

His Beatitude Patriarch Michel Sabbah, Latin Patriarchate –
Jerusalem Archbishop Swerios Malki Mourad,
Syrian Orthodox Patriarchate –
Jerusalem Bishop Riah Abu El-Assal, Episcopal Church of Jerusalem –
Middle East Bishop Munib Younan, Evangelical Lutheran Church in
Jordan and the Holy Land

The Jerusalem Declaration on Christian Zionism

In 2006 the leaders of four of the Churches in Jerusalem signed a statement condemning Christian Zionism. One of the signatories was the then Anglican Bishop in Jerusalem. It is based on an earlier statement issued at the end of the 2004 Sabeel conference on Christian Zionism, referred to above.

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‘Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called the children of God.’ (Matthew 5.9) Christian Zionism is a modern theological and political movement that embraces the most extreme 24 ideological positions of Zionism, thereby becoming detrimental to a just peace within Palestine and Israel. The Christian Zionist programme provides a worldview where the Gospel is identified with the ideology of empire, colonialism and militarism. In its extreme form, it places an emphasis on apocalyptic events leading to the end of history rather than living Christ's love and justice today. We categorically reject Christian Zionist doctrines as false teaching that corrupts the biblical message of love, justice and reconciliation. We further reject the contemporary alliance of Christian Zionist leaders and organizations with elements in the governments of Israel and the United States that are presently imposing their unilateral pre-emptive borders and domination over Palestine. This inevitably leads to unending cycles of violence that undermine the security of all peoples of the Middle East and the rest of the world. We reject the teachings of Christian Zionism that facilitate and support these policies as they advance racial exclusivity and perpetual war rather than the gospel of universal love, redemption and reconciliation taught by Jesus Christ. Rather than condemn the world to the doom of Armageddon we call upon everyone to liberate themselves from the ideologies of militarism and occupation. Instead, let them pursue the healing of the nations! We call upon Christians in Churches on every continent to pray for the Palestinian and Israeli people, both of whom are suffering as victims of occupation and militarism. These discriminative actions are turning Palestine into impoverished ghettos surrounded by exclusive Israeli settlements. The establishment of the illegal settlements and the construction of the Separation Wall on confiscated Palestinian land undermines the viability of a Palestinian state as well as peace and security in the entire region. We call upon all Churches that remain silent, to break their silence and speak for reconciliation with justice in the Holy Land. Therefore, we commit ourselves to the following principles as an alternative way: We affirm that all people are created in the image of God. In turn they are called to honour the dignity of every human being and to respect their inalienable rights. We affirm that Israelis and Palestinians are capable of living together within peace, justice and security. We affirm that Palestinians

are one people, both Muslim and Christian. We reject all attempts to subvert and fragment their unity. We call upon all people to reject the narrow world view of Christian Zionism and other ideologies that privilege one people at the expense of others. We are committed to non-violent resistance as the most effective means to end the illegal occupation in order to attain a just and lasting peace. With urgency we warn that Christian Zionism and its alliances are justifying colonization, apartheid and empire-building. 25 God demands that justice be done. No enduring peace, security or reconciliation is possible without the foundation of justice. The demands of justice will not disappear. The struggle for justice must be pursued diligently and persistently but non-violently. 'What does the Lord require of you, to act justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God.' (Micah 6.8) This is where we take our stand. We stand for justice. We can do no other. Justice alone guarantees a peace that will lead to reconciliation with a life of security and prosperity for all the peoples of our Land. By standing on the side of justice, we open ourselves to the work of peace - and working for peace makes us children of God. 'God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.' (2 Cor 5.19) August 22, 2006

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