

Inter 60s + 70s

CHRISTIANS
IN
ISRAEL
AND THE
YOM KIPPUR
WAR

ECUMENICAL THEOLOGICAL RESEARCH
FRATERNITY IN ISRAEL

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INTRODUCTION

Among the many things discussed concerning the Yom Kippur War is the attitude which Christians have adopted towards this major crisis in the life of the State of Israel. Have Christians kept silence? Was there a difference in reaction between Church establishments and hierarchies on the one hand and individual Christians or groups of Christians on the other? How did the reactions compare with those preceding and during the Six Day War? In which direction did the balance tip? In favor of Israel, or of the Arab countries? What were the underlying motivations of the various responses?

A prerequisite for a fair evaluation and a true answer to all these questions is the availability of as much material as possible in a suitable form. The Ecumenical Theological Research Fraternity in Israel felt that from its particular angle it could make a distinctive contribution to this need. The Ecumenical Fraternity is "a working group of Christian theologians living in Israel which aims at pursuing a continuing research study of Jewish faith and tradition and of the mutual relations of Jews and Christians both past and present, especially in the context of daily Jewish-Christian relations in Jerusalem and in Israel". From this definition of the Ecumenical Fraternity's aim it is clear that here lies a task for it, because the impact of this war on the mutual relations between Jews and Christians has been incisive. In particular the specific context of daily Jewish-Christian relations in Israel gave here the Christian response to this war a form which was quite unique in comparison with Christian responses elsewhere, since here, for a quarter of a century, the very familiar pattern of a Jewish minority amidst a vast Christian majority has been exactly reversed. It seems therefore of considerable interest to study the way in which a Christian minority - composed of both Arab Christians and Christians from the West - responded to these events which had such a deep impact on the Jewish majority society in which they lived, and to consider how the special understanding and the insights gained by them in this unique context bore fruit in a time of severe crisis.

In this publication we have concentrated deliberately on the Christian response that took place within this specific context, and therefore exclude what was written or said outside Israel, as others more qualified than ourselves have occupied themselves with that material. There are two parts: the first and largest part presents in an unedited form statements, messages, letters to newspaper editors, reflections, etc. which all have in common that they were expressed by Christians who were on the scene, so to speak, in the harsh reality of Israel suddenly caught in a state of war. Although this document does not pretend to be exhaustive, it includes all relevant material we were able to locate and collect after a diligent search. The reader will discern the nuances between the various responses and even the outright differences in attitude among Christians in this country. And it is obvious that this collation does not reflect the attitudes of those who chose to keep silent! As this silence has been censored by many Jews and Christians alike this necessary limitation of the document should be mentioned. But

whom we know as a dedicated promotor of better understanding between Jews and Christians in Israel, and his assistant Ms. Judy Ben-Hillel. Our thanks also go to Ms. Rita Gillies who helped collect the data for the account of specific actions undertaken by Christians during the war.

We gratefully acknowledge the financial assistance in covering the cost of this publication which we received from the Israel Office of the American Jewish Committee and from the Israel Interfaith Committee - two organisations with whom we have closely cooperated over the years.

It is our sincere hope that this publication may help to further a better understanding between Jews and Christians and may contribute to a more profound mutual appreciation of each other's motivations and attitudes.

Revd. Coos Schoneveld

Executive Secretary, Ecumenical Theological
Research Fraternity in Israel.

Can any man answer the questions which war and pain and suffering ask? I have no answers. I have only the convictions of faith and hope in a God of love. He has been faithful to His promises, and merciful in His miracles. "I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans of peace and not of evil, to give a future and a hope" (Jer. 29:11).

Blood is life and the seed of life. Today the blood of our boys and the blood of our neighbors mingles in generous flow. The air above, and the oceans below, the mountains and the dunes and valleys are saturated with the sacred blood of young life; the blood of a new covenant which will make brothers of men who fought and killed each other. May the holiness of their life-blood rain in love and peace on all of us who are anxiously waiting for that rain. May the blood that still courses in our veins beat in our hearts with the memory of their suffering, may that memory beat so strongly that we will not close our hearts to one another anymore, but will open them and share life in the new covenant so that all the world will take new courage and new hope. "On that day living waters shall flow out from Jerusalem, half of them in the Eastern Sea and half of them to the Western Sea; it shall continue in summer as in winter" (Zach. 14:8).

Blood is life and the seed of life. The earth of the Middle East has been soaked in the blood of sacrifice for centuries, the blood of animals, the blood of man, the blood of God. As a religious man, I have a vision. I nurture the "hope" that that rich seed is one day soon going to spring into life which will be a beacon of light to the whole world, life which will be an oasis in the desert of the world's pain, an oasis where every man can come to drink and be refreshed.

The Most Reverend George Appleton, Anglican Archbishop in Jerusalem, sent the following remarks to the British Broadcasting Corporation on October 21, 1973.

Here in Jerusalem I have been enquiring about prisoners of war from the two fronts and especially about the wounded. I am assured that they are being cared for in a humanitarian way. I hope to visit them in the next day or two.

Let us give expression to our human feelings of compassion for the wounded, the bereaved, and the anxious, and our regret for the many who have already died. Let us put ourselves in the place of others, Israelis trying to understand the feelings of Egyptians, Syrians and Jordanians in the continued occupation of their lands since '67, and Arabs putting themselves in the place of Israelis with their need of security, which they have never had for a single day. Jews too have never felt secure among the nations.

I think of the Palestinians, those in the West Bank, carrying on quietly, hoping for a chance to assist in creating their own future. Even more I think of the refugees in camps. The cost of one day of the war would solve the problems of their compensation and rehabilitation.

Israelis stress that they did not make a pre-emptive strike in this fourth

What can we be specifically thankful for?

1. That the fighting has ceased - the killing, the wounding, the destruction, have stopped.

The grief for those who have died will continue for years. Injured people will be damaged for the rest of their lives.

2. The two great powers have seen the danger of confrontation and have drawn back and are urging their allies towards peace.
3. There are to be no troops from the great powers drafted into the area, so no fear of either or both staying on indefinitely.
4. We can thank God that the U.N. Security Council has come to life, in firm decisions and unanimous actions.
5. The world can be thankful that three chronic problems have been made so acute that they can be no longer ignored:

- a) The resentment and frustration of the Arabs in having territories occupied so long.
- b) Israel's need of acceptance and security within secure and recognised borders, for Israel has not had a day of security since it was founded, nor have Jews felt safe in the world community or the Christian Church for many centuries.
- c) The urgent need of a settlement for the refugees, whether they be in desperate need in the camps or in embittered exile elsewhere.

Light has come out of the dark on these three interlocking problems which have to find an inter-relating solution.

6. I thank God for the patient people of the West Bank, who can see hope for the future and who want to take a part in its planning. I have felt for some years past they are a key group in the search for peace: They have been in contact with Israelis for over six years, they have nearly half their community on the other side of Jordan, they have their diaspora among the Arab states of the Middle East, and they cannot forget the Palestinian Liberation Movement. I believe that they must be represented in any peace negotiations.
7. I thank God for doves in Israel and in the Jewish diaspora who want Israel to be a righteous nation, and for many Jews who want to fulfil the divine hope first seen by Abraham, that his descendants shall be a blessing to all nations.

I was glad to note a statement given by Abba Eban, the Foreign Minister of Israel -

"If the ceasefire is honored and if discussions start, this month

The next selection represents public statements issued by Christian bodies and by heads of Christian organizations.

PUBLIC STATEMENT - 13 OCTOBER 1973

The Ecumenical Theological Research Fraternity in Israel, a working group of Christian theologians concerned with the study of Jewish-Christian relations, issues the following majority statement.

We express our profound shock and concern at the new attack by Arab States which has reopened the war in the Middle East. The fact that this attack was carried out on the Day of Atonement, the most sacred day of the Jewish year, outrages all human and religious feelings. This, and the continued rejection of negotiations, highlights the refusal of the Arab States to recognise the basic right of the Jewish People, which has been affirmed by the United Nations, to sovereign and independent existence in peace among the other nations in the Middle East. We declare that only after this refusal has been truly reversed will Christians have the moral right to require the Government of Israel to meet the legitimate claims of the Palestinian Arabs. We urge all Christians in the world who, like ourselves, feel concerned about the rights of the Palestinian Arabs, to recognise unequivocally this basic right of the Jewish People.

We mourn all those who have died and who are dying in this war. We pray that the hearts of all parties may be opened towards a true acceptance of each other in their own identity, as the beginning of a process leading to a just and lasting peace.

Abbot Laurentius Klein, Chairman

Revd. Coos Schoneveld, Executive Secretary

Separate from the above, a number of important Christians living in Israel, whose credentials are given below, issued the following statement in their individual capacities. Following its publication in the local press, 33 additional members of the Christian community voluntarily called or wrote to associate themselves with this act.

PUBLIC STATEMENT - 13 OCTOBER 1973

We, members of the Christian community of Israel, and sharing in its destiny, express our profound shock and concern at the new attack by Arab States which has reopened the war in the Middle East. The fact that this attack was carried out on the Day of Atonement, the most sacred day of the Jewish year, outrages all human and religious feelings. This, and the continued rejection of negotiations, highlights the refusal of the Arab States to recognise the basic right of the Jewish People, which has been affirmed by the United Nations, to sovereign and independent existence in peace among the other nations in the

Following the appearance of the above statement, 63 members of Nes Ammim, a Christian settlement in Israel, signed the following declaration.

We, the undersigned, at Nes Ammim support the statement of Israel's Christian community which was prepared by the Ecumenical Theological Research Fraternity in Israel and made public in The Jerusalem Post on October 15; however, after reviewing history we believe that it is absurd to expect or hope for a time when we as Christians can require the Jewish Government to meet any claims. We do believe the Palestinians have legitimate rights and that these rights should be honored through a negotiated agreement between Israel, the Palestinians and her Arabic neighbors and not through a requirement from Christianity.

The following Appeal for Peace was issued on October 19, 1973 by the Executive Committee of the United Christian Council in Israel.

As the entire region of the Middle East has again exploded into bitter conflict, tragic suffering and loss of life, we as representatives of the United Christian Council in Israel express profound shock and dismay that frustrated hopes and dreams of peace have resulted in resumption of fighting. That this outbreak of hostilities occurred on the most sacred and solemn Day of Atonement offends all religious feelings and human sensibilities.

We earnestly call upon all Middle Eastern states in accordance with the highest aspirations of their religious ideals, to abandon once and for all this easy recourse to bloodshed instead of responsible and fair negotiations, and with equal energy and dedication to begin to devise a strategy of peace, that all who live in this region who have known the full measure of suffering may now be privileged to know the fruits of peace.

We mourn all who have sacrificed life, and grieve for all who suffer. We pray that the one God whom we all fear may mercifully grant that neighbor will yet come to love and accept neighbor, and that a new spirit of tolerance will prevail, and that out from the fires of this conflict will be forged a desperate will for peace and a new path to fruitful coexistence.

A plea to the Christians in Jerusalem was issued by Anna-Grace Vester Lind, Head of Spafford House in Jerusalem.

It has been suggested that in this dark hour, surrounded by war, death and hatred, we Christians in the Holy Land should unite in prayer to bring in God's peace.

We Christians are so torn apart by disunity - theologically and politically, that it has left us impotent, useless and weak.

Is it not time for us to do something about this, to change it? How can we expect the Jews and Arabs to come to the peace table, when we Christians cannot even discuss the political situation calmly with each other?

Let us stop, and look into the face of Jesus, and find our way back in humility and penitence. In our unrest we will behold His calm, His rest, His peace. In our disunity and impatience with each other, we will behold His unfailing patience and love. Looking away from our imperfections, and the imperfections of our neighbor, we will behold His perfection. So looking at Him, we will grow like Him.

Jesus promised us His peace. Let us become His peace in this hour of turmoil and stand at the foot of the Cross beneath Him whose love was so great that He died for us, with His arms outstretched to include all God's creation - yes, Jew and Arab alike. Can we do less when we are pledged to follow in His footsteps?

God has promised us that if we obey His commandments we can ask what we will and He will do it. Now, are we going to fail when all we have to do is to surrender our lives to God, to love one another, and ask for His grace to live in this hour in His all conquering, all miracle-working power?

Let us put on the whole armor of God, that we may be able to stand, and keep standing. "Little children love one another".

October 17, 1973

In addition to statements issued by Christians living in Israel, there were also statements of Christian scholars from abroad who are studying in Israel. (Institutions are listed for identification only.)

As Christian scholars who have in common with our Jewish colleagues historic roots in the Land of the Bible and commitment to Biblical faith, and who now have gone through the crisis of war alongside Israelis, we share insofar as we can the present trial of the people of Israel. Our Christian conscience and our common humanity demand that we make our voices heard.

Rev. Prof. Dale Moody, Th.D.,
D.Phil. (Oxon)

Southern Baptist Theological Seminary,
Louisville, Kentucky, U.S.A.

Sister Michiko Ota

Oecumenical Commission for the Translation
of the Bible, Tokyo, Japan

Dr. Joe D. Seger

Archaeological Director, Hebrew Union
College, Jerusalem

Rev. Dr. William R. Watters Jr.

University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa, U.S.A.

Jerusalem, October 22, 1973

* * * * *

As scholars and churchmen from abroad living and working in Jerusalem we deeply deplore the resumption of hostilities in the Middle East initiated by Egypt and Syria on October 6.

We grieve over the loss of precious Arab and Jewish lives and the pain and suffering of the wounded. We are saddened at the destructive waste of resources which could have been used to improve the living conditions of all people in the region.

We regret that the renewal of hostilities has tempted the superpowers to exacerbate the crisis for reasons of international politics, but we take some consolation from the superpowers' belated decision to pull back from the brink of a wider war and to cooperate in proposing the call for a cease-fire and direct negotiations between the combatants which was approved by the U.N. Security Council on October 22.

At the moment of writing, it is not clear whether all the belligerents will accept a cease-fire and enter into direct negotiations. We regret that the renewed fighting may have strengthened the hands of those who believe that there can be a military solution in the Middle East dispute. We strongly urge that all belligerents accept the U.N. call for a cease-fire and enter into direct negotiations, beginning within the framework of the U.N. Resolution 242. These negotiations must determine secure boundaries in the disputed areas and provide adequate compensation for refugees dislocated by hostilities in the area over the past 25 years.

We join our voices with others in urging that, in accepting a cease-fire and direct negotiations, all belligerents will enter into a prompt exchange of prisoners fully supervised and verified according to accepted international standards.

We believe that future direct negotiations must proceed on the principle that there is room in the Middle East for autonomous self-determining Jewish and

the conflict for the advancement of its own interests, at a time when prospects for negotiations of a settlement were, at long last, in sight. The fact that this war was started on the Day of Atonement and during the month of Ramadan, and its presentation as a Holy War (Jihad), should shock and concern all religious and spiritually sensitive people for whom interfaith dialogue and ecumenism have any value.

We extend deep sympathy to all the families who lost loved ones in this totally unnecessary and irresponsible resort to violence. To the wounded we send our wishes for a speedy and complete recovery. We hope that all the prisoners of war will be humanely treated and pray that all of them will be allowed to return to their families soon.

We were greatly encouraged by the many manifestations of brotherhood and solidarity by members of all the communities in Israel. We hope that the sense of community revealed at this time of destiny will prevail and inspire interfaith dialogue and cooperation in the future.

We would like to mention with appreciation and gratitude the expressions of solidarity and the moral and material help of Christian friends, individuals and organizations, all over the world. We cannot help, however, wondering and being sorry that many spiritual leaders and clergy, some of whom are involved in the Christian-Jewish Dialogue, were silent at this dangerous hour for Israel.

We call upon all our friends all over the world to stand by Israel at this crucial hour, to identify with its struggle for survival and security and to help as much as they can for creating a climate of peace in our region.

We call upon our friends wherever they are to do everything within their capability to help the victims of war: families of the dead, wounded, prisoners of war and all who suffered, in every way they can.

R.J. Zwi Werblovsky	Chairman, The Executive Committee
Andre Chouraqui	Chairman of the Board
Suhayl Shukri	Honorary Secretary
Father Elias Chacour	Member of the Executive Committee
Rev. Coos Schoneveld	Member of the Executive Committee

October 21, 1973

Meditran, an association for the enhancement of cultural and social relations in Jerusalem, with a membership composed of Christians, Moslems and Jews, issued the following declaration for a peaceful settlement.

We, Arabs, Jews and Christian friends of MEDITRAN dedicated to enhancing social

In the following section, there are reproduced or printed letters and articles submitted for publication to the Jerusalem Post.

October 17, 1973

The Editor
The Jerusalem Post
Jerusalem

Dear Sir;

Israel is encircled by neighbors which are getting continually more bellicose and making war more frequently. The first Arab attack was in 1948. The war of 1956 was eight years later. Then it was only eleven years to 1967, and then a mere six years to the war of 1973. The recently stepped-up pressure of The Arabs on the non-aligned nations is causing more of them to stop recognizing Israel. Their support of terrorist activity is a further effort to cut Israel off from the rest of the world and to strangle her by air as well as by land. It is clear that the so-called "neutrality" of such nations as Britain, France, Austria, Belgium and others is working for the belligerent Arabs and against Israel. This is not neutrality at all. Russia is stirring up other Arab nations to get into the war against Israel. The Arab attempt to cut off oil to nations supporting Israel is spreading and getting more intense each year.

These signs of tightening the noose around the Jews of Israel today remind one all too clearly of the 1930's of Europe when Hitler was building up to the liquidation of Europe's Jews. Other nations then made compromises at the expense of the Jews, so it is happening again today. Who can forget former Prime Minister Chamberlain of England and his umbrella trip to see Hitler and the resultant compromise? As then, so today too many morally minded organizations and individuals are not speaking out about the threat to Israel's very existence. As a clergyman and educator, I especially deplore this near total silence abroad. It is not enough that a church leader or group says he or they pray for peace in the Middle East unless there is an open effort to rebuke aggressive acts such as the Arab attack on Israel on Yom Kippur and unless there is open support of the right of every nation to exist in peace within secure and recognized borders. Sad to say, even here in Israel where they enjoy many benefits under Israel's leadership, many important church leaders and organizations are silent. It is not that Israel may not survive the present emergency. Far from it. After this emergency is over, anti-Jewish and anti-Israel pressures in the world will still be present and must be dealt with.

There is a moral issue. The issue is not whether moral men wish to be pro-Arab or not. That is their privilege. The issue is whether such men can be morally responsible and at the same time be silent on Israel's right to exist in peace without continuing war being forced upon her by the Arab nations. Can they be morally responsible and encourage Arab warfare (or at least not

be obvious to all, namely the refusal to recognize the other half of Resolution 242. Moral organizations and individuals may wish to be pro-Arab, but to be that they do not have to be anti-Zionist, anti-Jewish, anti-Israel and certainly not to be for war and killing in order to reach "peaceful" ends. They could loudly and clearly support the world family of nations' conclusion for this area, the full application of the United Nations Resolution 242 -- not only Israeli withdrawals from the lines existing in 1967 (and certainly not all the way to the pre-June 5, 1967 lines in the light of the Arab record of the six years since), but that this withdrawal was to be contingent on Arab agreement to cease belligerency and make peace. In fact the Arab nations have consistently stood by their agreement not to recognize Israel, not to make peace with her on any terms or under any considerations, not even to negotiate with her. (This was their resolution at their Khartoum Summit Conference of November 1967.) Surely the moral leaders of our day must be aware of these facts. Should they not support the U.N. resolution as the basis for negotiations? The Algiers Conference of Non-Aligned Nations even had the temerity to condemn Israel because it would not make an "unconditional withdrawal"! That was in contravention of Resolution 242!

In summary -- these are all clear and obvious facts that can lead only to more killing, bloodshed and war, and if successful, to genocide. On a world wide scale efforts are being made in the 1970's against Israel analogous to the efforts by Germany in the 1930's, and by Poland and Russia later. The handwriting on the wall is clear. Why are men silent?

As if the signs already noted are not clear enough, there are others even more obvious. One could mention the use of oil as political blackmail, an Arab weapon against the nations friendly to Israel. From Saudi Arabia comes the statement that oil production will be curtailed "unless the U.S. modifies its support of Israel for Israel's expansionism at the expense of the Arabs." One could note the growing Arab pressures and blackmail on the countries in Africa contiguous to them, Niger and Chad and even on those contiguous to these, ten others in recent months. Can the moral leadership of the world not see the tightening noose? If it chooses not to speak up on these moral issues, can it not later be rightfully accused of moral negligence as were their predecessors in the 1930's over their failure to support the Jews of Europe as against Germany? Not only is Israel's survival in jeopardy, but the peace of the world is at stake. Now is the time for moral leadership to be heard.

Surely there are leaders not fooled by Austria's recent stand to make it more difficult for the Jews of Russia to escape that hell when they closed the Schoenau transit camp because of the Arab terrorist pressure. There is also evidence of complicity in this on the part of both Czechoslovakia and Russia. One success like this leads to another and we have had many already in the air hijacking area. Yet the moral leadership of the world continues to be silent. One could note further the failure to condemn air piracy on the part of the International Civil Aviation Organization meeting for a month recently in Rome. The failure was admitted to be because the Arab states voted against all measures, even the most modest, because they might help Israel. This negative block prevented securing the necessary two-thirds vote of the organization for passage of any meaningful measure. While this organization condemned Israel

CHRISTIAN COMMENT



War and Dialogue

November 2, 1973

Oikoumenikos

WHAT MAY BE happening to the Jewish-Christian dialogue in Israel and, perhaps, other parts of the world, is reflected in the following statement made by an official of the Israeli Ministry for Religious Affairs:

"The telephone is silent; none of our usual Christian friends have come to call. There was only one other time I can remember it so quiet in this office, and that was during the Six Day War."

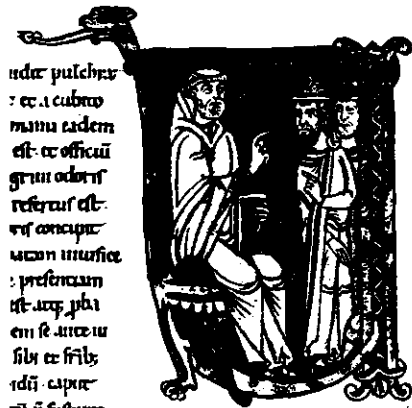
What effect will this, the Yom Kippur War, have on Jewish-Christian relations? It is too early to tell but it may be worth recalling that before June, 1967, interfaith discussions were largely of a denominational character, with groups of Jews and Protestants and Jews and Catholics meeting to discuss beliefs. After the 1967 war there was a breakdown in communications. Later, analysts attributed this to the fact that the parties that had engaged in dialogue in the United States and elsewhere had not got down to the real roots of the issues, but had merely hovered on the surface. One reason is that, for most non-Jews, the question of Israel is a completely political issue, whereas for the vast majority of Jews, it is inextricably bound up with their identity as Jews.

IT IS TRUE THAT, whereas some, if not most, Christians regard Israel as a political state like any other modern state, there are also Christians who see in Israel the realization of a reality promised in Scripture. They see a close relation between God's chosen people and the land that was once called Palestine. There are those who accept, as history, that God linked his covenant with the Jews with a gift of land but cannot bring themselves to admit that the identity of the contemporary Jewish people is also linked with that land.

When Christians were silent about the Six Day War, Jews were shocked — perhaps as shocked as they were about the silence of the Churches during the Holocaust of the Second

World War. They realized that individual Christians came out in support of Israel in 1967 as did many individual Christians come to the aid of some Jews during the '40s. Nevertheless, they were shocked and disappointed. Especially disheartened were those who had engaged in dialogue with the Churches. They felt let down and betrayed because the Churches to which their Christian friends belonged remained silent. Some

Jews then, began to remind their Christian friends that dialogue can take place only if and when the parties engaged in it accept each other as they are. Jewish-Christian dialogue can take place only if the parties are able to take a close look at each other's standpoint and culture and profit from new insights into the other's theological and ethnic world. Yet the silence of Christians in time of crisis for the Jewish state of Israel, when it is involved in a war such as the Six Day War or the Yom Kippur War, indicates that they are baffled by, or cannot accept the Jewish attitude to the Land of Israel.



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femp: et: et
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utq: des repugnans: Que
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Dialogue between a bishop and a Jew, 18th century, Douai, France.

asked themselves if the silence was not a subtle manifestation of the problem that had been posed by the death camps of Hitler.

In 1967, it became clear to World Jewry to what extent the existence and the survival of the State of Israel was bound up with their own existence and survival as Jews. Many began to feel that Israel as a Jewish state is a living, spiritual expression of Jewish aspirations for the fulfilment of Messianic hopes of freedom, justice and peace. Even those whose Jewishness had until then expressed itself, practically, only in religious terms, and who had little to do with Zionist activity, suddenly discovered the ethnic dimension of their Judaism.

WE CHRISTIANS cannot ignore the sense of Jewish disillusionment over "Christian silence" during these past weeks. However, from what is known about what individual Christians have done, especially here in Jerusalem, it appears that this silence was far from complete, and that the charge requires careful qualification.

We may need to inquire into the underlying causes of the silence of Christian officialdom. In doing so, we cannot fail to acknowledge that there was a failure on the part of the Churches in Israel to communicate to the outside world that there is always very grave Jewish anxiety over the threat of the destruction of the state of Israel, which always carries with it a threat of genocide.

On the other hand, it also has to be recognized that this was not entirely a matter of Christian deafness to Jewish opinion. In Israel there has been a very marked, though historically understandable, Jewish resistance to any kind of Jewish-Christian encounter in which the voice of Jewry could be truly heard and subsequently transmitted.

IT CANNOT BE GAINSAID that much Christian thinking on the subject of Israel's right to exist derives from spurious theological presuppositions. As a Catholic writer has stated:

"Fundamentally, the traditional Christian position towards the Jews, for a certain category of churchmen, is undeniably the theological impossibility to get accustomed to the idea that for the Christian order, the Jewish

November 6, 1973

CHRISTIAN HELP

To the Editor of The Jerusalem Post

Sir, — I hope that Mr. Landau, in his article, "Christians scored for keeping silent on the war" (October 15), excluded many Christians who live here in the Holy City and have been helping with cars and physical work in an effort to keep civilian life running smoothly during this awful war. The Lord Jesus Christ Himself said that anyone who takes up the sword will die by it (St. Matthew — 26,52). This is being evidenced by the tremendous casualties experienced daily by Egypt, Syria and their allies.

Real Christians throughout the entire world bleed in their hearts for the plight of Israel.

MRS. MARIE NANCY BROWN
Jerusalem, October 16.

December 4, 1973

FULBRIGHT AND M.E. REALITIES

To the Editor of The Jerusalem Post

Sir, — U.S. Senator Fulbright of the powerful Senate Foreign Relations Committee coupled the idea of an American-Israeli security treaty with an Israel pullback to the pre-1967 borders. He stated that because of the possibility of pullback, he feels the prospects for the cease-fire and a peace settlement are hopeful.

A pullback to even the 1967 lines (never mind the pre-1967 lines) would be suicide for Israel and genocide for more Jews. It is unfortunate that Mr. Fulbright is so detached from the realities here, especially commitments of any kind made by our neighbours, that he cannot see that, under conditions of modern warfare, Israel could not survive with enemies on those borders again. He should remember that cease-fire treaties signed by them before were broken by them at will. What certainty is there that this will not be repeated?

Let us not forget that the attacks of 1948, 1956, 1967 and 1973 were initiated by our neighbours who were refusing to come to peace terms, or even to talk to Israel, and all the while Israel was saying that she was willing to meet to discuss conditions. How much can anyone depend on the "talk" of belligerents?

REV. G. DOUGLAS YOUNG
President, American Institute of Holy Land Studies
Jerusalem, November 27.

Mormon support

November 14, 1973

To the Editor of The Jerusalem Post

Sir, — As a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (commonly called "Mormons") and as one of the officers in its Jerusalem Branch, I have been somewhat dismayed by certain statements of late regarding the "trustworthiness" of Christians. While not wishing to speak for Christianity (an impossibility, inasmuch as we agree with them only on the question of Jesus, while theologically being closer to Judaism), I would like to make a defence of my own coreligionists.

Mormonism was born in a Zionist spirit, in the 1820s and 30s. It has always regarded the immigration of Jews to the land of Israel as not only their right, but as their duty. In 1841, the Mormon Prophet Joseph Smith sent one of the 12 Apostles, Orson Hyde, to Jerusalem to dedicate the land for the return of the Jews. This he did, calling upon God to restore the land to its "rightful heirs," and to inspire the powers of the earth to aid in the establishment of a Jewish "nation."

On Yom Kippur, Mormons from throughout the world were meeting in conference in Salt Lake City. Some of our friends in attendance have reported the concern publicly manifest at that time for Israel in its hour of peril (the conference is broadcast nation-wide and around the world on radio and TV.)

The same day, Mormons of the Jerusalem Branch were gathered in fasting and prayer in Jerusalem. In the midst of our activities, we heard

the first air-raid sirens. Upon learning of the war, those of our number who had come down from Galilee rushed home to assist. They included a Mormon family from Kibbutz Shamir, just on the border, and another Mormon woman who works at the Safad Hospital, where she has been caring for the wounded (as she did in Beersheba during the 1967 war).

In our rush to try to assist our Jewish friends, none of us thought it necessary to call on the Ministry of Religious Affairs or to write letters condemning the Arabs. We were content to volunteer our services. One of our members is serving in the I.D.F. and was sent to Sinai before the end of the first week of the war. On the following Shabbat as we again gathered for our weekly services (minus a few who were engaged in more urgent matters!), we concluded our morning by going *en masse* to Magen David Adom to donate blood.

I hesitated to write this letter, fearing that — as is often the case — it might be viewed as bragging or as an attempt to "prove" some false loyalty to the Zionist cause. The thought even occurred to me that some would consider it an attempt at free publicity for Mormon beliefs. But, as I have seen criticism mounting, I have deemed it necessary to state the reasons for which our Jewish brethren may rest assured that we are their friends, in both good and bad weather.

JOHN A. TVEDTNES
Jerusalem, November 7.

Christianity can't be trusted in times of need

"THE telephone is silent; none of our usual Christian friends have come to call. There was only one other time I can remember it so quiet in this office, and that was during the Six Day War."

These were the words of a representative of the Israeli Ministry of Christian Affairs whom I visited nine days after the start of the war. And the tragic point that he was making was that Christians in Israel had once again closed themselves up in their private enclaves, and had once again drawn themselves together for solace into the quiet and somewhat greater security of their Christian ghettos. The Christian community in Israel was silently waiting and watching the events of this new war.

It is the silence and reluctance of the Christian churches to take any action whatsoever — either for or against the State of Israel — that compels this writing.

Need we turn our attention to the horrors of the Second World War to cite what has become the classic example of Christian silence in the face of imminent danger to Jewry? Need we be reminded of what Christianity could have done to prevent or retard the Holocaust, but failed to do? I think not.

We need merely turn our thoughts back some six years to the Six Day War. For if a pattern of Christian response to Jewry in danger exists, that pattern initiated by the period of the Holocaust certainly repeated itself during the time of the Six Day War.

**By Reverend
Dr. William Watters**

Statements were made "as were appropriate" to the importance of the situation at hand: the World Council of Churches (and numerous other ecclesiastical bodies) dispatched well-worded telegrams to all primary parties; thoughtful Christians throughout the world shook their heads and called for peace.

Following the Six Day War, the existence of the State of Israel was handled in a number of ways by the Christian world, each of the denominations working (to varying degrees) to fit Israel into their own world theological pictures. Post-1967 opinion on *Nostra Aetate* felt that it was a step in the right direction

to deal with the question of deicide and the Jews, but at the same time continue to overlook past millennia of Christian persecution of Jewry, as well as the present reality of the State of Israel.

My point, therefore, and first of all, is that in times of stress for the Jew, the Christian has been found wanting in terms of word followed by deed. The newly-discovered apparatus of the ecumenical dialogue is seen at such times for what it clearly is: little more than a well-intended academic exercise which fails to spring to action or cause action — either positively or negatively — on the part of the participants in times of crisis. It would seem logical that when one party of a dialogue is in danger of death, the other party, if truly interested in the other, would come to his aid. Such does not, once again, seem to be the case as evidenced by the present Christian response here.

The "Jewish question" has been answered historically in three ways: conversion, expulsion, and annihilation. The second is a substitute for the first when it does not work, and the third is a substitute for the second when it does not work. The urgency of our words rests upon the fact that the third alternative to the continuing presence of the Jewish people is once again being attempted: the threat of genocide exists for Middle East Jewry and for the State of Israel.

For a multitude of reasons Christians have an obligation to face the present issues in the Middle East crisis head on: the Jewish-Christian dialogue has shown that the covenant of God applies to both Christian and Jew. As such, each is responsible for the other's welfare. Christians may celebrate the existence of the State of Israel because Christ was and remained a Jew, and because of the essential Jewishness of Christianity.

Israel is the child of Jewry which now lives after the loss of six million parents. Whether out of remorse for past injustices to Jewry by Christians, or through the realization that every minority people has the right to self-identity and land, Christians are now called to the challenge of Israel. I am afraid nothing more than empty, actionless statements will be heard. No Christian dares move out of his safety to hoist a fresh Arab flag here, or, conversely, to volunteer his service

for Israel. Few Christian funds will arrive; little Christian muscle will be used in the battle for or against Israel. Christians will remain silent, watch and wait.

This past century has shown that Christianity is not to be trusted by Jewry in times of need. As Herzl went with hat in hand to Rome for assistance in building a Jewish State in Palestine; as world Jewry called upon Christianity to place pressure upon the Reich to end the slaughter of European Jewry; as Israelis waited patiently for their telephones to ring and mail to arrive in support of the Six Day War— so once again Israel will be sadly mistaken if in this war she looks for prompt and valuable assistance from Christianity.

Though I deeply wish it were not so, I must predict that concrete Christian action simply will not come. For Jewry, even the most enlightened Christians of the past have been notoriously neutral and ambivalent toward their needs as a people. So I believe they will be again. As Christians, therefore, our cry to Israel must be, "Don't count on us to help! Help yourselves; no one really cares! Don't trust us! In the safety and quiet of the lecture hall and dialogue table we will voice all sorts of aid and comfort. Yet when your life is challenged, don't look to us. Save yourselves!"

Harsh words, but I believe historically realistic words. Advice which Israelis and world Jewry have found to be true long ago. "Every man for himself!" seems to be the cold reality of the survival of Israel and her people, for Christianity does not seem to show tangible response in periods of Jewish oppression. The Jew might call upon Hillel to convince the Christian of his obligations to his fellow man: "If I am not for myself, who will be for me; but if I am only for myself, what am I; and if not now, when?" Such words are a call for responsibility and action both from the individual and from the group. Yet I sadly doubt any such reaction will take place in Christians.

During the past year, the Israeli Government has commented on unpopular governmental actions against Palestinian terrorists by saying, "We must do what we think is right for us, not what the rest of the world believes to be correct. We stand alone." On the face of it, such remarks seem cold, and unconcerned about the world around Israel. Yet in light of the present situation and the danger which Israelis are in, this policy seems to be the only means of defence which works, at least until Christianity comes to her aid.

Dr. Watters, who is at present in Jerusalem, and wrote this article on October 14, is a graduate of the Lutheran Theological Seminary and holds a doctorate in Judaica from Iowa State University. He has occupied a number of pulpits in the United Methodist Church.

CHRISTIANS VERSUS OFFICIAL CHURCHES

To the Editor of The Jerusalem Post

Sir, — I deeply regretted to see from his letter in this column (October 30) that Mr. George Otis felt offended by Dr. Watters' article in your paper of October 28. This gives the impression that Dr. Watters' meaning was misinterpreted. The article was not directed against those numerous individual Christians who come out straightforwardly in support of the Jewish people, like Mr. Otis himself, but against the great representative bodies of the Christian Churches which, throughout history, have excelled either in practicing persecution on their own behalf or in shrouding themselves in ominous silence when persecution took place.

There is no reason at all for any forthright Christian to take those words as a personal affront. The great admiration we Jews have for those who pursue a course of true understanding of their calling, in spite of the attitude of their politically oriented and frightened leaders, actually stems from the historical experience we have had when confronted with their official organizations.

The real trouble is that there are too few people like Mr. Otis and those he has mentioned in his letter among the hundreds of million of Christians whom the Jewish people had to face throughout its long history of suffering. Dr. Watters, in his article, draws very pertinent conclusions from this experience and we can only be grateful that these conclusions are being presented so clearly by a Christian scholar.

H.A. CIDOR

Jerusalem, October 31.

November 6, 1973

Silent churches

To the Editor of The Jerusalem Post
Sir, — I would like to thank Archbishop Raya for his letter outlining the activities of which his churchmen are a part during this war (November 6). His kind of response was exactly what I hoped to see as a result of my article of October 28. Unfortunately, there were no other responses to equal his.

That *individual* Christians (mainly Western Protestant, Roman Catholic, and Anglican) have helped in the war effort, is not the issue. As in the case of the Holocaust, the Six Day War, and the Yom Kippur War, the real issue is that responsible Christian *denominations* both here and abroad have failed to react to the crisis. Amid the silence of ecclesiastical leaders, the

efforts of the individuals become lost.

It was the singular purpose of my article to move church leaders to make clear to Israelis what they have done and how they feel. The loneliness of the Christian Affairs representative of the Ministry of Religious Affairs was not merely an artistic entry into my article, but what I felt (and still feel) to be the gut-level feeling of many Israelis, namely, that while Christian individuals will help, groups will not. When a man is in danger of death, he needs to know who his friends are. He must therefore interpret silent groups and individuals as his enemy.

REV. DR. WILLIAM R. WATTERS, JR.

Jerusalem, November 6.

November 9, 1973

In the section following, we have reproduced a variety of other kinds of Christian responses.

The following letter, originally written in French, was sent to hundreds of friends and associates throughout Europe by Father Marcel Jacques Dubois, a Dominican priest, who heads Isaiah House in Jerusalem. (The letter was subsequently translated into English and, with Father Marcel's permission, was distributed throughout the English-speaking world.)

And so, once again...Perhaps you remember this poem of Claudel. It bears the date of September 15, 1939, and its first words are the title of the small volume published at the beginning of the conflict which was to become the second World War. On re-reading it today and applying it to Israel, one cannot but be struck by its tragic and permanent actuality.

I was in France on Saturday October 6th, the day of Yom Kippur, when the news broke out on the radio and television screens. The suddenness of the aggression and what must be called its sacrilegious character struck with stupor all those who love the people of Israel and who feel concerned for its destiny.

The confusion brought about by contradictory broadcasts would have been already enough to sustain our anguish giving us the pre-sentiment that Israel was in danger. Danger, after all, has been the daily menace to which this small country has had to accustom itself since its birth.

Anxiety and affliction were felt on a more intimate and hidden level. On hearing the news that one guessed directed by a sordid malevolence, and the ironic commentaries of partisan reporters, I was cut to the quick in my Christian conscience by the solitude of Israel, and by the screen of misunderstanding and lies with which she was surrounded.

Such is, in fact the distressing truth - once again, and in a way more tragic than ever, Israel finds herself alone, misunderstood, exposed without defence to the calculations of the powerful and to the ill-will of the whole world.

* * * *

Israel is alone. This has been evident since 1967 at all the General Assemblies of the U.N., at each debate of the Security Council. For several months this isolation has still worsened. Israel has seen countries of the Third World with whom she had laboriously woven links of friendship and support, turn against her in strange rivalry as victims of political blackmail or threatened in their own interests.

Since the outset of this war, the process of disintegration has been brutally accelerated. One message from the Kremlin, affirming against all good faith that Israel was the aggressor was enough for their African friends to begin to abandon her one after the other.

In this field, no bitterness has been spared us. In a country where "les grands noms sont de grandes raisons pour de petits genies" - "big names are big reasons for small geni", - the Russian accusations have found a strange echo in the wearying and haughty declarations of "enarques" fictitiously non-committed, re-affirming the positions already taken six years ago.

In the letter that we wrote immediately after the Six Day War, we already denounced the simplist "Manicheism" according to which the world is divided into two camps. Good and bad. Israel, which appeared before the fifth of June 1967 like the little David whose weakness and isolation were pitied in the face of the Arab Goliath, was, immediately after the 11th of June, put into the bad camp because she was victorious.

It is according to this same pattern, that since 1967 a certain opinion presents the cause of the Arabs in general, and that of the Palestinians in particular, putting the latter without distinction on the side of the poor and humiliated, and Israel on the other side. Of the rich and powerful. We denounced this simplism on the occasion of the "World Congress of Christians for Palestine". Not that we have looked for means of eluding the misery of the refugees or the aspiration of the Palestinians to build up their own father-land; we are the first to admit that Israel has lacked magnanimity and initiative, besides this, it is too little known that many Israelis blame their government for its inertia, and reproach its lack of realism and imagination. We wanted only to protest against the ill-will with which the problem is over simplified, and above all, against the way the Palestinian cause is used as a banner for other causes. In a transposition in which the Palestinians were no longer more than a pretext, they became either an alibi for all Arab bitterness in its most contradictory pretention, or the symbol of the revolution of all the oppressed throughout the world. In this presentation, Israel is attributed the role of scapegoat!

I fear, in the present conflict and in the laborious negotiations which will follow that the proceedings have a deceitful simplism. These are in any case, the categories that the Arab leaders and Soviet propaganda, have used to disguise in the eyes of the world the aggression of Yom Kippur.

* * * *

To those tempted by the seduction of such a dialectic may I ask the same question as after the Six Day War: who are, finally, the poorest in the conflict? Aware of the paradox that I put forward I answer that they are those on the side of Israel.

Perhaps it is enough to recall here the words of Leon Bloy, who had perceived in a prophetic way the mysterious identity of the destiny of the Jews and the destiny of the poor. It is indeed the same compassion that inspires "Le Salut par Les Juifs", et "Le sang du Pauvre": "In writing a book on the poor, how could I not speak about the Jews? In a very beautiful page of the volume in which he publishes the retreat he gave, some years ago in the Vatican, Pere Loew defines the poor as "he to whom one does not listen". Now such is indeed, at present, Israel's position.

- Solitude of those who are surrounded by noise and fury in the tumult of counter-truths.
- Solitude of those whose intentions and words are distorted.
- Solitude of those who are accused and who are pre-judged, with no heed paid to their cause.
- Solitude of those who are not allowed to speak.

the present conflict manifests how hasty and unjust, in many cases, were the criticisms addressed to those considered as taking political positions.

Oh, if only instead of refusing too quickly their message, we had simply tried to understand the conversion to which we were invited, the new way of regarding Jewish reality in all its complicity! If we had heard if we had been simply attentive, perhaps we Christians would be today more capable of both understanding from within, the essential solitude of Israel, and of refusing the misunderstandings and lies that condemn Israel to such a dramatic isolation.

Understand what I mean. My intention is not at all to justify here the political action of the Israeli government, with eyes closed to its faults, or excusing its mistakes. That is certainly not my intention. My Israeli friends themselves would refuse such an irenism and such blindness.

If the war had not broken out, the prologue of the present letter would have precisely tried to present the balance sheet of the Israeli conscience at this present time; the rather grave crises that she is passing through, the diversity of the moral, political and religious attitudes which weaken her unity, the problems of all kinds with which she is faced. Far from being naive or optimistic, such an analysis would have been on many points rather alarming. It would have been evident that Israel's adventure is not an idyll, and that even a certain image of the Israel we love is actually threatened. Moreover, the danger, which is already evident, is that the aggression of Yom Kippur could confirm and intensify a certain nationalism that could augment even more the scepticism and the mistrust of Israel toward the Arab governments and the world supporting them.

But it is not on this plane that I intend to place my present reflection. On a deeper and more essential level than that of the "avatars" of Israel as a State, it is fundamentally a question of the right of the State of Israel to existence. As long as this right has not been clearly and loyally recognized by all. And in particular by her Arab neighbors, Israel will not feel secure, and her position will remain very precarious in her international relations.

* * * *

But that is not sufficient. There is in fact a Christian way of considering the right of Israel to exist as a nation, a Christian way of looking at Israel and at the Jewish reality, which is enlightened by faith, and which discovers the continuity of God's plan in all the fullness of its perspective.

This is without doubt the feeling of some of our Jewish friends who, under the shock of the Arab aggression in the midst of their oppressing solitude turned to us from the very first days of this war. They expected from the Church and from their Christian brother, the support of a cry of indignation or a gesture of solidarity. In fact, once again, they have been deceived or scandalized by the lack of reaction, or by the timidity of the response.

And yet, is it not true that in their very expectation, our Jewish friends were not mistaken?

In the name of our faith, had we nothing to say to them? If many Christians were feeling hesitant and paralyzed, that is perhaps because minds and hearts

In response to Archbishop Raya's call there were many expressions of support from the various Greek Catholic parishes in Israel. The following letter is one example.

Ibillin
October 15, 1973

His Excellency
The President of the State

The Committee of the Greek Catholic Parish (in Ibillin) held a meeting today in Ibillin to discuss the present situation in the light of the painful events which tear our Middle East, and especially to discuss the step which our conscience and duty impose upon us in our humble role as citizens of the State of Israel.

We decided, all of us present, and without any discussion and commentary, to support the declaration made by our Bishop Joseph Raya on October 6, 1973. We hereby also declare, in support of our belief in our duty towards our brother citizens the Jews, our complete fidelity to our government, and our complete support as a community to our best ability of the efforts made by our government to strengthen its economy as a fundamental effort for the continuance of normal life and the realization of peace and the future.

We have encouraged, and we shall continue to encourage the sons of our community, the devoted and sincere, to take an active part, as much as they can, in all that is demanded from them and in the frame of their capacity, in the neighboring villages, in the various factories or in any other service that they are asked to do. Every one of our young men is fulfilling his holy duty towards our dear State.

We have organized public prayers for the removal of the bloody war and for the establishment of peace and confidence and security in our dear country. We have asked and shall ask God, the King of Peace, to guide those responsible so that they find a better way than the present way of violence, so that we may live in peace and security in our beloved State.

With the approval of all the members of our Greek Catholic Parish of Ibillin at a special emergency meeting on October 15, 1973 in the Community House at Ibillin.

The Committee and the Parish Priest
of the Greek Catholic Parish in
Ibillin

Canon Roger G. Allison, head of Christ Church in Jerusalem (Evangelical Episcopal Church) sent the following letter, dated October 14, 1973, to a high Government official in the Ministry for Religious Affairs.

....My closest associates and I have been deeply shocked at the recurrence of war on so large a scale and at the threat it involves to the security of the people of Israel. We were particularly horrified that fighting should have begun on Yom Kippur.

At the end of the first week we wish to assure you and, through you, Her Excellency the Prime Minister, of our constant prayers that wisdom from on high may be given to all who carry responsibility of leadership.

We continue to believe that God has His own divine purpose in the renewal of Israel's independence and freedom after the long centuries of exile.

It is our hope and prayer that out of and after the present darkness there will arise the light of a new era of justice and peace, not only for Israel but also for her neighbors and for mankind at large.

The Reverend William Gardiner-Scott, head of Jerusalem's Church of Scotland sent the following cable to the World Council of Churches Headquarters in Geneva:

"Urgently urge action by Council on contravention of Geneva Convention on prisoners of war by Egypt and Syria"

and this cable to his home church in Scotland:

"Urgently urge Church of Scotland take appropriate action expedite release prisoners of war...accordance Geneva Convention"

Both cables were dispatched on October 30, 1973.

to strike us at will. The Jewish people have probably lived up to this formula to a far greater extent than any other people not to tell the truth, because we were so enamored of the idea but because we had no other choice. I believe that there is an element of human corruption in this form of resignation when it is carried to an extreme. For it permits the evil one to view himself with a degree of self-satisfaction, self-righteousness and security that can only lead him to greater acts of sadism. At some point, turning the other cheek plays into the hands of Satan and induces him to spread his dominion. In secular terms, this is the meaning of the civilized world's response to the Nazi onslaught against the Jews and, eventually, against other peoples. We Jews turned the other cheek, out of refusal to believe that man could really become fully a beast and out of our weakness. That was not the case with powerful Christian nations and churches that turned away both their cheeks and their eyes. I cannot believe that their passivism was motivated by their pacifism.

But I do not write to you to dredge up history. I mention these things only because they serve as background to the present.

Actually, I am not surprised that Israel was attacked on Yom Kippur. War is insanity, and who expects those who perpetrate it to act with normal and decent restraints? I confess that when I read of Christian armies declaring a truce on Christmas, I often wonder how men who call themselves Christians can bear the thought of how far from moral sanity they must be, if slaughter on the battlefield can be called off at will and then resumed a few hours later? Why not outlaw war forever? Why not destroy all arms? So I am not, personally, as horrified as others seem to be that the Egyptians and Syrians chose Yom Kippur to begin the war. They were really quite clever, just like the ancient Syrian Greeks and the Romans.

But I am horrified at you for saying nothing - again - or issuing statements in which you preserved your simon-pure neutrality. In 1967, perhaps you were a little surprised. After all, Israel, technically, fired the first shot - although only after Nasser had declared his intentions before the whole world to destroy the "Zionist state", after he had gotten UN observers and mobilized his army, and after Israel pleaded with the civilized world - of which the Christian nations are a major part - to induce Nasser and his Syrian allies to remove their armored might from its borders. About all we heard from you then was - "Restrain yourselves."

My brother, we refuse to be destroyed. For several millenia we have given the world a chance - the pagan world, the Christian world, the Moslem world, even the Far Eastern world. Surely, that is enough time to prove our patience and restraint. The world failed us. No one has ever been prepared to fight for us. No, that is the wrong way to put it. No one has been prepared to acknowledge our absolute right to all the privileges of life granted to others. So we have to do the job ourselves; we have to dirty our hands like everyone else who has to defend himself against a would-be murderer. In 1967, when we saw what the murderer was about, we attacked him and sent him scurrying back to his home ground. Then we invited him to talk. He refused. After all, we hadn't fought in order to slaughter him. He was still alive. He asked us to surrender, to give him back his ready access to our population. He would

Israel you said was "intransigent". It insisted on guarantees of peace before returning the spoils of the Six Day War. We should have recognized the need of the Arabs to have their sense of honor restored. We should have given them back their lands. Property before peace.

Peace, real peace - isn't that what Christianity is all about? Of course, you say, but Israel is at fault. Those refugees. Well, it's a bit tiresome to rake up the history. Yes, I believe with you that Israel and the whole Jewish people should have helped to solve the problem. Although we didn't have to be told you certainly drummed that into our heads - ever since 1948 when most of the problem was caused, not by us, but by the Arabs themselves. I, together with others whose views I shared, wrote that we hadn't done enough. But in all these years, you didn't turn with such eager intensity to the Arab states who were keeping the refugees in their miserable camps. You didn't denounce them for their inhumanity to their brothers. Only Israel was to be attacked for its "insensitivity". You collected a lot of money for Arab refugees. You organized committees and held conferences to discuss their plight. I haven't investigated the matter carefully, but I wonder how many conferences you arranged to consider the plight of Jewish refugees from Arab lands and how much you contributed to their resettlement?

Enough of this background. Now it has happened again. We were in our synagogues, and the Arabs attacked. Where was your cry of outrage? It just wasn't. But when your voice was heard, when hordes of Russian-armed Arabs, in tanks and planes, overran Israel's thinly defended lines, with every intention of annihilating and destroying Israel, you said, of course, rather softly, that this was wrong. But then, you added, the Egyptians and Syrians had been looking at their occupied lands. And there are those refugees. The crime of the Arabs is absorbed into the crime of Israel's effort to exist.

The Arabs captured Israeli prisoners in the first minutes of the war. But, as I write they have still refused to give the names to the Red Cross. Where are the voices of outrage from the churches? Surely this is a non-political issue about which your silence or, at best, soft-spokenness is moral irresponsibility.

The Arabs aim Katyushas and rockets at Israeli civilian settlements. Where is the voice of outrage? The Christian voice of outrage? There are Christian statements bemoaning the loss of life on both sides. That is even-handed, neutral, expressive of Christian love for all men. We also can express ourselves in this fashion. Even Golda makes such a Jewish statement in the Knesset. We are sorry at the loss of Arab lives. Can you ever, however, criticize Arab crimes without slipping in a word or two about Israel's equal guilt? Or about Israel's inability to be saintly?

And so, my brother, you have failed the test again. The test of objectivity. When it comes to Israel, you don't seem to be able to distinguish between the aggressor and the one attacked. The test of humanity. You lack the sensitivity to say the right word at the right time, to make the Arabs aware that Jewish mothers and fathers also have the right to know whether their sons are prisoners. The test of fair play. When you thought Israel was the stronger party, you felt no need to argue in its behalf. It could take care of itself. But when this did not seem to be the case, when, in fact, Arab (or is it Russian?) power was manifest, where was the Christian voice?

... And yesterday, several Christians in Jerusalem and other parts of Israel joined their Jewish brothers in praying and fasting, and sent telegrams to the Pope begging him to appeal to the Syrian and Egyptian governments to respect the Geneva Conventions concerning the P.O.W.s.

To come to the root of the question, I have the feeling that the fundamental reason for the disconcerting attitude of the Christian world towards the Jewish people and Israel is *blindness*.

Israel is not a people like other peoples. The agnostic citizens of the State are not the only ones to ignore, or to refuse this fact: the overwhelming majority of Christians do not understand that the Jewish People, today as in the past, bear the sign of an Election, an exclusive belonging to God:

כי ה' אלקיך אש אכלה הוא אל קנא (דברים ד', כד')

For the Lord thy God is a devouring fire, a jealous God. (Deut., 4, 24)

Therefore they do not acknowledge the prophetic יְעוּד (which means *destiny* and *vocation* together) of this People: that is *to sanctify the Name in the midst of an un-godly world*:
והיה ביום ההוא שרש ישי אשר עמד לנס עמים אליו גוים
יִדְרְשׁוּ וְהִיחָה מְנוּחָתוֹ כְּבוֹד (ישעיהו, יא', י')

And it shall come to pass in that day, that the root of Jesse, that standeth for an ensign of the peoples, unto him shall the nations seek; and his resting-place shall be glorious. (Isaiah, 11, 10)

There, I believe, lies the root of all the attitudes we deplore.

Linked to that blindness, there is also a terrible question - terrible for me. How can it be that most of the disciples of the Gospel, including so many leaders of the Church for whom the Bible is also the Word of God, who have also been marked (though in a different way) by the sign of God's election, who have also been called (though in a different way) to sanctify His Name - how can it be that they are so blind to their Jewish brothers who live with the same expectation and walk towards the same messianic goal?

I have no answer to that question. But I wish to emphasize a fact which is seldom acknowledged and that the late events have brought once more to light; this light may show us the direction in which a solution is to be found.

The actual trend of the life and history of the Church shows, more clearly than in the past, that she - the Church - founded by Jesus from Nazareth and called to spread the Gospel of justice and brotherly love throughout the Nations, is not only - I should say: is not mainly - the Hierarchical Establishment; the Church is, united to the Hierarchy, the community of believers living throughout the World. The Israeli Christians who share the destiny, the hopes and the sufferings of their people - and also the group of Western Christians living in this country and witnessing with genuine sympathy the extraordinary phenomenon of קְבוּץ גִּלּוּיּוֹת (Ingathering of the Exiles) - those also *are* the Church of Christ. What they say and do are also words and acts of the Church.

It is a pity that they are so few ... but biblical history teaches us that the faithfulness of the People to the Covenant (to which the Promises are attached) is not necessarily measured by the yard-stick of numbers or dignity of rank. Maybe a similar standard can be applied to some kind of "small remnant" in the Church ...

at the place from which we had so recently returned - hostilities had erupted. We can all testify to the fact that we had seen absolutely no troop movements. But, along with many Israelis, only on Sunday did we become fully aware that war had begun, and on a scale not previously known.

We heard from many acquaintances that they had been called up for military service. The streets of Jerusalem became conspicuously empty, and at the Feast of Tabernacles (Succoth) I was inevitably reminded of the words of the Prophet: "The streets of Zion are deserted, for no-one comes to the festival." A blackout was imposed, which created some problems in our house. We provided the students and ourselves with staple foodstuffs, put the air-raid shelter in Joseph House in order, and continued as usual with the planned study programme and with our regular prayers.

On Tuesday and Wednesday the situation became quite critical. I shall never forget the evening hours when we looked from the roof of Joseph House towards the mountains of Transjordan, which, in the moonlight, seemed to lie so close at hand. Beyond them, in Amman, King Hussein was taking decisions which would also affect us; would he attack, we wondered. Certainly he was under strong pressure from the Arab States; but he was also well aware of the striking power of the Israel army, and he probably also knew that he is not greatly beloved among wide circles of the West Bank population. Many Palestinian Arabs (not to be mistaken for the terrorists) indeed feel more attracted towards Israel than towards Jordan, with the exception of those immensely rich people who, to this day, exploit the poor in a way which was unknown in Europe even in its worst days. And these are the circles with whom Moscow has allied itself (when will the German Jusos [a radical youth movement in Germany - tr. note] finally see the light?). - Hussein did not attack but, in an extremely clever gesture, sent supporting troops to the Syrian front. Those two sleepless nights beside the radio proved to have been needless anxiety ...

In vain we proffered our help. The Israelis had promptly put aside all internal differences and had built up an extraordinary volunteer service; from gift parcels for the soldiers, through newspaper distribution and transport of food supplies for the civilian population, to contributing of blood, everything was organised in the best possible way.

Then, however, came critical hours in the relations between ecumenically-involved Christians and their Jewish dialogue partners: our Jewish friends began to deplore our silence regarding the outbreak of the war, and clearly hinted that they expected us to take a stand. At first, as Chairman of the "Fraternity" (an extremely dynamic group in Jewish-Christian dialogue), I was opposed to the issuing of a statement, since, in exactly the same way as every Israeli, I felt myself under attack in this war. What need, therefore, to take a stand? But then came the disenchantment: although I had until then believed that our Israeli friends would recognise us as full members of their State (be it as holders of citizenship or as permanent residents in Israel), their reaction proved things to be different: I had to recognise that we are not accepted in this way. For me personally, this realisation was the most painful aspect of this war. Consequently, we issued a statement on behalf of the Fraternity, without forgetting in the text those people who, this time had been completely forgotten even in the official statements of

We share pain and grief with all those who, during this war, have lost family members and friends. We attempt with all our strength to assist in improving the fate of the wounded and we hope that, after this senseless war, the readiness for negotiations will increase on all sides in order to bring peace to the Middle East for which all people of good will are yearning.

I thank you, dear friends, for all your sympathy and remain with warmest regards and every good wish for your personal wellbeing,

Yours,

Laurentius

War wounded in the hospitals were visited by individuals and groups in an effort to provide them with companionship and entertainment. One example was an entertainment group of four Christians from Nazareth who volunteered to perform before troops at the front. The American Institute for Holy Land Studies in Jerusalem also organized visits to the wounded. Members of Meditran canvassed shops in both sectors of Jerusalem for donations in order to provide parcels for wounded soldiers (including Arab prisoners of war). A religious community offered its buildings and grounds as facilities for a convalescent home for recuperating soldiers. A committee was formed, composed of members of the Christian community concerned for the war disabled. They issued a Hanukka/Christmas Appeal to collect funds and are working in close cooperation with the appropriate authorities (see page 12).

In addition, Meditran also organized visits to the soldiers at the front lines, to deliver messages to and from family and friends, thus providing moral and spiritual support.

There was also financial support from the Christian community. Examples include a donation of \$10,000 by the Quakers for war wounded; IL500 by the Child Evangelical Fellowship for education of war orphans; IL23,000 from the Greek Catholic Archbishop Joseph Raya (who made a personal contribution of IL5,000) and his constituents for war wounded and for the voluntary purchase of Government war bonds. The residents of Bir'im, despite their differences with the Government, announced to the press that each family would give IL400, that the community would volunteer 150 days of work to kibbutzim, and that they were providing lifts for soldiers. They eventually made a contribution of about IL75,000 for the purchase of Government Bonds. The Reverend Propst Helmut Glatte and his community in Jerusalem made a donation of IL1,403.50 for war wounded. War bonds were also purchased by the Organization of St. Jacques (Hebrew-speaking Catholic community) of Jerusalem, the Fathers of Zion and many others. The Reverend Faye Hansen in Haifa made a special trip to Norway to collect funds.

There were numerous calls to prayer, such as that by Latin Patriarch James Joseph Beltritti to all Roman Catholics; daily services were held at the Lutheran Church of the Redeemer in Jerusalem; a decision was taken by the "Jerusalem Ministers Fraternal" to leave certain churches open for prayer each day. Several Christian groups, such as Neve Shalom and the Organization of St. Jacques, participated in the day of prayer and fasting declared by the Israeli Rabbinate.

The President of the State of Israel received many letters and telegrams from church groups declaring their solidarity with Israel. Among them were the Organization of St. Jacques (who also sent a check in the amount of IL5,000 to the Prime Minister), the Sisters of Zion (in the Ein Karem, Jerusalem, Jaffa, and Nazareth communities), the Minister of the Garden Tomb in Jerusalem, and a group of Catholic women in Jerusalem (both lay and clerical). Father Elias Chacour, the priest of the Greek Catholic Parish in Ibillin, wrote a letter (see page 37) urging his constituents to answer Bishop Raya's