



1611 Telegraph Avenue
Suite 550
Oakland, California 94612
510.465.1777 main
510.465.1616 fax

January 27, 2012

A Statement of Support for Sabeel

As rabbis and people of faith, we stand in solidarity with the work of Sabeel.

Palestinian Christian liberation theologians such as Canon Naim Ateek of Sabeel challenge Jews and Christians to rethink our relationship to the Holy Land and each other on the basis of a universal standard of human rights grounded in nonviolence. Canon Ateek sees us as equal theological partners in the land we both love – and Sabeel's partnership model provides a hopeful model for dialogue and action. We encourage the Jewish community to engage the Palestinian Christian faith community with an open heart and mind in order to encounter another version of faithfulness.

We are aware that many Jews point to the more radical incarnations of some of Ateek's theological images. We believe, however, that it is a mistake to dismiss Palestinian Christian theology wholesale. As Jews, we are much more troubled by the "End of Days" theologies of fundamentalist Zionist Christians such as Pastor John Hagee, who believe that Jews will either convert or go to hell when we've fulfilled our theological purpose. This is anti-semitism par excellence.

The Palestinian people live in the face of daily brutality by those who are destroying their homes, confiscating their land and water, manning the checkpoints that prevent freedom of movement to hospitals, work and study, shooting tear gas during demonstrations and dropping bombs in civilian areas. Needless to say, many Palestinians do not possess positive feelings toward the people who perpetrate these kinds of actions. Nonetheless, an amazing movement for nonviolent resistance has arisen in Palestine – and Sabeel is part of this movement.

We have much to learn about the faithfulness of thousands of Palestinians toward nonviolence. Jews who are upset with Sabeel need to ask the following question: what kind of nonviolent leverage does a disadvantaged people use when so much power is aligned against them? This is the heart of the question that Sabeel have been exploring for decades: how to struggle nonviolently against Occupation.

We believe this is an extraordinarily important question with which to begin an interfaith dialogue. Granted, it will invariably be a difficult conversation, but it is one in which we simply must engage. At the end of the day, contemporary interfaith cooperation and reconciliation must be grounded in a shared understanding of human rights. Authentic prophetic faith challenges us in painful ways because, as Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel reminds us, it upsets the status quo.

After all, isn't this one of the central lessons of the Holocaust: that every person, group and country is accountable to the same human rights standards? When the Declaration of Human

Board of Advisors

Udi Aloni
Ed Asner
Rabbi Buzz Bogage
Professor Daniel Boyarin
Professor Judith Butler
Debra Chasnoff
Sami Chetrit
Noam Chomsky
Rami Elhanan
Eve Ensler
Ronnie Gilbert
Goapele
Rabbi Lynn Gottlieb
Adam Hochschild
Melanie Kaye/Kantrowitz
Naomi Klein
Tony Kushner
Professor George Lakoff
Aurora Levins Morales
Rela Mazali
Robert Meeropol
Michael Ratner
Adrienne Rich
Wallace Shawn
Michael Shimkin
Professor Avi Shlaim
Rabbi Laurie Zimmerman

Rights was written in response to the Holocaust, Jews were grateful for a universal measure by which to judge human behavior. We believe groups such as Sabeel to be our partners in affirming these sacred standards – that are rooted in our shared conviction that all human beings are created in the image of God. We are proud to stand together with them in our shared work of justice, dignity and liberation for all.

Signed,

Rabbi Brant Rosen

JVP Rabbinical Council

Rabbi Lynn Gottlieb

JVP Rabbinical Council

Rain Zohav, Rabbinical Student

JVP Rabbinical Council

Rabbi Laurie Zimmerman

JVP Rabbinical Council

Cantor Michael Davis

JVP Rabbinical Council

Rabbi Zev-Hayyim Feyer

JVP Rabbinical Council

Rabbi Julie Greenberg

JVP Rabbinical Council

Michael Ramberg, Rabbinical Student

JVP Rabbinical Council

Rabbi Rebecca Lillian

JVP Rabbinical Council

Rabbi Elizabeth Bolton

JVP Rabbinical Council

Rabbi Rebecca Alpert

JVP Rabbinical Council

Rabbi Alissa Wise

JVP Rabbinical Council

Rabbi Rachel Barenblatt

JVP Rabbinical Council

Rabbi Joseph Berman

JVP Rabbinical Council

Rabbi David Mivasair

JVP Rabbinical Council

Ari Lev Fornari, Rabbinical Student

JVP Rabbinical Council

Rabbi Brian Walt

JVP Rabbinical Council

Rabbi Eyal Levinson

JVP Rabbinical Council

Rabbi Michael Feinberg

JVP Rabbinical Council

Rabbi Margaret Holub

JVP Rabbinical Council

Rabbi Haim Beliak

JVP Rabbinical Council

Rabbi Jeremy Milgrom

JVP Rabbinical Council