

EMBRACING PEACE AND WORKING FOR JUSTICE: A JOINT REPORT OF THE WORLD MISSION COUNCIL AND CHURCH AND SOCIETY COUNCIL ON THE CENTENARY OF THE BALFOUR DECLARATION

May 2017

PROPOSED DELIVERANCE

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the Report
2. Instruct the World Mission and Church and Society Councils to make available an easily accessible study document based on the information in this report to help Church members understand the conflict and engage with steps for a just peace.
3. Urge that any public commemorations of the Balfour Declaration are undertaken sensitively, and always in the context for calling for peace and justice, and instruct the Church and Society Council to write to the Scottish and UK governments to that effect.
4. Call on UK government to base their engagement in this conflict on the principles of justice, equality, dignity, equal access to natural resources and freedom of opportunity for all.
5. Commend all those who are committed to the use of non-violent means of resolving the conflict and instruct the World Mission Council to continue to support partners who are working in this way.
6. Deplore the increased expansion of settlements which are illegal under international law and an obstacle to peace.
7. Instruct the World Mission Council, in consultation with the Investors Trust, and with the full cooperation of the Church and Society Council, and Council of Assembly, to undertake a strategic review of our presence, and to examine what would be the most effective use of its assets, in the pursuit of a just peace in Israel/ Palestine, and report back to the General Assembly of 2019.
8. Instruct the World Mission Council to continue to support, encourage, and organise 'Go and See, Come and Tell' visits; and urge congregations, Presbyteries and individuals to make this kind of pilgrimage which offers opportunities to meet with, and better understand the realities of partners working for peace and justice.
9. Encourage all church members to read, and engage with the Kairos Palestine document.
10. Affirm that Christian theology should not be used to justify or perpetuate a situation of injustice.
11. Instruct all church members to challenge antisemitism and anti-Muslim prejudice.
12. Encourage all church members to work ecumenically and with interfaith partners to pursue a shared vision for peace and justice in Israel/Palestine.

REPORT

1. Preface

1.1 This year is the centenary of the Balfour Declaration. Last year the General Assembly instructed the World Mission and Church and Society Councils to bring a joint report to this year's General Assembly exploring how the anniversary might appropriately be remembered and what factors might make for peace and justice between the Israeli and Palestinian peoples. This report is written for the Church of Scotland and church members as we seek to understand this complex anniversary, and to engage with the lived reality of this long-standing conflict with regard to our presence in the region.

1.2 The Balfour declaration, made by Arthur Balfour in 1917, remains prominent within the public discourse as its centenary approaches^[1]. It was issued during a period of great upheaval within the Middle East and at a time when international borders were being redrawn as colonial powers sought to shape and influence the region. This centenary raises specific questions for the Church of Scotland, given Lord Balfour's membership of our denomination, the significance of Biblical Israel within Christianity, the ongoing Israeli Occupation and the Church of Scotland's presence within the land.

1.3 This report seeks to foreground a range of stories from partners and individuals, in an attempt not only to listen to the many narratives, but to reflect carefully on how we as a Church can contribute towards a just peace. As with previous reports commissioned by The Church of Scotland on Israel/Palestine, this one largely reflects the activities and perspectives of our partner organisations and the voices of Christian Palestinians. As a result the report does not claim to describe the situation as it is experienced by all concerned, nor does it explore the conflict currently experienced within the wider Middle East. Nonetheless, the report has sought to share the perspectives it contains in a way that recognises the humanity of all who are caught up in this particular

conflict. As we reflect on the Balfour Centenary, and the human stories that lie behind this historic anniversary, the Church of Scotland recognises the need for us to ensure that our presence in the land is doing everything possible to contribute towards a just peace.

2. Introduction

2.1 At the entrance to The Tent of Nations, a hilltop farm southwest of Bethlehem, the Nassar family has painted on the coarse surface of a rock the words 'We refuse to be enemies'. In a land marked by conflict and violence, their witness to the radical pursuit of peace and justice is deeply moving.

2.2 The Nassars are a Palestinian Christian family. They have lived for three generations on their farm, harvesting the olives, tending the vineyards, and using the natural resources to sustain their community in a political context marked by conflict, land confiscation and violence. The Nassar family bought and registered their land in 1916, when the land was still under Ottoman rule. Their story precedes the Balfour Declaration of 1917 and serves as a reminder of how individuals on the ground continue to live out the consequences of geopolitical decisions made from afar by those with power.

2.3 Arthur James Balfour, 1st Earl of Balfour, (1848-1930) was born in Whittingehame House in East Lothian, was a member of the Church of Scotland as well as the Church of England, and served as both Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary when the British Empire was beginning to wane. Around the time when the Nassar family moved onto the land where they still live, the fortunes of the First World War had begun to turn in favour of the Allies, and after the war Palestine transitioned from Ottoman rule to government by Britain under a League of Nations Mandate.

2.4 The Nassar family's struggle is representative of that of many Palestinians. The registration papers establish clear title to the farm. Despite this, in 1991 the Israeli government attempted to seize the Nassars' land, and place it under state control, following a deliberate policy of land appropriation. Over the years, the Israeli government has denied them access to electricity and water. Their main route to Bethlehem has been blocked off by boulders. Their situation is not unique or even unusual. Many of their Palestinian brothers and sisters who once were neighbours have been evicted from their lands to make way for Israeli settlements, illegal under international law. Their story highlights the struggles that many Palestinian families face day-to-day in the territories occupied by Israel in 1967.

2.5 The Balfour Declaration of 1917, which viewed with favour a national home for the Jewish people in Palestine without prejudicing the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities, accelerated a process that had been underway since the 19th century. In the wake of the pogroms in Tsarist Russia, and the pervasive antisemitism elsewhere in the continent of Europe, many within the Jewish diaspora began to pursue the Zionist^[2] dream of returning to the land of their spiritual forebears. The Zionist vision of a safe homeland for the Jews coalesced with 19th century colonial romanticism, which was the prevailing *Zeitgeist* of that time. Whilst there had always been a small Jewish community which had remained in Palestine after the Roman Empire had carried out expulsions in 70 CE, it was during the 19th century that many Jews began to return in significant numbers.^[3]

2.6 Jewish association with, and return to, the land of Israel long preceded the Balfour Declaration. Nonetheless the Declaration played a significant role in offering hope for many Jews who had experienced antisemitism in Europe and dreamed of a homeland of their own. Today, whilst more Jews continue to live outside of Israel than within it, it is still perceived by many within the Jewish community as offering refuge, against a backdrop of

displacement and persecution. As well as the tragedy of the Holocaust in Europe that resulted in so many Jewish refugees, 800,000 Jews came to be displaced from North Africa and Arab countries in the 1940s and 50s. Persecution, and in some cases expulsion, reached its height in countries like Iraq, Yemen and Libya both before and after Israel's creation in 1948, Jews who come from these countries and others across the Middle East now make up over 50% of Israeli citizens. Today it is worth noting that 93% of British Jews see Israel as forming some part of their identity, demonstrating the degree to which the country is felt to be important. Many Jews within Scotland have family members and friends within Israel and so are directly concerned for their safety and security. Surveys also show that 73% feel that the ongoing occupation, and government policies, do not advance the prospects of peace.^[4]

2.7 As we approach the centenary of the Balfour Declaration, which will be a cause of celebration for many within the Jewish community and beyond, we must also acknowledge and reflect upon the role that the Declaration played in denying the Palestinian people their rights. There are well-founded fears, stories of profound loss and pain on all sides, and until these are listened to and understood, the chances for building a just peace for all will be increasingly difficult. As theologian Archbishop Helder Camara once said, 'without justice and love, peace will always be a great illusion'.

2.8 On the website of St Andrew's Scots Memorial in Jerusalem is the prayer of a Palestinian Christian, taken from the *Ecumenical Prayer Cycle*:

*Pray not for Arab or Jew,
for Palestinian or Israeli,
but pray rather for ourselves,
that we might not divide them in our prayers
but keep them both together in our hearts.^[5]*

2.9 This report has been written with the spirit of this prayer in mind. Above all, this report recognises how deeply western Christians and western governments have been, and still are, implicated in this conflict. It seeks to convey an understanding of how the stories and suffering of both Israelis and Palestinians are deeply intertwined with our own history.

3. The Balfour Centenary A Time for Reflection

3.1 In addition to the Balfour centenary, 2017 also marks the 120th anniversary of the first Zionist Congress in Basel, Switzerland; the 70th anniversary of Britain's decision to end the Mandate, which led almost immediately to the war of 1947-8, when the neighbouring Arab countries of Jordan, Syria, Egypt and Lebanon declared war upon Israel's declaration of independence. This is remembered by the Jews of Israel as the War of Independence, but by the Arabs of Palestine as the Nakba (catastrophe) in which roughly three-quarters of a million Palestinians were displaced from their homes and dispossessed of their lands. 2017 also marks the 50th anniversary of the Six Day War between Israel, Egypt, Syria and Jordan and others, in which Israel took control of the land of East Jerusalem, Gaza, Sinai (since returned to Egypt), the Golan Heights and the West Bank.

3.2 Anniversaries provide opportunities for reflection. They invite us to reconsider our own responsibilities as nations and individuals as we come to terms with our past.

3.4 The Balfour Declaration was issued in the form of a letter to Lord Rothschild, then a significant leader within the British Zionist movement:

Dear Lord Rothschild,

I have much pleasure in conveying to you, on behalf of His Majesty's Government, the following declaration of sympathy with Jewish Zionist aspirations which has been 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,

Arthur James Balfour

3.5 Throughout history the Middle East has been a crossroads linking Europe, Asia and Africa. Competing imperial powers and national interests have shaped its history. Centuries of Ottoman rule began to fade in the 19th century, giving way to European imperial interests in the 20th.

3.6 In 1915, an exchange of letters between Sir Henry McMahon, British High Commissioner in Egypt, and Sharif Hussein of Mecca led to an agreement in which Britain promised to support the emancipation of the Arabs if they joined the Allied side in the First World War. In 1916, the Sykes-Picot Agreement divided up the Middle East between Britain and its ally France. The Balfour Declaration a year later left Britain with three sets of seemingly incompatible commitments.

3.7 The Balfour Declaration did not create the conflict which we see today; noticeable tensions existed between Jewish and Arab residents almost as soon as Zionist Jews

in the late 19th century began to migrate in larger numbers from Europe to Ottoman Palestine. It “was not so much the starting point of the conflict as a turning point which greatly aggravated an existing trend.”^[6] As incorporated in the British Mandate for Palestine, it made the conflict more acute with protests, revolts and incidents taking place amongst British Mandate Palestinian residents during the twenties and thirties, most notably in 1929 and 1936. As the Church and Nation Committee of the Church of Scotland said in 1968, “It is out of the inherent contradiction of the Balfour Declaration that the troubles of Palestine since 1917 have arisen.”

3.8 The Balfour Declaration is careful to speak of the “civil and religious” rights of the Arab inhabitants of Palestine because, despite what was said in the Hussein-McMahon correspondence, it wants to exclude the political right to independence. In October 1918, Lord Balfour warned the prime minister, David Lloyd George, “The weak point of our position is that we deliberately and rightly [sic] decline to accept the principle of self-determination. If the present inhabitants were consulted they would unquestionably give an anti-Jewish verdict.”^[7] The following year, he cited the Anglo-French Declaration of November 1918, which said that the purpose of Allied policy was to set up “national governments and administrations that shall derive their authority from the free exercise of the initiative and choice of the indigenous population” but acknowledged that “in Palestine we do not propose even to go through the form of consulting the wishes of the present inhabitants of the country... The four great powers are committed to Zionism and Zionism, be it right or wrong, good or bad, is rooted in age-long tradition, in present needs, in future hopes, of far profounder import than the desires and prejudices of the 700,000 Arabs who now inhabit that ancient land.” Recognising that the Palestine Mandate would not readily promote the independence of this Arab population, he concluded: “In fact, so far as Palestine is concerned, the powers have made no statement of fact that is not admittedly wrong, and no declaration of policy which, at least in the letter, they have not always intended to violate.”^[8]

3.9 Imperial interests in the Middle East played a key role in the issuing of the Balfour Declaration, as did Christian theology and the two became deeply intertwined. Christian Restorationism of Victorian Britain – a viewpoint with deep roots in the 16th- and 17th-century Reformation – interpreted the Bible as prophesying the return of Jews to the land of Israel, the conversion of the Jews to Christ, and the imminent return of Christ to Jerusalem.^[9]

3.10 The Church of Scotland General Assembly of the day was supportive of the Balfour Declaration. Hailing the Declaration as an “epoch-making announcement”, the report of the Jewish Mission Committee to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in 1918 said:

3.11 “Whatever may be the ultimate political destiny of Palestine, it is certain that after the war there will be a great and growing influx of Jews into the land of their fathers. Without any undue straining of the letter of Holy Scripture, it is surely permissible to see in this return of the Jews from their age-long exile the fulfilment of the promises of the Old Testament prophets, and the accomplishment of God’s purpose for those who have never ceased to be His peculiar people.”

3.12 The committee’s primary concern appeared to be that “the establishment of Jewish control in Palestine... may lead to the setting up of almost insuperable barriers to a Jew accepting the faith of Christ, if not to the exclusion of Christian missionaries from the Holy Land.” It had joined with the representatives of the other British churches and missionary societies in a memorandum to Lord Balfour requesting that the British Government “see that the fullest religious liberty was secured to all and that no impediment was placed in the way of missionary propaganda”^[10].

4. The legacy of Balfour?

4.1 What has not changed since the days of Balfour is the fact that big international players still hold considerable influence in determining the fortunes of Israel/Palestine. In 2016 the US government agreed to give Israel \$38 billion

in military aid over a ten year period. Hamas has received funding and weapons from Iran, particularly in the years following the death of Yasser Arafat, leader of the Palestinian Liberation Organisation, and it is alleged that this arrangement has been re-established^[11]. The European Union and others, including our own Government, have contributed financially to the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank, an organisation that draws scepticism from many Palestinians for what they see as its role in putting into practice the oppressive measures of the Israeli Government, as well as perpetrating its own record of human rights abuses mainly through unlawful detainment.^[12] Others, who might agree with this notion of the Palestinian Authority as a subcontractor of the Israeli Government, highlight how it is impossible for any government to function effectively under occupation.

4.2 Israeli human rights organisation, and Church of Scotland partner, B'Tselem, document a vast array of human rights abuses perpetrated by the State of Israel, and call for the protection of civilians, respect for human rights, and a just resolution to the conflict.^[13] These human rights abuses impact all aspects of Palestinians lives, including their ability to access education and healthcare, their ability to work their land, and their freedom of movement. There have been a number of events that have caused and continue to cause fear among Israeli citizens. These include periods during which Hamas has openly targeted Israeli civilians by firing rockets from Gaza to neighbouring Israeli towns leading to the deaths of a number of Israelis and large numbers of Palestinians as a result of Israeli military retaliation (for example in 2014 when it launched its 'Operation Protective Edge' in Gaza).^[14] In addition, during the early days of the Second Intifada there was a series of terrorist attacks by Palestinians within Israel, and in the course of 2016 knife attacks have added to people's concern.

4.3 At the same time, the wider map of the Middle East is being re-drawn around sectarian religious divides, drawing the big regional powers of Saudi Arabia, Iran and

Turkey into a proxy war in Syria, with Russia on one side and the West (tentatively) on the other. Within Israel many people are understandably concerned about the external threats to their nation, not just from old foes such as Iran, Hezbollah and Hamas; but by ISIS and the growing threat of extremist and politicised Wahhabism. The destructive sectarian violence in the wider region as a whole poses an additional threat to all who live within Israel and the Palestinian Territories.

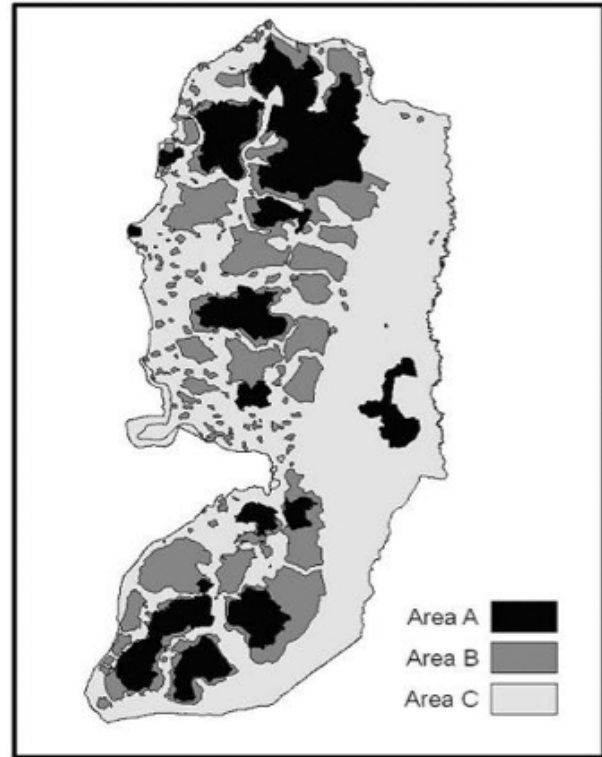
4.4 In a context such as this, and when literature from groups such as Hamas calls for the obliteration of Israel, downplaying Israel's fears will do nothing to help the situation on the ground^[15]. Nor will ignoring the plight of the Palestinian people living under Israeli occupation. At the time of writing there seems little prospect of this situation changing. Equally, there appears to be a lack of ability or willingness on behalf of the international community and regional actors to act on their concerns of human rights abuses and the acts of violence which have endangered the lives of civilians on all sides of the conflict. Without attention to these issues and a commitment to the universal nature of human rights, prospects of a just and lasting peace seem a distant possibility.

4.5 In what follows we seek to listen to some voices of Palestinians and Israelis whose lives have been shaped by the conflict.^[16]

4.6 Gabi Hannah, a Christian from Bethlehem, notes that the wall which Israel has built over the last decade, in defiance of the International Court of Justice, has meant that there are generations of Israelis and Palestinians now growing up who have never met each other^[17]. Where he used to spend time with his Israeli Jewish neighbours, now he is unable to do that. He notes that one generation has already stopped meeting together and learning from each other, and asserts that if the next generation also has that experience, the chances for peace will be gone.

4.7 During the Second Intifada that began in September 2000, the Israeli government began building a wall

separating parts of the West Bank from Israel. This move was defended by the Israeli government as being necessary to stop the wave of violence inside Israel brought by the uprising. Amongst a number of the Jewish Israelis consulted in the preparation of this report, Israel's right to have defensible borders was seen as necessary. Nonetheless, the wall directly impacts upon the lives of Palestinians, as many communities have been dispossessed of their land, cut off from the Holy Sites in Jerusalem, and economically disadvantaged. In some cases Palestinians have been physically separated from their families when the wall cuts through communities.^[18] When completed the route of the wall will be twice the length of the internationally recognised border. Indeed, 85% of the wall is built on Palestinian land and separates around 10% of the West Bank from the overall territory^[19]. In effect, the wall has meant that Israel can 'close' the West Bank and towns within it whenever it wants, denying Palestinians the opportunity to cross into Israel as well as in to other areas of the West Bank^[20] which means that some lose their jobs, some can't get produce to markets, and others cannot celebrate their religious festivals.^[21] Conversely, Israeli settlers are able to come and go as they please through checkpoints, uninhibited by the border that the wall has now become.^[22]



4.8 Following the Oslo Accords of the 1990s the West Bank was divided (in what was intended to be a temporary arrangement) into three areas, known as Areas A, B and C^[23]. Area A comprises 18% of the West Bank and covers cities such as Ramallah and Bethlehem: it is under full Palestinian security and civil control (though at times there are Israeli military incursions). Area B comprises 22% of the West Bank and is mainly rural areas and villages. Here there is Israeli security control and Palestinian civil control; a crucial aspect of this is that there is Palestinian control over planning. Area C comprises 60% of the West Bank, including the settlements and the land surrounding them, and the land that is on the western side of the wall; most of the Jordan Valley is in Area C. In Area C Israel has full security and civic control, including land allocation and

planning; it is very difficult for Palestinians to get permission to build, whether a house, a school or a clinic, and the Israeli authorities, with increasing frequency, demolish Palestinian buildings built without permission in Area C. Area C is contiguous, but there is not territorial continuity between the 165 separate parts of Areas A and B.

4.9 From 1967 to late 2013, 125 Israeli settlements were established in the West Bank, and these have received official recognition by the Israeli Authorities. Settlement expansion has continued since then,^[24] and plans to escalate this were announced in January 2017^[25]. It is widely accepted that under international law these settlements in the territories occupied by Israel since 1967 are illegal. Danny Sherman, a former Israeli Defence Force (IDF) Officer who now works with peace and human rights organisations, and who considers himself a Zionist, told us that the continued settlement construction is a direct obstacle to the achievement of a long-term and sustainable peace. This point is supported by leading Israeli scholars of international jurisprudence such as the Dean of the Hebrew University Law School, Professor Yuval Shany. Article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention states: *"The occupying power shall not deport or transfer parts of its own population into the territories it occupies."* Though the Israeli government is not actively transporting Jewish Israeli citizens into the settlements, it is encouraging settlement by subsidising the cost of buying and renting homes there^[26]. At its meeting in Munich on the 16th of February 2016, the Middle East Quartet (made up of United Nations, the United States, the European Union, and Russia), singled out three worrying trends that they said are 'severely undermining hopes for peace':

- 'Continuing violence, terrorist attacks against civilians, and incitement to violence are greatly exacerbating mistrust and are fundamentally incompatible with a peaceful resolution;
- The continuing policy of settlement construction and expansion, designation of land for exclusive Israeli

use, and denial of Palestinian development is steadily eroding the viability of the two-state solution; and

- The illicit arms build-up and militant activity, continuing absence of Palestinian unity, and the dire humanitarian situation in Gaza feed instability and ultimately impede efforts to achieve a negotiated solution.^[27]

4.10 With regards to the issue of settlement expansion, it is important to note that unlike the restrictive planning policy in place for Palestinian communities in Area C, Israeli settlements enjoy full representation in the planning process, detailed planning, and hookup to advanced infrastructure. While visiting Israel/Palestine in Area C a group from the two Councils drove along broken tracks to Palestinian villages which were just metres away from pristine tarmacked roads leading to Israeli settlements. A young man from Ramallah spoke of water shortages because access to water was only granted to Palestinians two or three times a week, while at the same time settlement swimming pools were being filled. Such stories are backed up by figures concerning water usage^[28], and contravene the right to safe and clean drinking water and sanitation that is explicitly recognised as essential for the full enjoyment of life and all human rights by the UN General Assembly^{[29][30]}.

4.11 Although legally the West Bank is not part of Israel's sovereign territory, the settlements and the settlers are subject to Israeli law. Meanwhile, Palestinians continue to live under Israeli military law and are systematically deprived of their rights and denied the ability to have any real impact on policymaking with respect to the territory in which they live.

4.12 In October 2016, Naftali Bennett, Israeli Minister of Education said, *"There is a discussion that in the coming months the UN Security Council will force a resolution on Israel. If that happens, we need to have an appropriate Zionist response, immediate sovereignty over Judea and*

Samaria, including Maaleh Adumim, Gush Etzion, Ariel, Ofra and Beit El.^[31]

4.13 Although settlements are not the only obstacle to peace^[32], statements like Naftali Bennett's (above) and what appears to be a consistent and systematic policy of land acquisition by the Israeli Government have created a scenario in which peace appears unachievable. The current situation between Israel and the Palestinian people is untenable and unsustainable not only for the disenfranchised and occupied Palestinians, but we believe also for the long term security and wellbeing of Israel as a nation-state.

5. Using the Balfour Declaration centenary to call for a just peace

5.1 The Church of Scotland has not been silent on the injustice of the socio-political situation in Israel/Palestine (Theology of Land and Covenant 2003, What Hope for the Middle East 2007, Invest in Peace 2011, The Inheritance of Abraham? 2013). The reports of 2011 and 2013 have largely echoed the 2009 Kairos Palestine document which many of our partners within Israel/Palestine were instrumental in shaping. The Kairos document, which the General Assembly of 2011 commended to the whole Church, is a call from the Palestinian Christian community to the wider Church for justice based around the inclusivity of God's love for all creation.

5.2 Although the reports listed above were written at different stages of the occupation, reflecting the changing political landscape of Israel/ Palestine, what they all have in common is the strong conviction that Christian religious belief and theology should never be used to legitimise, justify or perpetuate a situation of injustice. The Church has all too often fallen short of this conviction.

5.3 The Church of Scotland recognises that the State of Israel should be able to exist in peace and security while ensuring that the safety, wellbeing, and rights of all its citizens are protected. While the Church of Scotland, through its presence and partners, continues to engage

with the ongoing conflict, we recognise that events in the Middle East have historically coincided with an increase in antisemitic hate crimes within Scotland and elsewhere. We therefore have an equal responsibility to reject antisemitism in all its forms and to work to promote positive dialogue and engagement with the Jewish community within Scotland^[33].

5.4 At the same time, the Church of Scotland is committed to advocacy for the Palestinian people in their struggle for justice, equity and political parity. The history of the Palestinian people is a history of living under occupation and many of the Palestinians consulted for this report met have adhered to a theology of non-violence, and continue to struggle for political recognition and freedom through non-violent means. Peace, if it is to be achieved, will not be as a result of violence.

5.5 The three monotheistic religions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam all place importance on peace, justice and treating the stranger with hospitality and dignity. The English word 'peace' has come to have a much narrower meaning than shalom and salaam. Shalom/salaam is wholeness, completeness, unbrokenness, full health, comprehensive well-being.^[34]

5.6 Such a sentiment is captured by Rabbi Yehuda Ashlag (1886 -1954), whose words on world peace are prescient for the current situation in Israel/Palestine:

5.7 *"The well-being of the collective and of the individual...are one and the same....we can no longer speak or deal with just conducts that guarantee the well-being of one country and nation, but only with the well-being of the whole world, because the benefit or harm of each and every person in the world depends and is measured by the benefit of all the people in the world."*^[35]

5.8 A deep recognition of the human – human cost, human hopes, human flourishing, and human rights – might open up space for something new. This work is already apparent in the work of Israeli organisations with whom the Church of Scotland currently partners, such as

Rabbis for Human Rights, who seek to implement a Jewish interpretation of justice by carrying out a multitude of works relating to promoting and protecting human rights. These works range from complex legal cases, working with the IDF to secure land access for farmers, and repairing property after acts of vandalism. The latter is described by Yonatan Sefter, a Rabbinical student who helped a Palestinian farmer water his livestock after the rope to the farmer's well had been cut by settlers:

5.9 "Just that simple act, of being openly Jewish and helping a Palestinian, who didn't know me from Adam, to water his flock, helping him to be economically viable in his own homeland, felt like the essence of our work to me."^[36]

5.10 On 18th February 2014, Rabbi Arik Ascherman explained what it meant to him to be a Zionist:

"I still see Zionism as the liberation movement of the Jewish people. It begins with the proposition that an important factor contributing to Jewish oppression for 2,000 years was the fact that we were homeless/stateless, and therefore had little control over our own destiny [...] However, the Jews who came to Palestine at the initiative of Zionism starting from the end of the 19th century, did not arrive straight from the Bible or from Mars, and did not come to realize a deed nor displace Palestinians. Their aim was to realise their self-determination after being persecuted in Europe, in a land with which their identity is historically connected, both in their own eyes and in the eyes of all nations of the world."^[37]

5.11 Within the state of Israel many are concerned about ongoing discrimination. At great risk of public disapproval Major General Yair Golan, second in command of the IDF, in a speech given on Holocaust Remembrance Day 2016, drew attention to parallels between behaviour in 1930s Germany and contemporary Israel. He went on *'The Holocaust, in my opinion, must lead us to a deep reflection on the nature of the human, even when that human is ourselves; It must lead us to a deep reflection on the*

responsibilities of leadership, and on the quality of society. It must lead us to think thoroughly about how we - here and now - treat the foreigner, the widow and the orphan, and those similar to them."^[38]

5.12 Robi Damelin, who co-chairs the Church of Scotland's partner organisation, Parent Circle, dedicates her life to educating people across the world about the situation and asking that they listen to the perspectives of those who have lost a loved one as a result of the conflict: those Israelis and Palestinians who have lost their children to the conflict. Robi's son David was against serving in the Occupied territory and, when he was posted to Hebron, she said she would support him not going. He decided, however, that he would go and he would model leadership that respected the dignity and rights of all people. On leaving the army, David committed himself to peace, often attending peace rallies. While he was serving as a reserve officer, David was killed by a Palestinian sniper at Ofra checkpoint. One of the first things Robi said on hearing of the death of her son was, *"You may not kill anyone in the name of my child."* She attended a bereaved parents' network that brought Israeli and Palestinian parents together, to share their loss, see the humanity of each other, and work together to end the conflict. When the man who killed David was arrested, Robi knew she had a hard decision to make. She put her belief in reconciliation into practice and wrote to the family of the man who had killed her son, asking them if she could meet theirs.^[39]

5.13 She understands the frustration of young Palestinians who feel that their situation is hopeless due to the restrictions placed on so many aspects of their lives by military occupation. It is also problematic that they have never had the chance of meeting young Israelis their own age, except when they are in uniform at checkpoints. She asks governments around the world to recognise that wave after wave of violence will not stop unless actions are taken to end the occupation.

5.14 Bassam Aramin, a Palestinian who grew up in Hebron, living under Israeli occupation, works closely with Robi. When he was 12 he saw a Palestinian boy shot by an Israeli soldier at a demonstration. He wanted revenge and so joined a freedom fighter movement and was sentenced to 7 years in jail when he was 17 after throwing a grenade. Whilst in jail, he decided that in order to preserve his own humanity he had to understand the Israelis. Through dialogue he built up relationships with some of the prison guards, trading experiences, until each understood the other's perspective.

5.15 In 2007 his 10 year old daughter, Abir, was shot dead by an Israeli soldier while standing outside her school. For Bassam it began the process of trying to prove that his daughter had been murdered by a soldier. When Bassam was unsuccessful, he had a choice to make. He shared, *"Abir's murder could have led me down the easy path of hatred and vengeance, but for me there was no return from dialogue and non-violence. After all, it was one Israeli soldier who shot my daughter, but one hundred former Israeli soldiers who built a garden in her name at the school where she was murdered."* Bassam now works with the Parents' Circle, working alongside others to educate people to use non-violent means to resist the occupation^[40].

5.16 Such creative forms of resistance are reflected by YWCA's Joint Advocacy Initiative (JAI). Born of their overall mission values to advocate for human rights and dignity and to work in solidarity with the dispossessed, the Olive Tree Campaign distributes olive saplings among farmers, sponsored by individuals and a range of organisations. The farmers supported are those who suffer from the various Israeli policies that put their land and property under the threat of confiscation or acts of vandalism. One of the farmers to receive assistance was Basim Tamimi, one of the community leaders and land owners near Nabi Saleh whose villagers suffer from settlements expansion, land confiscation, and settler violence and vandalism. In the past couple of years, hundreds of olive trees have been destroyed and uprooted by the Israeli soldiers and settlers

from Basim's land. In 2015, the Olive Tree Campaign supported Basim and his family with 500 olive saplings, planted in his threatened land.

5.17 These stories represent a small insight into how the ongoing occupation and conflict have impacted upon the lives of both Israelis and Palestinians.

6. A Theology for a Just Peace

6.1 Balfour's Christian faith played an important role in informing his active support of establishing a Jewish homeland in Palestine. His beliefs went further than recognition of a Jewish connection to this land, as well as going beyond a Christian humanitarian support for the Jewish right to self-determination, free from persecution and antisemitism. Balfour's theology held that in order for Christ to return at the Second Coming, all Jews would have to return to Palestine and be converted to faith in Christ. This view is referred to as Restorationism and was a widespread view amongst many of his contemporary Protestant believers.

6.2 Although Protestant Restorationism is much less prevalent today, and the Church of Scotland has distanced itself from this viewpoint and other aspects of Christian Zionism, theology still plays an active role in relation to the question of the land.

6.3 For Cedar Duaybis at Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theological Centre, the lived experience of being forced from her home by the creation of the State of Israel in 1948 forced her to question her faith and to re-read Scripture afresh in the light of her context.

6.4 She said that the most disturbing thing about being internally displaced was what it did to their faith – they asked questions at church and the leaders couldn't answer them. The word 'Israel' had gone from meaning 'people of God' or 'Spiritual ancestor' to meaning a nation-state that had made them homeless and the Church was helpless to explain this. Cedar's father lost his faith and left the church for a long time, whereas her mother took the position of 'God's will be done; tough luck for us.' For Cedar as a young

woman, neither position was acceptable to her and so she joined with other Palestinian Christians who came together to look again at the Scriptures and to read them through Palestinian eyes and to understand them in the context of their suffering.

6.5 The Kairos document was written by a group of leading Palestinian Christians leaders as a plea for Christians in the West to recognise the difficulties faced by Christians living in Israel/Palestine. The document echoes Cedar Duaybis' experience outlined above and the uncomfortable reality of Palestinians regularly seeing their everyday experiences being overlooked by Christians in the West eager to apply a literalist interpretation of the Old Testament as justification for supporting Israel's occupation of the West Bank and Gaza.

6.6 The Church of Scotland has commended much of the Kairos document, recognising that it represents a cry from Palestinian Christians suffering in a context of Occupation which has denied them their rights and their land. The Church of Scotland commends the Palestinian Christian witness to striving for peace and justice through non-violent means.

6.7 Naim Ateek argues that:

"The only bridge between the Bible and people 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."^[41]

6.8 As Christians, we must take this to heart as we seek to understand our faith in a way that builds a just peace.

6.9 Theologians such as Naim Ateek and Mitri Raheb reflect a valid struggle with how Christian theology has engaged with the Old Testament, not least in how it has been its misused to justify the displacement of Palestinians by adopting a literalist interpretive lens. This has resulted in huge suffering for the Palestinian people.

6.10 Ateek, in assessing the role of the Old Testament in his Christian faith, chooses to emphasise the importance of the universal moral standards proclaimed by the prophets. His formulation of liberation theology is intended as a tool for Palestinian Christians to respond to Christians who see in the Old Testament prophetic justification for the confiscation of Palestinian land by Jewish Israeli settlers.

6.11 Mitri Raheb, a Lutheran Pastor from Bethlehem, engages with Palestinian Liberation theology in a different way. In his writing he looks to the ambivalence regarding nation states found in Old Testament Scripture itself. While this argument should not be laboured too much, for Christians it should raise questions about the theological significance that Christians place on nation states and how we apply the Bible within our current context. In paving a way forward Raheb emphasises that a peaceful resolution must recognise the rights of all peoples within the region:

"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."^[42]

6.13 For Christians such self-searching lies at the heart of good theological practice as we ask what our understanding of Scripture says about us and says about our image of God. Moreover, within the context of this conflict, such practice must also be brought to bear on Christian theologies that have had a profoundly negative effect on Jewish people. Much of this negative Christian treatment has found justification in theological supersessionism, or replacement theology.

6.14 Supersessionism holds that the Christian Church has succeeded the Israelites as the definitive people of God or that the New Covenant has replaced or superseded the Mosaic covenant. In upholding a supersessionist theology as it developed through history and the works of key Christian thinkers from Augustine to Luther and

beyond, Christians through the ages have negatively characterised tragic events in Jewish history as proof that they had been cursed by God in contrast to Christian election as the 'New Israel'. This included the fall of the Second Temple; the wandering Jewish diaspora, purposefully excluded from mainstream life in medieval Europe; the ghettos and the pogroms. All these events have in some way been exploited and used as proofs of God's rejection of Jews. Such theology has been used to perpetuate injustice and the oppression of Jewish people and has now been officially rejected by the Vatican and the World Council of Churches (of which the Church of Scotland is a member church).

6.15 In recognising the negative role that certain pervasive and persistent strains within Christian thinking have played, it is crucial that we approach this conflict with our history in mind. We must also recognise how our actions impact contemporary expressions of antisemitism. For this reason we must actively respect our differences with Judaism. An obvious difference is our relationship with land, the importance of which regularly appears within the liturgical texts of worship, prayers and writings throughout Jewish history. However, whilst recognising the central importance of land for the Jewish religion, the Church of Scotland strongly believes that Christian religion and theology cannot be used to sustain a situation of injustice and a clear lack of security for all peoples.

6.16 *"The centrality of the land to divine promise in the Old Testament is here unequivocal, although biblical scholarship must point to the different historical settings of the Old Testament passages which prevent any clear, simple and divinely authorised mandate for the delineation of Israel's borders in the twenty-first century."*

Land & Theology Report to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland 2003

6.17 This quotation helpfully pulls together a cohesive approach to the task of grappling with the Palestinian Christian theological discussions surrounding the modern State of Israel and Biblical interpretation. It refers to the

danger of equating too easily the modern state with the fulfilment of Biblical promises, as that in turn denies the rights of other peoples to a share of the land and connection to it.

6.18 Our role as Christians is to listen and attempt to understand a diverse array of connections to this place, whilst resisting the temptation to pull the Bible onto either side in a way that denies any people the fullness of life.

6.19 All people have a right to exist and are made in the image of God. Where our theologies diminish this right, the Church has a responsibility to question itself as it seeks to understand Scripture more fully in a way that offers life in all its fullness.

7. A Presence for a Just Peace

"In order to understand our reality, we say to the Churches: Come and see. We will fulfil our role to make known to you the truth of our reality, receiving you as pilgrims coming to us to pray, carrying a message of peace, love and reconciliation. You will know the facts and the people of this land, Palestinians and Israelis alike." (Kairos Palestine Document 6.2)

7.1 The situation on the ground is complex, and in so many ways needs to be seen to be understood. The appeal of the Kairos document to the Churches is 'Come and See'. The World Council of Churches also has the theme of pilgrimage, encouraging people to visit different places, see the reality, and understand the Gospel through different experiences. Since 2002, the World Council of Churches Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme has sent Christians from around the world, including many from Scotland, to witness life under occupation, and to engage with local Palestinians and Israelis who are seeking a just peace. When they return home after three months spent accompanying men and women through checkpoints, or accompanying children safely to school, or accompanying farmers into their fields close to settlements, they seek to engage their home communities

with photographs and stories of life under occupation in order to encourage international action for a just and peaceful solution to the conflict.^{[43][44]}

7.2 The Church of Scotland has had a presence in the Holy Land since the 1830s. It currently has two churches (St Andrew's Scots Memorial Church, Jerusalem, and St Andrew's Church, Tiberias); in addition to St Andrew's Scots Guesthouse in Jerusalem, Tabeetha School in Jaffa, and the Scots Hotel in Tiberias. This varied presence enables the Church to work directly with Israelis and Palestinians, to support local charities working for peace and dialogue, and in small ways supports the Palestinian economy through the sourcing of goods and services. These are small but real examples of ways in which the Church's presence allows it to have a positive impact. Such actions should not be underestimated, and yet as we reflect on nearly 200 years of presence in the area, and 100 years since the Balfour Declaration, it is right that we should explore what more can be done to contribute towards a just peace. Can the Church do more to promote dialogue? Is the Church of Scotland in Israel/Palestine being as effective as it can in working for justice and peace? Being present in the context of conflict and occupation enables numerous opportunities which promote small but meaningful change. But being institutionally present in such a context also brings compromise, as certain practical requirements, such as banking and the sourcing of goods etc., become increasingly hard to separate from settlement activity. It is this tension, and others like it, that must be explored as part of our marking of the Balfour centenary.

8. Action for a just peace

8.1 During its visit, the working group met with Hind Khoury, General Secretary of Kairos Palestine. Hind suggested that there was a need to accept that the peace process has failed. She said that the destruction of Gaza is complete, Palestinian Industry has shrunk by 13%, agriculture by 25% and that she estimated the occupation costs as much as \$10 Billion a year. In this situation she said "it is not what you say that is important, it is what you

do: in a situation of hopelessness, it is what you do that brings hope."

8.2 In a thoughtful statement on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in June 2016, the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches said:

8.3 *"Norms of international law and practice that bear upon this situation – relating to the conduct of armed conflict, protection of civilians, responsibilities and constraints upon an occupying power, the peaceful resolution of conflict, self-determination and human rights – have been so routinely ignored in the past decades that international law and international multilateral organizations have been undermined and weakened... With the breakdown of US-led peace efforts in 2014, the peace process, established through the 1993/1995 Oslo Accords, is widely regarded as having ended in failure."*^[45]

8.4 For almost three decades, the Church of Scotland has supported a two-state solution. This position stemmed from a hope that the Oslo Accords could bring about a solution, and a belief that providing internationally agreed borders could help pave a viable way forward. Many of those consulted in Israel/Palestine spoke of Oslo's failure while some such as Hind were still hopeful of a two state solution, believing that the building blocks had been adequately laid out in the Oslo Accords; they had just not been followed through. At the same time, there is a widespread view that the ongoing illegal settlement expansion is making any talk of a two state solution almost impossible. Proposals for a single or bi-national state are being discussed in certain quarters, although how that would work out in practice remains to be seen.

8.5 Most of those consulted in Israel/Palestine told us that the role of the Church of Scotland was to call for a resolution to the conflict based on justice, equality, dignity, equal access to natural resources and freedom of movement and opportunity for all. In the light of Israeli expansionist activity, this now seems an increasingly unachievable ambition. If this trajectory continues then the time may come for the Church to reconsider its

support for the two state solution, exploring other pragmatic approaches that might help to ensure the human rights of all in Israel/Palestine.

8.6 In the context of this impasse, the World Council of Churches has called on its 348 member churches, including the Church of Scotland, to be *“more active agents in countering despair and rebuilding hope”* by

- a. listening to and responding to the voices of Palestinian Christians (including those expressed through the ‘Kairos Palestine’ document);
- b. taking active steps to encourage a continued robust indigenous Christian presence in the Holy Land;
- c. promoting and supporting all non-violent efforts to end the occupation (including considering appropriate economic and other measures); and
- d. intensifying inter-faith dialogue and cooperation with Jewish and Muslim partners on the pilgrimage of justice and peace.

8.7 The Palestinian Christians who authored the Kairos Palestine document have asked the global church for help in ending the Israeli occupation of Palestine for the good of Israelis and Palestinians alike. And the Churches must take this call seriously. In the past, the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland has called on the UK Government to put pressure on the Israeli Government to dismantle the wall (2004); has called on the European Union to ensure the clear labelling of products which come from the illegal settlements in the West Bank, so that consumers can make an informed decision on whether or not to purchase them (2006)^[46]; has called on the UK government to recognise the Palestinian Authority (2007); has urged the UK Government and European Union to recognise the State of Palestine alongside the State of Israel (2015); and has regularly encouraged its members to visit and see the reality of the conflict. We have continued to contribute financially to partner organisations working for justice and peace, and through our joint *“Pray for Peace in the Middle*

East” initiative with Christian Aid, we have sought to increase awareness of the situation within our own congregations. These words and actions should be maintained. Wherever there are human rights abuses we should endeavour to keep congregations informed and to call on our own government to respond appropriately. Such actions and others like them have, at different points, provided glimpses of hope in a situation that might illicit understandable despair.

“Palestinian civil organizations, as well as international organizations, NGOs and certain religious institutions call on individuals, companies and states to engage in divestment and in an economic and commercial boycott of everything produced by the occupation. We understand this to integrate the logic of peaceful resistance. These advocacy campaigns must be carried out with courage, openly sincerely proclaiming that their object is not revenge but rather to put an end to the existing evil, liberating both the perpetrators and the victims of injustice. The aim is to free both peoples from extremist positions of the different Israeli governments, bringing both to justice and reconciliation.”

Kairos Palestine Document 4.2.6

8.8 The Palestinian Christian community has asked us to consider how we might creatively resist the occupation of Palestinian territory and yet the Church of Scotland has not yet considered fully the primary way in which they have suggested we do this: through the means of economic leverage.

8.9 Among those consulted some groups suggested that a boycott of Israeli goods would have a negative impact upon the Palestinian economy. Others suggested that such a boycott was a blunt instrument that would hurt parts of Israeli society that are committed to peace. One of our partners working in the Galilee with Jewish and Arab Israelis told the group that until there is cohesive and inspired leadership of the Palestinian people, economic measures would be unsuccessful. All these are reasons for

being cautious about adopting this approach. This caution was urged to avoid unintended, harmful consequences for the very population which the approach aims to help.

8.10 Yet there were other voices calling caution a luxury that they do not have given the harshness of their present reality. Those people living in the West Bank under daily occupation, and experiencing restrictions on movement, were convinced that their time was running out. They feared that the longer nothing changed, the more the occupation would be normalised, and the less land would be left to negotiate over as displacement and settlement expansion continued unabated. There are the voices of those in Gaza for whom it may already feel too late. It seems as though those with the very least were calling for this direct action, while those not living under the daily rigours of occupation were more cautious of its potential impacts.

8.11 As Christians we believe that it is important to consider how we use our time, talents and possessions in service of the Kingdom of God. Through reports exploring issues such as fair trade, disinvestment from fossil fuels, or the boycott of South African goods during apartheid, the General Assembly has already endorsed the principle that the money of the Church, and that of its members, should reflect its mission. This is something we encourage members to reflect on and consider prayerfully, and our consideration should acknowledge the complexity of possible outcomes, as far as can be discerned.

8.12 This report has presented a small snapshot of some of the lives shaped by the conflict. As a Church it is important that we hear all of these voices, Jewish, Christian, Muslim and others, and decide what we believe we can best do to contribute, in some small way, to the building of a just peace for all people. This report proposes that over the next couple of years we should reflect on our presence in the land, and look at investments, considering how these investments might make for peace and not conflict. At the same time, we should continue, in our changing political climate, to ensure that our own

governments are working for peace in a region marred by conflict, and we would encourage congregations and individuals to engage with their politicians to this end. We should prayerfully and humbly reflect on the ways in which we as individuals might better work to build bridges and not barriers through our theological practice, through our time and our talents.

9. Marking the Balfour centenary

9.1 As we approach the Balfour centenary there are many calls to mark this anniversary. In our congregations and in our parishes, we must engage in a renewed call to embody the good news that proclaims liberation and reconciliation as transformative truths to live by, and so any marking must be undertaken sensitively and always in the context of a just peace for all.

9.2 Anniversaries provide opportunities for reflection, not only on events, but on our own responses to them. The history of Israel/Palestine and of the Balfour Declaration shows what happens when the voice of the Other is ignored or not recognised. Our responses must always consider all the people involved, and what impact any actions that we take might have. Anniversaries invite us to reconsider our own responsibilities as nations and individuals as we come to terms with our historical past. They also open up possibilities to learn from the past and work towards a more just world.

9.3 The Church of Scotland wants to use the Balfour Anniversary to renew our efforts in calling for and working towards a just peace. Despite the current political impasse, and worsening prospects for peace, not only in Israel/Palestine but throughout the Middle East, we must not lose hope. In Romans 15:13 the apostle Paul reminds us that we serve a God of peace and hope: *'May the God of hope fill you all with joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope'*.

9.4 As we mark the Balfour centenary, we are reminded that we must ensure that our own governments and the international community to invest in peace, not war. And

whilst as a Church we do not sit at the political table, we can engage in grassroots and community activities which work to eliminate political and economic injustice, human rights abuses and other grievances, which if not addressed can fuel the spirals of violence.

9.5 We must engage in theological reflections which challenge the aspects of Christian Zionism that enshrine the rights of one people over another.

9.6 We must strengthen relationships and links with projects throughout Israel/Palestine which are working for peace.

9.7 Within this conflict we must seek to encourage those who are committed to non-violence. For Christians, this is in keeping with Christ's command to love our enemies, and living by the Sermon on the Mount which boldly proclaims 'blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called the children of God' (Matthew 5:9).

9.8 In our worshipping communities and parishes we must gather in the name of the God of peace, who disarms us through love, and asks us to see the face of God in every human being.

9.9 Engagement with the Jewish community here in Scotland is a key priority for the Church of Scotland. Through dialogue we are looking to strengthen understanding and trust between our communities.

9.10 We must challenge antisemitism and anti-muslim prejudice in any form, whilst standing with our Christian brothers and sisters across the Middle East who are being persecuted for their faith. And we must stand in solidarity with the small community of Palestinian Christians like the Nassar family and others, who have had to endure years of political oppression, antagonism and political exclusion, becoming pariahs in their own land.

10. Conclusion

10.1 The Church of Scotland recognises that with its presence in the Israel/Palestine comes responsibility. It

must engage in, and encourage dialogue and actions that can promote justice and peace for all. It must denounce what it sees as the clear obstacles to a peaceful and lasting solution to the Israel/Palestine conflict. Through its presence it aims to engage in dialogue with those from across the socio-political and religious divide throughout Israel/Palestine who are working towards a just peace.

10.2 The Church of Scotland must continue to do what it can to encourage a just peace in Israel/Palestine. This will involve a number of approaches, including speaking with the UK and Scottish governments, supporting projects on the ground working for reconciliation, listening and supporting voices of Israelis and Palestinians alike who are calling for the end of the Occupation, using positive investment to support projects which help the disenfranchised and dispossessed, and encouraging local parish congregations to get involved where they can. We must support the small community of Palestinian Christians within Israel and the Occupied Territories, most of whom are living out the Christian witness of non-violence in a context of political impasse and in some cases, suffering terrible privations and lacking access to natural resources such as water and their ancestral agricultural lands.

10.3 This report is a call for the Church of Scotland to mark the Balfour Centenary by redoubling its efforts in contributing towards a just peace for all who live in Israel/Palestine, joining in the spirit of hope and faith in God expressed at the end of the Kairos document which said: 'In the absence of all hope, we cry out for hope. We believe in God, good and just. We believe that God's goodness will finally triumph over the evil of hate and death that still persist in our land.'

11. Further information

Further reading:

- Kairos Palestine document (<http://kairos-palestine.ps/index.php/about-us/kairos-palestine-document>)

- 'Not in God's name: Confronting religious extremism' Johnathan Sacks
- Chapter 9 of 'The Theology of the Book of Genesis' R.W.L. Moberly.
- 'Coexistence & Reconciliation in Israel: Voices for Interreligious Dialogue ed. Ronald Kronish
- Write to your MP and MSP to ask them to be aware of the issues around the Balfour centenary and to mark it in a manner that is sensitive to both Israeli and Palestinian concerns around the anniversary.
- Go on a World Mission Council tour of Israel/Palestine to meet partners, and meet the Christians who live there.

Further action:

- Invite the World Mission Council and Christian Aid to host a prayers for peace event at your church on the 24th of a month.
- Join the global *act alliance* call to pray for peace in Israel/ Palestine (<http://actalliance.org/where-we-work/israel/>)
- support local Palestinian communities by purchasing Palestinian products from suppliers such as Hadeel (<http://www.hadeel.org/>)

In the name of the Councils

IAIN CUNNINGHAM, *Convener (World Mission Council)*
IAN ALEXANDER, *Secretary (World Mission Council)*
RICHARD FRAZER, *Convener (Church and Society Council)*
MARTIN JOHNSTONE, *Secretary (Church and Society Council)*

[1] <https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2016-11-16/debates/E6F367C0-2BFD-427B-8A02-2BBB2B1529B8/CentenaryOfTheBalfourDeclaration> (accessed 26/01/2017)

[2] Zionism is most generally defined as an international movement originally for the establishment of a Jewish national or religious community in Palestine and later for the support of modern Israel. A Zionist as it appears in this report can therefore be anyone who supports the right of Jewish self-determination. Over the course of history it has come to mean a lot of different things to different people and many but not all of the different ways to be a Zionist are reflected in this report.

[3] In 1914 Palestine had a population of 657,000 Muslim Arabs, 81,000 Christian Arabs, and 59,000 Jews. Scholch, Alexander (November 1985). "The Demographic Development of Palestine, 1850–1882". *International Journal of Middle East Studies*. 17 (4): 485–505.

[4] *The Attitudes of British Jews towards Israel*, Stephen Miller, Margaret Harris, and Colin Shindler, City University London, November 2015, (http://www.city.ac.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/008/295361/Israel-Report-FINAL.PDF) 72% of Jews in Britain rejected the claim that "Palestinians have no right to the land" of the 1,131 Jews surveyed, 73% thought that Israel's approach to the Peace Process was damaging "its standing in the world".

[5] <http://www.christianaid.org.uk/resources/churches/prayer/prayers-middle-east-gaza-iraq-syria.aspx> (accessed 16/01/17)

[6] Neville J Mandel, *The Arabs and Zionism before World War I* (London, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1976), quotation from page 231.

[7] James Barr, *A Line in the Sand: Britain, France and the Struggle that Shaped the Middle East* (London: Simon & Schuster, 2011), 81.

[8] Christopher Sykes, *Crossroads to Israel: Palestine from Balfour to Bevin* (London: New English Library, 1967), 12f.

[9] See, from three very different perspectives, Kelvin Crombie, *For the Love of Zion: Christian Witness and the Restoration of Israel* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1991), Robert O Smith, *More Desired than our Own Salvation: The Roots of Christian Zionism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), and Barbara W Tuchman, *Bible and Sword: England and Palestine from the Bronze Age to Balfour* (New York: Ballantine, 1984).

[10] Jewish Mission Committee to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, 1918

[11] <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/irans-support-for-terrorism-under-the-jcpoa> (accessed 16/01/17)

[12] <http://normanfinkelstein.com/2016/05/01/the-number-of-human-rights-violations-committed-by-pa-authorities-in-the-west-bank-was-significantly-greater-than-those-for-which-hamas-was-responsible-which-is-why-the-us-prefers-the-pa/> (accessed 25/01/2017)

[13] <http://www.btselem.org/statistics> (accessed 16/01/17)

[14] Between 8 July and 27 August, more than 2,100 Palestinians were killed in the Gaza Strip, along with 66 Israeli soldiers and seven civilians in Israel.

[15] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hamas_Covenant (accessed 10.02.2017)

[16] In May 2016 a small working group composed of representatives from the World Mission Council and the Church and Society Council travelled to Israel/Palestine to meet with Church of Scotland partners, congregations, and individuals, both in the State of Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory. The group heard from Jews,

Christians and Muslims as they sought to consult widely on the conflict and on the anniversary.

[17] <http://www.icj-cij.org/docket/index.php?pr=71&code=mwp&p1=3&p2=4&p3=6> (accessed 16/01/17)

[18] A good example of one family's situation is shown here: <http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/1.588138> (accessed 17.02.2017)

[19] http://www.btselem.org/separation_barrier (accessed 16/01/17)

[20] <http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-1.740789> (accessed 25/01/2017)

[21] http://www.btselem.org/freedom_of_movement/economy (accessed 25/01/2017)

[22] <https://shalomrav.files.wordpress.com/2012/04/oslo-abc-areas.jpg> (accessed 16/01/17)

[23] http://www.btselem.org/area_c/what_is_area_c (viewed 16/01/17)

[24] <http://www.nytimes.com/2016/10/06/world/middleeast/obama-israel-west-bank-settlements.html> (accessed 16/01/17)

[25] https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/24/world/middleeast/israel-settlement-expansion-west-bank.html?_r=0 (accessed 27/01/17)

[26] "A 2012 study by the newspaper Yediot Ahronot found that the average settler receives 70 percent more government money than does the average Israeli inside the green line."

[27] On the 28/12/2016 then US Secretary of State John Kerry warned that "trends on the ground – violence, terrorism, incitement, settlement expansion and the seemingly endless occupation – they are combining to destroy hopes for peace on all sides and increasingly cementing an irreversible one-state reality that most

people do not actually want." <https://www.state.gov/secretary/remarks/2016/12/266119.htm> (accessed 16/01/17)

[28] <http://www.btselem.org/water> (viewed 16/01/17)

[29] <http://www.un.org/es/comun/docs/?symbol=A/RES/64/292&lang=E> (accessed 16/01/17)

[30] For further reading on this see: http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0018/14049/human_rights.pdf

[31] The places Bennet mentions are all settlements built after 1967 in the occupied territories. <http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/219547> (accessed d 16/01/17)

[32] Other factors such as a divided Palestinian leadership and the question of the right to return for Palestinian refugees are also obstacles that must be overcome if peace is to be achieved.

[33] Defining antisemitism as: Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/a-definition-of-antisemitism> (accessed 25/01/17)

[34] Punton, Jim, 'Shalom' *The Lion Handbook of Christian Belief Lion*, 1982, pp 314 -315

[35] <http://www.kabbalah.info/eng/content/view/frame/31385?eng/content/view/full/31385&main> (accessed 16/01/17)

[36] Rabbis for Human Rights Annual Report 2012/2013 p.12

[37] <http://rhr.org.il/eng/2014/02/zionism-and-human-rights-rabbi-ascherman-on-what-zionism-means-to-him/> (accessed 16/01/17)

[38] Major General Yair Golan quoted in article by Ori Nir for APN (Americans for Peace Now) <https://peacenow.org/entry.php?id=18048#.V3PMvLgrLct> (accessed 16/01/17)

[39] Adapted from <http://www.theparentscircle.com/Story.aspx?ID=201> (accessed 16/01/17)

[40] <http://theforgivenessproject.com/stories/bassam-aramin-palestine/> (accessed 16/01/17)

[41] Ateek, Naim *Justice and Only Justice* (New York: Orbis Books, 1996), p.78

[42] Mitri Raheb *I am a Palestinian Christian* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996) p.80

[43] <https://www.eappi.org/en/about> (accessed 16/01/17)

[44] In December, Interior Minister Aryeh Deri, Chairman of the ultra-Orthodox Sephardic Shas party, banned Dr. Isabel Phiri, Associate General Secretary for the World Council of Churches (WCC) from entering Israel. At the time of writing it is yet to be seen whether this will have an impact on the EAPPI programme.

[45] WCC Central Committee, “**Statement on the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict and Peace Process**”, Trondheim, Norway, June 28 2016

[46] information on the labelling of settlement goods can be found at <http://www.eccr.org.uk/module-htmlpages-display-pid-64.html> (accessed 16/01/17)