

The Living Stones of the Holy Land Trust



Newsletter

No 12: Pentecost 2017

An ecumenical trust seeking to promote contacts between Christian communities in Britain and those in the Holy Land and neighbouring countries.

Contact: admin@livingstonesonline.org.uk or the editor at newsletter@livingstonesonline.org.uk

Website: www.livingstonesonline.org.uk; Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/livingstonesonlineuk/>

A year of anniversaries

2017 marks some significant and momentous anniversaries: 100 years since the Balfour Declaration, which, originating from a desire to compensate the Jewish people for centuries of persecution, replaced one injustice with another, namely displacing the Palestinians, indigenous peoples of the Holy Land, who were forced to flee their homes. Also 70 years since the ill-fated UN Partition Plan for Palestine; 50 years since the Six Day War and the start of Israel's occupation; and ten years since the start of Israel's blockade of Gaza. Commemorations of these events, which reverberate into the present as the root of much anger and anguish, must be accompanied by recognition of the truth and a turnaround of attitude.

“Canticle of the Turning”

Text: Rory Cooney, based on the Magnificat (see also p12)

My soul cries out with a joyful shout that the God of my heart is great,
And my spirit sings of the wondrous things that you bring to the ones who wait.
You fixed your sight on your servant's plight, and my weakness you did not spurn,
So from east to west shall my name be blest.
Could the world be about to turn?

My heart shall sing of the day you bring. Let the fires of your justice burn.
Wipe away all tears, for the dawn draws near, and the world is about to turn.
From the halls of power to the fortress tower, not a stone will be left on stone.
Let the king beware for your justice tears every tyrant from his throne.
The hungry poor shall weep no more, for the food they can never earn;
There are tables spread, every mouth be fed,
For the world is about to turn.

My heart shall sing of the day you bring. Let the fires of your justice burn.
Wipe away all tears, for the dawn draws near, and the world is about to turn.
Though the nations rage from age to age, we remember who holds us fast:
God's mercy must deliver us from the conqueror's crushing grasp.
This saving word that our forebears heard is the promise which holds us bound,
Till the spear and rod can be crushed by God,
Who is turning the world around.

My heart shall sing of the day you bring. Let the fires of your justice burn.
Wipe away all tears, for the dawn draws near, and the world is about to turn.

A WEEK IN THE WEST BANK – observations (Part 1)

Bridget le Huray, one of the Living Stones trustees, went on a study tour during March, in conjunction with the UK-Palestine Mental Health Network. The itinerary was designed for professionals from the field of mental health.

YMCA Rehabilitation Centre in East Jerusalem.

http://www.ej-ymca.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=87&Itemid=109

Although they are called the YMCA, they don't ever see any Christians and they see quite a lot of women. Their tagline is 'Restoring Hope For A Better Life' and they do some amazing work! Nadar Abu Amsha is the director who designs and runs their national programs. The centre is also used to train counsellors from many other parts of the world. The centre was used to launch a holistic rehab program which looked to get their patients to accept their disability and focus on their ability and their continued value to society. They reviewed their programs so that they could fit into the context of the occupation doing mostly relief work initially including doing vocational training to upskill farmers who had lost everything through land theft and settlements. However the 2nd intifada changed all that and they started to take care of the injured as they were released from hospital (bear in mind that under the Geneva Convention the onus is on the occupier to provide this, however that's not how it works when it comes to Israel).

The intifada (which means 'shake off' in Arabic) started off as peaceful demonstrations locally, but the level of violent retaliation from the army quickly made it a national resistance movement (mostly nonviolent through civil disobedience and withholding of taxes). Israel's leader (Yitzhak Rabin who later received a Nobel peace prize) issued a directive to the Israel army to break the Palestinians hands and legs (google 'broken bones policy') which resulted in over 50,000 injured, the vast majority of whom were under 17. The YMCA took them on following their release from hospital as there was no place that could deal with the mental effects that such trauma results in. The typical treatment was a 1 month program for PTSD.

Another program that I must tell you about is the one for widowed women with young children. Most of these women are young and the program is designed to empower them and help them build resilience to live independently. Many of them also witnessed the deaths of their husbands and have the added challenge of living in a patriarchal society. Many (under pressure from extended family and religious/cultural convention, with the intent to protect them and the children) end up marrying their brother-in-law in a struggle to survive. Sometimes it works, but most of the time it's painful as it is a feeling of marrying your brother. The alternative would be continuing to live and take care of your children with the fear of being taken advantage of as a young woman, which makes this their best option and one that is socially accepted albeit painful for the young woman. The centre works individually with these women.

Hebron

We left the YMCA and went on to Hebron- a large town in the West Bank frequently on the news because of the extreme and radical settlers. Here we met with Defence for Children International (dci) led by Riad Arar who is trained in social work, psychology and counselling supervision. His title is Director of Child Protection and Social Mobilisation. He is responsible for 2 programs one of which ensures detained juveniles are represented legally, have their rights monitored and receive post event psychological support. He described how Hebron is being split into two as a result of the settlers. There are parts of the town that are being systematically turned into ghost towns in order to make way for settlers. Over 2000 shops have been closed and there are daily attacks by heavily-armed settlers. Youth unemployment is high and stone throwing amongst youths is regular. The division of the town through a maze of barriers means children often walk through 2-3 checkpoints just to get to their desks every morning. As do their teachers. The situation is volatile with road closures happening

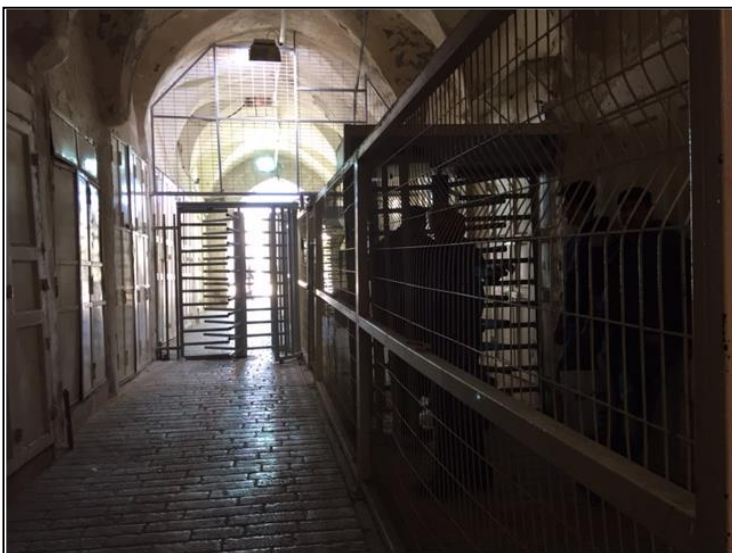
randomly. There are 50,000 Palestinians here and 400 or so radical (mainly American) settlers. Palestinians are not allowed to walk or drive in some areas and often have to drive great distances to travel just 1-2 miles. There are many psycho-social issues here that the professionals have to help with whilst living under the same conditions themselves.

We asked Riad how he keeps going. He said his hope lies in his beliefs and visits such as ours and his hope that we will talk about what we see and hear when we return.

We visited a small YMCA office in Hebron after this, where they work with families immediately following the arrests of children for stone throwing. We met a woman called Saadeya who works there but also had a child arrested and she described what happened that night. Her front door was blown out at 3am and soldiers told her to get everyone out of the house except her 14 yr old son Amer. The soldiers blindfolded Amer and cable tied his hands and placed him in the jeep. They allowed his father to say goodbye to him but they wouldn't allow Saadeya. There is a reason for this which I will explain. In the jeep they abused him physically and verbally. He was released after 10 days having undergone sleep deprivation and long spells of solitary confinement. During the 10 days he appeared in front of a military court 3 times. These were the only times Saadeya saw her son.

As a group we discussed the impact of what happens to Amar with Nader. Soldiers see children throwing stones but they do not arrest them. They video them and identify them through the arrest of other children who are pressured to inform. Choosing to break down doors so late at night/early in the morning is intended to disorientate and panic. A child's mental view of his home as a place of safety is destroyed. Making his father and mother powerless in front of him (almost like they are giving him up without a fight) breaks down the parents as role models in the child's mind. When released (having spent time in prison with adults as they are not segregated) often results in the child seeing it as a rite of passage. They reject the father and teacher as figures of authority as they are now 'grown up' having been in prison with adults. The model and image of the father as protector is destroyed. They want to protect themselves as they are on their own. They skip a very important developmental phase.

The intervention of the YMCA begins immediately. As well as dealing with the trauma for them as parents, they counsel and guide the family on how to react and behave immediately upon release of the child. They tell the family what to expect and provide coping mechanisms and strategies for dealing with the released child.



We then went on a guided walk of Hebron and witnessed firsthand how the Israelis are dividing this city. Barriers prevented us from going to certain sections whilst we had to wait at turnstiles to access other places, often being left standing whilst the soldier played with his/her phone or had a cigarette - 15 minutes on one occasion. It was an enlightening 4 hours in Hebron and I was amazed at the resilience of the people I met. I don't know how they do it.

Bethlehem

On the return to Bethlehem we stopped for tea at the house of a Palestinian farmer (Atta Jaber) whose family land was confiscated to make way for the Kiryat Arba settlement which is home to extreme religious settlers. (Google him to see his story.) After tea we made a collection for Atta. One of our group said some amazing words and ended by telling Atta that he is a Palestinian and he is a fighter! Words can't describe the reaction. It's quite overwhelming to witness and hear all of this. Thankfully I'm with an amazing group of clinicians and psychoanalysts (10 of us in total) and we spend an hour

each evening back in the hotel debriefing and checking in with each other to ensure we are all on the same page.



Friday started in a psychiatric hospital in Bethlehem. It caters for the 2.8 million residents and is run by a dynamic Croatian psychiatrist. It is situated in the most beautiful 19th century house, built as an Armenian orphanage and is run by the Government. Private patients would go to Jordan. There are 150 beds and two-thirds of those are used for chronic patients. We then went on to a brilliant session at a resource centre for Palestinian residency and refugee rights. The young lawyer (from Spain) gave us a detailed breakdown of the history of refugee numbers -those who left during the British mandate , in 1948, & in 1967; where they went. 90% of the 750,000 internally-displaced Palestinians still live within 100 Kms of their original home/ village but cannot travel back even to see them. [Find out more at <https://www.badil.org/en/>]

[Part 2 will follow in the next newsletter.]

PILGRIMAGE WITH A PURPOSE

Andy Roland reflects on the Week of Prayer in Jerusalem, and inspirations for writing



Andy and Jo visit Sabeel for the Thursday lunchtime Eucharist and discussion

In January of this year I accompanied Living Stones trustees Jo Simister and Lesley Dawson to the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in Jerusalem. I had been on a Living Stones pilgrimage during the Week of Prayer twice before, but this time I came with a specific purpose. In May 2015, I had retired as a Vicar, and once resettled, which took six months, I wrote a book called Bible in Brief. The aim was to produce a straightforward guide for people who did not know the Bible but who wanted to know what was in it, as well as to answer the sort of questions no one seems to do, e.g. what “Christ” means. I was incredibly lucky to stumble across a publisher who was encouraging and motivating, with the result that at the end of April we launched three books (see page 9) and a lively website, www.bibleinbrief.org, which is meant to accompany the book with a weekly blog and a discussion forum Do look it up.

The upshot has been that I think I have been turned into a writer. I thought that a book chronicling the “Week of Prayer in Jerusalem” could be an interesting and worthwhile project. The purpose is twofold: first, to give an account of the eight church services we attended, so that people over here can really grasp the fact that Christian worship and witness is still alive and active there, and second to give an account of the conversations I had with all sorts over the week - an Armenian money-changer, an international accompanier, two young Israeli soldiers. There will be no in-depth investigation of the issues, more a kind of magazine journalism in the hope that the reality of the situation in Jerusalem may slip under the guard of Christians who unthinkingly support the current situation in Israel and Palestine. To do this, I bought a tiny expensive camera and I hope that the photos will be good enough to make it a kind of Christian coffee table book.

It’s been very helpful to write this short introduction. I could hardly bear to think of Israel and Palestine when I returned - the constant tension, the constant absence of good news. This has given me the shove I needed, and now I intend to really get down to writing.

Prayers would be appreciated!

LIVING STONES OF THE HOLY LAND TRUST – overview and consultation

We are an ecumenical charity with the primary aim of advancing education about Christianity in the Holy Land and countries around, by:

- raising awareness in Britain and elsewhere, by educating and informing the public concerning Christians in the Holy Land through our website (www.livingstonesonline.org), lectures, newsletter and a yearbook of academic theological articles;
- promoting contacts between Christians (and others) in Britain and in the Holy Land, e.g. through pilgrimages promoting encounter, reflection and witness; - *see back page*
- co-operating with other charities and groups with similar aims, by sharing activities and information.

Our focus on education and scholarship makes us unique among the many charities and solidarity group which have an interest in the Middle East, and particularly in the Palestinians. This work is enabled through the **Michael Prior Memorial Fund**.

The Revd Professor Michael Prior was a founder of Living Stones, and its first chairman. He was a “stalwart, fearless and vocal supporter of the rights of the oppressed communities in Israel/Palestine”. Michael died suddenly in 2004, and the Memorial Fund which bears his name:

- Provides bursaries for higher academic studies, among Palestinians (except in exceptional cases), and particularly (but not exclusively) in theology; - *see p.7 for a list of scholars*
- Funds an annual Michael Prior Memorial lecture, alternately in the UK and in Jerusalem or the West Bank; - *see back page*
- Arranges other occasional events with an educational or academic focus. – *see back page*

Our spiritual patrons come from a wide spectrum and include:

In the Middle East: Bishop Suheil Dawani, *Anglican Bishop in Jerusalem*; Patriarch Gregorios III, *Melkite Patriarch of Antioch*; Nora Karmi, *Co-ordinator for Kairos Palestine*; Bishop Theodosius of Sebastia, *Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem*; Patriarch Fuad Tual, *Latin Patriarch in Jerusalem*; Bishop Munib Younan, *Lutheran Bishop in Jerusalem*; Jean Zaru, *Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) and co-founder of Sabeel*.

Elsewhere: Cardinal Vincent Nichols, *Roman Catholic Archbishop of Westminster*; Revd Baroness Richardson of Calow, *Methodist Church in Britain*; Archbishop John Sentamu, *Anglican Archbishop of York*; Bishop Desmond Tutu, *former Anglican Archbishop of Cape Town*

Please consider supporting our work with a donation through our Virgin Money Giving account, <http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/charities/TheLivingStonesOfTheHolyLandTrust>

If you are not yet a member, please join! You'll find the forms on p.8. Or join us on pilgrimage next January and get a year's membership free!



- Take a look at our website <http://www.livingstonesonline.org.uk/>
- and our facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/livingstonesonlineuk/>
- Fill in our consultation questionnaire on p7
- Become a member p8
- Join us on pilgrimage p12
- Contribute to the newsletter at newsletter@livingstonesonline.org.uk

MICHAEL PRIOR FUNDED SCHOLARS 2010 -2017

The following are about to complete:

- **Ussama Salman** from Jerusalem
Completing PhD at University of Wales, Lampeter; awaiting his viva on June 15 on *'Analysis of the problems that face Palestinian Christians on their presence and identity in Jerusalem'*
Living Stones has contributed full fees and expenses.

The following are currently receiving bursaries from Living Stones:

- **Johnny Bassous** from Bethlehem. In his second year of studies for a part time MA at Bethlehem Bible College. Living Stones has contributed full fees
- **Emil Halloun** from Ibiliin in the Galilee
Completing a PhD in English Literature entitled *"Amity and enmity; metaphors of weakness and strength in literature and literary theory"* at Bar Ilan University, Tel Aviv. Living Stones is contributing to his fees
- **Marcelle Zoughbi** from Bethlehem. In her first year of studies for a Masters in International Communication and Development at Bethlehem University. Living Stones is contributing full fees
- **Nadine Bitar** from Jerusalem. Studying for an MA in Christian Ministry at North Park University in Chicago, USA. Living Stones have contributed towards her living costs in the USA.
- **Andrew Ashdown** from the UK. Researching for a PhD in Christian and Muslim relations in Syria, at University of Winchester, UK. Living Stones have contributed towards the costs of fieldwork in Syria.

The following have completed their studies:

- **Grace Al Zoughby** from Bethlehem. MA completed at London School of Theology, 2010.
Dissertation topic *'Transforming revolution; A study on Jesus' interactions with women in the Gospel of St John and its contemporary application to a Christian Palestinian context'*
Living Stones contributed full fees and expenses.
- **Munther Isaac** from Beit Sahour. Completed PhD at Oxford Centre for Mission Studies in 2014.
Thesis topic *'Theology of the Land with a special reference to the Palestinian Church'*
Living Stones contributed to final year expenses
- **Omar Rashid** from Birmingham
Completed dissertation for an MSc International Development at University of Birmingham in 2014.
Title: *'Disability under occupation; At the congruence between conflict, religion and society in Palestine'*. Living Stones contributed to fieldwork costs in the West Bank
- **Abdel Masih Yunan** from Jerusalem
Completed an MA in Jerusalem Studies through Al Quds University in 2015, and has completed a further 3 credits to allow transfer to higher studies elsewhere.
Living Stones contributed to cost of Year Two modules and dissertation costs.
- **Archimandrite Nikodemos Anagnostopoulos** from Greece
Completed a PhD at Heythrop College, University of London.
Thesis topic is *'Turkey, Religious minorities and the State; The case of the Greek Orthodox minority of Istanbul'*. Living Stones contributed to living expenses in London
- **Kristian Girling** from London
Completed a PhD in Theology at Heythrop College, University of London, in 2016.
Research topic is *'A study of the Chaldean Catholic Church in Iraq and the diaspora of Jordan and Britain from 2003 – 2013'*. Living Stones contributed to costs in final year
- **Jack Nassar** from Ramallah
Completed a one-year Masters in Political Development and Communication at Goldsmith University in London, UK. Living Stones contributed to his fees

2017 - LIVING STONES MEMBERSHIP CONSULTATION

We would like to understand more about the interests of our membership - what you value, what you enjoy, what challenges you, what additional benefits you suggest, and so on. Please post your responses back to 48 Strickland Way, ORPINGTON, Kent, BR6 9UE – or you can download a form to email back from the website welcome page at <http://www.livingstonesonline.org.uk/>.

How long have you been a member?

Not yet a member	1 year	1-5 yrs	5-10 yrs	more than 10 years	Complimentary pilgrimage member
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Did you join as a result of a pilgrimage?

Yes	No
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What attracted you? (Tick as many as you like)

theology / Fr Michael Prior	newsletter
focus on Christians in the Holy Land	yearbook
pilgrimage	website
members events	facebook

Which of these have continued to engage you?

theology	newsletter
focus on Christians in the Holy Land	yearbook
pilgrimage	website
members events	facebook
scholarships for higher studies for Palestinian students	

Which do you participate in?

- Members Days
- Other lectures and events
- Pilgrimages
- Financial support to scholarships (Michael Prior Fund)
- Theology Group

Are there aspects you think we could improve?

Would you like to help sponsor a student, with a link to that person?	Yes	No
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Would you be able to provide, or help with, a bursary for a young person to join one of our pilgrimages?	Yes	No
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Would you sponsor a member of a church in the West Bank to participate in the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity services in Jerusalem? (cost about £40)	Yes	No
--	-----	----

Would you like to contribute to the yearbook or newsletter, financially or with an article?	Yes	No
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Would you like to be involved with our social media?	Yes	No
--	-----	----

Do you have other skills you would like to contribute? Please tell us!	Yes	No
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THE LIVING STONES OF THE HOLY LAND TRUST

BECOMING A MEMBER: Please complete your details in all sections below (*please print clearly*), including the Standing Order mandate if you wish to continue your membership (*you can terminate it at any time by notifying your bank*). Please sign all relevant sections. Then send the form with the cheque (*payable to Living Stones*) for £30 for your first membership payment to: Living Stones, 48 Strickland Way, ORPINGTON, BR6 9UE.

(NB: if you make a donation or arrange the Standing Order online we will still need your signed Gift Aid declaration.)

MAKING A DONATION: Please complete your details (*please print clearly*) including the Gift Aid declaration (*if you are a UK tax payer*) and sign below. Then return with a cheque (*payable to Living Stones*) for the amount of your donation to: Living Stones, 48 Strickland Way, ORPINGTON, BR6 9UE.

Name:

Address:

Postcode:

Email:

Telephone:.....

If you are a UK tax payer please ALSO complete this Gift Aid declaration.

I am a UK tax payer, and authorise Living Stones to collect Gift Aid on this and any subsequent donations.

Signed:Dated:

STANDING ORDER MANDATE: (for automatic annual payment of membership)

To the Manager of (*name of your Bank/Building Society*)

Address:

Postcode:

Please pay the sum of thirty pounds/ £30 immediately, and thereafter annually until further notice in writing:

From: *Your account name:*

Your account number:

Your Bank Sort Code:

To: **LIVING STONES Account No: 8913 7808; Code: 09-01-55**

Signed:Dated:

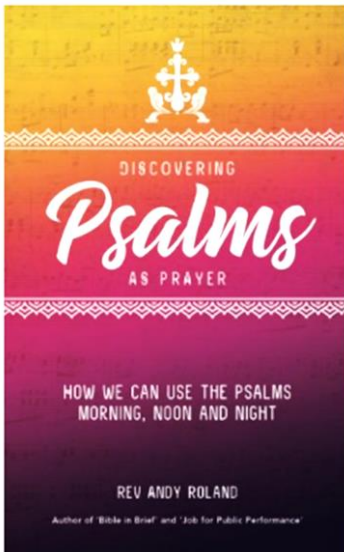
Name: (*please print clearly*).....

Address:

.....Postcode:

JUST PUBLISHED: THREE BOOKS ON PRAYER AND THE BIBLE

(See page 4 for the author's comments on the Week of Prayer pilgrimages and inspirations for writing)

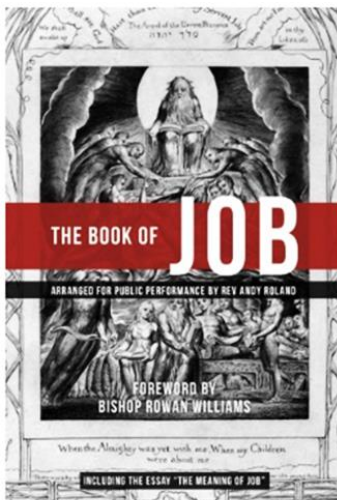


Discovering Psalms as Prayer: How we can use the Psalms morning, noon and night by Rev Andy Roland

The core of this book is how the author discovered a new way of praying the psalms in an ashram in India. It includes chapters on the problems with both prayer and psalms, and gives suggestions on how psalms can be used throughout the day.

The Book of Job: Arranged for Public Performance by Rev Andy Roland

This unique book is a performing edition of the Biblical Book of Job, one of the most dramatic writings from the ancient world. The arrangement clarifies the structure and emotional movement of the work, and simplifies how to put it on as a performance over 75 minutes including musical interludes. The book includes an essay on the meaning of Job, and a foreword by Rt Revd and Rt Hon Baron Williams of Oystermouth, former Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams.



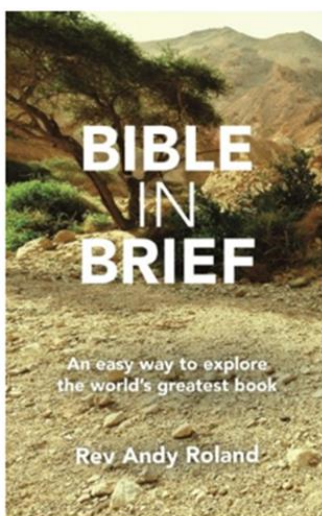
Bible in Brief: An easy way to enjoy the greatest book ever written by Rev Andy Roland

"I don't read the Bible, because it is too long and complicated." That's true. It is very long and very complicated. Not surprising, since it took over a thousand years to write by dozens of authors.

Bible in Brief is made up of six months of daily readings, each month and each week being a self-contained topic. There are 25 archaeological drawings to illustrate the text, with four maps. At the end of each month there is a selection of writings from the surrounding countries including quotes from the Babylonian story of the Flood, an epic poem in praise of Baal, and quotations from Jewish rabbis contemporary with Jesus and the early church. A "Bonus Features" section on various topics including how to use chapters and verses, different Bible translations, and personal recommendation of biblical films.

It is offered primarily to two kinds of readers:

- Those who want to read the Bible for the first time but don't know where to start. Many start at Genesis 1 and get bogged down in Exodus with the ten plagues of Egypt and the exhaustive description of the Tabernacle or Tent of Meeting with its "blue, purple and scarlet stuff and fine twined linen-
- For Christians who would like to get to know the Bible better, or who know part of the Bible quite well, usually the gospels, but would like a way in to the less familiar parts like the Old Testament prophets."



Andy's Bible Blog is at www.bibleinbrief.org/

'THE STRUGGLE WITHIN': A poem from Prof. Mazin Qumsiyeh

Written in reflection on the death of a close friend Vincenzo Tradardi. You can find Mazen's HumanRights newsletter at <http://lists.qumsiyeh.org/listinfo/humanrights>

Facing life's challenges and insecurity
The heart yearns for serenity
How can we ignore the oppressor's meanness
And simply understand his weakness
With so much deception
What is to change perception?
We struggle to see the positives
Even as we are flooded with negatives
A child hungers amid flies and vultures
While billionaires invest in ventures
Zionists steal our lands
And profit from our raised hands
Tossing and turning in their dreary night
Their biggest fear is truth coming to light
The corrupt rule in Ramallah
The weak put faith in Allah
Within you feed the good wolf more
If you do not want the bad one to score
Does the struggle within have winners
Or is it only in the case of the sinners?
The righteous are also struggling
Their caring hardly a blessing
In darkness, creating, and sheltering light
Is not a life of ease or of delight
- a burden hard to carry in sickness or in health
the (good) struggle goes on till the last breath
"joyful participation in the sorrows of world"
Buddhists had it right – participation a key word
From good will and good deeds
We are counseled that joy springs seeds
We are advised to take time
To appreciate the sublime
For us Palestinians, it is harder to reason
After decades of colonization and treason
though words easy to say, we still struggle to
understand
and even harder to plan: How we continue to
withstand?
How we have resilience
How we create persistence

Perhaps what sustains us is goodness all around
And the beauty of this hallowed ground
Perhaps we see divine in all of us
not just Palestinian baby Jesus
we see it in birds singing early mornings
even bats hunting insects evenings
we see it in poor honest unemployed
in families and children when joyed
we see it in smiles and stretched hands
in the rhythm of seasons in ancient lands
we see it in memories of Karameh victory
and all those who are symbols of bravery
we see it in forgotten graves of massacred
and in the hunger strikes of the incarcerated
we see it in a smile of dabka girls who carry genes
of their ancestral Canaanitic queens
we hear it in the rhythm of tabla and oud *
the call of the athan**, church bells, and even silent
sumoud
we smell it aroma of tabboun za'atar ***
taste it apricots, guava, figs, and loz akhdar****
we taste it in zibda baladiya***** with mountain honey
and in herbal medicines curing the worst agony
Countless generations passed in the arms of mother
Palestine
babies from Issa to the Ahmed of maddonnas divine
Our clock will end soon and we are no more
As we join all those departed who struggled before
We bequeath to our children beauty and burden
Thoughts pass as the plants leave their seeds in the garden
the secret to life is love and suffer grandfather told us
yet, the dust of billions of forgotten ancestors remind us
as we breathe it and eat it that we mortals must have
humility
and that humility added to struggle and love equals
serenity
the old country song says: in the end matters only kindness
this old country man says: humility and love can conquer
our madness
"Stay human" Vittorio Arrigoni said
In Palestine "Keep the hope alive" was echoed

*tabla and oud: drum and guitar;

**athan: muslim call to prayer;

***tabboun za'atar: bread of traditional kiln with thyme;

****loz akhdar: green almonds;

*****Zibda baladiya: A country butter made from goat milk

ACT PALESTINE FORUM: PRAYER VIGIL FOR PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST

On 24th of every month, ACT circulate prayers. Sign up at <http://actpalestineforum.org/vigil/>

On 6 May 2004, the UN General Assembly adopted Resolution 58/292 which “affirms that the status of the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem, remains one of military occupation, and affirms, in accordance with the rules and principles of international law and relevant resolutions of the United Nations, including Security Council resolutions, that the Palestinian people have the right to self-determination and to sovereignty over their territory...” The Resolution also “expresses its determination to contribute to the achievement of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and the attainment of a just and comprehensive negotiated peace settlement in the Middle East resulting in two viable, sovereign and independent States, Israel and Palestine, based on the pre-1967 borders and living side by side in peace and security.”

According to ACT Alliance member, Diakonia, “the practices of the Occupying Power, Israel, raise serious concerns under international law, not only under IHL (International Humanitarian Law) and IHRL (International Human Rights Law), due to the erosion of the basic protections and practices of acquisition and annexation of territory, in clear contravention of the central notions of modern public international law.”

Since the adoption of this resolution in 2004, tension and violence have remained present, human rights have continued to be violated, and hope in a just and timely end to the occupation has waned.

We pray for the upholding of international law in Palestine and Israel and for all those who suffer under the ongoing illegal occupation.

Gracious God, grant peace. Cleanse from our own hearts the seeds of strife; greed and envy, harsh misunderstandings and ill will, fear and desire for revenge. Make us quick to welcome ventures in cooperation among the peoples of the world, so that there may be woven the fabric of a common good too strong to be torn by the evil hands of war. In the time of opportunity, make us be diligent; and in the time of peril, let not our courage fail.

Lord, in your mercy; **hear our prayer.**

Grant, O God, that your holy and life-giving Spirit may move every human heart; that the barriers dividing us may crumble, suspicions disappear, and hatreds cease; and that, with our divisions healed, we might live in justice and peace.

Lord, in your mercy; **hear our prayer.**

Look with mercy, gracious God, upon people everywhere who live with injustice, terror, disease, and death as their constant companions. Rouse us from our complacency and help us to eliminate cruelty wherever it is found. Strengthen those who seek equality for all. Grant that everyone may enjoy a fair portion of the abundance of the earth.

Lord, in your mercy; **hear our prayer.**

O God, you made us in your own image and redeemed us through Jesus your Son. Look with compassion on the whole human family; take away the arrogance and hatred that infect our hearts; break down the walls that separate us; unite us in bonds of love; and, through our struggle and confusion, work to accomplish your purposes on earth.

We pray all of this through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

(Prayers adapted from *Evangelical Lutheran Worship.*)

Additional Meditation

“*Canticle of the Turning*” Text: Rory Cooney, based on the *Magnificat* – see front page.

Dates to save:

Members Day on Saturday 25th November

(venue to be confirmed) – check at <http://www.livingstonesonline.org.uk/events>

Guest Speaker: Sir Vincent Fean

Vincent Fean spent 38 years in the British Diplomatic Service, latterly as Ambassador to Libya (2006-10) and Consul-General, Jerusalem (2010-14).

Now retired from the Diplomatic Service, he focuses on the Middle East and North Africa region, particularly the Israel/Palestine conflict and Libya's future. He is a trustee of Medical Aid for Palestinians and patron of the Britain Palestine Friendship and Twinning Network.

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in Jerusalem: Pilgrimage in January 2018

A 12-day programme encompassing the Week of Prayer (Sat 20th – Sun 29th Jan 2018).

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in Jerusalem team organise a schedule of services in churches of different denominations throughout the week. Our presence is greatly appreciated and eagerly welcomed. Alongside these ecumenical services, we visit different communities in the West Bank and Israel, to understand the context within which the indigenous Christians practice their faith.

You can find more general information about our approach to pilgrimage at <http://www.livingstonesonline.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/2016-04-LS-Pilgrimage-Principles.pdf> and take a look at the slide sets at <http://www.livingstonesonline.org.uk/pilgrimages> to get an idea of our unique itineraries.

If you would like to join us, or just want to know more, please contact Jo on pilgrimages@livingstonesonline.org.uk

also of interest:

EmbraceME: Annual Lecture

Professor Avi Shlaim 'Britain and Palestine: From Balfour to Blair and Beyond'

We are privileged to welcome as our speaker Professor Avi Shlaim, Emeritus Fellow of St Antony's College and Emeritus Professor of International Relations at the University of Oxford, to explore this topic. Join us for a challenging and thought-provoking lecture that explores Britain's historical and current relationship with Palestine.

Tuesday, 27 June, 2017, 18:30-20:00, at St James' Church, 197 Piccadilly, London, W1J 9LL

Tickets from: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/embrace-the-middle-east-annual-lecture-2017-tickets-32466539293?aff=es2>

Pilgrimage to Lebanon: *Cradle of Civilisation and Faith* with Revd Andrew Ashdown

Monday 11 September - Tuesday 19 September 2017, with Christians Aware.

*****There is also an opportunity to visit to Syria as guests of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate, and to meet other church groups and faith leaders. Please contact Jo at**

pilgrimages@livingstonesonline.org.uk **as quickly as possible if you are interested in Syria, as the visa may take 3 months. NB a passport without any Israel stamps is required for a visit to Syria. *****