

A Liturgy of Public Resistance: The Wall Will Fall

By Rev. Diane Dulin

Note: This liturgy was one of the resources provided for the 2015 World Week for Peace in Palestine and Israel, organized by the Palestine Israel Ecumenical Forum (PIEF) of the World Council of Churches. The theme for the week was “God has broken down the dividing walls.”

These are the words of the Christian community of Palestine, proclaimed in *Kairos Palestine* (2009) and heard by those of us gathered today.

The separation wall erected on Palestinian territory [is our reality. ...] [The Wall] has turned our towns and villages into prisons, separating them from one another, making them dispersed and divided cantons. Gaza, especially ... continues to live in inhuman conditions, under permanent blockade and cut off from other Palestinian territories. (*Kairos Palestine* 1.1.1)

Israeli settlements ravage our land in the name of God and in the name of force, controlling our natural resources, including water and agricultural land ... (*Kairos Palestine* 1.1.2)

Reality is the daily humiliation to which we are subjected at the military checkpoints, as we make our way to jobs, schools or hospitals. (*Kairos Palestine* 1.1.3)

Reality is the separation between members of the same family, making family life impossible for thousands of Palestinians, especially where one of the spouses does not have an Israeli identity card. (*Kairos Palestine* 1.1.4)

Religious liberty is severely restricted; the freedom of access to the holy places is denied under the pretext of security... (*Kairos Palestine* 1.1.5)

In response to evil, the Christian community of Palestine has spoken boldly. We who gather today affirm:

We say that our option as Christians in the face of the Israeli occupation is to resist. 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 for it must find human ways that engage the humanity of the enemy. Seeing the image of God in the face of the enemy means taking up positions in the light of this vision of active resistance ... (*Kairos Palestine* 4.2.3)

We hear our sisters and brothers in Palestine when they speak to us and say:

This is a time for repentance. Repentance brings us back into the communion of love with everyone who suffers, the prisoners, the wounded, those afflicted with temporary or permanent handicaps, the children who cannot live their childhood and each one who mourns a dear one. The communion of love says to every believer in spirit and in truth: if my brother is a prisoner I am a prisoner; if his home is destroyed, my home is destroyed; when my brother is killed, then I, too, am killed... (Kairos Palestine 5.2)

And finally, we are addressed in love when the Christian community of Palestine says a word to the Churches of the world:

Our word to the Churches of the world is firstly a word of gratitude for the solidarity you have shown toward us in word, deed and presence among us.... It is a message of solidarity with those Christians and Churches who have suffered because of their advocacy for law and justice ... We ask our sister churches not to offer a theological cover-up for the injustice we suffer, for the sin of the occupation imposed upon us....

Our question to our brothers and sisters in the Churches today is: 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)

[A PERIOD OF SILENCE]

A Prayer for Palestine ... for a new life beyond Walls of Domination and Separation

In this gathering we seek your Spirit, O God. We experience the presence of others here today and give you thanks for the solidarity of our witness. Even more, we give you thanks for the steadfast faith and loving resistance proclaimed by Kairos Palestine. We see this faith and resistance embodied by daily sacrifice and commitment in the land of our Savior's birth. Equip us for bold new witness. Allow our efforts to emerge from the distorted shadow of walls to the bright light of public recognition. Give us urgent determination to resist boldly the violent wall of separation, deprivation and theft that sears the holy land of our faith. Grant us new spiritual and theological depth to rediscover the loving, freeing word of scripture: "for Christ is our peace, who has made us both one, and has broken down the dividing wall of hostility..." (Ephesians 2:14)

Let the people say, "Amen."

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