



from Garth...

My Name Is Palestine



As some of you may know, I've written a song called **My Name Is Palestine**, (you can see it on youtube [here](#)) which I am putting on a 12" vinyl single to be released very soon. The song was sparked off by a powerful and haunting painting by Palestinian artist Sulieman Mansour which I saw in Banksy's hotel in Bethlehem. **With all that has been happening in Palestine and Israel, from Eurovision through to the rumours of Trump's deal, it seemed important to make it available as soon as possible, and so we put it up on Youtube and later Facebook.**

The response has amazed and particularly moved me. We are now at about 24,000 views on YouTube alone, and I felt it would be helpful to review exactly what is being said. The comments that have come in, both there and on Facebook, have been in the thousands. The views by the way on Facebook amount to a further 24,000. I will include some of the comments that have come in, below - they are moving, and give a real insight.

Now a video clip has appeared [here](#), made by a Palestinian magazine called Meem - it is a shortened version of the song with some powerful images. This has had over half a

million views, it's currently at 560,000 with a whole variety of comments.

The Arabic in the film clip translates:

English artist sings “My Name is Palestine” in memory of 71 years of Nakba.

The English singer Garth Hewitt releases a song entitled “My Name is Palestine”

This painting by the Palestinian artist Suliman Mansour

inspired the artist to write the song.

This is a noble solidarity movement

It’s not the first time that this international artist has called for justice for the Palestinians

He has already produced a book called Occupied Territories: the Revolution of Love from Bethlehem to the Ends of the Earth

"She's a symbol of a people that refuse to die

Says my name is Palestine and I will live" - words that carry a powerful message in resisting the occupation and insisting to live life and gain freedom

If you translate the Arabic under the film using the google-translate button, you will note that the singer is referred to as Gareth Hoyt! Later someone is explaining who I am and points out that I’m a Canadian Gospel singer!

As I say in my comments under the song, I asked Palestinian friends to tell me what Suleiman Mansour’s painting meant to them and they responded with all sorts of words that were very key to the atmosphere and lyrics of this song, and I think this has prompted the amazing response. The warmth of these responses on Youtube, Facebook and Meem has made me realise how rarely people speak up clearly for the Palestinian community – they feel forgotten and ignored.

I don’t always know where individual comments have come from, but mostly they have been from somewhere in Palestine, certainly many have come from Gaza, some from Palestinians in the West Bank, also some from Lebanon, Egypt, and recently we’ve had a comment from a Palestinian in Turkey.

I want to share with you a few comments that have come in and you will see the depth of feeling and response at this very difficult time for Palestinians:

Voices Crying Out...

"You are right in translating the painting into such a beautiful song. Through your



beautiful voice the Palestinians do not feel alone and the democratic people of the world are grateful to you."

"It's a relief, knowing that we have supporters from the other side of the occupational wall."

"We say to you that we are proud of you from the tiny street between the houses in Gaza strip and from the sound of the children when they are playing and screaming and the sounds of their mothers calling them - your voice comes there like the lines of the lights of the sun, full of hope and peace and love. We love you so much."

"We will never forget your song or anything you did for our cause... we love you sir... thank you."

"My child who was crying a lot because of the bombing, now sings your song. Love you and thank you and our gratitude..."

"May God bless you Sir. You are the voice of humanity..."

"This is amazing - many thanks Garth from a Palestinian. We will survive, we will remain with support from honest people like you."

"The true core of art, this is how music brings us all together."

"Powerful words and wonderful sound. As a Palestinian I thank you for your support of our cause that they want to bury... Palestine will remain proud of the struggle of its people, with the honourable support of those like you."

"Thank you so much, and for every free person standing for justice and peace."

"Thank you Garth for standing by the voices of the oppressed. Great song and great voice... I just wish there more respected artists like you to advocate the rights of Palestine... and spread the news about the oppression all Palestinians are subjected to. Kudos to you for touching the hearts of thousands."

"Sometimes I hate living in Palestine due to how difficult it is to live here, but your song made me feel strong and deepened my love for my homeland."

"When injustice and humiliation become a reality and the whole world demands that



we – Palestinians - accept that reality... and then, Sir, you come up with such a marvellous song... powerful words and sincere message just to tell us that we are not alone. And that no matter how that new reality is promoted, Palestine will never die and it will remain. Thanks from the bottom of each Palestinian's heart."

"A thank you from a Palestinian Artist - if you want an album cover just contact me!"

Don't silence the Prophets... or the forgotten

The pressure on the Palestinians is huge – there are imprisoned children held in Israeli jails, traumatised and alone. The speed of home demolitions has accelerated, in Jerusalem and in the West Bank. And the stranglehold of occupation gets tighter.



The pressures on Gaza are simply inhumane. Children are sometimes allowed out for medical treatment but their parents are not allowed to go with them.

And not only is the pressure hard on Palestinians but pressure can be put on people here if they speak up for Palestinians. **We have to reject the ongoing racism against the Palestinians and speak loudly.** The pressure for silence can even come from angles we don't expect – for instance the Church. Jewish blog writer and Amos Trustee Robert Cohen has recently raised this issue in his latest blog ***The Church of England is stifling Palestinian solidarity – IHRA is to blame*** ([click here to read it](#))

It is well worth keeping an eye on Robert's blogs as he reflects a very thoughtful Jewish commitment to human rights and justice for all. In this latest blog he highlights the situation of long time Amos friend Jane Henson who has also worked at St George's Anglican Cathedral in Jerusalem for both the Dean and the Bishop. She has a very clear insight on what is happening to the Palestinian people and yet has experienced silencing by the Church here of a very worrying nature.

There are moments that God calls us to prophecy - and if the Church won't stand by prophets in those moments then who will? Interestingly Jane speaks of being able to talk more easily about the situation in Palestine to her friends not from the Christian community. **Those who prophecy and get rejected by their own faith**

communities are what Jewish theologian Marc Ellis calls exiles. He calls us to link together with exiles from different faith communities

The Time Is Now



Sister Joan Chittister

I bought a book this week by **Sister Joan Chittister**. She is a Benedictine Sister in Erie, Pennsylvania. She has had a significant impact on issues of peace and justice – Gill and I had the privilege of sharing Holy Week with the sisters at Erie one year and later we linked up with her again when she spoke at Greenbelt. Her book is called *The time Is Now* and it's "a call to uncommon courage" - basically a call to prophecy.

She talks of the "...courage of people... that carries us through... to the emergence again of the humanisation of humanity." These people are "... the unsung but mighty voices of community... They are the prophets... who prod the rest of the world into seeing what it means to be fully alive... These... courageous people who forever seek the truth, defend the weak, bring the peace, and **always, always, always** stand up to protest injustice." She then dedicates her book to these prophets.

A reflection by Joan Chittister

"What does a prophet do? A prophet cries out, cries out, cries out without fear, without care for cost, without end. Dear prophet, for the sake of the children, for the sake of the world, for the sake of the gospel, cry out!"

Prayer

Generous and compassionate God
We pray for the people of Palestine
We pray for their children who are suffering
We pray for so many of their people who are
in prison
We pray for them as they suffer under
occupation and seige
We pray that there will be justice in

peacemaking

And we pray that we will not be silent
So that the Palestinians find hope again
And find a road to justice
And may we be unafraid to speak up for
them

Unafraid to prophecy

We pray there will be a road of hope that
cuts through the desert of despair

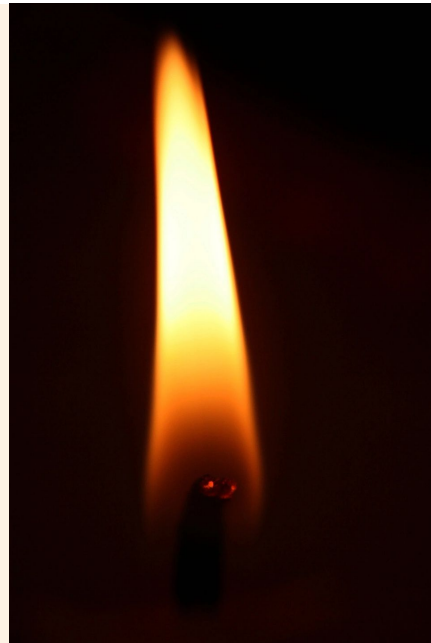
That brings a new dawn

For Palestinian and Israeli

A road in the desert that brings equality

A road in the desert for human rights

A road in the desert for freedom for all



So no more second class citizens -

No more racism, no more stealing of land -

But equality, equality, equality -

Because all are made in the image of the God

Who will not accept the mistreatment of anyone

Who says love your neighbour as yourself

This is the way out of despair

Amen

A handwritten signature in red ink that reads "Garth Hewitt". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Autumn or Advent/Christmas concerts

Due to a reorganisation of Garth's autumn schedule, he now has the following dates available for concerts - either the "normal" **An Evening With Garth Hewitt** concert, or some of the dates would be ideal for an **Advent or Christmas** concert:

4th, 5th October

8th, 9th November

15th, 16th November

6th, 7th December

For more information or to book one of these dates, email

isobel@amostrust.org



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