

Session Six: Call to Action

Objectives

- *To understand what Palestinian Christians are calling on Western Christians to do.*
- *To explore nonviolence from a variety of perspectives, both practical and theological.*
- *To understand the difference context makes in nonviolent action; that is, Palestinian resistance “with love as its logic” as compared to nonviolent actions we can take here in the United States.*
- *To brainstorm a variety of ways in which US Christians, individuals and congregations, can respond to the Call to Action.*

Preparation

- *Participants should read in advance Part 4, “Call to Action” and the conclusion, “A Time for Choices.”*
- *Facilitator should choose scripture passages, copy handouts, prepare packets of call to action resources, and gather stationary and envelopes for commitment reminders.*

Welcome (5 min)

The facilitator can choose any number of scripture readings that encourage reflection on actively loving neighbor and enemy, resisting evil, having hope, trusting in God, or the power of prayer. Some include:

Psalm 85: (1-7) 8-13

Psalm 122:6-9

Micah 6:8

Matthew 25:31-46

Romans 8:12-17

Romans 8:18-39

Romans 12

James 2:14-20

James 3:13-18

Ephesians 6:10-17

To What are We Being Called? (15 min)

- *Distribute or project onto screen the text of Section 6 of the Kairos Palestine document, “Our word to the Churches of the world.” This is “**Handout 6.1: To what are we being called?**”*
- *Have different students read each section aloud (3-4 readers).*

- *After reading, invite students to make a list of the specific “asks” that they heard the Palestinian Christians making of the Churches of the world.*
- *After creating list, discuss:*
 - Why are the Palestinian Christians asking for these specific actions from us?
 - Which have we already sought to do?
 - Which ones feel like challenges, and we may not be able to do or want to do? Why?
 - Which feel like invitations we are excited about doing?

What is “Loving Resistance” for us? (30 min)

- *Facilitator explains:*
- *Citing Matthew 5:45-47, Rom 12:17, and I Pet 3:9, the Kairos Palestine authors in Section 4 offer an extensive reflection on what they call “Loving Resistance,” or “resistance with love as its logic.” They define it as such:*
 - *“Love is seeing the face of God in every human being. Every person is my brother or my sister. However, seeing the face of God in everyone does not mean accepting evil or aggression on their part. Rather, this love seeks to correct the evil and stop the aggression.” (4.2.1)*
 - *For them, this means engaging in nonviolent resistance to the Israeli Occupation, and they see this as a Christian duty.*
- *Citing Matthew 25:31-46, the authors of the Kairos USA document also call us to nonviolent action:*
 - *“It is a call to individuals, churches, schools, human rights organizations and interfaith partners to join with all who embrace nonviolent resistance to injustice. It is a call to listen to the same Spirit that inspired the Civil Rights movement in this country and the struggle to end Apartheid in South Africa. We issue this call in the absolute conviction that God calls us to compassion—to join the struggle for justice and equality in the spirit of Matthew 25.” (Introduction, p.4)*
 - *“In this way, we stand with Kairos movements throughout the world, lifting up the ideal of nonviolent resistance to injustice in accordance with the teachings of our faith.” (Preamble, p.5)*
- *What “loving resistance” looks like for our Palestinian brothers and sisters will be different than what it looks like for US, living here in the United States. So, before we discuss what it means for us to respond to the call using nonviolence and loving resistance, let’s look at what “nonviolence” is.*
- *Distribute “Handout 6.2: Passages on Nonviolence.” Have small groups or partners read them together and try to identify the “key insight” about nonviolence the passage suggests.*
- *In large group, have groups report back one key insight about nonviolence from their passage. List on board.*

- *Discussion:*
 - Is there anything new or surprising you found in these passages?
 - Is there anything that particularly resonates with you or inspires you?
- Now, look at Exodus 1:15-21. (Shiphrah and Puah, the Hebrew Midwives). Read passage aloud.
 - In what ways are we like the midwives?
 - How are we different?
 - What other insights can we gain from reflecting on this passage?

Break (10 min)

What are we called to do in our context? (35 min)

- *Read aloud this passage from Kairos USA, page 11:*
 - “The favorable time is now—and the churches are called. It is clear that the political process has failed to bring about the changes that will result in a just and lasting peace in Israel and Palestine. We know that when politics fail to bring about the necessary changes in our laws, political systems and policies at home and abroad, social movements arise from the grassroots to inform and drive the process of change. We believe firmly that the churches are capable of leading the movement to bring peace to Israel and Palestine. The churches have done this before. We recall the pastors and theologians of the German Confessing Church who opposed Nazism with the publication of the Barmen Declaration of 1934. We lift up the courageous actions of religious leaders who transformed our own society in fundamental ways during the Civil Rights movement. The support of the global church for the South African Christians who stood against Apartheid was critical in bringing about the end of that racist system. Throughout modern history, the churches have called the faithful to respond to the cry of the poor, the dispossessed and the oppressed. Today, we summon our fellow U.S. Christians to heed this present call to action, in activities that include education, worship, political advocacy and nonviolent direct action on individual, local and denominational levels.”
- *Divide participants up into 7 groups, one for each of the specific topics listed in the Call to Action. Distribute to each group a packet that contains the text from the document (Handout 6.3: Call to Action Small Group”) as well as supporting materials that demonstrate possibilities for further work. A list of up-to-date resources are on the KUSA website, and some examples are included as “Handout 6.4: Call to Action Small Group Packet Sample”. Where applicable, resolutions or statements from that congregation’s denomination or church leaders related to these topics should be included. The groups will review resources as well as brainstorm their own, and discuss the questions on the worksheet.*

- *Have small groups report back in large group, listing their ideas on the board or flip-chart.*
- *Stepping back and reviewing the list, the facilitator can now suggest the following:*
- *Facilitator can use “Handout 6.5: Luke 10:27” as a visual if desired.*
- *What if we grouped them as follows:*
 - Heart—visits and partnerships
 - Soul—worship and prayer
 - Strength—BDS, political advocacy
 - Mind—education, doing theology
- *Read Luke 10:25-28, passage on loving God with all our heart, mind, soul and strength*
- *How could these actions be embodied as gestures of our love for God? (or, how can these actions be done to the Glory of God?)*

Making our Commitments (5 min)

- *Give each person a note card and ask him/her to write down one thing he/she will commit to doing in the next month.*
- *Give them envelopes to self-address and ask them to place cards in the envelope and place in basket on the way out. Explain that these will be sent to them as a reminder in 4 weeks.*

Final Thoughts on Hope (5 min)

- *Read Kairos Palestine statement on hope:*
 - “Hope within us means first and foremost our faith in God and secondly our expectation, despite everything, for a better future. Thirdly, it means not chasing after illusions – we realize that release is not close at hand. Hope is the capacity to see God in the midst of trouble, and to be co-workers with the Holy Spirit who is dwelling in us.”
- *Read from scripture:*
 - Romans 8:35-39
- *In the midst of their context, Palestinian Christians can find hope through their faith in God, and they cite Romans 8 as their inspiration.*
- *What will be our inspiration to do what we are called to do?*

Close in prayer (5 min)

Evaluation Sheets (10 min)

*Please have participants fill out evaluation sheets (“**Handout 6.6**”) and turn them in when they are finished. You might provide a large envelope for them to insert them in rather than handing them to you directly. We also encourage you to fill out your own evaluation as a facilitator (“**Handout 6.7**”). The board members of Kairos USA would be grateful to receive copies of these*

evaluations, so that we can continue to improve this curriculum, and develop others from the future.

Total time = 110 min