

An Appeal for Broader Anglican Consultation on Israel, Palestine and the Jewish People

**The Most Reverend and Right Honourable Lord Archbishop of Canterbury,
Dame Sarah Mullally DBE**

Your Grace,

We, the General Director, the Chair of the Trustees, and the Trustees and members of **CMJ UK (Church's Ministry Among Jewish People)**, respectfully write to express our concerns regarding the papers presented to General Synod concerning the Carlisle Diocesan Synod Motion, *Standing in Solidarity for a Just and Lasting Peace in Israel and Palestine* (GS2451A and GS2451B).

Founded in 1809 as **The London Society for Promoting Christianity Amongst the Jews**, CMJ is the second-oldest mission society of the Church of England and a member agency of the Church of England's Partnership for World Mission. For more than two centuries, we have sought to strengthen relationships between the Church and the Jewish people, oppose antisemitism, encourage understanding, and proclaim the Gospel of Jesus the Messiah in a spirit of reconciliation.

Today, CMJ also serves as a recognised source of pastoral support, theological reflection and advocacy for many Jewish believers in Jesus (Yeshua) worshipping within Anglican churches in the United Kingdom and across the worldwide Anglican Communion. Many have approached us with deep concern that, in recent discussions surrounding Israel and Palestine, their voices and lived experience have not been adequately represented.

We welcome the Synod papers' commitment to justice, peace, reconciliation, and their unequivocal rejection of antisemitism and anti-Muslim hatred. We also affirm the importance of hearing the witness of Palestinian Christians, whose suffering and faith deserve the Church's careful attention.

Our concern is not that these voices are being heard, but that they are presented largely in isolation from other faithful Christian perspectives. We were surprised that papers intended to shape the Church's theological engagement with Israel and Palestine appear to have been prepared without consultation, so far as we are aware, with CMJ, Jewish believers in Jesus, Israeli Christians, Hebrew-speaking congregations, or others whose experience forms an equally important part of the Church's witness. We therefore believe it is important that the resources commended to the Church reflect the breadth of faithful Christian concern on these questions.

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This concern is heightened by the recommendation that the *Kairos Palestine* document be used as a theological resource. We recognise its importance as an expression of Palestinian Christian experience and acknowledge its contribution to the Church's understanding of the conflict. At the same time, it represents one particular theological perspective and has been the subject of substantial discussion and critique throughout the Anglican Communion and the wider Church. We respectfully suggest that, if General Synod is encouraged to study *Kairos Palestine*, it should also be invited to engage with the significant body of theological reflection offered by Jewish believers in Jesus, Israeli Christians, Anglican theologians of differing convictions, and others whose scholarship presents complementary and contrasting perspectives. A process intended to deepen understanding should not inadvertently narrow the range of Christian perspectives from which the Church seeks its discernment.

Similarly, we are concerned by the treatment of Christian Zionism within GS2451B. While some expressions of Christian Zionism warrant careful theological scrutiny, the papers risk presenting a diverse theological tradition as though it were a single ideology. Where the Church seeks to characterise a theological tradition, we believe it is important that those who faithfully hold that tradition are themselves represented within the conversation. Many Anglicans affirm God's continuing purposes for the Jewish people while equally supporting justice, dignity and security for Palestinians. That diversity deserves fair representation within the Church's theological deliberations.

Zionism is a contentious term, but for the vast majority of Jews it is not about Jewish supremacy or unconditional support for all actions of the state of Israel, but instead the hope that a Jewish state could exist as a safe harbour in times of rising antisemitism - very much like the one we find ourselves in. Our Society (CMJ) has had over 200 years of experience engaging with Jewish perceptions of the church and must definitively express that we expect this to be a barrier to their engagement with the church of England. As a Society we are concerned it will be interpreted as a threat to the Jewish community. To quote the Chief Rabbi of London in the Jewish Chronicle "Meaningful progress begins when the dignity, aspirations and suffering of all peoples are acknowledged. Kairos II takes us further away from that goal, not closer to it."

Our Lord Jesus Christ, Himself born a Jew, looked upon Jerusalem with compassion and wept over the city. His ministry united truth with mercy and called His followers to become ministers of the gospel of peace. We believe that same spirit should guide the Church's witness today.

We therefore respectfully ask that future theological work on Israel, Palestine and the Holy Land be informed by broader consultation with Palestinian Christian leaders, Jewish believers in Jesus, Israeli Christians, representatives of the Jewish community, Anglican theologians from differing traditions, and organisations such as CMJ, whose historic vocation has been to strengthen understanding between the Church and the Jewish people.

We would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss these matters and to explore how CMJ might contribute constructively to the Church's continuing reflection. Our desire is not to deepen divisions but to strengthen the Church's witness by ensuring that it reflects the widest possible range of faithful Christian voices.

We offer these observations in a spirit of respect and Christian partnership and assure you of our prayers for the See of Canterbury and your ministry.

Yours sincerely,

Rev Aaron Eime,

General Director of CMJ UK

Adam Raffell

Chair of the Trustees

On behalf of the Trustees and Members of CMJ UK