



kaĩros íreland

*that justice and peace
might embrace* (Psalm 85:10)

*a call to íreland from
palestinian christians*

'Promised Land': an actual place or a divine metaphor?

Exploring the theology that underpins the Israel-Palestine conflict

Kairos Ireland theology workshop

Friday 13th September 10am - 2pm - Wesley House, Leeson Park D6, Dublin

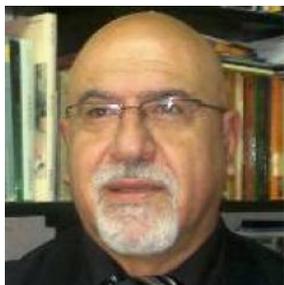
Palestinian Christians are offended by the way the Old Testament has been used politically to support a Zionist narrative - that God has given the Jewish people a divine right to biblical Israel because of the covenant that He made with Abraham and his descendants. Many religious Jews who have emigrated to Israel have claimed this privilege in their hearts and on the land: in the words of an American Jew who has returned to live in Jerusalem: "The God who creates the world can decide to give this land to the Jewish People." Many Reformation Christians have supported this theological narrative since the 16th century and continue to affirm the special right of the Jewish people to historic Palestine. This narrative has also been embraced by politicians, who have used religious arguments to make way for the Jewish homeland project and legitimise the confiscation of Palestinian land.

Today, having suffered from a dispossession process underway since 1947, Palestinian Christians have begun to see the political misuse of the Bible as the Faith Nakba [Rev Naim Ateek]. When they read the New Testament, they see the teachings of Jesus, Peter and Paul providing another perspective that rejects the notion that God chooses one people to worship Him on one particular mountain.

- What does the Old Testament actually say about the Promised Land and for whom?
- Are God's promises to ancient Israel unconditional and never ending?
- How does God have a special plan for the Jewish people different from His plan for other peoples who have kept the same covenant?
- How do New Testament teachings relate to Zionist understandings of entitlement?
- What has been the impact of the Christian Zionist narrative locally among Palestinians?

These are the kind of theological questions we will be exploring with a specially invited panel of speakers. They have thought about these questions for some time in the light of the systematic land dispossession. They will also address issues such as the Battle of Narratives and how the Kairos movement within the churches has responded to the challenge. Active dialogue will follow between the panel and participants.

THE PANEL OF SPEAKERS



Rifat Odeh Kassis is founding member and coordinator of Kairos Palestine. He was born in Beit Sahour, Bethlehem. He has long been active in the Palestinian struggle through various professional and voluntary positions to secure international human rights. In 1988 he worked with the East Jerusalem YMCA and in 1991 founded the Palestinian section of the Geneva-based global child rights' movement, Defence for Children International (DCI). In 2005, he became the International Coordinator of the Ecumenical Accompaniment Program in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI) and was Special Advisor on the Middle East in the World Council of Churches. In 1994, together with four others, he co-founded the Alternative

Tourism Group (ATG) with the aim to influence the pilgrimages to the Holy Land and to introduce Palestine from within. He is an author of two books, one of them "Kairos For Palestine" and has contributed in 16 others.



Mark Braverman is a Jewish American with deep family roots in the Holy Land. He grew up immersed in the Zionist narrative and ignorant of the cost to Palestinians. Witnessing the ongoing Nakba and meeting the Palestinian Christians in 2006, he returned to the U.S. to help found Kairos USA and now serves as Executive Director. Mark has worked with Catholic and Protestant churches in America, the UK and Europe on their policies and actions on Israel and Palestine. He served on the World Council of Church's Palestine Israel Ecumenical Forum and currently serves on the Theology Working Group of Global Kairos for Justice. Mark is a Research Fellow in Public Theology at Stellenbosch University (South Africa). He is

the author of two books - *Fatal Embrace: Christians, Jews, and the Search for Peace in the Holy Land* and *A Wall in Jerusalem: Hope, Healing, and the Struggle for Justice in Israel and Palestine*. His writings can be found at www.markbraverman.org.



Rev Brian Brown is a Methodist minister and came to England as a refugee from apartheid South Africa in 1978 following the regime's imposition of a banning order. He initially worked in the Denby Dale circuit, near Huddersfield. He then became Africa Secretary for the British Council of Churches for all of the 1980s before taking up a teaching position at Kingsmead College in Birmingham which prepared people for working overseas. This was followed by a lengthy period in the Methodist World Church Office in London with responsibility for African affairs. He acted as a consultant to Kairos South Africa when they produced their document, that subsequently became a model for Kairos Palestine. He is now retired but not given up interest in world affairs and how the apartheid mindset

affects the Holy Land.

Let us know if you would like to attend by emailing kairosireland@gmail.com
Organised by Rev John Parkin and Geoffrey Corry