

“Cry for Hope” in Lent.

A series of studies for Lent 2022 and beyond.

“*Cry for Hope: A Call to Decisive Action*” was issued in July 2020 by leaders of the Christian community in the Holy Land under the banner of Kairos Palestine. It was taken up by Global Kairos for Justice, a coalition of committed Christians from around the world.

“*Cry for Hope*” is a significant document both for those committed to justice and peace in Israel Palestine and for churches worldwide. (The text of “*Cry for Hope*” can be found at www.cryforhope.org)

- Its description of the current situation for Palestinian Christians, and indeed Palestinians as a whole, is a wake-up call amidst the challenges of the global pandemic and the environmental crisis. For many people the conflict in Israel/Palestine has been eclipsed by other global challenges. However once again the challenges of combating these global issues have been impeded by the historic and ongoing injustice suffered by the Palestinian people. Justice for the land called Holy remains a moral imperative.
- Churches are challenged by “*Cry for Hope*” to recognise that a point has been reached where their integrity is being called into question by the fact that some parts of the Church support Israel and its occupation of lands conquered in 1967. “*Cry for Hope*” argues the case that support for the continuing oppression of the Palestinian people is incompatible with the Gospel.

A number of churches in the UK have noted “*Cry for Hope*” and commended it for study; others have resolutions before them that call for such recognition. The present course has therefore been prepared to resource these studies and provide a format for use within Lent Groups run by many churches and ecumenical groupings. The material will then be available for use at other times of year.

It is hoped that by using this study material, churches and individuals will respond with action as suggested in the title of the document “*Cry for Hope: A Call to Decisive Action*”. A study guide is available as a supplement to this course, which includes more details on how the suggested actions can be taken. <https://www.sabeel-kairos.org.uk/cry-for-hope-in-lent-a-new-series/>

Format for the Course Meetings

A Zoom event will take place at 6pm (UK time) on each of the Sundays indicated. A recording of the event will be available from the following day for use at any time. Each meeting will consist of:

Brief introduction by Charlotte Marshall, from Sabeel Kairos UK.

First Speaker - 15 minutes

Second Speaker - 15 minutes

Q & A session - 30 minutes (or groups may decide to go straight into their own discussions)

Prayer and suggested actions – 10 minutes (for those not in group discussions)

The zoom meeting will then end, to enable Lent groups to discuss further (either online, or in person. Please note, we will not be hosting breakout rooms so you will need to set up your own discussion groups)

Group Discussion - 30 minutes if Q & A has been chosen, or 60 if not.

Cry for Hope Programme – week by week guide for groups.

Week 1 Why was “Cry for Hope” written?

Zoom event at 6pm UK time on Sunday 6th March 2022

Recording available from Monday 7th March

This week will cover the following areas:

- The background to “Cry for Hope.”
- The “conflict.”
- Why was it written at this point in history?

Speakers: Rev. Dr. Munther Isaac
Rev. David Haslam.

Questions for Group Discussion:

1. The conflict is not between two equal sides: it is wholly asymmetrical. What responsibility do Christians have to the oppressed and the marginalised? Where in the Bible do we find this expressed? (For a start you may want to look at Isaiah Ch. 58 and Matthew Ch. 5).
2. “Cry for Hope” speaks of a “Kairos moment”, a special, significant point in time which calls for action. It points out two previous “Kairos moments” - 1933 in Germany and 1964 in South Africa. What changes on the ground in Israel Palestine make this a “Kairos Moment?”
3. If the Church recognises this as a “Kairos Moment”, not least because international law is being flouted, what actions are appropriate for the Church and for Christians? What are the forms that resistance could take, inside or outside the country? Should the Church participate in the BDS (Boycott, Disinvestment, Sanctions) movement and, if so, focused just on goods produced in settlements, or any trade with Israel?

Prayer: You may like to have a time of open prayer and conclude it with the following prayer:

Lord Jesus, you came to earth at a moment in time and called the people of the land called Holy to a Gospel of truth and love. In our time we hear again the call to truth, justice and love. May the Church across the world uphold its calling to be faithful to the Gospel. May Christians respond with a passion for justice for all, Israelis and Palestinians alike, and do whatever they can to bring about a land where Jews and Palestinians are safe and live in peace. Amen

Recommended action

If you have not yet read “Cry for Hope”, do so now. In any case commend it to at least two friends who you think might be interested. www.cryforhope.org

Week 2 The Christian Community of Palestine

Zoom event at 6pm UK time on Sunday 13th March 2022

Recording available from Monday 14th March

This week will cover:

- Who are Palestinian Christians? Palestinian Christian speakers are often asked “When were they converted?” This question demonstrates that western churches have much to learn about Christianity in the Middle East.
- Why is the Christian community in Palestine disappearing?
- What is the importance of the Christian community in Palestine?

Speakers: Zoughbi Zoughbi (Wi’am)
Nora Carmi (Kairos Palestine and Sabeel Jerusalem)

Questions for Group Discussion:

1. Where in the Bible do you find the predecessors of today’s Palestinian Christian community?
2. Millions of Christians from across the world come to Bethlehem, Nazareth and Jerusalem to walk where Jesus walked and to see the sites of the Holy Land. What difference would it make if there were no longer any Christians living in the Holy Land?
3. The term “ethnic cleansing” is a recent one in International Law. How do you understand that term and does it apply here, for Christians and Muslims alike?

Prayer: You may like to have a time of open prayer and conclude it with the following prayer:

Heavenly Father you look with sadness upon injustice, hatred, and fear. Lift the hearts of those who despair that peace with justice will be seen in their lifetime. Bless the Christian communities of Bethlehem, Jerusalem and throughout Palestine that soon the hope sought in “Cry for Hope” might be found, and new joy be brought to those who at present see no future for them in the land called Holy. May a just peace be achieved between Palestinians and Israelis, which may then lead to true reconciliation. Amen

Recommended Action

Join Sabeel-Kairos UK - <https://www.sabeel-kairos.org.uk/category/join-us/>

In doing so you will receive the weekly Wave of Prayer, regular newsletters, and other resources and information to help you campaign and advocate for a just peace.

You could also consider joining one of their denominational campaign groups - <https://www.sabeel-kairos.org.uk/category/taking-action/investing-for-peace/>

Week 3 Is Israel an apartheid state?

Zoom event at 6pm UK time on Sunday 20th March 2022.

Recording available from Monday 21st March

This week will cover:

- What is apartheid? (You might like to google the ICC Rome Statute on Apartheid).
- Why is this important? What legal difference does it make in International Law?
- Brian Brown's book 'Apartheid South Africa! Apartheid Israel?'¹ identifies 9 similarities between South Africa and Israeli apartheid, but more significantly four ways in which Israel replicates 'Grand Apartheid'. Does it help or hinder to compare Israel with South Africa?
- What has changed recently that has affected thought on the question of apartheid? When does an occupation become permanent? Is the question of *de facto* and *de jure* annexation significant?
- Which is most important and why – a legal or moral case calling for Israel to be labelled an apartheid regime?

Speakers: Rev. Brian Brown
Dr. Allan Boesak

Questions for group discussion:

1. Do you consider that the situation in Israel Palestine now fits the description of apartheid?
2. Definition of apartheid is all important - be it South Africa's understanding of its essence or the legal definition in International Law. Consider if Israel's apartheid status requires a widespread campaign of political and economic pressure.
3. If you don't accept the title of apartheid, how would you describe the differences in legal status and security of tenure between Palestinians and Israelis?

Prayer: You may like to have a time of open prayer and conclude it with the following prayer:

Heavenly Father of all the human race, look with mercy upon all those who suffer from division, oppression and discrimination in every land. Grant that soon the world will value all your children as you value them. Grant strength and encouragement to all those working in Israel Palestine to bring together Israelis and Palestinians so that the future can be a peaceful and a secure one for all those who live between the River Jordan and the Mediterranean Sea. Amen

Recommended Action

Raise awareness of the issue of Israel Palestine with your M.P. if you have not done so already or send a follow-up message quoting Archbishop Desmond Tutu's call for economic sanctions as a non-violent method of applying pressure on the Government of Israel until they comply with International Law.

Consider joining the next national lobby of parliament led by the Palestine Solidarity Campaign or other days of action: <https://www.palestinecampaign.org/>

¹ ["Apartheid South Africa! Apartheid Israel?"](https://www.palestinecampaign.org/) by Brian J Brown (apartheid-southafrica-israel.com)

Week 4 Is it true that “You cannot follow the Gospel and support the oppression of the Palestinian people?”

Zoom event at 6pm UK time on Sunday 27th March 2022

Recording available from Monday 28th March.

This week will cover:

- The Gospel, for example in the Sermon on the Mount, calls for siding with the oppressed and the marginalised: in this context that is the Palestinians.
- The ongoing and worsening oppression of the Palestinians intensifies and sustains the conflict. To bring about a just peace for all the parties, it must end.

Speakers: Mark Braverman
Ulrich Duchrow

Questions for group discussion:

1. How does our understanding of the Bible lead to the requirement to pursue justice for the oppressed?
2. Where in the Bible is there a link between issues of justice and the teachings of Jesus? Can you be a Christian without opposing the oppression of the Palestinians? How do the Kairos Palestine document and “Cry for Hope” address this question?
3. Does the fear of being called ‘antisemitic’ in challenging Israel’s policies frighten people off? Serve to block taking action for Palestine? How can we as Christians best respond when our support for the Palestinians leads to this charge being made against us personally or against our churches, or even when the question is raised that criticism of Israel is or can be antisemitic?
4. How can Churches challenge their governments to link further support of and cooperation with the state of Israel to the fulfilment of international law and human rights?

Prayer: You may like to have a time of open prayer and conclude it with the following prayer:

Lord Jesus, you lived in an occupied country and died on a Roman cross. Look with mercy upon both occupiers and occupied. Grant a vision of how the occupation might come to an end and how the future might look with justice and peace for all the people of the land called Holy. Amen.

Recommended Action

Raise the issue of Israel/Palestine in your local Church Council, Circuit Meeting, Synod or other church body with a resolution about investments or BDS to encourage Israel to comply with International Law.

Week 5 Why is it a “Cry for Hope”?

Zoom event at 6pm UK time on Sunday 3rd April 2022
Recording available from Monday 4th April.

This week will cover:

- Why is hope needed? Can change come without hope?
- Can hope be found in the Holy Land today?
- “Our hope is in God”. Is that “so heavenly minded it’s no earthly use?”

Speakers: Shadia Qubti
Rev. John Howard

Questions for group discussion:

1. What is the appropriate balance in Christianity between hoping in God to provide, and considering that it is all down to us?
2. Alexander Pope said, “Hope springs eternal in the human breast”. Do you agree? What would you say to a Palestinian who, having lived all her life under oppression, says that she has lost all hope?
3. What is being hoped for?

Prayer: You may like to have a time of open prayer and conclude it with the following prayer:

Almighty God, you have inspired your children in every generation and given hope when it seemed that all hope might be lost. Grant that the hope for justice and peace may be kept alive in the land called Holy, and may the time soon be with us when all your children might live in peace. Amen

Recommended Action

Consider how to engage with the Cry for Hope from here, looking specifically at the recommended actions.

Use the study guide to help you further your knowledge and understanding of the situation, and then share that with your church community.

If you are a preacher, worship leader or house-group leader, remember to distinguish between ‘Israel’ in the bible and ‘Israel’ today and educate others that they are not one and the same.

Speaker Biographies

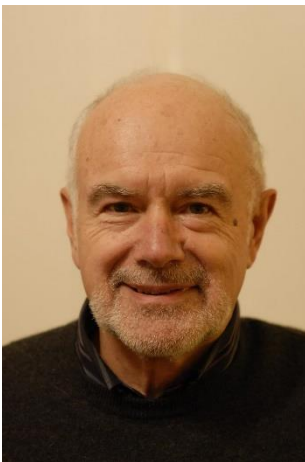
Revd. Dr. Munther Isaac:



Revd. Dr. Munther Isaac is a Palestinian Christian pastor, theologian, writer, speaker, blogger and, more importantly, a husband and a father. He now pastors Christmas Lutheran Church in Bethlehem and is the Academic Dean of Bethlehem Bible College. He is also the director of the highly acclaimed and influential Christ at the Checkpoint conferences and is a board member of Kairos Palestine. Munther is passionate about issues related to Palestinians and Palestinian Christians. He speaks locally and

internationally on issues related to the theology of the land, Palestinian Christians, and Palestinian theology. He is the author of “The Other Side of the Wall”, “From Land to Lands, from Eden to the Renewed Earth”, “An Introduction to Palestinian Theology” (in Arabic), and a commentary on the book of Daniel (in Arabic). He has a Master’s in Biblical Studies from Westminster Theological Seminary and a PhD from the Oxford Centre for Mission Studies.

Revd David Haslam:



David is a Methodist minister who has long campaigned on justice issues. He was a member of the Anti-Apartheid Movement Executive Committee for many years and founder of the End Loans to South Africa campaign. He also helped initiate the Dalit Solidarity Network and Church Action for Tax Justice. He has written ‘Race for the Millennium’, ‘Caste Out: the Dalits of India’ and ‘A Luta Continua: memoir of a sometimes radical Christian’. With Brian Brown he contributed to ‘Ecumenical Encounters with Desmond Mpilo Tutu’, a book of 72 essays which includes the views of ‘the Arch’ on apartheid in Israel Palestine.

Zoughbi Zoughbi:



Zoughbi Zoughbi is the founder and director of the Palestinian Conflict Resolution Centre in the West Bank. Wi'am was honored with the 2010 Peacebuilding Award in the World Vision International Peace Prize competition for "successfully integrating traditional Palestinian mediation customs with innovative academic models of conflict analysis to address the very difficult circumstances of Palestinians living in the occupied West Bank."

Zoughbi, also a city council member in Bethlehem, is involved in the Mennonite Central Committee in Jerusalem, the World Council of Churches, the International Fellowship of Reconciliation, and the Arab Partnership for Conflict Prevention. His work as a nonviolence educator has taken him to Costa Rica, Denmark, Holland, Japan, Lebanon, Poland, and the United States.

Nora Carmi:



Nora is a Christian Palestinian who has worked for peace and justice her whole life. She was born in 1947 in Jerusalem into a family of Armenian survivors from the genocide perpetrated by the Turkish Empire. For over forty years, Nora has worked as an educator and community-builder with all age groups of the society including children, teenagers, men, women, clergy and with people with disabilities.

She has also worked for several organizations such as YWCA, Sabeel and Kairos Palestine. Although now retired, Nora is still an active person, a member of several boards, and a peace and justice voice for Palestine and Israel, and also globally.

Revd Brian Brown:



Brian was born and brought up in South Africa. After a conventional 'white' upbringing he began to question the apartheid system, so much so that he joined the Christian Institute to work with Revd Beyers Naudé. The Institute was banned, as was Brian, and he and his family left the country for the UK. As a Methodist minister he worked first in Methodism and then became Africa Secretary for the British Council of Churches, working with Archbishop Tutu and others. He has published his memoir, 'Born to be Free' and most recently 'Apartheid South Africa! Apartheid Israel?' - a

detailed analysis of the parallels between the two apartheid systems.

Dr Allan Boesak:



Allan was highly influential in the struggle against apartheid in South Africa and became the leader of the United Democratic Front, which brought together a wide range of community and church organisations. He won the 1985 Robert Kennedy Human Rights Award. He comes from the Reformed tradition and among his many theological works are 'Farewell to Innocence' and 'Kairos, Crisis and Global Apartheid: The Challenge to Prophetic Witness'. He lives in Cape Town and continues to speak and lecture on the Christian response to the

current world situation, including that of Israel Palestine.

Mark Braverman:



Mark Braverman's roots are in the Holy Land – his grandfather, a fifth generation Palestinian Jew, was born in Jerusalem, emigrating to the U.S. as a young man. Growing up in the United States, Mark was reared in the Jewish tradition, studying Bible, Hebrew literature, and Jewish history. Returning to the Holy Land in 2006, he was transformed by witnessing the occupation of Palestine and by encounters with peace activists and civil society leaders from the Muslim, Christian and Jewish communities.

Since then, Mark has devoted himself full-time to the Israel/Palestine conflict. He is a co-founder of Friends of Tent of Nations North America, a nonprofit dedicated to supporting Palestinian land rights and peaceful coexistence in historic Palestine. He serves on the advisory

committee of Friends of Sabeel North America and as a consultant to Evangelicals for Middle East Understanding. Mark has been closely involved in the growth of the international church movement to support the cause of Palestinian rights. He is Executive Director for Kairos USA, a movement to unify and mobilize American Christians to take a prophetic stance for a just peace in Israel and Palestine.

Ulrich Duchrow:



Ulrich is Professor of systematic theology at the University of Heidelberg/Germany, specialising in ecumenical theology and theology-economy issues. He is co-founder and honorary chair of Kairos Europa, an ecumenical grassroots network striving for economic justice together with organisations of the marginalized and with solidarity groups (secular and church-related) linking North-South and East-West with inner-European social and ecological issues. From 1983 until recently he has been an adviser to the World Council of Churches in various capacities in relation to the “Conciliar Process on Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation”.

Shadia Qubti:



Shadia Qubti is a Christian Palestinian Israeli involved in many initiatives encouraging Palestinian women and youth to advocate for peace. Shadia was born and raised in Nazareth. She studied International Relations and English Language at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, and Conflict Resolution and Nonviolent Action at Trinity College University in Dublin. For the last ten years she has served as Projects Manager in Musalaha – an organization that promotes reconciliation between Israelis and Palestinians. Shadia has also worked with Christ at the Checkpoint, Revival Generation, and anothervoice.info.

Revd John Howard:



John has been a District Chair in the British Methodist Church and Chair of JACEI, the Joint Advisory Committee on the Ethics of Investment. He was a volunteer in EAPPI (the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel) and later the Methodist representative in the Jerusalem office of the Methodist Church from 2017 to 2019. He is Chair of the Sabeel-Kairos Methodist Group, and a Trustee of Sabeel-Kairos UK. John recently published 'Hope in Israel Palestine', a book based on his experiences in the region.