



from Garth...

A Place of Hope

Earlier this week Gill and I were at Amos Trust's online meeting Words of Hope. Five minutes before the end Chris Rose was sent a message telling him about the bombing of Al Ahli Hospital. Obviously this was a huge shock on every level. At that point we didn't even know whether the Director of the hospital, Suhaila Tarazi, was safe - but we had a message later saying that Suhaila was alright, having left the building shortly before the bombing.

Al Ahli has been a partner of Amos Trust for a good number of years and I can remember vividly my first visit. There were Israeli soldiers up on rooftops firing down at people as we arrived - as we went in those wounded were being brought into the hospital. Later I was shown around and met with patients, not the wounded that had just come in, but people wounded in previous incidents. One of them told me how she had been shot in the leg by the Israeli army - I thought she said her name was Miriam, I suspect now that it might have been Mariam (!) - her story gave me my first song about Gaza, **Song for Miriam**.

Al Ahli is without doubt a tremendous oasis and has through the years been a place of hope. Suhaila Tarazi has always been an inspiration.

The first casualty of war is truth

I will put some links in this newsletter to people who have been making comments about who did the bombing, as this may be helpful. **When the war started I remember saying to myself, the first**



casualty of war is truth.

We see that propaganda plays a significant part. There are two things that people say which I find irritating - often political leaders - and this phrase was used once again, "Israel are entitled to defend themselves" - this sounds to me like it is calling for a response, like

in church, where we should reply with
"And so are the Palestinians. Amen."

The whole battle of what is going on is rooted in the fact that one group of people are treated as less than another, and **the true spiritual response should be a reminder of equality.**

A couple of friends have quoted this prayer I wrote on a previous time of bombardment

*The people of Gaza with nowhere to run.
They are imprisoned under a harsh siege, bombed by
the most sophisticated new weapons and then
attacked in their own streets and houses.
O God where can they find refuge.
No one has listened to their suffering for over 60
years.*

*O God of the oppressed and suffering we see you in
the wounded of Gaza – we hear your cries of pain –
we share your tears.*

May we never be silent in the face of such pain.

*O God may world leaders at last hear the cries of the children and the suffering
of Gaza.*

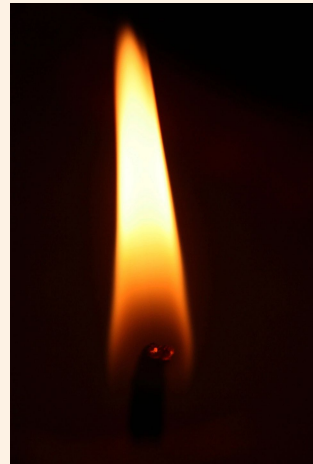
*May the siege be removed. The gates be opened. May they be allowed to have
food, water, medicine, human rights, dignity, justice, democracy.*

O God hear the cry of Gaza.

May freedom come – may healing come – may hope come.

May they be treated as we would like to be treated.

*And we pray for the people of Israel
because there will be no peace for them
until the occupation ends and the siege is over-*



*no peace for them until justice comes to Palestine.
And we pray that peace will come soon
and that each person will recognise the value of the other
and Israel and Palestine become a Holy Land once more.
Amen.*

The other thing that people say in this current situation is that Hamas started it all. **So what was going on in 1967? What was going on in 1948?** This goes back years. **No more brutality, no more apartheid.** We don't need more world leaders who arrive saying they are only friends of Israel, and "Of course Israel must protect itself". **We want leaders who help to guide people into the path of peace, who reject any more violence and call for the justice that is so desperately needed, and that could lay the foundation for peace.** No more clichés from world leaders, it's time to throw away the weapons and to sit down and find a pathway for everyone.

The Fruit of Justice Will Be Peace



*Lutheran Pastor, Rev Dr Mitri Raheb,
Bethlehem*

As you know, Gill and I were due to be in Palestine at this time but Gill was ill and we postponed our trip. I was to be singing at the opening of a Conference in Bethlehem organised by long time friend and Lutheran Pastor, Dr Mitri Raheb.

Mitri has sent out this urgent message:

Dear Friends,

Last Thursday we concluded our international conference "Land, People, and Culture", only to wake up two days later to see that the situation has changed drastically. We are glad that most of our guests are back in their countries safe and

sound. We have connected with the few who remained, and they informed us that they are doing well.

Many friends, concerned about our safety, have been sending us messages inquiring about our situation. Your prayers, advocacy, and support are much appreciated. **We are fine; however, Bethlehem and all the Palestinian cities in the West Bank were sealed off by the Israeli military, and all streets leading out or into Bethlehem were blocked with cement blocks.** This is preventing most students from reaching the University, which forced us to move to online teaching. But you can imagine how difficult it is for people here to concentrate while watching the horrendous news on TV.

As I write this late Monday afternoon, I hear the Israeli F-15 planes flying over

our cities on the way to bomb Gaza. This last hour alone, over 130 Israeli air strikes were conducted in Gaza. Several of these strikes are in the area where our University's satellite center is located. Gaza is in flames. Our heart goes out to the civilians in Gaza who live in fear, without electricity, water, food, or medicine. Our thoughts are with Rana, the director of our training center in Gaza, our staff, and students there.

We are concerned about the high number of civilian casualties, irrespective of if they are Palestinians or Israelis. We call for the Geneva Convention and International Humanitarian Law to be guaranteed by the international community. **However, the military and political, blind support that Israel is getting from Western countries is giving Israel a green light to level Gaza without any repercussions.**

The mainline Western media is in full gear utilizing a settler colonial rhetoric, demonizing the Palestinians as savages and terrorists, without talking about the root causes. Even when we speak out by sharing our own narrative, colonial voices try to silence us- demanding that we repeat settler colonial propaganda.

So, let's talk about the root causes: These young Palestinian fighters were born under siege in the largest open-air prison in the world. For decades, they waited for justice, for freedom, for a life in dignity, but all in vain. What they saw was a double standard treatment; those who stood with the occupied Ukrainians were standing with the Israeli occupiers. These young Gazans witnessed four wars that Israel led against their narrow strip that has been used as a real testing ground for the Israelis' latest technological weapons and artillery.

Worse, they were left with no hope whatsoever in an area 360 square kilometers where the air, the water, and the sea are polluted and where life became unlivable.

Israel and the world left them to perish slowly but surely as if they were children of a lesser god, negating their right to defend themselves.

Allow me to reiterate: Occupation will keep triggering resistance. No one can relinquish people's quest for freedom. Without justice there will be no peace. Keep us in your prayers. Raise your voice for justice. It is high time to decolonize Palestine so that our people can live in dignity and reach the potential that God has for them. Thank you for your support.

Rev. Dr. Mitri Raheb

We Are Being Gaslit

Independent British journalist Jonathan Cook, who several of you may have met during a trip to the Holy Land, tackles the misinformation issue **in his blog here**

The late Hon. MP for Gorton, Manchester, Gerald Kaufman



Anti-Zionist Orthodox Jews, members of Neturei Karta, Jews United Against Zionism, at last weekend's demonstration in London

Many Jewish voices calling for peace and an end to the occupation go unheard by the media

Here is [Gerald Kaufman MP](#) speaking a prophetic word in Parliament during one of the previous bombardments of Gaza

**Now the Via Dolorosa goes right through Gaza –
Goes down every bombed and broken street
While the wounded heart of Jesus always reminds us
That Palestinians are humans too**

When Resurrection Came to Palestine is one of the songs Garth performed at Greenbelt this year - [you can see it here](#)



Despite advertisements that may appear on some of Garth's YouTube videos, Garth derives no income from the resources he provides online, and his work of songwriting, recording, and travelling is supported entirely by donations to the Garth Hewitt Foundation and by the sale of items purchased from his website.

You can donate to [The Garth Hewitt Foundation here](#), and we are gradually making more and more of his music available as MP3 downloads which you can purchase from the music pages of his website.



©2023 Garth Hewitt Foundation | 186 Hykeham Road, Lincoln, LN6 8AP

[Web Version](#)

[Preferences](#)

[Forward](#)

[Unsubscribe](#)

Powered by **Mad Mimi**®
A GoDaddy® company