

WORLD MISSION COUNCIL

MAY 2011

PROPOSED DELIVERANCE

The General Assembly:

1. Receive the report.
2. Give thanks for the life and witness of Mission Partners who have died, acknowledge with gratitude those who have completed their period of service overseas, and uphold in prayer all who continue to serve.
3. Urge members of the Church to visit, meet and support the Christian community in the Middle East.
4. Encourage members to pray for the Presbyterian and other churches in Egypt and the work of the Coptic Evangelical Organisation for Social Services (CEOSS) amongst the least in the society.
5. Encourage members to pray for the witness of the Presbyterian and other Churches in Lebanon and Syria.
6. Commend the Kairos Palestine document to the whole church.
7. Give thanks for Jewish, Christian and Muslim cooperation in upholding the rights of the poor and oppressed in the Middle East and beyond.
8. Appreciate the work of the Council in developing its Centres to support the Council's work in the pursuit of justice, peace and reconciliation.
9. Commend the Council for seeking to engage every member of the Church of Scotland in support of peacemaking in Israel and Palestine.
10. Give thanks for the renewed co-operation between the Council and congregations of the Church of Scotland with Christian Aid, and urge all members to support Christian Aid in expressing solidarity with the world church.
11. Thank the Guild for their keen interest and support for the Council's work around the world.
12. Encourage congregations to join in twinning relationships.
13. Encourage members to offer for service as Mission Partners.
14. Encourage members to volunteer as Ecumenical Accompaniers.
15. Give thanks for the peaceful emergence of South Sudan as a new country and encourage the Council to continue to support the Christian communities in North and South Sudan.
16. Urge the Government of Pakistan to release and pardon Ms. Asia Bibi and to ensure that she and her family are protected.
17. Urge the Government of Pakistan to repeal the Blasphemy Law.
18. Urge congregations to be involved in advocacy activities in support of minority Christian communities.
19. Give thanks for the HIV Programme and the work of our partners at home and overseas, and re-commit the Church of Scotland to playing its part in response to the pandemic.
20. Thank congregations for their enthusiastic support for Souper Sunday and encourage them to continue to support the HIV Programme in prayer, action and giving.

REPORT

World Mission Reports to the General Assembly have traditionally highlighted the Council's work all over the world. It has often been difficult for people to comprehend it all, and many fasten on to sections dealing with a country they know or a Mission Partner a congregation supports. The Council has decided to focus on specific regions over the next three years, starting this year with the Middle East, to be followed by Asia, Africa and the Caribbean.

The General Assembly of 2010 instructed the Council to make our report 'Christians in Minority Situations' widely available. This was done in various ways, including a very successful conference with other concerned organisations; items in our WM magazine and in Life and Work; and the wide distribution of a popular copy of the report called 'If one suffers... ' to all congregations and to MSPs, MPs and MEPs. The report has brought much comment and also action ranging from campaigning to developing twinning relationships with Christians living in minority situations.

The Church is called to stand in solidarity with the least in society. The Church of Scotland at home and abroad is taking this injunction seriously. The poor are a gospel priority whether in Scotland or any other place. The World Mission Council is given the task of responding to that call on behalf of the Church of Scotland around the world.

Helping set people free from the oppression of poverty is one of the priorities of the Council. Supporting partners in new initiatives on evangelism; and supporting initiatives for justice, peace and reconciliation in situations of conflict or threat are others. In all that it does, the Council's overarching aim is to emphasise local to local engagement; the building of relationships and friendships between congregations and Presbyteries in Scotland with those of our partners around the world.

The Council is committed to giving support – spiritual, moral and practical – wherever we can and within

the resources available. The Council does this through engagement with partner churches and other organisations in many countries around the world; through the work of Mission Partners in specific countries; through the HIV Programme; in twinning relationships and through bringing people to Scotland to inform the church at home. It is from our engagement and involvement with our partners that the Council is able to share with the Church in Scotland the realities of every day life for those with whom we are in relationship around the world.

Further information on work with partners in specific countries is available on the Church of Scotland website or by contacting the Department in the Church Offices. The Council wants to offer members of the Church of Scotland opportunities to become actively involved with the churches of the world and support meaningful engagement with the world church. In the Report there is a menu of options for one particular aspect of our common task. This will give every member some ideas about how to be effective, to be active, and to be engaged in doing something in the pursuit of peace with justice for all in Palestine and Israel.

Investing in peace

"Through our love, we will overcome injustices and establish foundations for a new society both for us and for our opponents. Our future and their future are one. Either (there will be) the cycle of violence that destroys both of us or peace that will benefit both." Kairos Palestine, 2009

Kairos Palestine is a seminal document from the Palestinian Christian community. Launched in Advent 2009, it is subtitled, "A Moment of Truth, a word of faith, hope and love from the heart of Palestinian suffering." It is

¹ Kairos Palestine A Moment of Truth : A word of faith, hope and love from the heart of Palestinian suffering, 4.3 www.kairospalestine.ps

not “a theoretical theological study or a policy paper, but is rather a document of faith...” Its central concern is for a just and peaceable end to the Israeli occupation and an opportunity for the Palestinian people to build a secure and stable state. It points out the mission of the Church is “to speak the Word of God courageously, honestly and lovingly in the local context and in the midst of daily events,” and to “stand alongside” the “oppressed.” (Kairos Palestine 3.4.1) Mark Braverman, an American Jewish voice for justice and peace, welcomed the document, emphasising that “What is needed to bring peace to this land is ... a broad, global social movement that will change the political wind. And it is in the church that this movement will be initiated, led, and grow in strength.”²

Kairos refers to a moment of truth and challenge: God’s own timing for the fulfilment of God’s purpose in history. Famously used in the 1985 Kairos proclamation of the Churches in South Africa, Kairos Palestine seeks common cause with the South African situation. The Kairos Palestine document has been widely disseminated and is helpful in understanding the experience and situation of the Palestinian community, Christian and Muslim. It is also a cry to the world church to stand in solidarity with a minority community of Christians whose lands and livelihoods are threatened through Israeli military power, settler aggrandisement and uninspiring political leadership. The Palestinian Kairos Document issues an invitation, asking the question to Christians around the world: “Are you able to help us get our freedom back, for this is the only way you can help the two peoples attain justice, peace, security and love?” (Kairos Palestine 6.1) It urges Christians to “take a position of truth with regard to Israel’s occupation of Palestinian land.” (Kairos Palestine 6.3)

“Our land has a universal mission” (Kairos Palestine 2.3) The world church has been called to stand in solidarity with the Christians of the Middle East and the Council is

² <http://markbraverman.org/writing/remarks-at-world-council-of-churches-launch-of-kairos-statement>

heeding that call. Bishop Munib Younan of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL) addressed the 2010 General Assembly and urged us to “invest in peace.” That cry is taken seriously by the Council which is responding in faith and action with the ELCJHL and other friends in Palestine, Israel, the wider Middle East, and with partners in other contexts and countries around the world for whom the focus on peace is timely.

Peace is of central importance to our work all over the world, but especially in the Middle East. Peace is a necessary condition in allowing all peoples to flourish and develop. Martin Luther King Jr reminded us that “True peace is not merely the absence of tension: it is the presence of justice.”³ True peace requires an entire and dramatic new direction for society. It is about human dignity and wellbeing and opportunities for self and societal development. True peace needs justice.

Naim Ateek, Director of Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Centre, reminds us that the biblical word translated as ‘righteousness’ may also be translated as ‘justice’. He notes: “Many people tend to understand righteousness as having to do with their own personal spiritual life without taking into account their relationship with others. I believe that it is more likely that Jesus, in his historical context, addressing people who were living under occupation, with everything that that entails, was calling for justice. For the Palestinian people then were hungry and thirsty for justice. And this is exactly what our Palestinian people are hungry and thirsty for today.”⁴

“Seek first the kingdom of God and God’s justice.” (Matthew 6:33)

“Blessed are those who are hungry and thirsty for justice, for they shall be filled.” (Matt 5:6)

³ Quoted by Stephen B. Oates, *Let the Trumpet Sound: A Life of Martin Luther King, Jr.* (1982)

⁴ Ateek, N. *Politics, Theology and Peace in Israel/Palestine*, Lecture to the Friends of St. George’s College Jerusalem, London. 20 May 2010.

The distinguished Pakistani economist, Dr Mahbub ul Haq, recognised this essential interconnectedness in founding the UN Human Development Report. He highlighted: "For human security, in the last analysis, is a child that did not die, a disease that did not spread, an ethnic violence that did not explode, a woman who was not raped, a poor person who did not starve, a dissident who was not silenced, a human spirit that was not crushed. Human security...is a concern with human dignity."⁵

People created in the image and likeness of God – women, men and children – have the intrinsic right to human security, to justice, to human dignity, to live a life free of violence, disease, malnutrition or poverty. Here we make common cause with Christian Aid, the churches' agency for humanitarian and development action, as well as with people of all faiths or none, as we seek, and act to achieve, a peaceable world through the eradication of poverty and the realisation of justice, equality, dignity and freedom for all, regardless of faith, gender or nationality.

Working together with Christian Aid (we have had four joint regional events already in 2011) is additionally useful in advocacy and campaigning: offering opportunities to vocalise our concerns, and those of our sisters and brothers throughout the world. We continue to encourage churches to see the work of Christian Aid as an integral part of involvement in the world church.

The General Assembly of 2010 instructed the Council to "explore the relationship of Christian Aid to local Christian churches in the Middle East and to report to the Assembly of 2011." The Council was in communication with Christian Aid and the churches in the Middle East to clarify the relationship. Christian Aid is the relief and development agency of the churches of Great Britain and Ireland, supporting and engaging churches to work together "for a better life for all". It does not fund core church activities,

but has a commitment to work with the churches, church-related bodies and the ecumenical family when working on specific projects which fulfil Christian Aid's requirements and have common values and purpose. It is therefore able to offer assistance for specific projects which are clearly defined and time limited.

"Symbol of peace and sign of conflict" (Kairos Palestine 1.1.8)

The State of Israel was recognised by the international community as a haven after the devastating acts against Jewish people in the Holocaust. It was a political and humanitarian response to events of truly incomprehensible proportions. It is important to state our support for a secure and democratic State of Israel where all citizens enjoy equal rights under the law. Such a State faces threats from competing eschatologies or world views. On the one hand, it is at risk because of Zionism, both Jewish and Christian, which has little regard for the Palestinian people. On the other hand, there is a threat from those who would destroy the State of Israel. We believe in the hope of the Kingdom of God in which all citizens enjoy their full human rights and whose human dignity and worth are affirmed and upheld.

This is exactly the situation the Church seeks for the Palestinian people who have suffered from the displacement and dispossession they call the Nakba (disaster). The territory which is now the State of Israel was inhabited by Palestinian people whose lives were turned upside down in 1948 when they were forced from their homes, towns and villages. The aftermath of the Six Day War in 1967 saw further disruption when Israel began its occupation of the West Bank, Gaza, Sinai and the Golan Heights. Today, from those 750,000 original Palestinian refugees, there are 4.8 million who live in legal limbo, longing for a resolution of the political stalemate.⁶

This land is also the cradle of our faith; the place Christ

⁵ New Compulsions for Human Security, NGO/DPI Conference, September 1993

⁶ <http://www.unrwa.org/etemplate.php?id=86>

was born, lived, ministered, died and was resurrected. The Christian community which grew from those early disciples has sought to remain faithful over twenty centuries of births, marriages and deaths; work and play; and countless invasions and occupations. That community, today less than 2% of the population, is imperilled; it is continuously diminishing and losing its rootedness in the local society as more and more individuals and families choose to emigrate. Today, there are more Palestinian Christians in Chile than there are in Palestine.⁷

At the Sabeel Conference in 2006, a survey⁸ of the reasons for Palestinian Christian emigration from the West Bank (including East Jerusalem) and from Israel highlighted the economic and political volatility arising from occupation – the Separation Wall, the check-points, the confiscation of land, and the political uncertainty – as vital factors in explaining Christian emigration.

For the Christians in Galilee, unlike the Occupied Territory, the Wall and checkpoints are not the key issue for emigration; the factors here tend to be economic, but also discrimination and being a minority within a minority. A 2010 survey in Al-Liqa' Journal, 'The Christian Arab Youth in Galilee'⁹ found that 28.4% of young Christians in the Galilee (Palestinian citizens of Israel) think seriously about emigration. This is in contrast to a similar study in 1990 when the figure was under 1% (0.57%). The following were given as motives for emigration:

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| The bad economic and political situation | 33% |
| Studying | 30% |
| Feeling freedom and stability abroad | 19% |
| I have no future in this country | 12% |
| Joining family members abroad | 6% |

⁷ www.thisweekinpalestine.com/details.php?id=2409&ed=151&edid=151

Palestinian Christians: Facts, Figures and Trends. Diyyar, 2008

⁸ Sabeel Survey on Palestinian Christians in West Bank and Israel, Sabeel, 2006

⁹ Al-Liqa' Journal, June 2010

Despite two decades of 'peace process,' Kairos Palestine summarises the present reality: "The decision-makers content themselves with managing the crisis rather than committing themselves to the serious task of finding a way to resolve it." Settlements have massively expanded, East Jerusalem has been systematically colonised, and the Separation Wall has surrounded many towns and villages in the West Bank and left agricultural land and aquifers beyond Palestinian accessibility. Gaza is cut off from the rest of the world. To echo the words of Jeremiah (6:14): "They have treated the wound of my people carelessly, saying, 'Peace, peace,' when there is no peace." If wrongs are not righted how can there be peace? Ending the Israeli occupation of Palestinian Territory is a fundamental requirement for justice. Michel Sabbah, Latin (Roman Catholic) Patriarch, appealed to the churches of the world: "The greatest contribution that can be made to Christians in the Holy Land is to help put an end to the conflict."¹⁰

"Resistance is a right and duty...but it is resistance with love as its logic." (Kairos Palestine 4.2.3)

As the Israeli occupation is further embedded into the physical landscape of the Palestinian Territory, it is essential for those who support the rule of law to struggle all the harder to hold Israel and the international community accountable to International Law and International Humanitarian Law (laws applicable in wars or armed conflict). It is important to offer the hand of friendship and to walk with and support those who are taking an active part in their own efforts to bring a better future for themselves and their communities.

"Resistance is a right and a duty for the Christian. But it is resistance with love as its logic. It is thus a creative resistance...We can resist through civil disobedience... through respect of life." (Kairos Palestine 4.2.3 & 4.2.5) Thus the Christian Palestinian writers highlight their path of resistance to the forces which would deny their humanity

¹⁰ Michel Sabbah, Latin Patriarch emeritus, Cornerstone 43, Winter 2007, Sabeel, Jerusalem.

and equality through creative non-violence. We have seen it at work most inspiringly in Tahrir Square in Cairo, and then spreading across the Middle East.

Non-violent protest has been a growing phenomenon amongst the Palestinian community in the past decade and many are increasingly following the lead of the villages of Budrus (www.justvision.org/budrus) and Bil'in (www.bilin-ffj.org) where villagers, supported by Israeli and international friends, have found creative ways to express their opposition to the continued Israeli settler expansion. Each Friday, they demonstrate against the Israeli appropriation of Palestinian land by the route of the Wall (this is the terminology used by the International Court of Justice, recognising that it is sometimes a wall and sometimes an electronic fence with a surrounding exclusion zone) in creative and non-violent ways with local and international supporters.

Jewish, Muslim and Christian peacemakers from organisations like B'Tselem, Rabbis for Human Rights, the Israeli Committee against House Demolition, Machsom Watch, Tayyoush, Zochorot, Palestine Solidarity Campaign, Christian Peacemaker Teams and EAPPI stand together for justice and equal rights for all. Women in Black, started by a group of Jewish women, hold a demonstration each Friday, as they have been doing for over 20 years, near the Prime Minister's residence in Jerusalem to protest the ongoing Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territory.

“The Reality is the daily humiliation to which we are subjected” (Kairos Palestine 1.1.3)

The average age in Gaza is 17.2 years; in the UK it is 39.5 years. There are 1.5 million people living in 139 square miles (For comparison, Midlothian covers around the same area and has a population of 80,000¹¹). Mass unemployment, extreme poverty and food price rises caused by shortages have left four in five Gazans

dependent on humanitarian aid.¹² Yet Gaza has a rich agricultural heritage, manufacturing history and a skilled workforce. The deep poverty in Gaza is a deliberate and calculated result of the declared policy of the Israeli government which notified American diplomats that they, “intend to keep Gaza's economy on the brink of collapse without quite pushing it over the edge.”¹³ Oxfam¹⁴ reported no fuel had been allowed in for the Gaza power plant between Jan 5 and Feb 12, resulting in smuggling through tunnels from Egypt. As a form of collective punishment, Israel's continuing blockade of Gaza is a flagrant violation of international law.

Humanitarian aid is a short-term solution and can never be the answer to people's long-term needs. The deep poverty in Gaza requires a systemic change. While calling for this, the churches have also supported immediate and developmental assistance. Educational opportunities, vocational training for the young, medical care and social assistance as well as emergency relief have been part of the work and witness of the Churches to the people of Gaza through the Middle East Council of Churches (MECC) and its vocational training courses.

Mohammad Anan Mansour lives in a small house with his seven siblings and mother in one of the largest refugee camps in the Gaza Strip. At fifteen, and with no interest in school, Mohammed applied to enrol in the MECC Vocational Training Centre on a three-year carpentry and furniture-making course. Mohammed was determined to become a skilled carpenter in order to earn income to assist his family, which currently depended on whatever food was being distributed by humanitarian organisations, usually dry rations and oil. As well as getting a skill which will help him support his family, the MECC programme offers psychosocial counselling to help Mohammed deal with the trauma sustained when witnessing his father,

¹² www.amnesty.org

¹³ New York Times, Jan 5, 2010

¹⁴ Oxfam Gaza weekly update, 6-12 February 2011

¹¹ General Register Office for Scotland, 2004

a bus driver, being killed in front of him during the Israeli offensive on Gaza 2009-10, when Israeli war planes bombarded his home and neighbourhood.¹⁵

Such stories highlight the way of love offered freely from the Christian Churches to a people suffering under poverty, blockade, ideology, politicians, and inhuman isolation. These things make for peace and are a witness to those who opt for violence on all sides.

The Council pays tribute to the recently retired Director of the MECC Gaza Office, Mr Constantine Dabbagh. In the midst of difficult and trying circumstances, Mr Dabbagh has been a real Christian presence and inspiration in initiating, sustaining and developing the MECC's work and witness in Gaza.

“Human beings were not made for hatred” (Kairos Palestine 5.4.3)

One example of a love and a passion for justice and reconciliation is found at the Tent of Nations (www.tentofnations.org), an inspirational action started by two Lutheran brothers, Mr Daoud Nassar and Mr Daher Nassar. On their farm between Beit Jala and the Green Line (the armistice line of 1948) and surrounded by settlers who want to expel the family and take over the land their grandfather bought a century ago, international volunteers help the Nassars run programmes for local and international participants. Children's camps, olive tree planting and harvesting, work days and painting groups keep the place alive and busy and discourage Israeli settlers from taking the land themselves. Natural resources are conserved through micro-generation and the use of technology and the brothers have built cisterns to capture and conserve water. Their original cave home is now used as a dormitory for visitors; another cave is a meeting room, and another is used as a chapel.

Their caves and tents are under threat of demolition and

they must argue in Israeli courts to keep their own land, yet they continue to inspire hope. Arriving on the farm, visitors are greeted with a sign, “We refuse to be enemies.” The Nassars have sought to love their neighbour and have Christian, Muslim and Jewish supporters and participants. To worship with Daher in the cave is something especially spiritual and moving. These things make for peace.

A major aspect of life in the region, where Christians and Muslims are close neighbours, is the need to strengthen their unity as one people facing many challenges. During the first ever “World Interfaith Harmony Week” (1-7 February 2011), designated by the United Nations General Assembly, Bishop Munib Younan appealed to world churches: “there is no place in the world in which... churches live on their own. [We] live with other religions – sometimes in a minority position, sometimes in a majority position, but never alone... [This week] carries a strong message... to find the common values that promote justice, coexistence, peace, tolerance, and to work together for the eradication of poverty, the promotion of the role of women, and reconciliation in our world.”

The Heads of Churches in Jerusalem sit on the Council of Religious Institutions in the Holy Land (CRIHL), which is comprised of the two chief Rabbis, the Islamic court, and the minister of religious affairs to address and discuss key issues for the faith communities

The Sabeel Liberation Theology Centre has been developing more grassroots contacts between Christian and Muslim community leaders, pastors and imams to forge good relations and build mutual understanding. During a 2010 Muslim-Christian encounter, thirty-eight Muslim clerics joined a similar number of Palestinian clergy to focus on how people of different religions live together in peace and mutual acceptance.

One participant, Sheikh Zuhair, a Muslim leader in the Nablus area, emphasised that, in the Islamic tradition, religious leaders had a duty to bring awareness to their

¹⁵ NECC Gaza, Annual Report 2009

followers of the need to live together in peace and acceptance, and not allow the occupier to cancel the Christian presence and sow seeds of dissent between these faith communities. Naim Ateek led a workshop explaining Christian Zionism and the anti Islamic commentary of some western churches and politicians. He emphasised that these were alien ideas to the local Churches and Christian community which had lived side by side with Muslim neighbours for centuries.¹⁶ It is important to model coexistence to guide and inspire public opinion. These things make for peace.

Through its support for Sabeel, the Council has had opportunity to engage in theological dialogue with the local Christian community. From its outset, Sabeel has pioneered work amongst the Christian community to build and sustain ecumenical awareness and contacts between the historic churches in Palestine and Israel. Today, Sabeel continues its ecumenical witness, with clergy, youth and women's programmes.

Each Thursday at noon in Jerusalem, Sabeel holds a service that is open to the community. It is a time to join together to celebrate the Lord's Supper, to discuss how the scriptures apply today, and to pray for the specific needs of the region. Sabeel sends out a weekly "Wave of Prayer" to supporters from New Zealand through Asia, Europe and the Americas and back to the Pacific to join with them at noon on Thursdays in prayer for the region and its peoples, that peace may reign and God's will be done. We encourage you to pray for peace either with Sabeel or at a time that suits you and your community. Such things make for peace.

"Are you able to help us get our freedom back?"(Kairos Palestine 6.1)

Accompanying Christians, Muslims and Jews, all those who seek justice and peace, is the calling of the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and

Israel (EAPPI; www.eappi.org). The EAPPI Code of Conduct states: "We stand faithfully with the poor, the oppressed and the marginalized. We want to serve all parties in this conflict in a fair and unbiased manner in word and action." The Church of Scotland and Christian Aid have been amongst the key UK supporters of EAPPI since its foundation in 2001, and there have been participants from 15 different countries. Our ministers in Jerusalem and Galilee have been resources for serving EAs, as well as offering pastoral care and hospitality to volunteers and staff of the programme.

Through sending volunteers to live for three months in Palestine and Israel and offering "protection by presence" to vulnerable individuals and communities, every Ecumenical Accompanier (EA) is a witness to the incarnational love of God.

Many Scots, including several members and ministers of the Church of Scotland, have participated in the EAPPI programme, and in so doing been transformed themselves and have returned home to make valuable contributions to church and society in explaining and highlighting the realities of the situation. One Ecumenical Accompanier noted that relationships were the most important result of the three month experience, assuring people "they are valued, they aren't forgotten." The Council encourages you to consider volunteering in EAPPI.

One experience, from an EA working near Nablus, highlights the impact of settlers in creating Palestinian poverty. Akram Ibrahim Ali Imran went to his land in the village of Burin one morning in early September 2010 to find about twenty of his olive trees slashed or severed using chainsaws by men from the Yitzhar settlement. The EA reported, "branches covered with hundreds of olives were lying on the ground, already desiccated from the lack of moisture."¹⁷ Less than a year earlier, Akram had

¹⁶ Sabeel Annual Report 2010

¹⁷ www.eappi.org/en/news/ea-reports/r/article/4837/a-small-and-bitter-harves.html

lost 81 trees in a similar incident. These 100 trees would have produced around US \$20,000, a significant sum in the Palestinian economy. "This is how I support my family. Now we only have twenty left," Akram told the EA.

EAs monitor agricultural gates to check if Israeli soldiers open them to allow Palestinian farmers into their lands in the seam zone (between the Separation Wall and the Green Line); they help children go to school in Hebron when threatened with settler violence; they accompany the villagers of Yanoun who would be forced to abandon their homes to settlers if there was not an international presence.

Guild members have been enthusiastic and committed supporters of the work of the Church around the world. In the Guild project 2009-2012 "What does the Lord require of you?",¹⁸ Guild members are supporting the Council's Interfaith Action project in Palestine and Israel. The project introduction states: "As the prospect of resolution of the conflict in the region ebbs and flows, it becomes ever more necessary to support those who refuse to accept the inevitability of conflict, and the impossibility of any reconciliation."

The project has three parts: Christian (EAPPI), Muslim (a community education and development project in Jayyous) and Jewish (Rabbis for Human Rights (RHR)). RHR is an Israeli Jewish group which is relentless and vociferous in its efforts for justice and coexistence (www.rhr.org.il). RHR organises supporters to go into the Palestinian territories and support Palestinians threatened by settlers when planting or harvesting crops or trying to go about their normal life. Within the Guild project, RHR has piloted the "Sisters for Peace" project at Sapir College in Sderot to encourage young women from the Bedouin and Jewish religious societies to study and become more active for women's education, empowerment and rights. RHR are in a small but active and vocal grouping

¹⁸ www.churchofscotland.org.uk/councils/guild/gdprojects.htm

of Israeli organisations, such as the Israeli Committee against House Demolitions, Physicians for Human Rights, B'Tselem and Breaking the Silence which challenge government policies and seek a just peace for Palestinian and Israeli alike. Members of the Middle East Committee have been able to visit all three projects, including with the Moderator in March 2010. The Council, through the Faithshare Visitors Programme, is pleased to support two participants in a group of Guild supporters planning to visit these projects in March 2011 under the leadership of Clarence and Joan Musgrave. These things make for peace.

Writing stories from the midst of the experience and returning home to speak and share the experience is a central element in the Ecumenical Accompanier, Mission Partner or pilgrim visitor experience. This advocacy, sharing the stories of partners and learning from those who can speak from personal experience, is necessary, valuable and strategic. A key action, in which Scots can join churches all around the world, is the World Week for Peace in Palestine and Israel (29 May to 4 June) which asks us to pray, educate and advocate for peace in Palestine and Israel. (www.worldweekforpeace.org).

"Our hope remains strong." (Kairos Palestine 3.1)

Working with organisations such as the Al-Shurooq School For Blind Children; Lutheran and Episcopal congregations, schools and hospitals; the Idna Women's Cooperative; the Jayyous Community Project; the Galilee Society HIV project; Atfaluna Deaf School, Bethlehem Bible College, Canaan and Sindyanna Fair Trade Cooperatives, Wi'am, and more, the Council helps support the contemporary Palestinian presence living and working in their homeland.

One close relationship is that with Sunbula, which has had a shop in St Andrew's Guest House for two decades and has recently opened another in East Jerusalem, in Sheikh Jarrah. Sunbula works in partnership with over 20 community based organisations (involving more

than 2000 artisans). Many of the organisations Sunbula supports are women's groups creating employment in their communities because, as a result of the Wall, there is little or no employment for the men. With some based in refugee camps, and others in small towns and villages (including a L'Arche community in Bethlehem), the income and skills developed through Sunbula help people to adapt socially to the consequences of occupation and the destruction of traditional ways of living and relating. These things make for peace.

In the Parish Grouping of St Andrews Scots Memorial Church, Jerusalem, and St Andrew's Galilee, Tiberias, both congregations are small but very hospitable and in the tourist season can welcome large numbers of worshippers. The turnover of expatriates is quite fast and members of the congregations are dispersed. This means recognising a real need to build a sense of family support in the churches. Both Churches are exploring the development of 'peace gardens', and at Tiberias there is consideration of how best to redevelop in a way that strengthens our peace, reconciliation and interfaith presence.

The two ministers are fully involved in work with partner churches (especially through our formal partnerships with the local Episcopal and the Lutheran Churches), and with Christian, Jewish and Muslim organisations and individuals in the broader community, both within the State of Israel and within the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The Presbytery of Jerusalem has incorporated Mission Partners as corresponding members to encourage mutual support and also more engagement with the broader work of the church, and is exploring links with the Presbytery of Europe to facilitate more joint working and support.

Tabeetha School in Jaffa came into the Church of Scotland in 1912, having been bequeathed to the Church by the school's founder, Jane Walker-Arnott. In a region where the marginalised Christian community is a minority within a minority and have very little they can still call

their own, Tabeetha School has been a Christian witness for 148 years. Tabeetha offers good quality education, building tolerance and coexistence where education is so often used to reinforce opposing narratives and entrench conflict.

The Council's presence in Palestine and Israel is further consolidated and deepened through the Mission Partners who are placed there, each of whom has links to congregations here in Scotland. These Mission Partners are resources for the Council and whole Church of Scotland, helping to share the story, not just of their own work but of the issues encountered daily by the communities they work alongside and with whom they walk. Their writing and speaking can help Presbyteries and congregations here at home better understand the issues and challenges facing the Palestinian Christian community, indeed the wider Palestinian and Israeli societies. It is also hoped that such connections will encourage individuals and congregations to visit this land, not just to be where Jesus walked, but to meet the local Christian community, the 'living stones' of the Holy Land, see their situation, get to know them better, build lasting and ongoing relationships and be friends in good times and bad. These things make for peace.

Poverty in Palestine and Israel is deeply inter-related with the occupation. These elements cause misery for the people, but providing essential aid can only ever be one part of the road to recovery. For peace to prevail, poverty of opportunity, employment, culture and education must also be addressed. An essential aspect of Palestinian peace-building initiatives has been the important place of cultural awareness and development. Cultural life has seen a renaissance with the Palestinian Literary Festival (the former Moderator, Alison Elliot, is on the Board), Jerusalem Music Festival, the Palestinian National Orchestra, the Edward Said Conservatory of Music, Daniel Barenboim's West-Eastern Divan Workshop, storytelling, art exhibitions and many theatre and dance groups which travel around

the world sharing their life situation through stories and songs and bringing a human face to the Palestinian reality.

One prominent example comes from the Diyar Consortium of the Christmas Lutheran Church in Bethlehem. Just before Christmas 2010, the largest construction project seen in Bethlehem in many years was inaugurated as their Higher Education and Research Centre. Through this new building, the Lutheran Church in Bethlehem offers space where Palestinian young people can “express their feelings, thoughts and ideas in art and music; can shape their minds through theatre, and embody them through dance. Through their films they will be able to give a face to a community banned beyond the Wall and inspired by Christ who gave God a face, a voice and a name.” Rev Dr Mitri Raheb, minister in Bethlehem, rejoiced in this opportunity, “Christmas is not about what happened 2000 years ago, but it is all about what God started then and is still continuing here and now through us all.”¹⁹ The Council was pleased to be able to offer support for a local staff member to teach in the Media Centre project. These things make for peace.

“We say to the Churches: come and see.” (Kairos Palestine 6.2)

For decades the Church of Scotland, through the Council, has stood alongside the Christian community in the Middle East in friendship, love and solidarity. We have supported educational activities, health services, theological discourse, scholarships, worship and prayer opportunities in Israel and Palestine as well as countries such as Egypt, Syria, Lebanon and Jordan. The Church of Scotland has also supported regional community organisations such as the Middle East Council of Churches (MECC) in its work in Gaza, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Iraq, Iran and the Gulf, and The Fellowship of the Middle East Evangelical Churches which brings together all the Protestant Churches in the region.

Bringing the realities of our partners, their understanding and experiences, into the life of the Church of Scotland is central to our work. This is why the Council has stressed the importance of twinning. The twinning relationship developed between Kemnay and the Minyara Congregation in Lebanon is a prime example. Their aim is to learn from each other, encourage and support one another. And they do this through exchanging information and visits. One touching experience, reported from a visit of Kemnay to Minyara, was of a Scottish woman and a Lebanese woman sharing their experience of widowhood and receiving comfort from each other. Investing in peace is not only about the big picture but about allowing opportunity for touching of hearts and the enrichment of individual faith journeys. In the Galilee, the congregation of St Michael's, Linlithgow has begun a journey of friendship and partnership with Holy Family Episcopal Church in Raineh. These things make for peace.

Within a twinning relationship, each congregation also prays for the wider political and social situation, being mindful of what is happening in the country of their ‘twin’. In Lebanon, there is political unrest, a fragile peace and very little inter-religious cooperation. Mary Mikhael, President of the Near East School of Theology (NEST) in Beirut, appealed to all partners: “Once again anxiety and fear are knocking at our doors as Lebanon seems to be caught in a vicious circle. For how long, and what days ahead will bring us, are questions on our minds. Please pray for us and with us for wisdom and God’s guidance for our President and all the decision makers in Lebanon. Pray for peace and stability in Lebanon and the entire Middle East.”²⁰ We can pray with and for NEST, for our partners in the Presbyterian Synod of Syria and Lebanon, the wider Christian communities and all society in Lebanon and Syria in a knowledgeable way.

¹⁹ www.diyar.ps

²⁰ Letter to partners, Dec 2010

Events in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (Gaza and the West Bank) have repercussions across the Arab world, and beyond. Jean Zaru, from the Society of Friends in Ramallah, has been one of the key peacemakers within the churches in recent decades and her insight is instructive: "The Arab-Israeli conflict is the cause of an explosive situation that could become a threat to world peace. It now affects the lives of millions of people in the Middle East; if it widens, it could affect the lives of tens of millions of people elsewhere."²¹ It is in the interests of world peace that the churches speak out and focus on pressing for a just solution to Israel's 44 year occupation of Palestinian lands and oppression of the Palestinian people, and support those seeking more open, just and tolerant societies.

Jean Zaru is prescient in her analysis. The early part of 2011 saw an upswell of public opinion in the Arab world. Uri Avnery, the veteran Israeli politician and peacemaker, who was a member of the Jewish underground Irgun and fought against the British in the late 1940's, supported Jean Zaru's point in claiming that the underlying cause of the unrest could be named as Palestine: "In Arab culture, nothing is more important than honour. People can suffer deprivation, but they will not stand humiliation... (H)ow would I feel if I were a 15 year-old boy in Alexandria, Amman or Aleppo, seeing my leaders behave like abject slaves of the Americans and the Israelis, while oppressing and despoiling their own subjects. At that age, I myself joined a terrorist organization. Why would an Arab boy be different?"²² In Tunisia, Jordan, Dubai, Bahrain, Palestine, Yemen, Iran, and Egypt people did not join terrorist organisations, but took to the streets in a mass movement of people against dictatorial regimes.

In Egypt, a spontaneous 25 January non-violent uprising

occupied Tahrir Square and challenged and then ended the 30 year reign of Hosni Mubarak as President. In Arabic, the word "Tahrir" means liberation, not a final liberation but an ongoing process of liberation. The liberation of people in the Middle East will need their ongoing commitment in the struggle to liberate themselves and their countries from autocratic and unjust regimes. At the time of writing the way forward is uncertain. The military have seized control and, with no clear process for a smooth succession or for the introduction of greater democratic accountability, the risks of confusion and violence are high. Justice is what makes for peace in the long run. The vigilance and commitment of the people in ensuring political accountability all over the Middle East will be a necessary imperative, as will support from around the world in helping train and equip people for the future.

The Egyptian churches have also experienced difficult times, most recently in the New Year's Day bombings of a Coptic Orthodox Church in Alexandria, and are seeking to counter this and reach a way of peaceable co-existence. The Council shared its prayers and support for the local churches and their safety and the wellbeing of the whole society, as well as for a just and peaceable future. We have had many links with the Presbyterian Synod of the Nile and today one important area of engagement is support from the Church of Scotland HIV Programme as the Synod seeks to develop a Church Network against AIDS.

The Coptic Evangelical Organisation for Social Services (CEOSS), founded by an Egyptian Presbyterian minister and still connected with the church today, is working with Christian and Muslim leaders in Egyptian society to develop mutual understanding and better relationships. They are a long-time partner with Christian Aid and other development agencies. Starting from a programme to address the crushing poverty of rural Egypt, CEOSS soon realised that overcoming poverty requires sustainable development which would bring justice and peace. Their

²¹ Jean Zaru, *The Things That Make For Peace*, Global Ministries, USA. <http://globalministries.org/resources/mission-study/college-of-mission/things-that-make-for-peace.html>

²² www.gush-shalom.org, Feb 5, 2011

intercultural dialogue programme is part of their overall dedication to seek fullness of life for all in Egyptian society, and this needs deeper understanding between Muslim and Christian. These things make for peace.

The Scots Hotel

Land and presence are deeply intertwined. It is important to the Christian community, as our Episcopal and Lutheran partners have frequently emphasised, that land is kept within the community. The Church of Scotland owns and runs the Scots Hotel in Tiberias. A decade ago, the Church decided to invest in its property there. The Council plans to develop the work of the Scots Hotel and St Andrew's Guest House in Jerusalem organically to help them continue to serve the needs identified in dialogue with the local community and our partner churches. The Council wants to make the Centres it operates places for building bridges and seeking opportunities for people to speak, hear and engage with one another from all different views and experiences in the pursuit of peace with justice.

The Scots Hotel is used by many pilgrim groups from a wide range of denominations and countries, visiting the land of Christ's birth. At the beginning of this year, pilgrim groups from Taiwan, Indonesia and USA were recorded in the visitors' book. The latter, a Presbyterian Church USA group, was on its way to a partnership meeting with the Lutheran Christmas Church in Bethlehem. Many have expressed their appreciation for the quality of the facilities and the welcome and kindness from the staff. There has also been particular appreciation for the Quiet Room in the tower in the garden and use of the church for group worship.

For The Scots Hotel to remain attractive and competitive, it needs the facilities which visitors seek out when choosing a place to stay. The Council, after professional advice and with help and guidance from the Church of Scotland Trust and the Council of Assembly, agreed to make a further investment in the long-term future of The Scots Hotel in

adding a Wellness Centre (fitness centre and treatment rooms). The plans and financial projections have been closely scrutinised, the oversight for the work is in place with professional project managers appointed, and the management expertise is on the ground to see this development through within the agreed parameters. This decision has been taken over a period of years and with much professional guidance and prayerful consideration. The Scots Hotel is an investment which brings income to the Council. This is money which the Council is using to support its work in Israel and Palestine to further the message and practice of peace.

In the Centres, the Council seeks to run organisations that are tangible and visible witnesses to Christian principles and traditions, for example in employment policies, in how they treat suppliers (fairly, and preferably Fair Trade), in dealing with the government and taxes, and in their effect on the environment. Forsan Hussein, Director of the West Jerusalem YMCA, has emphasised that one of the biggest problems the world (and Israel and Palestine) faces is one of ethical leadership (in politics, business, society) and this is one area which the Council seeks to address.

The Galilee is, geographically, an important meeting point – it is central to Jordan, Syria, Palestine, and the Lebanon. The Galilee is an area of deep symbolic relevance within our faith. We remember the ministry of Christ in this area as a ministry of healing and reconciliation, of challenging the forces which create barriers between people, and we seek to offer a space where prophetic voices may speak and engage people to offer a contemporary message of peace and reconciliation that is for the whole world.

The Church of Scotland's original presence in the Galilee served people of that whole region, without any distinction on race, religion or nationality. In the midst of 'the storm', we seek to plant the seeds of peace. Already there is engagement with the Peace Prints Project in the Galilee, and planning with the Anglican Church for

a Galilee conference on Kairos Palestine. The Galilee is an important area today. In the long term, it could again be the crossing point it was in the days of Dr Torrance (the founder of the hospital in 1885). Our work there for wholeness and healing could be open to engagement from around the region as well as between Israelis and Palestinians. This is our dream. This is our intention. We are determined that the investment in the hotel will be an investment in peace.

The Church of Scotland HIV Programme²³ (formerly the Church of Scotland HIV/AIDS Project) has been integrated into the work of the Council, and one of the beneficiaries is The Galilee Society: The Arab National Society for Health Research & Services in Northern Israel. The Galilee Society promotes Aids awareness, seeking to reduce the risk of the disease in a culture in which there remains deep prejudice about HIV and little knowledgeable discussion. The Galilee Society has targeted schools in its educational materials to introduce a new generation to the realities and risks of HIV. The Society reports an increase in the numbers of religious leaders expressing interest in such educational opportunities within their communities.

Such initiatives also develop understanding and build relationships within the community and open doors to new perspectives and the development of open minds. We can think of Christ's teaching about the nature of the Christian community, of how we must live together and serve each other, putting the real needs of people at the heart of what we are about. The Council is seeking creative ways to put peace and reconciliation at the heart of our life in our work in the Middle East. We want to work with other Councils of the Church of Scotland to find areas for cooperation in story telling or witness or mediation or healing, for example with others in the Priority Areas Action Plan; in Together for a Change to link Priority Areas with Palestinian communities; with Mission and

Discipleship to offer young people opportunities to meet partners and understand the realities of the situation; with the Ministries Council in offering candidates for the ministry a placement in Jerusalem and with the Place of Hope initiative which seeks to equip churches to offer a message of hope, healing and reconciliation. Churches which are not able to handle their own differences are not well placed to play that role in the world.

The Council sees the Church of Scotland offering this opportunity for healing and growth, through our Centres, to our partners and others seeking to be healthy and holistic in their life and witness. The Council wants to offer opportunities to share the skill of mediation and its power to transform conflicted situations, and to have people learn more about themselves and learn better ways of handling conflict to help transform their own churches and organisations into vessels for peace and reconciliation. We do not pretend that we are leading the field, but we might just be beginning to do our duty. These things make for peace.

Be patient, steadfast and full of hope (Kairos Palestine 5.3) Bishop Munib Younan has emphasised that: "Justice is by nature not balanced, it is on the side of the suffering and the oppressed, the weak and the poor. ... the power of the cross (is) that God has redeemed all humanity equally, regardless of gender, ethnicity or race, whether powerful or weak, rich or poor, from the north or south, east or west. The reign of God calls us all together to the higher vision of seeking justice, love and reconciliation for all people."

The Council has taken this message to heart and is investing in peace in support of justice for our partners and friends in a variety of countries and contexts around the world. They want our friendship and companionship along the journey to wholeness and fullness of life. As we travel together we can celebrate together our milestones. Peace is a universal longing. We are investing in peace. And we want every member of the Church of Scotland to have the opportunity to do the same.

²³ www.churchofscotland.org.uk/speak_out/hiv_programme

This part of the report ends with an invitation to every member of the Church of Scotland to Invest in Peace. Already some people will have been aware of what is happening in Israel and Palestine and will have become involved in one way or another; while for others this is new territory. We have prepared “an investment portfolio” for everyone and we promise to assist any member who wants to choose from it. We have listed websites, and more information is available on our own one (www.churchofscotland.org.uk), but we are also prepared to answer questions and provide further guidance. The investment portfolio is designed so that people can enter at different levels, with different amounts of experience and commitment.

To invest in peace in Israel and Palestine you can:

PRAY

Choose a specific time each week; reflect on Matthew 5: 9: Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God; and pray for some of those peace-makers mentioned in this report. We dream of a great number of people in Scotland praying for peace in the Middle East with Sabeel and friends around the world at noon every Thursday. And remember our own mission partners there.

GIVE

Money always matters. £10 to the Al-Shurooq school or £100 to the Christian Aid programme in Gaza will make a real difference. Or books for the Lutheran Schools Library Project. Or support the Guild Project. Or give three months of your life as an EAPPI volunteer. Or give a present to someone that you have bought at the Hadeel shop online (www.hadeel.org) or in Shandwick Place, Edinburgh.

READ

Christian Aid reports (www.christianaid.org.uk).
Naim Ateek's book *A Palestinian Christian Cry for Reconciliation*.
Blogs from Mission Partners:

Colin Johnston: <http://colinintiberias.blogspot.com>
George Shand: <http://georghand.wordpress.com>
Tabeetha School: <http://tabeethaschool.blogspot.com>

WRITE

Send a Christmas card to Bethlehem. We will help you. Write to your MP or to the Israeli Ambassador to the UK reinforcing British opposition to settlements,

JOIN

The Scottish Palestinian Forum. Or Israeli Committee Against House Demolition. Or the Friends of Tabeetha. Or the Friends of St Andrews. Or other groups mentioned in the report. And participate in the World Week for Peace in Palestine and Israel. Doing things together is so often better.

WATCH

Films such as: The Promise, Budrus, With God on our Side, East Side Story.

STUDY

Kairos Palestine document – www.kairospalestine.ps
Invite a Mission Partner on deputation to speak. Contact the department.
Invite a returned volunteer from EAPPI to speak.

MEET

Christians in Israel and Palestine by going on a “Living Stones” pilgrimage. We can help you think about this before you go.
Invite your Muslim or Jewish neighbours to discuss with you their hopes for peace in Israel and Palestine.
Twin your congregation and build a relationship with a congregation in the Middle East.

These things make for peace.

WORLDWIDE CONCERNS

While the focus of the 2011 report is the Middle East, it is important to highlight some major areas of concern in other parts of the world. Peace is a fragile commodity and

can be very easily upset or negated. In Africa, Sudan has a major fault line on religious grounds. In Asia, in Pakistan, Korea, and Nepal, life is increasingly perilous for many. In the Caribbean, the Jamaican churches are seeking to be peacemakers. In all these places and more, our partners continue to seek to do justice, love mercy and walk humbly with God as they practise their Christian calling to be salt in their different societies and peacemakers as they pursue opportunities for wholeness and justice.

AFRICA

Sudan

January 2011 marked an historic opportunity for a new and peaceable direction for Sudan. A referendum was held to vote on separating the predominantly Arab and Muslim North from the South, where Christian and Traditional Beliefs predominate. The peace agreement required a 60% voter turnout as the benchmark of validity. Former US president Jimmy Carter, heading an observer mission from The Carter Centre, said "There is no doubt about the legitimacy of the election as far as the number of voters is concerned. I think it will meet international standards both on the conduct of the vote and the freedom of voters." With a 99% vote for Southern independence, it was announced in mid-February that the new country would come into being on July 9 and be named South Sudan. Threats have been made by the government to uproot the Southern Sudanese who live in the North and return them to the South. This would mean a mass migration of millions of Sudanese.

The Presbyterian Church of Sudan and the Sudan Council of Churches expressed their hopes for the future of South Sudan, that in becoming a free and independent nation it might achieve and sustain peace and development. They have been actively promoting peace by organising workshops in presbyteries; teaching and preaching on what it is to offer genuine forgiveness and reconciliation; and promoting the prevention of conflict amongst ethnic groups. We stand in solidarity with the Christian

churches of Sudan in efforts to end the conflict and bring new opportunity to all peoples of Sudan, Southern and Northern. This will be no easy task. As the Economist noted: "A South Sudanese girl is more likely to die in childbirth than to learn to read and write."²⁴ South Sudan has virtually no developed infrastructure. It will need huge amounts of international assistance. The Churches will need to push governments and aid agencies to invest in a peaceable future for the people of South Sudan. The churches will also need to be in the forefront of such action. These things make for peace.

Nigeria

Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa with an estimated population of over 150 million people. Jos, the capital of Plateau State, and its surrounding area has been the focus of Christian/Muslim conflict which has claimed hundreds of lives and destroyed property. Our partners tell us that the causes are multiple: political, leadership, economic power and land ownership, combined with ethnic and religious differences. Christians mostly constitute those ethnic groups referred to as "indigenous" and Muslims constitute those ethnic groups referred to as "settlers".

The Programme for Christian-Muslim Relations in Africa (PROCMURA), a Church of Scotland partner for many decades whose main focus is to work towards constructive relations between Christian and Muslims for peace and peaceful co-existence, has been in the forefront of working towards peace and reconciliation among the conflicting parties and seeking the prevention of further conflicts.

PROCMURA (www.en.procmura-prica.org) organised a conference in October 2010 for Christian and Muslim leaders from Plateau, Kaduna, Kogi, Kano and Bauchi States. The religious leaders lamented that many of the clashes involved both Christians and Muslims, even when the

²⁴ Economist, Feb 3, 2011

causes of the disagreement were not specifically religious. It was doubly dangerous when the media focused on religion as the principal cause of such conflicts when the true causes included a wide variety of competing social, political, and economic interests.

Through this dialogue, hosted by PROCMURA, the leaders pledged to work with government, traditional rulers, opinion leaders, all who were willing to work for the peace and welfare of the community in seeking to develop better relations and map out practical actions to prevent the recurrence of such conflicts and work towards peace and reconciliation.

Zimbabwe

The Church of Scotland's main contact with Zimbabwe through recent challenging years has been through the local partnership between the United Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa's (UPCSA) Presbytery of Zimbabwe and the Presbytery of Greenock and Paisley. In addition, two experienced Church of Scotland ministers have been working in pastoral roles in Zimbabwe: Very Rev Dr John Miller for the past three years and the Rev Donald Walker for the past year. Through these links we have learned something of the struggles of the churches. Congregations of the Presbytery of Zimbabwe have made courageous responses to the civil crises: in some areas where there has been a severe shortage of food, congregations have provided soup kitchens five days a week, providing essential nutrition to vulnerable adults and children. In areas where schools were either closed, or beyond the financial reach of parents for their children, some congregations have established schools and pre-schools in their premises.

Though independence was gained in 1980, some wounds from Zimbabwe's Liberation War remain unhealed in community life. New wounds were sustained during the electoral campaigns of 2008. The Presbytery of Zimbabwe has responded to these strains, with Rev Max Chigwida

developing peace initiatives, through CPIA – the Centre for Peace Initiatives in Africa and at the grass-roots level through EPAR – the Ecumenical Peace-building and Reconciliation Trust. These things make for peace.

CARIBBEAN

Jamaica

The request by the US Government for the extradition of alleged drug baron Christopher 'Dudus' Coke from Jamaica to face drug and gunrunning charges gave momentum to political unrest which eventually erupted in a bloody battle to capture him. This brought the church in Jamaica face to face, yet again, with the uncomfortable truth that the nation, known for its reggae music, talented athletes and natural beauty, is also plagued by a violence which is embedded in the political, economic and social life of Jamaica. The high crime rate threatens the wellbeing of its citizens as well as the income-earning capacity of a nation so dependent on tourism. The churches' role is pivotal in peace initiatives.

The United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands (UCJCI), as part of the Jamaica Council of Churches, participated in discussions, pastoral interventions and the development of initiatives to respond, not only to the latest round of violence, but also to on-going challenges of living in a culture whose economic and social order are so heavily influenced by drugs, gangs and violence. The UCJCI is working with pastors in affected areas to enable them to become catalysts for positive change. The objective is to arrest the current trend and to reshape the lives and value systems of children and young people through developmental workshops in the initial stage followed by ongoing programmes for the children and young people. The hope is that this strategy will foster a new generation driven by a more positive self-image and understanding in order to stimulate different perspectives on how communities are structured and how relationships are positively pursued.

ASIA

The Church of Scotland's partner churches in Asia live, witness and serve in Christ's name to their fellow Christians, Buddhists, Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs and to people who may not profess a faith, in communities across this diverse, dynamic continent that is also home to poverty and conflict.

Pakistan

The Church of Pakistan is concerned about the direction of the country and is seeking ways to approach extremist groups to challenge them to redeem the situation by recalling that Christians and Muslims are all inheritors of Abrahamic faiths and hold much in common.²⁵

In October 2009 the Synod of the Church of Pakistan called upon the Government of Pakistan to "repeal the Blasphemy Law which seems to have become a tool for ultimate abuse of any civil law and even a curse for the religious minorities."²⁶ In November 2010, Ms Asia Bibi, after a year and a half in prison, was found guilty of blasphemy and sentenced to death. After visiting Ms Bibi in Sheikhapura Jail one of our partners wrote, "Blasphemy laws smack in the face of democracy and human rights and only reinforce the notion that Christians and other religious minorities in the country are somehow inferior and less human..."

The Church has invited all who believe in equality, justice and equal opportunities to work together to eliminate discrimination and help in building bridges with the majority Muslim community to build a harmonious society. In a joint letter to the Pakistan High Commissioner urging the Government of Pakistan to release and pardon Asia Bibi, the Conveners of the World Mission and Church

and Society Councils wrote, "The Church of Scotland is concerned about the use and abuse of the Blasphemy Law in Pakistan to settle scores, exact revenge or inflame religious extremism."

It will take Pakistan years to recover from the devastating floods that hit much of the country during the 2010 monsoon. By some measures, this was a worse disaster than the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami. Fields were covered in mud and many crops, even trees, were flattened. Hundreds of houses are uninhabitable and will have to be demolished and rebuilt. Government offices and schools were wrecked and important documents and records lost, including children's school books and ministers' libraries. The Christian community reported no loss of life and were thankful for the assistance they had received from partners, including the Church of Scotland. These things make for peace.

Korea

With tensions high between North and South Korea, our partner churches and the National Council of Churches of Korea (NCCCK) have urged prayer and advocacy to promote peace on the Korean peninsula. A statement from NCCCK said "we in the South are reminded of the fragility of our nation's booming prosperity and of the starkly contradictory widespread poverty of the North." NCCCK further challenged the governments of South Korea, USA and Japan and the Christian community: "We therefore call on the ecumenical family to pray for peace in our land and to urge all governments to exercise caution, to refrain from further inflaming the political atmosphere...The fundamental interests of the people must prevail: mutual respect and peace with justice for all."²⁷ Our partner churches' consistent and persistent call for peaceful ways to resolve the conflict demands we join them in their cause.

²⁵ "A Statement by the Church of Pakistan" adopted by Synod Executive Committee, 21.10.09

²⁶ "A Statement by the Church of Pakistan" adopted by Synod Executive Committee, 21.10.09

²⁷ A Call to Prayer over the Yeonpyeong Island Incident, 26 November 2010

Nepal

Having emerged only in 2006 from a decade of civil war, Nepal continues to be designated a 'post-conflict' country. The United Nations Mission in Nepal (UNMIN) made a low-profile exit in January 2011 as the government of Nepal refused to extend its mandate. Since the 2008 elections, most political parties have failed to maintain a 'politics of consensus' to establish satisfactory power-sharing arrangements. This has effectively hindered the process of constitution-drafting and the reintegration of former Maoists, two essential aspects of the peace process. Most representatives of the major political parties are candid that the constitution may well not be in place by the May 28, 2011 deadline. This means the future of Nepal's political process remains extremely uncertain.²⁸

The United Mission to Nepal (UMN; www.umn.org.np) has been a Church of Scotland partner since its inception in 1954. One of United Mission to Nepal's four technical areas is peace building. For the majority of the Lapa people in North Dhading, there was no way to seek help or mediation in community disputes. As a result, many disputes have remained unresolved for years, and some of these have become violent. Living in remote areas, people have to travel a long way to reach formal state judicial bodies and these are often beyond the means of many.

Namaste Youth Club (NYC), one of UMN's partner organisations, organised peace building training for 14 peace groups, which UMN had helped to establish. Ramba Ghale and Gagan Gurung from the Youth Club are peace builders working with the local people to help them find ways of dealing with conflicts in their community. Their conduct and work has impressed the community and they have established high levels of trust. These things make for peace.

²⁸ Subindra Bogati, "Trouble Ahead in Nepal", Open Democracy, 17 January 2011

THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND HIV PROGRAMME

The Church of Scotland HIV Programme, which came into being on 1st January 2011, is now an integral part of the work of the World Mission Council and continues the work of the Church of Scotland HIV/AIDS Project. Its purpose is the same, to:

- break the silence on HIV/AIDS;
- stand together with partner churches;
- offer practical support;
- speak up for the voiceless;
- involve every member.

The HIV Programme continues to be involved in raising awareness, within the church and beyond, about HIV and its impact and particularly about the stigma and discrimination which so many people living with HIV still experience. It thus encourages congregations to become involved in its advocacy work.

The HIV Programme supports the work of 26 projects related to our partner churches in 15 countries, including Scotland. These projects are diverse but specific to the needs of their area and their aims include: voluntary counselling and testing, education and awareness of HIV and AIDS, training of trainers including church leaders and school teachers, physical and spiritual care and the support of orphans and vulnerable groups, and income generation activities and micro-credit for people living with HIV. These projects have been supported through the generous contributions of congregations – over £1million from 2002–2010!

The great success of Souper Sunday (now in its second year nationally) has transformed the lives of hundreds of people, in Scotland and overseas. The worship and soup combination has raised the awareness of congregations of the issues related to HIV, including the connections with food, and has encouraged their generous response in prayer and action.

The partnership with the Guild Project, 'A New Hunger' is also in its second year. This focuses on the need for

people living with HIV to have adequate food with which to take their medication. Projects supported by the HIV Programme are already benefiting from this as they are able to supplement the diets of those affected with necessary protein and reduce the number of chronically malnourished children. These things make for peace.

In the name of the Council

ANDREW R C MCLELLAN, *Convener*
 STEWART GILLAN, *Vice-Convener*
 SHIRLEY BROWN, *Vice-Convener*
 IAN W ALEXANDER, *Council Secretary*

ADDENDUM

Rev Dr Stewart Gillan, Vice-Convener

The Council records its gratitude and appreciation to the Rev Dr Stewart Gillan for the time, energy and insight

which he has generously shared with the Council in the 4 years in which he has served. An active member of the Middle East Committee, he played a prominent role in the discussions with the Anglican Diocese of Jerusalem which led to the renewal of the formal partnership between the Church of Scotland and the Diocese, and he helped identify a range of areas where shared action could be developed. Arising from this involvement, he was instrumental in creating the first twinning between Scotland and an Israeli/ Palestinian congregation, when his congregation at St Michael's, Linlithgow, linked with the Anglican congregation of Raineih, near Nazareth. He played a key role in assisting the Committee and the Council to reflect on its work in the Middle East and the wider world, with thoughtful and balanced contributions.

ANDREW R C MCLELLAN, *Convener*
 SHIRLEY BROWN, *Vice-Convener*
 IAN W ALEXANDER, *Council Secretary*

APPENDIX I MISSION PARTNERS

Staff and family members overseas between 1 January and 31 December 2010

Church of Bangladesh

| | | |
|---------------------------|-------------|--------------------------------|
| Mr David Hall | Development | Dhaka (Ecumenical appointment) |
| Mrs Sarah Hall | Education | Dhaka (Ecumenical appointment) |
| Rebecca Hall; Reuben Hall | | |

| | | |
|-----------------|------------------|----------------------------------|
| Ms Pat Jamieson | Community Health | Barisal (Ecumenical appointment) |
|-----------------|------------------|----------------------------------|

| | | |
|------------------|-------------|-----------------------------------|
| Mr James Pender | Environment | Meherpur (Ecumenical appointment) |
| Mrs Linda Pender | | |

United Mission to Nepal

| | | |
|---|------------------|------------------------------------|
| Mr Joel Githinji | Adviser HIV/AIDS | Kathmandu (Ecumenical appointment) |
| Mrs Agnes Waithiegeni Kavari; Grace Njeri Kavari; Francis Githinji Kavari | | |

Israel/Palestine

| | | |
|------------------------------------|------------------|-----------|
| Mr James Laing | Regional Manager | Jerusalem |
| Mrs Nicola-Jayne Laing; John Laing | | |

| | | |
|---|----------------------|---|
| Rev George Shand Ms Margaret Pressland | Minister | St Andrew's Scots Memorial Church, Jerusalem and St Andrew's Galilee (Jerusalem) |
| Rev Colin Johnston | Associate Minister | St. Andrew's Scots Memorial Church, Jerusalem and St. Andrew's Galilee (Tiberias). |
| Mr Antony Short Mrs Darya Short; Joelle Short; Ezra Short | Principal | Tabeeetha School, Jaffa |
| Mr James Maxwell | Chemistry Teacher | Tabeeetha School, Jaffa |
| Church of Central Africa Presbyterian, Malawi | | |
| Miss Helen Scott | Teacher | Ekwendeni Girls secondary School |
| Dr David Morton Mrs Rebecca Morton | Medical Officer | Nkhoma Hospital |
| Mr Robert Jones Pharmacist Dr Ritu Jones; Sophie Wyn Jones; Zara Siân Jones; Zoe Grace Jones | Nkhoma Hospital | |
| United Church of Zambia | | |
| Mr Keith Waddell Mrs Ida Waddell | Education Medical | Mwandi UCZ Mission Mwandi UCZ Mission |
| Mr Glen Lund Mrs Wendy Ann Lund; Julu Lund; Kathleen Lund; Taliesin Lund; Tsunami Lund | Lecturer | Kitwe UCZ Theological College |
| Ms Jenny Featherstone | Trainer | Mindolo Ecumenical Foundation (Ecumenical Appointment) |
| Bahamas | | |
| Rev Scott Kirkland Mrs Anita Kirkland; Pricilla Kirkland; Sarah Kirkland | Minister | Lucaya Presbyterian Kirk, Freeport |

APPENDIX II MISSION ASSOCIATES

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| Rev Mike and Mrs Jane Fucella | Church of Christ, Thailand |
| Mr Tony and Mrs Catherine Paton | CMS, Lao |
| Rev Donald and Mrs Judith Walker | Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa, Presbytery of Zimbabwe |

APPENDIX III DEATHS

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|---------------------------------|-------------------|
| Dr David Livingstone Wilson | 21 March 2010 |
| Mrs Morag Christine McPhail | 2 May 2010 |
| Dr Geoffrey Christopher Irvine | 5 May 2010 |
| Dr Nigel David Roderick Laidlay | 22 August 2010 |
| Dr Margaret Boyle | 26 September 2010 |
| Rev David Lyon | 28 November 2010 |
| Rev Ewing Smith | 28 December 2010 |
| Miss Helen Bee | 7 December 2010 |

APPENDIX IV FAITHSHARE VISITORS 2010

Mrs Elizabeth Ross-Bartell and Mr Kenneth Mackay, Kilmuir and Logie Easter, Invergordon, Scotland. CCAP, Ngazi School and Congregation, Synod of Livingstonia, Malawi. (8 April – 22 April 2010).

Mr Alan Hendry and Rev Richard Cameron, Scotstoun Parish Church, Scotland. CCAP, Mbame Congregation, Blantyre Synod, Malawi. (13 April – 25 April and 16 April – 6 May 2010 respectively).

Ms Faye Buchan, St Ninian's, Dunfermline, Scotland. ECCB, Orlova Congregation, Czech Republic. (29 April – 2 May 2010).

Mrs Marta Cerninakova, ECCB, Orlova Congregation, Czech Republic. St Ninian's, Dunfermline, Scotland. (30 April – 2 May 2010).

Mrs Elizabeth Harcus and Mrs Cynthia Jacobs, Westray Parish Church. CCAP, Mapanga, Maperera, Mkundi, Matapwata and Njeres Congregations, Blantyre Synod, Malawi. (6 May – 18 May 2010).

Mrs Joanna Ramsay and Mr Christopher Hoskins, COSY, Mission and Discipleship Council. South Asia Christian Youth Network, Nepal. (10 May – 22 May 2010).

Mr Shadreck Chuma and Mr Robin Monjeza, CCAP, Nkanda Congregation, Blantyre Synod, Malawi. Cairns Church, Glasgow. (12 May – 26 May 2010).

Mrs Jean Machinjili and Mr Willard Bandula, CCAP, Presbytery of Zomba, Blantyre Synod, Malawi. Presbytery of Melrose and Peebles. (14 May – 2 June 2010).

Mrs Mary Johnston, Mrs Sandra McCall, Dr David Geddes and Dr Gareth Powell, Ayr Presbytery, Scotland. CCAP, Bandawe Presbytery, Synod of Livingstonia, Malawi. (26 May – 8 June 2010).

Mr Alan Kimmitt, Ministries Council, Candidate for Ministry, Summer Placement. Zomba Theological College, Malawi. (27 May – 13 August 2010).

Ms Lindsay Turnbull, Ministries Council, Candidate for Ministry, Summer Placement. Presbytery of Jerusalem, Israel. (1 June – 24 August 2010).

Mr Robin Arnott, Dalgety Bay Parish Church, Dalgety Bay, Scotland. CCAP, Engcongolweni Congregation, Synod of Livingstonia, Malawi. (10 June – 25 June 2010).

Miss Hannah Pickles, COSY, Mission and Discipleship Council. Presbyterian Church of Taiwan, Youth Mission Centre. (28 June – 16 July 2010).

Miss Mairi Nelson and Miss Megan Yeomans, St John's Largs. CCAP, St John's Katolonji, Synod of Livingstonia, Malawi. (5 July – 16 July 2010).

Mrs Anthea Macnee and Rev Iain Macnee, New Pitsligo linked with Strichen and Tyrie, Scotland. PCEA, Mai-a-Ihii Congregation, Kenya. (7 July – 20 July 2010).

Mrs Marion Paton, Dunbog Primary School, Newburgh, Scotland. CCAP, Dorobo Primary School, Mzuzu, Synod of Livingstonia, Malawi. (7 July 2010 – 23 July 2010).

Miss Caitlin Campbell, Portobello Old, Edinburgh, Scotland. PCG, Dwerebease Congregation, Ghana. (15 July – 21 December 2010).

Ms Ann Brown and Ms Suzanne Brunton, Kemnay Congregation, Scotland. Minyara Congregation, National Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon. (18 July – 7 August 2010 and 23 July – 7 August 2010).

Miss Rebecca Patrick and Rev Geoff Redmayne, Fenwick Parish Church, Kilmarnock. St Andrews Scots Kirk, Colombo and Hikkaduwa, Sri Lanka. (26 July – 8 August 2010).

Ms Sarah Barr, Mr Ross Hutchison, Mr Joshua Smith and Mr John White, Kennoway, Windygates and Balgonie: St Kenneth's, Scotland. CCAP, Lusangazi Congregation, Synod of Livingstonia, Malawi. (28 July – 13 August 2010).

Mrs Hazel Wood and Rev Ian Manson, Church of Scotland, Geneva. CCAP, Ekwendeni Hospital Aids Project, Synod of Livingstonia, Malawi. (29 July – 12 August 2010).

Ms Bertina Weustink and Rev William McCulloch, St Andrew's Church, Rome, Italy. PCG, Osu North Presbyterian Church, Ghana. (2 August – 16 August 2010).

Mrs Linda Fleming, Mr Douglas Leitch, Mr James Meiklejohn and Mr John Singleton, Mission and Discipleship Council, Children's Assembly. CCAP, Children's Assembly, Synod of Livingstonia, Malawi. (4 August – 11 August 2010).

Mrs Jane Muwa and Rev John Mlera, CCAP, Namadzi Congregation, Blantyre Synod, Malawi. Auchtermuchty Parish Church with Edenshead and Strathmiglo, Auchtermuchty, Scotland. (6 August – 21 August 2010).

Miss Madalitso Mjikho and Mr William Chisambe, CCAP, Ekwendeni Hospital Aids Project, Synod of

Livingstonia, Malawi. Church of Scotland, Geneva. (13 August – 26 August 2010).

Mrs Sheila MacLeod and Mr Alan Crombie, Castle Street Church, Dingwall, Scotland. CCAP, Balaka Congregation, Blantyre Synod, Malawi. (17 August – 2 September 2010).

Mr Nimrod Kanampiu and Mr Loyford Leonard, PCEA, Chogoria Congregation, Kenya. South Queensferry Parish Church, Scotland. (18 August – 1 September 2010).

Miss Joanne Bolland and Mr Andrew Rooney, COSY, Mission and Discipleship Council. CCAP, Youth Assembly, Synod of Livingstonia, Malawi. (20 August – 2 September 2010).

Mrs Suniya James, Miss Sarah Lawrence and Mr Zeeshan James, Impact Pakistan, Church of Pakistan. COSY, Youth Assembly, Mission and Discipleship Council. (1 September – 8 September 2010).

Miss Kate Cooke, Portobello Old, Edinburgh, Scotland. PCG, Dwerebease Congregation, Ghana. (4 September – 21 December 2010).

Mrs Evelyn Saka and Mr James Chirwa, UCZ, Lubuto Congregation. Dunscore linked with Glencairn and Moniaive, Scotland. (6 – 27 September 2010).

Mrs Marta Cerninakova and Mr Robert Kovarik, ECCB, Orlova Congregation, Czech Republic. St Ninian's Dunfermline, Scotland. (10 – 19 September 2010).

Mr Jonas Kofi Donkor, PCG, Christ Presbyterian Church, Adentan, Ghana. St Andrew's Church of Scotland, Brussels, Belgium. (10 September – 27 September 2010).

Mrs Maureen Potter, South East Glasgow Kwenderana Group, Scotland. CCAP, Ekwendeni Congregation, Synod of Livingstonia, Malawi. (11 – 27 October 2010).

Rev Albert Bogle, St Andrew's Bo'ness, Scotland.
UPCSA, Lausanne Congress, Capetown, South Africa.
(13 – 31 October 2010).

Rev Leonard Rukenya and Rev Geoffrey Wanyoike,
PCEA, Kayole Congregation, Nairobi, Kenya. Chalmers
Ardler Church, Dundee, Scotland. (29 October –
9 November 2010).

Mr William Wishart, St Ninian's Ferguslie, Paisley,
Scotland. St Andrew's Bulawayo, UPCSA, Presbytery of
Zimbabwe. (14 November – 7 December 2010).