



Jerusalem Special Autumn 1995

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The Mosaic of Jerusalem

by Naim Ateek

There is something unique about Jerusalem. It can bring out the best and worst in people. It attracts some and repels others. One can love it or hate it. It is a tense place politically and religiously. It exacts one's emotions and drives people apart. Many are ready to go to war in order to defend or conquer it. Those who look for a serene and quiet life must live away from it. Yet they find themselves drawn back by it. It is difficult to stay away from it.

Jerusalem has been conquered and occupied many times throughout its long history since the time of the Canaanites. Its inhabitants have been crushed, humiliated, deported and exiled. The city itself has been destroyed and rebuilt a number of times. Many conquerors attempted to change its unique mosaic and special characteristics with initial apparent success only to find themselves the losers and failures. Out of the rubble Jerusalem has always emerged again defying any exclusive claims. Most of those who treated Jerusalem as their own possession have themselves been dispossessed of it. They end up victims outside its walls. Jerusalem has, indeed, seen it all. Its soil is mixed with the blood of friends and foes. Unfortunately, the people who possess it today have not learned the lessons of history.

Today as yesterday, Jerusalem has a captivating charm about it. Its charm lies in its religious character rather than in its political sphere. Those who love it should realize that the only way to keep it is by allowing it to be free and to be shared by all. To exclusively possess it is a sure way to lose it and to contribute to its destruction. With all of its

tensions and problems, Jerusalem potentially still carries within it the seed of peace that can bring healing and prosperity to all of its inhabitants today.

Jerusalem's attraction has always gone beyond its local inhabitants. To the pilgrim, Jerusalem is a dream come true. Pilgrims want to walk its streets and be in touch with its past. They want to pray in its churches, mosques and synagogues and feel a spiritual renewal. For millions of tourists Jerusalem is a must if only for its long historical significance and contemporary conflict. As for its Palestinian and Israeli inhabitants, Jerusalem is their home to which they adamantly cling. They need to find in it a decent life of freedom and dignity based on justice and security for all. Finally, for politicians Jerusalem is an enigma and a nightmare. It is a place where political intrigues take place and where decisions and strategies are created that either further negate the Palestinians or that lay the ground and open the way for a peaceful settlement.

The Palestinian and Israeli Jewish sides are equally capable of strongly justifying their exclusive claim over Jerusalem. For example, on the one hand, Jews claim that only they made Jerusalem the capital of their kingdom, therefore, it is more rightfully theirs than the Muslims. The Muslims, on the other hand, say that they intentionally did not make Jerusalem at any time their political capital in order to safeguard its sanctity. In their view, to make it a political center is a smack against its holiness.

Similar claims and counterclaims are the ailments of today in the struggle over Jerusalem. We are plagued by a sick mentality that strains itself in order to find an historical, political, or theological argument that outwits the other. Is it longevity of tenure that counts, or naked military power that conquers and rules, or is it that spiritual significance of Jerusalem which many times eludes us! Those who pursue this line of thought are with us continuously. They contribute to the malaise that never heals. Will we ever, as Palestinians and Israelis, see Jerusalem as our equally shared home! Will we ever reach the level of the human that sees the other as a brother and a sister! Will we ever achieve that biblical injunction, "Love your neighbor as yourself"!

Sabeel is holding a conference in Jerusalem on "***The Significance of Jerusalem for Christians and of Christians for Jerusalem***" on January 22-27, 1996. Have we too, as Christians, fallen in the same trap of exclusive claims by organizing a conference ***for Christians***? Are we embracing the very thing that offends us? It is absolutely mandatory to point out that our intention is very far from any exclusive claim. As a Christian community, we acknowledge the equal right of Muslims, Jews, and Christians to the city of Jerusalem. We stand for a whole-hearted inclusivity. At the same time, we struggle against any marginalization or peripherization of the Christian Community or any other community.

The mosaic of Jerusalem can only be complete with its Muslim, Jewish, and Christian components. Those who tamper with this fine balance of the mosaic are playing with fire and will ultimately contribute to their own detriment and exclusion. The sooner people and governments acknowledge this important fact about Jerusalem, the closer we will be to reaching a just peace. The tragedy of the Government of Israel and the Jerusalem Municipality today is their adamant exclusive claim on Jerusalem and their relentless drive to Judaize it. The celebrations to mark 3000 years of Jerusalem as the Capital for Jews is a betrayal of what Jerusalem is, a negation of its history, and smells of racism and arrogance that in no way lends itself to peace.

The same thing applies when some Muslim extremists talk about Jerusalem as an exclusively Islamic city. Any exclusive claim is doomed. It is past and backward looking rather than future and forward looking. We must do away and refrain from the use of any exclusive vocabulary. It is basically racist and discriminatory. What makes Jerusalem unique and whole is the marked contribution of all three religious communities. This must be safeguarded.

As to the Christians, we have in Jerusalem today a vibrant Community with an historic presence of 2000 years, a Community that is historically composed of many races and bloods, that has over the years created the Christian mosaic of Jerusalem, and has contributed to its ongoing life. Some were originally Arab, others became Arabized and Palestinianized, but all continue today to bear a witness to their faith in Christ who was crucified, died, buried, and resurrected in Jerusalem. This Christian community refuses to promote an exclusive claim. It willingly accepts the movement of history and does not deny or negate it. It acknowledges that the One God whom we love and worship has placed the Jew, the Muslim, and the Christian here in Jerusalem whether or not this suits our theology or ideology.

The city of Jerusalem, therefore, calls us today to see it as a mother that cares about all her children or as a hen that gathers her brood under its wings. Instead of wanting Jerusalem to belong exclusively to us, we should recognize that we all belong to Jerusalem. Instead of working to possess Jerusalem, we should be possessed by the love of justice and peace for all of Jerusalem's children today regardless of their ethnic or religious background.

This conference also hopes to present a Christian theological perspective, that will counterbalance the approach of largely western evangelicals, who give the State of Israel unconditional support, based upon a literal interpretation of the Bible. Most of these Christian Zionists have not taken seriously God's impartial demand for justice. Their love for Israel has prevented them from seeing the oppression of the Palestinians and the human rights violations they have suffered. Their ears are not attuned to the agonizing cry of a loving God, who is concerned about a just peace in the Middle East, and who is calling us to be instruments of that peace.

Indeed, this conference aims at educating Christians about their own Christian heritage. It will remind both easterners and westerners that the Christian faith which started in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost, draws us together in solidarity, and empowers us to renew our energies in the work of justice. It will, hopefully, clarify our vision that the best way to view Jerusalem is that of a city that belongs to God before it belongs to any one government or nation and that God demands justice as the basis for its peace. This conference will, therefore, help Christians, both Palestinians and internationals, lift a prophetic voice and make a contribution, however modest, for the creation of a just peace for all the people of Jerusalem and Israel/Palestine.

*Canon Naim Ateek, Director of Sabeel, is canon of St. George's Episcopal Cathedral in Jerusalem and pastor to the Palestinian congregation. He is author of **Justice and Only Justice: A Palestinian Theology of Liberation** (1989).*

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Jerusalem 6000

by John Worrell

The area now called Jerusalem has hosted human residence for at least six thousand years. Two thirds of that time it has been known to outsiders by a recognizable form of the modern name. Archaeological and textual evidence indicate that it has probably always been a remarkably open, inter-ethnic city. For only a little more than 1% of those six millennia did it serve as the recognized capital of a unified nation called Israel spanning the area between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea.

Now one of the largest public-relations campaigns in human history is being mounted, bearing a title, "Jerusalem 3000", a strategy which seem to pretend that the 1% covers the entire last half of the long cultural chronicle, and that this is actually all that matters. Relieving Jerusalem's history of this political and propaganda burden, however, reveals a deeply human and richly textured narrative of civilization in which all of its residents and admirers may justly share pride.

Earliest archaeological remains so far unearthed here date to the very beginning of what is loosely called the "Canaanite" or Early bronze Age, about 4000 BC. For the next three millennia the town functioned as one of several which straddled the spine of hills separating the agricultural and trade-route areas along the seaboard and the Jordan Valley. Although it was not one of the most prominent of those Canaanite cities, its name does appear in Egyptian and Mesopotamian texts from about 2000 onward. The "saalem" in the name, carried a connotation of "peace" or "wholeness" similar to that in both Arabic and Hebrew today. Some scholars believe that may have indicated a religious and political posture of peaceful neutrality in relationships with the various changing alignments of surrounding city-states.

When David forged a new union of the various groups throughout the land into a single political state, Jerusalem's

reputation for neutrality may have been a major factor in his decision not to subdue it but to make it the new capital. This seems to have worked well during his reign and that of his son, Solomon, who expanded the territory even further. However it only lasted for about eight decades. The union collapsed [thus the national-capital period of something a little over 1% on our human-occupation timeline]. The majority of the people then split off and realigned themselves with the traditionally stronger northern center of Shechem (Nablus), soon building a new capital nearby at Samaria (Sabastiya). Thereafter, Jerusalem functioned principally as the religious and political center for the more sparsely populated area from approximately southward of present-day Ramallah.

Subsequent invasions by empires out of Mesopotamia devastated both the north and eventually the south, Jerusalem finally falling a quarter of the way into the 6th century BC. It had served as a primarily independent capital of the small southern (Judaean) kingdom for approximately three and one-half centuries [a little less than 6% of our inhabitation timeline]. Archaeology and the texts (Biblical and political documents throughout the region) demonstrate that although leaders were sometimes exiled, Jerusalem and other cities and villages throughout the land were not depopulated nor simply replaced with outsiders. The majority of the population appears to have remained, tending the fields, flocks and shops. Jerusalem has been under limited Jewish control for three brief periods thereafter: under the Hasmoneans for about a century (2nd-1st centuries BC); for three years during the Bar Kochba revolt in the 1st century AD; and now, since 1948 and 1967, west and east respectively.

Jerusalem has been occupied by ancient Egyptians, Assyrians, Babylonians, Persians, Greeks, Romans, Byzantines, Crusaders, Turks, and assorted other outsiders. But from the early Canaanite periods through the latest Islamic ones, archaeology describes transitions of cultures and peoples that are far more gradual than drastic. The standard picture of serial invasions replacing one culture with another is not only far too simplistic - it is basically wrong. The history of this land and its people has been, instead, primarily a rich tale of cultural development. Regardless of how peaceful or belligerent a new group may have been, we find each successive way learning from and interacting with those already here: Canaanites, Philistines, and Israelites; Semites, Greeks and Romans; Jews, Christians and Muslims - to name only some of the most familiar categories.

As far back as the written and material evidences can carry us, people calling this city home have been born and died, worked and played, cooperated and fought, worshipped together and separately. But repeatedly throughout less enlightened periods of history, they have also seen their lands confiscated, homes destroyed, and family members deported. Such actions are not particularly new. What is different now is the declaration by one group to the world at large that this is a unique instance in which modern universal rights and laws do not apply. The claim is that a single brief ancient period of occupation provides one party with exclusive rights to ignore both the living residents of the present and 6000 years of the past.

John Worrell, an American archaeologist, has lived and worked in Jerusalem for the past three years.

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Post June 1967 Annexation and Colonization of East Jerusalem

by Ibrahim Matar

The June 1967 War brought the eastern part of Jerusalem including the walled Old City under Israeli occupation. Shortly thereafter, the Jewish State began a series of measures intended not only to maintain Jewish control of the city and its Palestinian population, but also to change its demographic character. This was accomplished by moving Jews to the occupied part of Jerusalem and building exclusively Jewish residential fortress colonies on confiscated private Palestinian property. What follows is a brief account of the measures and policies adopted by Israeli governments in Occupied East Jerusalem since June of 1967.

In **June 1967**, Israel formally annexed East Jerusalem by imposing the law, jurisdiction and administration of the State of Israel on its Palestinian residents. The Jewish State then proceeded to redraw the municipal boundaries of East Jerusalem by expanding its boundaries to three times its size in 1967. In January 1968, it began seizing private property from both the Christian and Moslem Palestinians of Jerusalem and to build on such lands exclusive Jewish residential settlements. Since 1967, 6,500 acres of the most expensive private real estate have been confiscated from Palestinians in the annexed areas of East Jerusalem. This seizure of private property was executed under the pretext of "public purpose." In this case, "public" means the exclusively Jewish public and "purpose" means private residential settlements solely for Jews.

Most of the Palestinian property in East Jerusalem was seized in the early 1970's and 1980's, however, confiscations have continued into the 1990's and up to the present.

In **January and April 1968**, immediately after the occupation 1,200 acres in the heart of East Jerusalem were confiscated from Palestinians for constructing the first Jewish residential colonies in the Holy City. These colonies include French Hill, Ramat Eshkol, and their extensions located on the property of Palestinian owners from the Sheikh Jarrah quarter. In addition, an industrial park was established in Kalandia on the northwest borders of Jerusalem, on the property of Palestinian owners from Kalandia and Rafat.

In **August 1970**, an additional 3,100 acres of privately owned Palestinian property were seized. On this land, four large fortress colonies were built. They include Ramot in the west, on the property of Palestinian owners from the villages of Beit-Iksa and Beit-Hanina; Gilo in the south, on the property of owners from Bethlehem, Beit-Jala, Beit-Safafa and Sharafat; East Talpiot, in the east on the property of owners from Sur-Baher; and Neve Ya'acov in the north, on the property of owners from Beit-Hanina.

In **March 1980**, an additional 1,100 acres were seized for the construction of the Jewish colony called Pasgat Ze'ev in the northeast on the property of Palestinian owners from Beit-Hanina and Hizma. This colony is presently expanding rapidly as more apartments are currently being built in order to expand the number of Jewish settlers from 30,000 to 50,000 by the end of 1995.

In **April 1991**, an additional 470 acres were seized from Palestinian owners from Beit-Sahour and Sur-Baher in the south of Jerusalem for the planned settlement of Har Homa. 9,000 apartments were approved for construction by the Rabin government in May 1995.

In **April 1992**, an additional 500 acres were seized for construction of another new Jewish residential settlement called Ramat Shu'fat on the property of owners from the Palestinian village of Shu'fat. This settlement is presently under construction and approximately 2,100 apartments are expected to be completed by the end of 1995, adding another estimated 15,000 Jewish settlers in East Jerusalem.

May 1995, an additional 150 acres of private property belonging to Palestinian owners from Beit-Hanina and Beit-Safafa were confiscated for expansion of Ramot and Gilo settlements.

With the completion of Ramat Shu'fat, the Palestinian population of East Jerusalem will be encircled and flanked from north, south, east and west by these Jewish fortress settlements. The only direction that remains free for the Palestinians of Jerusalem is the sky above them. The 155,000 Palestinians of Jerusalem will also be outnumbered as the number of Jewish settlers reached 160,000 in 1994, and is estimated to reach 180,000 by the end of 1995. In May 1995, the Rabin government approved the construction of an additional 9,000 apartments in the new settlement of Har Homa on land expropriated in 1991, and 7,000 apartments in the existing settlements of Pisgat Ze'ev and Ramot, on land expropriated by the Rabin government in April 1995. This will mean that if Rabin has his way in defiance of peace, his decision in 1995, will add another 80,000 illegal Jewish settlers in annexed Occupied Jerusalem. This would expand the number of Jewish settlers in Occupied Jerusalem to over 260,000 by the end of the century.

In addition to surrounding the Palestinians of East Jerusalem with the above-mentioned fortress colonies, the Israelis since 1967, have enlarged the Jewish quarter inside the walled Old City of Jerusalem. This flagrant act was achieved by destroying over 135 homes in the old Moroccan quarter next to the Wailing Wall, confiscating 30 acres of Palestinian property, and evicting another 5,000 Palestinians from the Moslem quarter. As a result, the Jewish quarter

of the Old City is today three times its original size in 1948.

To complete the Judaization of East Jerusalem, the Israeli government has also moved to Occupied Jerusalem, the Ministries of Housing and Agriculture, the headquarters of the Israeli police, the headquarters of the Israeli Army Central Command and the civil courts. The sum total of this process of Judaization leads one to conclude that the Jewish State from day one of their occupation of East Jerusalem had no intention of ever withdrawing from the Holy City.

In brief, the Israeli government has succeeded in Judaizing Palestinian East Jerusalem by creating a majority of Jewish settlers there. This has been done in violation of international law, by theft of private property, and by a racist policy of building exclusively for Jews. No person in the world, regardless of his/her religion, can be proud of such a policy nor of such an outcome.

The Palestinian indigenous population, both Christians and Moslems have paid a heavy price for this Judaization process. They have not only been dispossessed from their property, displaced and replaced by Jews, but also impoverished. It is estimated that the market value of their seized property exceeds 1 billion dollars.

Despite these conditions the 155,000 Palestinians of Jerusalem are determined to continue their struggle to liberate themselves from Jewish discrimination, exploitation and control. They are determined to defend and protect their property rights, and their right to self-determination and freedom.

Ibrahim Matar, a Palestinian economist from Jerusalem, works in development in Gaza and the West Bank.

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Post 1967 Israeli Settlements in East Jerusalem and Vicinity

First Wave 1968 - 1200 acres seized



- B.** Mount Scopus (Hadassah Hospital and Hebrew University expanded from pre-1967 enclave)
- C.** Jewish Moghrabi Quarters (expanded to four times 1948 size; 2,300 Jewish settlers in 1994)
- D.** Attarot Industrial Park (400 acre tract for Israeli industries)
- E.** French Hill, Ramat Eshkol, Ma'aleh Difna, Mt. Scopus (first Israeli housing colonies in East Jerusalem; 20,300 settlers)

Second Wave 1970 - 3100 acres seized

- A.** Neve Yaacov (19,300 settlers in 1994)
- F.** Ramot (most developed of existing colonies, with a population of 37,900 in 1994)
- G.** East Talpiot (built on private Palestinian land and in former UN zone; 18,000 settlers in 1994) **H.** Gilo (30,200 settlers in 1994)

Third Wave in 1980 - 1100 acres seized

- I.** Pisgat Ze'ev (30,900 Jewish colonizers in 1994, construction expanding to increase settlers to 50,000 by end of 1995)

Fourth Wave in 1991 - 470 acres seized

- X.** 9000 apartments approved in April 1995 for Har-Homa. a new Jewish settlement.

Fifth Wave in 1992 - 500 acres seized

- J.** Ramat Shu'fat (2,100 units to be completed by the end of 1995; 15,000 Jewish settlers expected)

Sixth Wave 1995 - 150 acres seized

- Plans to add 7,000 units to the existing settlements of Pisgat Ze'ev and Ramot.

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The 'Closure' of Jerusalem

The Current Reality

The Israeli government set up "temporary checkpoints" on 30 March 1993, forbidding Palestinians from Gaza and the West Bank to enter Jerusalem or Israel. Through this policy of "sealing off the territories", Israel continues to restrict access to Jerusalem and Israel, and between Gaza and the West Bank. Palestinians must obtain permits from the Israeli military government to work in Jerusalem or Israel, to visit relatives, to travel through Jerusalem, to reach medical facilities, to attend school or university, and to visit Jerusalem's holy sites.

In order to apply for a permit, applicants must take a form filled out in Hebrew to the nearest Military Governor's office, which can be up to 20 miles away. There, they have to queue outside, waiting for their turn to be admitted, which can take hours or even the whole day. Those not seen by 4pm must return the following day. The officer considers the applications in batches, and his decision is final, even though he may not have spoken to or even seen the applicant.

Since the Beit Lid bombing in January 1995, all Palestinians are required to have permits. Immediately prior to this, women were permitted free entry along with children under the age of 16 and men over the age of 55. Following every extremist action, all permits are canceled, and during some Israeli and Jewish holidays all are forbidden entry. This year, Christians from Bethlehem and the rest of the West Bank, including those with permits, were unable to join their Christian brothers and sisters from all over the world for the Easter celebrations in Jerusalem, as this coincided with the total closure during the Jewish Passover.

Details from the CCINGO (Co-ordinating Committee of International NGO's) statement, "The Closure of Jerusalem," released 14 March 1995.

Legal aspects of the closure by Jonathan Kuttab

When Israel occupied the West Bank in 1967 it proceeded to announce immediately to the world that it will allow free access to the holy places in Jerusalem. However, shortly after the occupation began, Israel unilaterally annexed East Jerusalem and a number of villages surrounding it into Israel and applied Israeli law and administration to them. It then proceeded to regulate the movement of people from the West Bank (as well as Gaza) into East Jerusalem.

During recent years and since the Gulf War, Israel intensified its campaign to Judaize Jerusalem and took a number of steps to restrict the Arab institutions in East Jerusalem. This was particularly harsh because East Jerusalem has always been the heart of the Palestinian area, containing not only the religious but also the economic, cultural, medical, institutional, and communications services of most of the West Bank.

Under the pretext of security regulations that prohibited movement of Palestinian workers into Israel, access to East Jerusalem itself was also severely restricted and often totally denied. While the security argument may have had some rationale with respect to Israel itself, (which, after all, is a sovereign country that can deny access to its own area), that argument has no validity with respect to East Jerusalem and the holy places within it, which are, by international consensus, part of the Occupied Territories. Even the Declaration of Principles signed by Israel and the PLO acknowledges the "territorial integrity of the Occupied Territories as a single unit" and undertakes not to do anything to jeopardize that integrity during the Interim Period. The present restrictions on access to holy places in Jerusalem are therefore the result of a combination of two separate but inter-related violations of international law:

The first is the illegal and unilateral annexation of East Jerusalem into Israel, which has been roundly denounced by all the countries of the world including the United States as illegal; and secondly because it violates the specific undertakings and obligations of the State of Israel to maintain freedom of access to the holy places.

It is curious in this respect that Israel does in fact provide free access to Jerusalem and to the holy places for tourists from all over the world and that the only ones to whom the restrictions in fact apply are the Palestinian inhabitants of the land. It is the Christians from Bethlehem and Beit Sahour living a few kilometers from the heart of the city who are denied, and it is the Moslems of the West Bank, some of whom live within sight of the Dome of the Rock who need permits to come into Jerusalem to worship.

Jonathan Kuttab is a Palestinian human rights lawyer and a member of Sabeel's committee. He is co-founder of the human rights organization Al-Haq and the Mandela Institute for Political Prisoners.

So Near, Yet So Far Away by Cedar Duaybis

For Palestinians, the mutilation of their country is by now a common experience, but maybe none more painful than the cutting off of Jerusalem, the heart and lungs of what remains of Palestine. "This cannot be permanent," was how they consoled themselves every time. "This can only be temporary."

"Please explain to him that my customers live on either side of the barrier," the woman pleaded. "I have been selling them laban [home-made yogurt] for twenty years now. They depend on me." "Go back," shouted the soldier, almost toppling her jar of laban as he pushed her aside. "Perhaps they will not be here tomorrow," sighed the woman as she sadly walked away.

A lot has been written about the importance of Jerusalem to West Bank Palestinians from the economic, medical, educational and business side. The closure has disrupted people's lives in every way and isolated Jerusalem from the rest of the West Bank. But what is most painful is to hear those people who do not have a "good enough" reason to deserve a permit to visit Jerusalem. So they wait ... "for surely this is only a temporary thing."

"Get out!" the soldier shouted as he roughly pulled one of them by the sleeve of her beautifully embroidered Palestinian dress. "Get out, both of you - go back and get permits." "A permit for what?" she spoke as if to herself as she got out of the taxi, the tears running down her cheeks. "I only want to visit ... my eyes yearn to see Jerusalem."

A visit to Jerusalem was a refreshing event for people whose choice of places in which to spend spare time, is unbelievably limited. Jerusalem provided an outlet that fulfilled and compensated. Some longed just to stroll along its ancient alleyways and savour its unique flavor, its smells, its sounds and its colorful displays. But what is most poignant is the spiritual deprivation that the closure has caused for Christians and Muslims alike. Taking part in the different religious events and celebrations in Jerusalem is a spiritual experience without which people feel reduced to lesser humans. It is like a little death.

"I made a vow and I need to go to the Holy Sepulchre to fulfill it," my friend said. "Perhaps I need to make another vow for the sake of lifting the closure," she added. "After all, this can only be temporary."

Cedar Duaybis, a Sabeel committee member, and member of the National Council of the YWCA in Palestine, is concerned with women's issues in church and society.

Scenes from the Bethlehem checkpoint

Every day, dozens of people are detained at the Bethlehem checkpoint for lack of a permit from the Israeli military authorities. The following are two accounts of people who were denied permits and therefore forced to risk detainment, a \$150 fine, and possible imprisonment in order to obtain necessary medical treatment in Jerusalem.

****Sabriya**, a 73 year old woman, deaf and disabled, sat in her wheelchair at the checkpoint beside the other detainees, unsure of all that was happening around her. Sabir her son, explained that their identity cards had been confiscated and they were to be fined. The soldiers had detained them as they were returning from a physiotherapy appointment at Maqassed Hospital on the Mount of Olives. While waiting to to be fined, Sabir commented, "This ticket is illegal, international laws and standards ... [should] condemn these scandalous procedures which are used daily with the knowledge of the world." Later that day Sabir had to travel to the Israeli Civil Administration in Hebron near their home to pay the fine and reclaim their IDs - a procedure of at least several days.

****A Bethlehem bus** stopped at the checkpoint and two soldiers boarded to check the passengers' permits. The ID of a blind man in his sixties was confiscated because he had been in Jerusalem without a permit. He was helped off the bus

by a woman who proceeded to plead with the soldiers on his behalf. The soldier then began yelling at the woman to move the blind man to allow a military jeep to pass. The woman, Azizi, said angrily, "Give me the ID ... where can a disabled man get money for you." Days earlier he had gone to the Civil Administration to ask for a permit, but was informed that the officer in charge was not available to approve permits at that time. He had no choice but to go to the hospital for the scheduled appointment and risk paying the \$150 fine.

These scenes are repeated at the six checkpoints which surround Jerusalem and the eighteen which separate Gaza and the West Bank from Israel. One detainee, Hanan, wished that "the lenses of the world, which stood in front of the signing of the peace accord, [would] stop and watch what Israel does against the Palestinian people, in spite of this peace."

These accounts originally appeared in 'Al-Quds', an Arabic daily newspaper published in Jerusalem.

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The Significance of Jerusalem

Highlights and Excerpts from Statements on the Future of Jerusalem

On November 14, 1994, the heads of the Christian communities in Jerusalem issue a declaration entitled, "The Significance of Jerusalem for Christians." Since that time Church leaders worldwide have reflected upon the meaning of this holy city and its future. Included here are excerpts from these statements.

Latin Patriarch Michael Sabbah Easter 1995

The Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem wants broad Christian support for the memorandum, which was featured in the previous issue of Cornerstone, on the status of Jerusalem written last November by the heads of the Christian communities in Jerusalem. They called for an acknowledgment of the universal importance of Jerusalem for Christians, Muslims, and Jews, and requested international guarantees for free access by members of the three faith groups to the city's holy places.

In an interview with J. Martin Bailey of the Middle East Council of Churches, His Beatitude Michel Sabbah "spoke of his daily prayer that members of the three faiths would each be equally respected, and that each would equally respect the others ... He referred to three religions and two peoples: "Jerusalem belongs to all of us. All five groups [Palestinians and Israelis; Christians, Muslims and Jews] should feel themselves at home in Jerusalem and responsible for its welfare."

In Patriarch Sabbah's Easter Message 1995, entitled 'The Celebrations and the Sufferings,' he highlighted the need for reconciliation in Jerusalem, and an equal sharing for all its children: Christians, Jews and Muslims. He spoke of the forthcoming celebrations for the third millennium of King David and the bimillennium of the birth of Jesus Christ.

"The bimillennium of Jesus Christ has a universal and spiritual significance. Jesus Christ was not born in Bethlehem only for Christians. He is the Eternal Word of God (cf Jn 1:1) who came for the salvation of all humanity. He is the 'Prince of Peace' (Is 9:5), and the prince of justice: 'righteousness and peace will kiss each other' (Ps 85:10).

"David was a King and Prophet. As such he is venerated by Jews, Christians and Moslems, and brings us all closer to reconciliation. If, on the contrary, celebrations are held to reaffirm the strength of one people over the other, or to emphasise the exclusive appropriation of Jerusalem by one people at the expense of another, then they will bring more disputes between the inhabitants of the holy city, centre of the celebrations, instead of bringing them nearer to reconciliation.

"... Normally these celebrations should bring healing to those who suffer; they should put an end to conflicts and the injustices which are still present. Israelis, both in Jerusalem and from outside, are calling for security. Palestinians, in and around Jerusalem, do not cease [to] claim their freedom and dignity. The inhabitants of the Occupied Territories are still forbidden to enter Jerusalem. They too speak out to lift all barriers and to have free access to Jerusalem....

"One cannot organise celebrations in the holy city and forget all those sufferings and injustices. The first celebration should be to put an end to these sufferings and injustices. The first celebration should be the opening of Jerusalem to all its children, Israelis and Palestinians. Jubilee celebrations should bring security and freedom to all the children of Jerusalem without discrimination. In the Jubilee Year, says the Lord, 'you shall ... proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants' (Lev. 25:10).

"Celebrating David, King and Prophet, and Jesus Christ, the Eternal Word of God in Jerusalem means proclaiming the message of Jerusalem to all humanity, but first, and above all, to its own children, Christians, Moslems and Jews.

"In any celebration the political leaders should take this into consideration. No solution, no security can be reached, without first achieving reconciliation in Jerusalem. This must be based on equal sharing for all its children. And, with respect to the Palestinian children, it cannot be achieved without solving the problem of the closure of Jerusalem.

"... Our message ... to the two peoples in and around Jerusalem, Palestinians and Israelis, is a message of hope. Freedom for the Palestinians is possible and security for the Israelis is possible. But both are intimately linked. The Risen Christ has given power to us all, to enable us to be reconciled with one another.

"... To our Jewish fellow citizens, we offer our best wishes. We wish for them the liberation symbolised and announced by [the feast of Passover]. And we wish to see, as part of this liberation, the freedom of the people with which they live.

"... We ask all the Churches... to add to their hymns of rejoicing an ardent prayer for all the inhabitants of Jerusalem and the land of the Resurrection. Pray for the Christians, the Jews, and the Moslems, so that God may grant us the grace of reconciliation."

United States Church Leaders Statement on Jerusalem: City of Peace March 1995

"The story of Jerusalem is a tragic one, and in the web of history members of three faiths are not innocent of one another's blood. Today, however, we stand at a special point in history where the future of Jerusalem is open to peaceful negotiation. The three communities of faith must have apart in those deliberations."

"...Developments on the ground in the Jerusalem area leave less and less for negotiation in the last phase of the peace process. In contravention of international law, more and more land is being taken out of Palestinian hands and placed under Israeli control by annexation, expropriation, and private purchases, often coercive or of questionable legality...."

"A resolution of the question of Jerusalem has the potential for advancing cooperation between Muslims, Jews and Christians. The future of Jerusalem must not be preempted by the actions of any one party. Only a negotiated agreement that respects the human and political rights of Palestinians and Israelis as well as the three religious communities can lead to a lasting peace. The goal of a 'warm peace' between Israel and its Arab neighbors can only be achieved in the context of a shared city where the interests of all parties are respected."

The World Council of Churches Press Release May 1995

Concerning the "Role of the Christian Community: The delegation believes that the Christian witness around the world to those things which make for true peace in this particular region continues to be essential. The Christian community in Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza is unique in the historical role it has played in keeping lines of communication open between all communities. This must continue and obviously, requires a continuing Christian presence in Jerusalem and the region."

The Presbyterian Church (USA) July 1995

In the 207th General Assembly of the PC(USA), a statement on the Status of Jerusalem urged the President and the U.S. Congress to "renew efforts to make U.S. aid to Israel conditional upon the cessation of the appropriation of Palestinian land in and around Jerusalem and the establishment of new settlements in the occupied territories, especially those that are a part of the ongoing efforts to create a 'Greater Jerusalem'..."

Additionally, the PC(USA) urged the Israeli government "to lift the military closures of Jerusalem that deny Christians, Muslims and others access to their places of worship, employment, health care, education, and other basic services."

Churches for Middle East Peace September 1995

"We urge...that the U.S. Congress suppress its inclination to encumber financial aid to the Palestinians and to influence or dictate matters subject to negotiation, such as the future status of Jerusalem. ...We are particularly concerned that during this interim period Israeli settlement activity, especially around Jerusalem, will preempt legitimate negotiations."

The U.S. Catholic Conference September 1995

"Treaties can establish peace only where there is a firm will on both sides to see that commitments are honored. The upcoming interim period demands a readiness on the part of all parties to make good on promises even in the face of potential difficulties."

"...Palestinian development depends more than anything on interchange with Israel. In an improved, cooperative security context, it is reasonable that Palestinians be granted improved access to Israel and particularly to Jerusalem. This is important not only for business but for specialized medical treatment, education and job training opportunities as well as for religious purposes."

"We pledge our support to both parties as they attempt to impement this interim accord 'in a new era of cooperation and co-existence based on common interest, dignity and mutual respect.' We pray that the God of peace will bless this undertaking"

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Ten Measures of Beauty (Ten Measures of Sorrow)

A Song by Garth Hewitt

Ten measures of beauty God gave to the world,
Nine to Jerusalem, one to the rest-
Ten measures of sorrow God gave to the world,
Nine to Jerusalem, one to the rest-
So, pray for the peace - pray for the peace;
Pray for the peace of Jerusalem.
Pray for the peace - pray for the peace;
Pray for the peace of Jerusalem.

You can greet your friends with the word "Shalom,"
Or you can greet them with "Salaam,"
But peace itself will never come
Till there's justice for everyone.
And there can be no peace for the Jew
Till there's peace for the Palestinian, too.
There can be no peace for the Jew
Till there's peace for the Palestinian, too.
So pray for the peace. . .

May the justice of God fall down like fire,
And bring a home for the Palestinian.
May the mercy of God pour down like rain,
And protect the Jewish people.
And may the beautiful eyes of a holy God,
Who weeps for all His children,
Bring the healing hope for his wounded ones
For the Jew and the Palestinian.
So pray for the peace. . .

Garth Hewitt is a singer-songwriter from England who is concerned with justice in God's world.

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Snapshots of Our Activities

While most of our efforts have been geared towards the preparations for the upcoming conference in January, the following on-going programs have been successfully conducted.

Youth Work

To celebrate the start of 1995 while still in the festive mood of Christmas celebrations, about 60 young participants met for one day in Jericho, the winter oasis accessible to participants from the Ramallah and Bethlehem areas, without the difficult burden of obtaining permits! This was a follow-up program for the young people who had taken part in the summer camps in Ramallah (1993) and Bethlehem (1994). The program included a climb up to the Mount of Temptation for meditation and reflection, a session on the meaning of Christmas, and recreational activities.

In August the same participants were invited to a two day workshop to discuss the role of Christians in society. Another field trip was organized to religious sites in Latroun, Jaffa and Lod; the highlight of the day was an afternoon at an amusement park! As laughter and shouts filled the air, the continuous struggle to obtain permits was quickly forgotten. It was worth the trouble!!

Leadership Training

A three-day leadership course for camp leaders was organized in June in cooperation with Young Life Ministries. Fourteen committed leaders took part in it.

Speakers Bureau

Increasing requests by Christian visitors and pilgrims have kept our team of speakers quite busy. We have spoken to hundreds of people this year alone. Most of the visitors come from USA, Europe and as far away as Australia!

Clergy Breakfast Meetings

Sabeel has started a new first in its creative programs! Parish priests from the various churches meet once a month over breakfast to share common concerns and discuss possible means of rapprochement, as well as, if possible, solutions to the existing problems.

Religious Education

A committee of Christian and Muslim educators have started discussing the possibility of teaching religion in such a way, that religious education would be an uniting factor among the different peoples in our area. Workshops to discuss topics such as religion and ethics, and religion as a way of life, have begun.

Nazareth Branch

The Nazareth Branch of *Sabeel* is pursuing its bi-monthly lectures and helping in the plans for the upcoming conference in the Galilee area.

WCC General Secretary and *Sabeel*

Among the many distinguished visitors who have met with the *Sabeel* committee this year is the World Council of Churches (WCC) delegation which traveled to Jerusalem in May. The General Secretary of WCC, Konrad Raiser, issued a statement following their visit, commenting that, "for a legitimate peace process to continue, it is essential that the Palestinian people, who are unequal partners, be supported and encouraged not to give up hope for peace."

