



Arab American University- Jenin

Faculty of Graduate Studies

**Palestinian Liberation theology position towards Israel's
occupation of Palestinian territories: Kairos Palestine as a
Model.**

By

Manawel Mario Salameh

Supervisor

Dr. Amjad Fouad Abdelaziz Bane Shamsa

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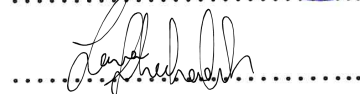
This thesis was defended successfully on 13/10/2022 and approved by:

Committee members

1. Supervisor: **Dr. Amjad Bani Shamsa**
2. Internal Examiner: **Dr. Lana Shehadeh**
3. External Examiner: **Dr. Rev. Munther Isaac**

Signature


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Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis represents my own work which has been done after registration for the degree of Quality Management at Arab American University Jenin and has not been previously included in a thesis or dissertation submitted to this or any other institution for a degree, diploma or other qualifications. Furthermore, I took reasonable care to ensure that the work is original, and, to the best of my knowledge, does not breach copyright law, and has not been taken from other sources except where such work has been cited and acknowledged within the text.

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Dedication

To my daughter Pilistia....my pleasure, and my companion from the moment of her birth until today, who has changed the priorities of life with her presence.

To my father.... my role model in life; He taught me how to live with dignity and pride.

To my loving mother... I cannot find words that can give her, her due, as she is the epic of love and the joy of life, and an example of dedication and giving.

To my wife.... the highest symbols of sincerity, loyalty, and my companion on every path.

To my brother and sister.... they are my support and share my joys and sorrows.

To the family, friends, and all those who contributed to standing by me during my study period.

Here, I make special mention and dedicate this letter of mine to the soul of the teacher, Professor Abd al-Sattar Qassem my first supervisor, who passed away during the period I was preparing the thesis.

Abstract

This research, entitled "Palestinian Liberation theology position towards Israel's occupation of Palestinian territories: Kairos Palestine as a Model", aims to highlight the identity of Palestinian Christians, and their role during Palestine's contemporary history, especially during the period of the Israeli occupation. The research sheds light on Palestinian Christians in general, but a particular emphasis is placed on Christian religious leaders and ways to confront Zionist myths through Palestinian Christian theology resistant to Zionist theology espoused by some Zionist Christian churches that justify murder, violence and occupation with biblical doctrines.

The research reviews the political role of Christian churches, which culminated in the issuance of the Cairo Palestine Document, which was considered a turning point in the Palestinian Christian position, especially in the clergy and churches., against the Israeli occupation and its policy, as well as its contribution to redefining Palestinian Christian identity in conjunction with religious identity.

Kairos Palestine worked towards building a political position about the occupation from the context of Palestinian Christian theology and towards ending injustice, achieving justice and ending the occupation through its adoption of non-violent resistance.

The researcher used the descriptive and analytical methodology based on definitions and theories of political and international thinkers to apply to Palestinian Christian identity and on a comparison between the world's local theological models and their reflection on the Palestinian situation and their application to the Palestinian Kairos as one of their models. An analysis and reading of the Kairos Palestine Initiative is included in this thesis as well 13 years after its

publication locally and internationally and interviews with its organizers in order to represent its achievements and impact were conducted.

The methodology was used to answer the key questions of the research; how successful is Kairos Palestine as a theological model in the Palestinian context in defending and strengthening Palestinian Christian identity using global liberal Christian discourse? And how much can Palestinians rely on this reference to demonstrate their right to live in peace in their occupied land?

The study was presented in four chapters. In the first chapter, the Palestinian reality and the Christian Palestinian reality were presented as well as the reasons for the selection of this research topic, its importance and the objectives. In the second chapter, the Palestinian reality and the Palestinian Christians' conflict and preservation of their identity as "individuals" or "churches" were identified. The theology of liberation and its origin in Latin America and methodology were studied in chapter III. The focus was on the local theology, focusing on its dimensions and what distinguishes this theology and the role of the clergy and the secular believers against the myths and the narratives on which the Zionist movement (to occupy land) and Zionist Christians (to support the occupation) rely. In chapter IV, the previous two chapters were linked through the application of the methodology and the theology to Palestinian clerics belonging to different churches who worked as a team for the publication of the document "Kairos Palestine" which acts as the most important ecumenical act in the world, the impact of their initiative on the Israeli occupation and the future of this initiative at the domestic and international levels.

The study found a number of results, the most important of which were:

As a result of the Israeli occupation on Palestine, a Palestinian liberation theology arose that demanded an end to the Israeli occupation and the achievement of justice and freedom for the

Palestinian people, it distinguishes from the Liberation Theology of Latin America and South that Palestinian theology provided a theological interpretation of the Bible with a Palestinian context and vision. Palestinian Christian theology and its stance towards the occupation culminated in the issuance of the Kairos Palestine Document, in which Palestinian Christians demanded an end to the Israeli occupation and the adoption of non-violent resistance. Despite the doctrinal differences between the Christian sects and churches in Palestine, the document contributed to achieving a Palestinian ecclesiastical consensus to be one of the largest ecumenical actions in the world, it also unified the Christian political discourse towards the occupation, and accordingly the international community (Christians in particular) was addressed with its various ideas and beliefs.

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Introduction

Palestine is a holy land for the three monotheistic religions (Judaism, Christianity and Islam), throughout the history of this land, the Palestinians have faced a number of crises, wars, and occupation, the last is the Israeli occupation, which occupied the land using two arguments: the first is Political - The Balfour Declaration in 1917, which gave the Zionism the right to occupy the land without taking into consideration the people's desire to self-determination and liberate their land to build their state. The second is religious; by using the biblical texts for the Jewish religion, that mention the “Promised Land”, with the support of the Zionist churches.

The Palestinian-Israeli conflict after establishing the state of Israel in 1948 is a political-civilizational conflict far from a religious one. It led to the displacement of the original inhabitants and the change of its civilizational and cultural features, affecting the Palestinian identity in the occupied territories, including the Christian and Islamic identity of the Palestinian people.

The religious argument still dominates, through the desecration of sanctities, the declaration of the state's Jewishness, the religious discrimination between Palestinian citizens and other various Zionist attempts to drag the region into this type of conflict.

In all this, an authentic Christian community with its ancient history on this land is rooted in Palestine despite its small number, and the context in which it lives. It is one of the first Christian communities in the world, because of its origin in the country of Christ. This community represents intensely Palestinian Christians, who have not wavered in their role in defending their national identity and seeking a better future. The Christian Palestinians in various fields, such as their active participation in local and international theological and political forums, as well as their construction of educational and health institutions that serve all Palestinians, and their promotion

of the national religious sense of the Palestinian, portray the suffering of their people as the suffering of Christ from the oppression of the Roman Empire. Simultaneously, they help to spread hope for everyone, that suffers from the occupation in the image of the glorious resurrection. The Christians are still present and active in this land. Their presence has been proven by the roles they have played throughout the ages, and despite the apparent numerical decline of Palestinian Christians, their role in modern history remains important in shaping Palestinian national identity.

During the important periods that have passed through the Palestinian districts, we find that the Palestinian Christians do not move away from any kind of resistance, where every time they prove their belonging to the homeland by resisting and spreading the scandals of the occupation and its violations of human rights and international laws. They refuse to support the Zionist churches that try to legitimize the occupation in Palestine. To resist the Zionist myths and the theology that supports this racist state, Palestinian Christians are building a local and national theology stemming from the Palestinian national context, which became a type of resistance against the Israeli occupation, as this Christian theology stems from Palestinian eyes that reflect the real suffering experienced by the local churches and the Palestinian people.

The Zionist churches are building their theology with the aim of strengthening and justifying the crimes of the occupation in the Promised Land, while Palestinian theology works to absolve God and the Bible from these evil deeds. Through this, we recognize that the Palestinian Christian theology combines politics as well, so that God's will is clarified on the political level for the salvation of the human being.

To clarify more, theology is a sign of what is divine, not only faith, but a way of explaining this faith to human beings according to the circumstances and environment of each believer based on, the premise that relativism is the one absolute in this world, while faith is itself according to

the determinants of each religion or ideology, but theology is pluralistic. "The theologian who studies God's process in time and space, and studies human behaviour at the same time and place to see how it corresponds to God's saving purpose,"¹ that is, the combination of God and human behaviour in spacetime and the approach between them.

In the Palestinian context and throughout the history of the Palestinian case, many ecclesiastical positions and speeches were issued to address the world for solidarity and to take a clear and explicit position on the Palestinian situation, the last of which was in 2009, where a position was issued by the leaders of Christian churches and clergy as a message to the international community, which was under the name of "Kairos Palestine", i.e. the stand for the right of Palestine, which demanded that the world intervene to stop the suffering of Palestinian people living under occupation under injustice, displacement and racial discrimination since the Nakba of 1948. This is what the document alerted to by issuing a cry of faith, hope, and love for all churches and Christians in the world to work for a just peace, asking them to reconsider any theology that justifies crimes, cold-blooded murder and land theft against Palestinians. Similar to South Africa in 1985 and Latin America in 1970, using faith and theology to resist Zionist theology. Authorities are centred on the act of resistance and liberation, proceeding from the narrative that Palestinian Jesus is still crucified and that nails are still hammering into the body of freedom and the horizon of liberation, and that free theology must be heard.

¹ Sedhom, Fr. William: "**Liberation theology in Latin America**" But Almashreq. Beirut 1993 p.11

Previous Studies

Many studies and books have been written to explain this new theology but the most important thing, is to know who this Idea started with.

The fathers of ‘Liberation theology’, according to a study, which became the first part of a book about ‘Liberation theology’ as William Sedhom wrote: the ‘Liberation theology’ was illuminated from the Vatican Council II, that council centralized its ideas on the humanity and human dignity, especially in one of his books “Gaudium et Spes”, where the fathers of the council emphasized on the equality between all the human beings because they are created on the image and likeness of God, they must not be economic inequality (The Idea of Liberation theology in Latin America), social inequality (The Idea of Liberation Theology in Africa) or even political (as it is in Palestine); by this spiritual idea the ‘Liberation Theology’ started in Latin America, and according to this idea the Medellin conference started in Colombia, the second conference where the archbishops of Latin America met, in 1968, and it was the starting point of this new theology.²

This new theology has its reflection on the Palestinian situation. We find that many studies were written about it. One of it is “The Palestinian Liberation Theology. Seeking Social Justice Through a De-Zionization of the Holy Scriptures” wrote by Elisa Farinacci. In her paper she was focusing on the Palestinian Liberation Theology, and its development. This theology as a consequence to the establishment of the sovereign state of Israel. In particular, the paper examines the ecumenical efforts set by Sabeel, a liberation theology movement established in 1990 near Jerusalem. Sabeel addresses both, the question of promoting an inclusive non-Zionist interpretation of the scriptures, and using the Bible as a tool for justice, peace, and nonviolence. Her paper discussed the agency of this Christian movement, which operates both at an individual

² Sedhom, Fr. William: “**Liberation theology in Latin America**” Dar Almashreq. Beirut 1993

level by offering a fresh interpretation of the Bible and its message to the believers, as well as at a community level by establishing a modality of behaviour for the Arab Christian communities in the context of the Arab Israeli conflict. The paper suggested the creation of a Palestinian Liberation Theology, that represents a creative religious action enacted by a Christian minority in order to address the theological and social challenges raised by the establishment of a sovereign state which uses the Hebrew Bible, shared in part both by the Christians and the Jews, to legitimize its presence and expansion.³

The outcome of the Christian local theology in Palestine was the “Kairos Palestine” document. One of the studies by Inas Altawil was about it: “Kairos Palestine with the splendour of suffering in Palestine”.

It is directed by Christian religious theologians and secular Christian figures with high credibility that address religious and political leaders, Palestinian society, Israeli society, the international community, and all the churches of the world, to tell them that it shouldn't give theological cover to the injustice that the Palestinians live in, or as described by Kairos Palestine “for the sin of the occupation imposed on us”.

This document proceeds with its words to all the Churches of the world, stating that it is not permissible to convert the Word of God into rigid characters that destroy the love and care of God in the lives of peoples and individuals.

Kairos Palestine also condemns all forms of racial and religious racism, including anti-Semitism and Islamophobia. And tell the world to not be timid from telling the truth and act in regard to the Israeli Occupation. The main goals of ‘Kairos Palestine’ should be stated:

³ Farinacci, Elisa “**The Palestinian Liberation Theology. Seeking Social Justice Through a De-Zionization of the Holy Scriptures**” IAFOR 2014

First, to exposes the distortion of the occupation of Christian theological texts, which it exploits to kill, expel, displace and deprive the Palestinians of their holy sites and lands.

Secondly, to encourage the world with all its churches to boycott the Israeli occupation and to impose sanctions on Israel until this despicable racist occupation regime falls and to give the Palestinian Muslims and Christians the right to return their historic land, Palestine, with its eternal capital Jerusalem, which is the most holy place in the world.⁴

Through these examples of the studies, we find that a new approach for resistance started in Palestine, and we can find the power of words, through a contextual theology that aims to liberate the suffering of the world.

But what distinguishes this thesis is that it will be the result of several previous readings and actions that were taken, and it will be a reflection on the questions that were directed to the writer during their previous activities, in addition to that it will be a realistic study on the life that the Palestinians live daily, as the researcher of this thesis identifies with the culture and life of Palestine, and with the church and the Christian religion.

Importance of this research

This research will be discussing the following hypothesis:

- a- The research will present a new method of usage to the Bible and the Catechism ascending from the bottom to the top in the different contexts, based on a similar method by Edward Said: colonial knowledge theory that measures the influence of colonialism on the lower classes, not on the superstructure.
- b- It will highlight some Christian leaders in the Palestinian resistance history, and will place them in the historical narrative of the resistant act as the main actors in it.

⁴ Altawil. Inas: **"KAIROS PALESTINE"** 2010

- c- It will apply the Christian Palestinian Theology, that confirms that Palestine is under occupation and it's the last occupied country in the world, and from it the ray of Christianity spread to the whole world as well, which makes the geography of double importance.
- d- It will study Kairos Palestine (A moment of Truth), as an example of local and contextual theology by studying the process, the Palestinian Churches leaders use to resist the occupation, and liberate Palestine from the occupation and strengthen the national identity of Palestinian Christians, by explaining the lack of criticism between the two identities.

The Hypothesis of this research will be analysed based on genuine research within the limits of the researchers' modest information.

Reason and Justification of Choosing this Research Question

This study was not accidentally chosen, it is based on:

- 1- Previous readings in the philosophical and ecclesiastical ceremony and its role in the societies in which the colonial aspect is most prominent:
 - A- The church and its role in societies.
 - B- The church and the politics, the ongoing dialectical relationship between the two concepts.
 - 2- Research that was done for the "Theology Fundamental" course about "Liberation Theology".
 - 3- Previous readings during the BA studies in Political Science about:
 - a- The Palestinian case.
 - b- Christian leaders in the Palestinian parties.
-

- 4- A Seminar that was visited about the “Christian-Muslim tension from the Ottoman rule during World War I”.
- 5- The participation in many conferences with Kairos Palestine.
- 6- The representation of Kairos Palestine in the USA and Norway.
- 7- The interest in Phenomenon of the emigration of Christians from Palestine with the reason that they don’t have any relation in the conflict.
- 8- Personal experiences that questioned the existence of Palestinian Christians and their relationship with the Occupation.

Research Objectives

This research aims to:

- 1- Highlight the identity of the Palestinian Christians, at a time when the East takes on a religious character, it treats them as a minority daily.
- 2- Compare the models of Local theologies in the world and their reflection on the Palestinian case and apply it on Kairos Palestine as one the models.
- 3- Highlight the dimension of the faith on the Christian youth and its reflection on the political society, and the relationship between religious and political identities.
- 4- Present Kairos Palestine's achievements after 13 years of its publication, at the local and international level.

Research Methodology

As a methodology for this research, descriptive and analytical methods will be explored in hopes of analyzing studies and theories that already exists and reach new results and answers to the research question. Documents and references on the 'Palestinian Theology' and 'Kairos

Palestine' will be reviewed. In addition, 8 interviews will be conducted with several Kairos Palestine leaders and national leaders, to enrich the study and achieve its goals.

Research Problem

- 1- The Palestinian – Israeli conflict is colonial and political in its nature, but the Israelis try to change the reality by using the religion and turn the conflict into a religious one, based on the Torah as it is the Promised Land.
- 2- The Christian Zionism and their support to establish the state of Israel.
- 3- The immigration of the Christians from Palestine.
- 4- The absence of Christian voice as collective not individual, and the absence of constructive structures for collective Christian discourse.
- 5- The religious intolerance in the Arab countries and the scallop of the Christians around the churches give the church an old/new role in guiding the youth in conjunction with the recent changes.

Research Theory

Palestinian Christian Identity was affected by the Zionist movement through 74 years of the Israeli occupation of Palestine, and after years of struggle and resistance, the time has come to devote all the individual efforts of the Palestinian theologians by issuing a document called Kairos Palestine (A moment of truth) to reconnect and re-identify the Palestinian Christians to their national identity and simultaneously their religious identity, by clarifying the role of the occupation in changing the nature of the conflict to a religious one and the effects of the occupation on the Palestinians, judging this occupation through Palestinian Christian theological eyes, and working to end the injustice by establishing a non-violent resistance method.

Research Questions

The main question is “Did Kairos Palestine as a model of theology in the Palestinian context succeed to defend and strengthen the Palestinian Christian identity by using the global liberal Christian discourse? How the Local and contextual theology and Kairos Palestine play a role to enhance the national identity of the Christian Palestinian?”

The following sub-questions surfaced in the process to achieve the objectives of this research:

1. What is the ‘Liberation Theology’?
 2. Is there a Palestinian Local theology? What is the mechanism? which local theology has been refined?
 3. What was the role of the Palestinian Christian in the history of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict?
 4. What role does Kairos Palestine play in the Palestinian situation?
 5. How did Kairos Palestine face the myth, that supports the statement, that the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict is a religious conflict?
 6. How can Kairos Palestine position itself in the global liberal Christian discourse, in the face of the perpetual religious colonial discourse of Israel and the occupying powers, by benefiting from the liberation theology, historical narratives, and the Christian holy place of Palestinian geography?
-

Time and Place Framework

- 1- The time framework for this research is from 2009 till 2018 (since the founding of Kairos Palestine), and that doesn't mean not to return to before this date when necessary.
- 2- The Place framework is the Palestinian territories, taking some models from the national and international churches, and the ecclesiastical attitudes towards this document.

Concepts

There are some concepts that will be used in this research, and they need to be defined, but here are some definitions from the dictionary that clarify the title of the research, like:

- 1- Liberation Theology: it's a religious movement, especially among Roman Catholic clergy in Latin America that combines political philosophy usually of a Marxist orientation with a theology of salvation as liberation from injustice.
 - 2- Kairos: it's a time when conditions are right for the accomplishment of a crucial action: the opportune and decisive moment.
 - 3- Kairos Palestine: it's a Christian Palestinian movement, born out of the Kairos Document, which advocates for ending the Israeli occupation and achieving a just solution to the conflict.
 - 4- Contextual Theology: also known as "enculturation," which means to refer to the way the church in every age tends to adapt its teachings to the culture in which it finds itself.
 - 5- Christian Zionism: The Christian support for the Zionist cause, meaning by that the return of the Jewish people to their biblical homeland in Israel. It is a belief among some Christians that the return of Jews to Israel is in line with a biblical prophecy and is necessary for Jesus to return to Earth as its king.
-

Contents

Section I: Thesis Proposal

Section II: National Identity

Section III: The Palestinian Church and the Occupation

Frist topic: The role of the Christian Palestinian (individual, Churches) in the Conflict.

Section IV: The Christian Palestinian Theology

First topic: What is Liberation theology and how it works?

Second topic: Models of Liberation theology (Latin America, Africa)

Second topic: Local and contextual theology or Liberation theology.

Section IV: Kairos Palestine document as a model

Frist topic: What is Kairos Palestine?

Second topic: The impact of Kairos Palestine on the Israeli occupation.

Third topic: Outlook, what is the future of Kairos Palestine?

Section V: Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusion

Sources & References

Annexes

Section I: National Identity

What is a national Identity? How is it developed and why it is important to review the national identity theory and definition when talking about Palestinian Christian? In this section of the research, we will answer these questions by defining the national identity, connecting the national identity with the Palestinian case, focusing on the Palestinian Christian identity?

National Identity Theory

According to Bezonelos et. al. “National Identity is how we see ourselves as members of a nation of people. This can range from a relatively narrow ethnic identity to a broader civic identity that encompasses many ethnic and religious groups. It can be inclusive or exclusive and not all people will define it the same way, even within the same country. National identity also informs nationalist separatist movements as well as policies about citizenship.”⁵ And other defines it as a “person's identity or sense of belonging to one or more states or to one or more nations”⁶⁷ National Identity refers to the feeling that could be shared with a group of people, and it is the point of view that make a group able to distinguish the differences from another group in other words between “We” and “They”. Furthermore, national identity is not the only identity that a person could feel, as it is common to have multiple identities.

⁵[https://socialsci.libretexts.org/Bookshelves/Political_Science_and_Civics/Introduction_to_Comparative_Government_and_Politics_\(Bozonelos_et_al.\)/07%3A_Political_Identity-Nationalism_Religion_Class/7.07%3A_Student_Resources](https://socialsci.libretexts.org/Bookshelves/Political_Science_and_Civics/Introduction_to_Comparative_Government_and_Politics_(Bozonelos_et_al.)/07%3A_Political_Identity-Nationalism_Religion_Class/7.07%3A_Student_Resources)

⁶ A nation is a community of people formed on the basis of a combination of shared features such as language, history, ethnicity, culture and/or society. A nation is thus the collective identity of a group of people understood as defined by those features. Some nations are equated with ethnic groups and some are equated with affiliation to a social and political constitution. Eller, Jack David (1997). "Ethnicity, Culture, and "The Past"". Michigan Quarterly Review. 36

⁷ Ashmore, Richard D.; Jussim, Lee; Wilder, David, eds. (2001). Social Identity, Intergroup Conflict, and Conflict Reduction. Oxford University Press. pp. 74–75.

The impact of these identities on politics is frequently studied independently by researchers, and several subfields of political science reflect this trend. Examples include the relationship between politics and gender, politics and race, ethnicity, or religion. Political scientists are particularly interested in learning about these groups' experiences because they have typically been excluded from the conversation in the field. The field has gradually grown to recognize how identities can interact with one another in ways that have various political effects. This is known as intersectionality, where the connections between different identities and categories can result in the privilege or marginalization of specific individuals and/or groups. To this specific theory, Rashid Khalidi argues that a national identity is not given, it is constructed, and it occurs in a multi-layered space and time that is shaped by the previous mentioned identities, but one important aspect that needs to be added here is the effect of external power, such as the formation of social classes or a colonial power in the case of Palestine. Finally, the consolidation of identity takes hold at a conjunctural moment marked by a historic crisis that enables the swift and substantial change of attitudes in a society.⁸

Comparative political scientists are particularly interested in how national identity influences politics, even though all of the identities mentioned above are significant for politics and can assist predict political conduct. Like other facets of identity, national identity fosters a sense of belonging. Symbols are frequently employed to communicate the ideals and goals of a nation. Consider the significance of a country's flag's colours and pattern and its national bird and anthem's lyrics. These phrases, colours, and symbols serve as markers for identity. They have the

⁸ Khalidi, Rashid. "Palestinian identity." *Palestinian Identity*. Columbia University Press, 1997

power to unite and inspire people. It is typical for nations to select new symbols after losing a war and when new nation-states are formed. Even so, this is not always the case.

The culture scientists, however, argue that the formation of national identity relies majorly on the formation of collective memory. No identity exists without memory, and this is at the heart of all national identity. The feeling of coherence through time and space is bolstered by the demonstration of remembering, afterward, what is recalled is characterized by the expected identity. Each group builds up the memory of its past and in this manner features its one-of-a-kind character opposite to other groups.

As indicated by Maurice Halbwachs, collective memory is a social build that creates and shows itself in a particular social context and, in that capacity, is arranged in what he calls “the social structures of memory”. The function of the group’s memory “is to react to the necessities of the present activity, needs that capacity as a channel by their choices either to forget or to remember and then transmit to the new generation; so, the traditions are adjusted as group adapted. Each community or social group builds up a collective memory of its past that countenances or even defies, to a collective memory of different groups. The social capacity of a collective memory is to recreate the past and additionally legitimize the present and a prosperous future”⁹. Edward Said puts it this way “Each Palestinian community must struggle to maintain its identity on at least two levels: first, as Palestinian with regard to the historical encounter with Zionism and the precipitous loss of a homeland; second, as a Palestinian in the existential setting of day-to-day life, responding to the pressure in the state of residence. Every Palestinian has no state as a Palestinian even though he is (of) without belonging to, a state in which at present he resides”. In the eyes of Maurice

⁹ Maurice Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory* (New York: Harper & Row, 1980) 1-49.

Halbwachs, it is space that “gives us the illusion of not changing with time and finding the past in the present”; it is space, therefore, which, in a way, attaches collective memory.

It is obvious how national identity affects modern politics. The sense of connection one feels for their nation or country might help him better comprehend actions because it has grown to be a crucial component of one's basic identity. A good example is the different wars that happened in Gaza, which caused the Palestinians worldwide to experience horrible suffering. Even though a Palestinian may have lived in different areas far away from Gaza and did not physically experience the trauma of this event, the shock, dread, and then anger that person felt were still palpable. Why should something that didn't personally affect me matter, one would ask logically. But this demonstrates how strong a sense of national identity can be, it may cause us to internalize other people's experiences and let them influence the way we behave politically. National identity implies a "principle of identity based on impersonal ties, remote ties, vicarious ties", that are arbitrated through common symbols and forms of communication (Hass, 1986).¹⁰

Therefore, National Identity is a major part of peoples' formation, and it is important as a basis for building nations and belonging, which helps form the social contract. Culture according to the abstract definition: Identity is a term used to describe the concept of a person and his expression of his individuality and his relationship with groups (such as religious, national or ethnic identity)¹¹

Identity, culture and heritage, for any nation, represent one of the most important pillars upon which its history and civilization is based, as it is the essential denominator and the constant

¹⁰ Bozonelos, Dino. “COMPARATIVE GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS” Victor Valley College 08/26/2022. section 7.2.1

¹¹ James, Paul (2015) · "Despite the Terrors of Typologies: The Importance of Understanding Categories of Difference and Identity" ·Interventions: International Journal of Postcolonial Studies17 · (2): 174–195.

and common destiny of the general features that distinguish that history and that civilization, which is what is built upon for a promising future based on solid foundations and rules that give strength to the nation. She pushes her children to build and develop further.

The identity of nations acquires its ability to survive by its ability to develop and interact with social, political, cultural, and historical realities, and by the awareness of this identity of flexible privacy, openness, and critical response.¹²

The Palestinian National Identity

In order to stay in the scope of this thesis, the necessary historical background will be focused on, this does not negate the fact, that the history of Palestine goes back to the 13 century B.E.C, as Nur Masalha beautifully stated in his book “Palestine. A Four Thousand Year History”¹³

During the end of the Ottoman empire education was secularized and the press expanded. According to Khalidi, “this massive expansion of opportunities gave ample scope to individuals of both non-notable and non-muslim background to achieve status” (Khalidi, p.61). This change affected the national Palestinian identity, in addition to the disinformation of the ottoman empire and the start of the Mandate in Palestine.

These transformations were so intense and profound that in a relatively short period of time, a distinct Palestinian national identity took hold. The new synthesis, however, was to remain

¹² Adwan, Haifa. Culture and its role in promoting and protecting national identity, 2020
<https://alwatannews.net/Opinion/article/863961/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AB%D9%82%D8%A7%D9%81%D8%A9-%D9%88%D8%AF%D9%88%D8%B1%D9%87%D8%A7-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%AA%D8%B9%D8%B2%D9%8A%D8%B2-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%87%D9%88%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%88%D8%B7%D9%86%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D9%88%D8%AD%D9%85%D8%A7%D9%8A%D8%AA%D9%87%D8%A7>

¹³ SMITH, CHARLES D. *Journal of Palestine Studies* 49, no. 1 (193) (2019)

strongly tinged by, and to overlap with, elements of religious sentiment and Arabism both of which had been among its precursors.

Since Al-Nakbah in 1948, the leaders of the new State of Israel started their war against the Palestinian national identity and started to deny and erase the Palestinian history, and that was expressed by Israeli Prime Minister from 1969 to 1974, Golda Meir, stated openly this to the New York Times in 1976, when she said that “There is no Palestinian people. There are Palestinian refugees.”¹⁴ this includes Palestinian (Christians and Muslims).

The national identity of the Palestinians was established in difficult and coercive circumstances, and within a framework of restrictions, complications, and distortions, meaning that it did not arise naturally, did not mature, or develop, in the midst of healthy subjective conditions, especially with regard to its self-expression in citizenship relations. Various tensions and problems, as well as attempts to dismantle and remove.

These circumstances impact the lives of all the Palestinians (Christian, Muslims), and according to the history and the collective memory of the Palestinian most of the villages were occupied and the citizen were forced to leave the country, and the Authors and Politicians started to research the question “who are we?”

Edward Said speaks in his book “After the Last Sky”, not only of the Palestinians' difficulty, to keep their identity in exile, but he highlights the struggle that any Palestinian must fight to legitimize this identity. As he points out, “Identity - who we are, where we come from,

¹⁴ Golda Meir, on the Palestinians, January 11, 2018 | by Golda Meir. Review on the internet on the 18th of sept. 2022 <https://aish.com/golda-meir-on-the-palestinians/>

what we are - is difficult to maintain in exile. Most other people take their identity for granted, not the Palestinian, who is required to show proof of identity constantly.¹⁵

With Edward Said's theory about collective memory in mind, the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) surfaces to this thesis, as it served as the symbol and agency that cemented the unity of the Palestinians, whether they were "inside" or "outside" of historic Palestine. Although after the Oslo agreement, that one could perhaps consider as another historic crisis, the Palestinian identity saw the necessity of a change in a rapidly changing circumstance.

The establishment of Palestinian nationalism could be better explained by combining elements of the two opposite approaches argued by Benedict Anderson and Anthony Smith. Anderson, on the one hand, advocates about the modernist school, he focuses on the dynamics of identity construction that is linked to modernity, secularism, and capitalism and emphasizes the creative and contingent nature of national identity as well as its adaptability to broad socio-political contexts in the modern world.

The process of identity construction was the stem of what Anderson calls "print capitalism", which facilitates the development of collective political mobilization.

"The two essential tools of "print capitalism," namely the newspaper and the novel, have created new concepts of place and time that have led to a new sense of community. People and their languages have both gained in importance, and print has become the hallmark of new communities"¹⁶. A major contribution of Anderson's theories and the formation of modern national consciousness is the role played by colonial borders. In postcolonial territories, the

¹⁵ Said, Edward, *After the Last Sky: Palestinian Lives* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1986) p16-17.

¹⁶ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, (London: Verso, 1991) chapters 2 et 3.

territory of the colonial powers often defines the nation. In the case of the Middle East, the countries that had formed into states were based on the divisions that the French and British mandates had imposed on them, in particular, because of the Sykes-Picot Agreement.

“The Middle East was a cultural union, yet had formed different political, social, and cultural communities, which gradually acquired their own life. The importance of colonial borders in the formation of national identities is particularly relevant to Palestinian nationalism.

Anthony Smith on the other hand accepts the innovation of nationalism as an ideological development. However, he challenges that modern political nationalism cannot be comprehended without considering the past ethnic ties and memories, and sometimes, these pre-present day ethnic groups and identities”.¹⁷

“The development of a specific identity as an outcome of a contention between two groups on a geographical area.”¹⁸ As Smith puts it, “the frequency, intensity, and duration of wars between rival polities is itself a significant factor in crystallizing ethnic feelings among affected populations”¹⁹. Being confronted with "another" always leads to a reevaluation of "oneself", in this case, a distinct Palestinian identity. The Zionist aggression has recognized Palestinians as a distinct society different from other Arabs nationals. More extensive layers of society have been politicized due to the Zionist danger; it has in this way driven the Palestinians into a long, even though inadequate, procedure of building up a common sense of national identity, exemplified by yearnings for a Palestinian national state.²⁰The Christian Palestinian National Identity

¹⁷ Anthony D. Smith, « The Problem of National Identity: Ancient Medieval and Modern? » in *Myths and, Memories of the Nation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), P102-105

¹⁸ Smith, « Nation and Ethnoscape », in *(Myths and Memories of the Nation, P149).*

¹⁹ Anthony Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (Oxford, UK: B. Blackwell, 1987) P38.

²⁰ Moqadi. Tariq, *Identity Theories and Palestine*. Published 2018

The theory of national identity was previously studied and defined in order to relate it to the Palestinian identity. During the history of the Palestinian struggle against the Israeli occupation, a small Christian Palestinian community resisted to prove their national identity and their belonging to their homeland. This proof is examined by highlighting the role of the Christians as individuals and the role of churches as associations during this struggle.

Christian affiliation (as individuals)

In the Palestinian cause, we find that there is a small Palestinian Christian community, but it is abundantly present in all fields and sectors and has had and continues to have the greatest impact in transmitting the living image to the world. The Palestinian Christians have been and continue to be an integral part of the people whose name shined in Palestine or in the diaspora, or even on all the different sectors of the economy, politics, diplomatic work, resistance in all its forms, writing, art research, music, singing, as well as film directing, and in most of these sectors the greatest exploitation of which was to convey the Palestinian narrative to the world.

Expressing the lived reality under occupation has become the basic thought of all Palestinians in all countries of the world. This expression stemmed from the ideas held by the Palestinians that gather under the national identity and branch out through other identities to which the Palestinians belong, for example the Palestinian Christians who chose Marxism as a basis for their struggle, and also some Palestinian Christians who worked to mobilize through the religious identity.

To understand Palestinian Christian thought, it is necessary to understand the contexts in which this role developed, starting from the ottoman empire following the most important period of the modern history of Palestine:

During the ottoman empire

Palestinian Christians lived under the Mullah regime²¹, which gave religious chiefs, especially patriarchs, broad religious and civil authority over their Parishes. Christian denominations ran themselves according to the laws of each denomination. This is called the "Personal status" law, which is still in force in ecclesiastical courts today in some Arab countries.

Over time, the Ottoman Empire started to weaken until it began to be called in the nineteenth century the "sick man of Europe". This led European countries to interfere in the internal affairs of the Ottoman Empire. They established themselves as protectors of Christian groups in the East. France had a privilege over the Catholic church, Russia over the Orthodox Church, and the Protestants under British protection,²² these foreign privileges were intended to be facilities, licenses, and guarantees offered to the weak states by the powerful foreign states under the banner of friendship and cooperation, which quickly morphed into rights and duties that often ended in military control and diversified into economic, religious, and political control.

As a result of the system of privileges, that the colonial powers exploited to control Palestine under the pretext of religion, a fertile foundation was created in the hearts of Palestinian Christians, who believed that colonialism is the savior Christ who will support Christians from the

²¹ The Ottoman system of boredom: "The Mullah is a group composed of local citizens and not foreigners subject to the High Porte, has a specific religion that does not belong to a single ethnic origin, and the formation of an independent political-social unity" and in the system of boredom grew the religious and civil power of the patriarchs, "If the patriarchs count the heads of Christian boredom religiously and civilly, they are mediators between God and mankind and represent their communities to the government." *Bateh: the Christians of Palestine under rule ottoman:p 114* The Arabs were affected by this system because it worked to destroy the relations and cohesion between the people of the same people as a result of the separation based on the sectarian separation system that prevailed at the time.

²² The Arabic Language Academy in Cairo, Scientific and Technical Terminology.

injustice of the “sick man” in his last days, turning this system into a peaceful and intellectual crusade later.

The West took on new methods, in its policy to control and seizure the Holy Land: religious, cultural and charitable penetration, and did not use at this stage the same tools that the West used to use in the control and colonization of people and nations, i.e., the use of the tools of force, weapons and war.

This led to a new phase characterized by non-violent and peaceful continuation of the crusades on the Holy Land, and this interference, control and seizure was through several ways such as the provision of services and the introduction of teachers, scientists and aspects related to education. Aid and services in the Holy Land, was the main objective that complemented the colonial goals, and to complete the process of domination through the existing churches, the colonial countries introduced their languages to private schools (church schools). The French language became a basic subject in the schools of the Latin (Catholics), and the German language in the schools of the Lutherans. The churches turned into ‘charitable centres’ not only for worship but for everyone to resort to them for money, or treatment through hospitals, (An example is the the French hospital – in Jerusalem), or for shelter²³.

However, all these ideas were completely extinguished when the drums of the first world war beat, where the enemy was surprised by the unity of Palestinians of different religions in the face of the European occupation (Mandate). The Palestinian Christians at that time were pioneers of the Arab nationalist renaissance, the most prominent of these Christians: Khalil Sakakini. He clarified the Palestinian situation in his memoirs, particularly in the second part, in which he

²³ Shosh· Alexander. **Radical transformations in Palestine from 1857 to 1882**. Second Edition, University of Jordan Publications, Deanship of Scientific Research. Amman, Jordan. 1993. pp. 77-80

mentioned the relationship between Christians and Muslims, and the role it played in the liberation of the country and Arab nationalism.

As Rev. Mitri Raheb summarized through an article he wrote under the title "Faith, Constancy, and Creative Resistance in Contemporary Palestinian Christian Thought", he focused on the peaceful and intellectual Christian resistance segment, as it was distributed as follows:

First period 1917

While the British armies in the Sinai Peninsula were ready to enter Palestine, Balfour hurried with his book A promise to the Jewish Lord Rothschild to establish a national home for the Jews in the land of Palestine, where the movement of Jewish immigration and settlement in Palestine had begun several years earlier, and Palestinian Christians were among the first to pay attention to the danger of Zionism, in 1905 Najib Azuri wrote his famous book on the awakening of the Arab nation. In it, he confronted the threat of Zionism and called for the establishment of a single Palestinian national Arab church away from sectarianism.

Najib Nassar, editor-in-chief of the Carmel newspaper, published 1911 his book on Zionism, in which he warned of its danger to the future of Palestine, set out to resist sectarianism and realized with his firm vision that sectarianism and colonialism are two sides of the same coin. In this era, Bishop Gregory Hajjar of the Royal Roman Church attacked the British project in Palestine, showing its danger and the danger of Zionism to the future of the region. It was also the turn of many to warn of the danger of Zionism, as the likes of Issa al-Issa and Pastor Elias Marmora worked to establish an early Palestinian national movement to warn of the danger of European infiltration that held privileges (as I mentioned earlier) and fought sectarianism and colonialism in all its forms.

Second period 1936-1939

During the mid-thirties of the twentieth century, the Palestinians understood that the British Mandate did not come to qualify Palestine for political freedom and to build a Palestinian state, but came for colonial ambitions as happened in the rest of the Arab countries, but this soon turned out to be a prelude to the realization of the ill-fated Balfour Declaration of the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine, especially after the increase in the emigration of Jews to Palestine after Hitler came to power in Germany, and the beginning of the emergence of his intentions to fight Judaism and this was evident during the Second World War.

The Palestinians understood the underlying intentions of the British Mandate, and they began their famous strike in 1939, which lasted three years, and here the role of Christians was evident through their loud voice within Palestine and in international forums, for example, Tawfiq Kanaan, who published a book entitled "The Question of the Arabs of Palestine" in which he outlined the danger of settlement, Jewish immigration to the future of the region. He was not the only one but there are other figures such as Issa al-Bandak. A number of pastors such as Pastor Hanna Research, Said Abboud, and Shadid Baz Hadid, who in their sermons and religious lessons called for addressing the danger of Zionism and calling for national positions where they were wary of the misuse of the Bible in the name of Zionism to occupy the land.

During the Great Revolution, Christians had a special role in the Palestinian national parties, where 5 days after the announcement of the strike, Hajj Amin al-Husseini headed a protest against the heads of the Palestinian parties, which resulted with the formation of a general leadership of the Palestinian people known as the Supreme Committee, which later became operational as the Arab Higher Committee, and included a number of Christians such as Yacoub Farraj, Alfred Duke, Fouad Saba.

Third period 1947-1948

UN Resolution 181, known as the resolution dividing Palestine into two Jewish states and an Arab state with Jerusalem under international trusteeship for its religious location, was recommended by the UN committee to consist of three points:

1. An Arab state: Its borders consist of the western Galilee, mountain Nablus and the coastal plain stretching from Ashdod south of Jaffa to the Egyptian border, including the Hebron region, Mount Jerusalem and the southern Jordan Valley, and this country has an area of 12,000 square kilometres.
2. Jewish State: Composed of the Eastern Galilee, the Meadow of Ben Amer, the bulk of the coastal plain, the Beersheba area and the Negev, this area, which is considered the most fertile Palestinian territory, has an area of 14,200 square kilometres.
3. The holy sites include the city and area of Jerusalem, placed under international trusteeship, and the United Nations Trusteeship Council appoints a non-Arab and non-Jewish governor of the area.

On 29 November 1947, these recommendations were adopted by 33 votes to 13 and 10 abstentions. Based on this decision, Britain declared the end of the Mandate of Palestine in March 1948, where it stressed that it would not exercise any administrative or military powers until the full withdrawal from Palestine on May 14, 1948, and the leaders of Israel declared their state the next day, as a result of the Nakba, the Palestinians lost about 77% of their land.

During this period, some 47,000 Palestinian Christians were displaced from their land, and the role of the Palestinian Christian turned from that of academic individuals or national clerics who wrote and warned of the danger of European Jewish colonialism, to a role and a collective national Christian effort, and we find the role played by Christian institutions engaged in the relief

of the afflicted, but their role did not stop at relief only. They began a new phase, namely attempts to Arabize the Church from foreign domination over it. The Arabization movement was influenced by Arab nationalist thought, which was headed by Jamal Abdel Nasser, but after the loss of the war in 1967, many Palestinian Christians turned to communist philosophy in its Marxist, Leninist, and Maoist forms in light of its spread in the world and its recognition of the ideology of resistance, and of those who adopted this thought were George Habash, Wadih Haddad, Nayef Hawatmeh and many others, who adopted the idea of struggle and armed resistance.

Fourth period 1967

The 67's war and the occupation of the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and the Golan were a severe blow to the Palestinians and the Arabs, as a result of which the PLO emerged as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

Before the 1967 war came to an end, a group of Arab theologians gathered in Beirut, including Father Jean Corbon, Father Georges Khader, Mr. Albert Laham, Rev. Samir Kafaiti, and Mr. Gabriel Habib to write the first ecumenical theological document entitled "A Theological View of the Arab Israeli Conflict." In this document, the book addresses the Christian Zionist ideology that saw the occupation of the West Bank as a victory from God. The World Union of Christian Students also issued the Declaration of Justice and Peace in the Middle East, which was the first theological document that recognizes the PLO.

During this period, the Middle East Council of Churches held dozens of conferences centred on the Palestinian issue, in which it stood out, in addition to the personalities mentioned above, Father Paul Terzi, Pastor Fouad Bahnan and others.

Many Catholic forums such as the Justice and Peace Committees and the Cyril Centre have issued dozens of statements calling for the justice and merit of the Palestinian cause, here again, Father Dr. Rafik Khoury and Bishop Lotfi Lahham were at the head of this movement.

The 1967 war paved the way for the rise of religious movements, after many lost hopes for Arab nationalism, many turned to religious movements, and the occupation of the West Bank and East Jerusalem in particular was a fertile centre for Jewish settler religious movements such as Gush Emunim and others, as we see the Christian Zionist movement regaining its violence as a result of the war.

Palestinian Christians saw themselves in the face of all these religious movements, and they did not ride the wave of religious movements but resisted them with all their might. National Christian figures such as Bishop Hilarion Kabouji and Father Ibrahim Ayad emerged in this era.

Fifth period 1987

The Intifada of Stones (the First Intifada), which was the product of Palestinian academics in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, was characterized by popular resistance and peaceful demonstrations. Beit Sahour was the ideal and supreme model of peaceful resistance that took civil disobedience as its path, and which was an example of the Christian role throughout the country.

During the first intifada, Christian leaders and church leaders issued statements in support of the intifada and defending the Palestinian right, with the first statement issued on 22-1-1988, just a few weeks after the publication of the first intifada. The intifada also prompted the Vatican to ordain Michel Sabah the first Palestinian patriarch of the Holy Land.

Al- Leqa' Center for Religious Studies also launched the Theology and Local Church Document, which opened the door to his book Christian Theology for the Palestinian context. This document was co-written and at the center of the meeting by ecclesiastical figures, Patriarch

Michel Sabah, Bishop Lotfi Lahham, Pastor Munib Younan, Father Rafik Khoury, Rev. Dr. Mitri Raheb, and other figures such as Youssef Zaknoun, Peter Qamari, George Huntleyan, Shukri Sanbar, Adnan Muslim, Lawrence Sammour and others.

During this period, Palestinian theology was institutionalized through three centers: Al-Leqa' Center for Religious Studies, which was founded in 1982, the Al-Sabeel Center for Liberation Theology in 1989, and the International Symposium House – Diyar in 1995. This era was also characterized by a prolific literary production, with more than 25 theological books published in Arabic, English, German and French.

Sixth period 2009

The Palestinian split in 2007 marked a serious deterioration in the Palestinian national project. This era was even marked by a desperation of armed resistance that did not bring about peace but increased Jewish settlements in the West Bank. In this context, a group of Christian thinkers felt the need to raise their voices loudly, calling for a third way, the path of creative resistance.

Therefore, these Christian personalities, consisting of Patriarch Michel Sabah, Bishop Atallah Hanna, Rev. Dr. Mitri Raheb, Father Jamal Khader, Rev. Naim Ateeq, Rev. John Katnacho, Rev. Fadi Diab, Dr. Jeries Khoury, Ladies Cedre Daibes, Noura Qurt, Lucy Snow, Messrs. Nidal Abu Zulf, Youssef Daher, and Rifaat Kassis launched Kairos Palestine document (A moment of Truth) at the International Symposium House on 11-12-2009. The authors of this document wanted to say the word faith against religious fundamentalism of all kinds, the word hope in a time of frustrated despair, and the word love as the title of a creative resistance that seeks

life rather than death. This document has formed a promising and unified Palestinian Christian voice.²⁴

After researching these different periods, the researcher concluded that the role of Palestinian Christians was and still has an important role in the field of politics, partisanship and resistance with all its intellectual, peaceful, popular and military dimensions, as we mentioned earlier in the different periods. Christians have sacrificed themselves for their noble cause and for steadfastness and survival in this holy land like the rest of the Palestinians (Muslims) without the slightest thought between what is religious, but their role stems from their national identity, which aims at liberation and resistance in all its forms. In order to end the Israeli occupation and return to their confiscated lands. Several names emerged from them in various social fields, where they were distinguished by their affiliation and support for the left, national socialism and secularism. Before the forty-eighth century, the efforts were individual by progressive left-wing personalities. He actively participated in the Jordanian Communist Party and the Ba'ath Party. after 48, the role became a pioneer in the Palestinian national project, as leaders and figures who had a role in the establishment of political parties such as George Habash, founder of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, Nayef Hawatmeh, founder of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, and leaders who engaged in the struggle such as Tawfiq Ziad, Wadih Haddad, Kamal Nasser, Hanan Ashrawi, and after the clergy participated in politics and resistance such as Father Hilarion Capucci, Father Ibrahim Ayad, and Father Manuel Muslim.²⁵

²⁴ Al-Raheb, Rev. Dr. Mitri. Creative resistance in contemporary Palestinian Christian thought. 2017
<https://hcc.plo.ps/archives/265>

²⁵ Farah, Fouad. "Living Stones, Arab Christians in the Holy Land", Al-Hakim Printing, Nazareth 2003. p. 160

The exodus of traditional Arab leaders from their positions following the establishment of the State of Israel gave rise to a political and social vacuum among the 48 Arabs, which was then filled by a young class of intellectuals from the cities where political activity was concentrated. This created a natural atmosphere for Christians to assume leadership positions in political and social movements until the emergence of educated Islamist elements that gradually began to dominate these movements since the beginning of the last decade of the twentieth century. Lawyer Elias Koussa of Haifa was the first to call for the establishment of an independent Arab nationalist party. On the other hand, attempts to establish an independent political bloc of Christians failed, while the Christian grassroots, especially the Orthodox, was characterized by full support for the Communist Party and nationalist and secular movements. At the same time, political Orthodox families such as the Habibi, Gracie and Tobi dynasties emerged that had an impact on the political life of the 48 Arabs. The overwhelming majority of the founders and leaders of the National Liberation League and the Communist Party were Christians, and despite the popular image of communists typically associating them with atheism and non-religion, most Christian communists in occupied territories in 1948 were not atheists, and many were practitioners of Christianity.

In 1958, a predominantly Christian political literary movement emerged such as Yeni Yeni, Sabri Jeries, Dr. Youssef Haddad, Mansour Kardouche and Habib Kahwaji. In 1962 they founded the Earth Movement. Despite the Christian character of the Land Movement, it attracted and gained the support of Islamic-nationalist elements. This movement advocated that the 48 Arabs had national rights to demand the right of self-determination and defended the right of return of Palestinian refugees to the country, and the Israeli government later banned the movement of the land. Arab Christians participated in the establishment of the Union of Arab Academics in the Committee for the Defense of the Land, the most prominent of which was Hanna Nagara, Saliba

Khamis, Emile Touma and Pastor Shehadeh Shehadeh. The Land Defense Committee organized Land Day against the laws of confiscation and commemorated the killing of six Arab citizens in the occupied interior, and this day later became a national symbol of the 48 Arabs.²⁶

But over time, this group has become suspicious and lost in its Palestinian Christian identity and finds itself out of balance between these two identities, not knowing where it is, where it came from, or where it is heading. The greater focus became on immigration, where religious identity prevailed over national identity, and thus the Palestinian refugees' view of Europe and the United States of America as a way out of the oppression of the occupation. In the Palestinian case, there are many idiosyncrasies and interactions multiply in the nature of the land, the place, the people, the history and the issue.

Mr. Nidal Abu Al-Zuluf²⁷ explained that this shift in identity, especially for Palestinian Christian youth, is "not necessarily accurate, some identify themselves as a Palestinian Christian figure and sometimes an Arab-Palestinian Christian figure"²⁸ by this clarification a quote from George Habash's had added when he define his Identity as "an Islamic of education, a Christian of religion, a socialist of belonging."²⁹ Moreover, Mr. Nidal continued by saying that "this shift in identity has nothing to do with religion but has to do with individuals and the societal mentality

²⁶ Ibid., p. 161

²⁷ Nidal Abu Al Zuluf is one of the writers and those in charge of the stand for the right of Palestine "Kairos Palestine", and the Director of the JHA It is a joint programme of the YMCA - Jerusalem and the Young Women's Christian Association - Palestine, working for a just peace in Palestine, based on Christian and human values, by mobilizing and mobilizing the Christian Youth Associations of the World, as well as churches, Christian institutions, United Nations bodies, institutions and organizations. and other groups, to influence decision-makers to take action to contribute to ending the Israeli occupation and all its violations of international laws.

²⁸ Personal interview, on 15/08/2022.

²⁹ Abdullah, Imran. "The memoirs of the "wise" George Habash see the light of day on the anniversary of his passing" 27/1/2019,

<https://www.aljazeera.net/news/cultureandart/2019/1/27/%D9%85%D8%B0%D9%83%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AD%D9%83%D9%8A%D9%85-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%81%D9%84%D8%B3%D8%B7%D9%8A%D9%86%D9%8A-%D8%AA%D8%B1%D9%89-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%86%D9%88%D8%B1>

that has moved away from its social and national role and has become inclined to the ego”, due to that Christian youth are part of this transformation and here begins the role of civil society institutions that have to remind citizens as a whole of their collective role and not only individual, and this is what must be worked on to re-instil Christian youth in the role of struggle and not to move away from it.

Patriarch Michel Sabah³⁰ when asked about the loss of the identity of the young Christian between his Christian faith and his Palestinian affiliation, that faith and belonging should not lead to internal conflict but is a call to resistance in the spirit of love, where it was clarified that the love that we must carry is not emotional love and inclinations for the enemy, but is the establishment of truth and the will of good for every human being, even the enemy, from the logic that man is created in the image of God, and with wars. Violence makes man become evil and must resist this evil to get out of this state and return to the good for which he was created.³¹

Here we are talking about the role of the youth and the Church in promoting the concept of patriotism and belonging to the Palestinian cause and not standing on neutrality. Thus, there is a role for the clergy to do this awareness through their pastoral and political role of resistance, as the Christian ego of the individual must be linked to religion to turn it into a theology.

³⁰ Christian cleric who has been the Patriarch of the Latin Church in Jerusalem for a year 1987, thus becoming the first Palestinian to hold that position, and the highest priestly Catholic rank in the territories. Holy. Duff εSabah constantly spoke about the rights of the Palestinian people, believing in the two-state solution and the right of return of Palestinian refugees. He also criticized the Israeli separation wall and called for an end to the occupation, in addition to defending the rights of Palestinian Christians. Since 1999, Sabah has served as the international president of the Peace of Christ Organization, which promotes peace. In 2008, the Pope ratified Benedict Sixteenth on the resignation of the Patriarch Michelle Sabah was one of his duties in the Church of Jerusalem due to his legal age, and was appointed as his successor Patriarchal Assistant Fouad Twal to be the new Archbishop of the Latin Church. He is one of the Palestinian theologians who wrote Kairos Palestine

³¹ Personal Interview, 12/08/2022

The role of Churches (as associations)

The Christian religion is rooted in this land from two thousand years ago where the Christian religion spread to the world from the heart of this Holy Land, the first church was and still is an integral part of the identity of this land, and the connection of the Christian in this land is a faith link that it is the land of Christ and the centre of the Christian religion, and the link of a national identity and national belonging, and this was apparent from the belonging of individuals to the homeland and their sacrifice and resistance to the Zionist occupation, and the local church is like the case of individuals, in addition to its faith work and the Christian upbringing of individuals, but its work The influence of Christians in Palestine is demonstrated by a study prepared by the researcher George Akroush that in Palestine there are "296 Christian institutions in Jerusalem, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip; 93 schools, universities and vocational centres, 19 health care facilities, 47 social protection institutions, 77 cultural and tourist centres, 38 youth and scouting centres, one environmental centre, and 21 local and international development agencies that offer a variety of The study shows that Christian organizations are the third largest employers of the Palestinian people after the Palestinian National Authority and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Refugees (UNRWA) and have exceeded the operating capacity of the largest Palestinian companies operating in the private sector with a total operating capacity of 9,098 employees (5,017 Christians and 4,081 Muslims).

In terms of financial resources invested, US\$416 million is invested year-on-year in vital sectors such as health care, education, social services, vocational training and development assistance interventions. As for the total number of targeted beneficiaries, community-based relief organizations provide services to approximately 37% of the Palestinian population in the West Bank, Gaza Strip and Jerusalem. The study also proved that the services of Christian development

and relief organizations improve the quality of life of more than 1.9 million Palestinians each year.

³² That is, this connection to the land was reflected in the institutions through which the churches work and through which they work to root the Christian and the Muslim in his land through these services. Mr. Nidal Abu al-Zalf explained the work of Christian institutions, “that these institutions work in the spirit of the Christian religion, which means from a theological point of view, but with humanitarian principles that respect all groups (religious, sectarian and partisan). Concern for the human being in his comprehensive concept through the concepts of human rights and non-discrimination between the citizen in Palestine It clarifies the role of citizenship for him in terms of rights and duties and calls for equality between all citizens of the country with dignity and humanity.”³³

Through this section of the research, the theory of national identity and its connection to the Palestinian cause was elaborated by focusing on the small Palestinian Christian community, that worked as individuals and groups with human rights, and humanitarian goal in order to liberate the human from sin and occupation, and worked on adopting a civil society in which citizens are respected in accordance with international laws and norms and in implementation of international human rights, as described by Patriarch Michel Sabah “the process of searching for what God wants from us at this time in history, and what God says to the different people, it is a process of guidance to get rid of these crises that he is going through in order to obtain this dignity that has been robbed of sin.”³⁴ We can find that it is the simple definition of theology, due to that we have to ask if there is Christian Palestinian local Contextual Theology.

³² Akroush, George. "Study: Christian Institutions Working in Palestine" The study was funded by Dar Al-Kalima University College in Bethlehem and the Pontifical Mission in Jerusalem, and was released through an electronic press conference on March 16, 2021.

³³ Personal interview, 15/08/2022

³⁴ Personal Interview, 12/08/2022

Section II: The Christian Palestinian Theology

In the previous sections, the national identity of the Christian Palestinians was elaborated by describing their role as individuals and churches in the Palestinian cause during the different periods. Moreover, it was mentioned the actions that was done by the Palestinian theologians facing the Israeli Occupation. In this section, we will study the theology from the liberation point of view, theology will be reviewed and read to answer these questions: what is the role of theology in liberation, and what is its role in the life of an oppressed person? How is God's will applied in situations of suffering, injustice, homelessness, poverty, and persecution? During this chapter we will find the answer to what is the nature of theology that applies to Palestinian Christians? In order to analyze the different Ideas of the Palestinian Theologian, and to understand the result of the analyzes of the nature of theology that resulted in Kairos Palestine Document, which considers the ecumenical work of various churches and the various theological dimensions, which took political positions to resist the Israeli occupation, and the voice of truth that calls for an end to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

The nature of the human being has been a subject of fascination since ancient times. We desire to understand ourselves, our place in the world and we also look at broader human questions: Why am I here? What is the meaning or the purpose of my life? Why do people suffer? These questions were asked historically by many philosophers such as Plato, Aristotle and Al-Farabi, and religions have been concentrating so much of their intellectual efforts to explain how theology or belief in God and the metaphysical world frees the humans from the limitations of the troubling terrestrial world.³⁵

³⁵ The meaning of life. <https://www.theschooloflife.com/article/the-meaning-of-life-2/> . reviewed on the 28th of sept. 2022

From that time till present, philosophers and religions have been a central part in explaining the imperceptible phenomena associated with the human spirit, and it was thought that religions were always existed in the societies during all ages, and as it is known “the term religion was used to refer to all aspects of the human relationship to the Divine or Transcendent that which is greater than us, “the source and goal of all human life and value”³⁶. Moreover, the philosophers and religions argue that the human’s miseries and unhappiness are due to his enslavement to earthly concerns. Where the only way to liberate him/ herself is to unite with God and adhere to the unshakable belief that everything happens in the world is an expression of God’s will.

And since God does not ordain evil, human being remains satisfied that God’s will is always good. This means that the human being becomes free from the enslavement of humans and things around him.

Religion is the practice of belief, in most cases identifying to the existence of a divine, transcendent being. While religion could be defined as “a strong belief in a supernatural power that control human destiny³⁷”.³⁸

During the history, religions has played a significant role in the political life, they crossed and completed each other many times, where they try to analyse the society sometimes to control it, and other times to help the society and to exist it from the devastation. Religion and politics are concepts that designate two different and independent subsystems of society. Although the concepts are separated analytically, the relationship between religion and politics is characterized by interdependence. Social scientists define religion as a “set of beliefs that connects the individual

³⁶ Nelson, James M. **Psychology, Religion, and Spirituality**, Valparaiso University, USA 2009 p.3

³⁷ <https://www.vocabulary.com/dictionary/religious%20belief>

³⁸ Theodorou, Nick. “**What are Plato’s main ideas about religion? O What Extent are they influential in Western religious philosophy?**” Bromsgrove School. Center 24040. 26 Jul 2020. P. 1

to a community, and in turn to a sense of being or purpose that transcends the individual and the mundane.”³⁹ While the concept of politics denominates “the regulative power to make collectively binding decisions, allocate resources and solve social problems.”⁴⁰

In the seventieth of the 20th century in Latin America, an intervention of religion in politics was established in order to liberate human being from the reality in which he lives. This intervention was a revolution within religion in which non-theological ideas were introduced to become a new theology in the twentieth century. The new social and intellectual movement appeared, from the heart of the Christian faith where their members were committed to ending poverty and abstaining from acquiring private property. It was a religious response to social problems and to get the church involved in the world’s problems and not to separate itself from the real tangible world, but to stand on the side of the poor and the people who suffer every day from the unfairness of life, this movement isn’t fit only for Latin America but for the entire third world and those who always suffer from poverty, starvation and all situations of suppression and oppression.

This movement is called Liberation theology which was defined later as “a synthesis of Christian theology and socio-economic analyses, entrenched in far-left politics, particularly Marxism, that emphasizes "social concern for the poor and political liberation for oppressed peoples”⁴¹, but to know what this definition means we have to go back and distinguish between the types of philosophy that reflect to our study.

³⁹ <http://political-science.iresearchnet.com/religion-and-politics/> reviewed on the 28th of Sept. 2022

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ **Dictionary of Historical Terms**, Second Edition, Chris Cook, Ed. 1998. P. 203

It is a liberation theology, two different terms; each one has a different meaning but collectively it became a new movement that our study will focus on it, but before we start learning the Liberation Theology we must know: What is theology? And what is liberation?

What is Theology?

Theology is a spiritual thing that tries to explain the God's will to the human beings by uniting his spirit with the absolute and to illuminate his way to his well.

Theology is the study of religion, plain and simple. The religion isn't simple, so theology covers a lot of subjects like rituals, divine beings, the history of religions, and the concept of religious truth. The word Theology comes from two Greek words: Theos (God) and logos (the study of), in other words as the dictionary defines it as "the rational and systematic study of religion and its influences and of the nature of religious truth, moreover, it is the learned profession acquired by specialized courses in religion (usually taught at a college or seminary), and it is defined as a particular system or school of religious beliefs and teaching."⁴²

Theology usually is a spiritual thing but when we talk about liberation theology we will think about intellectual thing, because it is different than other methods, here we were talking about inductive method where the fathers of the liberation theology observed phenomena that required them to intervene to stop these violations of humanity, and that need an intellectual thinking where it be more practical than theoretical.

According to the general definition of theology, we see that it's a study and knowledge, of God and God's plan in life of the human being, moreover it is not exclusive to one or to a group,

⁴²https://www.vocabulary.com/dictionary/theology?fbclid=IwAR2PQEJtCQdMoM7SXEeyzWmP_gdHd17R94SAOdrD-i1yEmsp3i0F2O8ONcs

in other words, this theology is an intellectual and spiritual orientation, such as philosophy, that studies the lived reality through the divine plan of human beings, to become an education taught to those wishing to know what God is, and his plans during time and place.

Theology is the study of what is divine, not just the faith, but it is a way to explain this faith for the humans according to the circumstances and the environment of each believer based on the fact that relativity is the absolute in this world, whereas faith is the same “according to the determinants of each religion or ideology” but the theology is multiple. “The theologian who studies God’s process in time and space, and studies human behaviour the same time and space to see how they correspond to God’s salvation purpose”⁴³ In other words, the combination of God and human behaviour in the space of time and space and the approach between them.

In the history of Christianity, hundreds have written in theology, and each of them has a theological and intellectual school to which he belongs according to their sectarian affiliation or monasticism to which each one belongs and also according to the intellectual and philosophical reference, where we can find many schools and multiple theology in interpretation the willing of God and his plans to the human beings according the references of the theologian, by this we can find the liberation theology where theologians study the religion in with phenomenological methodology and sociological inquiry.

What is Liberation?

Liberation means to be free from something or someone, and refers specifically to the act of being free, from having no freedom to having it. Also, the history is full of examples of moments of liberation. The dictionary defines it as a movement seeking equal rights and status of a group,

⁴³Sedhom, Fr. William: “**Liberation theology in Latin America**” Dar Almashreq. Beirut 1993 p.11

⁴⁴so liberation is an act and a movement but to know more about liberation theology we have to understand the differences between liberation and freedom.

Broadly speaking, liberty is the ability to do as one pleases.⁴⁵ Also in modern's politics liberty is the state of being free within society from oppressive restrictions imposed by authority on one's way of life, behaviour, or political views.⁴⁶ Sometimes we can see that liberty is differentiated from freedom by using the word "freedom" primarily, in the same time not to mean the ability to do as one wills and what one has the power to do. So, in general liberty is the use of freedom under the existence of rule of law without depriving the freedom of any other person in other words Liberty is to be free from the external. Freedom is to be free from the external and the internal. Meanwhile, there is sometimes a contradiction in the concept of liberty which we can take as an example, a person can have the freedom to steal something but not have the liberty to steal as in this action he is depriving others of their right not to be harmed. So, we can see that liberty sometimes can be taken as a type of punishment, in many cases people can be deprived of their liberty if they have committed any type of criminal acts.

The modern concept of liberty had been defined by many philosophers such as Marcus Aurelius, Thomas Hobbes, John Locke and many others. A polity in which there is the same law for all, a polity administered with regard to equal rights and equal freedom of speech, and the idea of a kingly government which respects most of all the freedom of the governed.⁴⁷ As Marcus Aurelius (121–180 AD) wrote. Where Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679) wrote: A free man is he that in those things which by his strength and wit he is able to do is not hindered to do what he hath the

⁴⁴<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/liberation>

⁴⁵The Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2005, Merriam-Webster, Inc.,

⁴⁶"Liberty | Definition of liberty in English by Lexico Dictionaries". Lexico Dictionaries English. Retrieved 2019-07-22.

⁴⁷Marcus Aurelius, "**Meditations**", Book I, Wordsworth Classics of World Literature, ISBN 1-85326-486-5

will to do.⁴⁸ We can see in those two definitions for Aurelius and Hobbes that the two philosophers have the main idea that liberty is the liberty of choice for the person under the role of law for all.

On the other hand, John Locke (1632–1704) defined the liberty in different way, according to him “In the state of nature, liberty consists of being free from any superior power on Earth. People are not under the will or lawmaking authority of others but have only the law of nature for their rule. In political society, liberty consists of being under no other lawmaking power except that established by consent in the commonwealth. People are free from the dominion of any will or legal restraint apart from that enacted by their own constituted lawmaking power according to the trust put in it. Thus, freedom is not as Sir Robert Filmer defines it: A liberty for everyone to do what he likes, to live as he pleases, and not to be tied by any laws.’ Freedom is constrained by laws in both the state of nature and political society. Freedom of nature is to be under no other restraint but the law of nature. Freedom of people under government is to be under no restraint apart from standing rules to live by that are common to everyone in the society and made by the lawmaking power established in it. Persons have a right or liberty to (1) follow their own will in all things that the law has not prohibited and (2) not be subject to the inconstant, uncertain, unknown, and arbitrary wills of others.⁴⁹

Due to this definition, Locke consisted of that it may be a contradiction between liberty and freedom because liberty is the person's right to do what he wants but under the role of the law, meanwhile freedom is that the only law that any person should obey is the law of nature.

⁴⁸ Hobbes, Tomas “**Leviathan or The Matter, Forme and Power of a Common-Wealth Ecclesiasticall and Civil**” 1651, Part 2, Ch. XXI.

⁴⁹ Locke, John. “**Two Treatises of Government**” A Translation into Modern English, 1689. ISR, 2009, p. 76

Liberation Theology

In 1971 we have a concept that combine what is divine with what is politics which is “Liberation Theology” this concept becomes a school that change the way of the thinking in the Christianly world; it’s a religious movement arise in the late 20th century in the Catholic Church centred in Latin America, it sought to apply the faith by aiding poor and oppressed through involvement in political and civic affairs. It stressed both heightened awareness of the “sinful” socioeconomic structures that caused social inequities and active participation in changing those structures.

We find that theologians and founders of liberation theology build their spiritual on the Bible to prove it stemming from the struggle of classes, apartheid and all the problems of colour, sex, identity and class, and are based on the fact that God exist in the history of his people, to save them. Meanwhile, he is the God of the poor, and he is also a God who cannot tolerate tyranny and injustice.

Thus, when we hear the Liberation theology, we think of highly educated theologians, such as Gustavo Gutiérrez. But the liberation theology remains a complex and richer ecclesiastical and culture phenomenon than those who practice the theology. Moreover, in the basics of the Church there is a faith that rejects all forms of violence and oppression. By this analysis of the reality in the countries we can find that the Liberation theology influenced by Karl Marx; Marxist Ideas were used both explicitly and implicitly by the fathers of Liberation Theologians. Gustavo Gutierrez used Marx implicitly whilst Leonardo Boff and Jose Miranda explicitly discussed the relationship between Marxism and Christianity. In General Liberation theologians use Marx as a tool for understanding poverty. They do not adopt his ideas wholesale but borrow concepts and

terminology which they find helpful. So, we can find the relation between liberation in Marx point of view and liberation from the Church Point of view⁵⁰.

The idea of liberation theology was crystallized

However, we find that the theology of liberation was not a coincidence, but the result of a change that occurred in the church, In the arms of the Second Vatican Council, and in the light of the teachings and instructions of the Second Council, he had established in the bottom and heart of the church the new theology with its initial ideas (as a fetus), where the Church's interest in human dignity was appeared in the reflections that have become evident in the Dogmatic Constitutions which resulted from this council:

- 1- Lumen Gentium “English: Light of the Nations”’: It is a new vision of the church.
- 2- Dei Verbum “English: Word of God”’: It is the interpretation of the Bible.
- 3- Gaudium et spes “English: The Joys and Hopes”’: pastoral constitution on the church in the modern world, Characterized by the Church's openness to the world.
- 4- Dignitatis Humanae “English: Of the Dignity of the Human Person”’: declaration on religious freedom on the right of the person and of communities to social and civil freedom in matters religious promulgated.

There is no doubt that all of these Synod documents carried the seeds of tension that exploded in the opening period that followed the Synod, especially in Latin America continent.

Especially in the constitution of the Joys and Hopes we can see that the idea of the constitution is to find the church in today's world and elaborate its work in this modern and fast thinking of the world and vacancy with humanity in all that is exposed to it are “There is no earthly

⁵⁰<http://www.philosopherkings.co.uk/Marx.html>

covet that drives the church, but one thing it aims for: Out of the comforting of the Holy Spirit, to continue the work of Christ himself who came to the world to testify to the truth, to be saved not to judge, to serve, not to be served.” (Joy and hopes 3)⁵¹

In the same Document in No. 29 the Fathers of the Synod emphasize the equality of all human beings, because they were created in the image and likeness of God, and all human beings must have equality and human dignity without any discrimination, so there should be no economic disparity (this is what the liberation theology has worked on in Latin America), or social inequality (this is what was the basis for working in Africa to abolish apartheid), or even political (and this is what the liberation theology in Palestine is trying to do to overcome the stage of inequality and occupation that we will elaborate more during our study).⁵²

In the midst of the Ecumenical Council in Rome, the ideas raised by it began to take shape in the Latin American continent. In 1964 and 1965, several meetings were held in which a common sense of the necessity of arriving at a new theological stream, based on "history", proceeded from the renewal brought about by the Synod, and from the difficult reality of the people that the South American continent suffers from.⁵³

In the context of this general atmosphere fraught with a desire for change, created by adherents of the new theological trend, the famous Medellin Conference was held in Colombia, which was the second conference in which the Council of Latin American Bishops participated between 28 August and 7 September 1968. The conference was a defining moment both in the history of the Latin American Church and in the history of liberation theology.⁵⁴

⁵¹See the Second Vatican Council "The Church in Today's World, Gaudium et spes".

⁵²Ibid.

⁵³Sidham, Father William, Liberation Theology in Latin America, Dar Al-Mashreq, Beirut 1993, p. 42

⁵⁴ Sidham, Father William, Liberation Theology in Latin America, Dar Al-Mashreq, Beirut 1993, p. 43- 46

From this, we can conclude that the birthplace of liberation theology is Latin America, and that was after the Second Vatican Council, but in particular in 1968 and many fathers and theologians who followed this new theology, but Gutierrez was considered the spiritual father, and the Medellin Conference was the starting point.

Every true theology arises from some spirituality, that is, from contact with God who suddenly enters history. That is why the spirituality on which liberation theology relied is the theology and spirituality of the poor, and it is not concerned with the individual poor who knocks on the door to beg. But the poor are the whole class and the popular classes that contain more than what are contained in the proletariat analyzed by Karl Marx. These poor are the workers exploited by the capitalist approach, the victims of partial use, the expelled from the production system; they are also the peasants and the legitimate owners of the land in the countryside, and the seasonal labor. All this social and historical bloc of the oppressed constitutes the identity of the poor, forming a social phenomenon (this is the first incident in Latin America).

The aims of the liberation theology

There are several reasons for starting the Idea of the liberation theology, which make a person a provocation if he sees those numbers of the world's population dying every day because of "the rich getting richer and the poor poorer". Therefore, liberation theology requires a firm protest against a situation in which it appears:

- 1- On the social level, collective injustice, exclusion and humiliation.
 - 2- On the humanitarian level, injustice and outrages upon human dignity.
 - 3- On the religious level, social sin, this is "a situation that contradicts the intention of the Creator and disdains the honour befitting him".
-

Liberation theology cannot ignore this little sympathy for the injustice inflicted on most of humanity. Therefore, liberation theology is based on the prophetic choice in solidarity with the lives of these millions of humiliated and humiliated peoples, and with their causes and their struggle in order to overcome this historical and social injustice. And this is precisely what the Vatican document indicates regarding “A Few Aspects of Liberation Theology” (6 August 1984): “We cannot be distracted for a single moment by the influential conditions of misery from which an urgent appeal to theologians arises.”⁵⁵

Considering to faith, the believers saw in this mass "the poor and the oppressed" as a flagrant defiance, the suffering slave of Jesus Christ. The first stage is the time of silent and sympathetic contemplation, but with liberation theology, it was necessary to go beyond the contemplation stage, to be based on effective liberating work. The crucified person wants to rise from the dead, so the presence is effective with these poor people through the struggle "with them," the poverty that unjustly inflicted them. Then the service of solidarity with the oppressed indicates the suffering act of Christ's love, which would be like a liturgical prayer that God tormented.⁵⁶

Personalities of liberation theology

From the base to the top

At the first moment, when we hear of liberation theology, we imagine in our minds very theological people, especially in the theology of segments such as Gustavo Guitarras, but liberation theology is an ecclesiastical and cultural phenomenon more complex and richer than being restricted to those who practice theology. In the foundation of the Church there is a creed of faith

⁵⁵ **Christian Freedom and Liberation** ", Instructions of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, August 6, 1984, March 22, 1986.

⁵⁶ Leonardo Boff, "**The Theology of Liberation**" (on Al-Masara Magazine, Issue 757), p. 45

that rejects all different forms of persecution, one by one. Among these basic societies, “the poor class” the third level of “theologians” is a level in which the thinking of pastors, bishops, priests and monks, and every person who preaches, is active, and this level acts as a bridge between theologians who refine the content and the community. These three reveal the same truth: they oppose faith and oppression. Levels have one goal, which is liberation.

The Theology of Liberation Tree:

We can describe liberation theology as a tree, as it is not permissible to see only professionals of this theology, because in this case our focus will be only on the branches and leaves and we forget both the trunk and the roots, as it is the basis for the tree's food and the tree depends on the roots that are buried and go deeper into the ground to make this tree bear fruit more.

“Therefore, we realize that this theological current is linked to the existence of the people, their faith and their struggle, and is part of the whole view of the Christian life, and it is also the theoretical basis of pastoral work, and it is organically attached to it. Spirituality, liturgy, and morals, and then transformed socially, sacrificing the result of that, in escaping from decline, on what the religious analysts build.”⁵⁷

Shared content

There is a common factor between the three levels of liberation theology that unites them in theological thinking, “since it is one fundamental theology, which is faith that changes history, or real history whose dough is brewing with faith.”⁵⁸ As this theology essentially reflects reality, and the content remains one, as the water that irrigates the tree is one, and it is the water of

⁵⁷ Leonardo Boff, “The Theology of Liberation” (on Al-Masra Magazine, No. 757), p. 139

⁵⁸ Leonardo Boff, “The Theology of Liberation” (on Al-Masra Magazine, No. 757), p. 140

oppression and pain due to poverty, racial discrimination, slavery ... etc., and the analogy is this tree consisting of roots, stems and leaves that depend on water to live, but this The water is murky, so the most affected is the roots, so we see the tree as a whole using various natural means to reach pure water.

Emphasis is placed on different differentiation and styles of theology in the logic of its formulation or more realistic in its language. Folk theology expresses itself in a feminine language full of spontaneity in various ways. As for the class of papers (theologians), it uses sound language that has tightened its rules, in which there is precision in expressions. "And this is the reason that enables us to easily grasp the nature of liberation theology, as we gain insight into its growth and rise from the bottom levels, where we analyze what the popular grassroots groups who are available to read the Bible are doing in clear terms of the oppression and eagerness in their lives to liberate. This is exactly what the theology practices. Emancipation, but in a refined and firm style, as for what is in the matter of intermediate pastoral theology between the two levels, it adopts a logic and language that are both lacking from the base (realistic foundations, reporting), and from the top (the necessity of critical consideration).⁵⁹

In the end, every theologian must do what Christ said: "We are idle slaves, we have done what we should have done" (Luke 10:17), since everyone is a theologian as soon as he consciously declares his faith, especially the theologians (leaves and branches) They are an integral part of the people, so it is imperative for them not to sit in their laboratories to formulate reality and methods of work, but rather to be among the people and work with them, so the liberation theologian exercises the function of the shepherd, the analyst, the interpreter, the coordinator and the

⁵⁹ Ibid. p. 141- 142

encouraging of the people in their faith and at the same time a companion in their path. He accompanies the people of God in spiritual retreats, and that is why the role of the theologian is very important in leading the people.⁶⁰

How to make liberation theology

After we have looked at the personalities who work in the field of liberation theology, we now come to the central part of the research, which is how to make liberation theology with the methods and methodological issues that this realist theology goes through.

But before these three paths there must be a way to reach the people, which is through participation.

- See: where in this first curriculum a realistic analysis of the country is made, or in the places where the liberation theology is established, and all popular facts are clarified, first in terms of the injustice that exists in this country, for example: poverty, racial discrimination, persecution. Secondly, the analysis is carried out in terms of the struggle that the people of the country present against this injustice.
- Judge: where the people see their land and their suffering from the logic of their religion and faith, and basically relying on the Bible to be the best way to march towards this theology in order to lead theologians and be under its guidance.
- Work: After studying the reality and judging work, the most important stage now begins, which is working through the organization of popular committees, trade unions, entering into governmental fields of oppressors (an attempt); It is very important to create a realistic program for the struggle, and to anticipate the possible results, the possibility of distributing

⁶⁰ Leonardo Boff, "The Theology of Liberation" (on Al-Masra Magazine, No. 757), p. 148 - 152

tasks, and mainly attention not to use violence and love for the enemies, so that God remains in the midst of his people and among those he loves (because God loves the oppressed and the forsaken).

The new movement in the church was criticized formally from the Catholic Church, and informally as naïve purveyors of Marxism and advocates of leftist social activism, and the Vatican had begun to curb the movement's influence through the changes that they did in the structure of the church by nominate some new conservative leaders. Despite of this criticized we find that the reflection of the liberation theology become wider and not restrict in Latin America but adopt the context of every nation under an oppression⁶¹.

There have been many criticisms, but among the most important and original problems of liberation theology are the following:

1. Transforming the Church into a sign of revolutionary commitment and considering this commitment as a criterion of her Christian authenticity.
2. Some theologians accept a comprehensive Marxist analysis with a suspicious distinction between "methodology" and ideological content.
3. Liberation theology adopts a dualistic vision of society based on differentiating between capitalist Christians and oppressed Christians, with the presumption of conflict between them without any possibility of reconciliation, and this contradicts Christian principles.
4. Reading the revelation from a political standpoint. This reading considers the revolutionary movements the first engine of the history of salvation and paving the way

⁶¹Stefon, Matt: "Liberation Theology Roman Catholicism" 2011

for the coming of the kingdom of God, and the church can find its unity, inclusion and joining the working class in which alone the meaning of history resides.

5. Theology has no choice but to choose the working class and turn into a strategic and tactical tool for the revolution.⁶²

Local and contextual theology or Liberation theology

Palestinian Christians, especially after the First World War, played an important role in the Palestinian national struggle, as they were pioneers of the struggle work in confronting the Mandate and the Zionist occupation. Their work branched into two divisions, peaceful and intellectual resistance, armed resistance, belonging and the formation of national parties that faced the Zionist occupation.

Since 1948 and the beginning of the Israeli occupation of Palestine until this day, we find that the occupation has negatively affected all aspects of Palestinian life in terms of land, natural resources (water), agricultural land, culture, science, popular interests, and even affected society and social customs, especially the identity of the Palestinian, as a result of its displacement and attempts to empty the spirit of citizenship and nationalism in them. Now the Palestinians are trying and working collectively and individually to establish their presence on this land and to transfer their identity and culture inherited through the years (before the occupation) to this day.

After years of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, we find ourselves facing people that have been striving for liberation since the beginning of the twentieth century. This occupation exploits religion to justify its place in the country, where the Christ was born, and to try to transform this occupation from a political conflict to a religious conflict between Jews and Muslims as if they are

⁶² Sidhum, Fr. William, **Liberation Theology in Latin America**, Dar Al-Mashriq, Beirut 1993, pp. 61-62

not political enemies as a result of the act of violent occupation. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is a catastrophe that has occurred in all cities and villages in Historic Palestine, no Palestinian (Christian or Muslim) is excluded from the result of this persecution.

Liberation is a word that comes directly to our minds in a political sense. We think of individuals or communities suffering from slavery, oppression, underdevelopment, captivity, colonialism, etc. sacrificing themselves to achieve liberation. This brings us to the conclusion that our inability to define the word freedom or liberation comes from the fact that each nation or category has its own idea for the term.⁶³

In 1971, the concept of "liberation theology" arose as a concept that combines what is divine and what is political in a single narrative. This concept became a school that changes the way of thinking about the world; it is a religious movement that originated "in the form of the past" in the late twentieth century in the Catholic Church based in Latin America, and sought to apply the faith by helping the poor and oppressed by participating in political and civil affairs. Both stressed the motivation of the growing awareness of the "wrong" social and economic structures that have caused social inequality and the active participation in changing and nourishing those structures.

Here we can say that all true theology arises from a spiritual idea, according to which we can find that the spirit of the poor is the basic spirit of 'liberation theology'. Understanding the weaker groups and the crushed classes that seek to improve their conditions and take freedom as a tool to achieve that, the poor are the natural reservoir of this idea as the entire class and the popular class containing more proletarians as introduced by Karl Marx.

⁶³ Stefon, Matt: "**Liberation Theology Roman Catholicism**" 2011

Theologians and founders of 'liberation theology' base their spirit on the bible to prove that it stems from class struggle, apartheid, and all problems of color, gender, identity, and class, and are based on the fact that God, regardless of God's concept, exists in the history of his people, to save them. At the same time, this God whom the Church promoted at some point in history as soothing to the revolutions of people and to their anger that is generated by their crises promising them paradise in the afterlife is in the theology of liberation the opposite, it's the God of the poor, who cannot tolerate tyranny and injustice. Thus, when we hear 'liberation theology', we think of highly educated theologians, such as Gustavo Gutierrez.

Despite this, liberation theology remains a complex ecclesiastical and cultural phenomenon and is richer than those who practice theology. Moreover, in the basics of the church, there is a faith that rejects all forms of violence and oppression. Through this analysis of the reality in states, we can find that 'liberation theology' was influenced by Karl Marx.

Marxist ideas have been used explicitly and implicitly by the fathers of liberation theology. In the historical and reciprocal processes Gustavo Gutiérrez implicitly used Marx while Leonardo Boff and José Miranda clearly discussed the relationship between Marxism and Christianity, their parallels and contradiction.

In the science of 'liberation Theology', religious scholars used Marx as a tool to understand, dismantle and deepen poverty analysis. They do not adopt all of his ideas, but they borrow from it concepts and terms that they find useful and succeed in positioning. We can find the relationship between liberation from Marx's point of view and liberation from the point of view of the church with a high degree of clarity. The new movement in the church was officially criticized by the Catholic Church, informally as a naïve financier of Marxism and advocate of left-wing social activism, and the Vatican made changes in the structure of the church in hopes of

curbing the movement's influence. Despite this, we can observe with great consideration that liberation theology expands and transcends the geographical determinants of Latin America. To find wider horizons and spaces, the context of each nation under oppression adopts and embraces them, in a reciprocal relationship worth focusing on. Any human action that reflects God's will on earth is theological, for God loves all human beings and calls on his children to fight sin and speak the truth (as described by Patriarch Michel Sabah)⁶⁴, this is a theological work par excellence. Palestinian Christians are an authentic part of the Palestinian people who are working to liberate their land from Zionist occupation, including clerics who have relied on their ideology and religion to resist this sin towards humanity.

When reading the Palestinian reality and the political occupation associated with religion (the Promised Land), and the existence of Christian Zionist groups that justify the occupation by returning to the Bible, especially the Old Testament, the need for a thought that does not accept the justification of sin but a resistant thought becomes to find ourselves in front of a multiple and divers kinds of theologies as described by Father Rafik Khoury⁶⁵ in the book "Towards a Theology Incarnated in the Soil of Our Country" in the part of theology in Palestine concerned and built": Contextual theology (specific to the historical, social and cultural context, associated with the place and time in which it takes place, which imposes itself with its own rationale and characteristics), historical theology (relative to the history within which it moves), theology of secularism (relates to the secular atmosphere in which it breathes), and the theology of liberation (specific to its goal, which is the liberation of man as an individual or society, from the internal and external constraints that constrain him). Here, according to Father Rafik Khoury, he preferred the term "incarnate

⁶⁴ Personal interview,

⁶⁵ Khoury, Rafek "Towards a Theology Incarnated in the Soil of Our Country" 2011

theology" because it encompasses all meanings and transcends them, combining the divine roots on the one hand and their extensions in the soil of the earth, where this theology is based on several concepts, namely: theology and the local church, theology and history, theology and heritage, theology and culture.

Since God directs his word to the real humans who exist in a particular environment (whether individual or collective). If the person is an individual then through all his components (a rational being, free, according to his feelings...) and at all levels of his being (physical, mental, spiritual...). And if the human being is in a community, the word of God addresses him through all the reasons they are going through, whether social, historical, geographical and cultural. The word of God is addressed to the human as an individual and within the community, and subsequently, the human has to act accordingly in the reality of his life. This word passes through a faithful community, the Church, and in order to become visible and realistic and to be transmitted through the local church, the language of this individual and the community is spoken to be tangible, embodied in time and place and transmitted through a vital, deep and tangible encounter, so this concrete and realistic theology directed at a particular community comes through a certain context through which it reveals its meanings to be transformed into a theological system that helps the man in the same context to understand, express and live his faith in a way that adapts to reality and the community that surrounds him. As the local church understands the conditions of space and time, this theology becomes unique with a realistic idea crystallized in proportion to this context, so that the church has a clear and realistic message that suits the community to whom this word is addressed by God.

This message and word, when transmitted through the context of the local church, enters the history of this place, the church lives in a constant dialogue with history, revealing in it the

signs of the times that help to understand reality by searching for new meanings associated with the historical development of this particular place, and after searching for meanings it is discovered for a Christian community living now and here, finding the unlimited possibilities of the word of God in a specific context and history.

In the message of the Patriarchs of the Middle East, "The Christian Presence in the East", the world was reminded of the following: "Our churches with their faith do not constitute isolated tractors or a foreign body living on the margins of the movement of history but are living in the midst of global and regional interactions, influenced by them, not with, influenced by them. Our Christian communities are the yeast that finds its natural place in the human dough."⁶⁶ and the human being of this history, the Arab man of this time and place, "is the man with whom we declare solidarity because he is part of our humanity, our civilizational depth, the environment of our vocation and our mission."⁶⁷

Thus, this theology became contextual and historical, linked to a local realist church that speaks from within the individual and the community, it does not start from nothing, but from springs that must be returned to, which are the springs of the rich and diverse heritage of this community, to be discovered, studied and understood, so that the incarnate word of God would be transmitted through the local church.

When this word and this theology are fully crystallized, the Church must work hard to connect them to the culture in the country, to develop a culture based on theology and vice versa. Here we mean the broadest definition of culture, it is not just art, but also literature, popular culture, customs of traditions, folklore, holidays, etc. We have a complete and incarnate theology (from

⁶⁶ Christian presence in the East, p.13

⁶⁷ Ibid. No. 54

the heart of the Christian faith: the mystery of the Incarnation), that is, it becomes in the form and concepts close to man.⁶⁸

In the Palestinian cause, in the face of this existential conflict, the Church itself asked where we in all this are. Where is our mission and invitation? And what does God want from us? The initiatives varied in small circles of clerics and secularists, and organized and collective platforms of thought were formed, which issued short and modest documents on the Christian faith, politics and Christian-Muslim relations, and statements were issued bearing the Palestinian cause, conflict and occupation to the world, turning this work into a process of building and crystallizing Palestinian theology at the official level of the Church and the level of the Christian base. There are many examples, including: Al-Leqa' Center: The first place that put forward the idea of the local church and Christian theology where its founder was Dr. Jeries Saad Khoury, a secular man. In its beginnings, the Center began to pay attention to Christian-Muslim relations in Palestine based on the idea of coexistence (space and time) and the one heritage (heritage), and over time a branch of the Center for encounter was established under the name "Theology and the Local Church" which organizes annual meetings and dialogues on the Palestinian cause and issues affecting Christian citizens. Ecumenical Theological Center of the Ecumenical Way: It is a Christian non-governmental organization, founded by the Rev. Dr. Naim Ateeq with its first conference in 1990 in Jerusalem, where the symbols of liberation theology in the world participated and the work of the conference was published in a book entitled "Faith and Intifada" and this organization still operates in Jerusalem, Nazareth and several international branches and

⁶⁸ Khoury. Father Rafeq. "For Open Borders Between Time and Eternity 1" Publications of the Meeting Center, Palestine, 2021, pp. 257-264

is supported by similar movements under the framework of liberation theology, which provides it with financial and educational support and nonviolent forms to resist the occupation.

The Encounter Center and the Sabeel Center were not alone in working in this field, as books of a theological character were and are still being published from various local churches in Palestine, such as: Rev. Mitri Raheb, Bishop Elias Shaqour, Father Emile Choufani, Rev. Munther Ishaq, Father Jamal Khader and others. We recall the pastoral messages of Patriarch Michel Sabah, which are based on a theological vision in the development of the pastoral work of the local church.

From these examples and models, we find an approach to theology, but each of them has their own theological character and dimension, and we find the libertarian theological dimension in the writings of the Rev. Naim Ateeq, who was interested in providing a reading of the Bible taking into account the reality of the Palestinian people and the injustice in which they live and to confront the Zionist, his words became a blessing for the Palestinians, as he raised important issues through his readings, including: Liberation, the concept of God, justice, peace, law and power, and the land, and other concepts and issues.

There is also a political theological dimension and here we mention the writings of Dr. Rafeq Khoury, especially in the book "The Uprising of Heaven and the Intifada of the Earth", in which he explains the false biblical interpretations that have to do with the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, where he provides a sound theological explanation where he raised several issues, the most important of which are: issues of land, choice, intifada, peace, repression... He left out the militant character through his writings, in which man unites with God in the uprising against sin, "The Intifada has a call to renew our faith by obeying God, by rejecting the oppressive oppressors, because whoever obeys the laws of injustice is wrong before God. This theology is a call to break out of the closure and contraction of ourselves, to return to God, to participate more and more, in

the life and concerns of the world in general, and in the life of our society in particular. We must bear witness to Christ and to his teachings in order to free ourselves and only then to attribute to him the liberation of our people: so that we dare to speak the truth, without fear of blame. Why."⁶⁹

It is necessary to mention the dimension on which the Rev. Mitri Raheb built his theology, which is the contextual theological dimension that is based through his studies and books on the Palestinian reading of the Bible, and confronting Zionist narratives and interpretations as he seeks to provide his interpretation of the Bible that does justice to the Palestinians and their fundamental rights, and has also addressed the general context of Palestine, including the Islamic environment, the multiplicity of churches, political tensions, and the development of this contextual theology based on Palestinian art and folklore.

A very important angle and a theological dimension is to give hope and give answers to the Christian base, which he is looking for through his multiple questions about his faith, his identity, his future, his situation in this homeland, where he faced these questions Patriarch Michel Sabah when he was appointed as the first Patriarch of the Latin Church in Jerusalem, and he found that he needed the pastoral theological dimension to address important issues such as political conflict (the meaning of the intifada, its implications, the possibility of peace), and biblical issues (in the Bible) that are used to provoke conflict (violence, choice, The Covenant, the gift of the earth). Patriarch Michel presented it as an answer to Christians' questions so that they would feel that they were not lost.

These theological dimensions are all different in their foundations and angles, but they aim to assimilate themselves, their specificity and understanding of their mission, as they are also

⁶⁹ Khoury, D. Jiries, "Sky Uprising and Uprising Earth" 1989 p. 40

rooted in the general Palestinian context, sensing its pains and tragedies and committed to its causes and hopes, so we can say that we are facing a theology that discusses all areas of human life, faith, culture and politics, we are facing a true local theology.⁷⁰

What distinguishes this theology, first of all, the fact that it is not artificial, but contextual and stems from the fruit of facing the pain and suffering of a people under the oppression of the occupation looking for its liberation, so the birth of this theology in all its dimensions in a spontaneous way stemmed from the questions of the Christian base about its future and its role from everything that is happening in the region, and this theology made its way itself, in exchange for a Western theology that seeks to justify oppression and injustice, so that this theology emanating from the soil of this land becomes positive for the needs and aspirations of Christians. It is also an ecumenical theology. We find that it was born simultaneously without prior planning, among all the churches in Palestine, not stopping at what divides the churches, but at what helps the churches deepen their identity, mission and role in the Palestinian context. It is also a theology of work and practice, it is not the product of office work or behind doors, but the product of work and daily confrontation, it was positive for the Christian base for the Christian rule, as mentioned earlier in the section on liberation theology that it started from the base and reality and is not the result of theological reflections, it is a theology that does not only analyse reality but works to change reality. Since it is a theology of practice, it becomes with the passage of years of occupation and as a result of different eras that the Palestinian cause has passed, it has become a theology. Experience and thinking are an idea born of experience and suffering, and it did not stop at pain and doubt, but turned experience into an idea and material that can be researched and scrutinized;

⁷⁰ Khoury. Father Rafeq. "For Open Borders Between Time and Eternity 1" Publications of the Meeting Center, Palestine, 2021, pp. 269-278

experience remains infertile if it does not turn into an idea, and thinking highlights this experience, as Palestinian experience in all its aspects constitutes a prolific theological material.⁷¹

As it was mentioned previously, the Palestinian theology is not pure liberation theology as Bishop Jamal Khader⁷² indicated, “every country has its own theology depends on the context of the country” where pastor Monther Isaaq mentioned that “Theology in Germany stems from feelings of guilt towards the world, while American theology stems from the realization of the American dream through happiness, and at the time theology in Palestine stems from injustice and suffering.”⁷³ That means the Palestinian local theology is more general than the other theologies, due to the possible adaptation of the reality and reflection of time, time and events taking place on the ground. Where Pastor Munther described it as “a local theology that interacts with the context” He added that contextual theology is broader than the liberation theology and broader than political theology⁷⁴ and he added that “contextual theology will deal with issues specific to their context and deal with them and read them with the eyes of faith, this is a first concept. And a second concept is reading the Bible through the eyes of your personal experience, which is like your experience as a person living in a specific environment that affected the human being and affected your needs and your understanding of God and the meaning of life”⁷⁵

In the face of this reality and pain, what is God's message to us? We find the answer through this contextual local theology that leads us to libertarian theology. Saying at the right moment a word of truth that reflects reality to become a message to the world that it is enough of the

⁷¹ Khoury. Father Rafeq. "For Open Borders Between Time and Eternity 1" Publications of the Meeting Center, Palestine, 2021, P.278-283

⁷² Jamal Khader. Personal interview, on 12th of Sept 2022

⁷³ Munther Isaac. Personal interview, on 14th of Sept 2022

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

oppression and injustice that is happening, and here Palestinian theologians of clerics and secularists stand in front of themselves and each other carrying each of them a certain theological dimension, a way of thinking and studying from a different angle, even following different churches, sitting together thinking where are we in all this and what needs to be done? Let's find ourselves in front of a message and a cry of hope to the world that it is time to work to end the state of sin imposed on the Palestinian people, it was the "pause for the right of Palestine" (Kairos Palestine), this is what we will talk about in the next chapter to find out what this document is? What is its global dimension? What is its impact on the world? So, what is its impact on the Israeli occupation?

Section III: Kairos Palestine document as a model

In section I, the National Identity and the national Palestinian Identity were defined, while in the section II, the Palestinian reality and what has been presented by the Palestinian Christians towards their conflict and the preservation of their identity as “Individuals” or “churches” have been studied, in Section III the liberation theology and its foundation in Latin America and the methodology on which it was built was explained (look, judge, action) were studied, an emphasis was placed on local theology, focusing on its dimensions and what characterizes this theology and the role of clergy and secular believers in the face of the myths and the false narratives, that the Zionist movement (To occupy the land), and the Zionist Christians (to support the occupation) rely on. Through this chapter, the two previous chapters will be linked in terms of applying the methodology and the theology of liberation, on the theologians who have theological schools, which are united as a team through their publication of the document "Kairos Palestine" and their impact on the Israeli occupation and its future on national and global levels.

What is Kairos Palestine?

What is Kairos Theology? But we can first talk about the meaning of Kairos as a word from Greek which means “opportune moment”, “right moment” for something to happen, “favourable time”. It is better to use the term “time”, but it is a different time.

The ancient Greek used to have two words for the modern notion of “time”: Chronos and Kairos. While chronos was used to determine the chronological time, the sequential and lineal time, Kairos was used by the Greek to refer to an existential time. In the mythological language,

Kairos was used to resist to the merciless god Chronos. While chronos refers to quantity of time, Kairos refers to quality of time.

The South African theologian Allan Boesak defines a Kairos consciousness as follows: “though some speak of a “Kairos time”, Kairos is actually a “moment”, of truth, of discernment, of discovery. It is a revelation of the reality we live in, of what is at stake and our responsibility in that moment. It is a moment decisive in history. Not all history but ours, of the times in which we live. In that sense it is unique, for us to see, understand, and act upon. Without seeing, understanding and acting the moment passes us by. A Kairos consciousness is a consciousness awake and open to the discovering of and responding to the decisiveness and uniqueness of that moment”^{76,77}

"Kairos Palestine" Waqfet Haqq" are words of Hope and love, it is a document that was issued in the year 2009 AD by a group of Christian clerics and some secular people. It is a document written at a certain moment in time, in the absence of hope, it is a cry to the world to stand up and take a right stand towards the injustice, displacement and racial discrimination facing the Palestinian people, as this suffering continues under the silence and shame of the international community in criticizing the practices of the Israeli occupation, and calling on all churches and Christians in the world to stand against racial discrimination, motivating them to work for a just peace, and reconsider any theology that justifies the crimes committed against the Palestinian people, justifying their murder, expulsion from their homeland and home, and theft of their land.

⁷⁶ <http://Kairossouthernafrica.wordpress.com/Kairos-consciousness/> . Access in 02nd April 2014

⁷⁷ Buttelli, Felipe Gustavo Koch. “Liberative Justice – A Brazilian Response to Kairos Palestine” theologies and cultures, Vol. XI, No 1 June 2014, pp. 84-96

This document did not occur by chance, it stems from people, who provided books or articles and were pioneers in the application of local Palestinian Theology, based on the Christian faith, which does not accept a neutral stand in the presence of suffering people, as Bishop Atallah Hanna wrote, "It is not only a message of solidarity with the Palestinian people, but a message that adopts this just cause and defends it by all peaceful, civilized and humane means"⁷⁸ and what distinguishes this document is that it is not an abstract theology or even a political paper, but rather a document of faith and action, and it is full of boldness and openness without any ambiguity in its proposal for a solution that will lead to a just and lasting peace. The document declares its position on non-violent resistance as a right and duty for all Palestinians, Patriarch Michel Sabah stressed during my meeting with him that God's call to us is to love the other not just in the refusal to keep him in sin, but to free him from the darkness in which he is and to define the truth, as Christ said, "and you know the truth, and the truth frees you". (John 8: 32).

When reading the document, we find ourselves in front of the result of the experience carried by its authors, and this experience manifested itself in an attitude that was shocking to the world, where they relied in their analysis on the methodology of the liberation theology, which is as follows:

The document began according to the liberation theology by looking at which reality is lived and why is it time to write such a document:

1. Everyone talks about peace, about the approaching date of the declaration of the State of Palestine, but all these are just promising that have no application on the ground, "Peace, peace,' they say, when there is no peace." (Jeremiah 6:14)

⁷⁸ Hanna, Atallah. "The Cross of Injustice – Easter Reflections" from the Kairos Document pamphlet, The Easter Appeal, Together towards the Jubilee. 2016. p 13

2. The construction of the separation wall, which turns Palestinian cities and villages into prisons with one exit, and that is through the Israeli checkpoints, which obstruct anyone who wants to move in all directions.
3. Israeli settlements are established daily on Palestinian lands and control natural resources.
4. Separation of Palestinian families, especially families in which one of the spouses holds the Jerusalem identity.
5. The growing number of refugees in camps where the conditions are difficult and unworthy of man.
6. Thousands of prisoners are in Israeli prisons.
7. Jerusalem, the centre of peace, has become a place of conflict, where Palestinian homes are destroyed on a daily basis and lands are confiscated from Palestinians who live there.
8. The internal situation of the Palestinians between the West Bank and Gaza (the split between Fatah and Hamas).⁷⁹

All these political data that removed all the hopes of the Palestinian people for Peace, made the theologians of Palestine from different churches pray, think and judge the Palestinian reality with a Christian theological perspective. The reality was different from the rest of the world and the places where theology is used, in this land the Bible is used for the injustice practiced against the people, as Palestine has become heaven because the word of God has been incarnated in it, and as in Palestine the heavenly messages have come down, this land has become for every human being, which makes it a universal message because God has distinguished it in the presence of

⁷⁹ Kairos Palestine, 2009 n.1

these religions, therefore, the world should respect the will of God in them and free them from injustice, therefore The Israeli occupation of the Palestinian land is a sin against God and against humanity, and the use of the Bible to justify or support political choices and positions, turns religion into a human ideology, and strips the word of God of its holiness, universality and truth, because it subjects God to the reconciliation of mankind and distorts his image and makes this land, which should be the meeting point of all the world, a point of separation, conflict and large prisons inside the wall.⁸⁰

What is distinctive about this document is that it was not just a political speech or a declaration of a state of an unjust cause or even a stand of solidarity, but it went beyond that by putting important points to work for the state of sin and war, namely resistance, but non-violent resistance. It "is the Christian choice in the face of the Israeli occupation, resistance is a Christian's right and duty, but according to the logic of Love (which the logic of Love was explained earlier), it is creative resistance, that is, it finds human ways that address the enemy's humanity. "Christ has taught us to resist evil, but to resist evil with evil"⁸¹. There are many options, including "boycotting Israeli goods, withdrawing investments from them, imposing sanctions against them," "civil disobedience," and "calling for the world to visit Palestine and live together with the people of the land". Through this theory that it is a kind of resistance, it is the restoration of methodology in the hearts of visitors, where they see the reality, judge the truth and start working.

This is the document that was issued from Palestine to the whole world to become a reference for the opinion of Palestinian Christians at the level of the clergy and ecumenically (through the existence of various churches). This theology has left a great impact on the Israeli

⁸⁰ **Kairos Palestine**, 2009, n.2 and 3

⁸¹ *Ibid*, n.4

side, what actions have been carried out through this document from the time of its issuance to this day, and what impact has it had on the Israeli occupation?

The impact of Kairos Palestine on the Israeli occupation

Kairos Palestine works on several levels in order to reach its goal, and the stand for the right of Palestine was not just words to describe and explain the situation of the Palestinian and the Palestinian issue, but addressed the world and appealed to them to stop this injustice, the speech was addressed to all those:

The Palestinian Christian community: Kairos urged them to withstand, resist the occupation, be patient, and carry the message even among thorns and blood, despite the small number, but the call and steadfastness is the duty of every Christian.

Muslim Palestinians: their call for love, coexistence, getting rid of extremism and intolerance, and a message to the world that Muslims are not a title of terrorism, but peace, and a title of dialogue.

Israeli society: inviting them to live together with love, remove the occupation, and establish justice.

Churches of the world: a tribute to the position of many churches and Christians supporting the Palestinian people in the right to self-determination, which is a call for repentance, consideration of theological positions that support political positions, the injustice of the Palestinian people, in addition to addressing the international community, and the application of all international resolutions against the Palestinian people.

A call to the Palestinian and Israeli people: to reach a common vision based on equality, non-superiority, denial of the other, and aggression against it under the pretext of fear and security, and that educational curricula work to know the other without denying it, and the establishment of

a state for all citizens away from religion and ethnicity, and a message to the Palestinian leaders of the need to end the Palestinian division and put an end to it.⁸²

Through this research, we find that the authors of this document worked hard to left impacts on the Israeli occupation from several ways, the most important are:

- 1) Theologically by talking about the Zionist theology and the Christian Palestinian theology.
- 2) International (the churches of the world)
- 3) Local through Palestinian Christians, strengthening their role and unifying their national and religious identity.

When we talk about theological, it is important to mention the description of the Kairos Palestine coordinator Mr. Rifat Qassis that “Kairos Palestine is not a message to the world. Dozens have sent messages. Rather, it is a call and a theological cry and an integrated movement to end the injustice that is the opposite of God’s will, and therefore it is an ecumenical Palestinian theology (from all churches) that represents everyone”⁸³ While the Rev. Mitri Raheb said that “it did not reach to be a theology, but rather it is an initiative and the largest ecumenical platform in the world in terms of the churches gathered in, but it is written by a group of Palestinian theologians whose intellectual references differ from each other, some of them believe in contextual theology and some in the liberation theology, and others believes in Comparative theology and so on..”⁸⁴ Through research, we find that Kairos is a compound of theology to turn with time into a theology under the name Kairos Theology, which began to be taught in several international universities.

⁸² Kairos Palestine document, 2009 “Our word to our brothers and sisters” number 5.

⁸³Rifat Qassis, Personal interview, on 13th of sept. 2022

⁸⁴ Mitri Al-Raheb, Personal interview on 12th of sept. 2022

We find that the Kairos Document refutes the Israeli version, the authors of which tried to forcibly link the will of the Supreme Lord and the rise of this illegal entity on the bodies and parts of his sons, Arabs, and Muslims, and from this door, this document gains great theological strength, and a very important window in standing in front of the currents of religious falsehood, from (Christian Jews) and Zionists affiliated with the new Jewish religion.

It should also be noted that the Kairos Document stressed that the state of Israel is nothing but a usurping and illegal Zionist entity, and the occupation of those who do not have what they have, and that this military occupation is a sin against God and against Man, and that the theology that justifies this occupation is nothing but a false and distorted theology and is very far from Christian teachings, and Christian theology based on the principle of tolerance and love, helping the oppressed and achieving justice among the peoples of the Earth.

One of the doors of power that helps the Kairos Document is the language written in it, which is the product of rational thought, a very great awareness, and far from bloodshed, wars, violence, etc., and this refutes the claim of occupation, which portrays us in front of the peoples of the world as barbaric and barbaric peoples.

What the Israeli occupation state is doing is nothing but a policy similar to that of the white minority in South Africa, and the policy of separation pursued by the occupation state is similar to the policy of apartheid, from this point of view the Palestinian Christians wanted to have a unified word to eliminate this occupation, and its ethnic policy based on the principle of religion and race; discrimination and injustice between people.

The lofty message carried by the Kairos Document is the achievement of justice and equality between societies, and that Christ came to Earth in order to complete this mission and achieve justice; to spread throughout the Earth and those in it, and came to interpret the previous

heavenly books of the Torah and others, and in this document Christians refute the Israeli claims of the divine promise of the Holy Land, and the crimes committed by the occupation against the Palestinians, under the pretext of these allegations.

“The shift from individual theological work at the level of small institutions or individual theologians, to collective ecumenical work among all the churches in Palestine through Kairos Palestine made the voice of Palestinian Christians stronger in the world and present in all international forums related to churches and global theology”, this is what pastor Munther Ishaac described⁸⁵. Kairos Palestine was not just a message to the world for the occupying power, but came as an unexpected lightning bolt, gaining support from some churches and international communities, as the document was used in many Christian groups and denominations to encourage Christian opposition to Israel. It has not been officially adopted by the World Council of churches. She has also been criticized by both Jewish and Christian groups.

The document’s authors worked hardly to transfer the message into tangible reaction by calling the world announcing different initiatives and campaigns for solidarity with the rights of the Palestinian people and to lift the occupation by putting pressure on Israel. The document also called during its annual meetings to classify Israel as an apartheid state. One of the initiatives and actions that that can be considered as a continuation of Kairos Palestine is Global Kairos for justice (GKJ), it is “a worldwide coalition of concerned Christians from different churches, denominational and national (or people of faith), churches and church related organizations born in response to the Kairos Palestine “Moment of Truth: a word of faith, hope, and love from the heart of Palestinian suffering” and it is committed to none violent means, calling for ending of the Israeli colonization of Palestine and advocating for the right of self-determination of Palestinian

⁸⁵Monther Isaac. Personal interview 14th of Sept. 2022

people and peace with justice for all people in the holy land.”⁸⁶ GKJ has several accomplishment action such as:

Cry for hope campaign: which is a call to decisive action, on a matter that Christian believes relates to the integrity of their Christian faith. With the ‘logic of love’ Kairos Palestine stated seven demands as a reaction to the 2018 Nation State Law and the actions that the US has made from moving its embassy to Jerusalem, to sharing the ‘peace to prosperity’ plan in 2020, declaring that any support for the oppression of Palestine whether passive or active is a sin. The seven actions demanded included: initiating a process that recognizes the rights of the Palestinians and deals with the misuse of the bible. Calling for an inclusive vision of the lands for Palestinians and Israelis. Affirming the Palestinians’ right to resist. Demanding the stop of human rights and international law violations. Supporting initiatives that work on partnerships between Palestinians and Israelis. Inviting everyone to visit the territories and see and stand in solidarity with the Palestinians.⁸⁷

Come and see: an invitation that the Palestinian Christian issue to the world, to make it known to the Christians all over the world that the truth, the reality, and how the Palestinians engage in non-violent acts of resistance as a course of life by worshipping in churches and mosques, passing by checkpoints every day in order to go to work or school and also by protesting non-violently in many places like Ne'len and Bel'in in order to call the world's attention against the Israel's occupation. This invitation encourages the Palestinian Christian receiving pilgrims coming to pray and become as a messenger telling the truth and carrying a message of peace, love and reconciliation.⁸⁸

⁸⁶ <https://www.cryforhope.org/index.php/about-global-kairos>

⁸⁷ Sabah, H.B. Michel “Cry for hope: A call to decisive action” Public Launch 1st of July 2020

⁸⁸ “Come and See”: A message of hope and resistance expressed in the Palestinian Kairos document

The Apartheid Dossier: A theological Study that the members of Kairos Palestine and Global Kairos for Justice had created for Christian and civil society organizations to guide them and encourage them to learn more about the crimes of apartheid, and the reasons why the Palestinian describe the Israeli occupation as an apartheid through a clear description of how Israel's laws, policies and practices meet the international definition, a Biblical/theological reflection describing the sin of apartheid, a heartfelt call to the global church to hear the please of the Palestinian Christian. This Study included a brief summaries and link to many of the reports calling out the apartheid, statements made by churches. This study is based on the definition of crime of apartheid and its description in the three most important and international documents which are The Geneva Conventions; The International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid; and the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.⁸⁹

BDS “Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions” Tool Kit: a way for resisting the apartheid and the Israeli occupation. This toolkit is a resource developed by Global Kairos for Justice, a network that emerged from the Kairos Palestine conference held in Bethlehem in 2018, GKJ commissioned this BDS Toolkit, for the purposes of providing important information and educating people about why economic actions are needed to make change in Israel's record of human rights violations against Palestine. Since the call for BDS is faced with intense opposition globally, this toolkit aims to let justice-seeking people working for Palestinian rights know that they do not walk this road alone. BDS is a tactic, a means to an end. It offers a unique and distinct witness through time-honoured, non-violent tools and actions, calling for justice for Palestinians and Palestine.

by Global Ministries | published on Oct 10, 2014 on the website:

https://www.globalministries.org/come_and_see/?fbclid=IwAR3_KqTJtkNkCNDZzSgqL4mqc1OjuRcdnifeJmNTwkqDIhx5LES_G-3XE6UM

⁸⁹“A Dossier on Israeli Apartheid” A Pressing Call to Churches Around the World, Prepared by: Kairos Palestine and Global Kairos for Justice 2022

Reactions and Criticism on Kairos Palestine

In 2010, a gathering of church leaders in South Africa endorsed the document a report on this endorsement noted that the "support for the Palestinians in Christian circles is gaining moral momentum and theological legitimacy" and called this "a very important trend, especially considering the fact that Christian Zionists have been among the most vocal and influential in supporting the state of Israel."⁹⁰

While this letter was rejected, the Presbyterian Church in the United States (PCUSA), in addition to endorsing the basic principles of the Kairos Palestine document, issued a study guide for its members to use during the examination of the entire document. The study guide was prepared by the Middle East monitoring group. In a statement issued on June 24, 2011, the Simon Wiesenthal Centre (SWC) expressed its disapproval, claiming that "the study guide does not accurately portray the Kairos Palestine document (KPD) for what it is: a revisionist document of hatred of Israel and contempt for Jews".

The Simon Wiesenthal Centre (SWC) described the Kairos Palestine document as casting "a political agenda in theological garb, rewriting history, ignoring Jewish roots and presence in the Holy Land for thousands of years" and placing "all the blame for the tragedy and the conditions of the Palestinians on Israel and nothing on the actions of the Palestinians who blew up innocent Israelis in restaurants and fired rockets at school buses". The Christian Council also criticized the document for using "an alternative theology that denies the legitimacy of Judaism and Jews".

⁹⁰ Chehata, Dr. Hanan (April 7, 2010). "Church leaders condemn Israel and Christian Zionism". Middle East Monitor.

In addition, the SWC Committee criticized PCUSA's study guide for failing to "guide readers on both sides of the conflict". Instead, said Rabbi Abraham Cooper of SWC, the PCUSA study guide "reads like an endorsement of the Kairos Document by the church leadership. Where the guide offers suggestions for reading, it selects almost exclusively from documents that have long been criticized as anti-Israel.⁹¹

Another guide to the Kairos Palestine document was prepared by the Israeli / Palestinian missions Network (IPMN), a group of activists within PCUSA. IPMN denounced the SWC's criticism of the PCUSA study guide, saying that the SWC's "tactics are shameful".

Abraham Foxman, national director of the Anti-Defamation League, criticized PCUSA on July 15, 2010, for endorsing the document, calling the document "a prime example of an attempt to undermine the legitimacy of Israel as a Jewish state". Foxman accused the document of calling "terrorism a form of legal resistance", supporting "boycott and divestment against Israel", and denying "any connection between the biblical covenants and the Jewish people".⁹²

Malcolm Lowe, a Distinguished Senior Fellow at the Gatestone Institute [citation needed] and a critic of the document, complained that while the document implicitly accuses the Israelis of legitimizing their Zionism on Biblical grounds, the document's authors "know ... Most Israelis do that. Do not subscribe to such a theology, but the political theology of Hamas already calls for violence and holy war in the name of the Almighty (or in any case in the name of Allah)."⁹³

Lowe also noted that the World Council of Churches (WCC) was "heavily involved in the preparation of this document as part of its long-term program to promote Palestinian political goals" and argued that the document "aims to mobilize churches around the world in the Boycott,

⁹¹ <http://www.eif-pcusa.org/InterfaithRelations/InterfaithRelationsandtheMiddleEast.html#churches>

⁹² "Presbyterian Church Still One-Sided on Israel". Anti-Defamation League.

⁹³ Lowe, Malcolm (April 2010). "The Palestinian Kairos Document: A Behind-the-Scenes Analysis". New English Review. Retrieved 30 July 2013.

Divestment and delegitimization program directed at the state of Israel ". Lowe further suggested that the document's reference to the 1985 South African document represented an implicit comparison of Israel to the apartheid regime in South Africa.⁹⁴

The heads of the United Church of Christ (UCC) and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) praised the Kairos Palestine document as "strong" in a joint statement issued in April 2010 that encouraged members of both denominations to read the document and support Palestinians and boycott products of Israeli settlements in the West Bank. "The Palestinian Christian Leadership has taken a bold step by declaring this a kairos moment, a designation not for a chronological time, but a ripe opportunity to take extremely important actions, a moment that could be lost if the opportunity is not seized," the church's joint statement said.⁹⁵

The Episcopal Fellowship of peace also supported the document, despite the Episcopal Church's general rejection of divestment against Israel. Bishop John Bryson Chanel found EPF's call for divestment "seriously flawed and unhelpful at this particular time in history", telling Episcopal News Service that the sanctions advocated by Kairos Palestine "also harm the important development of the Palestinian economy and further marginalize the Palestinian people ".⁹⁶

On April 15, 2010, the Kairos Palestine document was vetoed, and the Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR) criticized the controversy for saying "pushing Israel into isolation is the only way to find a peaceful solution in the Holy Land". While the document claimed to condemn both sides of the Israeli-Palestinian struggle, it included "statements that Justify one side

⁹⁴ Ibid. s

⁹⁵ A pastoral response to the Palestine Kairos document: "A Moment of Truth". United Church of Christ. Archived from the original (PDF) on 2013-10-04. Retrieved 2013-08-09.
<https://web.archive.org/web/20131004215154/http://www.disciples.org/Portals/0/PDF/DNS/2010/20100407-UCCDOCGMPalestineKairos.pdf>

⁹⁶ Peace fellowship supports economic sanctions for Middle East peace". Episcopal News Service.

while demonizing the other," applied a "moral standard" to Israel and another to the Palestinians and called for action only against Israel. The rabbis noted that the document "constantly objects to the 'occupation', without clarifying that it refers exclusively to the territories occupied by Israel and disputed since the Six-Day War of 1967". The idea of a Jewish state ". The rabbis were also concerned that the document while claiming to reject violence, expressed "respect" and "great appreciation for those who sacrificed their lives for our nation," which they interpreted as praise for suicide bombers.

The centre further said that the document "rejects or ignores more than half a century of rapprochement between Jews and Christians," and such previous documents seek to "delegitimize the continuous covenant of the Jewish people with God, especially by saying that Jesus has annulled our covenant. And Christianity. Noting that "these church documents were used as an excuse to persecute us, expel us and even try to annihilate us," the center said that "at the beginning of the Holocaust and the Second World War, especially the beginning of Vatican II, the Jewish people expect better from our Christian Brothers and sisters. The rabbis warned that "CCAR will require serious reflection before pursuing our common cause with any church body or organization that supports Kairos or continues to support it."⁹⁷

Through the previous examples of the reaction that took place in the world and in some churches, we find that we are facing a message that has the power to change reality towards the Palestinian cause and that this criticism stems from the fear that this document has influenced the state of Israel in several attempts:

⁹⁷ "A Rebuttal to the Kairos Document". The Centre for Israel & Jewish Affairs. April 15, 2010.

Influencing the Zionist narrative and relying on the Bible to justify their actions through the existence of a Christian theology, thought and narrative, stemming from a local theology contextual libertarian.

Influencing the churches in different countries of the world especially attempts to influence the Zionist churches by speaking in the same Christian religious context and explaining the teachings of the Bible in a Palestinian way.

One of the most important things that Kairos Palestine has affected is at the national level. Despite all that the Church has done to strengthen the steadfastness of those who were addicted through their attempts to communicate, communicate and make meetings with Palestinian Christians, they did not reach everyone and did not understand them, and thus there became a gap between the reality Christians and the voice of the Church, but through Kairos Palestine, there is an approach between the national and religious identities.

At the level of national identity, according to Bishop Jamal Khader, “the national identity remains with the human being wherever he is always. The virus of Palestine worked to create a clear space for Palestinian Christians by expressing their patriotism and resisting occupation through their Christian identity as well, that is, through resistance, especially from the eyes of their Christian faith.”⁹⁸

The impact on the economy of the occupation state by encouraging investors to withdraw their investments from the apartheid state, and also encourages the boycott of Israeli goods, especially the goods of settlements established in the West Bank.

The impact of the stereotype carried by the politicized media and controlled by the Zionist lobby in the world that:

⁹⁸ Jamal Khader. Personal interview, on 12th of Sept. 2022

The change in the perception of the conflict is that it is not a Jewish-Islamic conflict, nor the origins of Christians in this land, as an existential conflict, and that Christians are subjected to all the inconveniences of the occupation like any other Palestinian.

Changing the image of the Palestinian people from a terrorist to a person who loves their enemies and works to bring them out of darkness and sin.

A change in the thinking of a Christian man who has become lost in his identity between a Christian and a Palestinian to unite them together and understand that God calls him to be the owner of the truth says the truth and works to spread peace in the world.

Influencing the tourism sector and encouraging tourists and inviting them through their churches to come to Palestine as pilgrims and messengers of peace to "see and see" the reality of the Palestinian people by living with Palestinians in their homes and passing through Israeli barriers and experiencing Palestinian life instead of relying on tourism companies that do not show them the reality.

In all the above mentioned, it is a small part of the impact that is happening on the Israeli occupation state by Palestinian Christians, and it is clear that the impact is caused by a small group suffering from emigration and a decrease in numbers, but as Mr. Rifaat Kassis stated in one of his articles entitled "The Future of Christians in Palestine: presence and not existence" that "despite the increasing numbers of Christians who emigrate, the presence of Christians is strong and categorical if we distinguish between Existence and Presence. Existence is about numbers, while Presence focuses on the role and activities of Christians in serving their Palestinian community. Presence is also associated with Christian integration into their community and with their fellow

man facing the same fate”.⁹⁹ He adds about the Kairos Document of Palestine, what distinguishes it, and what is its impact, that “it was the most daring Palestinian document in presenting theological and political issues. It was almost the first document to discuss theological issues close to taboo, such as the promise in the Bible and the misuse of the Bible for political or other purposes. Thus, the document considers the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territory a sin against God and the people. Politically, the document was courageous in its criticism of Israel, holding it responsible for the repression, murder, and destruction, and criticizing the United States for its blind support of Israel. The document stressed the right of return for Refugees and the unconditional release of all Palestinian detainees. The document criticized the internal Palestinian division but blamed the international community for boycotting Palestinian democracy. The document did not hesitate to engage in self-criticism and criticize the people who created this situation. The height of her boldness was her demand that the churches of the world boycott Israel and force it to obey international law.”¹⁰⁰

The Christian presence is strong and effective and should be seen as a Palestinian presence. All the above facts provide a strong motivation for further participation in public issues and active participation to serve the interests of our Pa This is what theologians in Palestine affirm that the Christian presence is a small presence like the people of the country, where Patriarch Michel Sabah describes that “Christians are Palestinian citizens with full rights and duties, not a minority.”

Bishop Jamal Khader explained this by saying that Palestinian citizenship and identity is a characteristic of a Palestinian Christian, and he cannot live far from reality without defending God’s will by turning away from evil and stopping the suffering of the Palestinian people.” He

⁹⁹ Qassis, Rifat. The Future of Christians in Palestine: presence and not existence.

<https://www.kairopalestine.ps/index.php/resources/statements/the-future-of-christians-in-palestine-presence-rather-than-existence>

¹⁰⁰ Ibid

also added that this citizenship and identity stems from an authentic group that has a long history in the country is not a minority that is looking for concessions from the ruling authorities and has no clear action against the occupation in its country.”¹⁰¹

Through the interviews, a consensus was reached from the book *Kairos Palestine* that the work on *Kairos* did not end when it was launched, but the work lasted and continued, through the participation of the Palestinian theologians and writers of *Kairos Palestine* in international conferences and with various churches in order to promote the idea of boycotting Israel and stopping investments in it, and they work to spread the Palestinian reading of the Bible, and this is the most important impact on the Israeli occupation intellectually and economically.

Outlook, what is the future of *Kairos Palestine*?

Thirteen years after Issuing *Kairos Palestine*, what is the future of *Kairos Palestine* and how can it be continued to remain renewed in its language and depth?

Kairos movements exist in many countries in the Global South as well as in the Global North. The international movement is dependent on a committee in which *Kairos Palestine* plays the significant role of facilitating and coordinating the various committees’ tasks of looking at theological and political rhetoric, exchanging information, unifying advocacy strategies and suggesting activities that take into consideration the specificity of each country deriving from the *Kairos* concept of acting now for justice.

Kairos Palestine Today is translated into 23 international languages, thousands of people support it and signed it, and are working for a just peace in Palestine, International Churches have adopted the document and urge their children to work for an end to injustice and suffering, it is currently being implemented in more than 40 countries in the world, all of them have become active and

¹⁰¹ Jamal Khader. Personal interview. 12th of sept. 2022

influential, international youth movements are working to advocate for the Palestinian people, (and I personally was with one of these institutions FORBUNET in Norway) where this institution worked with university students to adopt the Christian initiative "Kairos Palestine" and is working to publish it also works on the cultural exchange by visiting the Palestinian territories and receiving Palestinians Young people in Norway to make tours to talk about their Palestinian cause. As Mr. Nidal Abu Zuluf said, "Kairos Palestine has not remained a message carried by Palestinian theologians but has become a message carried by thousands in several countries in the world to continue working on it, so we find many pages and groups bearing the name Kairos Sweden, Kairos Norway, Kairos USA... And many others"¹⁰² who are working to pursue the goals of Kairos.

In light of the continuity of the Palestinian situation as it has been since the moment of writing Kairos Palestine and the reality is unchanged internally, this means the continuity of work for Kairos Palestine, but it needs to develop and find ways to address the people in a more developed way that mimics the rapid development in the world. John Dabit, a Palestinian Christian living in America, also “stressed that the Palestinian identity is being strengthened abroad among Christians and Muslims, and that work needs a lot, especially in the process of pressure and advocacy. In order to urge them to support the Palestinian cause”.¹⁰³

The question here remains without a clear answer because injustice and suffering continue, work with all countries of the world continues, but as we find that all the facts that existed in 2009 to write this document continue from incursions, arrests, expansion of settlements, and assassinations, as the division still exists.

¹⁰² Nidal Abu Al-Zuluf Personal Interview, 15th of Aug. 2022

¹⁰³ John Dabeet Personal Interview on the 13th of Sept 2022

Conclusion

Palestinian Christians are an integral part of the Palestinian people. The Christian presence has been since the birth of Christ until today. Palestinian Christians have played a major role in all civilizations that inhabited this land. Palestinian Christians have passed through the ages for many challenges, obstacles and difficulties that have passed them on this holy land, the latest of which was the Israeli occupation of Palestine. Since the beginning of the conflict, Christian Palestinians have maintained their identity and nationality as Arabs and Palestinians and have had a prominent impact in the struggle and peaceful and armed resistance.

Through this research, we learned about their role in confronting the Zionist theology used by Israel and the Zionist churches in reading the Bible to justify their occupation of the land and justify the killing, violence and displacement of Palestinians on the basis that this land is the Promised Land.

After this individual work, Palestinian theologians United their efforts to launch the Waqf document of the right of Palestine (Kairos Palestine), which works to reflect the Palestinian reality and judge it through logic and Christian faith.

At the end of this research, it is worth mentioning in this context that the Palestinian theological vision emerged from the suffering suffered by the Palestinian people and Palestinian Christians in particular, and that this vision is exposed to many challenges, the biggest of which is the external challenge represented by Zionist Christianity and the Zionist lobby and the internal challenge resulting from the Israeli occupation, but this initiative continues to work and mobilize public opinion and international churches to end this occupation.

Results and Recommendations

The most important findings and suggestions—along with the sources, references, and literature that were used in this study—will be presented in this final chapter to help clarify the study's main tenets. These findings and recommendations were based on the readings and analyses that were used in the study. Additionally, a list of recommendations will be given to Palestinian theologians, Palestinian decision-makers, and a group of academics researching the Arab Israeli conflict. These recommendations may help these individuals strengthen the position of Palestinian theologians and promote Palestine's theological vision, in addition to the charismatic role of Palestinians.

Results

The study reached a set of results that can be reviewed as follows:

- The thought and philosophy of liberation theology originated in Latin American countries in the seventies of the last century; under the colonization of these people and countries by the United States of America, Christian voices and ideas appeared demanding justice, freedom, and equality for the peoples in these countries, and many Christian religious figures have emerged who have had a great influence on the world arena.
 - Liberation theology moved from Latin American countries to South Africa, which was under an authoritarian regime based on apartheid, and the discrimination of the white minority group over the black category, which was the majority, and many religious figures emerged in South Africa, headed by Desmond Tutu.
 - In light of the growing liberation theology in South Africa, and following repressive practices, the idea of the Kairos Document emerged, and despite the division of the
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churches in South Africa, this document united the church's voice against injustice, tyranny, and repressive practices to achieve the desired goal, and the great echo that contributed to the end of the apartheid regime.

- Under the Israeli occupation of the Holy Land and the repressive practices practiced by the Israeli occupation state, the Palestinian liberation theological vision arose, which demanded an end to this occupation, and has provided a new theological vision to interpret the Bible, in addition to demanding justice, equality, and freedom for the Palestinian people.
 - The difference in the vision of liberation theology in Latin America and South Africa from the Palestinian liberation theology lies in the demand of liberation theology in Latin America and South Africa for justice, equality, and freedom, while the Palestinian liberation theology vision, in addition to these principles, provided a theological interpretation of the Bible with a Palestinian context and eyes.
 - The Christian support for the Israeli occupation state stems from the prophecies of the Bible, and to achieve the second return of Christ, and other prophecies about the events of the end of time, and in order to achieve these prophecies, the establishment of a state for the Jews on the Holy Land must be achieved, and thus Western support for the occupation state is based on religious principles and prophecies.
 - The Palestinian Liberation theological vision faces many challenges and parties, starting from the Christian Zionist vision and its ideas, in addition to the Israeli occupation, which exerts pressures and repressive practices against Palestinians in general, and against Palestinian Christian theologians, in addition to the internal challenge, which is to limit the emigration of Palestinian Christians from this land.
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- Palestinian Christian theologians are trying to put forward the Palestinian Liberation theological vision in the Christian West in order to achieve justice, freedom, and equality on this earth, and by putting forward the principles and ideas of this theology in the Western churches, especially in the United States of America.
 - The Christian presence on this earth, in its highest form, culminated in the Palestinian Kairos Document (Waqf Haqq), in which Palestinian Christians demanded an end to the Israeli occupation and peaceful resistance in order to achieve this demand, in addition to achieving justice, freedom, and equality for all Palestinian people.
 - The big fundamental difference between the Palestinian Liberation theological vision and other liberation theology movements in the world is the nature of the other party, the power of the Israeli occupation state and its influence in the world contributed a lot to trying to weaken this Palestinian Christian voice, demanding the freedom of this people. The Kairos Document in South Africa was a major reason for achieving the demands of the liberation theology movement in it, while the Kairos Document in Palestine, despite its importance, did not achieve the desired goal.
 - The Kairos Palestine document contributed to achieving a Christian consensus on it, as the Palestinian churches signed this document, and despite the doctrinal differences between the Christian communities in Palestine, the Kairos Document united these communities and achieved a Palestinian Christian consensus to end the Israeli occupation on this land.
 - The diversity of schools and ideas in the Palestinian Liberation theological vision, has borne fruit positively on how to address Western Christians, where every thought and doctrine has a way of discourse.
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- In addition to the Palestinian Liberation theological vision, Palestinian Christians relied on the principle of watching what is happening and transferring the Palestinian reality to the west; through Christian pilgrimages and Christian missions to the Holy Land, Palestinian Christians deliberately transferred the lived Palestinian reality, the oppressive practices of the Israeli occupation, and the injustice against Palestinians to Western Christians.

Recommendations

The study recommends several recommendations, it is listed as follow:

- a. The development of local Palestinian Theology is in the stage of maturity, it needs to be deepened more by Palestinian academics and theologians.
 - b. Highlighting this theology to become a means of resistance and confrontation in front of Zionist myths and quotations from the Bible.
 - c. Confronting the Israeli discourse (religious and Political) with the Palestinian discourse (religious and political) through the involvement of theologians in political life.
 - d. The Palestinian national authority adopts the Kairos Palestine with the presence of a specialized unit in the Palestinian Foreign Ministry.
 - e. Explaining and interpreting Kairos Palestine to Palestinian Christians, not being satisfied with the international community and being preoccupied with the local community.
 - f. Integrating Palestinian Christian youth with the leaders of Kairos Palestine to convey the message to the world through the voice of youth.
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هذا البحث الذي جاء تحت عنوان " موقف اللاهوت التحريري الفلسطيني تجاه الاحتلال الإسرائيلي للأراضي الفلسطينية: وثيقة وقفة حق (كايروس) فلسطين نموذجاً"، هدف إلى تسليط الضوء على هوية الفلسطينيين المسيحيين ، وكيف عكس هذا الانتماء من خلال الدور الذي لعبته المسيحيين خلال التاريخ المعاصر لفلسطين خاصة فترة الاحتلال الإسرائيلي، البحث ألقى الضوء على بشكل عام على المسيحيين الفلسطينيين ولكن تم التركيز بشكل خاص على القيادات الدينية المسيحية وطرق مواجهة الاساطير الصهيونية عبر لاهوت فلسطيني مسيحي مقاوم للاهوت الصهيوني الذي تتبناه بعض الكنائس المسيحية الصهيونية والتي تبرر القتل والعنف والاحتلال بعقائد توراتية. البحث استعرض الدور السياسي للكنائس المسيحية والذي توج إصدار وثيقة كايروس فلسطين والتي اعتبرت نقطة تحول في الموقف الفلسطيني المسيحي وبشكل خاص رجال الدين والكنائس اتجاه الاحتلال الإسرائيلي وسياسته، بالإضافة لمساهمته في إعادة تعريف الهوية الفلسطينية المسيحية بالتزامن مع الهوية الدينية. وبناء المواقف السياسي على هذا الاحتلال من سياق اللاهوت الفلسطيني المسيحي والعمل على إنهاء الظلم وتحقيق العدالة وانهاء الاحتلال من خلال تبنيه المقاومة اللاعنفية. حيث استخدم الباحث المنهج الوصفي والتحليلي بالاعتماد على التعاريف والنظريات للمفكرين السياسيين والدوليين لتطبيقها على الهوية المسيحية الفلسطينية، كما تم تقديم مقارنة بين النماذج اللاهوتية المحلية في العالم وانعكاسها على الحالة الفلسطينية وتطبيقها على كايروس فلسطين كأحد نماذجها، كما تم عمل تحليل وقراءة لمبادرة كايروس فلسطين بعد 13 عاماً من نشرها محلياً ودولياً، وعمل مقابلات شخصية مع القائمين عليها من اجل عرض إنجازاته وأثرها. وذلك للإجابة على سؤال الرئيسي للبحث وهو مدى نجاح كايروس فلسطين كنموذج لاهوتي في السياق الفلسطيني في الدفاع عن الهوية الفلسطينية المسيحية وتقويتها باستخدام الخطاب المسيحي الليبرالي العالمي؟ ومدى امكانية الفلسطينيين الاعتماد على هذه المرجعية لإثبات حقهم في العيش بسلام في أرضهم المحتلة؟

وقد جاءت الدراسة في مقدمة أربعة فصول، ففي المقدمة تم عرض الواقع الفلسطيني واقع المسيحيين الفلسطينيين وشرح أسباب اختيار البحث، واهميته وأهدافه، في الفصل الأول، تم تحديد الهوية الوطنية والهوية الوطنية الفلسطينية، بينما في الفصل الثاني، تم تحديد الواقع الفلسطيني وما قدمه المسيحيون الفلسطينيون من صراعاتهم والحفاظ على هويتهم "كأفراد" أو "كنائس". تمت دراسة لاهوت التحرير وأسسها في أمريكا اللاتينية في الفصل الثالث وتم شرح المنهجية التي بُني عليها (انظر، احكم، فعل)، وتم التركيز

على اللاهوت المحلي، مع التركيز على أبعاده وما يميز هذا اللاهوت ودور رجال الدين والمؤمنين العلمانيين في مواجهة الأساطير والروايات الكاذبة التي تعتمد عليها الحركة الصهيونية (لاحتلال الأرض) والمسيحيين الصهاينة (دعم الاحتلال). في الفصل الرابع تم ربط الفصلين السابقين من حيث تطبيق منهجية وعلم اللاهوت التحرير على رجال الدين الفلسطينيين الذين ينتمون لكنائس مختلفة والذين عملوا كفريق واحد لنشرهم وثيقة "كايروس فلسطين" كأهم عمل مسكوني في العالم، وأثر المبادرة التي قاموا بها على الاحتلال الإسرائيلي وما هو مستقبل هذه المبادرة على الصعيدين المحلي والدولي.

وتوصلت الدراسة إلى جملة من النتائج أهمها:

نتيجة الاحتلال الإسرائيلي لفلسطين نشأ لاهوت تحرير فلسطيني طالب بإنهاء الاحتلال الإسرائيلي وتحقيق العدالة والحرية للشعب الفلسطيني. وما ميزه عن لاهوت التحرير في أمريكا اللاتينية وجنوب أفريقيا بأن اللاهوت الفلسطيني قدم تفسيراً لاهوتياً للكتاب المقدس مع سياق ورؤيا فلسطينية. وتوج اللاهوت الفلسطيني المسيحي وموقفه اتجاه الاحتلال بإصدار وثيقة كايروس فلسطين التي طالب فيها الفلسطينيون المسيحيون بإنهاء الاحتلال الإسرائيلي وتبني المقاومة اللاعنفية. وعلى الرغم من الاختلافات العقائدية بين الطوائف والكنائس المسيحية في فلسطين إلا ان الوثيقة ساهمت في تحقيق اجماع كنسي فلسطيني لتكون واحدة من أكبر الاعمال المسكونية في العالم، كما انها وحدت الخطاب السياسي المسيحي اتجاه الاحتلال وعليه تمت مخاطبة المجتمع الدولي (المسيحي بشكل خاص) بمختلف فكره وعقيدته.