabs for their own security, lest they unite and be a threat to Europe), the only real option for Palestinian Christians was to develop an inclusive nationalism (like the co-synonymous Jewish nationalism) that would unite both communities in a common struggle for nationhood, against the British as well as the Zionist Jewish *Yishuv* of Mandate Palestine. The great failure of the Palestinians was to develop such an identity within the thirty year period of the British Mandate. The success of the *Yishuv* in developing an Israeli-Jewish identity ensured their ultimate victory in the 1948 War as well as the present continuance

of the Jewish state in the midst of a region not exactly friendly to such an endeavour.

It was argued that a coherent Palestinian nationalism only emerged after 1967, a crisis year in the Arab world as a whole that taught the Palestinian people the hollowness of depending on their Arab brethren to ensure their 'state' in Palestine. Henceforth, the PLO would be strident in demanding a state for the Palestinian people of Palestine, within the borders of the present state of Israel. This was later amended in 1988 to accept the reality of Israel with a call for two states, one Israeli and the other Palestinian, side by side, along the pre-1967 War borders. It was significant in this context to note that the PLO had always preserved an image dedicated to a secular Palestine for all its inhabitants, both Christian and Muslim, but one in which Islam would possess a special role in view of it being the majority religion of the Palestinian people.²⁶

However, the development of religious Zionist nationalism, with its 'biblically based' claim on the entire land of Israel or *Eretz Yisrael*, resulted in the move among Palestinian and other Middle Eastern Christians to develop an alternate theological view that would counter this.²⁷ At the same time, the rise of Islamic fundamentalism, which in part followed the collapse of Arab nationalism, meant that Palestinian Christians had to develop their thought on this flank also, and respond to Muslims. Ateek did not really deal with this issue in his first book. He did however refer to the commonly held belief among Middle Eastern Arab Muslims that they would ultimately prevail against the state of Israel.²⁸

Role of Arab Christian Identity in the Middle East

Ateek, at least, in 1989, felt that the rise of militant Islam had discouraged even moderate Islamic and Muslim leaders from taking a proactive role in peacemaking, as they would fear jeopardising their respective positions within the community, unless such a role was specifically authorised in accordance with strict *Sharia* laws. He referred to the case of the Egyptian President Anwar Sadat, assassinated in 1981, for agreeing to a peace with Israel.²⁹

The move towards developing a sustainable and mutually beneficial Christian-Muslim dialogue as well as the steps taken towards enunciating and developing a PCT, rooted in the local culture and Arab civilization of the land were all long-term measures meant to extend a hand of friendship, brotherhood and solidarity with the majority Palestinian Muslim community, should questions be asked about the loyalty, patriotism or indeed even relevance of Christians and the indigenous Christian community to the land of Israel-Palestine.

Palestinian and other Middle Eastern Christians had also been calling on the Christians of the West to get to know the Eastern and Oriental Churches better. Eastern Christians felt that if only Westerners had a better knowledge of diversity and of Islam, much conflict between East and West, North and South could be avoided. Eastern Christians sometimes felt that if only Islamic and non-Christian minorities in the West were better received into their host societies, that would contribute immeasurably towards better feelings for the Christian and non-Islamic minorities within various Middle Eastern and Eastern-Oriental nations. Eastern Christians felt that the Church in the West should have a greater role to play in issues relating to minority welfare in their respective countries.³⁰

Thus, the Arab Christian had twin responsibilities. One was towards their faith by birth, and its corresponding spirituality as well as solidarity with other people of the same faith worldwide. The other was towards their culturally similar Arab brothers of the Islamic and other non-Christian faiths, as well as to the Arab-Islamic brotherhood, its culture, history, people and broadly Eastern-Oriental community. All Arab Christians living in the Middle East and further abroad had to straddle successfully the gap between these two burdens, to survive as a community within their particular contexts. Palestinian Christians, to survive as a sustainable community within their, at present highly restricted surroundings, must of necessity, subscribe to the above dictum.³¹

As a non-Muslim and therefore non-hegemonic community (though in close communion with Western 'empowered' Christians) in the

Middle East, Palestinian Christians, like fellow Christian minorities in the Levant (such as the Coptic Christians of Egypt), often had to face up to questions as regards their identity and their 'Arabness.' One similarity and common feature of all Palestinian Christian writers was their initial preoccupation with their identity. Many, including those whose main works were under scrutiny in this study, devoted at least a couple of pages to a discussion of their multiple identities (almost always emphasizing their Christian and Arab ones), almost all acquired as a result of the Western missionary and colonialist push into the region, over the last two hundred years or so. It was also possibly in reaction to this, that the internal so-called 'Arabization' process within the Palestinian Churches under Israeli rule was accelerated particularly after 1967.

The 'Palestinianization' of the clergy automatically encouraged a greater social and political engagement on the part of the various churches of Israel-Palestine. During the 1980s, three of the most important Palestinian churches acquired Palestinian Bishops (Samir Ka'fity for the Arab Anglicans, Lutfi Lahham for the Greek Catholics and Michel Sabbah for the Latin Catholics), who had the theological and political courage to condemn the occupation of Palestinian lands and to demand liberation and a better deal for their Palestinian people.³²

With the sole exception of the mother GOC, all mainline Churches in Israel-Palestine were headed and mainly served by native and non-native Arab clergy. However, the Greek question that lay over the Orthodox Church of Jerusalem, the almost total control exhibited by the Greek Bishops, monks and priests within the fraternity of the Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre, over the premier (both historically, physically, culturally and numerically) Church in Israel-Palestine, had meant that Palestinian Christians were still exposed on their most sensitive as well as public flank to charges of being not completely 'Arab' or even sufficiently national-patriotic, to fight against the Zionist Israelis on a joint platform with their Muslim brethren.

Another factor obviously had to do with the identity that Arab Christians in Israel-Palestine had created for themselves over the past

couple of hundred years. While there tended to be little difference between educated secular Palestinians, whether Christian or Muslims, from a cultural point of view (both were heavily Westernized, again a crucial point in separating themselves from the large majority of Palestinian Muslim people resident in the joint states of Israel-Palestine and Jordan, as well as from the Bedouin Arab community scattered across these same territories), Palestinian Christians, by virtue of their small population (in comparison with the Muslims), do tend to be better educated, more Westernized, and obviously more attuned to looking towards Europe or America for support, instead of just afield to the greater Arab and Islamic worlds. This could be seen as a cause for conflict since Westernized enclaves were found within a larger mass of people with conservative, often deeply Islamic views, who would be more attuned to look to Saudi Arabia or even Iran for help in the midst of the serious existential issues facing them.

Ateek in his book *Justice and Only Justice*, declared himself to be an Arab, Palestinian, Christian, Israeli, a clear case of the multiple identities which Palestinian Christians bear. He mentioned in his book the fact that many Arabs (not to mention Westerners) refuse to acknowledge or even comprehend the fact that there were Palestinian or Arab Christians. The fact that there were many (indeed, more) non-Arab Muslims was well known. The basic assumption among many Arabs was that to be Arab was to be Muslim. He saw this as an anomaly as Mohammad, the prophet of Islam was born in the year 570 CE. In the context of 'Arabness,' Riah Abu El-Assal, former episcopal bishop of Jerusalem was fond of claiming that 'Before Muhammad was, I am.'³³

There had obviously been an Arab Christianity that predated Islam. However, Ateek saw the process of 'Arabization' in the Levant as a process that had gradually happened from the seventh century onwards with the arrival of Islamic forces in the region. The American Middle East scholar Donald E. Wagner estimated that with the arrival of Islam in Palestine, the cultural and linguistic 'Arabization' of the Levant gave birth to a distinctive Levantine Arab Christianity, by the year Charlemagne was crowned Emperor of a renewed Western Roman Empire in 800 CE.³⁴

Ateek also referred to the somewhat obvious fact that the people of Palestine and indeed the Levant were self-declared Semites, whereas actually, they belonged to an anomaly of races and people that had passed through and settled in this region, over the ages, including the Hamitic Canaanites, the Syrians, the Phoenicians, the first Christian communities who in turn were a mixture of the Jewish, Samaritan, Greek, Roman and Arab populations, the Western Crusaders and many other ethnic groups who lived in the region.³⁵ The noted Islamic and Christian Arabic studies scholar, Bishop Kenneth Cragg had mentioned that with the widespread movement of Muslim Arab armies over a vast area of land and the establishment of a huge Empire that extended from virtually East to West of the then known world (in Asia, Africa and to a certain extent, in Europe), the ethnic Bedouin Arabian factor was ameliorated to the extent that Islamic culture was not brought on by an input of Arab blood, but by 'Arabization' via the means of language. So it would be 'Arabness' via the Arabic language that would within a century or so after the rise of Islam be the main discerning factor in who was an Arab. It would take a couple of more centuries for Islam to become synonymous with being an Arab.³⁶

Early Historical-Conflictual Experience of Naim Ateek

Naim Ateek was born in what was once the mainly Palestinian Muslim town of Baysan in the eastern Galilee, close to the junction of the Jezreel and Jordan valleys. Its name was ironically derived from the early Canaanite term for 'house of tranquillity' and peace. Historically, the town had its origins in the Canaanite Era, with it being mentioned in the Book of Joshua in the Old Testament. The town since then had changed its ethnic composition and political make-up several times, corresponding to the numerous invasions and changes that Palestine was exposed to over the ages. Ateek was just eleven years when the Jewish forces led by the *Haganah* (the *Yishuv* defence force that later became Israeli Defence Forces (IDF)) took control of the town of Baysan on May 12, 1948. After a two week occupation, the town was evacuated by the *Haganah*, with the few

Christian residents being bussed to Nazareth, the main Christian town in the Galilee and the majority of Muslim residents being taken to the Jordan River and forced over to what was then Trans-Jordan at gunpoint. Christian refugees from all over the Galilee and beyond were finding their way to Nazareth and life there was not easy in the over-crowded situation of the refugee camps and church-provided relief accommodation.³⁷

This story was narrated in Ateek's first book on PLT: *Justice and Only Justice: A Palestinian Theology of Liberation*. This fairly typical Palestinian refugee story formed the basis of the Ateek family's own experience with the Palestinian catastrophe or *Nakba*. Palestinians often emphasized that their usage of the term *Nakba* referred primarily to the impact of what happened to the native Arab people of Mandate Palestine as a result of the war, clearances and later entrenched policy outlooks that paved the way for the establishment and growth of the present state of Israel, as a predominantly Jewish state. The establishment of the state alone by itself did not constitute the *Nakba*. May 15, the Israeli Independence Day, was also the *Nakba* day for the Palestinians.³⁸

Ateek left Nazareth in July 1959, to go to the US to pursue theological studies. Ateek graduated in the early 1970s from the Church Divinity School of the Pacific (CDSP) in Berkeley, California, with a Masters Degree in Theology. He later gained a PhD from the Graduate Theological Union (GTU) in Berkeley, California, in the early 1980s. He then headed back to Nazareth to take up the priesthood in the Anglican Church (or as it came to be later known, the Episcopal Church in the Middle East). He served a number of pastorates in his native Nazareth, Haifa as well as other towns in the West Bank and Jerusalem, before being confirmed as Canon in charge of the Arabic-speaking congregation at St. George's Cathedral church in East Jerusalem, the headquarters of the Anglican Episcopal Church in the Holy Land and the immediate beyond.³⁹

Ateek grew up under the oppressive rule of the Israeli military government in the Palestinian territories of Israel, one that was a remarkably draconian set of rules and regulations, intended to control, manipulate and ultimately disperse the Arabic-speaking residents of

the state of Israel, so as to ensure they were never a threat, demographically, politically or economically to the Jewish majority of the 'new' nation.

On his return from studies abroad, Ateek was forced to take note of the fate of his people in the state of Israel, particularly when serving in pastorates located in the occupied West Bank after 1967. The Zionist nature of the state of Israel meant that Palestinian Christians were left asking sensitive questions about the all-encompassing love of God and whether God actually loved the Palestinian people as much as his 'chosen' people, the Jews. They also started asking questions about the necessity of still adhering to and reading the Old Testament or 'covenant' with all its too obvious biases towards the Jewish people. Palestinian pastors were concerned about the impact that the occupation and the prolonged Arab-Israeli conflict could have on the Christian psyche in the Holy Land and the Middle East at large. The lack of a suitable solution as well as remission of the Palestinian issue as a result of the Camp David Accords in 1979 was a major source of frustration for the Palestinian and Arab people.

Coupled with this was the first Palestinian Intifada that broke out in 1987, a bitter struggle waged between a seemingly powerless people and a well-equipped military force. The highly skewed results of this conflict forced the Palestinian issue onto the screens of the world's consciousness.

The Birth of the Palestinian Ecumenical Liberation Theology Centre: Sabeel

When Ateek was serving his pastorate in East Jerusalem, he made it a point to meet up with interested parishioners after service in the parish hall to debate theological as well as political issues that had cropped up in his sermon. It was these debates that started to attract more and more people to St. George's Cathedral in East Jerusalem and the vibrant Arabic-language congregation within its precincts. Later, when Ateek decided to organize a conference devoted to the question of a Palestinian Theology of Liberation, he was able to tap into this well-spring of goodwill and support within the Palestinian Episcopal

as well as Christian community at large along with focused external and international support. Ateek managed to collect some of the best scholarly as well as theological brains in Israel-Palestine for his proposed conference that was eventually held in March 1990 at the Tantur Ecumenical Theological Institute, midway between Jerusalem and Bethlehem.⁴⁰ It was clear that PLT also grew out of the work of al-Liqa centre, a group of politically and theologically concerned Arab Christian and Muslim clergy and laity that started meeting together and theorising from the early 1980s.

Almost all the leading lights of al-Liqa centre were featured in the contents list of the conference publication listed below. As a concerned Palestinian Christian cleric, Ateek would have been well aware of the work and theological and political standpoints of this group during the 1980s, much before his conference was organized. He did mention the work of al-Liqa in the course of an interview (along with the Arabic term for contextual theology: *Labut Mahali*), but quite specifically denied any association or linkages with this group.⁴¹ Daphne Tsimhoni too maintained that PLT grew out of Ateek's doctoral dissertation on the topic, followed by years of sermons, parish discussions, and attendance at al-Liqa conferences and elsewhere.⁴²

The conference meant to herald the birth of a new field of 'liberation theological endeavour' was held in March 1990 at the Tantur Ecumenical Theological Institute. The conference dealt with issues like the Palestinian Reality; Palestinian Christian Identity; Power, Justice and the Bible; Women, Faith, and the Intifada; and International Responses to the Quest for Palestinian Theology. Paper presenters and contributors included the crème de la crème of the Palestinian Christian intellectual, political and theological elite. The PLO participation was ensured by the presence of the Palestinian Episcopalian Bir Zeit University Professor and then PLO spokesperson Hanan Ashrawi as well as prominent Palestinian agronomist Jad Isaac. The theological component was ensured by theologians and clerics such as Gerjes Khoury, Riah Abu El-Assal, Elias Chacour, Jonathan Kuttub, Mitri Raheb, Zoughbi Zoughbi, Naim S. Ateek, Cedar Duaybis, Nora Kort, Jean Zaru and others.

The international component included contributions by the doyen of American feminist liberation theologians, Rosemary Radford Ruether, Jewish liberation theologian Marc H. Ellis, Holy Land Christian specialist Don Wagner and others. It was this conference that led to the founding of a permanent centre in Jerusalem known as Sabeel, the Arabic word for 'the way,' 'channel' or 'spring' of life-giving water. Sabeel also had a branch in Nazareth where the focus is mainly on youth activities. The centre described itself as an 'ecumenical grassroots liberation theology movement among Palestinian Christians.' The choice of Tantur to launch the PLT conference was significant; however, as al-Liqa itself had been conceived there in the early 1980s. As one of the main participants at the conference wrote in the foreword to the main conference publication (Naim S. Ateek, Marc H. Ellis, Rosemary Radford Ruether (eds.), *Faith and the Intifada: Palestinian Christian Voices*, Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1992), the choice of Tantur, midway between Jerusalem and Bethlehem was quite symbolic for a liberation theology conference.⁴³ This was the first of many such conference publications by the group of scholars, clerics and political-social activists that later coalesced into the ecumenical liberation theology organization known as Sabeel.

There was the hope that a place midway between the traditional site of the birth of Jesus and his place of crucifixion and resurrection would be auspicious for the launch of this conference. It was hoped that the spirit of the incarnation and the sacrifice of Christ on the cross in Jerusalem as well as the eternal hope engendered by His resurrection would guide the proceedings of the first PLT conference. This conference was held towards the end of a period when it had become increasingly embarrassing for Palestinian Christians to hold on to their faith in the face of the Israeli and Zionist programme against the hopes and rights of the native Palestinian Arab people of the Holy Land. Various peace plans proposed by different parties during the 1980s had come to naught and the ongoing Intifada had involved huge loss of life. It was felt that there was ample reason for concerned Christian Palestinians to try to articulate their concerns vis-à-vis the 'status quo.'⁴⁴

Use of the Exodus Narrative in Palestinian Liberation/Contextual Theology

The story of the Exodus of the Hebrews from slavery in Egypt to freedom and eventual national Kingdom in Canaan-Palestine was one of the most inspirational motifs of the physical as well as spiritual liberation of a particular human community, known to modern man. This story, enshrined in the holy scriptures and inherited folklore of most of the Semitic peoples as well as their fellow mono-theistic brothers worldwide, was a source of inspiration for countless oppressed communities through the ages, and not only just the Hebrew-Jewish people to whom, the narrative primarily referred to. Exodus in the mid-twentieth century was the primary inspiration in the development of a 'situationally relevant' theology of liberation in the Latin American region. This phenomenon was carried over into the development of contextual/liberation theologies in other parts of the global 'third world,' in Africa and Asia.

The key issues Ateek and Sabeel had to address have been the idea of election (the notion of the chosen people), justice and peace, and land. However, PLT differed from all other liberation theology in facing a particularly difficult hermeneutical problem. The Exodus Paradigm was central to early Latin American liberation theology. But the Exodus led to the displacement of the original inhabitants of the land, in whom Palestinian Christians saw themselves. Naim Ateek was against the use of the Exodus paradigm as an interpretive tool within PLT.⁴⁵ This was obviously because the story of the Hebrew 'Exodus' from slavery in Egypt to prosperity and eventually nationhood in the land of Canaan, functioned very much like a double-edged sword in the Palestinian and Arab Christian situation. What was construed as liberation for the ancient Israelites was seen as slavery and subjugation for the indigenous residents, the various Canaanite tribes of the land of Canaan. Transpose the situation directly into the twentieth century, with the arrival of large numbers of European Jews seeking refuge from anti-Judaic persecutions in Europe, colonising the land of Palestine and depriving the original Arab inhabitants of their land and thereby livelihood, and one

understood why Ateek was unwilling to use the Exodus paradigm as a prospective spiritual model for Palestinian liberation.⁴⁶

Another reason for Ateek's unwillingness to use this paradigm was in the light of the abuse of the Exodus message by both Zionists as well as Christian fundamentalists, as a clarion call for the return of the Jewish people to their ancient 'promised' land. In the eyes of many Westerners, Christians and Zionists, modern-day Palestinians had been conveniently substituted for ancient Canaanites. In his view, the 'divine' command to the ancient Hebrew people to conquer-take over the land of Canaan and to subjugate and eliminate its inhabitants made the use of the Exodus paradigm exceedingly difficult as a 'liberationist' tool in the eyes of the Palestinian people. Ateek hoped that Palestinians would one day be able to enjoy their own exodus (or return to their homeland from exile), when the book of Exodus in the Bible will be restored to its rightful position within the Palestinian Christian religious experience. However, he hoped that such a Palestinian exodus would not be accompanied by the bloodshed; dispossession and intolerance witnessed in the biblical Exodus as well as its more modern variant in 1947–48. For Ateek, the concept of a God who allowed such horrors and injustices was certainly not acceptable.⁴⁷

Many Palestinian Christians had been unable to understand how a righteous God could allow what was going on in the Occupied Territories. The Native American theologian Robert Allen Warrior echoed the same question in his writings when he asked whether Native Americans and other struggling indigenous people could dare to trust the same God in their struggle for justice. Warrior was with Ateek when he claimed that the Exodus narrative was not an appropriate way for indigenous Americans to theorise about liberation. He emphasized how he read the Exodus story with Canaanite eyes. He even created common ground with the Palestinians by stating that the obvious characters in the biblical story for Native Americans to identify with must be the indigenous Canaanites in the land of Canaan who were disinherited under divine orders from Yahweh, God of the Hebrew slaves from Misr (Egypt), so that they, the slaves, could possess the land.⁴⁸

Warrior critically mirrored the present Palestinian experience vis-à-vis the previously un-empowered Palestinian Jewry that had conspired against them (using the Exodus narrative), by referring to how Yahweh liberated the Hebrew slaves from Egypt by using the same power that He had used against the enslaving Egyptians, to defeat and demoralise the indigenous inhabitants of Canaan. Like Ateek, Warrior was particularly perturbed by those portions of scripture that call on the conquering Hebrews to annihilate the indigenous inhabitants of the so-called Promised Land. To him, these portions brought too many painful memories of his own people's early saga and their experiences at the hands of another chosen people, the Puritan invaders of North America.⁴⁹

He described how many Puritan divines in early America referred to indigenous Native Americans as Amalekites and Canaanites, archaic usages of text meant to convey church sanction of genocidal practices against these peoples. Present and past right-wing Jewish elements had used these same terms from Israel's past to justify strategies of ethnic cleansing against the Palestinian people. Warrior again sided with Ateek when he made mention that the Canaanites should be at the centre of Christian theological reflection and political action. For him, the ancient Canaanites remained the last ignored piece in the biblical text with the exception of a study of the land of Canaan.⁵⁰

The Old Testament and Palestinian Liberation Theology

There had been therefore calls to abandon the Bible and particularly the Old Testament. Lutheran Palestinian bishop Munib Younan as a Palestinian pastor and bishop was familiar with the questions asked by his flock as regards the Old Testament or Hebrew Bible. He referred to the interpretations of Christian Zionist (fundamentalist) pastors and televangelists, so freely available on TV worldwide that sought, in his eyes, to impose an alien ideology on the Palestinian people. It was their teaching of the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies that was unsettling to the Palestinian people. In his view, these mainly US-based tele-pastors 'harm Christ and his people in the land of the Bible'.⁵¹ He also referred to the lack of adequate biblical knowledge

and critical or enquiring spirit among the Palestinian people, concerning the Old Testament and its message. The Palestinian Church's teaching of the Old Testament was, in his view, very weak and as a result, Palestinian Christians were easily led astray and shocked by certain texts in the Bible.⁵²

Younan referred to texts in the Old Testament such as Joshua 6 and I Samuel 15; 1–3 where God is seen as authorising the total destruction of the indigenous Canaanite people, as scripture portions that were extremely problematic for the present Palestinian residents of the historic land of Canaan-Palestine. Particularly after 1967, the impact of such texts was catastrophic on the Palestinian people in light of what they had experienced. As a result, some people had been led away from faith, even actively campaigning against some of the mainstream Western churches that had been felt to have offered uncritical support to the state of Israel.

He gave a call for a reinvigorated Palestinian outlook on Biblical theology, especially a focus on developing a theology that was sound, that liberated, that was able to contextualise itself in accordance with the situation, cultural and political of the Palestinian people, while always remaining loyal to the essential orthodoxy of the message of Jesus Christ as revealed in the Word of God. He cautioned that the alternative vision might be a situation where some or even many Palestinian Christians become Marcionites, refusing to acknowledge the Old Testament, and all or parts of its message. Many Western Christian critics of Ateek and Sabeel had referred to him in the context of Marcion and Marcionism, particularly with regard to his frequent calls to revise parts of the Old Testament that made negative references about non-Hebraic and non-Judaic people. Marcion was a Gnostic theologian of the early Christian era, who denied the validity of the Hebrew Bible in the Christian faith and experience, thereby inviting the calumny of heresy on him and his followers. He acknowledged that the Palestinian mainly clerical interest in developing a localised contextual theology had always been as a counter to the above, indeed as a bulwark intended to help believers to confront various faulty 'dispensational and eschatological' interpretations of the word of God, and thereby lead the flock towards a better understanding and comprehension of the Old Testament.⁵³

At the same time, the Bible was widely used in the West mainly among dispensationalists, Christian Zionists and evangelicals to justify the actions of the state of Israel in oppressing the Palestinian people. Younan quoted the case of an American fundamentalist pastor in one of the Free Churches operating in East Jerusalem preaching just after the 1967 War from Daniel 7, on that favourite theme of dispensationalists about the four great beasts and horns. He preached in particular from Daniel 7:7–8, and compared the small horn to Israel that had plucked up Egypt, Syria and Jordan by the roots in the just concluded war. He used this war to show that God was fulfilling this Biblical prophecy and exhorted his listeners to obey God by being quiescent to the new world order. It was interpretations and preaching like this that disheartened some Palestinian Christians who happened to be exposed to such teachings. Younan gave a clear call for developing within a local contextualized theology, a clear Palestinian theology on election and the question of Israel. He also called for a clear Palestinian theology on eschatological issues and on issues concerned with the fulfillment of prophecy.⁵⁴ As Ateek put it,

Liberation Theologians had seen the Bible as a dynamic source of their understanding of liberation, but if some parts of it were applied literally to our situation today the bible appears to offer to the Palestinians slavery rather than freedom, injustice rather than justice, and death to their national and political life.⁵⁵

Ateek referred to the *Benedictus*, Luke 1:68, which when recited by Palestinian Christians, referred to the blessed Lord God of Israel who had visited and redeemed his people, and he asked rhetorically to imagine what Palestinian readers of these verses might be thinking of when they read it in their present context. Which was the Israel that was being referred to in Palestinian people's eyes? Was it the Israel of old or the present Israel that sought to oppress them? In the latter case, how could they sincerely join in the blessing of a people when they themselves had yet to be redeemed physically and politically? He also quoted from Sir Arnold Toynbee to show that the present state of Israel had all but negated the 'spiritual Israel of the Judeo-Christian tradition,' during

his lifetime. This was a fact that might be repeated by any Christian whose life-span had included the mid-twentieth century and later, as the period during which the state of Israel was formed and grew.⁵⁶

PLT therefore began with hermeneutics.

Palestinian Liberation Hermeneutics

Ateek's book *Justice and Only Justice: A Palestinian Theology of Liberation* was one of the first attempts by a native-born Palestinian theologian to come to terms with an understanding of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict from the Palestinian Christian, albeit nationalist, theological, historical and political perspective. The main argument of the book was that, to quote Pleins,

Palestinian Christians require a liberation hermeneutic that will directly tackle biblical texts stamped by conquest and domination. Ateek is convinced that if Palestinians hope to continue to take the biblical texts seriously, they must not simply take refuge in 'allegorising' or 'spiritualising' the biblical text.⁵⁷ The required hermeneutic must steer between the Scylla and the Charybdis of modern theology: A Liberation hermeneutic must not shy away from modern uses of the text that bring about exploitation and domination. Furthermore, liberation hermeneutic needs to confront directly the liberating and oppressive tendencies inherent in the text itself for its own historic moment.⁵⁸

It could be said that Ateek's entire work was an attempt to reclaim the Bible and in particular the Old Testament, for the re-use and re-conditioning of the Palestinian Christian people.⁵⁹ Ateek's entire purpose in attempting a Palestinian theology of liberation was to try and develop a constructive encounter with the Hebrew Bible for Palestinian Christians. However, he did exhort them to approach the text with caution, as so many parts had been used to justify nationalistic or militaristic tendencies on the part of their oppressors. One was reminded of Elisabeth Schüssler-Fiorenza's feminist critical hermeneutics of suspicion, that also sought to look at all Biblical texts critically and with caution.⁶⁰ Similarities between Ateek and the South

African theologian, Itumeleng J. Mosala could also be traced in that Mosala also called for a critical look at biblical texts that could have double meanings as regards oppression and exploited people. Mosala cautioned us to remember that the Bible was written in hegemonic codes. Mosala used Marxist analytical tools to try and decode the Bible. There, however all similarities with Ateek ended as Ateek himself admitted to have no skills or interest in using this kind of an approach to the crisis situation in Palestine.⁶¹

The Bible itself, Ateek claimed, had to be saved and redeemed.⁶² Ateek was theologically astute enough to acknowledge that the Biblical text contained evidence of a divine trajectory of both inclusivity as well as exclusivity. There was universalism as well as particularism in the Bible.⁶³ Ateek acknowledged that this point was one of the most important theological facts that Palestinian Christians had to grasp. A Palestinian theology of liberation must grapple with this fact, as indeed, 'the tension between the inclusive and exclusive concepts of God permeates the entire Bible.'⁶⁴ Ateek supported seeking proof of the universalistic vision of God within the covenant that He made with ancient Israel. He quoted John Ferguson to show that 'the covenant bore within it the seed of universalism.'⁶⁵ Ateek also quoted Amos 9:7-

Were you not like the Ethiopians to me, O People of Israel? Says the Lord.

Did I not bring up Israel from the land of Egypt, and the Syrians from Kir?⁶⁶

The problem was made more complex by post-Holocaust readings of scripture which were inclined to grant almost divine-mandate status to the modern state of Israel. The reference here was to theologians such as Paul van Buren, about whose work Ateek had made certain critical references. His criticism was reflected by similar analysis on the part of others including Rosemary Ruether. Ateek took issue with the way van Buren used the term 'Israel' in his introductory essay: *Discerning the Way*, to his projected four volume series: *Theology of the Jewish-Christian Reality*. Van Buren used it in the classic Christian Zionist version, as implying the present state of Israel was a direct

successor state to the biblical state known by the same name. He also referred to God as fighting against the Arabs on the side of Israel in the war of 1948, thereby making it extremely difficult for Ateek to read his works in any kind of an objective spirit.⁶⁷

Ateek felt that van Buren's God was the seemingly tribal God of Old Testament Israel and not the New Testament God of love, grace and mercy. Van Buren was only concerned about the suffering of the Jewish people, past and present, and had no mind or conscience to give any heart to the Palestinians, manifestly the most wronged people in the establishment of the state of Israel. As he stated, van Buren seemed quicker to recognize the injustices of ancient Israel twenty five hundred years ago, than those of the present state of Israel against the Palestinians. Ateek condemned the post-holocaust and pro-Zionist theology of van Buren as too simplistic and irresponsible. For van Buren, to be critical of Zionism was to be anti-Jewish, whether now or in biblical times.⁶⁸

Ruether described how van Buren's theology was heavily influenced by that of Swiss theologian Karl Barth. She argued that van Buren seemed to have transferred the Christological monism evident in Barthian theology to the divine covenant with the Jewish people. In van Buren's eyes, all work of God in history proceeded directly from the one covenant made by God with Israel on Mt. Sinai. The difference between Jew and Gentile was like the difference between light and darkness. Christians did not have another covenant with God that was separate from the one Sinaitical covenant. Van Buren, even as a Christian, did not believe that Jesus was the Messiah of Israel. He believed that Christianity and Christians should have a subsidiary relationship to Judaism and the Jewish people. Jesus was central for Christianity as 'the paradigmatic expression of the covenant of God with Israel for Gentiles.' Jesus was the link through which Gentiles connect with the one eternal covenant of God with Israel. Jesus thus was central for Christian Gentile salvation, but not for that of the Jews who were already participant in the divine covenant.⁶⁹

Crucial to our study, van Buren believed that God's covenant with Israel also implied a promised land. The land of Canaan-Palestine-Israel was given to the Jewish people (and by automatic default, the

present state of Israel) in perpetuity, whether they were there physically present, now or at anytime in the past or the future. No other people, whether they had dwelt in the region for millennia, had claims or rights to the land. In van Buren's eyes, Jewish presence in the Promised Land automatically meant in the form of a Jewish state. Jews alone can be full citizens in such a state. In van Buren's eyes, such a state was divinely mandated to be a theocratic state, governed by the Torah. Only Torah-observant Jews were true Jews. In his eyes, secular Jews that did not strictly observe the Torah had forfeited their right to be Jews, or the 'chosen ones,' chosen to be a light to the Gentiles, including the Christians.⁷⁰

For van Buren, the role of the Christian church and by extension, the role of supposedly Christian countries was to be none less than a life of service and support for the Jewish people and their state of Israel, yesterday, today and tomorrow. Activist defence of the state of Israel was a must for all Christians. Van Buren could not tolerate any criticism of the state of Israel, which were all lies according to him. The Palestinian refugee problem was solely the problem of the Arab states that had committed aggression on the state of Israel in the first place and later refused to allow the refugees to return, keeping them refugees as a form of pressure and blackmail on the Jewish state. The Western Christian church in his eyes should combat all lies against the state of Israel.⁷¹

In the end, Ruether did acknowledge that van Buren's purpose in writing *A Christian Theology of the People Israel*, had undoubtedly sprung from a sincere desire on his part as a post-holocaust theologian to seek to contribute his mite towards overcoming what must seem to him as deeply engrained anti-Semitism on the part of the majority of so-called Christians as well as the mainline Christian church. However Ruether, again like Ateek, could not understand why van Buren had to be so uncritical of the present largely secular Jewish state of Israel. She considered van Buren to have had uncritically accepted a version of religious Zionism of the Kabbalistic tradition of Avraham Kook, the virulently anti-Arab extreme right wing Jewish rabbi, originally from New York. Van Buren had also decided to entirely and uncritically accept the Israeli government's version of the history of the Jewish state's relations with the Palestinian people and the Arab world.⁷²

In the case of Palestinian Christians, theology played a crucial role. 'The only bridge between the Bible and the people,' Ateek argued, 'is theology. It must be a theology that is biblically sound; a theology that liberates; a theology that will contextualise and interpret while remaining faithful to the heart of the biblical message. Unless such a theology is achieved, the human tendency will be to ignore and neglect the undesired parts of the Bible.'⁷³

Ateek opted for a Christ-centred hermeneutic, which read the Hebrew bible in the light of the events of Christ. Munib Younan too in his work on *Palestinian Local Theology* had argued that 'the canon of hermeneutic for the Palestinian Christian can be nothing less than Jesus Christ Himself.' As a Lutheran, he quoted Luther himself in proof of this, '*Was Christus treiben*: Seek for the Christ and only Christ' (Younan's translation from the German quoted).⁷⁴ His exegetical technique sought to place the Christian messiah Jesus Christ, at the centre, front and back of the Bible, Old and New Testament. He insisted on reading the Old Testament with its many 'problematic' passages for Palestinian Christians and Palestinians in general through the lens and eyes of the New Testament Jesus.⁷⁵

On this basis, Ateek was not afraid to call for a radical re-reading, re-writing and re-analysis of certain passages in the Old Testament, that he felt did not correspond to the inclusive vision of Christ propagated in the New Testament scripture as the saviour of the whole world. Ateek made reference to certain biblical passages such as chapter six of the book of Joshua in the Old Testament, where God calls on Joshua to totally destroy the people of Jericho, as well as all the living things owned by the people of that city as an example of the kind of biblical discourse that was unacceptable to the Christians of the Middle East today. He also made reference to other parts such as 2 Kings 2:23–24, Exodus 17:14–16, Deuteronomy 25:17–19, I Samuel 15:1–3, Isaiah 43:1–4 and Isaiah 61:5–6, where either the contextual story or the text were unacceptable in its present form to the Christians today. Ateek included a call for the 'de-Zionisation' of such scriptural portions.⁷⁶

Texts about retribution and vengeance, therefore, should be read in the light of the forgiveness Christ proclaimed. Thus, for example,

if we take Joshua 6 or Exodus 7–15, Ateek argued that such passages describe an understanding of God which had now been definitively transcended. As Christians, Ateek argued, 'we cannot begin our study of the Bible from Genesis. We must begin with what God had done in Christ and then move into the Old Testament in order to understand the background of the faith.'⁷⁷

On this basis, Ateek developed a non-violent liberation hermeneutic that should be seen in opposition to the more popularly conceived Palestinian Muslim hermeneutic of violent struggle. Ateek traced three different streams of interpretation of the Hebrew bible which he calls nationalist, Torah-oriented and prophetic.⁷⁸ The nationalist strand he found in what was called in the Tenakh the 'former prophets,' Joshua, Judges, 1 and 2 Samuel, and 1 and 2 Kings.⁷⁹ Such texts, he argued, inspired the Maccabean revolt and later the Zealots (66 and 132 CE).

Yahweh was their (the nationalist Jews) God in a unique sense: they recalled God's mighty acts in the past and were determined to realize the same acts in the present. The past had become idealised and they believed that it could be reclaimed. They refused to accept the reality of their relative weakness vis-à-vis the great power of the day, Rome.⁸⁰

Of course, early modern Jewish nationalism was rooted in the secular world view which underlay European colonialism, but after the 1967 War, there was a temptation to read victory in terms of these ancient texts. Ateek argued that this failed to recognize the universal dimension of the divine love. He also argued that the destruction of the temple in 70 CE and the final collapse and destruction of the Zealots in 135 CE at their fortress refuge of Masada at the hands of Rome's Legions, was undeniable proof of the ultimate non-viability of war and violence as a prerequisite for the formation and establishment of a Jewish state in Israel-Palestine.⁸¹

The second stream of interpretation, he called the Torah stream, and this was always non-violent. It was this way of reading Scripture, he argued, that enabled the Jewish community to survive two thousand years of persecution. He had no problem with this strand, but

he argued that it led to a tendency to isolationism and religious legalism which in turn led many Jews to embrace secular modernity at the dawn of the modern era. The emancipation from ghetto life and the impact of the European enlightenment helped in the creation of Reform Judaism, with its emphasis on 'ethics, morality and justice'.⁸²

The third stream was the prophetic, which he felt was most in tune with the best in the Christian faith. He argued that during and after the exile, the prophets moved from a nationalistic to a universal understanding of God. Ateek understood Christ as standing within this tradition. As he pointed out, Jesus was critical of both the Pharisees and the Sadducees as the dominant rabbinic Jewish groups of his time, as well as the activities of the Zealots who were actively fomenting resistance against the Roman authorities during that period. In the light of the widespread prophetic references in the Old Testament to the nature and future arrival of Jesus Christ as the 'saviour' of the world, Ateek made a concerted push for a Christian understanding of the Old Testament that was based on the prophetic line alone. The Old Testament could be read and viewed from three main frameworks, legal, cultic and prophetic traditions. In Ateek's view, a Christian understanding of the Old Testament must be necessarily based on the prophetic viewpoint as Jesus Himself came as prophet and the fulfillment of prophecy and during His life; He was frequently at odds with the 'other' traditions within his Jewish-Roman spectrum.⁸³

At the same time, Jesus affirmed God's activity within history as we see from a text such as Matthew 11:2–6. The Kingdom of God was something tangible both in the present as well as the future. Jesus' preaching of the Kingdom was a counterpoint to apocalyptic pre-occupations. This was evident in Jesus' emphasis on peace and justice, one of the key themes of Ateek's work. Ateek had argued that theology mediates scripture for the people.⁸⁴ This was examined under three heads: peace and justice, election and universality and the land.

Peace and Justice: The Prophetic Appeal to Justice

When former President Bill Clinton visited the Israeli Knesset in October 1994, he gave a speech in which he quoted his pastor as

telling him, 'If you abandon Israel, God will never forgive you.'⁸⁵ Ateek pointed out that Clinton's views rested on a literal interpretation of the Scriptures, ignored the question of justice and showed ignorance regarding the actual situation. Unjust regimes, Ateek argued, always talk about peace and always wish to establish it. Their peace, however, was not based on justice, but on preserving and perpetuating the injustice which they had created. It was based on maintaining the status quo and consolidating the gains which they had acquired through their military power.⁸⁶

The biblical concept of justice was the centre of Ateek's theological vision. He constantly referred to Micah 6:8:

He had showed you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?⁸⁷

He had sought to understand how a people that had suffered so much can inflict suffering in return. Why, he asked, should the price of Jewish empowerment after the Holocaust manifested in the creation of the State of Israel, be the oppression and misery of the Palestinians?⁸⁸ He cited the vision of the God of righteousness and justice in the Old Testament as his hermeneutical starting point in trying to convince Zionists to rethink their policy.⁸⁹

Palestinians, he insisted, wanted justice with mercy, a justice obtained through healing and forgiveness.⁹⁰ 'Absolute justice restores rights, but also had a way of condemning and humiliating the wrongdoer. This almost universally leaves the persons, the human family, or the nation involved, fragmented and lost. Therefore, Ateek argued that what was needed was a way in which justice could be exercised so that the ultimate result would be peace and reconciliation between and within each people, and not the fragmentation and destruction of either or both. Our problem, he said, was that while such positive results were innately natural in God, they were alien in unredeemed humans.'⁹¹

'Understanding,' was key to Ateek's account of reconciliation work, whereby Palestinians as the 'wronged' ones in the Israeli-Palestinian

conflict, sought to understand the compulsions behind the conquest, colonisation and domination of Palestine by mainly European Jews, themselves the victims of discriminatory and exculpatory policies in the West and in Eastern Europe. At the same time, he made no compromise with Zionism. True reconciliation between Palestinians and Israelis, he argued, was only possible when Israel discarded Zionism as its state ideology and embraced all residents of the land in a truly democratic one-nation secular state.⁹²

Ateek's call for mercy from both sides was particularly significant in view of the continuing intransigence of Israel in dealing with its subordinated populations. Ateek turned to the parable of the untrustworthy servant in Matthew 18:23–35, where the master upbraided and eventually condemned the servant for not showing the same mercy that was shown to him to others. The moral that Ateek sought to bring out here was that one need not expect mercy and kindness from God, if one was not willing to forgive one's fellow man.⁹³

Leonard Marsh claimed that,

In an intractable situation, where the legacy of the past hangs so heavily, this disinherited and dwindling Palestinian Christian community survives as a prophetic sign that reconciliation and renewal can only occur when enemies can forgive and be forgiven.⁹⁴

The Adoption of Utilitarian Ideals

As noted earlier, Israel had secular origins and amongst other things, Ateek argued that some aspects of the Utilitarian strand in Western law had been adopted by Israel. The Utilitarian concept of justice defined what was 'good' independently from what was 'right' and rightness and in this context 'justice' was defined as what 'maximises the good.' In the case of Israel, what was good for Israelis was not good for the Palestinians. Ateek showed how over the years from 1967–1988, over 50 per cent of Palestinian-owned land in the West Bank and Gaza had been confiscated by military-run tribunals and courts in the name of

state security, on the basis of arbitrary military orders issued in the name of the military governor of the Occupied Territories.⁹⁵

Utilitarian accounts of law can only be challenged by disputing their legitimacy. Ateek appealed to the liberation claim of the 'priority of the poor in history.' Those in power, he argued, needed to 'take note of the biblical truth that God's principal concern is for the victims of injustice. Once this biblical and theological idea is understood, it should produce political responsibility.'⁹⁶

Ateek believed that Christians, especially in Palestine, must dedicate themselves to non-violence. The Church in Israel-Palestine, he argued, could play a powerful role in promoting justice and peace 'only through active non-violent means.'⁹⁷ At the same time, he argued that,

Peacemaking had to be a dynamic process, a process in which conflicts were not avoided, but were harnessed to construct the building of a better society for all the people involved. Peacemaking is a costly and difficult task because of the immensity and intensity of evil and human brokenness in the world. It is, therefore, a complex process, and if peace is to be genuine and effective, it must be multidimensional so that it can embrace the different interlocking problems of conflict. Peacemaking can be nothing less than the daily experience of the Cross in all its agony and pain, but also, thank God, with all its promise of new life.⁹⁸

Again,

Peacemakers, however, were called to try to make the eschatological vision of peace inform their work of peacemaking, to try to make that vision, at least in part, a present reality so that it will exert a powerful formative influence on every real historical situation of conflict.⁹⁹

In an exegesis of 1 Kings 22, Ateek argued that the fate of Micaiah ben Imlah who refused to tell Ahab what he wanted to hear 'reveals

the fate of men and women who stand for justice. They were willing to stand against great odds so that the word of God and justice reigns supreme.¹⁰⁰ The story was a lesson to 'all whom, instead of fixing their eyes on justice, blindly support any state, especially one that was guilty of injustice.'¹⁰¹

Similarly, his account of Psalms 42 and 43 led Ateek to urge Palestinian Christians to trust in a God of justice who will act, even in the midst of inaction on the part of the world authorities and temporal rulers.¹⁰² For Ateek, 'trust' and 'hope' were the two liberating factors that would free the Christian from the 'dark realities' of the present.¹⁰³ Hence,

With faith, trust, and hope in God, the outcome, though not visible, is assured. Although the adversary may be ungodly, deceitful, and unjust, he or she will not have the final word. God will inevitably vindicate what is right and just.¹⁰⁴

Election and Universalism

Election was one of the key themes of the Hebrew bible. Israel was 'the chosen people.' This belief, however, could then be used to underpin arguments for the legitimacy of the State of Israel and for the necessity of evicting the Palestinians. For Palestinian Christians, debates regarding the inclusivity or exclusivity of God formed one of the most important theological issues around which questions of their very existence in the Holy Land and in Israel revolve. How could one then deal with this idea?

Ateek argued that many theologies of election were implicitly racist and that what must be developed was a theological basis for 'the rejection of all forms of racism and discrimination without exception' such as that being practised in Israel and Palestine.¹⁰⁵

Ateek does this first by appealing to the prophets. He frequently referred to Amos 9:7 with its clearly Universalist overtones about a God of all people including the Ethiopians and other Hamito-Semitic peoples.¹⁰⁶ Leviticus 25:23 as well as Psalm 24:1 showed that the God of the Old Testament could also be an inclusive God who cared about

the land and all its occupants, where Jewish or non-Jewish, alien or native.¹⁰⁷ The book of Jonah satirises a parochial view of the world, as against the more egalitarian world order that God was espousing through his prophet at that time. Ezekiel 47:21–23 commanded the Israelites returning from Babylonian exile to live in peace with the non-Jewish people that now live in Canaan, to whom the land now belongs as well. 'The tragedy of many Zionists today,' Ateek wrote, 'is that they had locked themselves into this nationalist concept of God. They were trapped in it and they will be freed only if they discard their primitive image of God for a more universal one.'¹⁰⁸

In the New Testament, however, he found a far greater emphasis on universality. In the Synoptics, he appealed to the healing the Roman Centurion's servant (Mathew 8:5–13,) where it is said that 'many will come from east and west and will eat with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.' The story of the Syro-Phoenician woman showed that non-Jews were included in the promises of salvation (Matthew 15:21–28 and parallels). In the story of the ten lepers who were healed by Jesus in Luke 17:11–19, only the Samaritan gives thanks to God. Here, and in his account of John 4, Ateek took the Samaritans as symbolic of today's Palestinians.¹⁰⁹

The parable of the Good Samaritan was used by Jesus to show who one's neighbour was. Samaritans, being half-caste Jews were the despised untouchables and out-castes of Roman Judea and Samaria. Jews would ritually avoid Samaritan territories (corresponding roughly to today's northern West Bank region and the regional capital Nablus where still a Palestinian Samaritan community of some two hundred souls manages to symbolically survive), when travelling between Judea and Galilee. Jesus, knowingly used a Samaritan figure as a good man entrusted with saving his 'neighbour,' the Jewish traveller robbed, beaten and left to die by the side of the road. He also used Jewish notaries as examples of bad people in this parable who refuse to help their fellow Jew on the road.

Ateek used this parable as a means of illustrating the Palestinian experience at the hands of the Zionists. Palestine was always historically a place of refuge for European Jewry, especially since the beginning of the modern pogroms in Eastern and Central Europe from the

1880s onwards, till the state of Israel was established in 1948, after the greatest pogrom of all, the German Holocaust. It was significant that though the Jews were long resident in historical and geographic Europe they were generally denied the ability to settle en masse in any European state or even in America, prior to, during and after the Second World War.

In his analogy, Ateek compared these people with the Jewish notaries that walked with their eyes averted when they saw their hurt 'brother.' The modern Jews in turn, had to turn for settlement to an Arab nation, peopled by their fellow Semitic cousins and brothers (a relationship fairly similar to that between ancient Palestinian Jews and Samaritans). Native Palestinian Arabs did not object to the Jews coming and settling in the land as long as they were willing to share the land with its present residents and earlier inhabitants.¹¹⁰

Clashes started to occur when the guests (European Jews) started to misuse the hospitality extended to them and began to covet power and total take-over of the state and country. The Roman-era Samaritans extended a helping hand to their Jewish cousins, in the way that Palestinian Arabs allowed their country to be settled and eventually taken over by European Jewry. He analogously exhorted the Jews of Israel to remember the help, knowingly or unknowingly extended to them by native Palestinians in their greatest hour of need and to correspondingly reciprocate in the mode of the good Samaritan, now that the tables had been reversed and it is the Palestinians who were dispersed (refugees) and in need.¹¹¹

Many Synoptic parables call 'chosenness' in question by highlighting Jesus' rejection by the chosen people (Mark 12:1–12; Luke 20:9–19) in the Emmaus story. Thus, it turned out that 'Jesus himself, it turns out, is the key and the focus—not Israel. In Him, the redemption of Israel, as well as of others, was accomplished.'¹¹²

In John, the Prologue was entirely about how the Word which had been given to us previously only through the medium of the Jewish prophets had now taken on flesh, life and spirit through the arrival, life and death-resurrection of Jesus Christ. Ateek quoted from possibly the most famous and important verse in the entire Christian scriptures to prove that God loved 'the whole world' and not just the 'once-chosen'

Jewish people.¹¹³ Leading on from this, Ateek made the conclusion that theologically speaking, neither Jerusalem, capital of the Jewish people nor Mt. Gerizim (in Nablus), capital of the Samaritans was important anymore, but the knowledge that 'God is spirit and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.'¹¹⁴ When John 1:51 was set alongside Genesis 28:12–13, place was replaced by Jesus. Ateek spoke of 'a definite de-Zionising of the biblical faith. It is no more Israel or the land that is the all-important centre, but rather Jesus the Christ.'¹¹⁵

Acts 1:6 showed the move from Israel to the wider gentile world. Above all, Galatians 3:28 redefined 'chosenness' and makes old distinctions impossible. Ephesians 3:3–6 also spoke of the Gentiles as 'fellow heirs, members of the same body, and sharers in the same promise in Christ Jesus through the Gospel.'¹¹⁶

On the basis of these texts, Ateek argued that the theology of inclusivity that was evident as a strand in many parts of the Old Testament and which found its fulfillment in the New Testament must be the natural basis for a Palestinian Theology of Liberation especially as it sought to be a theology rooted in the land of Palestine and one that stood against the now-resurgent 'nationalist' Jewish and Christian Zionist stream of thought.¹¹⁷

The Problem of Land

Ateek argued that religious Jews could not do without the support of Christian Zionists, especially those based in the strongly bible belt states of the US, who in turn, were needed to lobby the US Congress and House of Representatives. Zionists within Israel were determined to prevent what they saw as a great evil, namely the establishment of a Palestinian state on the West Bank and Gaza. Some Jewish groups even saw the Israeli settlement of West Bank land as a form of redemption of the land, and therefore a process to hasten the arrival of the first Jewish Messiah. This particular aim would correspond with that of the majority of Christian Zionists in their desire and belief that settling the land of Israel-Palestine with Jews from all over the world would hasten the arrival of the second coming of Christ.¹¹⁸

Ever since 1948, Christian and Jewish Zionists had found themselves both allied to an increasing victorious side. This was despite the fact that the ultimate theological aim of the Christian Zionists was the destruction of the state of Israel through the 'final battle' of Armageddon so that all those who profess faith in Christ would be saved. This would ironically only include a third of the Jewish people worldwide that profess faith in Jesus Christ as messiah. The remaining two-thirds would be destroyed in the war.¹¹⁹

In countering this ideology, Ateek developed a theology of the land which had four strands.

The first was that the idea of land applied to the whole earth. 'The whole Earth is the lord's. This is all God's world. The whole world should be holy. It is all sacramental.'¹²⁰ 'The material world, far from being desacralised, was sanctified in its entirety.'¹²¹ In a way, this was indicated by the fact that God revealed himself more to the Jews when they were away from the land than when they were in it.¹²² The Exodus, the giving of the Torah, the setting up of the divine covenant with Abraham and his descendants, all took place outside the historic borders of the Holy Land.

In this context, Ateek referred also to Exodus 3:5 where God commanded Moses to take off his shoes, as the land that he was standing on had been made holy and sacred by the divine presence of the Lord God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. This occurred in Sinai and not in the historic holy land of Canaan-Palestine. He just used this episode to show that all land was holy and not only Palestine.¹²³ Moses was denied the right to enter the 'promised land' by God. Many of the greatest prophets of the Hebrew Scriptures such as 'Second Isaiah,' Jeremiah and Ezekiel, either served or finished their life's work in exile.¹²⁴ Ateek emphasized that 'God is the God of the whole world-not simply the greatest God among other Gods, and not exclusively their God, but the only true God, the God of the whole world.'¹²⁵

Secondly, occupation of a particular piece of land had moral consequences. The land was given by God to those people who were obedient to His Will and commandments. The Israelites remained in the land as long as they were obedient to the 'one God' and his laws. Ateek argued that by dis-inheriting the Palestinians from the land, the

present rulers of Israel had committed a cardinal sin in God's eyes.¹²⁶ 'Obsession with the land,' he wrote, 'has had disastrous consequences for the Jews at different times in their ancient history. For it is not the land that carries a blessing to the people, but faithfulness to the God of justice, righteousness, and mercy.'¹²⁷

History teaches us that whoever concentrates heart and mind on the land will be cursed and vomited out of the land. This is what happened to the Crusaders, Christians who fell into this trap. The land can, however, become holy to those who put their trust in the God of the whole universe, whose nature does not change- a God of justice for all, who desires goodness and mercy for all people living in this and every land.¹²⁸

Ateek advised the state of Israel and the Jewish people to embrace a more inclusivist vision of God and the land of Canaan-Palestine-Israel, if they wanted to survive as a nation and a people in the Middle East.¹²⁹

For its own survival, Israel and Jewry must recognize that God is the God of the whole universe, who lives and cares for all people, the God who desires justice and mercy. The salvation of the Jews in Israel and the Palestinians in Palestine right here and now lies in acknowledging the truth of Micah's words: 'He had showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.'¹³⁰

The Naboth story provided the classic or central biblical paradigm for the enunciation of a Palestinian theology of liberation. Like Naboth, the Palestinians had their lands confiscated, but this placed the Israeli state in the position of Ahab (and perhaps the United States as Jezebel), and we know what happened to them! Given this possibility Ateek once again wanted to insist on justice with mercy.¹³¹

Thirdly, Ateek argued that the concept of kingdom in the New Testament was the counterpart of the concept of land in the Old. Thus

there was certainly an imperative for working out justice and peace in a particular area: the gospel is not abstract. But this land was not just Palestine, but anywhere.¹³²

Fourthly, there was good reason to cherish the land, but this applied to Palestinians as well as to Jews.

Like all other Palestinians (Muslims), cherish the land and were loyal to it because it is the land of their birth and the land of their ancestors. It is their homeland, *watan*.¹³³

The responsibility of Palestinian Christians was very specifically to be hospitable to the millions of pilgrims that visit the Holy Land. Ateek viewed the Palestinian Christians as the 'living stones' of the Holy Land, and exhorted all pilgrims who visited the Holy Land to not only see and experience the sights and places that made Palestine a 'fifth Gospel,' although, from a Christian point of view it was Christ and not the land which was holy.¹³⁴

Summarising his argument, he returned to the theme of justice and peace:

The land of Israel-Palestine is part of God's world. It belongs to God in the same way as does the rest of the world. God is its creator and owner-just as God is the maker and owner of the whole world. Today, God had placed on this land both Palestinians and Jews. They must then share it under God and become good stewards of it. It does not belong to either of them exclusively. They must share it equitably and live as good neighbours with one another. Both nations must 'do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with God' (Micah 6:8). Once these biblical demands of justice had been satisfied, a good measure of peace will be achieved. The result will then be a new and deeper security enjoyed by all throughout the land. 'For the effect of justice will be peace and the result of righteousness, security and trust forever' (Isaiah 32:17).¹³⁵

CHAPTER 4

THE POLITICS AND PRAXIS OF NAIM ATEEK AND SABEEL

The previous chapter dealt with some of the main historical, political and theological issues that had resulted in the growth and impacted on the development of a unique Palestinian Theology of Liberation. Considerable space was devoted to the theology of Naim Ateek, in particular, as one among the two main theologians whose work and writings had been sought to be highlighted and critiqued in this work. The present chapter continued the focus on Ateek and Sabeel, particularly as regards their stand on various critical political as well as theological issues facing the Palestinian Arab people in the Israel-Palestine region.

Sabeel and Jerusalem

Jerusalem, and in particular East Jerusalem and the Old City, had always been a focal point of Sabeel. Ateek emphasized the holiness and significance of Jerusalem in his writings, claiming how Jerusalem with the passage of time and history became sacred to more than one group and people, thereby inaugurating the history of contested political as well as religious rights over the city. The 'holiness' of Jerusalem and its significance for the life and worship of the Palestinian Christian people were one of the most enduring appeals of this city for people like Ateek. He, however, was concerned about how

to reduce conflict by seeking to see how it could be possible to share Jerusalem between the different religious groups that had laid claim to the city and to its purported 'holiness,' namely the Jews, Christians and Muslims. Ateek's contestation was to show that it was possible from a Palestinian Christian point of view to share Jerusalem between all the three main faith groups. Such a solution must be based on truth and justice.

Ateek based his claim to the spiritual (and political-physical) inheritance of Jerusalem on behalf of the Palestinian Christian people, on the basis of an initial declaration that Palestine had, from a historical perspective, always formed part of the (historic) Arab homeland. He adopted a very broad definition of the term Arab as a basis for this, terming and categorising all the ancient invaders who had entered the land of Canaan-Palestine over the ages, such as the Canaanites, the Babylonians, the Assyrians, the Phoenicians, and even the Israelites (Hebrew people from Egypt) as people who had initially arisen in the Arabian Peninsula and hence were worthy of the generic term of Arab.¹

The main office of Sabeel has always been in East Jerusalem and present-day Jerusalemites like Ateek (with Israeli citizenship) and others (with Jerusalem residency papers) dominated the leadership structures of the organization. Palestinians holding Israeli citizenship were generally allowed to travel in the occupied territories as well as in East Jerusalem, which while being de-facto annexed to Israel, still remained *de jure* internationally a disputed territory and claimed by the Palestinians as the capital of their projected state in the West Bank and Gaza. Those Palestinians that were resident in East Jerusalem in 1967, when the territory was occupied and later annexed to the state of Israel, were granted Jerusalem residency identity papers, which in its present form grants them physical access to the state of Israel as well as the Occupied Territories of the West Bank, as well as benefit of Israel's social security network, including old age pension and health care insurance. In the present circumstances, it would be practically impossible for a resident of the West Bank and Gaza to move about freely in Jerusalem or the state of Israel, without the requisite permits, that were provided only on a one-off daily basis.

The work of Sabeel, being trans-border, in the sense that it involved advocacy and volunteering by people based in East Jerusalem (under Israeli rule and law), the Galilee region (in the state of Israel), and in the occupied Territory of the West Bank of Palestine, as well as a strong international segment based mainly in the Western Anglo-Saxon world as well as in northern and western Europe, meant that almost the entire volunteer as well as office work force of this organization were people without the restrictive West Bank and Gaza Palestinian residency identity documents (IDs). This, in turn, had contributed to the perception that Sabeel was an entirely Israeli-Palestinian organization, that should operate within the limits and precincts of Israeli law alone, without reference to the Palestinian legal sphere. Sabeel's primary focus on West Bank as well as East Jerusalem Palestinians as the primary beneficiaries of their aid and developmental efforts made this restriction without validation. Many of the board members and active contributors to Sabeel were Palestinian lawyers (such as founding Sabeel board member and famous East Jerusalem based lawyer Jonathan Kuttab), with an active portfolio and practise spanning the Israeli-Palestinian legal persona.

This was also a reflection of the present-day importance of Jerusalem to the Palestinian Christian community as since 1993, Israel had increasingly restricted access for West Bankers wishing to travel or even stay in East Jerusalem. The result was that only people with Jerusalem residency and identity cards were allowed to travel freely within the Israeli state. Jerusalem-based Christians thus had much greater mobility than the Palestinian population in the West Bank and Gaza, who had to rely on often tenuous travel links with neighbouring Arab states like Jordan and Egypt. A policy that was started sometime after the 1993 Oslo Peace Accords (as a result of a series of militant Islamist suicide bombings, that were themselves programmed to coincide with a deep felt frustration and distrust among Palestinians for the sham Oslo Peace process), had now grown through the last 15 or so years into an almost total blockade directed against West Bankers (and a total blanket denial of permits to Gazans) wishing to enter Jerusalem or the state of Israel for travel, casual, official, labour or medical reasons, all in the name of security.

All Palestinian people wishing to travel from the West Bank towards Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, had to apply for travel permits, showing valid reasons (valid in the eyes of the restrictions imposed by the Israeli authorities) for their proposed travel. Permits, if and when issued, were generally granted a day at a time. All males of so-called fighting age (between the ages of 18–45), were generally denied permits outright, even in serious medical emergency cases. The only time that permits were willingly granted, were during times of religious festivals, such as the Christian Easter and Christmas, as well as technically during 'Ramadan' and 'Eid,' but even here, the authorities tended to discriminate between Christians and Muslims, with more permits being generally granted Christians (while eliminating those of fighting age again, through various bureaucratic loop-holes).² Ateek condemned this policy of the Israeli occupation authorities in a June 1994 statement when he described how it was easier for a tourist from any part of the world to visit Jerusalem, while it was almost impossible for a Bethlehemite resident of Palestine to visit his mother church-city of Jerusalem, just six miles away.³

Jerusalem also contained the headquarters of all the major Christian denominations in the Holy Land as well as numerous Church-related aid agencies. Pilgrimages had always been a way to attract Western Christians to interact with Palestinian Christians and Sabeel had focused on this from the beginning. This was a policy naturally followed by many Christian organizations in Israel-Palestine, both those sympathetic towards or initiated by Palestinians and associated Western Christian organizations and churches as well as those organizations with manifested Christian Zionist tendencies. Sabeel had also been active ecumenically, organising ecumenical prayer meetings as well as other social networking activities amongst clergy of all the main denominational factions in Israel-Palestine.

This again was part of the ecumenical vision of Sabeel, developed initially by Naim Ateek, during the course of his ministry in Israel and later in Jerusalem and the occupied West Bank. It was an unavoidable imperative of the Palestinian situation, given the low numbers of Christians now present in the area, and their inescapable commitment towards bonding as much as possible in the needs

of mutual survival. Sabeel's first and primary commitment towards the indigenous Palestinian Christians, whatever their denominational affiliation, was in the form of arranging and initiating various forms of ecumenical encounters and get-togethers that had been focused on developing a common sense of identity and purpose among Palestinian Christians.

Sabeel was involved when the Heads of Churches and major Christian organizations met in 1994 to discuss the status of the Holy City and the situation of Christians therein. One of the pre-eminent concerns for Palestinian Christians as well as the Church and Christian clergy based in the Old City and East Jerusalem was the status of the 'Old City,' and Palestinian East Jerusalem, where almost all the main Churches as well as Christian pilgrimage sites were located. This issue was played up in all Church statements during the 1990s and culminated in the joint letter sent to the two heads of state as well as Chairman Arafat of the Palestinian Liberation Organization-Palestinian National Authority (PLO-PNA) in July 2000.

The main interest and concern for the historic Palestinian and Holy Land Churches was that the Old City and Christian and Palestinian East Jerusalem stayed within the Palestinian national orbit. They issued a declaration known as 'The Significance of Jerusalem for Christians.' The Church leaders and Patriarchs were geared into issuing this highly unusual communiqué dealing solely with the Christian vision of Jerusalem, because of their fears regarding the sidelining of the Jerusalem issue as a part of the Arab-Israeli peace process. The Jerusalem issue, in turn, directly impinged on the existential security of the Christian communities as it was of direct consequence to them, whether the Palestinians or the Israelis should control East Jerusalem and the Old City, where most of the Christian communities and establishments were based. The Patriarchs made the claim that any call or pursuit of exclusivity or a kind of human supremacy over Jerusalem, was against the prophetic character of the city of Jerusalem.

Historically, Jerusalem had never tolerated exclusivist claims to possession of the city and had rejected such attempts to impose solitary control over the city by one group or people. They called on Jerusalem to be 'open to all,' and 'shared by all.' The Patriarchs sought

to develop and propagate a Christian vision of Jerusalem that would link Jerusalem to the deepest-held spiritual hopes and aspirations of Christian people worldwide. They sought to root the Christian presence (and by default, their own presence) in Jerusalem (the city of God, both temporal as well as spiritual), with the long history of the people of God (the Jewish people) whose spiritual centre was Jerusalem, a vocation that was ultimately fulfilled through Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ sent by God to ensure the salvation of the whole world.

The Patriarchs also made an appeal to the Jewish prophets concerning Jerusalem, tapping into the rich vein on Jerusalem as the city of Justice where the Lord dwells in holiness, and where the city would be an example in the midst of the nations, where the presence of God would mean that the (then yet to be built) Second Temple would be a house of prayer for all people (see Isaiah 1:26,27; 2:2; 11; 17; 56:6–7; 60:1, also Psalm 68:18 and Ezekiel 5:5). Turning to the New Testament, they saw a prelude to the present ‘un-peaceful’ state of affairs in Jerusalem in the cry of Jesus over the city of Jerusalem, looking down from the Mount of Olives on a city that had rejected his teachings and would soon conspire to put Him to death as it had done with so many prophets before him, sons of the soil, just as he was (see Luke 19:42). Again in the book of Acts, Jerusalem was the place where the Holy Spirit was given to the first Christians (thereby inaugurating the present era of Christian Church), who were supposed to be witnesses to the truth in Christ, not only in Jerusalem, but to the ends of the world (see Acts 1:8; 2).

Again, crucial to their continued existential relevance, the Patriarchs mentioned that it was in Jerusalem that the church first acquired elements of ecclesiastical governance and rule by elders, as is witnessed in many of the earlier and later chapters of the book of Acts. Thus, Jerusalem must always remain a temporal as well as spiritual reference point for Christians worldwide. They also referred to the book of Revelation with its anticipation of a new heavenly Jerusalem, that focal nodal point of Christians through the ages (see Revelation 3:12; 21:2, also Galatians 4:26 and Hebrews 12:22). The Patriarchs emphasized that in the Christian tradition, the ‘earthly Jerusalem’ prefigured

the 'heavenly Jerusalem as the vision of peace.' They emphasized the importance of Jerusalem in the development of the Christian liturgy and also the impact made by the pilgrimage tradition to Jerusalem for the 'symbolic (divine-spiritual) meaning of the Holy City.' The Patriarchs referred to how pilgrimages over the last two millennia had transformed the meaning of Jerusalem, giving the city a unique place in the heart of Christianity everywhere.⁴ Sabeel, in particular, wanted to challenge Zionist views that Jerusalem was above all important for Jews.

Ateek had emphasized that any attempt at understanding the holiness or speciality of Jerusalem for humankind must take into consideration the fact that Jerusalem was a 'special' city for over 4000 years. He traced the evolution of Jerusalem from a little village that contained a cultic shrine to a Canaanite deity called *Shulmannu*, to the present metropolitan world city that is 'holy' to the followers of three world religions. Ateek traced the development of the word Jerusalem (*Yerushalayim* in Hebrew) to a combination of two Semitic words, *Jeru* or *Yeru* meaning foundation of and *Salem* or *Shalem* which according to him, denoted a shortened form of the name of the Canaanite deity mentioned earlier. This particular deity was visited by Canaanite tribes to appeal and pray for health, fertility and protection and thereby the name associated with this particular God became the Semitic term *Shalom* or *Salam* associated with peace or wholeness.

Ateek made the point that the gradual growth in significance for Jerusalem for the Hebrew people can be traced to Genesis 14 (the meeting between Melchizedek, king of Jerusalem and Abraham, patriarch of the Semitic peoples) and later to David's conquest of the city from the Jebusites. David's bringing of the Ark to Jerusalem as well as the later building of the first Jewish Temple there were all meant to capitalise on the earlier spiritual significance of the city for the Canaanite-Hebrew and other Hamito-Semitic peoples. A Palestinian theology of Jerusalem must of necessity, take into consideration the significance of the city right from the time of the Canaanites. By implying this, Ateek was seeking to give a Palestinian nationalist tinge to the sanctity of Jerusalem for Palestinian Christians, without just emphasizing

the 'Jesus birth and death' factor, which would traditionally be the sole motivating impetus in seeking a sanctity of Jerusalem from the Christian point of view.⁵

Ateek wrote,

The tragedy of the Government of Israel and the Jerusalem Municipality today is their adamant exclusive claim on Jerusalem and their relentless drive to 'Judaize' it. The celebrations to mark 3000 years of Jerusalem as the capital for Jews is a betrayal of what Jerusalem is, a negation of its history, and smells of racism and arrogance that in no way lends itself to peace.⁶

Sabeel published a document in July 2000 known as the Jerusalem Sabeel Document. In it, the ecumenical liberation theology organization outlined the principles that were required for a just peace in Israel-Palestine. They made a clear case for shared sovereignty in Jerusalem, arguing that this alone could be the basis for a lasting and 'moral' peace in the region. The Jerusalem Sabeel document clearly stated that it was the moral and incumbent right on Israel to return all the Palestinian territories captured in the War of 1967 (and that such territories were occupied territories based on UNSC resolutions 242 and 338), such as the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, and the Eastern half (including the Old City) of Jerusalem, to the native Palestinian inhabitants (and to their legitimate and recognized political-administrative body, the PNA, so that a sovereign state could be established on the basis of these areas.

The locus for this was the already recognized (by the world community, including the Arab world and the PLO) fact that the state of Israel had been established by force of arms (in what they argued was a highly skewed series of battles in 1948 heavily diced in favour of the Jewish *Yishuv* and its military wings such as the *Haganah* and the *Palmach*) on 77 per cent of the former land of Mandate Palestine, which was some 20 per cent land in excess of what the United Nations General Assembly had allotted in the Palestine Partition Resolution 181 of November 29, 1947.

The Sabeel document also affirmed that East Jerusalem was clearly occupied territory, despite a history of unilateral steps by the state of Israel (such as the annexation of East Jerusalem and its adjoining areas by the state of Israel in 1980, known generally as the Basic Law for Jerusalem, whereby there was a deliberate extension of the municipal limits of Jerusalem far beyond the historic borders of the city into the West Bank so as to maximise the territory directly under the state, and the building and settling of vast numbers of Jewish settlers within the formerly Arab areas of East Jerusalem and the Old City), on the basis of UNSC resolutions 252 and 478. Sabeel called on Jerusalem's sovereignty to be shared between the two states of Israel and Palestine.

The city must be an 'open city' for Palestinians, Israelis and also internationals coming as tourists, visitors or pilgrims. East Jerusalem must be the capital of the proposed future state of Palestine, while West Jerusalem must be the capital of Israel. As a Christian organization, Sabeel called for an agreement between the Israelis and the Palestinians that would guarantee the sanctity of the 'holy places' (the majority of holy places within the Old City of Jerusalem belong to the Christians community), as well as the rights of the three main monotheistic faiths in the land on an equal footing and basis. Somewhat controversially, they advocated that all land appropriation as well as confiscation activities undertaken by Israel within the walled city of Jerusalem (the obvious reference was to the Israeli-sponsored drive that saw an entire Palestinian quarter, the so-called *Mugrabi* (Moroccan) Quarter, within the Old City adjacent to the Wailing Wall, levelled for the sake of added space near the Jewish Wall, as well as the large-scale extension and rebuilding of the Jewish Quarter within the Old City, undertaken by the Israeli state after 1967), be reversed in the name of peace.

Sabeel made it clear that they viewed all Jewish settlements built on occupied West Bank territory, including East Jerusalem as illegal under international law and they again controversially (and somewhat illogically one would assume, given the present direction of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, with the clear hints as well as 'actions on the ground' being undertaken by the Israeli side to preserve the present status quo regarding a majority of the settlements as an integral part

of the state of Israel as well as the so-called 'Security Barrier' as the future border between Israel and a 'cantonised' Palestinian state) advocated that all settlements built on Palestinian soil since 1967 must be part of Palestine. Sabeel also condemned the closure imposed on East Jerusalem by the Israelis in 1993, whereby the city was virtually as well as physically cut off from the rest of the West Bank and Gaza, denying Palestinian people in their hinterland access to the city. Israel had also consistently tried to impose a policy of control and limits on the Palestinian population in Jerusalem, seeking to keep it within 27 per cent of the total city population, through various means such as demolition of homes, confiscation of land and revocation of Palestinian residency rights.⁷

The same point was made vis-à-vis Muslim rhetoric about Jerusalem as well.

For Sabeel, the importance of the declaration was as a statement of the inalienability of the 'living stones'* of Jerusalem for the worldwide Christian tradition. The Jerusalem Declaration of the Christian Patriarchs made the point that only through the continuing presence of a native and indigenous community of Christians in the 'holy land,' the so-called 'living stones,' did the historical and archaeological sites in the land take on a significance of 'life.' Only through the living stones were the dead stones (the holy sites of Christendom) worth anything at all. Jerusalem's importance for Christians could be expressed in two ways:

1. It is a Holy City with holy places most precious to Christians because of their link with the history of salvation fulfilled in and through Jesus Christ;
2. It is a city with a community of Christians which had been living continually there since its origins.⁸

Sabeel emphasized that what they sought in Jerusalem was the harmonious inter-living of all people in the city, whether Christian or otherwise.⁹ Jerusalem was seen as,

* Commonly used term to refer to the native Christians of the Holy Land.

Symbol and a promise of the presence of God, of fraternity and peace for humankind, in particular the children of Abraham: Jews, Christians and Moslems.¹⁰

Sabeel held a conference in Jerusalem on 'The Significance of Jerusalem for Christians and of Christians for Jerusalem' in January 1996.¹¹ The aim of this conference was to highlight the importance of Jerusalem for Christians as well as to raise a campaign against any form of 'marginalization or "peripheralization" of the Christian community or any other community.'¹²

Sabeel had always sought to educate people as regards the true nature of the Israeli occupation and its main contribution to this was the attempt to enunciate a moderate Christian theology of the kind set out in the previous chapter, broad enough to ensure equal representation for all in the politico-economic and cultural space of Jerusalem. Sabeel stood for a vision of Jerusalem where the City first belonged to 'God' before it did to any temporal authority and this knowledge should temper the activities of any present or subsequent controller of the status quo in the city.¹³ History showed that every dominant culture-religious grouping in Palestine sought to impose its own version of exclusivity on Jerusalem. This would include the ancient Jews, Byzantine Christians, Muslims (both Arabs as well as Turks), and now the Zionists. Ateek's vision of Jerusalem was as 'an open city that could be the capital of both Palestine and Israel.'¹⁴

Ateek argued that there was a crucial responsibility on the part of the international community to see that the city is shared.¹⁵ He wanted East Jerusalem to become the Palestinian capital.¹⁶ At the same time, the Old City should be declared a special holy zone that was outside the direct jurisdiction of either Israel or Palestine, and governed by an international charter guaranteed by the United Nations. This point was a common demand of the Catholic Church and the Vatican, since almost right after the start of the British Mandate in Palestine, as the Catholics feared an erosion of their rights and privileges acquired through centuries of diplomacy and other dealings with the Ottoman state.

Later, after the establishment of the state of Israel, the Vatican intensified this demand on behalf of the native Catholic and Christian community of the Old City of East Jerusalem. It was taken up by the Jerusalem Patriarchs in their 1994 Declaration on Jerusalem. While initially supporting the 1994 Declaration, by 2000 Sabeel had along with most of the Christian community, including the Vatican-oriented Latin community, turned towards a more nationalistic-oriented solution of the Jerusalem issue, declaring themselves in favour (alongside the PLO standpoint) of a re-division of Jerusalem along East-West lines, with the Eastern half becoming the capital of a proposed Palestinian state.¹⁷ Ateek had put his faith in international law as the means to ensure a just and lasting peace in Jerusalem.

Sabeel and the Peace Process

Sabeel welcomed the Oslo Accords and the 'peace' between Israel and the PLO when it was declared to the outside world in 1993. The Jerusalem Sabeel document of 2000 was however particularly critical of the Oslo process's commitment to a just peace as envisioned in the Madrid Conference at the end of the Gulf War in 1991. Oslo only resulted in entrenching the Israeli occupation of the West Bank, by setting up what they assumed to be a puppet Palestinian regime headed by former PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat, who they assumed would be pliant to their vision of a Palestinian state that would be, at best, a satellite or feeder state of Israel. A process that was supposed to have been started in 1993, Oslo in all its manifestations, had by March 2000 (the Sabeel Jerusalem document was published soon after) only enabled the Palestinian Authority (the PLO dominated administrative and governmental body set up as a result of the Oslo Peace Process in September 1993) to take over some 18.2 per cent of the territory of the West Bank (which was itself, including Gaza just 22 per cent of the territory of historic Palestine and much below the 49 per cent envisaged by the UN as per the UN partition resolution of 1947 for the formation of a Palestinian state within the truncated territory of Mandate Palestine). Then as well as now, the Palestinians were only allowed to effectively control the city and municipal limits of the various towns within the West Bank.

Almost all the surrounding countryside as well as the main access roads linking the West Bank towns and villages was controlled by the Israelis using their armed forces as well as the border police. Since the year 2000, there was no handover of territory from Israeli control to the Palestinians. Moreover, the so-called Security Wall (more popularly known among the Palestinians and concerned Western activists as well as groups such as Sabeel as the 'Apartheid Wall') was steadily progressing, reducing the territory, Palestinians had to live in and move around on by at least another 50 per cent. This seemingly corresponded to the 57.1 per cent of the territory of the West Bank that was left under Israeli control following Oslo. Then, as well as now, none of the territories that were returned to the Palestinians were geographically linked together.

This made it essential for Palestinians to use Israeli controlled and monitored roads, subject to international-like security and border processing terminals, haphazard road blockings and movable army checkpoints (all seemingly designed to make travel almost impossible and exceedingly difficult for Palestinians and non-Israelis associated with them), which in practice meant that all non-Israeli or Jerusalem residents and permit-holders must travel on secondary, unapproved and arbitrary access roads (that were themselves subject to blocking at any given time and according to the whims and fancies of the Israeli security authorities) to gain access between Palestinian controlled areas and regions. The Israelis maintained control over all the highways and road networks through out the Occupied Territories as well as all space and territory above and below ground.¹⁸

By 1996, however, the peace process was in the doldrums as a result of both Israeli and militant Palestinian intransigence. For an agreement signed in September 1993, the Oslo Process (and the so-called Declaration of Principles (DOP) that accompanied it) was already in trouble by November 1993. The Israelis had initially programmed a withdrawal by December 1993 from the southern West Bank city of Jericho as well as from parts of the Gaza Strip. They managed to delay this withdrawal by seven months, thereby putting a lot of strain on the peace process.

The steady building of settlements during the so-called Oslo peace process (the Israelis had initially promised to freeze construction, but then proceeded to enlarge existing settlements as well as even build new units) continued all under the pretext of the concept of natural growth. By 1994, it was quite clear to the Palestinians as well as the concerned world community at large, that no nation or government could or was willing to put effective pressure on the Israelis to stop them building in the settlements, which was in turn, the major deterrent in fostering a sense of cooperation or trust between the Israelis and the Palestinians.

While the first Intifada had petered out by 1993 (a consequence of which was the so-called Oslo peace process), Hamas and Islamic Jihad started its suicide bombing campaign against Israeli targets well within the state of Israel by 1994. This process, that was born of the intense frustration felt by the Palestinian people as a result of the flawed peace process, was capitalized on by Israel to put seemingly never-ending 'security' roadblocks and delays in front of the Oslo process, a procedure that ultimately killed it.¹⁹ Given America's support for Israel, Sabeel called for broadening the scope of the sponsorship of the peace process.²⁰

Given the history of US collaboration and unbiased support for the state of Israel, Sabeel had called for a just peace in Israel-Palestine, one that they did not feel able to ensure in the land under the (then as well as present) stewardship of the US. It was the fears of the consequences of an unjust peace in the region that had forced Sabeel to actively campaign among Western Christians, thereby hoping that raising awareness of the Palestinian and Christian situation among them, would in turn enable them to exert pressure on their church hierarchy and national political leadership to 'facilitate' a just peace process in Israel-Palestine.

Sabeel, through its international bodies such as FOSNA (Friends of Sabeel North America) and other bodies scattered across the mostly Western world, actively endeavoured to engage in international political activism, advocacy and 'behind the scenes' diplomatic work that would seek to make a difference in the lives of countless Palestinians, both Christians as well as Muslim, through the enablement of a just

peace in the region, based on the withdrawal of Israel totally from the Occupied Territories and the establishment of a Palestinian state therein, with suitable attention being devolved to the question of the refugees, Jerusalem, water-sharing and other matters of daily life, interest and consequence in the region.

Through out the 1990s, Sabeel consistently feted outspoken critics of the Oslo Process, such as that most acclaimed doyen among Palestinian expatriate academics, the late Professor Edward Said. His outright criticism of the Palestinian Authority and the 'peace' that it had made with Israel were reflected in Sabeel's oft-expressed fear that the Palestinian Authority might be forced to accept an 'unjust peace' that had been 'attractively packaged by the state of Israel and the United States Government.'²¹

Sabeel felt that any peace that was cut off from international law and was imposed from above would be as in the days of the prophet Jeremiah, a false peace and would not last. Such a peace, Sabeel prophetically declared, would be only momentary and at best temporary, before plunging the region into greater violence and bloodshed.²² Ateek stated that 'if there is no justice, then there can be no peace.'²³ As a Christian organization, Sabeel's duty was to raise their voice and 'appeal to people in power to halt the oppression and constructively use the peace process as an instrument of justice, so that a genuine peace can prevail.'²⁴

One of Sabeel's commitments was to take a stand for justice. Justice alone would guarantee a peace that would lead to reconciliation and thereby peace and security for all the people of the land. Sabeel's prophetic commitment was to stand on the side of justice, thereby opening themselves to the work of peace and henceforth enabling themselves to become children of God as per the Beatitude psalm of Matthew 5:9. Concomitantly at Sabeel, one of their duties was to raise a prophetic voice against the very obvious pitfalls in the path of justice and peace in the Israel-Palestine region.

One obvious pitfall was the ongoing process of 'bantustanization' as well as 'cantonization' going on in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, a process that become very obvious in the present and past decade with the virtual (and since 2007, political) separation of the Gaza Strip from

the rest of Palestine with the takeover there by the militant Islamist faction Hamas. The separation and consolidation of the Gaza Strip under the Hamas regime had admittedly stuck a dagger through the heart of the entire Palestinian statehood project. The political and religious ideologies of Hamas and Fatah as well as their working operandi were too disparate to ever admit a smooth reconciliation between the two movements working together to build a democratic state from the grassroots in what remained of the truncated territory of Palestine. The former was born from the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood and the latter was an inevitable child of Nasserite and largely secular Arab Nationalism. It was now abundantly clear to even the most disinterested observer that Israel did not intend to allow the Palestinians to form a viable and territorially contiguous state in the West Bank, as this would go against their prevailing security doctrine of allowing only militarily weak neighbouring Arab states (the sole exception being the case of Israel's southern neighbour Egypt, whose Sinai desert border with Israel was demilitarised since the Camp David peace accords of 1979).

This doctrine also corresponded to the so-called 'Allon Plan,' which was outlined by the Israeli Labour Government following the 1967 capture of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.²⁵ The main emphasis of this military-strategic plan was a recommendation for Israel to maintain overall control over the West Bank as well as the Jordan River and Dead Sea region. An added emphasis was on building and maintaining a series of security and agricultural settlements in the Jordan River valley that would ensure Israel's military and security control of this vital border region. The plan also advocated control over the fertile southern Palestinian region of Hebron as well as sections of the so called Judean Highlands where the important West Bank aquifers and water reserves were located.

The Allon Plan recommended significant settlement building in the East Jerusalem area as well as in the parts of the West Bank that had been added to the new Israeli expanded post-1967 Jerusalem municipal area.²⁶ Successive Labour administrations in Israel had followed through with the recommendations of the Allon Plan, building their strategic reserves and settlements in broad accordance with the

provisions of the plan. The Oslo Accords and their subsequent interpretations can be defined from this point of view in line with this plan of ensuring an over 50 per cent Israeli control over the West Bank. As a result of all this, Sabeel does not envision Israel allowing the Palestinian people and their so-called Authority to have any more than 'autonomous' rule in the West Bank, or at most a semi-state, shorn of most of the sovereign attributes of an actual state.

Sabeel had consistently lobbied against such an outcome, preferring the, as yet, unrealized concept in the Middle East of two sovereign and fully democratic states, Israel and Palestine, existing side by side to each other. Sabeel envisioned a sovereign Palestinian state on something like 23 per cent of the territory of historic Palestine, including all of the present West Bank and the Gaza Strip as well as East Jerusalem, all territory in short defined as illegally occupied by the Israelis under international law. They also advocated an evacuation of most of the present Israeli settlements in the West Bank, without distinguishing between the so-called legal and illegal ones, as concurrent in official Israeli terminology and discourse.

Sabeel had suggested that one way of utilising these 'evacuated settlements' in a future peace settlement would be to house the Palestinian refugees that hopefully would return to the Palestinian state. Sabeel advocated that this could constitute part of a hypothetical scheme of proposed Israeli reparations to the Palestinians. All land seized from Palestinians by Israelis during their long and still ongoing occupation of the West Bank, must be compensated by them. Those Jewish settlers that choose to remain in the settlements, resisting evacuation to Israel, must become Palestinians citizens, living under Palestinian sovereignty.

As an outcome of a proposed peace treaty between the Palestinians and the Israelis, Sabeel envisaged both Israel as well as the proposed Palestinian state inevitably becoming interdependent economically, as a result probably because of the large amount of primary manpower available on the Palestinian side as juxtaposed with the superior economic, agricultural, technological and manpower coordination (managerial) skills available with the Israelis. Sabeel maintained that this alone, while being far from the ideal solution, would see an 'acceptable

justice' carried through that would leave most Palestinians compliant for the sake of 'peace and prosperity.'

Sabeel felt that such a Palestinian state would be in consonance with most UN resolutions passed on this issue since 1967, thereby enabling this state to get the support of the international community as well. Sabeel controversially stated that such a formula would give the Palestinians, 'a state as sovereign as Israel,' thereby ridding them of the Israeli occupation and restoring to them the whole of the occupied territories of 1967. Sabeel also demanded that the US (as the wealthiest and most dominant concerned international Party in the Middle East today) as well as the international community compensate the Palestinian people for their 'historic' compromise in being willing to accept a state on just 23 per cent of the territory of Mandate Palestine, instead of the approximately 43 per cent allotted by the UN in 1947.

Sabeel and by extension, Naim Ateek, had never really shifted from their vision of two mutually 'sovereign' states of Israel and Palestine entering into a confederation or even a federation with neighbouring Arab countries such as Jordan or even Lebanon and where Jerusalem becomes the federal capital. While entertaining the above vision, Sabeel also did not shirk from declaring that the best 'vision' and ideal solution for the Israel-Palestine issue would be the creation of a 'bi-national' state (as was the system during the British Mandate) in the region that would see the people of the Palestinian Territories and Israel live under a constitutional democracy that would guarantee the rights of all without discrimination. The Jerusalem Sabeel document's 'vision for the future' concluded with the statement, 'one state for two nations and three religions.' The document also reminded us that for any solution to succeed, the principle of justice must be upheld at every turn. Justice must be rendered and security achieved in equal measure for a viable and enduring solution to be achieved. This alone and nothing else would enable a permanent peace between Palestinians and Israelis.²⁷

The One-State Solution

The best way to solve the Palestinian issue had always been the main dilemma of strategic planners and political activists worldwide, as well

as obviously in the very region of the crisis. The preferred solution of most Palestinian people, historically, was the one-state solution, but only if the state under discussion was a secular democratic one of all its occupants. The present Jewish democratic nature of the state of Israel was certainly not acceptable to the majority of the Palestinian residents of the region. This was also one of the main fears of the Zionist dominance of the state of Israel. A one-state secular democratic nation was not acceptable to the majority of the Jewish residents of the state of Israel, if that means losing the essentially European Ashkenazi (Eastern European) Jewish identity of the state.

Palestinian Christians, in general, had never hidden their preference for a single united secular democratic state in Israel-Palestine as the ideal solution to the vexed conflict issue. They had held on to this dream, despite being rebuffed from both sides in the dispute, the Israeli Zionist angle as well as the religious Muslim Palestinian establishment, that had sought to emphasize the Muslim credentials of any future Palestinian state. A secular one-state solution was seen as the necessary security buffer to the existence of the Palestinian Christian community as a small and embattled 'minority within another minority' community in the region.

In fact, it could be argued that it was the realization of the purported 'death' of the one-state solution that propelled certain politically aware Palestinian Christians to launch Christian-Muslim dialogue institutes and liberation/contextual theology centres that would act as the necessary points of dialogue and understanding between the two communities as well as interested Westerners and others. Both Ateek as well as Raheb had written nostalgically in favour of the one-state solution as their 'dream' solution to end the conflict. Ateek had gone further ahead than Raheb in envisioning a 'federated united states of the Holy Land,' a regional entity combining most of the states of the fertile Levant, in what would initially at least be an economic union of independent states (like the European Economic Community (EEC), the precursor of today's European Union (EU)). Ateek had taken time out in his speeches to reiterate his as well as the preference of the PLO for a single bi-national state in Israel-Palestine. He had also acknowledged that it was very unlikely that such a state would be accepted by

the Jewish majority of Israel, as their desire as per Zionist format had always been to strive to preserve the Jewish majority in Israel.²⁸

Zionist organizations as well as those politically aware Westerners that support the state of Israel in its present albeit secular 'Jewish' form had strong reservations about the work of Palestinian liberation/contextual theology centres that sought to ultimately work for the 'preferred' option of a one-state solution in the region. In the US, the premier and oldest running liberal Jewish watchdog against discrimination and anti-Semitism, the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) had criticized Sabeel's role in propagating the one-state solution. The ADL had particularly criticized Sabeel's penchant for a one-state solution to the Israel-Palestine imbroglio, which they view as impractical or 'irrational and impossible,' as it goes against classical Zionist dogma of a Jewish 'Israeli' nation in the erstwhile British mandate of Palestine.²⁹ As was seen earlier, the ADL had charged Sabeel with encouraging hostility towards Israel with its support of policies like divestment. The Judeo-Christian Alliance named two individuals, both PCUSA mission workers who had worked and campaigned for a single state in Israel-Palestine.³⁰

Christian Zionists accused Ateek of campaigning for a new national state in Israel-Palestine that would subsume the present Jewish state and create a new state that would have no Jewish majority in it. This would be going against all experiences of Westerners in general, who had been used to living in states of their own making, and where one particular ethno-cultural group was predominantly in control and in the status of a dominant majority.³¹ Sabeel's Christian-humanistic vision of a single bi-national state for Palestinian Christians and Muslims as well as for Jews had made it a pariah in the eyes of the Zionist world.

Sabeel and Human Rights

Sabeel had consistently stood up for human rights and had won plaudits from the majority Muslim community for doing so. Sabeel's appeal had always been its home grown nature. During a period when to be Christian in the Middle East, was in the general Muslim public eye

to be somewhat suspicious and unpatriotic, Sabeel in Palestine stood for justice and peace, and positioned themselves as vital advocacy and campaigning tools with the West, a group that could be relied on to convey the right Palestinian nationalistic views to their Christian and other contacts in the European and North American nations, whose stand in the international arena was most crucial to solving the Israel-Palestine issue.

The older MECC had, by contrast, been unable to gain the support of the Palestinian Muslim elite, probably because of its largely Lebanon and Cyprus-based centre of activities. Mention was made of earlier of the so-called 'Christians for Palestine' conference that was held in Beirut, Lebanon, in 1969. This was the period when the Palestinian national movement in exile, led by the PLO was in the ascendant in the Arab world and especially in Lebanon and Jordan. The conference was addressed by many leaders among the Palestinian nationalists such as PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat, Kamal Nasser (PLO spokesman and Christian, assassinated by an Israeli hit-squad in Beirut in 1972), Dr. George Habash (again Christian head of the PFLP) and others, including many Lebanese 'Arabists,' committed to a secular democratic vision for Palestine. The World Student Christian Federation (WSCF) supported this conference as well as the Antiochian Orthodox Church in Lebanon.

The Lebanese 'Arabists' (the term Arabist was used in the context of Lebanon, with its strong voice, particularly among the Maronites, that sought to negate the Arab heritage of the country, instead seeking to emphasize the Phoenician and thereby Greco-Roman origins of the Lebanese people, and in particular, its Christian segment) were possibly epitomised by the career of the former director of the WSCF office in Beirut, Gabriel Habib. He, in common with other Middle Eastern and Levantine Christians had been strongly influenced by Arab nationalism and in his later and influentially lengthy role as the founding general secretary of the MECC, sought to propagate his vision of engendering Christian support, both native as well as external, for the purpose of enabling a vital secular democratic movement within the various Arab States (and in particular those with significant Christian minority populations, such as Lebanon, Syria, and Egypt).

Sabeel's and Ateek's vision of a future Palestinian state is in essence, a localised vision of what men like Habib, and Antiochian Orthodox bishop Georges Khodr were articulating in the 1960s and early 1970s in Levantine Lebanon and Syria.³² Sabeel took note of other international agreements that needed to be respected, should the conflict in the Middle East be brought to a suitable and honourable end. This included the Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination; the Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; the Convention on Civil and Political Rights; the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment or Punishment; and the Convention on the Rights of the Child.³³

Sabeel's justification for the acceptance of a broad range of 'Western' origin human rights agreements stemmed from its Christian faith. Human rights, Ateek argued, were grounded in the command to love God and neighbour. Exegeting the story of the Good Samaritan, he argued that the Samaritan can be seen as an allegorical representation of a modern day Palestinian while the Hebrew robbed and left to die on the road quite aptly corresponds to the persecuted European Jews in particular who sought refuge in Palestine from the later nineteenth century onwards, a process that was accelerated as a result of Russian pogroms against the Jews as well as the later rise of National Socialism in Germany, which culminated in the Holocaust and the subsequent establishment of the state of Israel in 1948.

Further, human rights were grounded in the divine love shown in cross and incarnation. This divine love for human beings grounds human dignity.³⁴

Again, Ateek found in the doctrine of creation, a basis for the unity and equality of all human beings. 'They were born in the image and likeness of God. This meant that regardless of race, colour, ethnic background, language, sex, creed, social or economic status, they were all born in the image of God, and, therefore, entitled to freedom and equality. In Acts, Peter discovered in the house of Cornelius that 'God shows no partiality, but in every nation

anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him' (Acts 10:34–35).^{*} Ateek stated that,

When we remove the different masks which we had accumulated over the years, the masks of ethnicity, nationalism, sectarianism, denominationalism and all other masks, underneath it all is a human being created in the image of God. This is the great common denominator. This common humanity is God's gift to all of us. Its dignity and worth had been affirmed, as mentioned above, in, through, and because of the Incarnation.³⁵

Ateek called for all religions to review their faith because 'any doctrine that tends to infringe on human rights cannot be of God.'³⁶ 'It was important to point out that the dynamic tension between 'divine' and human rights was not yet over.' He wrote,

Those of us who live in the context of the Israel/Palestine conflict can testify to this. Many Israeli settlers show greater interest in what they call 'divine rights' than human rights. In their tenacious hold on 'divine rights,' they had no qualms about infringing upon the human rights of Palestinians. They look to certain passages in the Bible as divinely allotting the whole land of Palestine as an eternal inheritance to the Jewish people. Therefore, if the implementation of this mandated 'divine right' happens to infringe upon the human rights of Palestinians, so be it; since in the final analysis, they believe that divine rights take precedence over human rights.³⁷

Ateek argued that the United Nations Universal Declaration on Human Rights (UDHR)^{**} was not only an expression of what the

^{*} All quotations in this paragraph were from the NSRV of the Holy Bible.

^{**} Available at <http://www.un.org/Overview/rights.html> or at <http://www.unhchr.ch/udhr/lang/eng.htm> which was the official UN website for the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

United Nations had been able to produce in the post-War era, but also a document that honoured God and stood at the centre of God's concern for all people.³⁸

Sabeel and Women's Rights

Ateek had long compared the situation in Palestine to that in South Africa, in that what is actually happening in Palestine was apartheid and racism. In the early days of Sabeel which corresponded to the early days of South African liberation, there were frequent contacts between Christian groups from both countries as well as groups of Palestinian Christian women who visited South Africa. These were the heady days of the peace process when it was assumed that a full Palestinian state was just round the corner. As a prominent Palestinian Christian organization and indeed one that stood for liberal Western values in opposition to the conservative values of traditional Palestinian society, Sabeel gave a lot of importance to women's rights. One of the founders of Sabeel was herself actively involved in the Palestinian women's movement as well as in the drafting of the Palestinian Women's Charter which called for equality for women in all spheres of public and private life including law, economy, education, development, politics, civil and family life, culture and religion, health, and the media.³⁹

The Charter, which was published in 1994, was drawn up by a coalition of fifty six women's organizations which formed a coalition in 1989 with the aim of drawing up such a charter of rights of Palestinian women to be included in a future constitution of a Palestinian state. In the Palestinian context, the first draft of the 'Basic Law' which was commissioned by former Palestinian President Yasser Arafat to serve as some sort of temporary constitution (till the drafting of a future permanent one, once statehood had been achieved), made no mention of Women's Rights, at all. As a result of widespread protests, a later draft guaranteed equality for women in the 'public' sphere, thereby acknowledging that the 'private' sphere would be controlled by traditional Muslim '*Shari'a* law.'⁴⁰ Mention was made of the fact that 'no law or legislation would raise the status of women to full personhood

unless changes occurred in the mentalities as well as natures of men and women.⁴¹ Interestingly, the document mentioned all the relevant international and UN conventions on human rights, except the 1979 UN Convention on Women's Rights, thereby opening the drafting team as well as their superior authorities to accusations of bias and prejudice against women.

Christian women, as a result of their superior position in the Palestinian stratum, in relation to educational accomplishments as well as general liberal attitudes, had been in the forefront of campaigning for 'equal rights' for Palestinian women along with other Muslim women from liberal backgrounds. However, as Arafat made it clear to a women's delegation that met him, he could not take on the Islamic conservatives, even if he wanted to.⁴² This was in the context of the main rival to the PLO in the Occupied Territories being the Hamas and Islamic Jihad Islamist movements. Any concession in the field of women's rights would be seen as surrender to 'Western' cultural forces and would be immediately capitalized on by the Islamic opposition.

Sabeel and a Christian Theology of Islam

Sabeel viewed Christianity, and in particular Middle Eastern Christianity, as falling in the middle of Judaism and Islam. Middle Eastern Christians were culturally Arab.⁴³ What was perceived as being Muslim and Arab culture today, was Christian and Arab centuries before the arrival of Islam in the Levant.⁴⁴ Muslims and Middle Eastern Christians (with the exception of those Christians that had accepted Western evangelical traditions) had refused to engage with Judaism, both believing that their respective faiths had superseded the Jewish religion.⁴⁵ On the contrary, in the West today, Christianity and especially the politically influential and increasingly predominant evangelical Christian movement, had sought to engage with Judaism and the Jewish people to such an extent that some forms of western Christianity (such as the Zionist Christians) seemed to be admixtures of the two faiths to the extent that they can no longer be called Christian in the orthodox sense.

Ateek called for the Eastern Church to develop a theology of interaction with both Judaism and Islam.⁴⁶ As Palestinians who had to stay in the Middle East along with large Muslim co-nationalists, there was a great need on the part of the Palestinian Christian as well as Muslim community to learn to understand as well as respect and live with each other. Muslim tolerance of Christians and Christianity could not be restricted to the Western pilgrims and tourists that flock to many Middle Eastern states to visit Holy Sites, Roman-Byzantine ruins or to just relax at the coastal resorts on the Mediterranean Sea. Levantine Christians had been in the region since the establishment of the Christian faith in the first century CE.

While many excellent Western theological treatises as well as political dissertations existed on the state of Islam as well as the Muslim people, Ateek felt that work on cross-religious dialogue and multi-faith understanding must be done by Levantine or Palestinian Christians. A new practical theology of interaction must be developed that took into consideration issues of real life that affected both faiths and people.⁴⁷

Ateek wrote,

We (the Palestinians) need a theology (of interaction with Islam) that would ultimately express itself in real life situations rather than formal dialogue: a theology that can begin with practical issues and yet move to the more religious and theological: a theology that had practical implications as, for example, cooperating in the realm of human rights, and move on to share our understanding of the sovereignty of God; a theology that moves beyond co-existence and solidifies the relationship between us as equal citizens of the same land and people: a theology that helps us emphasize our common Palestinian heritage and our common nationality: a theology that capitalises on our common struggle for political freedom and independence and the unique contribution which each of us had given towards the achievement of this common objective.⁴⁸

Ateek was careful to insist that dialogue with Islam should not be at the expense of one's own faith nor should Christians negotiate based

on any sense of inferiority vis-à-vis Muslim people. Both faith groups were facing the same problems in the Middle East today and even countries that were theoretically independent (such as Syria and Egypt, with long histories of Muslim-Christian inter-living) were facing a lot of pressure from the West to change their mode of government as well as internal market dynamics. Ateek raised the pertinent issue of the large numbers of Christian schools in Palestine that could be used as a dynamic to effect change in the minds of both Christian as well as Muslim youth.⁴⁹ Tolerance, he argued, must be built on knowledge rather than on ignorance.

We must help our (Christian) students to mature in the understanding of their Christian faith, as well as understand and respect Islam. We must help our Christian young people to shed any inferiority complex they might had. We must insist, for example, that our understanding of God as triune is not a clever Christian philosophical way which the early church concocted in order to cover up or explain away a dilemma of the relationship between Christ and God. We believe in One God, but this One God is triune in his essence and being. This is the living faith experience of our forefathers and foremothers. It is the heart of our understanding of God in and through Christ. We say this clearly and unashamedly.⁵⁰

The worldwide resurgence of militant Islam as well as Western efforts to contain it had led to wars and unrest in different parts of the world. Palestine had its fair share of radical Islamic parties such as Hamas (Islamic Resistance Movement) as well as Islamic Jihad (*al-Jihad al-Islami*). Both were more known as active militant organizations, though Hamas had an active political wing that now dominated the Palestinian political spectrum in the Gaza Strip after falling out with the main Fatah political formation in the West Bank. Christians were understandably suspicious about the ultimate aims and objectives of these organizations, especially vis-à-vis the Christian minority in Palestine. Do these groups subscribe to a medieval Islamic vision of minorities under the concept of

‘dhimmitude?’⁵¹ From a Christian point of view, it would be difficult to stay in a nation that sought to impose the *Sharia* law as well as practising religiously motivated discrimination against its minorities.

Sabeel’s Theology of Engagement with the State of Israel

Sabeel, as a Palestinian Christian organization, tried to maintain an active interaction with the state of Israel, employed Palestinian-Israelis among its staff and also sought to engage in dialogue with sympathetic Jewish Israelis from across the Jewish and international spectrum. At the same time Palestinian Christians had always been a minority. Ateek wrote,

At times, the Palestinian Church and community was oppressed by the state, at other times it had enjoyed special status and privilege. At still other times, it was merely tolerated. Under Israeli rule, the Church was generally treated as an integral part of the Palestinian people. Except for some expatriate Christians who at times enjoyed certain protection and some privileges, most of our people suffered as Palestinians with the rest of the community. We did not escape the confiscation of our land or deportation, incarceration, or at times the desecration of our Holy Places, etc. For Palestinian Christians, the state of Israel was the occupier of their land, usurper of their human and political rights, oppressor and de-humaniser.⁵²

While he called for peace and reconciliation with Jewish Israelis, Ateek also insisted that a suitable dialogue with the state was established that took into account the historic wrong done to the Palestinian people in the state of Israel. He called for challenging the whole history of Zionism as it stood today and even called for a rewriting of the history of the state of Israel.⁵³ Palestinian theology had to insist on the right of Palestinians to repatriation or compensation. Ateek wrote,

It [PLT] had to challenge the unjust laws that had been enacted by the state in order to control and subject the Palestinians.

It must be a theology that expresses the arrogance and built-in discrimination of the state.⁵⁴

In occupied Palestine, the Church in many cases also doubled as an employer trying to provide suitable employment that would ensure that people could remain in their place of origin. At least three quarters of the resident working Christian population of the Palestinian Territories were employed in either the Church or related Christian social service and aid organizations.⁵⁵ Thus, the Church found itself fulfilling functions which ought to be undertaken by the State. Ateek acknowledged that the Church had to continue this work whilst maintaining a prophetic role and a relationship of constant dialogue with the state. Ateek stated,

At all cost, the Church must retain its independent voice and continue to champion the cause of the poor and oppressed. In this way it maintained its servant role in society, and follows in the footsteps of its Lord Jesus Christ.⁵⁶

The Palestinian Jesus: Using Crucifixion Imagery Amidst Accusations of Deicide

As a manifestly Christian organization, Sabeel had sought to use the figure and life of Jesus Christ in its work. As a mainly Middle Eastern Christian group, Sabeel had sought to emphasize the humanity as well the divinity of Jesus, possibly in reaction to the excessive emphasis on the divinity of Christ, that had historically been the case in the Churches and sacred liturgies of the region. Just as Christians worldwide had sought to relate personally as well as collectively as a church and a community to the sufferings of Jesus, both at the hand of the Jewish authorities as well as at the hand of the imperial power Rome that finally crucified him, so also had Sabeel sought to relate and compare the Palestinian experience and in particular the Palestinian Christian experience to that of their Lord.

A popular part of the Sabeel conference-witness visit circuit was the famous replica pilgrimage of the 'Contemporary Way of the Cross,'

which had also been billed by Sabeel as a 'liturgical journey along the Palestinian Via Dolorosa.'⁵⁷ The aim was to take Western tourists-pilgrims along a journey somewhat similar to the age-old practice of walking the Via Dolorosa in the Old City of Jerusalem and its immediate precincts, a practice undertaken by Christian pilgrims to the Holy Land for almost two millennia. The reason was to educate Westerners, in particular, to the realities of life in East Jerusalem and the Occupied Territories, especially the situation among the Palestinian residents of these areas. Ateek had long emphasized in his writings, the persona and the paramount message of Jesus Christ, as the sole passage by which Palestinian Christians can mediate the dangerous shoals and struggles that they face in their life-journey in the land of Israel-Palestine.

Ateek was criticized for over-emphasizing the human identity of Jesus, and in particular, the purported Palestinian identity of Jesus as a Jew living under the occupation of the Roman authorities.⁵⁸ Ateek's emphasis of the Palestinian identity of Jesus was criticized as reducing his Jewish identity. As Vanderbilt New Testament scholar (and practising Orthodox Jew) Amy Jill-Levine stated,

Any writing that separates Jesus and his first followers from Jewish identity, associates these proto-Christians with the Palestinian population, and reserves the label 'Jew' for those who crucified Jesus and persecuted the church is not only historically untenable but theologically abhorrent.⁵⁹

She went on to quote certain statements made by Ateek that compare the crucified Jesus to the present Palestinian situation as a people under occupation. For Jill-Levine, the comparison is exaggerated and inappropriate. In an obvious reference to the militant Palestinian Islamist groups like Hamas and Islamic Jihad that had actively promoted suicide-bombing as a legitimate revenge tactic against purported Israeli aggression, she stated,

Jesus did not advise his followers to blow up Romans (and Ateek is not advising his followers to blow up Jews, but by lumping

all Palestinians into one category, he risks that impression); Palestinians had not been sentenced to destruction.⁶⁰

Jill-Levine critiqued a later quotation by Ateek, in which he made reference to the inclusivity of Jesus' humanity and message, such as 'a commitment to the poor, a commitment to the ministry of healing, a commitment to justice and liberation of the oppressed, a commitment to jubilee which involves economic justice for all ... words ... (that) ... constituted a paradigm shift at the time of Jesus, and they (Jesus' ministry) ... provide(s) us with the basis of a paradigm shift for ministry in the twenty-first century.'⁶¹ Jill-Levine accused Ateek in this context, of seeking to negate Jesus' Jewish faith and background (rooted in the Old Testament Mosaic Law as well as prophetic heritage to take care of the poor and the oppressed), as a result of this view. She also implied Ateek's tendency to slip towards an approach to the Bible, and particularly the Old Testament that seemed remarkably similar to that of the 'heretic' Marcion.⁶²

Jill-Levine went on to state that 'any prejudicial commentary that divorces Jesus from Judaism and then uses the story of Jesus to condemn all Jews was not a "Christian" message. It was rather a recycled anti-Judaism that depicted Israel as a country of Christ-killers.'⁶³

The use of Christian and crucifixion imagery had emerged as a major issue of contention between Palestinian Christian groups and their supporters on the one hand, and Jewish and Christian right-wing and conservative groups on the other. Even some liberal Judaeo-Christian theologians (as seen above) had joined the bandwagon of calls against Sabeel for pursuing the use of such imagery that recalls the (in their eyes) historic charges of deicide against the Jews (as was practised in Europe during most of the past two millennia). The ADL had raised the issue of Ateek's comparison of the Palestinian people to the 'crucified Jesus' and comparison of the Roman crucifiers to the present-day state of Israel. In their view, this was just another way of raising the old historical charge of 'deicide' against the Jewish people.⁶⁴ In short, the ADL implied that Sabeel was anti-Semitic, despite the fact that the organization, at least in Israel-Palestine, claimed to speak for a manifestly Semitic Arab people.

The ADL was particularly irritated by Ateek's comparison of Jesus Christ's struggle against the authoritarian forces represented by the Jewish-Herodian-Roman ruling elite in Palestine, two thousand years ago, with the British-Zionist imposed 'evil' domination of the Palestinians over the last hundred years.⁶⁵ One of their key objections against Sabeel was the organization's patronising of noted anti-dispensationalist theologians like the British Anglican Stephen Sizer, who was seen as a leading proponent of the theological substitution of Jews with Christian believers, as God's 'chosen' people. Zionist groups in the West, such as the Judeo-Christian Alliance criticized Ateek's reception by the United Church of Christ (UCC) in the US.⁶⁶

Zionists accused Sabeel of promoting an old Christian viewpoint, which was their obsession with the so-called 'Jewish sin' that led to the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. They also pandered to common Arab obsessions about Jewish power. They accused Ateek of ignoring issues dealing with Palestinian society in particular and Arab society in general in his speeches. They also accused him of ignoring the role Muslim extremists had traditionally played in the Middle East in driving away Christians and making the region more and more mono-religious, with the exception of the state of Israel.⁶⁷

Zionists accused Ateek for falling into the trap of blaming Israel as the sole culprit in the fate of the Palestinian people today. And they claimed that Palestinian Christians led by Ateek did not show any concern for Israeli victims of Palestinian suicide attacks. Christian Zionists believed that Churches that support and encourage Ateek and his organization risked losing credibility with their own members as well as with the American people. The Judeo-Christian Alliance accused Ateek of denying the right of the Jewish people to have a state of their own in the Middle East. Invariably, it was Ateek's biblical imagery about Israeli policies towards the Palestinian people that raised the hackles of the Zionists.⁶⁸ In many ways, Ateek was turning the tables on Israeli Zionists as well as Christian Zionists who had created an entire Jewish victimhood industry based on their own appropriation as well as deification of the Holocaust experience.

Christian Zionists were continually incensed by Ateek's insistence on using 'crucifixion imagery,' to describe Israeli 'occupation' activities

in Palestinian Territories. Ateek was blamed for the UCC adopting anti-Israel resolutions at the Church's General Synod in July 2005.⁶⁹ Church sources sought to explain Ateek's use of biblical imagery to his commitment to liberation theology. It's also the use of this kind of imagery as well as the Sabeel campaign over divestment which had attracted the wrath of a good segment of North American organized Jewish society. Ateek was essentially portrayed as having resurrected the old 'blood libel' against the Jews and having applied that to the modern state of Israel.⁷⁰

The UCC supported Ateek, especially over the 'imagery' controversy. Peter Makari, Executive Director for the Middle East [UCC as well as Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)] stated to a Jewish newspaper in Boston in July 2005 that he was, 'sure it's not referring to deicide. Ateek is a theologian, so it's natural that he'd draw on biblical texts, and he's speaking from a context of occupation. Here we're not in a situation where we always understand the reality in which Palestinians were living.'⁷¹

Another UCC church official had raised the point in support of Ateek that as Christians, it would be impossible to ignore the Christian imagery of the Cross and Christ's crucifixion on it, as this was the only way that Christians could relate to their own personal suffering as well as to the sufferings of other people.⁷² Ateek was accused of pandering to the 'demonization' of Israel and Jews which routinely took place in the Arab media both in Palestine as well as in the Arab world at large. His crucifixion imagery was portrayed as being the Christian equivalent of Jew-baiting in the Middle East.⁷³

Ateek himself had publicly acknowledged the deep support that the UCC had bestowed on the work of Sabeel in Jerusalem. The UCC had sent two mission workers to the Sabeel centre in Jerusalem. Christian Zionist groups like the Judeo-Christian Alliance clearly made a distinction when they attack Palestinian Christians like Ateek. They emphasized the 'corrosive' impact that he left on the local churches like the UCC, while being very careful to portray them as being 'innocent lambs' led astray by 'evil' Palestinian Christians. The activity of the mission website of the UCC and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), known as the Common Global

Ministries Board, in publishing Sabeel policy statements, had come in for a lot of censure on the part of the Christian Zionists.⁷⁴

Christian Zionists led by organizations like the Judeo-Christian Alliance had been leading a fight to get mainline American churches to deny statements made by Ateek at various conferences and assemblies. While the UCC had acknowledged that they were in a partner relationship with Sabeel, they also acknowledged that no move had been made to censure the remarks of Ateek.⁷⁵ Ateek himself insisted that as a Christian, he had every right on earth to use Christ-imagery in portraying the travails and struggle for survival of the Palestinian people in their present context of oppression and displacement at the hands of the Israelis.⁷⁶

Use of 'Liberation Theology' in the Politics of the Israel-Palestine Struggle

Pro-Zionists often blamed the particular 'liberation' theological orientation followed by Sabeel as the main 'poison' behind the group's increasing support among liberal mainstream Christians in the West. As one particular critic of Sabeel claimed,

Sabeel is not a peacemaking organization, but a group that offers a false moral narrative of Arab innocence and Israeli malevolence to churches in the U.S. Sabeel's big lie is that Israel can single-handedly end the violence against it through concessions and peace offers to those vowing the destruction of the Jewish state. History had proven such narratives false. Some may find it tolerable to see Christian scriptures used as a weapon against the Jewish State and its people. They may find it tolerable to see Christian institutions used to broadcast a false moral narrative about the Arab-Israeli conflict. As a Christian, I object.⁷⁷

Again responses to this statement had varied with some responders trying to draw a difference between organizations like Sabeel and churches in the US which were portrayed as being innocently unaware of the dangers posed by association with individuals like Ateek. The

response among Western Zionists to Ateek's campaign against Israel as part of his Palestinian Christian identity was one of outrage and disbelief at the manipulation Ateek was capable of, in 'misusing' the Holy Scriptures to the benefit of the Palestinian people.⁷⁸

Christian Zionists as well as Zionist Jews in general, saw the efforts of Christian organizations like Sabeel in the light of efforts to turn the arms of the clock back, as far as Christian theological revisionism was concerned. And they were surprised by the general 'Christian' silence as regards these kinds of statements coming from the Palestinian Christian quarter of Jerusalem. Zionists traced these attitudinal statements to the experience of Jews through out their history in Europe that culminated in the Holocaust.⁷⁹ Some critics saw in PLT nothing other than 'new wine in old wine-skins,' another mutant or variant of a very old theological controversy, that of 'replacement theology' that had haunted and confused the Christian Church for millennia. Replacement theology was the premise that God had replaced the Abrahamic covenantal people, the Jews, with the Christian church that took root among the followers of Jesus Christ. While common to all groups of Christians through the ages, this form of theological thought had a particular resonance among Protestants in Europe, as they sought to claim for themselves a 'chosen status,' that would set them apart from the traditional Catholic Church as well as from the Jews. Christian 'universalism' was always seen as having superseded Jewish 'particularism.' The advent of liberation theology, with its concurrent 'glorification' of the status of the poor and the downtrodden, had meant that there was a surge of interest from a Christian point of view in the fate of 'oppressed' people such as the Palestinians. As a result of the present hegemonic and 'dominant' status of the state of Israel and concomitantly, the Jewish community in Israel-Palestine, the focus of attention among certain mainline Protestant denominations and circles in the West, had gradually shifted towards a concern for the lot of the Palestinian people as the perennially new underdogs of the region.⁸⁰

Ateek's use of the religious-political method called 'liberation theology,' in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, has also been a cause for much contempt, as this method with its overtly Marxist

background and influence, had been discredited after the fall of the Communist bloc in the early 1990s.⁸¹ Some commentators also critiqued Sabeel for not offering any 'liberation theology' style solutions for the problems of Christian minorities in other Middle Eastern and Islamic societies.⁸² For some critics, the comparison between the situation of the Palestinians, whether Christian or Muslim and that of the vast majority of the Latin American population, who were very poor people, systematically and comprehensively oppressed by the relatively small ruling elites within their own societies, was considered inappropriate. The Catholic patrons of liberation theology in its original Latin American framework did not seek to fight for the political independence of the poor of their region. Nor did they seek to replace the rich with the poor. They were genuinely seeking to create a situation where there was a 'new sense of shared communal identity among all the strata in one and the same society.'⁸³

Questions had been raised as to why Sabeel produced so little material in Arabic if it truly was committed to the reforming of Palestinian society from within. Much of the printed material that was produced for Sabeel was meant for Western Christian consumption. The obvious conclusion, said his critics was that Ateek was just trying to 'enlist mainline Churches into the causes of Palestinian Nationalism.'⁸⁴ It was stated that due to the 'oppressive' nature of the Israeli occupation, Sabeel's main point of focus tended to be international observers, rather than the common people of Palestine.⁸⁵ This was strange as Sabeel started out as an organization committed to upholding the values and faith of the Christians of Palestine. Extensive linkages and attention with foreign supporters was deemed necessary when an organization saw its main future in activities that were focused on educating and advocating in the West as regards the situational condition of Palestinian Christians. It was however hoped that PLT of the Sabeel variant did not lose their vital connection to 'theology on the ground' in Palestine, as this would negate the *raison d'être* of the Sabeel movement.⁸⁶

Critics had questioned the relevance and need for a 'national theology' of the type championed by many Palestinian theologians and clerics in the present situational and existential conflict in the region. It

was noticed that the contextualization of Palestinian theology started well before the outbreak of the first Intifada in 1987. The roots of this movement obviously lay partly in the movement towards the indigenisation of the clergy that took place in Israel-Palestine, following the Second World War and even later. The 1960s and 1970s saw the rise to clerical prominence of a select band of 'native' Palestinian priests who sought to restore authority within the Church in the Holy Land, to the hands of the local Christian populace. A kind of ethnic and ecclesiastical-clerical nationalism did play a role in the development of this Palestinian theology of contextualization/liberation.

The Christian critic and theologian Malcolm Lowe had questioned the rights of Palestinian theologians to assume a 'national theology' of their own, one that sought to challenge notions of the inappropriateness of national-centric theologies and religious manifestation in the Western world. In the German context in today's world, Lowe questioned whether it would be possible to talk about a German theology (with all its unsavoury references to the Nazi-period German Christian movement), just as Mitri Raheb, as a Palestinian Arab Lutheran referred to a Palestinian theology.⁸⁷

It was extremely rare to find established mainline Churches that joined the revolutionary struggle.⁸⁸ Palestinian church leaders needed an ecumenical vision to get liberated from the political and theological constraints of their own churches as well as the restrictions of the situation of 'occupation' in which they were placed. Palestinian liberation and contextual theology practitioners as represented by Sabeel's Ateek and the International Centre of Bethlehem's (ICB's) Raheb did seem to be focusing on a state of affairs of liberation that looked beyond the 'temporary' Israeli occupation and sought to remodel the society in which they lived in, especially in the context of their lives as minorities within a state dominated by the Islamic faith, albeit, in its moderate syncretic Palestinian or Levantine form.

Christians in Palestine and Israel had, of late, identified their role as that of pacifiers and advocates for a non-violent struggle in the Israeli-Palestinian context. In this context, Munib Younan, the Lutheran bishop in Palestine, had exhorted the Palestinian people to 'use brains, sanity, dialogue and non-violence as the only way to achieve

the Palestinian goals of an end to the 40-year military occupation and the creation of an independent, viable state living side by side with Israel.⁸⁹ In his view, this was the only way to develop a 'peaceful, non-violent strategy for justice and to build a common vision of a modern, civil, democratic society.'⁹⁰

Sabeel and the Question of Divestment

Many Palestinians, including Ateek, took heart from the divestment process that was critical in convincing the former white minority regime in South Africa that the time of enforceable Apartheid in their country was over. As Oliver Tambo stated in 1987,

Trade and foreign investment had bolstered the apartheid economy and added to the resources which Apartheid State had recklessly wasted in the pursuit of inhuman schemes ... Furthermore this trade and investment had enabled the apartheid economy to fund ever increasing expenditure on the State's coercive machinery which is aimed at internal repression and external aggression; and the flow of technology from outside helps to refine that apartheid machinery and make it more efficient ... These international connections had helped sustain, and continue to sustain the apartheid system.⁹¹

Much the same could be said about the present Israeli state. Drawing the parallel, Desmond Tutu argued that,

Similar moral and financial pressures on Israel were being mustered one person at a time. If apartheid ended, so can this occupation, but the moral force and international pressure will had to be just as determined. The current divestment effort is the first, though certainly not the only, necessary move in that direction.⁹²

Former Cape Town Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu functioned in the honorary post of International Patron of Sabeel since 2003.

This reflected the widely-held belief among the vast majority of Palestinians as well as concerned Israelis, Westerners and those liberally aware South Africans (black as well as white), concerned about the situation in Israel-Palestine, that there was a vast amount of similarity between the situation in the Palestinian Occupied Territories today and what was the situation in the formerly Apartheid land of South Africa.

The UN's special rapporteur on Human Rights in the Palestinian territories, Dr. John Dugard (himself a white South African law professor) had in a UN report published in 2007 (and summarised in a *Guardian* newspaper report of February 23, 2007), made the claim that the situation in Occupied Palestine in certain respects (such as the long-time tested Israeli policy of setting up, declaring and maintaining closed military zones within areas of Palestinian habitation without giving sufficient prior notification to the inhabitants of the affected areas, the sometimes arbitrary policy of house-demolitions carried out under various excuses, the policy of building settler-only roads and again provocatively building and expanding settlements in the midst of Palestinian residency areas, as well as the seemingly ultimate separation policy of encircling Palestinian habitation areas both in the West Bank as well as the entire Gaza Strip with a high 'security wall' that might also double as a highly fortified and sometimes electrified security perimeter), resembled nothing other than the situation in the formerly Apartheid state of South Africa.⁹³

Tutu himself was active on the Friends of Sabeel North America (FOSNA) conference circuit over the past couple of years championing this similarity, and other than former US President Jimmy Carter (whose outspoken views on the conflict situation in the region were familiar, as given in his book *Palestine Peace Not Apartheid* (New York, Simon and Schuster, 2006), the former Archbishop was the most vocal and visible international face championing the discriminatory regime of the Israelis in the Occupied Territories. The American campaign and advocacy branch of Sabeel, FOSNA, had a particularly active portfolio of activities, including the regular and yearly holding of regional conferences in multiple venues (particularly at politically favourable colleges, universities and mainline churches) across the US and Canada,

highlighting the Palestinian human rights situation and the need for a process of selective divestment and boycott therein of North American companies profiting from and trading with either the Israeli state or companies that operate from the occupied West Bank of Palestine.⁹⁴ It was significant in this context that Desmond Tutu was one among some of the earliest liberal activists against Apartheid to champion a boycott of South African goods in the early 1970s, a policy that was never popular and always controversial among liberal whites in the region.⁹⁵

Tutu's and other's stand on divestment was justified in the late 1980s, as the campaign to end Apartheid in South Africa as soon as possible, by any means including violence, gathered momentum (Tutu was also criticized for never apparently openly and publicly supporting the renouncing of violence by African national parties such as the ANC, a policy he believed was born out of the total desperation of the African-origin peoples of South Africa), and simultaneously Western governments, companies, banks and universities started to withdraw from dealing with and investing in South Africa. The value of the South African currency, the Rand, fell steeply during the later 1980s, thereby affecting all sectors of the economy. This along with other local and international factors forced the South African Afrikaner white minority government of F. W. de Klerk to literally bite the dust in seeking negotiations with the African National Congress (ANC) and other parties to the dispute.⁹⁶

It was Tutu's faith in the power of divestment to put pressure on and bring change to his native South Africa that enabled him to take a similar stand on the vexed issue of Israel-Palestine. It was also significant in this context that the South African Council of Churches (SACC), with 26 member churches had endorsed what it called an 'academic and cultural' boycott of Israel in May 2005.⁹⁷

Sabeel's Divestment Strategy

Palestinians of all religious persuasions saw the large scale Western investments in Israel as threatening the establishment of a durable peace. Sabeel was particularly active as regards Western church

divestment in Palestine. The Sabeel statement on this issue stated that,

Earning money through investment in companies whose products and services were used in such a way as to violate International Law and human rights is equivalent to profiting from unlawful acts and from the oppression of others. Investment in such companies can be seen as condoning the harm of innocent civilians under occupation and the illegal Israeli settlement policies that lead to human rights violations. Investment in such companies enables the government of Israel to sustain the ongoing violation of human rights of innocent civilians. Continuing such investments, once the facts were brought to our attention, constitutes deliberate condoning of the evil practices.⁹⁸

As it happened, multinational corporations built franchises in the occupied territories, supply military goods, and provide material for the construction of the settlements and the 'Separation (Apartheid) Wall' between an expanded Israel proper and the much reduced Palestinian areas of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Sabeel therefore urged Churches to boycott or divest from companies that,

1. provide products, services or technology that sustain, support or maintain the occupation;
2. had established facilities or operations on occupied land
3. provides products, services, or financial support for the establishment, expansion, or maintenance of settlements on occupied land or settlement related infrastructure;
4. provide products, services or financial backing to groups that commit violence against innocent civilians; or
5. provides finances or assists in the construction of Israel's separation wall or settlement infrastructure.⁹⁹

The WCC had strongly supported this call and had come in for a lot of criticism at the hands of Jewish-Zionist as well as pro-Zionist Christian groups in the West. The WCC, which had some 347 member churches

in its framework, gave a call in February 2005 to its member churches (and particularly its Western church members) to give 'serious consideration' to withdrawing investments from Israel, as a means of indirect action to put pressure on the Jewish state to end its occupation of the Palestinian Territories. Notwithstanding the fact that the decisions of the WCC were non-binding, the international church body (which acts like a form of United Nations of Global Christendom) had since its inception in 1948 taken a stand against colonialism and racism, possibly a testament to the fact that the group had always included a strong contingent and representation from the Global South and the Third World, where a majority of the post-Second World War world's Christians reside.

Successive WCC General Assemblies as well as Select Committees had passed resolutions in favour of the Palestinian people, particularly since 1967. The Fifth Assembly of the WCC held in Nairobi, Kenya, in 1975, passed a resolution supporting 'the rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination.' The Sixth Assembly in Vancouver, British Columbia, in 1983 called for the establishment of a Palestinian state. The WCC initially like most international bodies welcomed the Oslo Accords of 1993, but had since been very critical of Israel's policy of facilitating peace in the region. The MECC was the regional body of the WCC in the Middle East and naturally the WCC had a policy of listening to the MECC, as regards the critical issues affecting the Christians of the region. The MECC's anti-Zionist stand had therefore coloured the deliberations of the mother-body as well.¹⁰⁰ Sabeel was heavily criticized by pro-Zionist groups as it was perceived as the brain behind the move by Western churches to divest from companies doing business with and profiting from Israeli occupation policies in the West Bank and (formerly) Gaza.¹⁰¹

Ateek appealed to what he calls the 'Ownership Responsibility' of shareholders.¹⁰² The Sabeel statement continued on this issue,

Within the structure of corporations, shareholders were theoretically the true owners of a corporation and were ultimately responsible, legally, politically and morally, for the actions of the corporation, which were done on their behalf, for their benefit and

in their name. No shareholders can avoid legal or moral responsibility once the issue was brought to their attention. If they cannot direct the management of a company to change its actions, they were still responsible for such actions as long as they own shares. When the church controls through its pension funds and investments large numbers of shares, its impact can be significant. When the company is involved in violations of International Law – child labour, pornography, apartheid practices, or settlement building – the owners (shareholders) were morally responsible. To the extent they cannot prevail on the other shareholders and the management to end their evil practices, they must divest and sought other investments that were more in line with their beliefs. Even if such action is numerically insignificant, it is morally essential in terms of the witness of the church itself.¹⁰³

Sabeel sought to relate and equate divestment with the Christian testimony of the church as a community of believers, thereby making it morally imperative on the part of Western mainline Churches to actively engage in the process with regards to Israel-Palestine. For Ateek, 'Morally responsible investment is a Christian imperative.'¹⁰⁴ Western churches such as the Presbyterian Church USA (PCUSA), the WCC, the Episcopal Church USA (ECUSA), the UCC, the United Methodist Church (UMC), the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (ELCA), the Church of England (CofE), and others, had all passed resolutions at their general assemblies in recent years, encouraging divestment from companies that support and profit from Israel's overt as well as covert occupation of the Palestinian Territories. These churches were trying to understand whether they could use the money deposited in their 'pension funds and endowments to exert pressure for peace in the Middle East.'¹⁰⁵

Sabeel had always been quick to dissociate itself from any accusations of anti-Semitism or prejudice against the state of Israel. The Sabeel statement added,

Our call for morally responsible investment is specifically focused on companies directly involved in illegal practices in the

Occupied Territories and not in Israel itself. Sabeel believes that any divestment must be done from moral obligation-the same moral obligation that obliges us to struggle against and separate ourselves from anti-Semitism.¹⁰⁶

Responses to Sabeel's Call for Divestment

Jewish agencies world-wide were quick to focus on Sabeel as the originator of the campaign for divestment. Sabeel Jerusalem as well as their North American support body, FOSNA, had accused their critics of being very well-organized with access to substantial funding so as to conduct their largely media-oriented campaign against them. FOSNA itself had stated that there were over 200 paid staff of Jewish and pro-Zionist Christian agencies working to discredit Sabeel and church divestment action in North America alone.¹⁰⁷ Sabeel had acquired lots of critics among the Western Zionist community, particularly Christian Zionist as well as Jewish watchdog (anti-discrimination) organizations in the US and Great Britain. Accusations against Sabeel and Ateek had ranged from being 'anti-Semitic, anti-Israel, pro-terror, and a roadblock to peace.'¹⁰⁸

Their focus of criticism was particularly directed against the Friends of Sabeel North American branch (FOSNA) which was particularly active in raising funds as well as conducting conferences aimed at portraying the Palestinians as currently, the true 'victims,' in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The ADL claimed that Sabeel or its North American wing 'FOSNA' actively supported the Palestine Solidarity Movement (PSM), which sought to make universities and colleges in the US 'divest' from companies that had business links with Israel. According to the ADL, 'FOSNA' co-sponsored the first national conference at the University of California at Berkeley in February 2002 and its fourth national conference at Duke University in October 2004. Christian Zionist groups often accused Naim Ateek of being the main instigator behind many of the mainline Churches in the US adopting pro-Palestinian standpoints on critical issues like disinvestment.¹⁰⁹

Abraham H. Foxman, the ADL National Director stated that,

The Sabeel Centre had long played a behind-the-scenes role in encouraging churches to adopt divestment as a tool to pressure Israel. Leaders of the mainline Protestant denominations had routinely welcomed Sabeel leaders as guests at conventions and national meetings, and the influence of Sabeel in advocating for divestment is indisputable, however out of sync their rhetoric is with the people in the pews. Sabeel is the engine that is driving the divestment campaign.¹¹⁰

The ADL however sought to differentiate between the attitude of the mainline church leaders in the US and the West in general and the 'people in the pews,' whom they viewed as being largely and from their point of view, 'safely,' pro-Israeli.

Divestment had proved a profoundly difficult issue. The Presbyterian Church (USA), the largest of American Presbyterian groups was one of the first North American church groups to vote for divestment from Israel in its June 2004 General Assembly. The Church held something like \$2.7 million in US Caterpillar stocks. The church thus started off what became part of a greater campaign for selective divestment from Israel. This policy, however, became very controversial within the PCUSA, with the usual significant charges of anti-Semitism being laid against the body, both from without as well as within the body. A subsequent assembly in 2006 significantly modified the terms as well as content of the initial 2004 resolution. The emphasis was stated as not to be involved in divestment from Israel, but on 'corporate engagement.'

The Church charged its 'Committee for Mission Responsibility Through Investing (MRTI),' with responsibility for 'progressively engaging' with companies that they felt were financially benefiting from Israel's occupation of Palestinian Territories. One of the companies so identified by the MRTI was US-based multinational Caterpillar, among others. The MRTI, was involved in the process of 'constructively engaging' these companies, with the purpose of causing them to possibly change their corporate strategies in Israel-Palestine.

The Committee had yet to recommend divestment in the case of any US company, and even should they do so, say in the case of Caterpillar (as the most likely candidate company for divestment), the entire process would require the final seal and approval of the PCUSA General Assembly voting by majority resolution.¹¹¹

The Church of England (CofE) at its General Synod on February 1, 2006, decided by majority vote to (think about) engaging in divestment of church funds from companies that engage in profitable activities in the Palestinian Occupied Territories. Supported then by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, the Synod asked its Ethical Investment Advisory Group (EIAG) to engage Caterpillar Inc. in intensive discussions to determine whether the company had any intention of 'withdrawing from supplying or maintaining either equipment or parts for use by the state of Israel in demolishing Palestinian homes.'¹¹² The overall intention of the Synod was to put pressure on Caterpillar to change its policies vis-à-vis the state of Israel. The Synod, as per the invitation and request of the then Episcopal bishop of Jerusalem, Riah Abu El-Assal, as well as Sabeel Director Naim Ateek, urged the EIAG to visit Palestine and see at first hand the impact of recent house and property demolitions on the Palestinian people's psyche as well as to witness the 'illegality under international law of the activities in which Caterpillar Inc.'s equipment is involved.'¹¹³

The main aim was to withdraw funds from the US earth-moving company Caterpillar who's mighty armoured D9 bulldozers were regularly used to flatten Palestinian land and homes in the Occupied Territories.¹¹⁴ It was a D9 caterpillar that killed the American International Solidarity Movement (ISM) activist Rachel Corrie in March 2003 and this catapulted American churches into talks about divesting from Caterpillar. Caterpillar bulldozers had been used by the Israelis since 1967, in all military-colonisation activities in the Palestinian Territories. These include the demolishing of thousands of Palestinian homes, property, orchards, wells and ancient olive groves. The Anglican Church is estimated to have some \$4.4 million of stock and share investment in the US heavy equipment company Caterpillar.¹¹⁵ On the first day of the Synod itself, the Rt. Rev. John

Gladwin, bishop of Chelmsford and a Patron of Sabeel as well as the then chairman of Christian Aid, made a speech in which he said that, 'the problem in the Middle East was the government of Israel rather than Caterpillar, but that it was vital that the church should invest only in organizations which behaved ethically.'¹¹⁶

However, the Chief Rabbi of Great Britain, Sir Jonathan Sacks strongly condemned the CofE vote on 'morally responsible investment (MRI)' in Israel. This led to the Anglican Archbishop of Canterbury publicly backtracking on his commitment to divestment.¹¹⁷ The Anglican Church in the United Kingdom, however, later quietly went ahead in October 2008 to divest from their £2.2 million stock investment in Caterpillar Inc. The reason for this was stated to be purely economic, partially as a result of the 2008–09 worldwide financial crisis, and in no way connected to ethical or political considerations, based on the use of Caterpillar equipment by the Israeli occupation machinery in the Palestinian Territories.¹¹⁸ The whole debate in Jewish and Israeli media led to the highlighting of the role of Sabeel in the international campaign for divestment. Sabeel in particular was portrayed in *The Jerusalem Post* newspaper as, 'an extremist Palestinian organization that pays lip service to a two-state solution while promoting the "right of return" for all Palestinians, which is a euphemism for the destruction of Israel as a Jewish state.' Sabeel had always maintained the practical necessity of the two-state solution, as well as the 'justice' oriented approach of ensuring the return of all Palestinian refugees to the 'future' state of Palestine.¹¹⁹

Sabeel's activities against Israel were all portrayed as part of the so-called 'Durban strategy' adopted by anti-Zionist organizations and states against Israel, starting from the 2001 Durban 'World Conference against Racism,' where various non-governmental organizations adopted a resolution condemning Israel's 'racist crimes against humanity including ethnic cleansing [and] acts of genocide.'¹²⁰

CHAPTER 5

CONTEXTUAL THEOLOGY IN PALESTINE: THE THEOLOGICAL AND POLITICAL-CULTURAL PRACTISE OF MITRI RAHEB

The previous chapter dealt with some of the main theological as well as political issues affecting the Sabeel Centre for Ecumenical Liberation Theology in Jerusalem as well as its sister support organizations in the Western world. The chapter ended with an attempt to analyse the impact that the divestment debate had made in the West as a part of the entire debate on liberation in Israel-Palestine. The present chapter will seek to analyse the work of the Palestinian Lutheran theologian and cleric, Mitri Raheb. Raheb understood himself as a modern Lutheran theologian, albeit one dedicated to a contextual interpretation of Protestant Christian theology. Like Ateek, his ancestors came from the Greek Orthodox tradition based in the autocephalous Jerusalem Patriarchate. Both Naim Ateek and Mitri Raheb were descended from Greek Orthodox forebears, the father of Naim Ateek being an active member of the GOC in his native Nablus (in the northern West Bank of Palestine). The name Raheb denoted monk in Arabic and itself was a proof of his Orthodox descent. His paternal grandfather was a member of the Greek Orthodox fraternity of

Bethlehem in the later decades of the nineteenth century.¹ Both were led to the Protestant tradition in their youth in response to the perceived lack of Arab nationalism as well as adequate pastoral and spiritual care and attention within the mother GOC of Jerusalem.

Raheb, too, was initially influenced by the evangelical Baptist community in his work, teaching at the Bethlehem Bible College. He pursued his entire graduate and doctoral work in Germany under a scholarship programme of the LWF. His period in secular-oriented Germany in the late 1970s and early 1980s seemed to have deepened his own ecumenical credentials, as on his return he became involved in the ecumenical and inter-faith ministry of al-Liqa, the Palestinian Christian-Muslim faith, culture and heritage group in the Israel-Palestine region.

Raheb was on the editorial board of the bi-annual *Al-Liqa Journal* and was the managing editor during the period from 1992–96. In the early 1990s, he started to branch out on his own, focussing on his own Church in Bethlehem, Christmas Lutheran Church, located strategically close (in Madbasseh Square) to the heart of Bethlehem, Manger Square. He decided to focus on the main revenue and foreign exchange generating venture in the Israel-Palestine region, namely tourism under the guise of pilgrimage. He invested in building a new guest house associated with the Church, and currently run as part of the programmes (the Authentic Tourism Programme) under the ambit of his flagship institution, the ICB (Dar Annadwa Addawliyya).

Raheb and Ateek both thus essentially relied on the same segment of Western population for support, the one appealing to Lutherans, the other Anglicans. Raheb was a regular invitee and attendee at Sabeel Conferences starting with the first one that inaugurated the discipline of PLT on the world-stage in 1990. He had regularly presented on theological and political issues, both at Sabeel conferences as well as others around the world.

Office representatives from Sabeel also regularly participated in the bi-annual ICB Intercultural conference series that focussed on land, people and identity (a series that was projected to run from 2005–15).

A gradual process of growth-separation was visible in the workings of these two organizations, particularly as the ICB and its allied bodies within the overarching *Diyar* Consortium grew larger and demanded more time and attention from their office-bearers. Raheb commented that he felt that the approach of his organization and Sabeel's was different in the sense that Sabeel was totally committed to advocacy, both localised as well as international, as well as clerical and lay outreach endeavours, while the overriding aim of the ICB (and its associates) was to create the physical, material, technological and spiritual infrastructure that would help the Palestinian people to rebuild themselves and their 'nation.' It was probably significant that al-Liqa centre for Religious and Heritage Studies in the Holy Land's Theology and the Holy Land Conference (Palestinian Contextualized Theology Conference, 16th Session), titled 'Any Theological Thought for which Future,' (Bethlehem-Palestine, Bethlehem Hotel, January 16–18, 2009) had a panel discussion dedicated to 'The Palestinian Theological Centres: Their Visions and Possible Cooperation,' featuring all three Palestinian contextual/liberation theology centre chiefs including Naim Ateek (al-Sabeel), Mitri Raheb (Dar Annadwa) and Geris Khoury (al-Liqa). This was the first such panel discussion featuring the three theologians at a public al-Liqa conference.²

Palestinian Contextual Theology: The Roots

Raheb's impulse to create a contextual theology derived from his exasperation with the way Israeli politics as well as Christian Zionism had hijacked Christian theology in the West as well as parts of the East during the period after the Second World War.³ Like Ateek, he was concerned at the way the present Israeli people were identified with their old Hebrew forebears of the Old Testament. This, in turn, was the ammunition that fired the guns of the Christian Zionists, as Ateek noted in critiquing the work of the American theologian, Paul M. van Buren, in his works such as *Discerning the Way*, and *Theology of the Jewish-Christian Reality*.⁴ The present majority communities of the land who were largely of East European heritage were seen as the ancient and historic Hebrew people of the Bible. Palestine's Christian minority

found this attitude very difficult to understand as they viewed themselves as the lineal descendents of the first Judaeo-Christians.⁵ They also found very difficult to accept it when their co-religionists in the West did not recognize them or were unwilling to give them the status that they justifiably felt was theirs.⁶

Palestinian Christians could not understand how the whole context of roughly two millennia of non-Jewish majority presence in the Holy Land could be forgotten or wiped from the slate by Western Christians in their eagerness to rehabilitate a Jewish state of Israel. The 'de-spiritualisation' of the Jewish faith and their re-instatement as a 'people without a land in search of a land without a people,' meant that 'Palestine' could be very conveniently 'de-populated' in the minds of Westerners, given the already widely held views of the Holy Land being a desert populated at the most by a few 'miserable Bedouin.'⁷ The now rejected theology which argued that the church had replaced Israel was replaced, in Raheb's view, by a theology that replaces the Palestinians by the Jewish people.⁸ This looks at the land as being connected only to one people that is the Jews, and not to those who remained there for centuries and might indeed had more Semitic/Jewish roots than most of the Jews imported for demographic reasons from Russia, Ethiopia or India.⁹ This 'replacement theology' provided a theological cover for an ongoing racial replacement policy of the State of Israel. Raheb was obviously referring to Israel's policy since 1948 of reducing the number of Palestinians in the land of Israel-Palestine through any possible means.¹⁰

The 1967 War only increased the 'restorationist' attitude among religiously oriented Westerners who saw the victory that the state of Israel achieved against so-called 'insurmountable' odds, as the proof that the new state was indeed the lineal inheritor as well as successor to the biblical Israel.¹¹ This again was possible by adroit handling of Western media and public relations by Israel's spokesmen both in Israel as well as in the West.¹²

In Raheb's eyes, the Intifada proved the catalyst in modifying the attitude of the world church as regards who was the actual oppressor in the Holy Land. The Intifada also provided the Palestinian Christians of Israel-Palestine with the opportunity to actively participate in the

moral and political struggle for Palestinian liberation, without actually taking up the (possibly more popular option) gun, as was the policy followed by many Muslim Palestinians. The same point was made by both Ruether as well Ateek, as regards the impetus derived to start a Palestinian theology of liberation.¹³ Media images of the Intifada educated the liberal population of the world as to what was actually happening in the Territories. What had been relatively well hidden till then, namely the Israeli oppression of the Palestinians in the Territories, now burst to light in the glare of the television cameras. For Raheb, it now became obvious who was the new 'David and Goliath'.¹⁴

As Zionism arose so, too, did militant Islam which sought to portray the whole land of Israel-Palestine as holy and belonging to Islamic *Waqf* (Islamic Trust land, hallowed by the name of *Allah* Himself).¹⁵ All fundamentalisms were exclusive. Reacting to this, there began a slow movement on the part of many mainline churches to distance themselves from the policies of the state of Israel.¹⁶

'Palestinianism' as an Integral Part of Biblical Interpretation

Raheb believed that only a narrative understanding and vision of the Bible can adequately explain the situation in Palestine today. Scripture must be seen as a set of narratives concerning land, people and identities.¹⁷ Raheb argued that acceptance that the kingdom was not going to come was theologically necessary because it means 'an end... to any exclusive nationalistic narrative with or without its religious packaging'.¹⁸ Henceforth the land (*Eretz*) was understood to encompass the earth, and justice and freedom achieved universal significance.¹⁹ For him 'the whole New Testament is but a collection of narratives that challenge the then existing exclusive national and religious narratives'.²⁰

Raheb wrote,

The New Testament introduces a new lens in that instead of identifying with one people over against the others, which is the traditional way of forming one's identity, it calls to reflect

on the whole process of identification being misleading. It's not by chance that in the first chapter of the New Testament, three non-Israelites were included in Jesus' genealogy. It's not by chance that the narratives of the Samaritans were so widely included, although their narrow national discourse is questioned. It is not by chance that the marginalised sinners and tax collectors were included creating an inclusive community based on social justice. It's not by chance that the three synoptic gospels end with a call to cross boundaries and reach out into the world, a programme which is shown in the Acts of the Apostles, starting with Jerusalem, mentioning both Judea and Samaria as regions to receive the gospel until the end of the earth.²¹

In the Pauline epistles, in his view 'the main issue is the Gospel of Jesus Christ and its implication for the relationship of the Jewish people and the gentiles, as a result of an identity crisis of a Jew from the Diaspora, who came to be grounded in Christ as his home, who divided the wall of hostility creating as a new inclusive community, where 'there is neither Greek nor Jew, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male or female.'²² The New Testament ended then with the vision of a new heaven and new earth with a new people made out of all nations and tribes.²³

At the same time Raheb believed that an understanding of the land of Palestine with all its physical and ethno-cultural diversity, as a result of a varied and highly colourful history, was equivalent to the 'fifth' gospel.²⁴ 'We had to understand the geography and geopolitics of Palestine if we want really to understand its history and the identity of its people.'²⁵ Similarly, the 'Christian' and Palestinian people of the land must be seen as the 'sixth' gospel.²⁶ In his words,

The Palestinian people were an important continuum from the biblical times until today is the peoples of the land and their distinct cultures. Their understanding of the context is important to understand the text of the bible. They constitute another important hermeneutical key to the bible. It's important to listen

to their experience that might prove to be more relevant to our exegesis than that of the Israeli people.²⁷

Raheb's Contextual Theology

Raheb opted for contextual rather than liberation theology, because he regarded the latter as too bound to Western political thought forms and because he wished to relate faith to culture.²⁸ However, the situation he was addressing was one of constant violence and oppression. Like Ateek, he stood for a non-violent approach that would appeal to both Israelis as well as Palestinians, but also for the empowerment of the Palestinian community through contemporary arts-based education that would cater to their most basic needs and cultural aspirations. He opined,

Imagine all of the future artists, musicians, and journalists of Palestine being challenged with all of these ideas and being able put an expression, an artistic expression – for example, with an issue like non-violence – through their art, through their music, through their journalism. This is how we can shape a whole society and community ... reaching out to the children on the street who were throwing stones.²⁹

Raheb felt that for a prospective PCT to be successful, it must be able to clarify its relationship with its own culture. Christian Arabs lived within the context of Muslim-Arab culture. Their survival as a faith in this context was essentially related to their non-confrontational relationship with Arab Muslims as the dominant or majority community. Arab Christians and Muslims had mutually added to their cultural strength and civilization over the centuries.³⁰

Raheb believed that a properly developed contextual theology 'must redefine the concept of religion and give it content.'³¹ Again in the Middle East and elsewhere, people had always been interested in politicising religion to serve their own particular interests. He felt that a PCT properly developed would go a long way towards

countering the unhealthy shift towards religious fundamentalism and isolationism. Raheb's contextual theology was programmed to appeal to all within the Palestinian spectrum irrespective of their religious or ethnic origins. As he put it,

Religion, properly understood, is a positive relationship between God and humans, simultaneously forming the basis for all of a person's relationships to other human beings and to the environment.³²

Raheb was critical of the power-oriented Christianity of the West or the Islamist revivalism of the East that focuses on a God of fire and power willing to fight on behalf of human beings (provided they were on the right side) in the world, when the true faith should direct one to 'the helpless and suffering God; only the suffering God can help.'³³

So in Raheb's eyes,

Contextual theology had to determine God's relationship to humans and to make the position of human beings in religion clear on that basis.³⁴

Raheb raised the important issue about land being not sacred in its own right. Land was only made sacred by the presence of God and this was something that took place only by the blessing of God. It was God who was holy, not land. Land was one of God's gifts to humanity. To please God, land must be shared justly.³⁵ As he put it,

A resolution to the conflict will be possible only when the land is equitably divided between the Israelis and Palestinians. Only in that way can both people live in freedom, dignity and sovereignty. There is therefore a particular relationship between a human being and land: sometimes one must renounce land in order to attain one's humanness; and sometimes one must cling to the land in order not to lose one's humanness. The land was created for humans, not humans for the land; and the task of

every prophetic theology that had justice as a criterion is to understand this and expound this distinction.³⁶

Raheb believed education and training was essential to the development of a coherent contextual theology. The importance of a secular modern western-oriented education could not be underestimated in building a new Middle East as well as a new Palestine.³⁷ He had focused on education and training. The *Diyar* Consortium set up by Raheb defined itself as a 'Lutheran-based ecumenically oriented institution,' committed to serving the Palestinian people from the 'womb to the tomb,' and with a special focus on a cross-section of society, coming from both Christian as well as Muslim backgrounds and from all the regions of Palestine, rural, urban and the refugee camps.

Raheb's self-declared aim, as well as the motto of the ICB, was to motivate the Palestinian people to take control of their lives and future by being proactive and thereby empowering the local community to develop the human resources and artistic talents that would promote the building of Palestinian civil society. He emphasized the contextual nature of the ICB's philosophy which sought to blend 'local sensibilities with a cross-cultural perspective.' Raheb had taken special pains to ensure that the *Diyar* Consortium and the ICB function in as cost-effective a way as possible. His prioritisation of culture had led him to focus on education epitomised in his founding of the Dar al-Kalima (House of the Word) Lutheran School and Academy which was later upgraded and was now known as the Dar al-Kalima College of Higher Education, with its main campus on Mount Murair, along the old Bethlehem-Hebron road. The ultimate aim of this Palestinian institution of advanced training and education was to provide prospective students and applicants with a graduate diploma or degree in contemporary fine art, documentary film making, graphic design, glass and ceramic, and jewellery making. It aimed to 'provide alternative educational opportunities to what already exists at institutions of higher learning in Palestine.' By doing this, it created new job openings and career avenues for Palestinian youth in the Occupied Territories.

Another vital aim was the revival of cultural life in the Palestinian Territories, as well as the 'reshaping of the Palestinian cultural identity that suffered at the hands of the Israeli occupation.' The focus had always been on interdisciplinarity. Raheb was justifiably proud of the fact that his organization had within the relatively short time-span of just over a decade, become the third largest private employer in the entire Bethlehem region, with many staff trained abroad for the purpose of returning to pursue meaningful work in Palestine.

For Raheb, the Arabization of the churches in the Middle East and in particular the Syro-Palestinian Levant, started with the leadership of the Greco-Byzantine (but as yet not the main mother church, the Greek Orthodox of Jerusalem) churches and had now progressively spread to the education sector and also to individual theology, especially in the case of the Protestant churches. He felt that 'Arabization' and indigenisation alone would have the power to bind the faithful to their churches, community, society and state in the long run. Then and then only, would Palestinian Christians be able to reflect on their vision of being a truly liberated and enlightened minority in the Middle East.³⁸ For Raheb, one of the most practical and potent tools to achieve the above objective was through the medium of culture as given below.

Raheb's Cultural Theology and Praxis

Culture had lain at the heart of Mitri Raheb's work in Bethlehem.³⁹ 'Culture,' he wrote, 'is one of the most important elements for people's survival. Under immense constraints and in the most immoral situations, culture is the art to learn how to breathe normally. In contexts of conflicts, people were concentrating mainly on those who "kill the body," but often they forget about those who "kill the soul," i.e. the dignity, creativity and vision of a people. Without a vision, nations "cast off restraints."⁴⁰ Culture is the art for the soul not only to survive, but to thrive. Culture is the art to refuse being just on the receiving end, to resist being perceived only as a mere victim. Culture is the art of becoming an actor, rather than a spectator. It is the art of celebrating life in a context still dominated

by forces of death and domination, an art of resisting creatively and non-violently.⁴¹

Raheb maintained that culture was not something that should be enjoyed only in times of peace. He had sought to convince Western donors that Palestinians need more than 'the crumbs that fall from the Master's (Israel in this case) table.'⁴² For Raheb, 'culture had to do with self-determination. Culture is the place where we determine who we were as we define ourselves and not as defined by others. Culture is the medium through which we communicate what we really want in a language that is different than the political semantics and religious formulas.'⁴³

People were wearied with nationalistic rhetoric. In contrast to this bombast, culture was sacred space. Raheb stated,

Where people learn how to breathe freely in a context where the fresh air seems to be almost already used up. This is why I believe that culture is one of the most important pillars in a future Palestinian state. The role culture will play in our future state is what will determine for many if Palestine is not only their homeland by birth but by choice too. What happens in the cultural zone will indicate the direction Palestine is heading towards: a democratic state where there is not only freedom from occupation but also a state that guarantees legally the freedom of expression and allocates resources to ensure that the cradle of the three monotheistic religions will become a major cultural hub for humanity.⁴⁴

At a time when a wall of separation and apartheid is being built around Bethlehem we were here investing in people who dare to cross boundaries ... At a time when the Holy Land is suffering under the culture of violence we were here to proclaim that the power of culture is what is needed to transform a society and to empower a community ... At a time of destruction we invest in beauty ... At time of bombing and shelling we set new tunes, play new songs of freedom, justice, reconciliation and compassion ... And at time of great tribulations we create room for wellness and space for hope ...⁴⁵

Culture also functioned for Raheb as a point of contact between Palestine and the rest of the world.⁴⁶ This was especially in the context of a very Western-oriented population that had embraced Western norms, values as well as cultural expressions, more or less whole heartedly. He wrote,

Encountering the other is always important in understanding oneself. It is in the light of meeting a different context that one realizes one's own unique context. Culture becomes thus the space where people can meet others and themselves, where they can discover a language that is local and yet universal and where they realize that in order to breathe, one had to keep windows wide open to new winds and fresh air brought across the seas and oceans. Simultaneously, what Palestine needs were ambassadors of its culture who can express the unique spirit of the land and its people. Culture is the means that empowers us to give face to our people, write melodies to our narrative and to develop an identity that is deeply rooted in the Palestinian soil like an olive tree, yet whose branches reach out into the open skies.⁴⁷

Raheb and Holocaust (post-Auschwitz) Theology in the West

As with Ateek, biblical exegesis was an issue for Raheb. It was significant to note in this context that both Jewish rabbi and radical anti-Zionist theologian-academic Marc Ellis as well as American Catholic feminist liberation theologian Rosemary Radford Ruether, both close associates as well as academic and political collaborators with the Palestinian liberation theologians (such as Ateek and Raheb), devoted considerable space towards analysing and critiquing holocaust theologians such as Elie Wiesel, Irving Greenberg, Emil Fackenheim and Richard Rubenstein, among others. Ruether (as a Christian), along with Ateek had dedicated space to critiquing Paul M. van Buren.

Both had critiqued the so-called Holocaust theologians, those who had sought to lay a foundation for better Jewish-Christian relations by advocating Christian repentance for the Holocaust. Raheb went on to study in Germany the 1980s and found that for his teachers, Israel was 'first of all a holy and mysterious people, a suffering people

oppressed by every other people, a people worried about its survival yet miraculously beating its powerful foes.⁴⁸ Of course, his experience was just the opposite, having been born in the occupied city of Bethlehem in the West Bank, eight kilometres away from Jerusalem. In particular, he found himself alienated by the famous biblical characters that he had grown up to love and respect such as Joshua and David. These characters were solely identified with modern Jewish victories. He states,

The Joshua and David so familiar to me suddenly became politicised, somehow no longer seen in continuity with Jesus, as they used to be. They were instead placed into a kinship with Menachem Begin and Yitzhak Shamir (former Prime Ministers of Israel). Their conquests were no longer for spiritual values but for land – my land in particular.⁴⁹

Raheb's identity as a Palestinian in Europe at that particular period in time was constantly being seen in the light of the 'Munich complex' in Germany. Reference here was obviously to the Palestinian terrorist attack on the Olympic village in Munich during the 1972 Summer Olympic Games that killed 12 Israeli athletes. 'The issue was my land, which God had promised to Israel and in which I no longer had a right to live unless it was as a "stranger." The God whom he had had known since his childhood as love had suddenly become a God who confiscated land, waged "holy wars," and destroyed whole people.'⁵⁰

Post-Auschwitz theology became trapped in the image of Jewish perpetual victimhood and refused to consider or even give space to the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people living under occupation either in Israel or in the West Bank/Gaza for over fifty years now.⁵¹

The rising Jewish-Christian dialogue after the Second World War froze out Palestinian Christians. They were branded 'nationalists' and 'non-serious' theologians.⁵² He argued that there was an increasing 'mythologization' of the state of Israel as well as an all-out 'demonization' of the Palestinian people and the PLO.⁵³ Raheb therefore asked,

If post-Auschwitz theology considers how one must speak of Jesus Christ without becoming anti-Jewish, it should in the same breath consider how one can speak of the Jewishness of Jesus without becoming anti-Palestinian. These questions were inseparable.⁵⁴

*Raheb and the 'Fragmentation' of the Worldwide
Christian Community*

Raheb argued that the other side of the 'global village phenomenon worldwide was increased fragmentation and an increased entrenchment of the 'Third World' nations as the 'have-nots.'⁵⁵ He believed that this was due to the skewed power relations in the world today. The Soviet Union functioned within a totalitarian system that oppressed minorities and indeed all who opposed the official communist line.⁵⁶ The post-Soviet world today had evolved from a largely Capitalist-oriented economic control spectrum, where there was a powerful centre that accumulated wealth at the cost of deprivation in the peripheries. A classic example of this was the European community of wealthy prosperous nations. The same was true of the Middle East where you had an economically and politico-militarily powerful state of Israel in opposition to other Arab states that cannot hope to compete with the Israelis at any level of 'western' oriented development. The reasons for the successful economic development of Israel as opposed to that of many Arab states was complex. Arab nations had not industrialised nor been part of the Enlightenment ferment. They had been ruled under a variety of dictatorial regimes and military-backed cliques, making democracy a very distant prospect.

Fragmentation raised the issue of identity. The Israeli-Palestinian context became the conflict between two opposed identities with disproportional power relations. 'The power structures within a context were important in assessing the process of fragmentation. Powerless people were often accused of causing fragmentation; while on the contrary, they were seeking self-affirmation of their identity within the community.'⁵⁷ Fragmentation, Raheb argued, 'is a sign of the 'evil' world and the 'powers aiming at the destruction of a harmonious community that is intended by God.'⁵⁸

The opposite was true also in theological terms when, as Raheb stated,

Fragmentation aims at inclusion, where one's identity is asserted within the community, then it is a sign of the liberation and the empowerment of the people as envisioned by God.⁵⁹

Raheb's Conception of 'Minority Status' in the Biblical Context

For Raheb, the Bible was a book whose main story was about 'minority' communities in the Middle East. The way in which this was understood changed after Constantine. He stated,

The language of love and trust that had been an integral part of Biblical texts in the context of persecution was suddenly transformed into a language of violence and hatred by the new context. The persecuted understand the Bible differently from the persecutors. The powerless interpret it differently from the powerful.⁶⁰

The 'Constantinian' reality that was present in parts of the East through the Byzantine Empire and in the West through the Holy Roman Empire should not divert us from the reality as expressed in the world of God that the Christian faith began as the product of a persecuted minority. Thus understood, the Bible was highly relevant to Palestinian Christians. It had the crucified Christ as its centrepiece and only with this focus can the Bible be understood, interpreted and contextualized in the right and justly way. The reference was obviously to the crucifixion as understood according to the classic tenets of Christian orthodoxy, in that Christ's death on the cross was made in ultimate atonement for the sins of mankind.⁶¹

Raheb's Definition of 'Christian Mission'

Raheb wished to re-interpret mission in the light of his account of fragmentation. He pointed out that the life of Jesus, in particular, was a life dedicated to the inclusion of the marginalised and the downtrodden. Christ went out of his way to interact with the Samaritans.⁶² The author

of Ephesians spoke of abolishing the 'dividing wall' between Jew and Gentile. The redemptive and restorative action of the cross, 'integrates, incorporates and reconciles diversity.'⁶³ As a Christian Palestinian, he was concerned about maintaining the unique individuality of the Palestinian Christians and their ancient Greco-Arab and Christian culture even in a future joint state of Jews and Arabs, but what he took from Scripture was a vision of 'one divine and the new society in which both Jews and Gentiles were united and reconciled without negating the particularity of each.'⁶⁴ The experience of Pentecost showed that the uniqueness of each culture is respected. 'Mission in the context of fragmentation is thereby this authentic and culturally deep-rooted proclamation of the Gospel, which had the power to communicate among people.'⁶⁵

Non-Western churches often labour under the perception that local Christians were nothing but the lackeys of Western imperialists and missionaries. Therefore, the need for a truly contextual theology. 'This process of indigenisation, contextualization, and transformation will be one of the major challenges to mission in the twenty-first century. There is a need as never before for a contextual theology in a cross-cultural approach. A theology that is deeply-rooted in the specific culture, and simultaneously understands other perspectives and contexts and communicates with them.'⁶⁶

In a version of the popular Catholic idea of 'subsidiarity,' Raheb proposed a *via media* between dependence and independence which he called 'interdependency' The only solution for the 'healing' and rebirth of Christian communities is, he argued, their mutual interdependency based on a genuine sense of 'give and take' rather than a centre-periphery dependency syndrome.⁶⁷

Raheb's Critical Theological Concepts: The Bible and Palestinian Christians

Like Ateek, Raheb had to grapple with the issue of biblical interpretation. Whereas Ateek was theologically radical enough to advocate a selective reading of the Hebrew Bible, however, Raheb urged Palestinians to identify themselves with the God of Israel. He claimed that the crux of the Old Testament was to make the knowledge about

a 'Jewish God' available for all people, including the modern day Palestinians. Raheb saw the God of both the Old and New Testament as one and the same God, a God concerned with justice, again an important item on the Palestinian agenda of dispossession from the land on which they were born and had lived for centuries. The only visible difference was that the New Testament God was also a God of grace who came to save all the people of the world and not just the Jewish people. The Old Testament and the New, while describing different eras and periods in human history, were still inseparably interconnected.

The New Testament should be seen as a particular interpretation of the Old Testament. In the Middle Eastern context, the Old Testament was universally acknowledged by Jews and Muslims as part of their Holy Scriptures as well, thereby promoting a key point of dialogue among the three monotheistic communities of the region. Muslims accepted the first five books of the Bible, or the *Pentateuch* (Mosaic Law: *Torah* in Hebrew, *Tawrat* in Arabic) as holy and divinely inspired scripture. They also in like fashion venerated the Psalms of David (*Zabur* in Arabic), as well as the Gospel stories of Jesus (*Injil* in Arabic). In addition, while Muslims might not generally read these books, preferring the Quran above and before all the previous works (as the sole unadulterated content within the divinely inspired literature of the ancients), they did venerate and respect all the Jewish prophets and seers, both major as well as minor as well as Jesus Christ as prophets in their own rite, the last and most prominent of whom was Muhammad, the founder of the only true universal faith (in their eyes) that is Islam. Raheb believed that at least in the Middle Eastern perspective, it should be incumbent upon Christian theologians to focus on the Old Testament, in particular because it was through the Old Testament that Christians can connect to the Muslims and Jews of the region. For Raheb, the Old Testament was also about making the connection between socio-political realities and faith, something that was vital to the existence and survival of Palestinian Christians as a community in the Holy Land.⁶⁸

Citing the context of what happened in the so-called 'new world,' the appropriation of vast tracts of fertile land and the enslavement,

genocidal slaughter and displacement of native populations as a result of Western colonial enterprise, all of which were often justified by the church-sponsored theology of those times as the 'Will of God,' Raheb cautioned the putative theologian to be careful when coming to conclusions about the interpretation of any particular theological texts.⁶⁹ 'One and the same theology can produce contradictory effects. It could mean either salvation or damnation, liberation or enslavement, justice or injustice, peace or war. That is why we must pay attention to the social, economic, and political implications, the motives and interests that play a role in every exegesis.'⁷⁰

Raheb claimed that the Bible was written by his own Hebrew, Aramaic-speaking Semitic, Greco-Roman ancestors. On the contrary, in the West, the Bible was seen as mainly a Hebrew Bible and the Bible of the Hebrew people alone.⁷¹

Raheb's Consideration of the Book of Exodus

Unlike Ateek, Raheb made extensive use of the book of Exodus. He called it 'the most holy book in the Hebrew Bible.'⁷² Raheb detailed how the Exodus story was used in varied contexts in the Bible. 'It was from the context that the prophets determined whether they would apply the Exodus story as judgement, warning, or promise.'⁷³ He argued that given the historic experience of the Jewish people in Europe, in a context of suffering and oppression during and prior to the Second World War and even after that epochal event, their belief in the liberating aspects of God's power as manifested in the Exodus narrative must be respected as, 'an expression of their faith in the God of liberators.'⁷⁴ But, 'experiencing the Exodus is not a permanent guarantee. Just as God entrusted the Torah to the people liberated out of Egypt, so should Israel uphold human right in its dealings with the Palestinians. There is no exodus without justice in the Bible.'⁷⁵

Raheb opted for a direct approach as regards the Exodus conundrum in his premier theological treatise, *I am a Palestinian Christian*. He also opted for an exegesis of the Exodus story that was similar to the way that Christians and Jews had interpreted this story over the ages, and in particular, very similar to the contextual narrative favoured by practitioners of liberation theology worldwide. Raheb clearly

interpreted Exodus as a direct call from God to human beings, 'to follow and to participate actively in the process of liberation.' In this way, Raheb credits God with having founded the very 'first liberation movement on earth.'⁷⁶

Raheb as a contextual/liberation theologian (he vehemently opposed being called a liberation theologian, for fear obviously of hurting the feelings of his more conservative Western supporters, with their inherited notions of liberation theology as a left-wing Marxist-Communist oriented socialist and revolutionary movement in the Latin American backyard of Euro-America) clearly derived significant comparisons between the policies of Ramses II in delaying the departure of the Hebrew people from Egypt to their 'promised land' of Canaan, and that of the present-day Israelis in seeking to delay the liberation of the Palestinians and their consequent establishment of a Palestinian state (that would be independent of the state of Israel, ensuring the free and unhampered development of the Palestinian Arab people in an environment suited to their needs and aspirations).⁷⁷ He saw in Exodus a call to the Palestinian Christian church to act like Moses (did in confronting Pharaoh) in confronting the injustice of the Israeli state. Raheb also sees in the Ten Plagues (Exodus 7–12) that God sent to punish Egypt a comparative reference in modern terms to the efficacy of economic sanctions (as were used against the formerly Apartheid state of South Africa in the 1980s) as a tool of pressure-struggle against the Israeli state in their 'unlawful-by force' occupation of the Palestinian people and their Territories.⁷⁸

For Raheb, the Exodus narrative was not important just for itself, as a description of the liberation of the Hebrews, but because of the giving of the Ten Commandments to them in the Sinai Peninsula. These 'divine' commandments of action, duty and service on the part of the Hebrew people, ensured what they would had to do to maintain the liberation that they had so recently won from the Egyptians. He sought to emphasize the 'ethical consequences' of liberation for both the Hebrew-Israeli as well as the Canaanite-Palestinian people. For Raheb, Exodus as well as traditional Jewish recall of the sufferings of the Hebrew people in Egypt 'as the basis for life in the promised

land could provide an essential starting point for a dialogue between Christian Palestinians and Jews.⁷⁹ Raheb's willingness to use the theological-political narrative of Exodus in a comparative perspective with the present Palestinian situation, as well as his unwillingness to use the Christo-centric hermeneutic preferred by Ateek in biblical exegesis, marked the main theological difference between these two premier Palestinian theologians.

Raheb appropriated the Exodus story for use by Palestinians. He recounted how he paraphrased the entire story of the Hebrews substituting the ancient Israelites with a Bedouin tribe from Canaan-Palestine. Narrating the story this way, Raheb found that his Bible class students were immediately able to identify with the ancient Hebrews as a people intimately allied to themselves, the modern Palestinians in mentality and life experience.

In opposition to Ateek, Raheb opted for the less controversial (in Western eyes), but more radical (from a Canaanite-Palestinian and Arab perspective) course of attempting to co-opt Exodus into the Palestinian Christian as well as national narrative. This probably stands as the most important difference between the theological stands of these two men who were often seen as placed in very similar situations of service, Raheb in the 'still occupied' and blockaded Bethlehem area of the West Bank of Palestine and Ateek in Palestinian East Jerusalem and the Palestinian-inhabited areas of Israel and the West Bank at large.

What we learn from the Exodus narrative was that 'God remains true to the world. God follows what is happening in it. God is sensitive to what can be seen and heard. God is concerned. God knows what it means when a worker is exploited, when someone is deprived of his or her rights, or when children were denied life and future. This God of the Exodus is the God we had come to know in Christ. A God who had himself suffered and therefore suffers with the suffering. A God who as a child had been oppressed by a pharaoh named Herod and therefore is in solidarity with the refugee children.'⁸⁰

The last sentence should be the crux of the Palestinian people's engagement with the book of Exodus given their historic role as a majority 'refugee' stateless people in the modern world. Raheb clearly

identifies with and labels the Exodus story as the first documented 'liberation' movement.⁸¹

Raheb exhorted the worldwide Christian community to, 'be the voice of the voiceless ... to seek out Pharaoh (in this context, the leadership of Israel and the Anglo-American Western world) and talk to him.'⁸²

Raheb compared the 'Pharaonic' policies of Rameses II, to the policies of the present day Israelis under former premier Yitzhak Shamir. Shamir's 'Three No's' stand as regards Palestinian-Israeli relations during the late 1980s, concerning Palestinian self-determination, negotiating with the PLO and no independent state of Palestine were reflected in all the denial politics undertaken by the Pharaoh to prevent the ancient Hebrews from leaving Egypt.⁸³

Raheb included a call to impose economic sanctions on Israel, again reflecting a similar appeal by Ateek, and others, quoting the supposed success of this strategy against apartheid South Africa. Raheb made a direct correlation between the ten plagues supposed to have been sent by God against Egypt and modern-day political and economic sanctions as an effective tool to make the state of Israel obey international law as regards the Palestinians.

Raheb made the point that the ancient Hebrews defeated Pharaoh despite their military inferiority because they had the help of the 'one and only living' God with them. He included a message both to the occupied Palestinians as well as to the occupier Israelis in his discourse on the Exodus. The Israelis should remember that no amount of military superiority can hold their illegal occupation of the Palestinian areas, if they persist in a course outside the Will of God. Simultaneously Palestinians, to achieve and keep their victory over oppression and discrimination must persist in freedom from 'sin.' 'The freedom the Bible speaks of is not just "the freedom of the heart" but an all-encompassing freedom from all sins, be they sins of political oppression, sins of economic exploitation, or "sins of the heart." We apply the biblical concepts of freedom not only to free individuals but also to free societies.'⁸⁴

Raheb urged modern Israelis to remember the time when their 'ancestors' suffered under Egyptian rule in virtual slavery. The historic suffering of the Jewish people, whether in the Orient or in

the Occident, can according to Raheb, be used as a starting point for a 'dialogue between Christian Palestinians and Jews.'⁸⁵ Raheb sees the role of the Church, both internally as well as externally, as concerned with challenging the powers that be to gain freedom for 'oppressed' peoples as well as helping the 'liberated' people to maintain their liberation.⁸⁶

Raheb's Reading of the Prophet Jonah

The First Gulf War proved a happy hunting ground for fundamentalist preachers. As Raheb stated,

The fundamentalists saw this war (the first Gulf War) as a more or less just war willed by God. They were amazed at the accuracy of scripture. It was this accuracy that confirmed them in their 'right faith' and impelled them to become missionaries. They declared that this war was nothing less than the beginning of the end. It was the prelude to Christ's second coming. They drove people to repent, arguing that now their salvation was to be found only with the faithful band of fundamentalists.⁸⁷

Countering this, he appealed to the prophet Jonah who had to acknowledge that the divine mercy is shown even on Israel's enemies. Thus, the 'God who loves humanity cares about Iraq. God is not indifferent to the Iraqi population. God had compassion for that great nation in which eighteen million persons live "who do not know their right hand from their left."'⁸⁸ Raheb asked how many Nineveh's (Iraq) need to be destroyed before mankind can grasp that, 'God's compassion really had no limits that it encompasses everyone, and that no one is excluded from it?'⁸⁹

Raheb's hermeneutic use of 'Law and the Gospel' in Palestinian liberation/contextual theology

Raheb adopted the ancient hermeneutical rule that the Old Testament was patent in the New and the New Testament latent in the Old. Like a good Lutheran, he adopted 'Law' and 'Gospel' as his central

hermeneutical keys. He insisted that 'Law and Gospel were the two sides of the one righteous God. The God of the Bible is simultaneously the God demanding justice and the God promising it.'⁹⁰

Just as Jesus was the righteousness of God and as a result was the central tenet of the scriptures, so also the Christian and scriptural controversy over Justice and a Just God revealed that God interacted differently with the powerful and the powerless. He demanded justice from the former and provided justice to the latter.⁹¹ Raheb applied this concept of 'Law and the Gospel' directly to the Israeli-Palestinian syndrome where he emphasized the importance of paying attention to the 'balance of power' in the Holy Land.⁹²

Raheb felt that the principle of 'Law and Gospel can be readily applied to the situation in Palestine. On the one hand, we had to pay attention to the balance of power. What was often overlooked was that demands were most often made of Palestinians, even though they were the weak ones, whereas mighty Israel is seldom criticized. More often than not, people even justify Israel's behaviour.'⁹³ Raheb insisted that 'Christians had to be in solidarity with those who were powerless, poor and oppressed. This is the way in which Martin Luther's teaching on Law and Gospel attained socio-political significance.'⁹⁴ Raheb recommended that when 'we examine a controversy over justice, we must first take a look at the balance of power, for God deals differently with the powerful than with the powerless. God demanded justice from the former and promises justice to the latter, which is evident not only in Hannah's song (1 Samuel 2:1–10) and Mary's Magnificat (Luke 1:46–55).'⁹⁵

Raheb saw the Holy Scriptures as a 'book about a minority,' in his attempt to link it to the experiences of the Palestinian people. Citing the Old Testament as the 'faith experience of a Jewish minority in a non-Jewish world,' and the New Testament as 'the faith testimony of small Christian communities in a pagan Roman world,' Raheb saw the Word of God as 'a book about persecuted people, written by persecuted people.'⁹⁶ Consequently, he argued that the dialectic of law and the gospel were the characteristics of God and the ways in which God acts towards mankind.⁹⁷ Based on Raheb's work that the whole Bible was nothing but a collection of diverse 'narratives about land,

people, and identity,' as well as 'a series of documents which witness to faith and to the coming of God to mankind,' he argued for a vision of God in which those in power were treated differently from those not in power, thereby demanding justice of the former, while dispensing justice to the latter.⁹⁸

The hermeneutic principle inherent in all this was that when reading the Bible, one must always be careful to analyse any particular statement based on its *Sitz im Leben*, seeking to understand whether the voice heard was that of a powerful or powerless person.⁹⁹ Raheb therefore called for two different yardsticks to be used when judging the Palestinians as well as the Israelis based on their actions, the former born out of deprivation and oppression as the seemingly permanent underdog in the conflict, while the latter's power seemed mostly spent in maintaining its dominance at the hands of the former.

Raheb's Lutheran insistence on the sole efficacy of the concept of law and the gospel as hermeneutical tools in an analysis of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict had come in for some criticism at the hands of scholars and theologians familiar with the conflict at stake. In this context, it was mentioned that 'this hermeneutical method is one among equals, and that it is more appropriate to socio-political and ethical than to soteriological elements in the Bible.'¹⁰⁰ German theologian Thomas Damm referred to God's reconciliation with man as mentioned in 2 Corinthians 5:18 as making it 'not possible for to speak of God's justice as having two aspects of law and gospel when expounding soteriological and eschatological texts.'¹⁰¹ He insisted that it would be better to consider law and gospel as an exegetical tool subordinate to the Christo-centric approach favoured by Ateek as well as also by Raheb.¹⁰² Law and gospel should only be of use in the interpretation of certain passages in the biblical text.¹⁰³

Raheb felt that Biblical concepts such as 'election' and 'promise of land' which had created so much theological controversy in the West and which had been used to annexe, occupy, ethnically cleanse and colonise so much territory in the 'new world,' were themes that should be viewed with extreme caution.¹⁰⁴ These themes when misused had resulted in extreme forms of religious fundamentalism and fanaticism,

with the adjacent attributes of racism, xenophobia and intolerance of anybody or group that opposed the above themes as propagated by the dominant power. These scriptural themes should always be seen as a 'promise' and a 'gift' from God and not as something that should be considered the sole right and ownership of a particular nation, group or tribe. Raheb believed that just as God is on the side of those who stand with empty hands, so also 'Christians' worldwide, whether Western or Eastern should be in solidarity and support with those who were 'powerless, poor and oppressed.'¹⁰⁵

*Raheb's Interpretation of the Concept of 'Election' as
Witnessed in the Bible*

'Election' referred to God's promise in the Old Testament that the 'Jewish' descendants of Abraham alone were the 'chosen' and 'beloved' of God. Israel considered its experience with God to be unique, special, and exclusive, but Raheb applied it to all who see themselves as unworthy, weak and powerless-to those who begin to despair about themselves.'¹⁰⁶

The concept of 'Election' was most applicable when a people were in a defeated and exiled condition. The concept of 'election,' thus applies primarily to Palestinians. Election was 'a promise to the weak, encouragement to the discouraged, and consolation to the desperate.'¹⁰⁷ We learn from Isaiah that the point of 'election' was service 'to the other.'¹⁰⁸ It was God's gift. Paul emphasized in Romans 9–11 that election was solely based on the 'freedom' and choice of God and not on birth or inheritance.¹⁰⁹ Election had to be 'proclaimed, and actualised again and again, depending on the context.'¹¹⁰

Life in the land was contingent on obedience. The Mosaic Law stated that Israel would lose the land if she became disobedient.¹¹¹ Two items of faith in God were emphasized in this context, the need to love YHWH alone and the need to abstain from the taking of innocent lives. Those who violated these commandments need not feel that they may retain ownership of the land.¹¹²

Raheb warned that the 'claim' of election could often be transformed into a dangerous ideology. This had happened in the case of Israel today and was repeated in the case of the other two monotheistic faiths

through the ages. In his view, God's 'election' in the Old Testament never included a nation-state, but was specifically directed at Jewish people. When 'election' became part of the state-ideology that meant danger for those who were 'unelected.' 'We human beings in this world,' he wrote, 'had no business to determine who is or who is not chosen. Separating them is an eschatological matter and is God's business alone (see the parable about the weeds among the wheat in Matthew 13:24–30). This separation cuts right through our own house, so we were warned never to raise election into a claim.'¹¹³ The question continually posed by the Hebrew bible is whether the Israelite state relied on its own power or on God's, and whether it exercised its power on behalf of the poor and the weak or on behalf of the strong and the rich?¹¹⁴

Raheb tried to compare ancient 'divine' promises with modern state realities in arguing that there was no proof in the Word of God that a 'real, existing state (is) viewed as the bearer of that promise.' Raheb related what he saw as a divine hesitancy in naming a King for Israel by God through his prophet Samuel to unwillingness on the part of God to sanction a peculiarly Jewish Israelite state. Raheb took the divine rejection of the concept of Kingship in 1 Samuel 8 as proof that God never intended a formal state, monarchic or otherwise to be formed in the Holy Land.¹¹⁵ The creation of the monarchy was in fact the result of a lack of faith of the Hebrew people in their God, YHWH.¹¹⁶

Raheb shared in a common frustration faced by many Palestinians, Christian and Muslim, when they reflect that the foundation of the state of Israel was readily invested with 'divine' significance by many Christians in the West, but the extreme humanitarian and existential problem faced by Palestinian refugees displaced as a result of the 1948 War that created the state of Israel were not considered from a 'divine' perspective at all. One got the impression that Raheb was confusing the post-1967 fundamentalist protestant movement in favour of biblical prophecy (and its consequent legitimisation of the state of Israel as the divinely sanctioned successor of the ancient Israelite kingdoms), with the early genesis of the state of Israel, which from all accounts, was created (internationally and on the diplomatic scene) through the incessant lobbying efforts of the ZOA – the former

Zionist Organization of America (along with the tactful diplomatic maneuvering of US President Truman by Chaim Weizmann and his other American Jewish handlers).

The end-result of the Holocaust and the Second World War with the presence of the large displaced peoples camps in Europe that needed evacuation on an urgent basis, was no-doubt another reason for the expeditious recognition of the new Jewish state (as no Western state seemed willing to accept more Jewish refugees from the human detritus of the Second World War). A deal with the Israeli Zionists to absorb the Jewish camp residents seemed to have been concluded as part of the Western strategy to recognize the creation of Israel.¹¹⁷ This was not to underestimate the importance of the aid effort mounted in many western countries during the worst period of the Palestinian refugee crisis, an effort that still continues today in the light of organizations like UNRWA.¹¹⁸

Raheb's work at this juncture essentially revolved around an appeal and a cry for fair play and fair treatment for the Palestinians, which must of necessity involve the theological realm as well. Raheb was clear about his blaming of Western Christian theological ambiguity on the Palestinian situation as an issue of fundamentalism, both Christian and Jewish. What Raheb essentially meant in this context, was his reference to a certain fundamentalist vein within Western Christianity (as well as by obvious inference, within Western Judaism), whereby Palestine was conveniently equated with the Roman Palestina of the Jesus era (or the Canaan-Israel-Judah-Palestine of the earlier 'Jewish' period, without any inference or reference to what had transpired in that land over the last two millennia, with the rooting of a native non-Jewish Christian as well as Muslim people in that land. He discussed that the main danger about fundamentalist religion was its ignorance of world history at large and its excessive and sole focus on a particular historical epoch and 'spiritual' revelatory era as the supreme and primary goal of human life on earth.¹¹⁹

Raheb and Israeli 'Election' Today

Raheb argued that the modern state of Israel had a major problem with the concept of 'chosenness' in their state theology. The state theology of Israel was often defined as Zionism, a largely secular (with

the exception of the large Orthodox Jewish component within Israel) atheistic Zionism, that often celebrated the religious festivals of the Jewish world, from a cultural point of view and without any particular resonance in the spiritual realm. Faith, theology and ideology were all thus reduced to a question of political expediency and Zionism became just a political tool to maintain European or Ashkenazi Jewish majority rule in the former Palestinian state of Israel. Shemaryahu Talmon, Professor of the Hebrew Bible at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, had argued that 'Judaism must reject the dogma of election insofar as it does not mean serving and being different, but instead means being superior.'¹²⁰ Agreeing with this, Raheb argued that military might could not be a sign of election. On the contrary, abuse of power would harm Israel.¹²¹

Raheb viewed Israel's relationship with the Palestinians as the test-case of how Israel understands her 'election' as a 'claim' or a 'promise'.¹²² He also viewed this as a test-case of whether a 'second South African situation' would be created or rather 'continue' to be created in the Holy Land.¹²³

Like Ateek, Raheb resorted to the minor post-exilic prophets to prove his work that God is a God of all and not just for one people or race. Both appealed to Amos, but Raheb appealed especially to Jonah.¹²⁴ In his 2008 book *A Palestinian Christian Cry for Reconciliation*, Ateek too turns to Jonah as a character whom he portrayed as the first Palestinian Liberation Theologian.¹²⁵

The politics of the First Gulf War seemed to imply a theology of election:

So Iraq had to be destroyed, for only one Nation had the right to be powerful in the Middle East; only one nation is allowed to be equipped with weapons of destruction; only one nation is permitted to occupy territory-Israel. Could this be a new version of the election of Israel?¹²⁶

Reflecting on election Raheb wondered whether it would not be 'theologically possible for Jews, Christians and Muslims ... to remember their common roots as well as their future in the patriarch of faith

Abraham, and so urge their people to respect and cooperate with each other in order to share in the blessing of Abraham.¹²⁷ He wrote,

The Israel of which I dream is an Israel no longer seduced by the voices of false prophets, meaning that it no longer clings to dreams of a Greater Israel and no longer acts like an expansionist colonial power in the Middle East, and the Palestine I see before me is a Palestine that does not allow any Arab or Western state to determine its future. A Palestine that had learned that history cannot be reversed, and that Israel is an apart of both present and future history. The real security of both peoples can only be guaranteed by a just peace. Without peace there is no security and no survival.¹²⁸

Raheb argued that there must be an acknowledgement of the dual nature of occupancy of the land of Israel-Palestine.¹²⁹ Historically there had always been more than one people in historic Israel or Palestine. Palestine was often invaded, but never had any invaders been able to completely homogenise the territory. There had always been enough diversity either for a rebellion or for another invader to try his hand at re-subjugating the people. However powerful Israel as a nation and an entity is, it would be impossible for it to subjugate the region completely. 'It (the Holy Land-Palestine and Israel) had to be shared between two peoples in two independent, yet interrelated states.'¹³⁰ 'It is now time to think of transforming the enemy into a neighbour (Luke 10:25–37). Palestinians and Israelis need to discover the humanity of the other. Reconciliation was the possibility to move beyond the concept of "winning the war" and into "winning the enemy" – that is, to transform each other into a potential neighbour. Our role as Christians is to restore justice by ending the Israeli occupation and to work for peaceful coexistence of two people and three religions in two states.'¹³¹

Raheb and 'Land' in the Bible

Raheb, like Ateek, argued that the land of Palestine-Canaan was not the sole domain of the Jewish people, as inherited from God. He questioned the necessity of taking into consideration the different interpretations

and connotations applied to the state borders of the ancient state of Israel. Raheb found discrepancies in the way borders were represented in the Bible. He rejected conventional Jewish-Christian as well as literalist interpretations of the Old Testament in this regard, arguing that there was no conclusive proof that God ever intended a particular set of borders to stand as fixed for all-time in history.¹³²

Raheb's problem was with the Biblical references that detail ancient Israelite territory as divinely mandated to stretch from inside the present borders of Egypt into the Syrian heartland and present day Lebanon. Allied to these common Palestinian and Arab apprehensions, was Israel's long history of attacking and occupying over long periods, vast swathes of neighbouring territory in the fertile Levant. Raheb gave a very 'conservative' definition for the 'river of Egypt' referred to in Genesis 15:18, one that most 'literalist' readers would define to be the Nile itself. He argued that this river actually referred to the 'Arish Wadi,' a now dry river bed between historic Gaza and the 'eastern border' of the Nile delta.¹³³ While Genesis 15:18 gave broadly corresponding borders for ancient Israel's southern and northern borders, the eastern border was not mentioned at all. Raheb acknowledged that the borders named in Genesis chapter 15 were those of the reign of Solomon, when the ancient Israelite empire was at its greatest.¹³⁴

Numbers 34:2–13 gave one of the most detailed descriptions in the Holy Scriptures as regards the extent and territorial border delineation of the ancient Israelites as revealed by God to Moses. The southern borders were mentioned as again running from the Mediterranean Sea through the western end of the Sinai Peninsula to the southern end of the Dead Sea. The northern border of the ancient Israelite state takes all the territory of the present state of Lebanon as well as the eastern border to include Damascus and a large part of the Jordan.¹³⁵

Most of the modern-day argument about 'Eretz Yisrael,' had uncritically accepted this maximalist definition for the territorial borders of the present day 'state of Israel.'¹³⁶ Obviously this was problematic for Palestinians and other Arabs and Palestinian Christians. Raheb argued that these borders as represented in the Bible actually do not represent 'reality ... but later visions.'¹³⁷ Raheb cited Joshua 13 as well as 1 Kings 1 to show that the ancient state of Israel always

had variable borders that were not necessarily 'historically accurate'.¹³⁸ Raheb felt that the fact that ancient Israel never had fixed borders should persuade the present state of Israel to be satisfied with the land that it had since 1948. 'Should the present state of Israel appeal to the borders of the empire of David and Solomon (which lasted only 40 years), or to those established by Joshua, or to those of the Northern Kingdom or of Judah?'¹³⁹ Raheb argued that

Every work that clings to an exclusive 'Greater Israel' or 'Greater Palestine' should be rejected as a fanatic and extreme ideology. Like it or not, the fact is that there were two peoples living in the geographic territory of Palestine, and their fates can no longer be separated. For God's sake, for the sake of humanity, and for their own sake, Israel must not cling to a Greater Israel. An Israeli claim to all of Palestine is impossible on the basis of either ancient or modern history. Meanwhile, a large number of Palestinians had declared their readiness to share the land with the Israeli, so that the Jewish people persecuted by the whole world can had a homeland. The Land happens to be the homeland of two peoples. Each of them should understand this land to be a gift of God to be shared with the other. Peace and the blessing on the land and on the two peoples will depend on this sharing. Only then will the biblical promises be fulfilled.¹⁴⁰

He cited Hans Küng here to the effect that in the matters of the political borders of a modern state, a division must always be maintained between socio-folkloric 'national ideology' and 'divinely mandated revelation.' God does not require modern Jewry to defend borders that may have been defined by God millennia ago.¹⁴¹ Raheb also argued that non-Jews were allowed to live or were tolerated in Old Testament Canaan.¹⁴² He used Ephesians 2:19 to argue that Christians had a divine right to be in the Israel-Palestine.

Raheb followed the Ateek line in his reading of the Promised Land. He cautioned against reading the prophetic books literally. According to Raheb, the 'contextual' theologian, reading the Bible to see proof of prophecy in modern political happenings and recent episodes

in history is to risk giving up classic 'biblical scepticism, as a tool of theological study.' He was very critical of the speed with which Western theologians had fallen for seeking Divine revelation and Will in the establishment of the modern state of Israel.¹⁴³

Raheb argued that many of the promises in the Bible, made in the Deuteronomistic or Prophetic tradition were not actually meant to be realized in real life. Rather, they were 'words of hope to a people who were weak and stateless.'¹⁴⁴ Raheb saw the fulfillment of these divine promises as an 'act of God' and a miracle. He felt that the fulfillment of divine promises should be left to divine providence and people should not take it into their heads that they can play a part in the manifestation of divine promises.¹⁴⁵ Like Ateek, Raheb cited Leviticus 25:23 to argue that the land belongs to God and that those who dwell in it were nothing 'but aliens and tenants.'¹⁴⁶

Raheb was prepared to accept the immigration of hundreds of thousands of European Jews to Palestine as an expression of their faith in the Old Testament promise of the land of Palestine to the Jews. He was equally adamant that this should be seen as a testimony and an expression of their faith in God alone. Raheb supported a 'spiritualised' concept of the Jewish ownership of the land of Palestine as a present of God in eternity to the ancient Hebrew people. Present-day Jews, as the spiritual inheritors of the ancient Hebrews can claim the land based on God's promise to their father Abraham in Genesis 12:1–3. However those Jews who come to Palestine must be willing to accept the rights of the previous residents in that very same land, the Arab people of Palestine. The problem with Zionist Jews as well as the present state of Israel was that they were unwilling to accept the reality on the ground in Palestine, and were trying to create another state-sponsored reality of their own in the very same space.¹⁴⁷ Raheb pleaded that Jewish (and Western Zionist Christian dispensationalist) beliefs about the land, must be seen in the context of the over 40 years of Israeli occupation of the West Bank and the steady confiscation and eating away of Palestinian land. He issued a call for faith to be linked to justice.

Raheb does acknowledge the need to have a strong state in order to deter enemies but, in the Hebrew bible, 'The king of Israel is subject to the law of God; obedience is demanded from him, and

justice is expected. He repeatedly warned against relying solely on power, on army and weapons. (Deuteronomy 17:14–20; 2 Samuel 23:3; Psalms 33:16–18; Psalms 147:10f). The prophets were assigned the duty of watching over him (1 Samuel 15; 2 Samuel 12:24f; 2 Kings 1). Individual kings were rated according to their obedience to these laws.¹⁴⁸ Disappointment with monarchy led, he argued, to hopes for the future and the supersession of ‘nationalist’ definitions of kingship to one that was all-embracing and sought to portray God as the God of all beings.¹⁴⁹

The new king ‘will not judge by appearance or hearsay; he will judge the poor fairly and defend the rights of the helpless. At his command the people will be punished, and evil persons will die. He will rule his people with justice and integrity.’¹⁵⁰ The emphasis here was on a God-king, ‘who will rule justly and wisely and in whose time there will be “peace without end.”’¹⁵¹ Therefore peace can be interpreted to mean peace in a global sense, world peace. Post-exilic definitions of peace invariably meant peace among all people and men, and were not primarily or necessarily only focused on ‘peace in Israel.’¹⁵²

Raheb argued that the arrival of Jesus Christ as the messiah was never predicted in the prophetic scriptures with any reference to the establishment of a temporal state on earth.

Raheb agreed that,

...today’s state of Israel is a political necessity, given the history of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. If this more or less secular state wishes to be respected, it must comply with international law and allow itself to be measured by it. Its ties to Judaism cannot free it from this duty. Rather, these ties increase its obligation.¹⁵³

Raheb seemed to almost quote from Ateek’s work about the theology of post-Auschwitz Holocaust theologians like Paul van Buren when he referred to the common systematic error that many of these ‘Western’ theologians made in refusing to give any relevance to the non-Jewish occupants of the land. Many of the Holocaust theologians were actually

writing to justify the creation of the state of Israel as a modern-day refuge for the Jewish people who had been displaced from Europe and elsewhere in the Arab-Islamic worlds. Raheb ended his book *I am a Palestinian Christian*, by trying to relate the teaching of Jesus to key experiences in the life of an average Palestinian in his interaction with the state of Israel. Raheb was clear that as Palestinian Christians, the duty of him and his congregation and the Christian community at large in Israel-Palestine is to love their neighbours, the Israelis and Jews as well as fellow Palestinian Muslims. However, this does not mean that as Christians, they should sit back and accept injustices. In this sense, Raheb, like Ateek, holds out for non-violent resistance as the sole course to be opted for by the Christians of Israel-Palestine. He commented,

God forbids us to shed our enemy's blood. But God also summons us to resist our enemy, if that enemy attempts to shed the blood of our neighbour. We do not want to kill our enemy, but we will not let him kill our brother or sister either. Loving one's enemy without resisting him would be a cheap, abstract, and treasonable attitude. But to resist without loving one's enemy can be inhuman, brutal, and violent. The one without the other would violate divine and human rights. But if we can endure the tension, both love and resistance offer the only way out for us Christians.¹⁵⁴

Raheb sought to understand what the Palestinian people had gained from the first Palestinian Intifada in the concluding chapters of his book, *I am a Palestinian Christian*. He enumerated the loss of fear for the Palestinian people vis-à-vis the Israelis as the major achievement of the Intifada. While the intifada was in public eyes, a very violent contest between two very unequal forces,

Never in their history had the Palestinian people been more ready to resist as in the Intifada. At the same time, never had so many Palestinians talked with Jews and Israelis as during the Intifada. The Palestinians had thus shown that they can still forgive the enemy and regard the enemy as a creature of God, despite the injustice done to them.¹⁵⁵

Raheb sought to conclude his book, much in the earlier mode of Ateek, with a call to justice for the Palestinian people. He treaded a very fine line here between loyalty to his ethnic Muslim brethren on the one hand and the spiritually much more important commitment of Palestinian Christians vis-à-vis their need to 'love their enemy,' lest they make the mistake of falling into hatred and racist ideologies. This was a dilemma faced by Christians not only in Palestine, but in many areas of the Middle East and the world in general, where one's loyalty to the principles of one's faith often puts one in conflict with one's co-nationalists. 'Criticism of Israel,' he said, 'must always include self-criticism. That can occur only when faith hones one's conscience and love guides one's reason.'¹⁵⁶

Raheb's book ended with his 'dream,' a pragmatic conclusion to the seemingly insoluble Israeli-Palestinian problem. His conception of the 'two-state solution' was not the rigid political formula that the words imply, but actually a vision of:

Two equal peoples living next to each other, coexisting in the land of Palestine, stretching from the Mediterranean to the Jordan. These two peoples had learned to share this small strip of land. They had allowed themselves to be convinced that their destinies can no longer be kept separate and that the only possibilities that had were common survival or mutual destruction.¹⁵⁷

Raheb also reflected Ateek's concluding vision in his book, *Justice and only Justice*, of a United States of the Middle East, a regional commonwealth where all the states while essentially sovereign and independent, would still be linked by indivisible economic bonds. Raheb provided a very visionary conclusion to his chapter, predicting happenings that were still far from being consummated. Raheb predicted that the end-result will be what is mentioned in Micah 4:1–3 where the prophet talks about the time when God will again establish Jerusalem as the capital of all the nations and the entire world will look to Mount Zion as a place of wisdom and peace in an era without war.¹⁵⁸

CHAPTER 6

PALESTINIAN THEOLOGICAL PRAXIS IN CONTEXT: AN ANALYSIS OF THE APPROACHES OF ATEEK AND RAHEB FROM A COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

This concluding chapter deals with the different approaches that the PCT movement ‘al-Liqa,’ the liberation theology movement ‘Sabeel’ and the intercultural movement ‘*Diyar*’ consortium have taken towards resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, given their similarities as well as divergences in the light of the intersection between theology and politics. The contextualization of theology and politics in Palestine has been a long story, especially in the light of the tortured history of that nation in world affairs.

Palestinian Christians have long been controlled and influenced by Western Christendom and it was only in the middle part of the last century that a so-called ‘contextualization’ movement arose among them that sought to place the culture of the Palestinian people right at the centre of their faith and practice. This chapter has sought to show how Ateek and Raheb’s work in Jerusalem and Bethlehem respectively had an impact on Palestinian society, irrespective of party religious affiliation, as they sought to bridge the secular-religious divide within

their own society. Ateek was a 'liberation' theologian and Raheb was a 'contextual' theologian in their own words, both seeking to relate their theology to practice, so that an effective praxis-oriented political and cultural milieu was created, within which the Palestinian Christian population could live and function.

Al-Liqa, Sabeel and Dar Annadwa

Al-Liqa had its origins in the early 1980s, when a group of Palestinian scholars and theologians associated with the Tantur Ecumenical Institute for Theological Studies, midway between Jerusalem and Bethlehem, decided to withdraw from the centre and form a dialogue centre of their own that would be able to focus on the all-important issue of Christian-Muslim relations in the Holy Land. Al-Liqa has since its inception focused on this theme as well as on research into the heritage and culture of the Palestinian and Levantine Christian Arabs. They mainly fulfilled their role through the conducting of yearly and bi-yearly conferences on the two above themes as well as one-day workshops, seminars and symposia directed mainly at the native Palestinian and Christian population of the West Bank, Jerusalem and the state of Israel. Al-Liqa was also actively engaged in publishing mainly in Arabic for domestic consumption as well as in English and Italian for external consumption.

Sabeel had its origins in the period immediately prior and during the First Intifada when there were concerted calls on the Christian community in Israel-Palestine to respond to the continued Israeli occupation of the Palestinian Territories, either in a violent or non-violent framework.¹ It originated in the commitment of Pastor Ateek to develop a Christian non-violent theo-political approach towards the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, one that sought to distinguish itself from the more Islamist-oriented and militant approach of the Hamas-Fatah movement in those days.² Sabeel had focused on community development from its earliest days, trying to play a part in the development and rebuilding of Palestinian society, fragmented and broken by over forty years of Israeli occupation of the Palestinian Territories. This fragmentation and destruction of Palestinian communal life was

further accelerated by the negative impact of the First Intifada and all the post-Intifada security measures put in place by the Israelis.

The ICB or Dar Annadwa Addawliyya had its origins in the outreach ministry of the Christmas Lutheran Church in Bethlehem, a process that really started after the Rev. Dr. Mitri Raheb assumed the pastorate of the church in 1988. He sought to renovate and re-employ some of the empty rooms and buildings that surrounded the church and convert them into revenue-generating institutions, thereby contributing to the renovation and regeneration of the region. One of the first projects undertaken by Raheb with the full support of the Lutheran Church in the Holy Land along with other interested donors was the establishment of the Abu Gibran Guest House right in the heart of the Old City of Bethlehem, next to his own mother church, Christmas Lutheran, in 1992. This also coincided with what was known as the Authentic Tourism Programme in Bethlehem, an initiative to get tourists to come again to the city and to enjoy the traditional hospitality of the Palestinian people.

The establishment of the ICB followed in 1995, which coincided with the first international and intercultural conference organized by the centre. Raheb also emphasized the importance of internationalist collaboration. Many of his projects were accomplished with the help of Western support, both political, financial and humanitarian aid, directed towards the welfare of the Palestinian people, both Christian as well as Muslim. In 1998, Raheb founded the *Dar al-Kalima* Model School, which became part of the network of Lutheran schools in the region. A notable achievement was the high participation of Muslim students in the rolls of the school. The ten-year period from 1999–2009 saw a frenetic pace of activity at the ICB with the launch of *al-Kahf* Gallery and Arts and Crafts Centre in 1999, followed by the Bethlehem Media Centre (2003), the *Dar al-Kalima* Health and Wellness Centre (2003), and finally the *Dar al-Kalima* College in 2006. That year also saw the official launch of the *Diyar* Consortium that was intended to bring all the varied activities of the Bethlehem centre under one organizational roof.

The ICB, also known as Dar Annadwa Addawliyya (the House of Worldwide Encounter) had a number of other initiatives other

than those mentioned above. These would include the Bright Stars Programme focused on pre-school and early primary school children in the Bethlehem region, the *Ajyal* (generations) programme that focused on community care for the elderly and *Azwaj* (couples) group programme that focused on young couples and families. The ICB itself was housed in a landmark Bethlehem building abutting the Lutheran church that once comprised part of the old Lutheran School in the Old City. This was transformed into the *Ad-Dar* Cultural and Conference Centre, an impressive centre built through a generous donation from the government of Norway. This building was significantly damaged during the April 2002 Israeli siege of Bethlehem and had to be restored and partially reconstructed.³

Raheb had thus sought to ensure the grassroots appeal of his organization and that its activities benefit the maximum among the most vulnerable sections of the population in the occupied West Bank. His holistic 'cradle to the grave' approach was designed to benefit and appeal to a wide cross-section of the Palestinian populace, irrespective of religious and socio-political orientation.

Relevance to Palestinian Christians

Palestinian Christians were a small 'minority within a minority' in the Israel-Palestine spectrum. They were often perceived as a somewhat 'embattled' minority, given their propensity to migrate in search of greener pastures abroad. One of the purposes of Ateek, Raheb and al-Liq'a's theo-political as well as cultural endeavours in the region was to seek to give a 'voice to the voiceless,' to ensure that the ecumenical Palestinian Christian voice did not go unheard in the general cacophony of competing forces and influences in the region. While Sabeel started out initially as an organization dedicated to educating the 'Christian' West about the situation on the ground in Israel-Palestine, it considerably diversified its activities over the years, as its popularity and support base, both political and ecumenical as well as financial, within and outside the Israel-Palestine region increased. Sabeel benefitted from the ease of access that Israelis as well as Palestinian residents and citizens of the state of Israel were allowed in the occupied

Palestinian Territories, a situation that radically changed during and after the first Intifada.

Ateek himself sought to apply strategies and policies learnt during his youth pastoring depleted Christian communities within the state of Israel, during the 1960s and 1970s, a situation that forced him to seek to build up an ecumenical framework of collaboration between the different Christian churches and communities in the area. He carried this process on in his work as Canon in charge of the Arabic-speaking congregation in the main seat of Palestinian Anglicanism in Israel-Palestine, St. George's Cathedral in occupied East Jerusalem. Raheb, while younger than Ateek, had a similar ecumenical-oriented experience, both in his early life in the occupied West Bank town of Bethlehem as well as later when he went abroad to Germany for higher education.

Post-Intifada, the new and fractured situation in which Palestinian Christian communities found themselves in the region, because of the travel and other restrictions imposed by the Israelis, meant that there was a lot of scope for ecumenical as well as inter-faith activities. Its essentially Western-oriented approach has meant that Sabeel has made ecumenical endeavors between Palestinian Christians and Westerners as well as localised encounters between the various Christian churches and communities in the region their prime goal of activism. Sabeel's ecumenical counterpart in the West Bank town of Bethlehem, al-Liqa, while having substantial internationalist activism, has made inter-faith encounter in Israel-Palestine their main plank of activity. *Diyar* has made educational and cultural endeavor among Palestinian youth of all groups and faiths the main thrust of activism, while ensuring that the mainly Lutheran world in the West was well aware of the ecumenical and internationalist implications of their work in the occupied West Bank of Palestine.

The Value to Muslims

Has Palestinian liberation/contextual theology anything to offer in the largely Muslim environment in Palestine today? Obviously, this question was a sub-set of the more general question as to the importance of minority faiths within the context of a majority faith environment.

This applied to Christians in India and in many Muslim countries, to Jews in many parts of the world, to Sikhs just about everywhere, and to Muslims in Western Europe and North America. Reflecting on these examples, one could see that minority faith communities often 'punch above their weight,' both in providing distinguished individuals who represented their community (for example Gandhi in South Africa, C.S. Andrews in India, Bhikhu Parekh in Britain today), and in the ability of minority communities to puncture complacency and ask questions the majority community could not otherwise see.

The Church in Palestine was such a minority group, faced with complex challenges intensified by the long drawn-out Israeli occupation of the Palestinian Territories. As mentioned earlier, the missionary emphasis on social, educational and medical work in Palestine meant that Christians inherited a social services and educational organizational and institutional network far in excess of their actual numbers. This, in turn, was the greatest contribution that Christian missionaries and their native supporters left in Palestine, a legacy that impacted on many generations of Palestinian people, irrespective of religious affiliation.

Ateek and Raheb's institutions were in many ways a modern development on the older missionary project in Palestine. The work of al-Liqa in particular in Bethlehem was focused on developing a sustainable dialogue between Muslims and Christians in Palestine-Israel, with the initiative being taken from the side of the native Christian ecumenical community. Sabeel's focus on Christian-Muslim relations in the region was less overt, possibly because of the internationalist ecumenical focus of the group. Raheb's work in Bethlehem again stood out in this context as the most praxis-oriented socio-political as well as educational-culturally programmed approach that sought to fashion a new generation of Palestinians, Christian and Muslim, on the streets of Palestine, who would be capable of carrying forward the goal of building a sustainable and self-reliant nation-state for the Palestinian people.

In this sense, Raheb's work under the *Diyar* umbrella stood out as the approach that had the most to offer in the largely conservative Muslim environment in modern Palestine. The liberation that was sought to be propagated by Raheb for the Palestinian Christian people

was primarily one from fear, fear of being part of an ever-shrinking Christian minority in a Muslim sea that was the Christian situation in Palestine today. Raheb saw his role as facilitator of Christian-Muslim youth encounters in this role, programming and developing a generation of Christian-Muslim youth to becoming the torch-bearers of an independent Palestine. In this sense, the liberation he envisaged was one of the mind, a spiritual liberation necessary for both the communities to live in peace and brotherhood in a future independent Palestine of their dreams.

The Approach of Sabeel

The church in Palestine was largely planted by Western missionary activism, an effort that went on more or less uninterrupted till the mid-twentieth century. Even today, the church in Palestine was far from independent of Western influence and financial support, a circumstance that hardly set it apart from the rest of the church in the 'third world.' The organizations referred to in this study were not independent of this trend; indeed, they would find it very difficult to function in their present format without the generous help of their external donors, predominantly in Europe, America and Australasia.

The programmes developed by both Sabeel as well as the al-Liqa centre in Bethlehem were relatively similar and largely based on the dialogue approach, the premise that talking with one's enemies was the best path to reconciliation and peace. Funds accrued from the West were largely spent (in addition to paying the salaries of office and field staff members and meeting overhead costs) in conducting conferences, both local as well as (particularly in the case of Sabeel) international, local clergy and laity-workshops, youth-conferences and day-trips (as a means of bringing dispersed Palestinian communities and individuals together in social networking exercises) and finally (in the case of Sabeel) witness visits that were a means of bringing Western tourists and pilgrims to Israel-Palestine on a reality-awareness exercise.

Sabeel had since its inception devoted increasing space and resources to involving interested Palestinian clergy and laity within an ecumenical liberation theology framework, one that was programmed to

emphasize the continued relevance of scripture, Old as well as New Testament, for the Palestinian Christian people and their context.

The weekly Thursday-noon communion service at the Sabeel offices in Jerusalem featured a Latin American base community-modeled prayer and scriptural reflection format that again sought to make the Anglican bible passage of the week relevant to the Palestinian struggle for liberation and against Israeli socio-political and economic oppression in the Occupied Territories. One of the outcomes of this was that Palestinian Christian participants at these sessions as well as interested foreign visitors and observers were exposed to the scriptures through the socio-political lens of liberation theology, a scheme of reading and analysis not generally or historically popular and culturally accepted in the Palestinian and Levantine Christian framework.

People were challenged as they realized that the situation in Palestine today, coupled with the Israeli occupation and its side-effects could be remarkably similar to the circumstances and personal-collective communal experience that Jesus and his early followers faced in Roman Palestine, over 2000 years ago. This, in turn, encouraged them to go out and face the occupation on a daily basis, with courage and fortitude, secure in the knowledge that what was happening in Palestine today could be seen as a test of their faith. Just as Jesus took a stand against his fellow Jewish oppressors as well as the Roman occupiers on the basis of truth and justice as revealed in the Hebrew Scriptures, so also Palestinian Christians and their foreign supporters were exhorted to view the present conflict situation that they were placed in through the eyes of Jesus Christ and His responses to the circumstances that faced Him and Palestinian society at that particular historical juncture.

This mode of viewing the conflict, that was enunciated by Ateek through his first book, *Justice and Only Justice*, had the added advantage of being able to connect the Palestinian struggle for liberation and the Christian sub-struggle within that broader context, to concerned Christians and Christian communities worldwide, including those that had been through and were still in the process of developing these forms of non-violent protests against sectarian, class, race and political-economic oppression. The reference here is obviously to,

among others, the South African struggle against Apartheid, the continuing Latin American experiments with base communities and liberation theology, the Dalit struggle against caste-based oppression in India and interested and concerned supporters of liberation/contextual theological approaches in the Western world.

Sabeel while primarily being a centre with a regular staff rota and office space of their own, also focused as part of their work on maintaining links with the greater Palestinian Christian community. They sought to practise their ecumenism seriously, especially in situations where ecumenism as a form of Christian pastoral praxis was seldom practised in this part of the Middle East. It was in keeping with this obligation that regular clerical meetings were arranged at least once a month either at the Sabeel offices in Jerusalem, Nazareth or in selected locations across the Palestinian Territories or within the State of Israel.

These meetings, mainly attended by Protestant and Greek Orthodox clerics of Arab origin, as well as many Catholics of the different rites present in Israel-Palestine, sought to instill a sense of commonality and purpose among Palestinian Christian clerics, under a common yoke and system of bondage. Palestinian clerics were regularly invited to attend Sabeel international conferences where they (especially if they were Orthodox) got a rare chance to interact with Christians and fellow clerics from other mainly Western Anglo-Saxon Christian nations. Sabeel international conference attendees regularly visited Palestinian Churches and communities whether within the State of Israel or in the Palestinian Territories, thereby instilling in both hosts as well as participants a sense of community and Christian solidarity with each other.

Sabeel had sought to lay an emphasis on better inter-communal relations within Palestine. It recognized that Palestinian Christians would have to live in a future Palestinian state that was Muslim-dominated and that they therefore needed to seek amicable relations with the Muslim majority. Ateek mentioned Hamas, the Palestinian Islamist movement as a possible example of an Islamic liberation theological and political movement.⁴ Sabeel has, despite its said commitments to the contrary, been unable to give adequate representation to

Muslim Palestinian voices at their conferences during the 1990s and later. The first Palestinian Theology conference at Sabeel Jerusalem in the early 1990s did not have a single Muslim speaker to give a paper and there was no topic dealing with Christian-Muslim relations (the what, how's and where's), at this conference. It was left to speakers and writers outside the immediate ambit of the Sabeel centre such as the Latin Palestinian cleric and contextual theologian Rafiq Khoury, his fellow al-Liqa colleague Gerjes Khoury as well as the reputed British Arab Studies scholar Kenneth Cragg to recommend the above listed reality.⁵

The 1996 Sabeel Conference which was dedicated to a study of Jerusalem, in the context of peacemaking, (and which was the next major one after the first 1990 inaugural), had a panel session on Christian-Muslim relations, but here again, no Muslim speaker was invited and the three papers were given by both a Christian Palestinian (Gerjes Khoury) and by two Western experts on Islamic and Muslim world affairs. Gerjes Khoury was candid enough in this presentation to admit that Palestinian Christians, despite centuries of living among Muslim Arabs, knew next to nothing about their law (*Sharia*) or the crucial teachings of the prophet (*Sunna*).

He also found fault with the Christian as well as Muslim religious education available in Palestinian schools and colleges as very lacking in an ecumenical spirit and superficial, seemingly totally unsuitable for the purpose of Muslim-Christian co-existence in Israel-Palestine. This was a call echoed by many sectors of the Palestinian Christian establishment, especially as the Christians owned a good number of educational institutions in Palestine. This, in turn, forced a major review of religious education within the school system contributing to the development of what was a joint ecumenical Christian religious education syllabus, now been taught in various Palestinian school across East Jerusalem and the Territories. Fr. Rafiq Khoury was a major voice in this endeavour.⁶

Ateek had given a call many times during the course of his preaching, teaching and writing ministry for the Church in Israel-Palestine to develop a theology in relation to other faiths, and especially with Islam. Bishop Munib Younan described how such a theology was

in no way a departure from the orthodoxy of the Church. It constituted a Palestinian 'orthopraxis within the Church's orthodoxy.'⁷ He also considered that no church can lay claim to the theology of liberation as it involved inter-church praxis. A theology of liberation, at least in Palestine, must be ecumenical in nature. As befitting the Palestinian situation, liberation/contextual theology must reach out to all Christian as well as Muslim inhabitants of Palestine in brotherhood and friendship.⁸

He was quoted as saying that the well-being of the Christian community on the land depended on having good relations with their Muslim brothers and sisters.⁹ He also gave a similar call to develop inter-faith relations with the Jews. Ateek insisted that relations with Jews and the Israeli state be on the basis of justice and peace. A peace based on justice was the only way to solve the Israeli-Palestinian issue. This alone would pave the way for a true reconciliation between Jewish Israelis and Palestinian Arabs. Thus reconciliation between Palestinians and Israelis was the present ultimate goal that the Church in Palestine must strive for based on peace and justice.¹⁰

The Sabeel Vision stated that:

Sabeel affirms its commitment to make the gospel relevant ecumenically and spiritually in the lives of the local indigenous Church. Our faith teaches that following in the footsteps of Christ means standing for the oppressed, working for justice, and seeking peace-building opportunities, and it challenges us to empower local Christians. Since a strong civil society and a healthy community were the best supports for a vulnerable population, Sabeel strives to empower the Palestinian community as a whole and to develop the internal strengths needed for participation in building a better world for all. Only by working for a just and durable peace can we provide a sense of security and create ample opportunities for growth and prosperity in an atmosphere void of violence and strife. Although remaining political and organizational obstacles hinder the full implementation of programmes, Sabeel continues to develop creative means to surmount these challenges. We sought both to be a refuge for

dialogue and to pursue ways of finding answers to ongoing theological questions about the sanctity of life, justice, and peace.¹¹

Sabeel sought to learn from Christ's life under occupation and his response to injustice and to apply this to Palestinian reality.¹² The centre also sought to promote understanding internationally, principally through bi-yearly conferences and yearly witness visits (which were basically mini-conferences). They also had a flourishing youth department that held yearly Young Adults Conferences, a relatively new phenomenon on the Sabeel calendar. Sabeel encouraged 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.¹³ International Friends of Sabeel chapters were established in many countries including Australia, Scandinavia, the United Kingdom, Ireland, Canada, and the United States as well as more recently in France, Holland and Denmark. These Chapters were meant to provide additional support for Sabeel's work in 'advocacy, education, and non-violent resistance to the Israeli occupation.'¹⁴

There was a similar history of radical thinking and move towards a contextualization of theology within Palestine in the Lutheran community as well. This move towards what was then known as a 'Palestinian theology' started well before the first Palestinian Intifada broke out in 1987. A former bishop and head of the Lutheran church in Palestine, (Naim Nasser) writing in a German Protestant publication (*Friede im Land der Bibel-3. Folge*) during the first Intifada explained Palestinian theology as follows:

We know ourselves to have been placed by God, as part of the Palestinian people, in this land Palestine, and called by His Son, Jesus Christ, to be His people. Therefore we are citizens of two states, the earthly-Palestinian and the heavenly-divine state. It is the task of the so-called 'Palestinian theology' to clarify the relationship of those two states to each other. Our theologians strive to pursue theology in the Palestinian context, i.e., to seek new ways in which to proclaim the Gospel to our people in its situation, language and mentality ...¹⁵

The clear reference to the classical Lutheran concept of the Kingdoms of Heaven and Earth was very visible in this statement. As was explained later in this chapter, Raheb's work in Palestine has sought to follow up on this very Lutheran principle of the two Kingdoms and their mutual interdependence.

An Estimation of Raheb's Approach

Mitri Raheb was involved with al-Liqa Centre from its early years and honed his theological orientation within the context of his native Palestinian heritage and culture in close association with this organization. He, however, diversified from al-Liqa set-up in opting to follow partially the example provided by Archbishop Elias Chacour (the Galilean Israeli-Palestinian educator) in seeking to focus on education as the tool of empowerment of the Palestinian youth in the West Bank and particularly in Bethlehem.

Raheb's approach must be seen as an attempt to meld institutions and approaches within a framework of occupation and oppression to create facts on the ground in Bethlehem that were most suited to the present needs of the Palestinian people, irrespective of faith, creed or party affiliation. It was in this context that his theological approach became apparent as well as its divergences from the top-down approach favoured by Sabeel and al-Liqa. Raheb had sought to utilise the broad similarities of culture, language and the political and economic situation that do more than anything else to bind the two main religious communities of Palestine together against a common foe, to create a cultural theological approach that will in turn lay the groundwork for a reliable, sustainable and mutually fruitful dialogue between the Christians and Muslims of the Palestinian Territories. He also sought to do this through the use of the twin tools of co-ed Christian-Muslim 'education' (conceived from the cradle to young adulthood) as well as popular Arab culture, coupled with his holistic 'cradle to the grave' concept of providing readily available and relatively cheap recreation and healthcare facilities to the occupied and logistically constrained Palestinian people of Bethlehem and the Palestinian Territories in general. Raheb's ability in achieving what he had accomplished, has

hinged on his success in persuading Western (mainly US and European Lutheran) donors that Palestinians deserve a better life, even if this cannot at present include freedom.

Raheb viewed the present situation in the Territories as being more fit for visions of the future as it should be in Israel-Palestine. One of Raheb's greatest fears as a long-time resident of the occupied West Bank was the continuing Palestinian and Christian emigration from the Territories, primarily as a result of the Israeli occupation. His primary purpose in developing a theo-political contextual praxis of liberation was to counter this trend by giving the Palestinian Christian people a sense of work-dignity, empowerment, holistic development and pride in remaining in their homeland, despite all the pressures to the contrary to make them leave.

Raheb had a particular vision for infrastructure development and building institutions in Palestine, and was particularly interested in implementing projects that would result in developing human resources through the arts, culture and modern vocational-oriented education in the Occupied Territories. He has felt the need to harness the creativity and the inherent talent of the people. Raheb's vision was concerned with the building up of the Palestine of his dreams, and not being bogged down with questions about how one must deal with and end the Israeli occupation of the West Bank. He felt that there was already enough Palestinian and worldwide obsession with the occupation and with the requirement of whether to support a two or one-state solution. Now was the time to build up the Kingdom of God on earth and particularly in this context of the proposed new Palestinian national state. This was more important than anything else in Raheb's view.¹⁶

All Raheb's outreach mission activities were theologically speaking a fore-taste for understanding the concept of the Kingdom of God. It was in this context that the Lutheranism of Raheb becomes apparent. Just as Luther enunciated the concept of the two Kingdoms, the Kingdom of man and the Kingdom of God, with the possibility and necessity of cooperation between the two, so also Raheb viewed his medical, cultural and educational work in the context of a necessary outgrowth of his theological analysis in praxis. Historically, classical

Lutheranism had believed that the Kingdom of this world was quite distinct from the Kingdom of God in Jesus Christ.

Hence, it could be argued that Lutherans would not be theologically comfortable with the premises of the orthodox Latin American format of liberation theology that had always stood against any separation between the spiritual as well as the political and physical liberation of mankind. Lutherans in general and Western Lutherans in particular, might thus well opt to support the less confrontational 'contextual Lutheran-base theology' of Mitri Raheb. The end of the occupation and the physical-political liberation of Palestine was not the sole goal in Raheb's eyes. He also believed in working towards the greater purpose of the spiritual liberation (the liberation of the soul) of the Palestinian people, both Christians as well as Muslims.¹⁷ Raheb's firm belief was that it would not be possible to achieve the 'physical' liberation of Palestine primarily by lifting the Israeli occupation. True liberation of the Palestinian people could only proceed as a result of the spiritual and physical liberation of the land of Israel-Palestine, and one of the tools, in his opinion, to achieve this was through the contextual theological medium that he devised and sought to propagate through his various projects and institutions.

A contextual approach to theology was important precisely because it gave importance to people's narratives. This is because only something like 8 per cent of the Palestinian population was functionally literate. One must take notice of the uneducated people in Palestine. As most of the people did not care about theology, we should appeal to them by way of practical 'on the ground' policies.¹⁸ It was for this reason that the ICB knowingly preferred a contextual and less politicised service-oriented approach.¹⁹

Raheb's emphasis on inter-faith dialogue sought to take further what had been tried and tested in al-Liqa over the past two decades or more. The most important fact in this context was to actually bring people together without talking about the process of doing so through dialogue. Christians and Muslims must come together without having the necessity to speak about coming together. Muslims and Christians in Bethlehem and in Palestine had the same needs and some times different needs. The 'need of the hour' was to provide for their need

which was what Raheb was trying to do through his different institutions and projects.

He felt that it was important to include Muslims in all his projects, and indeed sometimes more work must be done for Muslims than for Christians, as true liberation would not be achieved for Christians unless the Muslims of Palestine acquire their own physical and spiritual liberation as well. Liberation for Palestinians had to be holistic, or not at all, as Christians were a small minority in a Muslim sea. Raheb's vision was to see Christians and Muslims swimming and walking and going on tours and painting together rather than anything else as well as going on tours to foreign countries together as brand ambassadors of the extent of ethno-religious harmony in Palestine. He felt that what he was doing at the ICB did more to bring Muslims and Christians, and particularly the youth of Palestine, together. In Raheb's view, Christian-Muslim harmony and unity could be achieved only as a result of a grassroots ground-based approach and by emphasizing the essential unity of the people of Palestine as well as the potential of the people to remain together.²⁰

In Raheb's view, the most important thing was to create a taste of the new life that could possibly be enjoyed in Palestine once the Israeli occupation had ended. It was important not to be obsessed by the occupation, but to think beyond it. To this end, Raheb argued that theology must be translated into infrastructure, people and ultimately onto the streets of Israel-Palestine.²¹ The holistic development sought through the *Diyar* consortium marked a major difference between his approaches as opposed to the Sabeel programmes. Whereas Sabeel and al-Liqa looked to the ideal Israel-Palestine of the future, Raheb sought to change the present. Raheb emphasized the Arabic term *Dar* in all his institutes, as well as the plural form *Diyar*, both of which mean 'home.' All his organizations were homes and at Dar al-Annadwa as well as at Dar al-Kalima, what was most important was the building of the homeland of Palestine and belonging to it.²²

It has been asked whether what Raheb was doing in Bethlehem was little more than applying plasters to the open sore that was the Palestinian and Christian situational context today in the land of Israel-Palestine.²³ This would however be the result of taking an

extremely critical stand against the work of a Christian organization that sought to pave the way as regards the future of the Palestinian people in their own homeland. Raheb's *Diyar* Consortium had within the space of fourteen years (1995–2009) grown to become one of the largest employers of quality manpower in the Bethlehem Governorate of the Palestinian Authority. *Diyar* employed a total of just over a hundred people in 2009–10, making it the third largest employer in Bethlehem.²⁴

They were projected to reach out to some 60,000 people during the course of their various activities and projects in 2009 alone and their impact was not just restricted to the Bethlehem region, but extended far afield covering mainly the southern West Bank and Jerusalem, plus part of the Palestinian populated areas of the state of Israel. 60 per cent of the people who benefit from *Diyar* programmes were Palestinian Muslims, reflecting the organization's situational context as well as communal outreach within the predominantly Muslim Manger Street quarter of Bethlehem.

The city of Bethlehem itself has now become a Muslim-majority city, reflecting the large-scale emigration of Palestinian Christians from the region over the last hundred years and almost completely reversing the Christian history of the city over the last two millennia or so. Raheb's entire mission strategy was fashioned around the policy of 'empowering people in a context of continuing conflict.'²⁵ His vision and that of his organization was geared towards 'influencing people's transition from a stance of reactivity to one of pro-activity, from being victims to becoming visionaries, from waiting to creating, and from surviving to thriving.'²⁶ Again from a holistic and spiritual point of view, Raheb sought to emulate Jesus Christ's own ministry of 'preaching, teaching and healing in his (Christ's own) homeland... That we might have life and have it abundantly (John 10:10).'²⁷

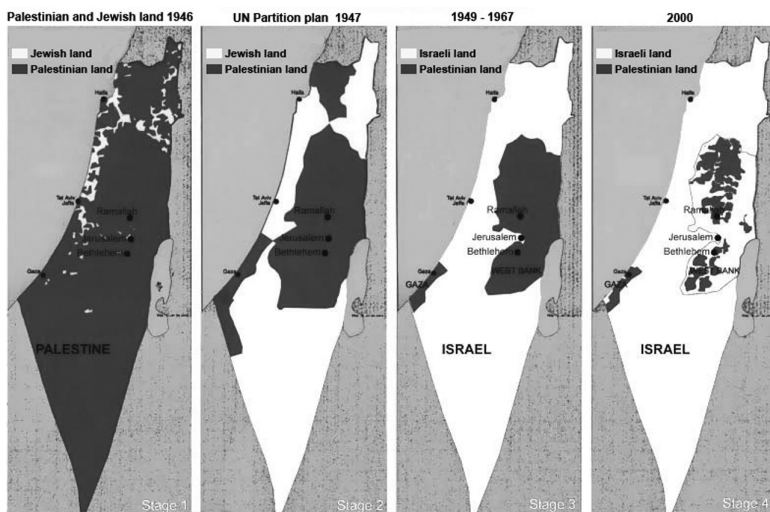
Raheb declared that,

In a context of too much peace talking, *Diyar* believes in peace-making. In a context of too much politics, *Diyar* believes in caring for the polis/city. In a context of too much religion, *Diyar* believes in investing in spirituality. In a context of too much

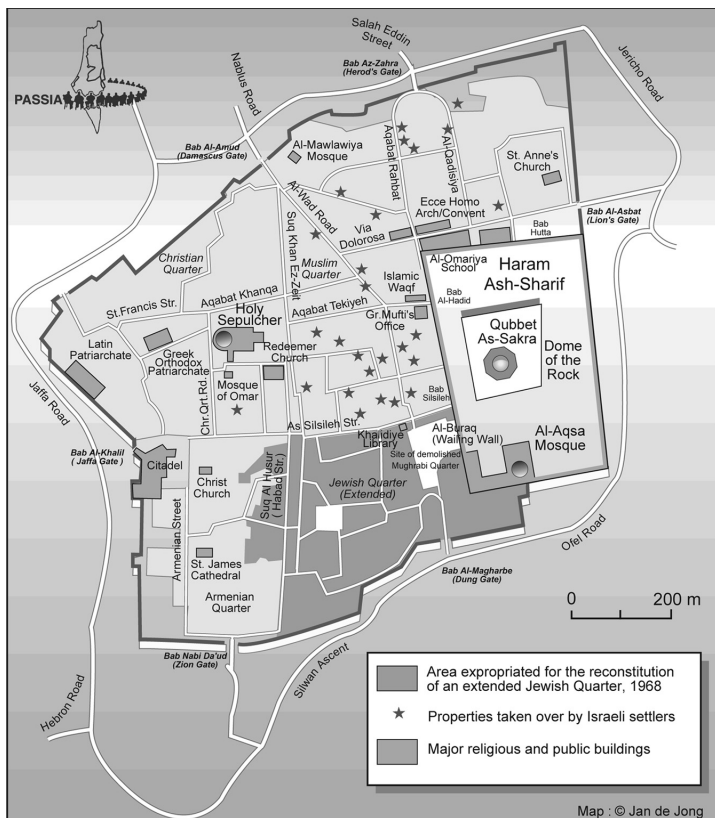
disempowering aid, *Diyar* believes in empowering the individual and the community. In a context of too much segregation, *Diyar* believes in building bridges and platforms for intercultural dialogue. In a context of despair, *Diyar* believes in creating room for hope. In a context full of liturgies of death, *Diyar* celebrates the mystery of the risen Lord of life.²⁸

Sabeel and *Diyar* were thus closely connected within the spectrum of Palestinian liberation/contextual theology and in particular, the advocacy and publicity (conference-oriented) support work that they perform often overlapped with each other. This often sought to confuse Western viewers and supporters of Palestinian Christians as to the actual similarities and differences between the various groups. Both Sabeel as well as the Raheb-inspired ICB engaged in liberation/contextual theologies to bring the whole gamut of their activities into focus. However the essential praxiological focus of each remained different. Their differences lay within the theo-political visions of the two Palestinian Christian clerics and directors of these centres, Naim Ateek and Mitri Raheb, as well as the socio-political and economic angles through which these visions were translated into actual praxis. The essential purpose of both these organizations as well as that of al-Liqa remained to engage the Palestinian Christian community along with their interested co-believers in the West and the rest of the world, in a just and non-violent struggle for peace, truth and justice in Israel-Palestine, and to serve as a point of mutual contact and understanding with the majority Muslim and Jewish communities of the region. Liberation/contextual theologies emerged in this context as a tool that could be used to unlock the hidden or latent political and spiritual energies of the Palestinian Arab Christian people in their struggle against political, economic and national-developmental oppression in Israel-Palestine. This was the role that Sabeel, al-Liqa and the *Diyar* Consortium sought to fulfill through their varied activities in the Holy Land.

APPENDIX A: PALESTINIAN LOSS OF LAND 1946–2000



APPENDIX B: THE OLD CITY OF JERUSALEM



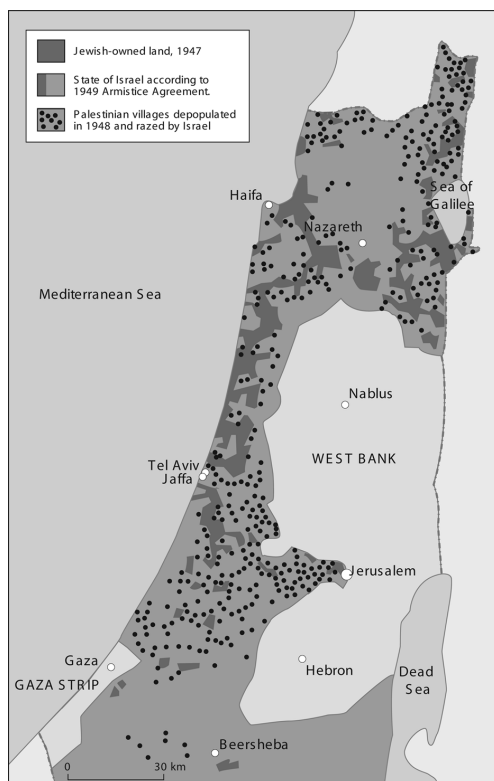
Source: Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs (PASSIA)

APPENDIX C: PALESTINE UNDER THE BRITISH MANDATE, 1923–1948



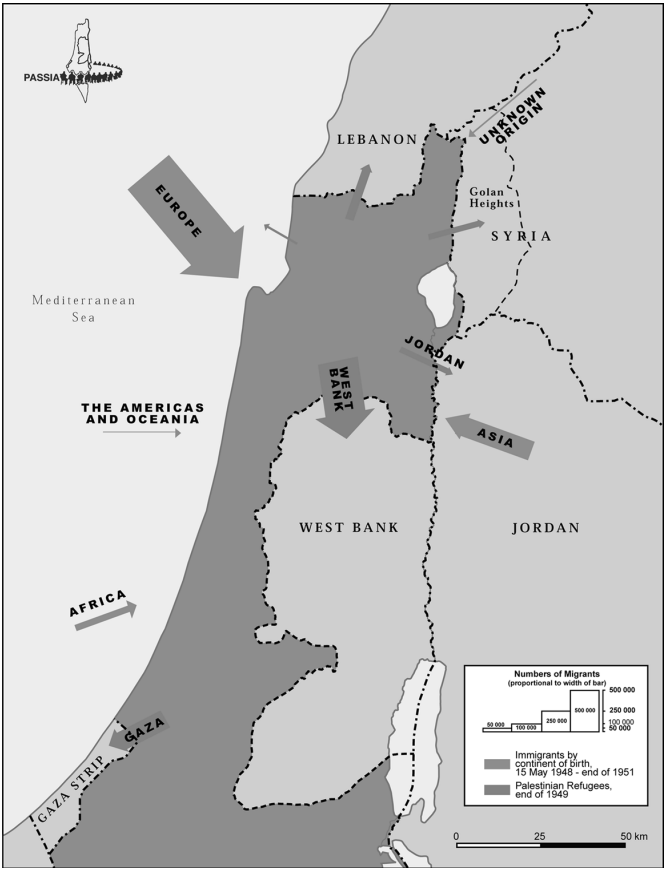
Source: Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs (PASSIA)

APPENDIX D: PALESTINIAN VILLAGES DEPOPULATED IN 1948 AND RAZED BY ISRAEL



Source: Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs (PASSIA)

APPENDIX E: POPULATION MOVEMENTS 1948-51

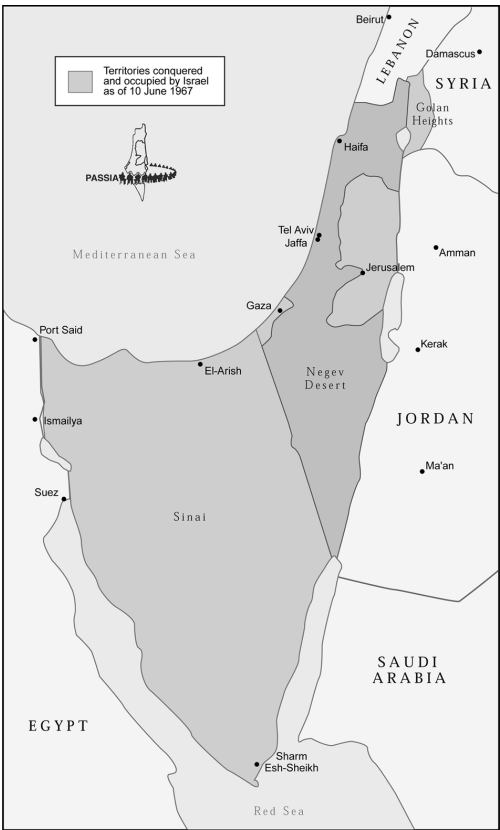


APPENDIX F: PALESTINIAN REFUGEES, 2001



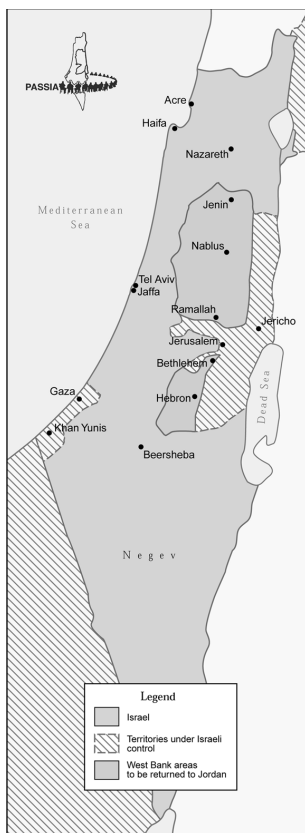
Source: Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs (PASSIA)

APPENDIX G: THE NEAR EAST AFTER THE 1967 JUNE WAR



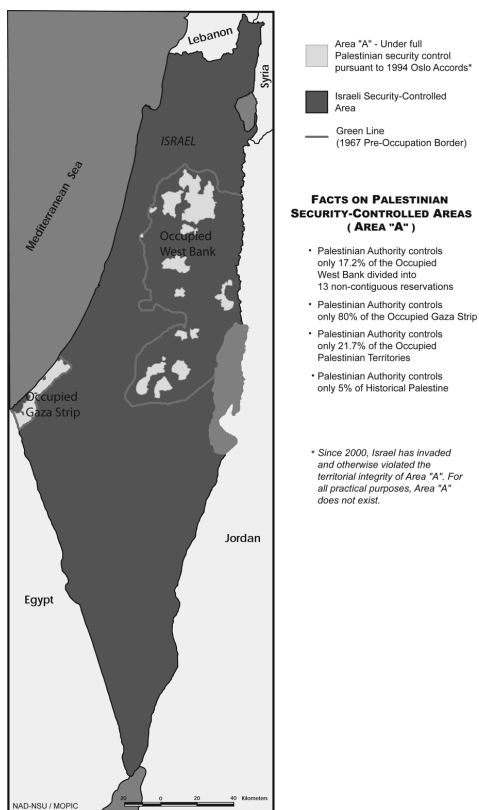
Source: Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs (PASSIA)

APPENDIX H: THE ALLON PLAN, JULY 1967

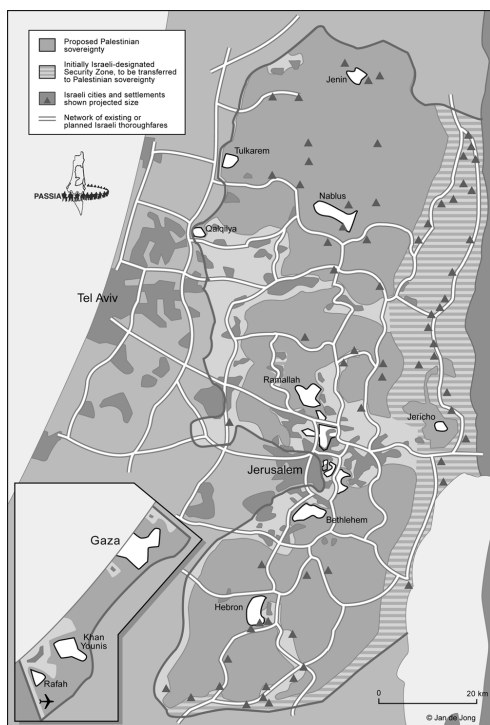


Source: Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs (PASSIA)

APPENDIX I: ISRAELI AND PALESTINIAN SECURITY-CONTROLLED AREAS

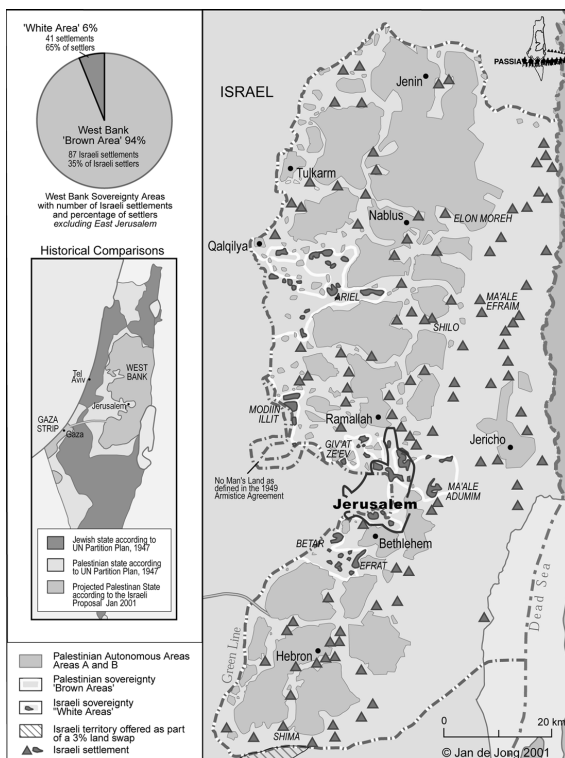


APPENDIX J: PROJECTION OF THE WEST BANK FINAL STATUS MAP PRESENTED BY ISRAEL, CAMP DAVID, JULY 2000



Source: Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs (PASSIA)

APPENDIX K: FINAL STATUS MAP PRESENTED BY ISRAEL – TABA, JANUARY 2001



Note: Based on a 6% West Bank Territorial Transfer to Israel

Source: Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs (PASSIA)

NOTES

All URLs were correct at the time of writing.

Chapter 1 The Historical Background

1. All bracketed italicised words will be the Arabic, Hebrew or German transliterations of the requisite text. Separately sometimes, English translations of the Arabic or Hebrew word transliterations will also be provided parenthetically in brackets.
2. David's capture of the city of Jerusalem was detailed in 2 Samuel 6:6–10. Also see 1 Chronicles 11:1–9; 1 Chronicles 14:1–7.
3. Bernard Wasserstein, *Divided Jerusalem: The Struggle for the Holy City*, (Virginia: R. R. Donnelley and Sons, 2002), 6. The Church of the Holy Sepulchre was called the Church of the Resurrection by local Palestinian Christians.
4. Refer Sir Anton Bertram and Mr. J.W.A. Young, *The Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem: Report of the Commission appointed by the Government of Palestine to inquire and report upon certain controversies between the Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem and the Arab Orthodox Community*, (London: Humphrey Milford, 1926), 75–78. Also see Shahadeh Khoury, Nicola Khoury and Dr. Raouf Sa'd Abujaber, *A Survey of the History of the Orthodox Church of Jerusalem*, (Amman-Jordan: The Orthodox Central Council, The Orthodox Society, 2002), 274.
5. Wasserstein, *Divided Jerusalem*, 10. Jerusalem was universally referred to as *al-Quds* in the Arab-Islamic world. Also refer Marwan Abu Khalaf, 'The Significance of Jerusalem for Muslims,' in Yitzhak Reiter, Marlen Eordegian and Marwan Abu Khalaf, 'Jerusalem's Religious Significance,' *Palestine-Israel Journal*, nd., 17.
6. Again see Kenneth Cragg, *The Arab Christian A History in the Middle East*, (London: Mowbray, 1992), 52.
7. See Anthony O' Mahony, 'Christianity in the Holy Land: the historical background,' *The Month* 26, no. 12 (1993): 469.

8. See Wasserstein, *Divided Jerusalem*, 8. Also refer S. P. Colbi, *The Christian Establishment in Jerusalem*, in Joel. L. Kramer, 'Jerusalem: Problems and Prospects,' (New York: Praeger, 1980), 159–160. Also see Cragg, *The Arab Christian*, 101.
9. Again refer S. P. Colbi, *The Christian Establishment in Jerusalem*, 154.
10. Ibid, 160. Also see Atallah Mansour, *Narrow Gate Churches: The Christian Presence in the Holy Land under Muslim and Jewish Rule*, (Pasadena: Hope Publishing House, 2004), 55. Also see appendices for a political-geographic map of the present religious composition of the Middle Eastern region, including the Christian populations of the fertile Levant of Israel-Palestine and Syria-Lebanon.
11. Cragg, *The Arab Christian*, 102.
12. Ibid, 106.
13. See Anthony O' Mahony, *Christianity in the Holy Land*, 469
14. Ibid.
15. See Anthony O' Mahony, *Christianity in the Holy Land*, 470. Also see Daphne Tsimhoni, *Christian Communities in Jerusalem and the West Bank since 1948: An Historical, Social, and Political Study*, (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1993), 137.
16. See O' Mahony, *Christianity in the Holy Land*, 470–471.
17. For reference, see Tsimhoni, *Christian Communities in Jerusalem and the West Bank since 1948*, 137.
18. See Kevork (George) Hintlian, 'Pilgrimage from a local point of view,' in *The Forgotten Faithful: A Window into the life and witness of Christians in the Holy Land*, ed. Naim Ateek, Cedar Duaybis and Maurine Tobin (Jerusalem: Sabeel, 2007), 172–173.
19. See Cragg, *Arab Christian*, 101.
20. See Bruce Masters, *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Arab World: The Roots of Sectarianism*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 49–50. Also see Itamar Katz and Ruth Kark, 'The Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem and its Congregation: Dissent over real estate,' *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 37 (2005): 529.
21. See Anthony O' Mahony, *Christianity in the Holy Land*, 469.
22. Ibid.
23. See Cragg, *The Arab Christian*, 52.
24. *Firman*: Ottoman Turkish term for a law proclaimed by the Emperor and read in regal assembly. See Sotiris Roussos, 'The Greek Orthodox Patriarchate and community of Jerusalem,' in *The Christian Heritage in The Holy Land*, ed. Anthony O' Mahoney, et al. (London: Scorpion Cavendish, 1995), 212.
25. See Anthony O' Mahony, 'Palestinian-Arab Orthodox Christians: Religion, Politics and Church-State Relations in Jerusalem, c. 1908–1925,' *Chronos*

- Revue d'Histoire de l'Université de Balamand* (Balamand-Lebanon), no. 3 (2000): 70.
26. For a detailed description of the status quo as it was applicable to the Holy Places in the Holy Land, refer one of the first works in English on this vexed issue by L. G. A. Cust, *The Status Quo in the Holy Places*, with an Annexe on the status quo in the Church of the Nativity, Bethlehem, by Abdullah Effendi Kardus (London: His Majesty's Stationary Office, 1929), 13.
 27. See S. P. Colbi, *The Christian Establishment in Jerusalem*, 164.
 28. Sotiris Roussos, 'The Greek Orthodox Patriarchate and Community of Jerusalem,' in *The Christian Heritage in the Holy Land*, ed. Anthony O' Mahoney, et al. (London: Scorpion Cavendish, 1995), 213.
 29. Cragg, *The Arab Christian*, 117–118.
 30. See Masters, *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Arab world*, 58.
 31. See Adnan Musallam, 'Christian Arabs and the Making of Arab Nationalism,' *Al-Liqa Journal* 6, (February 1996): 43–45.
 32. *Ibid*, 45.
 33. *Ibid*.
 34. See speech and article by Archbishop of Constantina, Aristarchos, 'The Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem,' in *The Forgotten Faithful: A Window into the Life and Witness of Christian in the Holy Land*, ed. Naim Ateek, Cedar Duaybis and Maurine Tobin (Jerusalem: Sabeel, 2007), 75–76. Also Daphne Tsimhoni, *The Greek Orthodox: A Community in Conflict*, in *Christian Communities in Jerusalem and the West Bank Since 1948: An Historical, Social, and Political Study* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1993), 33.
 35. See in this context, Itamar Katz and Ruth Kark, 'The Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem and its congregation: Dissent over real estate,' *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 37 (2005): 509–510. Also see Chris McGreal, 'Greek Orthodox church mired in Jerusalem land row,' *The Guardian* (London), March 22, 2005.
 36. See Anthony O' Mahoney, 'Palestinian-Arab Orthodox Christians: Religion, Politics and Church-State Relations in Jerusalem, c. 1908–1925,' *Chronos Revue d'Histoire de l'Université de Balamand* (Balamand-Lebanon), no.3 (2000): 78. Again see Katz and Kark, *The Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem and its congregation*, 514.
 37. Refer unpublished PhD Work by Daphne Tsimhoni, *The British Mandate and the Arab Christians in Palestine 1920–1925*, (PhD, London University, 1976). Also see Tsimhoni, *Christian Communities*, 35–36.
 38. See Tsimhoni, *Christian Communities*, 35–36.
 39. *Ibid*, 176–180.

40. Ibid, 176–178. Also see S. J. Kuruvilla, 'Jerusalem's Churches under Israeli Rule,' *Al Aqsa Journal* 7, no. 1 (Autumn 2004): 25.
41. See Amnon Ramon, *The Christian Element and the Jerusalem Question*, Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies: Background Papers for Policy Makers, no. 4, April (1997): 13. Also see S. J. Kuruvilla, 'The Politics of Mainstream Christianity in Jerusalem,' (seminar paper presented at Graduate Research in Politics (GRiP) Seminar, School of Humanities and Social Sciences (HuSS), Department of Politics, University of Exeter, February 8, 2004). Also refer Michael Dumper, *The Politics of Sacred Space: The Old City of Jerusalem in the Middle East Conflict*, (London: Lynne Rienner, 2002), 124–125. Again see Daphne Tsimhoni, *Christian Communities*, 176–177. For the official Israeli government view on this issue, see 'Prime Minister's Office Statement on Jerusalem City Building,' April 24, 1990, *The Internet Archives of the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Volume 11–12, 1988–1992*, <http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Foreign%20Relations/Israels%20Foreign%20Relations%20since%201947/1988-1992/134%20Prime%20Minister-s%20Office%20Statement%20on%20Jerusalem>. Also refer Appendix C for a map detailing the Old City of Jerusalem, with its various contentious quarters and holy sites in the appendices.
42. Sotirios Roussos, 'The Greek Orthodox Patriarchate and Community of Jerusalem,' (unpublished conference paper, Elefsina, May 29, 1994). Also refer Tsimhoni, *Christian Communities*, 37.
43. See in this context, Bernard Wasserstein, *Divided Jerusalem: The Struggle for the Holy City*, 2nd Ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 268.
44. See Tsimhoni, *Christian Communities*, 42–45.
45. Refer Sotiris Roussos, 'The Greek Orthodox Patriarchate and Community of Jerusalem,' in *The Christian Heritage in the Holy Land*, ed. Anthony O' Mahony (London: Scorpion Cavendish, 1995), 211–213.
46. See Roussos, *The Greek Orthodox Patriarchate and Community of Jerusalem*, 215.
47. See Jean Corbon, 'The Churches of the Middle East: Their Origins and Identity, from their Roots in the Past to their Openness to the Present,' in *Christian Communities in the Arab Middle East: The Challenge of the Future*, ed. Andrea Pacini (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 97.
48. To read a translated version of Cyrus's edict, see 'Vol. I: Babylonia and Assyria,' in Charles F. Horne, Ed. *The Sacred Books and Early Literature of the East*, (New York: Parke, Austin, and Lipscomb, 1917), 460–462, available at <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/ancient/539cyrus1.html>.
49. Diary entry by Anthony Ashley-Cooper, 7th Earl of Shaftesbury (1801–85) on May 17, 1854. See Edwin Hodder, *The Life and Work of the Seventh Earl of*

- Shaftesbury K.G. (London: Cassell, 1886), 14. Also see Naim Ateek, *Justice and Only Justice: A Palestinian Theology of Liberation* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1989), 24. Also quoted in Mitri Raheb, 'Shaping Communities in times of Crises: Narratives of Land, peoples and Identities,' (conference paper presented at the biannual intercultural conference of the International Centre of Bethlehem, Bethlehem, November 2005), <http://www.mitriRaheb.org/newsletters/shapingcommunities.htm>.
50. See Stephen Sizer, *Christian Zionism: Road-Map to Armageddon* (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 2004), 55–58. Also see Paul C. Merkley, *The Politics of Christian Zionism, 1891–1948* (London: Frank Cass, 1998), 12–15; 38–41. For a detailed study of nineteenth Century 'Restorationism' in the UK, the IJS and Lord Shaftesbury, refer Victoria Clark, *Allies for Armageddon: The Rise of Christian Zionism* (London: Yale University Press, 2007), 63–72.
 51. 'Balfour Declaration, Letter from the British Foreign Office minister Lord Balfour to Lord Walter Rothschild,' November 2, 1917, in Ateek, *Justice and Only Justice*, 27–28. Also see Sizer, *Christian Zionism*, 62. Also refer Merkley, *The Politics of Christian Zionism*, 46–50. Again refer Stephen Sizer, 'The Historical Roots of Christian Zionism from Irving to Balfour: Christian Zionism in the United Kingdom (1820–1918),' in *Challenging Christian Zionism: Theology, Politics and the Israel-Palestine Conflict*, eds. Naim Ateek, Cedar Duaybis and Maurine Tobin, (London: Melisende, 2005), 24–31.
 52. See Michael Handelzalts, 'Pen Ultimate: Sticking my neck out,' *Ha'aretz* (Tel Aviv), December 27, 2007, <http://www.haaretz.com/weekend/weekend/pen-ultimate-sticking-my-neck-out-1.236061> (accessed March 13, 2008).
 53. Ibid.
 54. See O' Mahony, *Christianity in the Holy Land*, 471–472.
 55. See Tom Segev, *One Palestine, complete: Jews and Arabs under the British mandate*, (London: Little, Brown, 2000), 5.
 56. Ateek, *Justice and Only Justice*, 29.
 57. Anthony O' Mahony, *Christianity in the Holy Land*, 473.
 58. Statement by General Sir Walter Norris 'Squib' Congreve, see Tom Segev, *One Palestine, complete*, 9.
 59. Anthony O'Mahony, *Christianity in the Holy Land*, 473.
 60. Ibid, 474.
 61. See Tsimhoni, *Christian Communities*, 44.
 62. See Appendix D for a map detailing Palestinian West Bank cities and Israeli settlement policy.

63. S. J. Kuruvilla, *The Politics of Mainstream Christianity in Jerusalem*, seminar paper presented at Graduate Research in Politics (GRiP) Seminar, School of Humanities and Social Sciences (HuSS), Department of Politics, University of Exeter, February 8, 2004, <http://www.huss.ex.ac.uk/politics/postgrad/GRiP/papers2004/Ad-2.pdf> (accessed March 23, 2005).
64. See Amnon Ramon, *The Christian Element and the Jerusalem Question*, 15. See Appendix C for a map of the Old City of Jerusalem, including the Christian holy places.
65. S. J. Kuruvilla, *The Politics of Mainstream Christianity in Jerusalem*, seminar paper presented at Graduate Research in Politics (GRiP) Seminar, School of Humanities and Social Sciences (HuSS), Department of Politics, University of Exeter, February 8, 2004.
66. Ibid.
67. See George Hintlian, 'Reflections of a Jerusalem Christian.' *Bitterlemons-international.org*, 2, no. 43, December 9 (2004). Available at <http://www.bitterlemons-international.org/inside.php?id=262> (accessed on January 24, 2007).
68. For more in this context, see Ramon, *The Christian Element*, 14–16.
69. In this context, see Stephen Sizer, 'Christian Zionism: A British Perspective,' (paper presented at the 3rd International Sabeel Conference, Bethlehem University, Bethlehem-Palestine, February 1998), in *Holy Land-Hollow Jubilee*, ed. Naim Ateek and Michael Prior (London: Melisende, 1999), 189.
70. See Michael Dumper, 'The Christian Churches of Jerusalem in the Post-Oslo period,' *Journal of Palestine Studies* 31, no. 2 (Winter 2002): 58–59.
71. See Ateek, *Justice and Only Justice*, 46.
72. Ibid.
73. Sotiris Roussos, 'Eastern Orthodox Perspectives on Church-State Relations and Religion and Politics in Modern Jerusalem,' *International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church* 5, no. 2 (July 2000): 115.
74. Menachem Klein, 'The Jerusalem Problem: The Struggle for Permanent Status,' (Gainesville: University Press of Florida-in association with the Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies, Jerusalem, Israel, 2003), 79.
75. Roussos, *Eastern Orthodox Perspectives*, 115.
76. See S. J. Kuruvilla, *The Politics of Mainstream Christianity in Jerusalem*, seminar paper presented at Graduate Research in Politics (GRiP) Seminar, School of Humanities and Social Sciences (HuSS), Department of Politics, University of Exeter, February 8, 2004, <http://www.huss.ex.ac.uk/politics/postgrad/GRiP/papers2004/Ad-2.pdf> (accessed on March 23, 2005).

77. In this context, see Amnon Ramon, *The Christian Element and the Jerusalem Question*, 1997, 13.
78. See S.J. Kuruvilla, *The Politics of Mainstream Christianity in Jerusalem*, 17–18.
79. See Inger Marie Okkehaug, *The Quality of Heroic Living, of High Endeavour and Adventure: Anglican Mission, Women and Education* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 103.
80. See Riah Abu El-Assal *Caught in between: The story of an Arab Palestinian Christian Israeli* (London: SPCK, 1999), 51.
81. See Tsimhoni, *Christian Communities*, 142–145. Also refer to the official website of the Anglican Church in the Holy Land at <http://www.j-diocese.org/index>. Also see Riah Abu El-Assal *Caught in between*, 52–53.
82. See interview with Ray Lockhart, Vicar of Christ Church, Jerusalem, 1994, in Stephen R. Sizer, 'Christian Zionism: A British Perspective,' in *Holy Land-Hollow Jubilee*, eds. N.S. Ateek and Michael Prior (London: Melisende, 1999), 194.
83. For more online information of the CMJ and its work in support of the Jewish people of Israel, refer to the old website of the CMJ-ITAC, still available at http://www.itac-israel.org/about_itac_israel.html, accessed on December 1, 2008.
84. Ibid.
85. Ibid.
86. Refer Tsimhoni, *Christian Communities*, 145. The new website of the CMJ (without reference to ITAC), but with a short history of both the historic English mission as well as the present Israeli mission is available at <http://www.cmj-israel.org/AboutCMJ/tabid/55/Default.aspx>.
87. See Tsimhoni, *Christian Communities*, 148.
88. For more details refer Tsimhoni, *Christian Communities*, 152. Also look at the official Church website of the ELCJHL at <http://www.elcjl.org>.
89. This region will be referred to as the IPJ area in the future.
90. For further information see Tsimhoni, *Christian Communities*, 151.
91. See Michael Dumper, *The Politics of Sacred Space: The Old City of Jerusalem in the Middle East Conflict* (London: Lynne Rienner, 2003), 57.
92. In this context, see S. J. Kuruvilla, *Church-State Relations in Palestine: Issues and Perspectives under Jewish rule*, (paper presented at 55th Annual Conference of the Political Studies Association (PSA), University of Leeds, April 2005), <http://www.psa.ac.uk/2006/pps/Kuruvilla.pdf> (accessed on January 20, 2006).
93. Munib Younan, *Witnessing for Peace: In Jerusalem and the World* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Press, 2003), 18–19.

94. Genesis 13:15, Genesis 15:7, Leviticus 25:2, Leviticus 25:23. Genesis 13:15 states that 'All the land that you see I will give to you and to your offspring forever.' Genesis 15:7 states that 'I am the Lord who brought you from Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land to possess.' Leviticus 25:2 states that 'When you enter the land that I am giving you, the land shall observe a Sabbath to the Lord.' Leviticus 25:23 states that 'The land is mine; with me you were but aliens and tenants.' In Younan, *Witnessing for Peace*, 56–57.
95. Younan, *Witnessing for Peace*, 56–57.
96. See Younan, *Witnessing for Peace*, 57. Also see Timothy Gorringer, *A Theology of the built Environment: Justice, Empowerment, Redemption* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 57.
97. Younan, *Witnessing for Peace*, 58–59.
98. Ibid, 59. Also refer Mitri Raheb, *I am a Palestinian Christian* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 87–91.
99. Walter Brueggemann, *The land: place as gift, promise and challenge in Biblical faith* (London: S.P.C.K., 1978), 2. In Younan, *Witnessing for Peace*, 59.
100. See Timothy Gorringer, *A Theology of the built Environment*, 54.
101. Naim Ateek, *Justice and only Justice; A Palestinian theology of Liberation* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1989), 112.
102. Younan, *Witnessing for Peace*, 64. Also see Naim S. Ateek, 'Biblical Perspectives on the Land,' in *Faith and the Intifada: Palestinian Christian Voices*, eds. N. S. Ateek, M. H. Ellis and R. R. Ruether, (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1992), 115.
103. Ibid.
104. Ibid.
105. Younan, *Witnessing for Peace*, 60–61.
106. Naim S. Ateek, 'Introduction: The Emergence of a Palestinian Christian Theology,' in *Faith and the Intifada: Palestinian Christian Voices*, eds. N. S. Ateek, M. H. Ellis and R. R. Ruether, (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1992), 5.
107. Again see Mitri Raheb, *I am a Palestinian Christian*, 16–17.
108. Ibid, 17.
109. Refer Raheb, *I am a Palestinian Christian*, 17.
110. Ibid, 19.
111. See Raheb, *Palestinian Christian*, 40.
112. See 'Palestinian Declaration of Independence,' in *Documents on Palestine: Volume 1*, (Jerusalem: PASSIA, 1997), 331–332. Also refer Adnan Musallam, 'On the Thorny Road: Towards a Peaceful Resolution of the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict, 1967–2002: A Palestinian Perspective,' *Al-Liqa Journal* 26 (June 2006), 187.

113. Raheb, *Palestinian Christian*, 40.
114. Again see Raheb, *Palestinian Christian*, 41–42. Also refer ‘Islamist Action Groups,’ in *Peacemaking in a Divided Society: Israel after Rabin*, ed. Sasson Sofer (London: Frank Cass, 2001), 152–153.
115. Refer Yezid Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for State: The Palestinian National Movement 1949–1993* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 80–81.
116. Refer Yezid Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for State*, 49.
117. Ibid, 50.
118. Ibid, 52.
119. Raheb, *Palestinian Christian*, 42.
120. Refer Musallam, *On the Thorny Road*, 187. Also Sayigh, *Armed Struggle*, 625–631.
121. Refer Sayigh, *Armed Struggle*, 625–632. See also ‘Islamist Action Groups,’ in *Peacemaking in a Divided Society: Israel After Rabin*, ed. Sasson Sofer (London: Frank Cass, 2001), 161–162.
122. Adnan Musallam, *On the Thorny Road*, 190.
123. See Geris S. Khoury, ‘Palestinian Legislative Elections 2006,’ *Al-Liqa Journal* 26 (June 2006): 174.
124. Comments recorded by the Author in conversations and interviews with Palestinian Christians during a field trip to the region in July–August 2007. Also refer Geris S. Khoury, *Palestinian Legislative Elections 2006*, 183.

Chapter 2 Political and Liberation Theologies: Implications for Israel-Palestine (The Theo-Political Context of Ateek and Raheb’s Work)

1. Andrew Dawson, *The Birth and Impact of the Base Ecclesial Community and Liberative Theological Discourse in Brazil*, (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 1998).
2. Ibid, 126. Also refer *Populorum Progressio* (English version), Vatican Archives, March 26, 1967. http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/paul_vi/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-vi_enc_26031967_populorum_en.html (accessed on January 21, 2006).
3. Iglesia y Sociedad en America Latina (ISAL) (Church and Society in Latin America), in Christian Smith, *The Emergence of Liberation Theology: Radical Religion and social Movement Theory*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 17.

4. Ibid. Also see Jürgen Moltmann, 'Political Theology and Theology of Liberation,' in *Liberation the Future: God, Mammon and Theology*, ed. Joerg Rieder (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1998), 61.
5. Gustavo Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics and Salvation*, (London: SCM Press, 2001), 208.
6. Rebecca S. Chopp and Ethna Regan, *Latin American Liberation Theology*, in *The Modern Theologians: An Introduction to Christian Theology Since 1918*, eds. David Ford and Rachel Muers (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 469.
7. See Hugo Assman, *Practical Theology of Liberation*, (London: Search Press, 1975), 104–105.
8. Ibid.
9. Gustavo Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, (London: SCM Press, 1974), ix (intro).
10. Ibid.
11. See Alfred T. Hennelly, *Theologies in conflict: The Challenge of Juan Luis Segundo*, (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1979), 109.
12. Chopp and Regan, in Ford and Muers, *The Modern Theologians*, 471.
13. See Theo Witvliet, *A Place in the Sun: An Introduction to Liberation Theology in the Third World*, (London: SCM Press, 1985), 138–139.
14. Christian Smith, *The Emergence of Liberation Theology*, 27.
15. Ibid.
16. Chopp and Regan, *Latin American Liberation Theology*, 475.
17. Philip Berryman, *Liberation Theology: Essential Facts about the Revolutionary Movement in Latin America and Beyond*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987), 4.
18. Rebecca S. Chopp and Ethna Regan, *Latin American Liberation Theology*, 471.
19. Ibid, 473.
20. See S. Hawley, *Does God speak Misquito*, (PhD, Oxford University, 1995).
21. Gutierrez, *Theology of Liberation*, 11.
22. Quoted and referred to in Rosemary Radford Ruether, *To Change the World: Christology and Cultural Criticism* (London: SCM Press, 1992), 27. Also see Notes (no. 12) to Chapter II (*Christology and Liberation Theology*) in *To Change the World*, 75.
23. See Ruether, *To Change the World*, 27.
24. Gina Lende, *A Quest for Justice: Palestinian Christians and their Contextual Theology*, (M.Phil, University of Oslo, 2003), 51. This work was one of the first works in English from a European University that focused on Palestinian Christian issues and their affairs.

25. Gina Lende, *A Quest for Justice: Palestinian Christians and their Contextual Theology*, 51.
26. K.C. Abraham, 'Third World Theologies,' *CTC Bulletin*, May-December 1992, 8, in 'Towards a Contextual Theology,' by Lourdino A. Yuzon, *CTC Bulletin*, Chapter 1, XII (2)-XIII (1 and 2), July 1994-September 1995. Available at <http://www.cca.org.hk/resources/ctc/ctc94-02/1.Yuzon.htm> (accessed on April 30, 2006). Rev. K. C. Abraham was the author of many books and articles including *Third World Theologies: Commonalities and Divergences*, (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock Publishers, October 2004), and *Liberative Solidarity: Contemporary Perspectives on Mission*, (Tiruvalla, India: Christava Sahitya Samithi, April 1996).
27. K. C. Abraham, *Third World Theologies*, 5.
28. Stephen B. Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1992), 1. Stephen Bevans is also co-author (with his colleague Roger Schroeder, S.V.D.) of *Constants in Context: A Theology of Mission for Today*, (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2004).
29. Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology*, 1-2.
30. Ibid.
31. José M. de Mesa, 'Contextual Theologizing: Future Perspectives,' *East Asian Pastoral Review* 40, no. 3 (2003) in *Theses on the Local Church: A Theological Reflection in the Asian Context*, FABC Papers 60, 54. Available at <http://eapi.admu.edu.ph/eapr003/mesa.htm>, (accessed on September 14, 2006).
32. K. C. Abraham, *Third World Theologies*, 5.
33. Mitri Raheb, *I am a Palestinian Christian* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 25.
34. Naim Ateek, *Justice and only Justice: A Palestinian theology of Liberation*, (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1989), 71.
35. Ibid, 72.
36. Rosemary Radford Ruether, 'Foreword,' in *I am a Palestinian Christian*, by Mitri Raheb, 7.
37. Ibid, 8.
38. Raheb, *Palestinian Christian*, 15-16.
39. Ruether, *Foreword*, 8. Also see Raheb, *Palestinian Christian*, 24-25.
40. The history and aims of Tantur can be accessed from the website <http://come.to/tantur>, accessed on February 21, 2008.
41. See Michael Dumper, *The Politics of Sacred Space: The Old City of Jerusalem in the Middle East Conflict* (London: Lynne Rienner, 2002), 132-133.
42. 'Theology and the Local Church in the Holy Land: Palestinian Contextualized Theology,' Bethlehem, *Al-Liqa Journal*, (summer 1987), http://www.al-liqa-center.org.ps/p_materials/eng/theology.php (accessed July 25, 2006).

43. Refer Yohanna Katanacho, 'Arab Christians,' review of *Arab Masibioun*, by Geris Khoury (January 22, 2008), <http://www.comeandsee.com/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=857>.
44. See Geris Khoury, 'Olive Tree Theology-Rooted in the Palestinian Soil,' *Al-Liqa Journal* 26 (June 2006): 95. Also see Geris Khoury, 'Palestinian Christian Identity,' in *Faith and the Intifada: Palestinian Christian Voices*, eds. N. S. Ateek, R. R. Ruether and M. H. Ellis (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1992), 72–73.
45. Refer Geris Khoury, *Olive Tree Theology*, 99.
46. See Geris Khoury, *Olive Tree Theology*, 102. Also see Khoury, *Palestinian Christian Identity*, 73–74.
47. Geris Khoury, *Palestinian Christian Identity*, 75.
48. Geris Khoury, *Olive Tree Theology*, 96. Also see Rosemary Radford Ruether, 'Preface,' in *Faith and the Intifada: Palestinian Christian Voices*, eds. N. S. Ateek, M. H. Ellis and R. R. Ruether (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1992), 10.
49. Geris Khoury, *Olive Tree Theology*, 96.
50. Refer Rafiq Khoury, 'Earthly and Heavenly Kingdom: An Eastern Christian Perspective,' *Al-Liqa Journal* 28 (August, 2007): 108.
51. Rosemary Radford Ruether, 'Preface,' in *Faith and the Intifada: Palestinian Christian Voices*, eds. N. S. Ateek, M. H. Ellis and R. R. Ruether (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1992), 9. Also see Rafiq Khoury, *Earthly and Heavenly Kingdom*, 109.
52. Rafiq Khoury, *Earthly and Heavenly Kingdom*, 109.
53. Rafiq Khoury, 'Christian Communities in the Middle East: Current Realities and Challenges in the Islamic Context,' *Al-Liqa Journal* 28 (August 2007): 17.
54. Rafiq Khoury, 'Christian Communities in the Middle East, 17. Also see 'The Future of the Churches in the Middle East,' *First Statement of the Catholic Patriarchs of the East*, Bifkaya-Lebanon (August 24, 1991), <http://www.opus-libani.org.lb/cpco-english/img00591.htm> (accessed on December 2, 2008).
55. See also 'The Christian Presence in the Middle East: Witness and Mission,' *Second Collegial Pastoral letter of the Catholic Patriarchs of the Middle East to their Faithful in their different countries of Residence*, Cairo (1992), <http://www.al-bushra.org/mag08/extpr.htm> (accessed July 23, 2007).
56. See Tsimhoni, *Christian Communities*, 191–192.
57. See Michel Sabbah, 'Reading the Bible Today in the Land of the Bible,' *Fourth Pastoral Letter of the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem*, Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem (November 1993). Available at http://www.lpj.org/newsite2006/patriarch/pastoral-letters/1993/readingthebible_en.html (accessed October 24, 2008).

58. Ibid.
59. Michel Sabbah, 'Reading the Bible Today in the Land of the Bible,' *Fourth Pastoral Letter of the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem*.
60. Ibid.
61. Ibid.
62. Ibid.
63. Ibid.
64. Ibid.
65. Michel Sabbah, 'Reading the Bible Today in the Land of the Bible,' *Fourth Pastoral Letter of the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem*.
66. See Ateek, *Justice*, 55–61.
67. Source: History of the Melkite Greek Catholic Church on the World Wide Web at <http://www.melkite.org/index.htm>, accessed March 20, 2008.
68. Refer Fr. Rafiq Khoury, 'Shaping Communities in Times of Crisis: Land, Peoples and identities: The Palestinian Case,' paper delivered at the Intercultural conference of the International Center of Bethlehem, November 11, 2005, <http://www.annadwa.org/intercultural/Rafiq.doc> (accessed January 21, 2007). Also see unpublished review of Ateek's book *Justice and only Justice: A Palestinian Theology of Liberation*, (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1989), and its Arabic translation, *The Struggle for Justice: Palestinian Liberation*, (Bethlehem: Dar al-Kalima, 2002), by David Neuhaus SJ, p.2. The Author is grateful to Rev. Neuhaus for making available to him the text of this review by email, after an interview with him in West Jerusalem (September 6, 2007). Some of Chacour's books include *Blood Brothers* (1984, 2003), *We Belong to the Land* (1990, 1992), and the latest *Faith Beyond Despair, Building Hope in the Holy Land* (2002, 2008). These works were largely autobiographical, written in the above mentioned 'narrative' mode of telling a story as well as conveying a theological point of view.
69. Statement by Archbishop Elias Chacour in *Abuna Elias Chacour to Receive Eighteenth Niwano Peace Prize*, Mar Elias Educational Institutions (MEEI) press release, Ibillin-Galilee (February 19, 2001), <http://www.meei.org/who/niwano.pdf>, accessed on March 20, 2007.
70. See Abuna (Father) Elias Chacour, *Free Yourself from Hatred*, <http://www.meei.org/who/free.pdf> (accessed on March, 21, 2007).
71. Riah Abu El-Assal *Caught in between: The story of an Arab Palestinian Christian Israeli*, (London: SPCK, 1999).
72. Information acquired by this researcher during various conversations between him and Naim Ateek as well as various Sabeel staff members in Jerusalem in August-September 2007.

73. See Davies, Mathew. 'Middle East: Court ruling favours Jerusalem diocese, not former bishop, in dispute over school's ownership; Jerusalem Bishop Suheil Dawani committed to preserving institutions for future mission.' *Episcopallife online*. May 28, 2008. http://www.episcopalchurch.org/81808_97428_ENG_HTM.htm (accessed on December 4, 2008).
74. See El-Assal, *Caught in between*, 146.
75. Ibid, 56.
76. Ibid.
77. Ibid, 57–58.
78. Interview with Marc Ellis at 2nd Intercultural Conference of the International Centre of Bethlehem, *Dar al-Annadwa*, August 27–September 1, 2007.
79. See also the work by Thomas Damm (out of print now and translated from the German), *Palestinian Liberation Theology: A German theologian's approach and appreciation* (Trier: Culturverein AphorismA, 1994), 6.
80. See Marc Ellis, *Toward a Jewish theology of Liberation* (London: SCM Press, 1987), 25–26, in *Justice*, by Ateek, 70.
81. Ateek, *Justice*, 70.
82. See Rosemary Ruether, *The Wrath of Jonah: The Crisis of Religious Nationalism in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002), 217.
83. Ellis, *Toward a Jewish Theology of Liberation*, 114, in *Justice* by Ateek, 70.
84. See Ellis, *Towards a Jewish Theology of Liberation*, 114.
85. Ibid, 84, 114–115.
86. Ibid, 117.
87. See Marc H. Ellis, 'Holocaust, Christian Zionism and beyond a Jewish Theology of Liberation After,' in *Challenging Christian Zionism: Theology, Politics and the Israel-Palestine Conflict*, eds. Naim Ateek, Cedar Duaybis, and Maurine Tobin (London: Melisende, 2005), 176–177. Also see Ellis, *Toward a Jewish Theology of Liberation*, 120.
88. Ellis, *Toward a Jewish Theology of Liberation*, 112.
89. Ibid, 112–113.
90. Ellis, *Toward a Jewish Theology of Liberation*, 120.
91. Ibid, 115.
92. Ibid.
93. Ellis, *Toward a Jewish Theology of Liberation*, 115.
94. See Rosemary R. Ruether, 'Preface,' in *Faith and the Intifada: Palestinian Christian Voices*, eds. N. S. Ateek, M. H. Ellis and R. R. Ruether, (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1992), 9–10.
95. See Gregory Baum, 'Introduction,' in *Faith and Patricide: The Theological Roots of Anti-Semitism*, by Rosemary Ruether, (London: Search Press, 1975), 11–12. Also see Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Liberation Theology: Human*

- Hope Confronts Christian History and American Power* (New York: Paulist Press, 1972), 9.
96. Rosemary R. Ruether, *Faith and Fratricide: The Theological Roots of Anti-Semitism*, (London: Search Press, 1975), 184.
 97. See Rosemary Ruether, 'Western Christianity and Zionism,' in *Faith and the Intifada: Palestinian Christian Voices*, eds. N. S. Ateek, R. R. Ruether and M. H. Ellis (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1992), 156. Also see R. R. Ruether, *Liberation Theology*, 10.
 98. See Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Liberation Theology: Human Hope Confronts Christian History and American Power* (New York: Paulist Press, 1972), 11.
 99. Ruether, *Western Christianity and Zionism*, 16.
 100. Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Faith and Fratricide: The Theological Roots of Anti-Semitism*, (London: Search Press, 1975).
 101. Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Faith and Fratricide*, 28.
 102. Ibid, 65.
 103. See Gregory Baum, 'Introduction,' in *Faith and Fratricide: The Theological Roots of Anti-Semitism*, by Rosemary R. Ruether (London: Search Press, 1975), 12.
 104. See Rosemary Ruether, *The Wrath of Jonah: The Crisis of Religious Nationalism in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002), 186–190; 216–218. Refer R.R. Ruether, 'Middle East Peace Means Restoring an Old Arab's Farm,' *National Catholic Reporter*, (June 5, 1987): 12 and R.R. Ruether, 'Peace Doesn't Mean Putting Palestinians in Their Place,' *National Catholic Reporter*, (April 8, 1988): 14–15 as well as R.R. Ruether, 'Listening to Palestinian Christians,' *Christianity and Crisis* 48, (April 4, 1988): 113–115. For further references see Ateek, *Justice*, 195.
 105. See two books by Stephen Sizer, *Zion's Christian Soldiers? The bible, Israel and the church*, (Nottingham: IVP, 2007) and Stephen Sizer, *Christian Zionism, Road Map to Armageddon*, (Nottingham: IVP, 2004). Also see Rosemary Radford Ruether, 'Western Christianity and Zionism,' in *Faith and the Intifada: Palestinian Christian Voices*, ed. in N.S. Ateek, M.H. Ellis and R.R. Ruether (NY: Maryknoll-Orbis Books, 1992), 147.
 106. Ruether, *Western Christianity and Zionism*, 148.
 107. Ruether, *Western Christianity and Zionism*, 148–149. Also refer Ronald R. Stockton, 'Christian Zionism-Prophecy and public opinion,' *Middle East Journal* 41, no.2 (Spring 1987): 246. Quoted in Rosemary Ruether, 'Western Christianity and Zionism,' in *Faith and the Intifada: Palestinian Christian Voices*, ed. N. S. Ateek, M. H. Ellis and R. R. Ruether (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1992), 150–153.
 108. Ruether, *Western Christianity and Zionism*, 152.

109. Ibid, 152.
110. Ibid, 153–154.
111. Ruether, *Western Christianity and Zionism*, 154.
112. Ibid.
113. Ibid, 156.
114. Ibid.
115. See Rosemary Ruether, *Justice and Reconciliation*, in *Holy Land, Hollow Jubilee: God, Justice and the Palestinians*, ed. Naim Ateek and Michael Prior (London: Melisende, 1999), 121.
116. Rosemary Ruether, *Justice and Reconciliation*, 121.

Chapter 3 The ‘Sabeel’ Ecumenical Liberation Theology Centre in Jerusalem: A Study of the Theology and Praxis of Naim Ateek

1. Duaybis later wrote a report of the South African trip made in the early 1990s, which was available on the Sabeel website in one of the very early Cornerstone magazine releases.
2. My main source for this will be his two main books setting out a Palestinian theology of liberation, *Justice and Only Justice: A Palestinian Theology of Liberation* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1989) and the recently published, *A Palestinian Christian Cry for Reconciliation*, (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2008). I shall also be making use of a plethora of articles and essays written by Ateek and published in many of the Sabeel Conference outputs as well as in their quarterly English only journal, *Cornerstone*. In addition, I shall make use of many interview articles and reviews published in Western Church and Christian outlets as well as many American and Canadian newspaper reports.
3. See Jean Corbon, George Khodr, Samir Kafity, and Albert Lahham, ‘What is required of the Christian Faith Concerning the Palestine Problem,’ in *Biblical and Theological Concerns* (Limasol, Cyprus: Middle East Council of Churches, n.d.), 11–13. Also, see Jean Corbon, ‘Western Public Opinion and the Palestine Conflict,’ in *Christians, Zionism and Palestine* (Beirut: Institute for Palestine Studies, n.d.). This text was taken from a lecture presented by Jean Corbon in February 1969, again place unknown. Condemnation of Zionism as a form of racism was first adopted by the UN in 1975. See Marc H. Ellis, *Toward a Jewish Theology of Liberation*, (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2004), 152–154. The Middle East Council of Churches (MECC), the main collaborative organ of mainstream churches

- in the Middle Eastern region (and regional body of the World Council of Churches (WCC), had consistently elaborated a position based on the above enumerated points of vision, for a just resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The WCC's position too on this issue is well-known as a mirror of that of the MECC. Also see J. David Pleins, 'Is a Palestinian Theology of Liberation Possible?' *Anglican Theological Review* 74, no. 2 (1992): 143.
4. Jean Corbon, 'Western Public Opinion and the Palestine Conflict,' in *Christians, Zionism and Palestine* (Beirut: Institute for Palestine Studies, n.d.).
 5. Jean Corbon, George Khodr, Samir Kafity, and Albert Lahham, 'What is required of the Christian Faith Concerning the Palestine Problem,' in *Biblical and Theological Concerns* (Limasol, Cyprus: Middle East Council of Churches, n.d.), 11–13.
 6. Ibid.
 7. Ibid.
 8. Ibid.
 9. Ibid.
 10. Ibid.
 11. Ibid.
 12. Ibid.
 13. See Marc H. Ellis, *Toward a Jewish Theology of Liberation*, (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2004), 152–154.
 14. Ibid.
 15. The term 'Constantinian Judaism' was used extensively by Jewish liberation theologian, Marc H. Ellis, in many of his works, as well to a lesser extent by R. R. Ruether and Naim Ateek, in their respective works.
 16. See in this context, George Khodr, 'Christians of the Orient: Witness and Future; The Case of Lebanon,' *WCSF Journal* (May 1986): 36–42, in *Jewish Theology of Liberation*, by Marc Ellis, 154–155. Also see Ruether, *The Wrath of Jonah*, 183.
 17. Marc H. Ellis, *Toward a Jewish Theology of Liberation*, (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2004), 152–154. Also see Ateek, *Justice*, 57–58.
 18. Ateek, *Justice*, 58
 19. Ibid, 58–59.
 20. Ibid, 59, 66.
 21. Ibid, 59.
 22. Ibid.
 23. See Ateek, *Justice*, 57–58.
 24. Ibid, 57–61.

25. Also refer Azmi Bishara, *A Vision for Peace: Thinking the Unthinkable*, in *Holy Land Hollow Jubilee: God, Justice and the Palestinians*, ed. Naim Ateek and Michael Prior (London: Melisende, 1999), 294.
26. See Azmi Bishara, *A Vision for Peace*, 294–295. Also see Geries Khoury, 'The Social Role of Arab Christians in Israel, Jordan and Palestine,' *Al-Liqa Journal* 6, (February 1996): 4–8, 14–15.
27. See also Geries Khoury, *The Social Role of Arab Christians*, 7.
28. Ateek, *Justice*, 160.
29. Ateek, *Justice*, 160, 210n.22.
30. See Ateek, *Justice*, 160.
31. See Geries Khoury, *The Social Role of Arab Christians*, 24.
32. In this context, see Michael Dumper, 'The Christian Churches of Jerusalem in the Post-Oslo Period,' *Journal of Palestine Studies* 31, no. 2 (winter 2002): 55.
33. See Donald E. Wagner, *Dying in the Land of Promise: Palestine and Palestinian Christianity from Pentecost to 2000* (London: Melisende, 2003), 35.
34. Ibid, 38.
35. See Ateek, *Justice*, 15–16.
36. See Kenneth Cragg, *The Arab Christian*, (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1991), 14.
37. Ateek, *Justice*, 11.
38. See *Preface in A Palestinian Christian Cry for Reconciliation*, by Naim Ateek (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2008), 14.
39. Ateek, *A Palestinian Christian Cry for Reconciliation*, 5, 8–9.
40. Ibid, 8–9.
41. Interview with Naim Ateek in August, 2007.
42. In this context, see Amnon Ramon, *The Christian Element and the Jerusalem Question* (Jerusalem: Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies-Background Papers for Policy Makers, April 1997), 7–8. Also see Tsimhoni, *Christian Communities*, 192.
43. Samia Khoury, Foreword-Welcome, in *Faith and the Intifada: Palestinian Christian Voices*, ed. Naim S. Ateek, Marc H. Ellis, Rosemary Radford Ruether (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1992), vii–viii.
44. Ibid.
45. Ateek, *Justice*, 86. Also see Malcolm Lowe, 'Israel and Palestinian Liberation Theology,' in *End of an Exile*, by James Parkes 3rd Ed. Eugene B. Korn and Roberta Kalechofsky eds. (Marblehead, MA: Micah Publications, 2005), 271.
46. Samia Khoury, 'Foreword-Welcome', in *Faith and the Intifada: Palestinian Christian Voices*, vii–viii.

47. See Ateek, *Justice*, 85, 86–87.
48. See, in this context, Robert Allan Warrior, 'Canaanites, Cowboys, and Indians: Deliverance, Conquest, and Liberation Theology Today', in *Voices of the Religious Left: A Contemporary Sourcebook*, ed. Rebecca T. Alpert, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2000), 51–57.
49. Ibid.
50. Ibid.
51. See Munib A. Younan, 'Palestinian Local Theology,' *Al-Liqa Journal* 1 (May 1992): 55–57.
52. Ibid.
53. Ibid.
54. See Younan, *Palestinian Local Theology*, 56–58.
55. Ateek, *Justice*, 75.
56. Arnold J. Toynbee, *Introduction*, in *Prophecy, Zionism and the State of Israel*, by Elmer Berger (New York: American Council for Judaism, 1968) in *Justice*, by Ateek, 75–76.
57. Ateek, *Justice*, 78.
58. J. David Pleins, 'Is a Palestinian Theology of Liberation Possible?' *Anglican Theological Review* 74, no. 2 (1992): 139.
59. Ateek, *Justice*, 77.
60. See Elizabeth Schussler Fiorenza, *The Politics of Otherness: Biblical Interpretation as a Critical Praxis for Liberation*, in *Voices from the margin: interpreting the Bible in the Third World*, ed. R.S Sugirtharajah (London: SPCK, 1991), 313–315.
61. In this context, see I. J. Mosala, *Biblical Hermeneutics and Black Theology in South Africa*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 10–30.
62. Ateek, *Justice*, 77.
63. See Pleins, *Is a Palestinian Theology of Liberation Possible?*, 139.
64. Ateek, *Justice*, 92.
65. See John Ferguson, *War and Peace in the World's Religions*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), 80, in *Justice* by Ateek, 92.
66. This was a favourite scripture quotation of both Ateek as well as Mitri Raheb. They used it to prove that the God, YHWH, is an inclusive God who loves all equally. See Ateek, *Justice*, 93.
67. Ateek, *Justice*, 65.
68. See Ateek, *Justice*, 64–65.
69. See Paul van Buren, *A Christian Theology of the People, Israel* (New York: Seabury Press, 1983). Also see Ruether, *The Wrath of Jonah*, 209–213.
70. Ibid.
71. Ibid.

72. Ibid.
73. Ateek, *Justice*, 78.
74. See Younan, *Palestinian Local Theology*, 57.
75. Ibid.
76. See Ateek, *Justice*, 83–85. Also see Ateek, *A Palestinian Christian Cry for Reconciliation*, 55–56.
77. Naim Ateek, *Zionism and the land: a Palestinian Christian perspective*, in *The Land of Promise: Biblical, Theological and Contemporary Perspectives*, ed. Philip Johnston and Peter Walker (Illinois: Inter-Varsity Press, 2000), 208.
78. Ateek, *Justice*, 93–94.
79. Ibid.
80. Ibid.
81. See Ateek, *Justice*, 95.
82. Ibid, 96.
83. See also Harald Suermann, 'Palestinian Contextual Theology,' *Al-Liqa* 5 (July 1995): 18.
84. Ateek, *Justice*, 78.
85. *The Jerusalem Post* Newspaper (Jerusalem): October 28, (1994) in *Cornerstone* 2, (winter 1994). Available at <http://www.sabeel.org/old/news/newsltr2/index.htm> (accessed on February 3, 2007).
86. Ibid.
87. Micah 6:8.
88. Ateek, *Justice*, 116.
89. Ibid, 117–119.
90. Ibid.
91. Ibid, 139.
92. Ibid, 159.
93. Matthew 18:23–25. Also Ateek, *Justice*, 140–141.
94. Drew Christiansen, *Palestinian Christians: Recent Development*, in *The Vatican-Israel Accords: Political, Legal and Theological Contexts*, ed. Marshall J. Breger, (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2004), 307–336. Quoted in Leonard Marsh, *Palestinian Christians: Theology and Politics in the Holy Land*, in *Christianity in the Middle East: Studies in Modern History, Theology and Politics*, ed. Anthony O'Mahony (London: Melisende, 2008), 218.
95. Ateek, *Justice*, 43.
96. Ibid, 133.
97. Ibid, 135.
98. Ibid, 150.
99. Ateek, *Justice*, 150.

100. Ibid, 90.
101. Ibid.
102. Ibid, 91.
103. Ibid.
104. Ibid, 92.
105. Ibid.
106. Amos 9:7: Were you not like the Ethiopians (or Cushites; Nubians) to me, O people of Israel? says the Lord. Did I not bring Israel up from the land of Egypt, And the Philistines from Caphtor and the Arameans from Kir?
107. Leviticus 25:23: The land shall not be sold in perpetuity, for the land is mine; with me you were but aliens and tenants.' Psalm 24:1: The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it.
108. Ateek, *Justice*, 109.
109. Ibid, 99.
110. Ibid.
111. Ibid.
112. Naim Ateek, *Zionism and the land: a Palestinian Christian perspective*, in *The Land of Promise: Biblical, Theological and Contemporary Perspectives*, ed. Philip Johnston and Peter Walker, (Illinois: Inter-Varsity Press, 2000), 210.
113. John 3:16.
114. John 4:24.
115. Naim Ateek, *Zionism and the land: a Palestinian Christian perspective*, in *The Land of Promise: Biblical, Theological and Contemporary Perspectives*, ed. Johnston and Walker, 212.
116. Acts 3:3–6.
117. Ateek, *Justice*, 100.
118. Ateek, *A Palestinian Christian Cry for Reconciliation*, 89.
119. Ibid.
120. Exodus 3:5.
121. See Ateek in Walker, 211.
122. Stephen was actually stoned to death for insisting before the Jewish Sanhedrin the facts about Jesus' birth and the non-Judaic nature of Jewish prophetic and divine inheritance. See Acts 7.
123. Ateek, *Justice*, 110.
124. Ibid, 110.
125. Ibid, 110–111.
126. Ibid, 111.
127. Ibid, 110.
128. Ibid, 111.

129. Ibid, 112.
130. Ateek, *Justice*, 112 and Micah 6:8.
131. Ateek, *Justice*, 89.
132. Ibid, 111.
133. Ibid, 112.
134. Ernest Renan, *The Life of Jesus*, (New York: Modern Library, 1927), in, *Justice*, by Ateek, 113.
135. See Ateek in Walker, 213–214.

Chapter 4 The Politics and Praxis of Naim Ateek and Sabeel

1. See Ateek, *Jerusalem in Islam and for Palestinian Christians*, in *Jerusalem: Past and Present in the Purposes of God*, 2nd Ed. by P. W. L. Walker, (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1994), 125–126.
2. This information was accessed via talks with many West Bank-educated Palestinian youth during this researcher's last field trip in August–September 2007, as well as during my interview with leading Sabeel board member and lawyer, Jonathan Kurttab.
3. See Naim Ateek, *June 1994 Postscript to Jerusalem in Islam and for Palestinian Christians* in *Jerusalem: Past and Present in the Purposes of God*, 2nd Ed. by P. W. L. Walker, (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1994), 152.
4. See *Memorandum of Their Beatitudes The Patriarchs And of the Heads of the Christian Communities in Jerusalem On the Significance of Jerusalem for Christians*, Available at www.al-bushra.org/hedchrch/memorandum.htm (accessed on August 15, 2006). Also see Naim Ateek, 'The Significance of Jerusalem for Christians,' *Cornerstone magazine*, Jerusalem, Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Centre, no. 2 (winter 1994). Available at <http://www.sabeel.org/old/news/newsltr2/index.htm> (accessed February 10, 2007).
5. See Naim Ateek, *A Palestinian Theology of Jerusalem*, in *Jerusalem: What Makes for Peace! A Palestinian Christian Contribution to Peacemaking*, ed. Naim Ateek, Cedar Duaybis and Marla Schrader (London: Melisende, 1997), 94–95.
6. Naim Ateek, 'The Significance of Jerusalem for Christians,' *Cornerstone magazine*, Jerusalem, Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Centre, no. 2 (winter 1994). Available at <http://www.sabeel.org/old/news/newsltr2/index.htm> (accessed February 10, 2007).
7. See the 'Jerusalem Sabeel Document: Principles for a Just Peace in Palestine-Israel,' *Cornerstone magazine*, no. 19 (summer 2000): 4–7. Refer Appendix D for a map of Palestinian West Bank cities and Israeli Settlement policy.

8. Jerusalem Sabeel Document. Again see the *Jerusalem Patriarchal Declaration* of 1994, details of which were mentioned earlier.
9. This point was also emphasized in the *Jerusalem Declaration* mentioned above.
10. Jerusalem Patriarchal Declaration, 1994.
11. Naim Ateek, 'The Mosaic of Jerusalem,' *Cornerstone magazine*, Jerusalem Special Issue, autumn 1995. Available at <http://www.sabeel.org/old/news/newsltr3/index.htm> (accessed on February 10, 2007).
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid.
14. Ateek, *Justice*, 134. In Saliba Sarsar, 'Palestinian Christians: Religion, Conflict and the Struggle for Just Peace,' *Holy Land Studies Journal* 4, no. 2 (November 2005): 41.
15. Naim Ateek, 'O Jerusalem! If You Only Knew Today,' *Cornerstone Magazine*, no. 39 (winter 2006): 1. Available at <http://www.sabeel.org/pdfs/corner39.pdf> (accessed on May 23, 2006).
16. Ibid.
17. See in this context, 'Jerusalem Sabeel Document: Principles for a Just Peace in Palestine-Israel,' *Cornerstone magazine*, no.19 (summer 2000): 5.
18. See *Sabeel Jerusalem Document*, 6.
19. See Donald Wagner, *Dying in the land of Promise: Palestine and Palestinian Christianity from Pentecost to 2000*, (London: Melisende, 2003), 225.
20. See Naim Ateek, 'O Jerusalem! If You Only Knew Today,' *Cornerstone Magazine*, no. 39 (winter 2006): 1. Available at <http://www.sabeel.org/pdfs/corner39.pdf> (accessed on May 23, 2006).
21. See the *Jerusalem Sabeel Document*, 6.
22. Ibid.
23. Quoted in Sarsar, *Palestinian Christians: Religion, Conflict and the Struggle for Just Peace*, 41.
24. Ibid.
25. The 'Allon Plan' was authored by Yigal Allon, a legendary commander of the early Israeli military. Refer map in Appendix B.
26. For a map of Palestinian West Bank cities and Israeli Settlement policy, refer Appendix D.
27. See *Jerusalem Sabeel Document*, 6–7. Also see Donald Wagner, *Dying in the land of Promise: Palestine and Palestinian Christianity from Pentecost to 2000*, (London: Melisende, 2003), 226; 286–292.
28. Naim Ateek, *Justice and Only Justice: A Palestinian Theology of Liberation*, (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1989), 172–174. Also see Naim Ateek, *A Palestinian Christian Cry for Reconciliation*, (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2008), 175–176.

29. See 'Interfaith: Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Centre: An ADL Backgrounder,' January 24, 2007. Article posted on the interfaith homepage of the Anti-Defamation League website at http://www.adl.org/main_Interfaith/sabeel_backgrounder.htm (accessed on March 22, 2006).
30. Ibid.
31. Dexter Van Zile, 'View Is Not for All Christians,' Boston, *The Jewish Advocate online*, March 14, 2007, http://www.thejewishadvocate.com/this_weeks_issue/letters_to_the_editor/?content_id=2441 (accessed on February 24, 2006).
32. Interview with Ms. Amneh Badran, Doctoral Candidate at the Department of Politics, University of Exeter and former Director of the Jerusalem Centre for Women, February 21, 2007. See Donald Wagner, *Dying in the Land of Promise*, 200–201.
33. Naim Ateek, 'Human Rights were God given Rights,' *Cornerstone Magazine*, no. 14, New Year (1999). Available at <http://www.sabeel.org/old/news/news14/index.htm> (accessed on February 20, 2007).
34. Naim Ateek, 'Human Rights were God given Rights,' *Cornerstone Magazine*. The emphasis here was on the obvious fact that was also the root cause of the Arab-Israeli conflict, which was the inability of the Israeli authorities to view, respect and deal with Palestinians and Arabs from a fully human perspective.
35. Ateek, *Human Rights were God given Rights*.
36. Ibid.
37. Ibid.
38. Ateek, *Human Rights were God given Rights*.
39. Canon Naim Ateek and Mrs. Cedar Duaybis, 'Palestine and South Africa: Reflections on a visit to South Africa,' *Cornerstone*, Jerusalem, Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Centre, no. 2 (winter 1994). Available at <http://www.sabeel.org/old/news/news12/index.htm> (accessed February 10, 2007).
40. Dan Connell, 'Palestine on the Edge: Crisis in the National Movement,' *Middle East Report: Odds Against Peace: Palestine, Israel and the Crisis of Transition*, no. 194/195, (May-August 1995): 6-9. Available at: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3012780> or <http://www.merip.org/mer/mer194/palestine-edge> (accessed February 10, 2007).
41. Ibid.
42. Ibid.
43. See Naim Ateek, *Who is the Church? A Christian Theology for the Holy Land*, in *The Christian Heritage in the Holy land*, ed. Anthony O' Mahony, Goran Gunner and Kevork Hintlian (London: Scorpion Cavendish Ltd, 1995), 316.

44. Ibid, 318.
45. Ibid.
46. Ibid, 317.
47. Ibid.
48. Ibid.
49. Ibid.
50. Ibid, 318.
51. The term 'dhimmitude' was coined by Bat Ye'or (in her famous work *The decline of Eastern Christianity under Islam: from Jihad to Dhimmitude: seventh-twentieth century*, Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1996), a Hebrew pseudonym (meaning daughter of the Nile) for Gisele Littman, an Egyptian-born British historian, who wrote about the history of the non-Muslim people living in Islamic lands, the so-called 'dhimmis.' Their socio-political and legal status within the state was sought to be defined using the term 'dhimmitude.'
52. Naim Ateek, *Who is the Church? A Christian Theology for the Holy Land*, in *The Christian Heritage in the Holy land*, ed. Anthony O' Mahony, Goran Gunner and Kevork Hintlian (London: Scorpion Cavendish Ltd, 1995), 319.
53. Ibid.
54. Ibid.
55. Information obtained from interview with Fr. Peter Madros at the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, August 17, 2006.
56. Ateek, *Who is the Church? A Christian Theology for the Holy Land*, 320.
57. The Sabeel Centre in Jerusalem had brought out a primer titled 'Contemporary Way of the Cross: A Liturgical Journey along the Palestinian Via Dolorosa,' (Jerusalem: Sabeel Centre, 2005).
58. See Naim Ateek, *A Palestinian Christian Cry for Reconciliation*, (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2008), 11; 92–93. Also see Ateek, *Justice and Only Justice*, 13. Also see reference to speech by Ateek titled 'The Zionist Ideology of Domination Versus the Reign of God,' at the Notre Dame Centre, Jerusalem, 2001 in *The Misunderstood Jew: The Church and the Scandal of the Jewish Jesus*, by Amy Jill-Levine (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2006), 183.
59. Amy Jill-Levine, *The Misunderstood Jew: The Church and the Scandal of the Jewish Jesus*, (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2006), 183.
60. Ibid.
61. Part of a convocation speech by Ateek at the Episcopal Divinity School, Cambridge, MA, 2006 in 'The Misunderstood Jew: The Church and the Scandal of the Jewish Jesus,' by Amy Jill-Levine (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2006), 184.

62. Amy Jill-Levine, *The Misunderstood Jew*, 184.
63. Ibid, 185.
64. See 'Interfaith: Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Centre: An ADL Backgrounder.'
65. Ibid.
66. Dexter Van Zile, 'Sabeel's Teachings of Contempt,' A Judeo-Christian Alliance Report, June 2005, <http://www.c4rpme.org/bin/articles.cgi?Cat=activist-roadblock&Subcat=sabeel&ID=161> (accessed on April 23, 2006).
67. Dexter Van Zile, 'A Primer on Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Centre,' Boston-MA, David Project Centre for Jewish Leadership, October 2005, <http://www.judeo-christianalliance.org/materials/SabeelPrimer.doc> (accessed on April 30, 2006).
68. Ibid.
69. Ibid.
70. Hillel Stavits, Letters to the editor – 'Bullying for the Hidden Truths,' Boston, *The Jewish Advocate online*, March 14, 2007, http://www.thejewishadvocate.com/this_weeks_issue/letters_to_the_editor/?content_id=2441 (accessed on February 24, 2006).
71. Ibid.
72. Dexter Van Zile, 'Sabeel's Teachings of Contempt.'
73. Ibid.
74. Ibid.
75. Ibid.
76. Interview with Naim Ateek, Jerusalem, Sabeel, August 24, 2007.
77. Dexter Van Zile, 'Sabeel's Teachings of Contempt.'
78. Ibid.
79. Ibid.
80. See Malcolm Lowe, 'Israel and Palestinian Liberation Theology,' in *End of an Exile*, by James Parkes 3rd Ed. Eugene B. Korn and Roberta Kalechofsky eds. (Marblehead, MA: Micah Publications, 2005), 265–266.
81. Mark D. Tooley, 'Liberation Theology in the Middle East,' *FrontPageMagazine.com*, May 23, 2006, <http://www.frontpagemag.com/Articles/ReadArticle.asp?ID=22575> (accessed on March 3, 2007).
82. Ibid.
83. Malcolm Lowe, 'Israel and Palestinian Liberation Theology,' 266.
84. Mark D. Tooley, 'Liberation Theology in the Middle East.'
85. Michael Marten, 'Anglican and Presbyterian Presence and Theology in the Holy Land,' *International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church* 5, no. 2, (July 2005): 191.

86. Ibid, 191.
87. Malcolm Lowe, 'Israel and Palestinian Liberation Theology,' 269–270.
88. Kiran Laloo, 'The church and state in apartheid South Africa,' *Contemporary Politics* 4, no. 1, (1998): 39.
89. Ekklesia email news bulletin, 'Palestinian bishop urges non-violence to tackle injustice,' by staff writers, February 6, 2007, http://www.ekklesia.co.uk/news/world/070216dont_fight (accessed on February 7, 2007).
90. Ibid.
91. Sabeel Editorial, 'A call for morally responsible investment: A non-violent response to the occupation,' *Cornerstone* Special Issue 37 (summer 2005): 4. Also see *A call for morally responsible investment: A non-violent response to the occupation*, Sabeel Document No. 3, (Jerusalem: Sabeel Centre, Second Printing, May 2005): 12.
92. *A call for morally responsible investment: A non-violent response to the occupation*, Sabeel Document No. 3, 25.
93. See Rory McCarthy, 'Occupied Gaza like Apartheid South Africa, says UN report, Jerusalem, *The Guardian*, February 23, 2007. Available at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2007/feb/23/israelandthepalestinians.united-nations> (accessed on January 3, 2009).
94. See *Palestine and Apartheid*, speech made by Archbishop Emeritus of Cape Town, Desmond Tutu, at Friends of Sabeel North America conference at the Old South Church, Boston, October 27, 2007. Available at <http://www.boston.com/news/daily/29/102907speechtext.pdf> (accessed on January 3, 2009).
95. Again see Lawrence Wood, 'Tutu's story,' review of *Rabble-Rouser For Peace: The Authorized Biography of Desmond Tutu*, by John Allen (New York: Free Press, 2006), *The Christian Century* (October 17, 2006). Available at <http://www.christiancentury.org/article.lasso?id=2441> (accessed on January 3, 2009).
96. Ibid.
97. See Matti Friedman, 'Israel: Holy Boycotts,' Jerusalem, *The Jerusalem Report* (March 20, 2006): 17.
98. *A call for morally responsible investment: A non-violent response to the occupation*, Sabeel Document No. 3, 7.
99. Ibid, 15.
100. See Matti Friedman, 'Israel: Holy Boycotts,' Jerusalem, *The Jerusalem Report* (March 20, 2006): 17. Also see Paul Charles Merkley, *Christian Attitudes towards the State of Israel*, (London: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2001), 198–199.
101. Discussed in the next section in this chapter.

102. *A call for morally responsible investment: A non-violent response to the occupation*, Sabeel Document No. 3, 9.
103. Ibid, 9–10.
104. Ibid, 17.
105. See Michael Paulson, 'Church delegation offers Mideast peace investment plan: Effort meant to quell divestment from Israel,' *The Boston Globe*, July 2 (2005). Available at http://www.boston.com/news/local/articles/2005/07/02/church_delegation_offers_mideast_peace_investment_plan/ (accessed on January 3, 2009).
106. *A call for morally responsible investment: A non-violent response to the occupation*, Sabeel Document No. 3, 22.
107. See Sister Elaine Kelley, *Sabeel Snapshots*, Jerusalem (March 2006). Available at <http://ebookbrowse.com/sabeel-snapshots-march-06-doc-d105162272> (accessed on January 4, 2009).
108. Ibid.
109. *Interfaith: The Sabeel Centre: A Driving Force of Divestment*, August 23 (2005). Article posted on the interfaith homepage of the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) website at http://www.adl.org/main_Interfaith/sabeel_center.htm (accessed on February 23, 2007).
110. ADL Israel / Middle-East Press Release: *Radicalized Palestinian Christian Group Pushes Protestant Churches Toward Divestment*. Available at the ADL website at http://www.adl.org/PresRele/IsIME_62/4782_62.htm (accessed on February 23, 2006).
111. See Matti Friedman, 'Israel: Holy Boycotts,' Jerusalem, *The Jerusalem Report*, March 20 (2006): 17. Also see Tova Richard Hills, 2004 GA's *Israel/Palestine language replaced*, report on the Committee on Peacemaking and International Issues of the 217th General Assembly of PCUSA, Birmingham, Alabama, (June 15–22, 2006). Available at <http://www.pcusa.org/ga217/newsandphotos/ga06072.htm> (accessed on January 3, 2009).
112. See statement *A Global Campaign for Ethical Investment on behalf of Palestinian Human Rights and a Just and Viable peace in Israel-Palestine: An Ongoing Review of Diverse Approaches by Groups and Individuals Worldwide*, prepared by the Palestine-Israel Action Group, Michigan, Ann Arbor Friends Meeting, April (2008): 1.
113. See statement *Morally Responsible Investment: A Call To The UK Churches From Palestine-A Non-Violent Pro-active Response to the Israeli Occupation of Palestine*, released by The Interfaith Group for Morally Responsible investment, London, All Hallows on the Wall, nd. Available at <http://www.cc-vw.org/articles/mrii.htm> (accessed on January 24, 2009).

114. Ibid.
115. Ekklesia email news bulletin, *Church of England votes to disinvest in Caterpillar*, staff writers, February 7 (2006). Available at http://www.ekklesia.co.uk/content/news_syndication/article_06027caterpillar.shtml (accessed on March 20, 2007). See Matti Friedman, Israel: Holy Boycotts, Jerusalem, *The Jerusalem Report*, March 20, (2006):17. See also the Statement 'Morally Responsible Investment' by KAIROS (Canada)'s Executive Director following the *Sabeel Toronto Conference on Morally Responsible Investment As A Non-Violent Response To The Illegal Israeli Occupation Of Palestinian Territories* (October 26–29, 2005), Toronto, November 16, (2005). Available at http://www.fosna.org/investment_activism/documents/church_kairos.pdf (accessed on January 3, 2009).
116. Ekklesia email news bulletin, *Church of England votes to disinvest in Caterpillar*.
117. Sarah Mandel, 'The Radicals behind the Anglican Church,' *The Jerusalem Post*, February 26, (2006). Also available on the NGO-Monitor website at www.ngo-monitor.org. Available at <http://ebookbrowse.com/sabeel-snapshots-april-06-doc-d105162272> (accessed on September 28, 2006).
118. Ekklesia News Brief, *C of E divests from Caterpillar as pressure grows over mining shares*, staff writers, February 10 (2009). Available at <http://www.ekklesia.co.uk/node/8595> (accessed On March 10, 2009).
119. Ibid.
120. Sarah Mandel, 'The Radicals behind the Anglican Church,' *The Jerusalem Post*, February 26, (2006).

Chapter 5 Contextual Theology in Palestine: The Theological and Political-Cultural Practise of Mitri Raheb

1. See Donald E. Wagner, *Dying in the Land of Promise: Palestine and Palestinian Christianity from Pentecost to 2000* (London: Melisende, 2003), 32.
2. Notification of this conference along with programme and post-conference report were placed on the *Al-Liqa* organizational website for public awareness.
3. This was one of the motives behind his publication of his main book, *I am a Palestinian Christian*, (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995).
4. See Naim Ateek, *Justice and only Justice: A Palestinian Theology of Liberation*, (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1989), 63–65.
5. A common point raised by many Palestinian Christian theologians.

6. Again a common reason for the stridency of Palestinian Christians when questions of identity were raised.
7. Mitri Raheb, *I am a Palestinian Christian*, 79.
8. Ibid, 57–58.
9. Mitri Raheb, *Shaping Communities in times of Crises: Narratives of Land, peoples and Identities*, unpublished conference paper available as a newsletter on Mitri Raheb's website at <http://www.mitriRaheb.org/newsletters/shaping-communities.htm> (accessed on January 20, 2006).
10. Ibid.
11. Mitri Raheb, *Shaping Communities in times of Crises*.
12. Ibid. One is reminded here of the iconic Israeli UN diplomat and one time foreign minister Abba Eban.
13. Mitri Raheb, *Shaping Communities in times of Crises*. See also Naim S. Ateek, Marc H. Ellis, and R.R. Ruether, *Faith and the Intifada: Palestinian Christian Voices*, (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1990).
14. Mitri Raheb, *Shaping Communities in times of Crises: Narratives of Land, peoples and Identities*.
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid.
18. Ibid.
19. Ibid.
20. Ibid.
21. Ibid.
22. Galatians 3:28.
23. Mitri Raheb, *Shaping Communities in Times of Crises: Narratives of Land, Peoples and Identities*.
24. Ibid.
25. Ibid.
26. Ibid.
27. Ibid. Much of Raheb's as well as Ateek's theology was formulated in response to that of German post-Holocaust theologians such as Friedrich-Wilhelm Marquardt as well as the American theologian Paul M. van Buren. Ateek's criticism of van Buren's writings was detailed earlier in this work. Marquardt was a left-wing Barthian, whose best known book was *Die Juden und ihr Land*, (The Jews and their Land, Gütersloh, 1975, 2nd edition, 1978).
28. Interview with the Rev. Mitri Raheb: Pastor, Evangelical Lutheran Church, Bethlehem, August 16, 2006.
29. Ryan Beiler, *After the darkness, dawn. Against all odds, Palestinian Christians sought resurrection in Bethlehem*, Newspaper article archived on Raheb's website

- at http://www.mitriraheb.org/press/after_the_darkness.htm, accessed on February 23, 2006.
30. Mitri Raheb, *I am a Palestinian Christian*, 46.
 31. Ibid, 44.
 32. Ibid.
 33. Ibid.
 34. Ibid.
 35. Ibid, 45.
 36. Ibid.
 37. Much of the details given here had been accessed (by this researcher on January 8, 2009) of the main web-pages of both the ICB (*Dar al-Annadwa*) at http://www.annadwa.org/en/index.php?option=com_contentandtask=viewandid=7andItemid=12 and the 'Dar al-Kalima' College at http://college.daralkalima.org/index.php?option=com_contentandtask=viewandid=7andItemid=10.
 38. Mitri Raheb, *I am a Palestinian Christian*, 25.
 39. Mitri Raheb, Culture as the Art to breathe, *ICB Newsletter*, Archive of Articles and Updates. Available at http://www.annadwa.org/news/newsletter_sep06.htm (accessed on February 21, 2007).
 40. Ibid.
 41. Ibid.
 42. Mitri Raheb, *Culture as the Art to breathe*.
 43. Ibid.
 44. Ibid
 45. Ibid.
 46. Ibid.
 47. Ibid.
 48. Mitri Raheb, *I am a Palestinian Christian*, 56.
 49. Ibid.
 50. Mitri Raheb, *I am a Palestinian Christian*, 56.
 51. Ibid, 58–59. The implication is towards the Jewish and Christian post-Holocaust theologians previously referred to in this present chapter.
 52. Mitri Raheb, *I am a Palestinian Christian*, 58–59.
 53. Ibid, 58.
 54. Ibid.
 55. Mitri Raheb, 'Mission in the Context of Fragmentation,' *International review of Mission* 86, no. 343 (1997): 393.
 56. Ibid, 394.
 57. Mitri Raheb, *Mission in the Context of Fragmentation*, 395.
 58. Ibid.
 59. Ibid.

60. Ibid.
61. Ibid.
62. Mitri Raheb, *Mission in the Context of Fragmentation*, 395.
63. Ibid, 397.
64. Ibid.
65. Ibid.
66. Ibid, 398.
67. Mitri Raheb, *Mission in the Context of Fragmentation*, 398.
68. Mitri Raheb, *I am a Palestinian Christian*, 62.
69. Ibid.
70. Ibid.
71. Interview with the Rev. Mitri Raheb: Pastor, Evangelical Lutheran Church, Bethlehem, August 16, 2006.
72. Mitri Raheb, *I am a Palestinian Christian*, 81.
73. Ibid, 83.
74. Ibid.
75. Ibid, 84.
76. Raheb, *Palestinian Christian*, 89.
77. Ibid, 90.
78. Ibid, 90.
79. Ibid, 91.
80. Ibid, 89.
81. Ibid.
82. Ibid.
83. Ibid, 90.
84. Ibid.
85. Ibid, 91.
86. Ibid.
87. Raheb, *Palestinian Christian*, 93.
88. Jonah 4:11, in *I am a Palestinian Christian*, by Raheb, 97.
89. Raheb, *Palestinian Christian*, 97.
90. Ibid, 63.
91. Ibid, 64.
92. Ibid.
93. Ibid, 64.
94. Raheb, *Palestinian Christian*, 64.
95. Ibid, 64.
96. Ibid, 62.
97. Thomas Damm, *Palestinian Liberation Theology: A German theologian's approach and appreciation*, (Trier: Kulturverein Aphorisma, 1994), 11.

98. Mitri Raheb, 'Land, Peoples, and Identities: a Palestinian Perspective,' *Concilium International Journal of Theology* 2, 2007, 66. Also see Damm, Palestinian Liberation Theology, 12.
99. Damm, Palestinian Liberation Theology, 12.
100. Ibid, 13.
101. Ibid.
102. Ateek, *Justice*, 79. Also see Raheb, *Palestinian Christian*, 63.
103. Damm, *Palestinian Liberation Theology*, 13.
104. Ibid.
105. Ibid, 64.
106. Ibid.
107. Mitri Raheb, *I am a Palestinian Christian*, 66.
108. Ibid.
109. Ibid, 67–68.
110. Ibid.
111. Leviticus 26:31–39; Deuteronomy 4:25–28 and 28:63–68, in *Palestinian Christian*, by Raheb, 76.
112. Ezekiel 33:21–26, Leviticus 26:39–45 and Deuteronomy 30:1–10, in *I am a Palestinian Christian*, by Raheb, 76.
113. Ibid, 70
114. Ibid, 71.
115. See 1 Samuel 8:5–8. Also refer Raheb, *Palestinian Christian*, 77.
116. Refer 1 Samuel 8:7–8. Raheb acknowledges that there is a debate in Scripture over the validity of the monarchy and whether or not God willed it.
117. See Victoria Clark, *Allies for Armageddon: The Rise of Christian Zionism*, (London: Yale University Press, 2007), 140–144.
118. UNRWA (The United Nations Refugee Works Agency), the UN Agency set up in 1949 and mandated with relief work for the Palestinian refugees.
119. Mitri Raheb, *I am a Palestinian Christian*, 79–80.
120. Mitri Raheb, *I am a Palestinian Christian*, 71.
121. Ibid.
122. Ibid.
123. Ibid.
124. Ibid.
125. Ateek, *A Palestinian Christian Cry for Reconciliation*, 77.
126. Raheb, *Palestinian Christian*, 96.
127. Ibid.
128. Ibid.
129. Mitri Raheb, 'O Broken Town of Bethlehem,' Capital Commentary-Excerpts from the July 2002 issue of *The Lutheran* [c] 2002 Augsburg

- Fortress. Used by permission and available at <http://www.thelutheran.org>, biweekly email newsletter available from 'The Centre for Public Justice,' Washington, D.C., December 16, 2002. Available at [http://www.cpjustice.org/stories/storyReader\\$929](http://www.cpjustice.org/stories/storyReader$929) (accessed on February 28, 2007). Further information on this is available at <http://www.annadwa.org>.
130. Ibid.
 131. Ibid.
 132. Raheb, *Palestinian Christian*, 73.
 133. Ibid.
 134. 1 Kings 4:24.
 135. Numbers 34:2–13.
 136. *Eretz Yisrael*: Hebrew for united (unified) Israel.
 137. Raheb, *I am a Palestinian Christian*, 74.
 138. Ibid.
 139. Ibid.
 140. Ibid, 80.
 141. The reference here was to a statement by Hans Küng, *Das Judentum*, (Munich: Piper Verlag GmbH, 1991), 675–678, in *Palestinian Christian*, by Raheb, 74. The obvious reference was to the ancient borders of Israel as given in Numbers 34 and Ezekiel 47.
 142. Raheb makes reference to Biblical passages like Genesis 23:1–20, Judges 1:21, Jeremiah 12:16 and Isaiah 2:2–5 in proof of this.
 143. Raheb, *Palestinian Christian*, 79.
 144. Ibid, 76.
 145. Ibid.
 146. Leviticus 25:23, in *Palestinian Christian*, by Raheb, 76.
 147. Raheb, *Palestinian Christian*, 76.
 148. Ibid, 77.
 149. Ibid.
 150. Isaiah 11:3–5.
 151. Raheb, *Palestinian Christian*, 77. Biblical references: Isaiah 9:6–7, 11:1–10, Micah 5:1–5; Jeremiah 23:5f and Zechariah 9:9f.
 152. Raheb, *Palestinian Christian*, 78.
 153. Ibid.
 154. Ibid, 103.
 155. Ibid, 104.
 156. Ibid.
 157. Ibid, 113.
 158. Micah 4:1–5. Also in *Palestinian Christian*, by Raheb, 114–115.

Chapter 6 Palestinian Theological Praxis in Context: An Analysis of the Approaches of Ateek and Raheb from a Comparative Perspective

1. See Naim Ateek, *A Palestinian Christian cry for reconciliation*, (New York: Maryknoll, Orbis Books, 2008), 7.
2. Ibid, 7–8.
3. See Mitri Raheb, *Bethlehem Besieged: Stories of Hope in Times of Trouble*, (Minneapolis, Fortress Press, 2004) for more information about the scale of the destruction following the Israeli invasion of Bethlehem and the determination of the staff and supporters of the ICB to rebuild again after this.
4. Interviews with Naim Ateek, Jerusalem, Sabeel, August–September 2007.
5. In this context, see Chapter 12: *A Future with Islam?* in *The Arab Christian*, by Kenneth Cragg, 279–282.
6. See Naim Ateek, *The Future of Palestinian Christianity*, in *The Forgotten Faithful: A Window into the Life and Witness of Christians in the Holy Land*, eds. Naim Ateek, Cedar Duaybis and Maurine Tobin (Jerusalem: Sabeel, 2007), 147. Also see Geris Khoury, *A Vision for Christian-Muslim Relations*, in *Jerusalem: What makes for Peace: A Palestinian Christian Contribution to Peacemaking*, ed. Naim Ateek, Cedar Duaybis and Marla Schrader, (London: Melisende, 1997), 40–41.
7. See Munib A. Younan, 'Palestinian Local Theology,' *Al-Liqa Journal* 1, (May 1992): 53.
8. Ibid.
9. Ateek, *The Future of Palestinian Christianity*, 147.
10. Ateek, *The Future of Palestinian Christianity*, 147–148.
11. This is from the Sabeel Purpose Statement available at the Sabeel website at <http://www.sabeel.org/etemplate.php?id=2>, accessed on March 23, 2007.
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid. Also see the International Friends of Sabeel page on the Sabeel website at <http://www.sabeel.org/etemplate.php?id=11>, accessed January 23, 2007.
14. Sabeel Purpose Statement.
15. Quoted in Malcolm Lowe, 'Israel and Palestinian Liberation Theology,' in *End of an Exile*, by James Parkes 3rd Ed. Eugene B. Korn and Roberta Kalechofsky eds. (Marblehead, MA: Micah Publications, 2005), 268–269.
16. Interview with Rev. Dr. Mitri Raheb, International Centre of Bethlehem, August 24, 2007.
17. Ibid.
18. Ibid.
19. Ibid.

20. Ibid.
21. Ibid.
22. Ibid.
23. Conversations with Professor Tim Gorringer, Exeter, October 2008.
24. Available at Raheb's website at <http://www.mitriraheb.org/> (accessed on April 2, 2009).
25. Speech made by Rev. Dr. Mitri Raheb at the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America's (ELCA) Bishop's Academy, January 2009.
26. Ibid.
27. Ibid.
28. Ibid.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Unpublished Papers, Official Statements, Theses and Reports

- Abuna Elias Chacour to Receive Eighteenth Niwano Peace Prize.* Mar Elias Educational Institutions (MEEI) press release. Ibillin, Galilee, February 19, 2001.
- A Call for Morally Responsible investment: A Non-violent response to the occupation.* Jerusalem: Sabeel Centre Publication, Document No.3, May 2005.
- A Global Campaign for Ethical Investment on behalf of Palestinian Human Rights and a Just and Viable peace in Israel-Palestine: An Ongoing Review of Diverse Approaches by Groups and Individuals Worldwide.* Statement prepared by the Palestine-Israel Action Group (a subcommittee of the Peace and Social Concerns Committee of Ann Arbor Friends Meeting-Quakers), Michigan: Ann Arbor Friends Meeting, April 2008.
- Ateek, Naim. *Suicide Bombers: What is theologically and morally wrong with suicide bombings? A Palestinian Christian Perspective.* Jerusalem: Sabeel Centre Documents, No.1, 2003.
- Ateek, Naim. *The New Consciousness: Palestinian Christians confront their past, present, and future in light of a Palestinian Theology of Liberation: The 1990 CMS Annual Sermon.* London: CMS, May 14, 1990.
- Balfour Declaration.* Letter from the British Foreign Office Minister Lord Balfour to Lord Walter Rothschild. London, November 2, 1917.
- Christian Statements and Positions.* In Mahdi Abdul Hadi ed. *Documents on Palestine: Volume 1.* Jerusalem: Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs (PASSIA), 1997, 17–132.
- Declaration on the relation of the Church to non-Christian religions: Nostra Aetate.* Proclaimed Pope Paul VI, Vatican Archives, October 28, 1965.
- Dumper, Michael. *The Christians of Jerusalem in the Post-Oslo Period.* Unpublished paper presented at the symposium, 'History of Jerusalem: Contemporary Research Trends,' Jerusalem, December 15–16, 2000.

- Hanna, Atallah. *The Impact of Zionism on Jewish, Christian and Muslim Relations.* Speech delivered in absentia at conference organized by 'Friends of Al-Aqsa,' SOAS, London, March 15, 2004.
- Hawley, S. *Does God speak Misquito.* Unpublished PhD, Oxford University, 1995.
- Hopwood, Derek. *Russia and the Holy Land.* Unpublished paper presented at the First International Conference on 'The Christian Heritage in the Holy Land,' Jerusalem, July 5–9, 1994.
- Khoury, Rafiq. *Shaping Communities in Times of Crisis: Land, Peoples and Identities: The Palestinian Case.* Unpublished conference paper, The International Centre of Bethlehem, Bethlehem, November 11, 2005.
- Klein, Menachem. *The Jerusalem Problem: The Struggle for Permanent Status.* Gainesville: University Press of Florida in association with the Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies, Jerusalem, Israel, 2003.
- Kuruvilla, S.J. *Church-State Relations in Palestine: Issues and Perspectives under Jewish rule.* Paper presented at 55th Annual Conference of the Political Studies Association (PSA), University of Leeds, April 2005.
- Kuruvilla, S.J. *The Politics of Mainstream Christianity in Jerusalem.* Paper presented at Graduate Research in Politics (GRIP) Seminar, School of Humanities and Social Sciences (HuSS), Department of Politics, University of Exeter, February 8, 2004.
- Lende, Gina. *A Quest for Justice: Palestinian Christians and their Contextual Theology.* Department of Culture Studies (History of Religion), University of Oslo, Oslo, Autumn 2003.
- Morally Responsible Investment, A Call to the UK Churches from Palestine: A Non-Violent Pro-active Response to the Israeli Occupation of Palestine.* Report by The Interfaith Group for Morally Responsible Investment, London: All Hallows on the Wall, October 2005.
- Morally Responsible Investment.* Statement by KAIROS (Canada)'s Executive Director, following the Sabeel Toronto Conference on Morally Responsible Investment As A Non-Violent Response To The Illegal Israeli Occupation Of Palestinian Territories (October 26–29, 2005). Toronto, November 16, 2005.
- Neuhaus, David. Unpublished review of N.S. Ateek, *Justice and only Justice: A Palestinian Theology of Liberation* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1989); *The Struggle for Justice: Palestinian Liberation* (in Arabic). Bethlehem: Dar al-Kalima, 2002.
- Palestine and Apartheid.* Speech made by Archbishop Emeritus of Cape Town Desmond Tutu at Friends of Sabeel North America (FOSNA) Conference, Boston: Old South Church, Boston, October 27, 2007.
- Populorum Progressio* (English version). Vatican Archives, March 26, 1967.
- Prime Minister's Office Statement on Jerusalem City Building.* April 24, 1990, Vol.11–12, 1988–1992.
- Radicalized Palestinian Christian Group Pushes Protestant Churches Toward Divestment.* Anti Defamation League (ADL) Israel/Middle-East Press Release, New York, August 23, 2005.

- Raheb, Mitri. *Shaping Communities in Times of Crises: Narratives of Land, Peoples & Identities*. Unpublished conference paper, The International Centre of Bethlehem, Bethlehem, November 2005.
- Ramon, Amnon. *The Christian Element and the Jerusalem Question*. Jerusalem: Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies, Background Papers for Policy Makers, April 1997.
- Roussos, Sotirios. *The Greek Orthodox Patriarchate and Community of Jerusalem*. Unpublished conference paper, Elefsina, Greece, May 29, 1994.
- Sabbah, Michel. *Reading the Bible Today in the Land of the Bible*. Fourth Pastoral Letter of the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem: Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, November 1993.
- Sabella, Bernard. *Palestinian and Arab Christians: The Challenges Ahead*. Sami Hadawi Memorial Lecture, *Al Muntada Al Fikri Al 'Arabi*, Amman, Jordan, September 22, 2004.
- The Christian Presence in the Middle East: Witness and Mission*. Second Collegial Pastoral letter of the Catholic Patriarchs of the Middle East to their Faithful in their different countries of Residence, Cairo, 1992.
- The Future of the Churches in the Middle East*. First Statement of the Catholic Patriarchs of the East: Bifkaya-Lebanon, August 24, 1991.
- 'The Jerusalem Sabeel Document: Principles for a Just Peace in Palestine-Israel.' *Cornerstone Journal*, Issue 19, Summer 2000.
- '*The Kairos Document: Challenge to the church: A Theological Comment on the Political Crisis in South Africa*, (1985).' Johannesburg, September 25, 1985.
- The Significance of Jerusalem for Christians and of Christians for Jerusalem*. International Conference message on Jerusalem sponsored by Sabeel Liberation Theology Centre, in consultation with the Middle East Council of Churches (MECC) and other ecumenical Christian organizations, Jerusalem, January 28, 1996.
- 'The Significance of Jerusalem for Christians.' *Cornerstone magazine*, Issue 2, winter 1994. <http://www.sabeel.org/etemplate.php?id=5> (accessed April 23, 2006).
- The Significance of Jerusalem for Christians*. Memorandum of Their Beatitudes The Patriarchs And of the Heads of the Christian Communities in Jerusalem, Jerusalem, November 14, 1991.
- Theology and the Local Church in the Holy Land: Palestinian Contextualized Theology*. Bethlehem, *Al-Liqa Journal*, Summer 1987.
- Tsimhoni, Daphne. *The British mandate and the Arab Christians in Palestine 1920–1925*. Unpublished PhD, University of London: School of Oriental and African Studies, January 1976.
- Vatican II Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to non-Christian Relations: Nostra Aetate*. Vatican Archives, October 28, 1965.
- Weiderud, Peter. *An Open Letter on the Status of Jerusalem*. Commission of the Churches on International Affairs, World Council of Churches (WCC), Geneva, March 31, 2005.

Books

- Abraham, K.C. (ed). *Third World theologies: commonalities and divergences*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1990.
- Aburish, Said. *The Forgotten Faithful: The Christians of the Holy Land*. London: Quartet Books, 1993.
- Alpert, Rebecca T. (ed). *Voices of the Religious Left: A Contemporary Sourcebook*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2000.
- Alves, Rubem A. *A Theology of Human Hope*. Washington: Corpus Books, 1969.
- Anderson, Irvine H. *Biblical Interpretation and Middle East policy: The Promised Land, America, and Israel, 1917–2002*. Gainesville, Florida: University Press of Florida, 2005.
- Assman, Hugo. *A Practical Theology of Liberation*. London: Search Press, 1975.
- Ateek, Naim. *Justice and Only Justice: A Palestinian Theology of Liberation*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1989.
- Ateek, Naim. *A Palestinian Christian Cry for Reconciliation*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2008.
- Ateek, Naim, Cedar Duaybis and Maurine Tobin (eds). *Challenging Christian Zionism: Theology, Politics and the Israel-Palestine Conflict*. London: Melisende, 2005.
- Ateek, Naim, Marc H. Ellis and Rosemary Radford Ruether (eds). *Faith and the Intifada: Palestinian Christian Voices*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1992.
- Avineri, Shlomo. *The Making of Modern Zionism: The intellectual origins of the Jewish State*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1981.
- Bergmann, Sigurd. *God in context: a survey of contextual theology*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003.
- Berryman, Phillip. *Liberation Theology: Essential Facts about the Revolutionary Movements in Latin America and Beyond*. London: I.B.Tauris, 1987.
- Bertram, Anton and J.W.A. Young. *The Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem: Report of the Commission appointed by the government of Palestine to inquire and report upon certain controversies between the Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem and the Arab Orthodox Community*. London: Oxford University Press, 1926.
- Bevans, Stephen. *Models of Contextual Theology*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1992.
- Bialer, Uri. *Cross on the Star of David: The Christian World in Israel's Foreign Policy, 1948–1967*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005.
- Bin Talal, El-Hassan. *Christianity in the Arab World*. London: SCM Press, 1998.
- Boff, Leonardo and Clodovis Boff. *Introducing Liberation Theology*. Tunbridge Wells: Burns and Oates, 1992.
- Bradstock, Andrew and Christopher Rowland. *Radical Christian Writings: A Reader*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2002.

- Braude, Benjamin and Bernard Lewis (eds). *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire: The Functioning of a Plural Society. Volume 1: The Central Lands*. New York: Holmes and Meier, 1982.
- Breger, Marshall J. (ed). *Vatican-Israel Accords: Political, Legal, and Theological Contexts*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2004.
- Brown, Robert McAfee. *Gustavo Gutiérrez: An Introduction to Liberation Theology*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1990.
- Brueggemann, Walter. *The Land: Place as Gift, Promise, and Challenge in Biblical Faith*. London: SPCK, 1978.
- Burrell, David and Yehezkel Landau (eds). *Voices from Jerusalem: Jews and Christians Reflect on the Holy Land*. New York: Paulist Press, 1992.
- Carey, Roane (ed). *The New Intifada: Resisting Israel's Apartheid*. London: Verso, 2001.
- Cattan, Henry. *The Question of Jerusalem*. London: Third World Centre for Research and Publishing, 1980.
- Chacour, Elias (with David Hazard). *Blood Brothers*. Grand Rapids: Chosen Books, 2003.
- Chacour, Elias (with Mary E. Jensen). *We Belong to the Land*. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1992.
- Chomsky, Noam. *World Orders: Old And New*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1994.
- Chopp, Rebecca S. *The Praxis of Suffering: An Interpretation of Liberation and Political Theologies*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1990.
- Clark, Victoria. *Allies for Armageddon: The Rise of Christian Zionism*. London: Yale University Press, 2007.
- Cleveland, William L. *The Making of an Arab Nationalist: Ottomanism and Arabism in the Life and Thought of Sati al-Husri*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1971.
- Cohn-Sherbok, Dan. *On earth as it is in heaven: Jews, Christians, and liberation theology*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1987.
- Cragg, Kenneth. *The Arab Christian: A History in the Middle East*. London: Mowbray, 1992.
- Cust, L.G.A. *The Status Quo in the Holy Places*. Jerusalem: Ariel Publishing House, 1980.
- Damm, Thomas. *Palestinian Liberation Theology: A German theologian's approach and appreciation*. Trier: Kulturverein AphorismA, 1994.
- Davies, W.D. *The Gospel and The Land: Early Christianity and Jewish Territorial Doctrine*. London: University of California Press, 1974.
- Dawson, Andrew. *The Birth and Impact of the Base Ecclesial Community and Liberative Theological Discourse in Brazil*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 1998.
- DeBerri, Edward P., James E. Hug, Peter J. Henriot and Michael J. Schultheis. *Catholic Social Teaching: Our Best Kept Secret*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1992.
- Dumper, Michael. *The Politics of Sacred Space: The Old City of Jerusalem in the Middle East Conflict*. London: Lynne Rienner, 2002.

- El-Assal, Riah Abu. *Caught in between: The story of an Arab Palestinian Christian Israeli*. London: SPCK, 1999.
- Elgvin, Torleif, (ed). *Israel and Yesbua*. Jerusalem: Caspari Centre for Biblical and Jewish Studies, 1993.
- Elizondo, Virgil. *Way of the cross: the Passion of Christ in the Americas*. Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield, 2002.
- Ellis, Kail C. *The Vatican, Islam, and the Middle East*. New York: Syracuse University Press, 1987.
- Ellis, Marc H. *Out of the Ashes: The search for Jewish Identity in the 21st Century*. London: Pluto Press, 2002.
- Ellis, Marc H. *Reading the Torah Out Loud: a Journey of lament and hope*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007.
- Ellis, Marc H. *Toward a Jewish theology of liberation: the challenge of the 21st century*. 3rd Ed. Waco, Texas: Baylor University Press, 2004.
- Ellis, Marc H. and Otto Maduro (eds). *The Future of Liberation Theology: Essays in Honour of Gustavo Gutiérrez*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1989.
- Gorringe, Timothy J. *Furthering Humanity: A Theology of Culture*. Hants: Ashgate, 2004.
- Gorringe, Timothy J. *A Theology of the built Environment: Justice, Empowerment, Redemption*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.
- Gottwald, Norman K. and Richard A. Horsley (eds). *The Bible and Liberation: Political and Social Hermeneutics*. London: SPCK, 1993.
- Gräbe, Uwe. *Kontextuelle Palästinensische Theologie*. Erlangen: Erlangen Verlag für Mission und Ökumene, 1999.
- Gutiérrez, Gustavo. *A Theology of Liberation*. London: SCM Press, 1983.
- Haften, Ann E. *Water from the Rock: Lutheran Voices from Palestine*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2003.
- Hennelly, Alfred T. *Liberation Theologies: The Global pursuit of Justice*. Mystic: Twenty-Third Publications, 1995.
- Hennelly, Alfred T. *Theologies in Conflict: the Challenge of Juan Luis Segundo*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1979.
- Hewitt, Marsha Aileen. *From Theology to Social Theory: Juan Luis Segundo and the Theology of Liberation*. New York: Peter Lang, 1990.
- Hodder, Edwin. *The Life and Work of the Seventh Earl of Shaftesbury K.G.* London: Cassell, 1886.
- Hopwood, Derek. *The Russian Presence in Syria and Palestine, 1843–1941: Church and Politics in the Near East*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969.
- Horne, Charles F. (ed). *The Sacred Books and Early Literature of the East, Volume I: Babylonia and Assyria*. New York: Parke, Austin, and Lipscomb, 1917.
- Hourani, Albert H. *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age, 1798–1939*. London: Oxford University Press, 1969.
- Hummel, Thomas, Kevork Hintlian and Ulf Carmesund. *Patterns of The Past: Prospects for the future: The Christian Heritage in the Holy Land*. London: Melisende, 1999.

- Jill-Levine, Amy. *The Misunderstood Jew: The Church and the Scandal of the Jewish Jesus*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2006.
- Johnston, Philip and Peter Walker (eds). *The Land of Promise: Biblical, Theological and Contemporary Perspectives*. Illinois: Intervarsity Press, 2000.
- Khoury, Shahadeh and Nicola Khoury. *A Survey of the History of the Orthodox Church of Jerusalem*. Amman: The Orthodox Central Council-The Orthodox Society, 2002.
- Kirk, J. Andrew. *Liberation Theology: An Evangelical View from the Third World*. London: Marshall, Morgan and Scott, 1979.
- Kung, Hans. *Das Judentum*. Munich: Piper Verlag GmbH, 1991.
- Lohfink, Norbert F. *Option for the Poor: The Basic Principles of Liberation Theology In the Light of the Bible*. Berkeley: BIBAL Press, 1987.
- Mansour, Attallah. *Narrow Gate Churches: The Christian Presence in the Holy Land under Muslim and Jewish Rule*. Pasadena: Hope Publishing House, 2004.
- Masalha, Nur. *The Bible and Zionism: Invented Traditions, Archaeology and Post-Colonialism in Israel-Palestine*. London: Zed Books, 2007.
- Masters, Bruce. *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Arab World: The Roots of Sectarianism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.
- Merkley, Paul Charles. *Christian Attitudes towards the State of Israel*. Montréal: McGill University Press, 2001.
- Merkley, Paul Charles. *The Politics of Christian Zionism, 1891–1948*. London: Frank Cass, 1998.
- Mosala, Itumeleng J. *Biblical hermeneutics and black theology in South Africa*. Grand Rapids-Michigan: Eerdmans, 1989.
- Mourad, Kenize. *Our Sacred Land: Voices of the Palestine-Israeli Conflict*. Oxford: Oneworld, 2004.
- Okkehaug, Inger Marie. *The Quality of Heroic Living, of High Endeavour and Adventure: Anglican Mission, Women and Education*. Leiden: Brill, 2002.
- O'Mahony, Anthony. *The Christian Communities of Jerusalem and the Holy Land: Studies in History, Religion and Politics*. Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2003.
- O'Mahony, Anthony. *Christianity in the Middle East: Studies in Modern History, Theology and Politics*. London: Melisende, 2008.
- O'Mahony, Anthony, Goran Gunner and Kevork Hintlian (eds). *The Christian Heritage in the Holy Land*. Jerusalem: Swedish Christian Study Centre, 1995.
- Pacini, Andrea. *Christian Communities in the Arab Middle East: The Challenge of the Future*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998.
- Peri, Oded. *Christianity Under Islam in Jerusalem: The Question of the Holy Sites in Early Ottoman Time*. Leiden: Brill, 2001.
- Prior, Michael. *Western Scholarship and the History of Palestine*. London: Melisende, 1998.
- Rad, Gerhard von. *The Problem of the Hexateuch and other Essays*. Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1966.

- Raheb, Mitri. *Bethlehem Besieged: Stories of Hope in times of trouble*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2004.
- Raheb, Mitri. *Das reformatorische Erbe unter den Palaestinensern, zur Entestebung der Evangelisch-Lutherischen Kirche in Jordanien*. Guetersloh: Guetersloher Verlaghaus, 1990.
- Raheb, Mitri. *I am a Palestinian Christian*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2005.
- Rantisi, Audeh. *Blessed were the Peacemakers: The Story of a Palestinian Christian*. Guildford: Eagle, 1990.
- Rokach, Livia. *The Catholic Church and the Question of Palestine*. London: Saqi Books, 1987.
- Rowland, Christopher. *The Cambridge Companion to Liberation Theology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.
- Rowland, Christopher. *Radical Christianity*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1988.
- Rowland, Christopher and Mark Corner. *Liberation Exegesis: The Challenge of Liberation Theology to Biblical Studies*. London: SPCK, 1991.
- Rubenstein, Richard. *After Auschwitz: History, Theology, and Contemporary Judaism*. 2nd Ed. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1992.
- Ruether, Rosemary Radford. *To Change The World: Christology and Cultural Criticism*. London: SCM Press, 1981.
- Ruether, Rosemary Radford. *Faith and Fratricide: The Theological Roots of Anti-Semitism*. New York: The Seabury Press, 1974.
- Ruether, Rosemary Radford. *Liberation Theology: Human Hope Confronts Christian History and American Power*. New York: Paulist Press, 1972.
- Ruether, Rosemary Radford. *The Wrath of Jonah: The Crisis of Religious Nationalism in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002.
- Ruether, Rosemary Radford and Marc H. Ellis (eds). *Beyond Occupation: American Jewish, Christian, and Palestinian Voices for Peace*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1990.
- Sabbah, Michel. *Faithful Witness: On Reconciliation and Peace in the Holy Land*. NY: New City Press, 2009.
- Said, Edward. *The Politics of Dispossession: The Struggle for Palestinian Self-Determination, 1969–1994*. New York: Pantheon, 1994.
- Saunders, Harold. H. *The Other Walls: The Politics of the Arab-Israeli Peace Process*. Washington DC: American Enterprise Institute, 1985.
- Sayigh, Yezid. *Armed Struggle and the Search for State: The Palestinian National Movement 1949–1993*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.
- Schutte, Ofelia. *Cultural Identity and Social Liberation in Latin American Thought*. New York: SUNY Press, 1993.
- Scott, Peter and William T. Cavanaugh (eds). *The Blackwell Companion to Political Theology*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2004.
- Segev, Tom. *One Palestine, Complete: Jews and Arabs under the British Mandate*. London: Little, Brown, 2000.
- Segundo, Juan Luis. *Sign of the Times: Theological Reflections*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1993.
- Sizer, Stephen. *Christian Zionism: Road-Map to Armageddon*. Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 2004.

- Sizer, Stephen. *Zion's Christian Soldiers? The Bible, Israel and the Church*. Nottingham: IVP, 2007.
- Smith, Christian. *The Emergence of Liberation Theology: Radical Religion and social Movement Theory*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991.
- Sobrinho, Jon and Ignacio Ellacuria (eds). *Systematic Theology: Perspectives from Liberation Theology*. London: SCM Press, 1996.
- Sofer, Sasson (ed). *Peacemaking in a Divided Society: Israel after Rabin*. London: Frank Cass, 2001.
- Sugirtharajah, R.S. (ed). *Voices from the Margin: Interpreting the Bible in the Third World*. London: SPCK, 1995.
- Tsimhoni, Daphne. *Christian Communities in Jerusalem and the West Bank since 1948: An Historical, Social, and Political Study*. Westport: Praeger, 1993.
- Van Buren, Paul. *A Christian Theology of the People, Israel*. New York: Seabury Press, 1983.
- Wagner, Donald E. *Anxious for Armageddon*. Scottsdale, Pennsylvania: Herald Press, 1995.
- Walker, P.W.L. *Jerusalem Past and Present in the Purposes of God*. Croydon: Deo Gloria Trust, 1994.
- Wasserstein, Bernard. *Divided Jerusalem: The Struggle for the Holy City*, 2nd Ed. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002.
- West, Gerald. *Biblical Hermeneutics of Liberation: Modes of Reading the Bible in the South African Context*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1995.
- Wiesel, Elie. *Night*. London: Penguin Books, 1981.
- Witvliet, Theo. *A Place in the Sun: An Introduction to Liberation Theology in the Third World*. London: SCM Press, 1985.
- Younan, Munib A. *Witnessing for Peace In Jerusalem and the World*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004.

Chapters in Edited Volumes

- Aristarchos, Archbishop of Constantina. 'The Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem.' In Naim Ateek, Cedar Duaybis and Maurine Tobin, (eds). *The Forgotten Faithful: A Window into the Life and Witness of Christian in the Holy Land*. Jerusalem: Sabeel Publication, 2007, 75–79.
- Ateek, Naim. 'Biblical Perspectives on the Land,' in Ateek, Ellis & Ruether (eds). *Faith and the Intifada: Palestinian Christian Voices*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1992, 108–116.
- Ateek, Naim. 'The Future of Palestinian Christianity.' In Naim Ateek, Cedar Duaybis and Maurine Tobin (eds). *The Forgotten Faithful: A Window into the Life and Witness of Christians in the Holy Land*. Jerusalem: Sabeel, 2007, 136–150.
- Ateek, Naim. 'Introduction: The Emergence of a Palestinian Christian Theology.' In N.S. Ateek, R.R. Ruether and M.H. Ellis (eds). *Faith and the Intifada:*

- Palestinian Christian Voices*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1992, 1–6.
- Ateek, Naim. 'Jerusalem in Islam and for Palestinian Christians.' In P.W.L. Walker, *Jerusalem: Past and Present in the Purposes of God*. 2nd Ed. Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1994, 125–150.
- Ateek, Naim. 'June 1994.' Postscript to 'Jerusalem in Islam and for Palestinian Christians.' In P.W.L. Walker, *Jerusalem: Past and Present in the Purposes of God*. 2nd Ed. Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1994, 151–154.
- Ateek, Naim. 'A Palestinian Theology of Jerusalem.' In Naim Ateek, Cedar Duaybis and Marla Schrader (eds). *Jerusalem: What Makes for Peace? A Palestinian Christian Contribution to Peacemaking*. London: Melisende, 1997, 94–106.
- Ateek, Naim. 'A Palestinian Perspective: The Bible and Liberation.' In R.S. Sugirtharajah (ed). *Voices from the margin: interpreting the Bible in the Third World*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1991, 280–286.
- Ateek, Naim. 'Pentecost and the Intifada.' In Fernando F. Segovia and Mary Ann Tolbert (eds). *Reading from this Place: Social Location and Biblical Interpretation in Global Perspective, Volume 2*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995, 69–81.
- Ateek, Naim. 'Who is the Church? A Christian Theology for the Holy Land.' In Anthony O' Mahony, Goran Gunner and Kevork Hintlian (eds). *The Christian Heritage in the Holy Land*. London: Scorpion Cavendish Ltd, 1995, 311–320.
- Ateek, Naim. 'Zionism and the land: a Palestinian Christian perspective.' In Philip Johnston & Peter Walker (eds). *The Land of Promise: Biblical, Theological and Contemporary Perspectives*. Illinois: Inter-Varsity Press, 2000, 201–214.
- Baum, Gregory. 'Introduction.' In Rosemary Ruether, *Faith and Patricide: The Theological Roots of Anti-Semitism*. London: Search Press, 1975, 1–22.
- Bishara, Azmi. 'A Vision for Peace: Thinking the Unthinkable.' in Naim Ateek and Michael Prior (eds). *Holy Land Hollow Jubilee: God, Justice and the Palestinians*. London: Melisende, 1999, 293–298.
- Chopp, Rebecca S. and Ethna Regan. 'Latin American Liberation Theology.' In David Ford and Rachel Muers, (eds). *The Modern Theologians: An Introduction to Christian Theology Since 1918*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2005, 469–484.
- Christiansen, Drew. 'Palestinian Christians: Recent Development.' In Breger, Marshall J. (ed). *The Vatican-Israel Accords: Political, Legal and Theological Contexts*. Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2004, 307–339.
- Colbi, S. P. 'The Christian Establishment in Jerusalem.' In Joel. L. Kramer. *Jerusalem: Problems and Prospects*. New York: Praeger, 1980, 153–177.
- Corbon, Jean. 'The Churches of the Middle East: Their Origins and Identity, from their Roots in the Past to their Openness to the Present.' In Andrea

- Pacini (ed). *Christian Communities in the Arab Middle East: The Challenge of the Future*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998, 92–110.
- El-Assal, Riah Abu. 'The Identity of the Palestinian Christian in Israel.' In N.S. Ateek, M.H. Ellis and R.R. Ruether. *Faith and the Intifada: Palestinian Christian Voices*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1992, 77–84.
- Ellis, Marc H. 'Holocaust, Christian Zionism and Beyond: A Jewish Theology of Liberation After.' In Naim Ateek, Cedar Duaybis and Maurine Tobin (eds). *Challenging Christian Zionism: Theology, Politics and the Israel-Palestine Conflict*. London: Melisende, 2005, 169–178.
- Fabian, Larry. 'The Role of Religion.' In Shai Feldman (ed). *US Middle East Policy: The Domestic Setting*. Boulder, Colorado: West View Press, 1988, 50–55.
- Fiorenza, Elizabeth Schussler. 'The Politics of Otherness: Biblical Interpretation as a Critical Praxis for Liberation.' In R.S. Sugirtharajah (ed). *Voices from the margin: interpreting the Bible in the Third World*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1991, 311–325.
- Hintlian, Kevork. 'Pilgrimage from a local point of view.' In Naim Ateek, Cedar Duaybis and Maurine Tobin (eds). *The Forgotten Faithful: A Window into the life and witness of Christians in the Holy Land*. Jerusalem: Sabeel, 2007, 172–175.
- Khoury, Geries Sa'ed. 'Palestinian Christian Identity.' In N.S. Ateek, R.R. Ruether and M.H. Ellis (eds). *Faith and the Intifada: Palestinian Christian Voices*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1992, 71–76.
- Lowe, Malcolm. 'Israel and Palestinian Liberation Theology.' In Eugene B. Korn and Roberta Kalechofsky. *End of an exile: Israel, the Jews and the gentile world! James Parkes*. 3rd Ed. Marblehead, Massachusetts: Micah Publications, 2005, 265–324.
- Marsh, Leonard. 'Palestinian Christians: Theology and Politics in the Holy Land.' In Anthony O' Mahony (ed). *Christianity in the Middle East: Studies in Modern History, Theology and Politics*. London: Melisende, 2008, 205–218.
- Moltmann, Jürgen. 'Political Theology and Theology of Liberation.' In Joerg Rieder (ed). *Liberation the Future: God, Mammon and Theology*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1998, 60–80.
- Raheb, Mitri. 'Biblical Interpretation in the Israeli-Palestinian Context.' In Torleif Elgvin (ed). *Israel and Yeshua*. Jerusalem: Caspari Centre for Biblical and Jewish Studies, 1993, 109–117.
- Raheb, Mitri. 'Law, Power, Justice and the Bible.' In N.S. Ateek, M.H. Ellis and R.R. Ruether (eds). *Faith and the Intifada: Palestinian Christian Voices*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1992, 97–100.
- Ruether, Rosemary Radford. 'Justice and Reconciliation.' In Naim Ateek and Michael Prior (eds). *Holy Land, Hollow Jubilee: God, Justice and the Palestinians*. London: Melisende, 1999, 116–121.
- Ruether, Rosemary Radford. 'Preface' in N.S. Ateek, M.H. Ellis and R.R. Ruether (eds). *Faith and the Intifada: Palestinian Christian Voices*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1992, 9–14.

- Ruether, Rosemary Radford. 'Western Christianity and Zionism.' In N.S. Ateek, M.H. Ellis and R.R. Ruether (eds). *Faith and the Intifada: Palestinian Christian Voices*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1992, 147–157.
- Sizer, Stephen. 'Christian Zionism: A British Perspective.' In Naim Ateek and Michael Prior (eds). *Holy Land – Hollow Jubilee*. London: Melisende 1999, 189–198.
- Sizer, Stephen. 'The Historical Roots of Christian Zionism from Irving to Balfour: Christian Zionism in the United Kingdom (1820–1918).' In Naim Ateek, Cedar Duaybis and Maurine Tobin (eds). *Challenging Christian Zionism: Theology, Politics and the Israel-Palestine Conflict*. London: Melisende, 2005, 20–31.
- Sizer, Stephen. 'The International Christian Embassy, Jerusalem: A Case Study in Political Christian Zionism.' In Michael Prior (ed). *Speaking the Truth about Zionism and Israel*. London: Melisende, March 2004.
- Wagner, Donald E. 'Holy Land Christians and Survival.' In N.S. Ateek, M.H. Ellis and R.R. Ruether (eds). *Faith and the Intifada: Palestinian Christian Voices*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1992, 43–49.

Journal Articles

- Aoun, Sami. 'The Muslim Perspective.' In Perspective: 'Jerusalem, a shared trust.' *MECC Journal*, 8, July 1990, 14–19.
- Clarke, Duncan L and Eric Flohr. 'Christian Churches and The Palestine Question.' *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 21(4), Summer 1992, 67–79.
- Connell, Dan. 'Palestine on the Edge: Crisis in the National Movement.' *Middle East Report*, 194/195, May-August 1995, 6–9.
- Corbon, Jean, George Khodr, Samir Kafity and Albert Lahham. 'What is required of the Christian Faith Concerning the Palestine Problem.' *Biblical and Theological Concerns*, Limassol, Cyprus: Middle East Council of Churches, n.d., 11–13.
- Dumper, Michael. 'The Christian Churches of Jerusalem in the post-Oslo period.' *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 31(2), winter 2002, 51–65.
- England, Izhak. 'The Legal Status of the Holy Places in Jerusalem.' *Israel Law Review*, 28(4), Autumn 1994, pp. 589–600.
- Gregerman, Adam. 'Old Wine in New Bottles: Liberation Theology and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict.' *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*, 41(3–4). Summer-Fall 2004, 313–339.
- Grey, Mary. 'From Grotto to Ghetto: Holy Land Diary, November 2006.' *Holy Land Studies Journal*, 6(1), 2006, 1–5.
- Haija, Rammy M. 'The Armageddon Lobby: Dispensationalist Christian Zionism and the shaping of US policy towards Israel-Palestine.' *Holy Land Studies Journal*, 5(1), 2006, 75–95.
- Katz, Itamar and Ruth Kark. 'The Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem and its Congregation: Dissent over real estate.' *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 37, 2005, 509–534.

- Khader, Jamal. 'The Role of the Palestinian Church in the Palestinian Problem in the Aftermath of the June 1967 War: Repercussions of the War on Christian-Muslim Relations.' *Al-Liqa Journal*, 28, August 2007, 38–45.
- Khalaf, Marwan Abu. 'The Significance of Jerusalem for Muslims.' In Yitzhak Reiter, Marlen Eordegian and Marwan Abu Khalaf. 'Jerusalem's Religious Significance.' *Palestine-Israel Journal*, nd., 17–20.
- Khodr, George. 'Christians of the Orient: Witness and Future; The Case of Lebanon.' *WCSF Journal*, May 1986, 36–42.
- Khoury, Rafiq. 'Christian Communities in the Middle East: Current Realities and Challenges in the Islamic Context.' *Al-Liqa Journal*, 28, August 2007, 6–19.
- Khoury, Rafiq. 'Earthly and Heavenly Kingdom: An Eastern Christian Perspective.' *Al-Liqa Journal*, 28, August 2007, 106–116.
- Khoury, Geries Sa'ed. 'Olive Tree Theology-Rooted in the Palestinian Soil.' *Al-Liqa Journal*, 24, August 2005, 58–108.
- Khoury, Geries Sa'ed. 'Palestinian Legislative Elections 2006.' *Al-Liqa Journal*, 26, June 2006, 174–183.
- Khoury, Geries Sa'ed. 'The social Role of Arab Christians in Israel, Jordan and Palestine.' *Al-Liqa Journal*, 6, February, 1996, 1–26.
- Kuruvilla, S.J. 'Jerusalem's Churches under Israeli Rule.' *Al-Aqsa Journal*, 7(1), Autumn 2004, 23–28.
- Lalloo, Kiran. 'The church and state in apartheid South Africa.' *Contemporary Politics*, 4(1), March 1998, 39–55.
- Martin, William. 'The Christian Right and American Foreign Policy.' *Foreign Policy*, 114, spring, 1999, 66–80.
- McCord, Don. 'Friedrich-Wilhelm Marquardt: a Theological-Biographical Sketch.' *European Judaism: A Journal for the New Europe*, 38(1), Spring 2005, Issue No. 74, 17–47.
- Meier, Andreas. 'Conference on Palestinian Theology: Towards a Theology of Liberation in the Palestinian-Israeli Context.' *Al-Liqa Journal*, 1, May 1992, 65–77.
- Mesa, José M. de. 'Contextual Theologising: Future Perspectives.' *East Asian Pastoral Review*, 40(3), 2003.
- Musallam, Adnan. 'Christian Arabs and the Making of Arab Nationalism.' *Al-Liqa Journal*, 6, February 1996, 27–47.
- Musallam, Adnan. 'On the Thorny Road: Towards a Peaceful Resolution of the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict, 1967–2002: A Palestinian Perspective.' *Al-Liqa Journal*, 26, June 2006, 184–197.
- O'Mahony, Anthony. 'Christianity in the Holy Land: the historical background.' *The Month*, CCLIV (1512), December 1993, 469–476.
- O'Mahony, Anthony. 'Palestinian-Arab Orthodox Christians: Religion, Politics and Church-State relations in Jerusalem, c.1908–1925.' *Chronos: Revue d' Histoire de l' Université de Balamand*, Tripoli, Lebanon: University of Balamand, 3, 2000.

- Pleins, J. David. 'Is a Palestinian Theology of Liberation Possible?' *Anglican Theological Review*, 74(2), 1992, 133–143.
- Prior, Michael. 'Palestinian Christians and the liberation of theology.' *The Month*, December 1993, 482–490.
- Raheb, Mitri. 'Land, Peoples, and Identities: a Palestinian Perspective.' *Concilium International Journal of Theology*, 43(2), Spring 2007, 61–68.
- Raheb, Mitri. 'Mission in the Context of Fragmentation.' *International review of Mission*, 86(343), 1997, 393–398.
- Raheb, Mitri. 'Sailing Through Troubled Waters: Palestinian Christians in the Holy Land.' *dialog: A Journal of Theology*, 41(2), Summer 2002, 97–102.
- Roussos, Sotiris. 'Eastern Orthodox Perspectives on Church-State Relations and Religion and Politics in Modern Jerusalem.' *International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church*, 5(2), July 2000, 103–122.
- Ruether, Rosemary Radford. 'Listening to Palestinian Christians.' *Christianity and Crisis*, 48, April 4, 1988, 113–115.
- Sarsar, Saliba. 'Palestinian Christians: Religion, Conflict and the Struggle for Just Peace.' *Holy Land Studies Journal*, 4(2), November 2005, 27–50.
- Segal, Aaron. 'Future Options for Jerusalem.' *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, 30(3–4), 194–210.
- Smith, Christian. 'Las Casas as Theological Counteroffensive: An Interpretation of Gustavo Gutiérrez's Las Casas: In Search of the Poor of Jesus Christ.' *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 41(1), 2002, 69–73.
- Stockton, Ronald R. 'Christian Zionism-Prophecy and public opinion.' *Middle East Journal*, 41(2), (Spring 1987), 234–253.
- Suermann, Harald. 'Palestinian Contextual Theology.' *Al-Liqa Journal*, 5, July 1995, 7–26.
- Tsimhoni, Daphne. 'The Christian Communities in Jerusalem and the West Bank, 1948–1967.' *Middle East Review*, Fall 1976, 41–46.
- Tsimhoni, Daphne. 'The Greek Orthodox Community in Jerusalem and the West Bank 1948–1978: A Profile of Religious Minority in a National State.' *Orient*, 23(2), 281–298.
- Wardi, C.H. 'The Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem.' *Journal of the Middle East Society*, Jerusalem, 1947, 5–12.
- Warrior, Robert Allan. 'Canaanites, Cowboys, and Indians: Deliverance, Conquest, and Liberation Theology Today.' *Christianity and Crisis*, September 11, 1989, 261–264.
- We Stand For Justice: We Can Do No Other*. 'Palestinian Church Leaders' Statement on Christian Zionism.' *Holy Land Studies Journal*, 5(2), August 22, 2006, 211–215.
- Younan, Munib A. 'Palestinian Local Theology.' *Al-Liqa Journal*, 1, May 1992, 51–63.
- Yuzon, Lourdino A. 'Towards a Contextual Theology.' *CTC Bulletin*, Chapter 1, XII (2)-XIII (1 & 2), July 1994-September 1995.

Magazine, Newspaper and Online Articles

- Ateek, Naim. 'Human Rights were God given Rights.' *Cornerstone Magazine*, Issue 14, New Year 1999.
- Ateek, Naim. 'O Jerusalem! If You Only Knew Today.' *Cornerstone Magazine*, Issue 39, Winter 2006.
- Ateek, Naim. 'The Mosaic of Jerusalem.' *Cornerstone magazine*, Issue 3, Autumn 1995.
- Ateek, Naim and Cedar Duaybis, 'Palestine and South Africa: Reflections on a visit to South Africa by two members from Sabeel.' *Cornerstone Magazine*, Issue 2, Winter 1994.
- Binyon, Michael. 'The struggle to keep the faith in Bethlehem.' *The Times* (of London), January 15, 2005.
- 'Church of England votes to disinvest in Caterpillar.' *Ekklesia news bulletin*, February 7, 2006.
- Davies, Mathew. 'Middle East: Court ruling favours Jerusalem diocese, not former bishop, in dispute over school's ownership; Jerusalem Bishop Suheil Dawani committed to preserving institutions for future mission.' *Episcopallife online*, May 28, 2008.
- Friedlander, Albert H. 'Professor Friedrich-Wilhelm Marquardt: Voice of conscience for German Christianity.' *The Independent* (London), Obituaries, June 13, 2002.
- Friedman, Matti. 'Israel: Holy Boycotts.' *The Jerusalem Report*, March 20, 2006.
- Grievies, Brian. 'A Journey of justice, a journey of faith: An interview with Naim Ateek.' *The Witness*, September 2001.
- Handelzalts, Michael. 'Pen Ultimate: Sticking my neck out.' *Ha'aretz* (Tel Aviv), January 3, 2008.
- Hills, Toya Richard. 2004 *GA's Israel/Palestine language replaced*. Report on the Committee on Peacemaking and International Issues of the 217th General Assembly of Presbyterian Church USA (PCUSA), Birmingham, Alabama, June 15–22, 2006.
- Hintlian, Kevork. 'Reflections of a Jerusalem Christian.' *Bitterlemons-international.org*, 2(43), December 9, 2004.
- Horowitz, David. 'Evangelicals seeing the error of "replacement theology".' *The Jerusalem Post Online*, March 20, 2006.
- Interfaith: The Sabeel Centre: A Driving Force of Divestment*. Anti Defamation League (ADL) Israel/Middle-East Press Release. New York, August 23, 2005.
- Kelley, Elaine. 'Sabeel Snapshots.' *Cornerstone*, March 2006.
- Leard, Jeff. 'Trouble in Palestine: What can Christians do?' *MECC NewsReport*, Limassol, Cyprus, May-June 1997, 14–16.
- Mandel, Sarah. 'The Radicals behind the Anglican Church.' *The Jerusalem Post*, February 26, 2006.

- McCarthy, Rory. 'Occupied Gaza like Apartheid South Africa, says UN report.' *The Guardian* (London), February 23, 2007.
- Paulson, Michael. 'Church delegation offers Mideast peace investment plan: Effort meant to quell divestment from Israel.' *The Boston Globe*, Boston, July 2, 2005.
- Raheb, Mitri. 'Culture as the Art to breathe.' *ICB Newsletter*.
- Raheb, Mitri. *The other side of the coin: A reading in the Palestinian Elections*. January 27, 2006.
- Sabella, Bernard. 'Preoccupations: Palestinian Christians and the Tasks Ahead.' *Jerusalemites.org*, February 23, 2000.
- Sharp, Heather. 'Holy Land Christian's decline.' *BBC News Website*, December 15, 2005.
- Tchilingirian, Hratch. 'Dividing Jerusalem: Armenians on the Line of Confrontation.' *Armenian International magazine* (AIM), October 2000, 40–44.
- Tooley, Mark. D. 'Liberation Theology in the Middle East.' *FrontpageMagazine.com*, May 23, 2006.
- Tugend, Tom. 'Through the looking glass with Friends of Sabeel.' *The Jewish Journal*, May 15, 2008.
- Wood, Lawrence. *Tutu's story*, review of John Allen, *Rabble-Rouser For Peace: The Authorised Biography of Desmond Tutu*. (New York: Free Press, 2006). In *The Christian Century*, Chicago, October 17, 2006.

INDEX

- 1948 War, 87, 111, 113, 130, 217
 1967 War, 53, 104, 105, 107, 127, 133, 152, 195
- Abbas, Mahmud, 61
 Abdul Majid, Sultan, 10
 Abu Gibran Guest House, 229
 Abraham, K. C., 73, 74
 Abraham, Prophet (Ibrahim), 22, 85, 139, 142, 151, 216, 220
 Acre (Akko), 5
 Acts, Book of, 141, 150, 166, 167
 Aflaq, Michel, 11, 53
 Ahab, 137, 143
 Ajyal programme, 230
 Al-Bana, Hassan, 54, 56, 59
 Al-Gama'at al-Islamiyya (the Islamic Groups), 55
 Al-Husseini, Haji Amin, 56
 Al-Kahf Centre, 229
 Al-Liqa Centre for Religious and Heritage Studies in the Holy Land, 33, 34, 43, 72, 75, 76, 77, 78, 84, 121, 122, 193, 227, 228, 230, 231, 232, 234, 236, 239, 241, 244
 Conferences, 121, 194
 Journal, 82
 Al-Majaj, Amin, 42
 Al-Malik al-Kamil, 6
 Al-Qaeda, 58
- Al-Qasim, Abd'al-Karim, 59
 Al-Ta'ifa al-Injiliyya al-Usqufiyya al-'Arabiyya, 39
 Al-Wazir, Khalil (alias Abu Jihad), 56
 Ali, Mohammad, 6
 Allon Plan, 160
 Amalekites, 125
 Amos, Book of, 129, 138
 American Academy of Religion (AAR), 95
 American Messianic Fellowship (AMF), 32
Amutab, 41
Anastasis, 2
 Anathema, Law of, 87
 Andrews, C.S., 232
 Anglican Church, 81, 92, 93, 111
 Arabs, 39, 40, 116
 Bishop of Jerusalem, 105, 117
 Community in Palestine, 121
 Canon of St. George's Cathedral Church in Jerusalem, 97
 Christ Church High School, 92
 Church of England, 187, 190
 Diocese of Jerusalem, 42
 General Synod of the Anglican Church in the Middle East, the, 41
 in the Middle East, 30, 39, 40, 41, 42, 92, 93, 119
 in the UK, 190, 191
 in the US, 187
 Anglo-Saxon world, 147, 212, 231, 235

- Anti-Arabism, 106, 107, 131
 Anti-Defamation League (ADL), 164,
 175, 176, 188, 189
 Anti-Dispensationalist, 176
 Anti-Semitism, 95, 102, 103, 106, 107,
 108, 130, 131, 164, 175, 187,
 188, 205
 Antiochian Orthodox Church, 5, 7, 17,
 165
 Arab, 72, 79, 116, 117, 118, 130, 146
 Arab Christians, 28, 52, 54, 63, 71, 72,
 74, 78, 108, 110, 113, 115, 116,
 117, 123, 198, 244
 Arab Christian University of Israel
 (Ibillin), 90
 Arab-Israeli Conflict, 103, 120, 149, 178
 Arab League, 113
 Arab Orthodox Laity, 3, 9, 35
 Arab Orthodox, 3, 11–13, 17, 19
 Arab Patriarch, 19
 Arab Revolt, 59
 Arab Theologians, 106, 108
 Arab University in Nazareth, 92
 Arabic, 12, 16, 72, 79, 80, 118, 119,
 120, 180
 Arabists, 165
 Arabization, 29, 30, 74, 116, 117, 118,
 201
 Arafat, Yasir, 37, 56, 61, 149, 156, 165,
 168
 Aramaic, 3, 83, 209
 Arb, Jalil, 42
 Archbishop of Canterbury, the, 41
 Archdiocese of the Galilee, Akko, Haifa
 and Nazareth, 90
 Arish Wadi, 221
 Ark of the Covenant, the, 151
 Armageddon, 142
 Armenian Community, 5, 36, 37
 Armenian Orthodox, 8, 10, 46
 Ashrawi, Hanan, 42, 121
 El-Assal, Riah Abu, 42, 43, 61, 91, 92,
 93, 117, 121, 190
 Assisi, St. Francis of, 6
 Assman, Hugo, 67
 Assyrians, 146
 Ateek, Canon Naim Stifan, 1, 33, 42,
 43, 48, 51, 52, 63, 64, 71, 72,
 74, 75, 80, 81, 89, 91, 92, 93,
 94, 95, 97, 99, 100, 104, 105,
 109, 110, 111, 112, 117, 118,
 119, 121, 123, 124, 125, 127,
 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133,
 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139,
 140, 141, 142, 143, 145, 146,
 148, 151, 155, 159, 162, 163,
 164, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170,
 172, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178,
 179, 181, 182, 187, 188, 190,
 192, 194, 196, 203, 209, 211,
 212, 215, 219, 222, 223, 225,
 226, 227, 228, 230, 231, 232,
 236, 237, 244
 Ateret Kohanim, 14
 Ba'ath Party, 11, 53, 113
 Babylon, 20, 139, 146
 Balfour Declaration, the, 107
 Balfour, Lord Arthur James, 22, 23
 Baptist Church,
 Evangelical, 193
 Native Palestinian Israeli, 111
 in the US, 111
 Barak, Ehud, 36, 37
 Barak, Prophet, 87
 Barth, Karl, 130
 Base Christian Communities (BCCs),
 68, 69
 Basle, 46
 Baysan (Beisan, Beth She'an), 92, 119
 Bedouin, 117, 118, 195, 211
 Begin, Menachem, 204
 Beirut, 26, 165
 Beit Jala, 30, 76
 Beit Sahour, 30, 76
 Ben Imlah, Micaiah, 137
 Berlin Missionary Association, 7
 Berryman, Phillip, 69

- Bertram, Sir Anton, 13
- Bethlehem, 10, 30, 76, 77, 78, 111, 120,
122, 193, 201, 202, 203, 227,
228, 229, 230, 231, 232, 233,
239, 241, 242, 243
- Bethlehem Bible College (BBC), 193
- Bevans, Stephen. B., 73
- Bible, the, 67, 167, 206
- Old Testament, 48, 49, 80, 85, 86,
 87, 88, 101, 118, 125, 126, 128,
 130, 132, 133, 134, 138, 141,
 143, 175, 194, 207, 208, 213,
 214, 216, 217, 221, 234
- New Testament, 86, 87, 130, 132,
 139, 141, 143, 150, 196, 197,
 208, 213, 214, 234
- Bishop Riah Educational Campus, 92
- Bishopric, Anglo-Prussian, 6
- Boycott, Divestment and Sanction
 (BDS) Movement, 184, 185
- Bridges for Peace (BFP), 32
- British Mandate Palestine, 12, 24, 25,
27, 56, 63, 81, 84, 89, 99, 107,
113, 152, 155, 156, 162, 164
- High Commissioner in Palestine, 25
- Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre, 12,
13, 17, 18, 116
- Brueggemann, Walter, 50
- Bush, George H. W., 15
- Byzantium, 2, 9, 16, 75, 79
- Empire, 11, 12, 83, 206
- Christians in, 89, 155
- Caliph 'Omar, 9
- Camp David, 36, 37, 120, 160,
- Canaan, 49, 87, 118, 123, 124, 125, 126,
139, 146, 151, 210, 211, 222
- and Israel, 130, 143
- and Palestine, 50, 126, 142, 146, 211
- Capitulation Treaty (Ottoman), 10
- Carter, Jimmy, 183
- Catechetical Centre, 82
- Caterpillar, Inc., 189, 190, 191
- Catholicism, 81, 82, 90
- Greek, 17, 18, 78, 88, 89, 90, 116,
 Archbishop of Jerusalem, 105
- Melkite Greek Catholic Church of
 Antioch, 88
- Melkite Greek Catholic Church of
 the Galilee, 89, 90
- Melkite Uniate Greek Catholics,
 8, 18, 19, 78, 88, 89, 90
- Latin, 4, 8, 9, 10, 18, 19, 25, 29, 32,
 35, 37, 39, 43, 46, 65, 76, 81,
 83, 84, 97, 101, 116, 155, 156,
 179, 180, 207, 235
- Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, 19,
 33, 82, 85, 156
- Chacour, Elias, 88, 89, 92, 108, 121,
239
- Chalcedonic, 98
- Charity Associations Law, 29
- Chelmsford, Bishop of, 191
- Chopp, Rebecca S., 70
- Chosenness, 86, 140, 218
- Christmas, 148
- Christmas Lutheran Church in
 Bethlehem, 193, 229
- Church Divinity School of the Pacific
 (CDSP), 119
- Church Fathers, 65
- Church of the Holy Land, 105, 137, 150
- Church of the Holy Sepulchre, 2, 3, 4,
9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 33, 36, 61
- Church of the Resurrection, 4, 10
- Church Mission to the Jews (CMJ-
 ITAC), 32, 41, 42
- Church Missionary Society (CMS), 6, 7,
38, 39, 43
- Church of the Nativity, 10
- Civil Rights Struggle, 89, 96, 104
- Clergy-Laity Controversy, 12
- Clinton, Bill, 36, 134, 135
- CMS Mission Schools, 26, 39
- Commandments, 87
- Common Global Ministries Board,
177–178
- Constantine, Emperor, 2, 206

- Constantinian, 83, 95, 206
 Constantinople, *see Istanbul*
 Coptic Church, 5
 Corbon, Jean, 105
 Cordite, 23
 Corinthians I & II, Book of, 215
 Cornelius, the Roman Centurion, 166
 Corpus Separatum, 27
 Council of Catholic Patriarchs in the Middle East, 83
 Council of Christians and Jews (CCJ), 32
 Covenant, 85
 Cragg, Kenneth, 9, 118, 236
 Crucifixion, 51, 174, 175
 Imagery, 173, 175, 176, 177
 Crusades, 4, 5, 6, 8, 118, 143
 Cyrus the Great of Persia, 20
 Cyprus, 75, 165

 Dalit, 235
 Damascus, 11, 221
 Damm, Thomas, 215
 Dar al-Annadwa, 193, 229, 242
 Ad-Dar Cultural and Conference Centre, 230
 Dar al-Kalima College, 200, 229, 242
 Dar al-Kalima Health and Wellness Centre, 229
 Dar al-Kalima Model School, 229
 David, Prophet, 87, 106, 151, 204, 222
 Dawani, Bishop Suheil (of Jerusalem), 92
 De Klerk, F. W., 184
 Dead Sea, 160, 221
 Declaration of Principles (DoP), 157
 Deicide, 173
 Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP), 54
 Deuteronomy, Book of, 224
 Dhimmis, 39, 172
 Dialogue
 Between Christians and Jews, 76, 96, 98, 204, 221
 Between Christians and Muslims, 76, 79, 163, 171, 236
 Christian-Marxist, 65
 Divine Election, 86, 216, 217
 Diyar Consortium, 194, 200, 227, 229, 231, 232, 242, 243, 244
 Druze, 11, 71, 90, 91, 109
 Duaybis, Cedar, 43, 104, 121
 Dugard, John, 183
 Durban World Conference against Racism, 191

 Eastern Byzantine Orthodox Church, 89, 170
 Eastern Christians, 38, 72, 115, 148
 Eastern Europe, 23, 107, 136, 139
 Ecclesiology, 69
 Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians (EATWOT), 69
 Egypt, 72, 90, 123, 124, 125, 127, 129, 147, 160, 166, 170, 210, 212, 221
 Eid, 148
 Election, 138, 216, 217
 Question of, 123, 127
 Ellis, Marc, 94, 97, 99, 100, 103, 122, 203
 Emmanuel House, 41
 Emmaus Story, 140
 Enlightenment, 205
 Ephesians, Book of, 141, 207, 222
 Episcopal Church, *see Anglican Church*
 Ethical Investment Advisory Group, 190
 Ethiopia, 5, 129, 138, 195
 Euro-American Society, 102, 210
 European Union (EU), 163
 Evangelism, 21, 44, 45, 46, 100, 101, 125, 127, 169, 193
 Evangelical Episcopal Arab Community, 39
 Evangelical Episcopal Church, 39, 40, 42, 44
 Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land, 42, 44

- Evangelical Lutheran Church of America, 187
 Exodus, Book of, 132, 133, 142, 209–213, 124, 133, 142, 209, 210, 211
 Exodus Narrative, the, 67, 72, 98, 123–125, 142
 Ezekiel, 45, 139, 142, 150
 Fackenheim, Emil, 203
 Faithful of the Temple Mount, 46
 Fassuta, 78
 Fatah, 60, 61, 160, 171, 228
 Feast of the Tabernacles, 45
 Ferguson, John, 129
 Former Prophets, the, 133
 Foxman, Abraham, 189
 Fragmentation, 206
 Franciscan, 6, 8, 10
 Franks, Western, 8
 Freire, Paulo, 65
 Fundamental Agreement, 32
 Galatians, 141, 150
 Galilee, 18, 43, 77, 78, 88, 89, 90, 92, 118, 119, 139, 147
 Al-Gama'at al-Islamiyya (the Islamic Groups), 55
 Gandhi, Mahatma, 232
 Gaza Strip, 40, 45, 52, 56, 58, 59, 60, 61, 63, 97, 105, 136, 141, 146, 147, 152, 154, 156, 159, 160, 161, 171, 183, 185, 186, 204, 221
 Genesis, Book of, 87, 133, 141, 151, 221, 223
 Gentile, 42, 98, 130, 131, 141, 197, 207
 Germanos, Patriarch, (of Constantinople), 11
 Germany, 108, 181, 193, 203, 204, 231
 Gideon, Prophet, 87
 Gladwin, Rt. Rev. John, 190–191
 Gobat, Bishop Samuel, 38
 Good Samaritan, the, 139, 166
 Gospel, the fifth, 144
 Grace and Redemption, Concept of, 98
 Graduate Theological Union (GTU), 119
 Greek Orthodoxy, 3, 8, 10, 13, 17, 18, 54, 75, 80, 83, 84, 116, 118, 192, 197, 235
 Church of Jerusalem, 7, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 17, 18, 35, 46, 116, 192, 193, 201, 235
 Church of Antioch, 17
 Confraternity (Greek Orthodox), 17
 Cypriot-Greek-origin clergy, 12, 16
 Patriarchs, 17, 35
 Greenberg, Irving, 203
 Gulf States, 52, 57
 Gulf of Suez, the, 20
 Gulf War, the, 156, 213, 219
 Gutiérrez, Gustavo, 66, 67, 70, 71
 Habash, George, 53, 165,
 Habib, Gabriel, 110, 165, 166
 Haganah, 118, 152
 Haifa, 88, 89, 119
 Hamas (Harakat al-Muqawama al-Islamiyya), 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 158, 160, 169, 172, 173, 174, 228, 235
 Hamitic, 118
 Hattin, Horns of, 4
 Hawatmeh, Nayef, 54
 Hebrews, 50, 100, 125, 150, 166, 209, 212
 Ancient, 124, 194
 Bible, 72, 85, 86, 106, 123, 125, 126, 128, 131, 133, 138, 207, 209, 217, 219, 223
 People, 151, 166, 209, 210, 217
 Scriptures, 98, 142
 Hebrew University of Jerusalem, The, 89, 219
 Hebron, 160
 Hellenic Republic, 12
 Hermeneutics, 67, 68, 101, 128, 133
 Hexateuch (Books of Moses), 50
 High Commissioner of Palestine, 25

- Holocaust, the, 95, 96, 99, 102, 135, 140, 176, 179, 218
- Jewish Empowerment after the, 135
- Post-Holocaust Guilt, 103
- Post-Holocaust Reading of Scripture, 129
- Post-Holocaust Theology, 130, 203, 204, 205
- Holy Land, the, 7, 9, 12, 13, 18, 19, 25, 35, 36, 38, 39, 44, 48, 52, 57, 75, 76, 77, 80, 81, 85, 99, 111, 120, 122, 138, 142, 144, 148, 149, 163, 174, 195, 202, 208, 214, 217, 219, 220
- Holy Spirit, 150
- Holy Week, 14
- House of Clergy (Diocese of Jerusalem), 40
- House of Laity (Diocese of Jerusalem), 40
- House of Tranquillity and Peace, 118
- Human Rights, 166, 183
- Al-Husseini, Haji Amin, 56
- India, 20, 195, 232, 235
- Injil (gospel), 208
- International Centre of Bethlehem (ICB), 1, 181, 193, 194, 200, 201, 229, 230, 242, 244
- International Christian Embassy Jerusalem (ICEJ), 32, 41, 45, 111
- International Friends of Sabeel, 238
- International Law, 88, 185, 187
- International Solidarity Movement, 190
- Intifada, First, 33, 34, 36, 58, 60, 105, 120, 122, 158, 228, 229, 231
- Iran, 57, 58, 59, 117
- Iraq, 83, 213, 219
- Irgun Gang, 87
- Iron Fist policy, 99
- Isaac, 22, 139, 142
- Isaiah, Book of, 132, 142, 144, 150, 216
- Islam, 3–5, 7, 9, 11, 29, 30, 53–63, 72, 75, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 94, 110, 112, 113, 115, 117, 118, 169–172, 180, 181, 199, 208, 225, 236,
- Fundamentalist / Radical, 63, 112, 113, 114, 147, 160, 169, 171, 174, 196, 228, 235,
- Political, 53–63, 86, 113,
- Islamic Jihad, 58, 59, 60, 61, 158, 169, 171, 174
- Islamic Liberation Party, 57
- Istanbul, 3, 6, 7, 9, 17, 89, 103
- Jabotinsky, Vladimir, 87
- Jacob, Prophet, 22, 139, 142
- Jahiliyya, 55
- Jebusites, 2, 151
- Jeremiah, Prophet, 142
- Jericho, 87, 132, 157
- Jerusalem (al-Quds), 2, 3, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 27, 30, 33, 36, 37, 47, 76, 119, 122, 141, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 155, 156, 159, 162, 173, 174, 192, 197, 204, 226, 227, 228, 235, 243
- Bishopric of, 92
- Christian vision of, 150
- Christians of, 28, 37, 147, 150,
- Declaration of the Patriarchs, 154, 156
- Diocese of, 40
- East, 2, 27, 28, 33, 36, 97, 119, 120, 127, 145, 146, 147, 148, 153, 155, 156, 160, 161, 174, 211, 231, 236
- Importance for Christians, 154, 155
- Jewish Quarter, 37, 153
- Mount of Olives, 150
- Muslim Conquest of, 2, 154
- Palestinian Population in, 151, 154
- Patriarchate, 10, 11, 17, 37, 149, 150, 156
- Residency, 146, 147, 157

- West, 27, 28, 153
 Zionist Views of, 151
 Jesus Christ, 70, 80, 83, 98, 126,
 130, 132, 134, 139, 140, 141,
 142, 144, 150, 173, 174, 175,
 176, 197, 206, 208, 224, 234,
 238, 241, 243
 Messiah of Israel, 130, 141, 142
 Palestinian Identity of, 174
 Second Coming of, 101
 Jewish Diaspora, 53, 97, 197
 Jihad, 54, 56, 57, 59
 Jill-Levine, Amy, 174, 175
 John, Book of, 139, 140, 141
 John XXIII, Pope, 65
 Joint Heads of Christian Churches, 37
 Jonah, 139, 219
 Jordan, 28, 52, 57, 108, 117, 127, 147,
 162, 165, 221, 226
 Era, 16, 28, 29
 Greek Orthodox in, 12
 Migration to (from Palestine), 52
 Political Islam in, 29
 Public Education Law of, 29
 River, 52, 119, 160,
 Transjordan, 26, 27, 30, 56, 119
 Valley, 118, 160
 Joshua, Book of, 118, 132, 133,
 204, 221
 Joshua, Prophet, 87
 Jubilee Tradition, 49
 Judaism, 21, 72, 80, 96, 98, 101, 102,
 106, 108, 110, 130, 131, 133,
 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 151,
 167, 169, 170, 174, 175, 179,
 195, 197, 213, 218, 219, 220,
 224, 232
 Ancient State, 108
 Constantinian Judaism, 95, 110
 Fundamentalist, 63, 110
 Orthodox, 102, 219
 Reform, 102, 134
 Judeo-Christian Tradition, 20, 103,
 127, 164, 195
 Alliance, 176, 177, 178
 Religious Imagery, 97
 Judea, 139, 160, 197
 Kabbalism, 131
 Ka'fity, Samir, 42, 105, 116
 Kahane, Rabbi Meir, 87
 Al-Kahf Centre, 229
 Khodr, George, 105, 109, 166
 Khomeini, Ayatollah, 59
 Khoury, Gerjes Sa'ed, 77, 78, 80, 81,
 82, 121, 194, 236
 Khoury, Rafiq, 72, 82, 83, 84,
 90, 236
 Kings I & II, Book of, 132, 133, 137,
 221, 224
 Kingship, Concept of, 217
 Knesset, 12, 31, 134
 Kollek, Teddy, 15
 Kook, Avraham, 131
 Kort, Nora, 121
 Küng, Hans, 222
 Kuttab, Jonathan, 43, 121, 147
 Lahham, Lutfi, 116
 Lahham, Martine Albert, 105
 Lahut Mahali, 121
 Latin America, 65, 66, 71, 72, 81, 92,
 96, 104
 Base Community, 234, 235
 Third Bishop's Conference (CELAM
 III), 71
 Law and Gospel, 214, 215
 Law and Justice, Concept of, 98
 League of Nations, 24, 26
 Lebanon, 17, 35, 40, 52, 72, 83, 90, 105,
 108, 162, 165, 166, 221
 Lebanese Christians, 83, 165
 Leo XIII, Pope, 65
 Levantine,
 Arabs, 8, 17, 90, 117
 Christians, 8, 72, 79, 165, 170,
 234
 Leviticus, Book of, 138, 223

- Liberation Theology (PLT), 67, 68, 69,
 70, 71, 72, 91, 94, 98, 103, 104,
 109, 112, 114, 121, 122, 123,
 141, 143, 145, 163, 172, 179,
 180, 193, 196, 219, 231, 236,
 237, 244
 First Conference, 100, 122
 Hermeneutics, 128
 Jewish Theology of Liberation, 94,
 95
 in Latin America, 71, 94, 97, 123,
 180, 235
 in North America, 97
 in Palestine, 122
 Liberative Praxis, 73
 Quarterly Review, 82
 Lloyd George, David, 22, 23
 London Jewish Society (LJS), 6, 21
 Lowe, Malcolm, 181
 Luke, Book of, 139, 140, 150
 Luther, Martin, 214
 Lutheranism, 1, 6, 7, 30, 38–47, 81,
 132, 181, 187, 192, 193, 200,
 213, 214, 215, 229, 230, 231,
 238, 239, 240, 241
 Church in the Holy Land, 30, 43
 World Federation (LWF), 44, 193

 Maccabean Revolt, 133
 Madbasseh Square, 193
 Madrid Conference, 156
 Magisterium, of the Church, 67
 Magnificat, Mary's (Luke 1:46–55), 214
 Makari, Peter, 177
 Manchester Zionist Society, 20, 23
 Mar Elias University Project, 90, 91
 Marcion, 85, 126, 175
 Mark, Book of, 140
 Marsh, Leonard, 136
 Marxism, 72, 129, 210
 Maryknoll School of Mission, 94
 Masada, 133
 Matthew, Book of, 134, 136, 139, 159, 217
 Matossian, Mardiros, 14

 Mecca, 3
 Mediterranean Sea, 5, 20, 170, 221, 226
 Meir, Golda, 111
 Melchizedek, King, 151
 Memorandum of Their Beatitudes, 33
 Mesa, Jose M., 74
 Messianic Jewish Alliance America
 (MJAA), 32
 Methodist Church, 187
 Metz, Johann Baptist, 66
 Micah, Book of, 135, 143, 226
 Middle East Council of Churches
 (MECC), 93, 109, 165, 186
 Ministry of Housing of Israel, 15
 Ministry Religious Affairs of Israel, 32
 Moltmann, Jurgen, 66
 Monism, Christological, 130
 Mosala, Itumeleng J., 129
 Moses, Prophet (Nabi Musa), 88, 142,
 210, 221
 Mufti of Palestine, 56
 Muhammad, Prophet, 3, 117, 208
 Muslim Brotherhood, 29, 54, 55, 56,
 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 160

 Nablus, 92, 139, 141, 192
 Nakba (Naqba), 19, 39, 87, 107, 119
 Naboth, Biblical story of, 143
 Napoleon, 18, 20
 Nasir, Hanna, 42
 Nasser, Gamal Abdal, 55, 85
 Nasserism, 113, 160
 Nasser, Kamal, 165
 Nasser, Naim, 238
 Nationalism,
 Arab, 11, 29, 54, 55, 60, 84, 85, 105,
 112, 160, 165, 193
 Christian, 62
 Jewish, 133
 Palestinian, 18, 54, 59, 180,
 Nazareth, 77, 88, 89, 92, 111, 119, 122,
 235
 Nazism, 166
 Nineveh, 213

- North America, 72, 125, 188, 232
- Occupied Territories, 52, 58, 60, 124,
137, 146, 157, 159, 169, 173, 174,
183, 188, 190, 200, 234, 240
- Organization of Islamic Conference
(OIC), 113
- Orient, Greater, 109, 213
- Oriental Church, 79, 115
- Orthodoxy, 10, 80
- Oslo Peace Accords, 147, 156, 157, 158,
159, 161
- Ottoman Empire, 9, 10, 20, 24, 25, 31,
38, 54, 72, 84, 99, 106, 107,
109, 155,
- Palestine, 72, 87, 88, 118, 123, 136, 142,
144, 146, 148, 153, 155, 161,
162, 165, 167, 168, 176, 190,
191, 196, 197, 200, 202, 220,
222, 234, 237, 238, 240, 241
- Christian Minority in, 171
- Colonisation of, 136
- Israeli Colonisation of, 102
- Land of, 80, 123, 141, 144, 167
- Mandate, 119
- Original Inhabitants of, 123
- Roman Occupation, 80, 106, 218, 234
- Solidarity Movement (PSM), 188
- State of, 153, 156, 159, 161, 162
- Territories, 71, 119, 124, 162, 173, 177,
183, 186, 187, 189, 191, 200,
210, 228, 231, 232, 235, 236, 239
- Palestinian Liberation Organisation
(PLO), 17, 53, 54, 57, 58, 59,
60, 121, 149, 152, 156, 163, 165,
169, 204, 212
- Palestinian National Authority (PNA),
17, 32, 62, 149, 152, 156, 159,
161, 243
- Palestinian Native Church Council
(PNCC), 39
- Palestinians, 15, 16, 36, 44, 48, 50, 51,
52, 53, 54, 56, 61, 64, 71, 72,
76, 77, 80, 86, 87, 90, 93, 95,
96, 97, 99, 102, 104, 106, 107,
109, 113, 117, 122, 124, 127,
128, 135, 136, 138, 139, 142,
144, 146, 153, 157, 158, 161,
162, 166, 170, 182, 198, 199,
202, 210, 211, 225, 226
- Palmach, 152
- Palmerston, Lord, 22
- Passover, 15
- Parekh, Lord Bhikhu, 232
- Paul, Apostle, 216
- Paul, Pope VI, 65, 76
- Pentateuch, 175, 208, 216
- Pentecost, 207
- Petah Tikva, 111
- Peter, 166
- Pharisees, 134
- Phoenicia, 118, 146, 165
- Pius XI, 65
- Pleins, J. David, 128
- Pogroms, 107, 139, 166
- Popular Front for the Liberation of
Palestine (PFLP), 54
- Populorum Progressio (Papal Bull),
65
- Powers and Principalities, 98
- Prayer Friends of Israel (PFI), 32
- Presbyterianism, 43, 105, 164, 187,
189, 190
- Church in America, 187, 189
- Committee for Mission
Responsibility Through
Investing (MRTI), 189, 190
- General Assembly, 189
- Progressive List for Peace (PLP), 91
- Promised Land, 80, 125, 131, 222
- Propst (Provost), 43
- Psalms, Book of, 138, 150, 224
- Puritanism, 125
- Quadragesimo Anno, 65
- Qub'ayn, Najib, 40
- Queen Helena, 2

- Qur'an, 55
 Qutb, Sayyid, 55, 59

 Raheb, Mitri, 1, 43, 48, 63, 64, 72, 73, 74, 81, 99, 121, 163, 181, 192, 193, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 210, 211, 212, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217, 218, 219, 220, 221, 222, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227, 228, 230, 231, 232, 233, 239, 240, 241, 242, 243, 244
 Contextual Theology of, 198, 199
 Culture in Bethlehem, 201, 202, 203
 Land in Palestine, 199
 Lutheranism of, 192
 Ramadan, 148
 Ramallah, 30, 40
 Rameses II, 210, 212
 Raya, Archbishop Joseph-Marie, 89, 110, 111
 Regan, Ethna, 70
 Rerum Novarum, 65
 of Jesus Christ, 51
 Revelation, Book of, 150
 Roman Empire, 11, 80, 83, 98, 106, 117, 118, 134, 139, 170, 174, 176, 206, 234
 Romans, Book of, 216
 Rome, 133, 173,
 Rothschild, Lord Walter, 22
 Rubenstein, Richard, 203
 Ruether, Rosemary Radford, 71, 95, 96, 97, 98, 100, 101, 103, 122, 129, 130, 131, 196, 203
 Ruether, Herman J., 99
 Rum Urthuduksiya, 8, 12
 Rumi, 8
 Russia, 13, 195

 Sa'adeh, Antun, 53
 Sabbah, Michel, 19, 36, 48, 81, 85, 86, 87, 88, 116

 Sabbath, 49
 Sabeel Centre for Ecumenical Liberation
 Theology Centre, 1, 2, 34, 42, 43, 89, 91, 92, 94, 100, 104, 122, 123, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 161, 162, 164, 165, 166, 168, 169, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 184, 185, 187, 188, 189, 191, 192, 194, 227, 228, 231, 232, 233, 234, 235, 236, 237, 238, 239, 244
 Conferences, 193
 Friends of, in North America (FOSNA), 158, 183, 188
 International Patron of, 182
 Jerusalem Centre, 188
 Jerusalem Document, 152, 153, 156, 162
 Rationale behind the Launch of, 122
 Statement (on Divestment), 185, 186
 Vision Document, 237
 Young Adults Conference, 238
 Sacks, Sir Jonathan, 191
 Sadat, Anwar, 114
 Sadducees, 134
 Saladin (Salah-al-Din), 3, 4, 5, 8
 Said, Edward, 45, 159,
 Samaria, 139, 197
 Samaritans, 118, 139, 140, 141, 197, 206
 Samson, Prophet, 87
 Samuel I & II, Book of, 132, 133, 217, 224
 Samuel, Prophet (Nabi Samwil), 87, 106
 Samuel, Sir Herbert, 25
 San Francisco Theological Seminary, 105
 Schussler-Fiorenza, Elisabeth, 128
 Scriptures, Biblical, 68, 135
 Scyla, 128
 Secretariat for Christian Educational Institutions, 82

- Segundo, Juan Luis, 68
 Semites, 72, 79, 95, 118, 123, 209
 Settlers, 153, 161, 167, 185
 Kach, 87
 Shafiq, Munir, 61
 Shaftesbury, Seventh Earl of, 21
 Shalom, 151
 Shamir, Yitzhak, 204, 212
 Sharon, Ariel, 15
 Sharia, 55, 57, 114, 168, 172, 236
 Shehadeh, Raja, 42
 Shi'a, 57, 58, 59
 Shulmanu, 151
 Shura, 55
 Sinai Peninsula, 45, 142, 160,
 210, 221
 Sinaitical Covenant, 130
 Sizer, Stephen, 41, 176,
 Smith, Christian, 69
 Sobrino, Jon, 69
 Solomon, King, 106, 221, 222
 Sophronius, Byzantine Patriarch,
 9, 81
 South Africa, 82, 104, 168, 182, 183
 Apartheid, in, 82, 182, 183, 184,
 210, 212, 235
 Council of Churches, 184
 Liberation, 168, 219
 Post-Apartheid, 104
 Soviet Union, 63, 205
 Special Statute for Jerusalem, 33
 St. George's Cathedral and College, 41,
 119, 120, 231
 St. James, Brother of Jesus Christ, 11
 St. John's Hospice incident, 12–14, 13,
 15, 36
 Status Quo (in the Holy Places), 10, 13,
 25, 27, 33, 35, 36, 122, 155
 Stern Gang, 87
 Sunna, 236
 Synoptic Gospels, 139, 140
 Syria, 11, 21, 72, 90, 118, 127, 129,
 166, 171
 Syrian National Party, 53
 Takfir wal-Hijra, 55
 Talmon, Shemaryahu, 219
 Tambo, Oliver, 182
 Tel Aviv, 45, 148, 228
 Temple,
 First, 151
 Herodian (Jewish), 106, 133
 Mount (Dome of the Rock), 3,
 45, 58
 Second, 150
 Tenakh, 133
 Theological Studies, 75, 76, 97, 121,
 122
 Theology, 132
 Calvinist Version of, 100
 Contextual, 72, 73, 78, 80, 81, 82,
 163, 198, 231
 Dispensationalist, 100
 Gnostic, 126
 Islamic Liberation Theology, 235
 Liberation, *see Liberation Theology*
 Political, 66
 Post-Theology, 130, 131
 Replacement, 195
 Third World, 65, 82, 97, 123,
 186, 205
 Torah, 131, 133, 142, 208, 209
 Toynbee, Sir Arnold, 127
 Treaty of Alliance, 26
 Tripoli, 5
 Truman, President Harry S., 218
 Tsimhoni, Daphne, 84, 121
 Turkey, 7, 89
 Tutu, Desmond, 182, 183, 184
 Two Kingdoms, Concept of, 239,
 240, 241
 Uganda Proposal, 23
 Ummah, 54
 Uniata (Eastern Rite Churches), 19
 United Christian Council of Israel
 (UCCI), 111
 United Church of Christ (UCC), 176,
 177, 187

- United Nations (UN), 109, 155, 162, 168
 - Convention on Women's Rights, 169
 - General Assembly (GA), 27, 152
 - Partition Plan for Palestine, 37, 156
 - Refugee Works Agency (UNRWA), 218
 - Security Council Resolution 181, 152
 - Security Council Resolution 242, 152
 - Security Council Resolution 252, 153
 - Security Council Resolution 338, 152
 - Security Council Resolution 478, 153
 - Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP), 27, 37, 38
 - Universal Declaration on Human Rights (UDHR), 167
- United States, 36, 95, 96, 101, 124, 125, 141, 183
- Universalism, 138
- Utilitarianism, 136
- Van Buren, Paul, 129, 130, 131, 194, 203, 224
 - Pro-Zionist Theology of, 130
- Vatican, the, 18, 31, 32, 33, 35, 36, 76, 155, 156
- Vatican II, 19, 31, 65, 76
- Via Dolorosa, 174
- Von Rad, Gerhard, 50
- Wagner, Donald E., 117, 122
- Warrior, Robert Allan, 124, 125
- Watan, 51, 144
- Waqf, 3, 4, 196
- Weizmann, Chaim Avriel, 22, 23, 218
- West Bank, 12, 27, 28, 30, 44, 53, 56, 57, 58, 61, 77, 87, 92, 97, 105, 108, 110, 111, 119, 120, 136, 139, 141, 146, 147, 148, 152, 153, 154, 156, 157, 159, 160, 161, 171, 183, 184, 185, 187, 204, 211, 228, 231, 239, 240, 243
- Western Christians, 72, 97, 100, 111, 148, 180, 195, 218, 227
- Western Wall, 153
- Wiesel, Elie, 203
- Will of God, 209
- Williams, Rowan, 190
- World Council of Churches (WCC), 46, 93, 185, 186, 187
 - General Assemblies, 186
 - Student Christian Federation, 165
- World War I, 22, 23, 113
- World War II, 52, 54, 108, 218, 140, 181, 204, 209
- Yahweh, 48, 86, 87, 106, 124, 125, 133, 134, 135
 - Activity of, 134
 - Attributes of, 88, 142
 - Concept of Land, 142
 - Covenant with Israel, 130, 142
 - Holiness of, 87
 - Kingdom of, 100, 134
 - Laws of, 87
 - Nationalist Concept of, 139
 - Primitive Image of, 139
 - Will of, 49, 87, 142
 - Word of, 87, 126
 - YHWH (Hebrew term for GOD), 216, 217
- Yasin, Sheikh Ahmed, 58
- Younan, Bishop Munib, 48, 49, 51, 52, 125, 126, 127, 132, 181, 236
 - Development of a Local Contextualised Theology, 127
- Young, J. W. A., 13
- Zabur, 208
- Zaru, Jean, 43, 121
- Zaru, Nadim, 42
- Zealots, 133, 134
- Zionism, 4, 46, 47, 88, 87, 93, 99, 102, 106, 107, 108, 110, 113, 120, 124, 130, 131, 135, 136, 139,

- 155, 169, 172, 176, 178, 179,
188, 196, 219
- Christian Zionists, 1, 5, 11, 20, 21,
23, 32, 44, 46, 50, 125, 129,
141, 142, 148, 164, 169, 176,
179, 188, 194
- Israeli Zionists, 116, 122, 141, 176,
218
- Jewish Zionists, 80, 93, 102, 106,
108, 110, 142, 179, 188
- Nationalism, 114, 141
- Organisation of America (ZOA), 218
- Political, 88
- Religious, 97
- Zoughbi, Zoughbi, 121
218