STRENGTHENING THE CHRISTIAN PRESENCE IN THE HOLY LAND THROUGH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A STRATEGIC PLANNING PROGRAMME

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2017

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ABSTRACT

This thesis focuses on strengthening the Christian presence in the Holy Land that has been in existence for more than 2,000 years. The Christian presence there is not only about maintaining and preserving the holy shrines related to Christianity. It is also about maintaining and preserving the local Christian congregations and the Christian communities located in Palestine and Israel. These groups have had a series of challenges resulting in a critical decline in the Christian population. The research presented here applies a SWOT analysis to the history, current reality of the Christian presence in the Holy Land and the challenges that influence its future. The benefit of using this approach allows for a concrete analysis of the problems that face the Christian community from the Palestinian-Israel conflict, economic instability, social problems, and the Christian cultural predicament, identified from the literature. The outcome of the analysis is translated into strategic solutions and actions that can be incorporated in programmes and projects to be implemented within, and by, the local Christian communities. These strategic solutions aim to revitalise the indigenous Christian presence in Palestine and Israel and encourage the development of their social, political, and cultural existence, with the hope of obtaining justice, peace and reconciliation.

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List of Abbreviations

AD	Anno Domini
Acts	Acts of the Apostles
BCE	Before Common Era
CE	Common Era
CCA	Coordinating Catholic Aid Organization
CCRP	Church-Community Relationship Programme
CCP	Career Consulting Plan
CMP	Community Mentorship Project
CPDP	Christian Political Democratic Programme
CRO	Christian Recruitment Office
Custos	Official title in the Franciscan Order
EAP	Educational Awareness Programme
EAPPI	Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel
IDPP	Interfaith Dialogue Project Plan
MECC	Middle East Council of Churches
PLC	Palestinian Legislative Council
PNA	Palestinian National Authority
SIRC	Social Issues Research Centre
SWOT	Strength, Weakness, Opportunities and Threat
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization

List of Illustrations

Figure 1. Map1. The Holy Land at the time of Jesus
John Stirling *"An Atlas of the New Testament*" (London: George Philip & Son LTD 1944, 4th edition). P. 3 **P. 2**

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Definitions

Christians of the Holy Land

The local Christians presently living in the Holy Land are the descendants and heirs of the first primitive Christian community who lived in the First Century AD, experienced the death, resurrection of Jesus Christ and the coming of the Holy Spirit and believed in Jesus Christ as their Saviour. They were the first people Jesus called the "living stones" in the First Epistle of Peter [1]and the "salt of the earth"[2] in the Gospel of Mathew. In the beginning, these early Christians originated from the Jewish, pagan, and Arab communities. In addition, every nation and civilisation that came, settled, and eventually departed, left behind some of their traditions and beliefs. These traditions and beliefs merged with those existing within the Christian community in the Holy Land.

There were also Christians from outside the Holy Land, who came to serve and protect the Christian shrines and churches there. For example, Byzantine Emperor Constantine I had churches erected on many of the Christian holy sites. He also had monasteries built all in many parts of the country. Later, Pope Urban II commissioned the Crusaders from Europe to free the Holy Land (especially the Church of the Holy Sepulchre) and local Christians from their "tormentors" and to combine warfare in the defence of Christianity with a form of penance for sin. After St. Francis visited the Holy Land in 1219, many of his followers visited the holy sites despite harsh conditions and hostile Muslim rule. These monks served the existing Christian communities as clergy and some established their own parishes and churches.

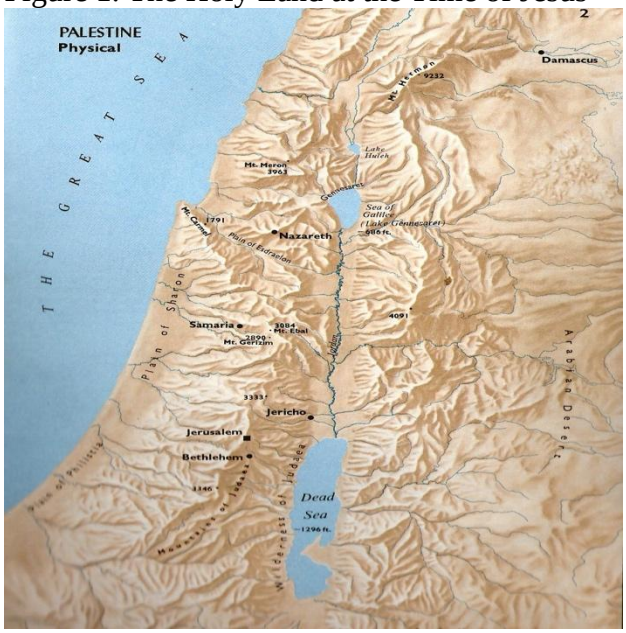
[1] 1Peter: 2-5. Holy Bible, New International Version, Colorado: Biblica: 2011.
[2] Ibid1. Mathew: 5-13

Currently, the local Christian community consists of 13 different denominations and churches and each has a different place of origin and ethnicity e.g. Armenian, Greek, Russian and Syrian. The local Arab Christians, also known as Palestinian Christians, of whatever denomination, are the descendants of the first Christian community that began after the first Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came down on the disciples, as described in the Acts of the Apostles.[3]

The Holy Land:

For Christians, the Holy Land refers to all of the territories associated with Jesus Christ's life, from his birth, ministry, death, resurrection, and ascension. They were the areas where Jesus travelled and visited, in terms of cities, places and roads that connected these cities and places. At that time these territories were part of the Roman Empire.

Figure 1. The Holy Land at the Time of Jesus



[3] Ibid 1. Acts 1: 2-3

Today they are part of the Israeli and Palestinian political territories. The Holy Land consists of four regions: the Coastal Plain, Central Chain of Mountains, Jordan Rift Valley, and Negev Desert.[4]

Figure 2. Map 2. The regions of the Holy Land

The New Testament of the Bible gives clear reference to the geography of the country during Jesus' time. For example, the Gospel of Luke identified Jesus' travel from Nazareth to Galilee[5], while the Gospels of Mathew and Mark identified Jesus' baptism at the River Jordan (possibly near Bethany-across-the-Jordan).[6] The Gospel of Mark also records Jesus' time spent at the Judean desert, or wilderness, where the Satan tempted Him three times.[7] The New Testament provides the reader with clear geographical information about Jesus' travels and the places he visited.[8]

[4] Ibid 4, See map 2
[5] Ibid 1, Luke 3: 23
[6] Ibid 1, Mathew 3:13; Mark 1:9
[7] Ibid 1 , Mark 4:1
[8] Ibid 4, See Map 2

Chapter One

Introduction to the Thesis

1.0 Introduction.

This chapter presents an overview of the contents of the thesis. It begins by explaining the research question, proceeds to the scope and limits of the thesis, and then provides the objectives of the thesis. Next, the methodology that was applied to answer the research question is described. The chapter ends with the presentation of a comprehensive review of the relevant literature.

1.1 Overview.

The present day Holy Land is a place of two people, the Palestinians and the Israelis, and three religions, Judaism, Christianity and Islam:[9] The Holy Land is usually considered to include the areas where Jesus was born, travelled and visited in terms of cities, places, and the roads that connected them and where he died, rose and from where ascended into heaven. These territories were part of the Roman Empire at that time and now are part of the Israeli and Palestinian political territories. The followers of Judaism, Christianity and Islam each have a corresponding memory of the Holy Land that they keep alive by their presence and their scriptures. The focus of this thesis will centre on the Christians living in the Holy Land.

This country, the city of Jerusalem in particular, is the centre toward which all of Jesus' earthly life converges. It is where his mission of salvation finds all of its meaning. According to the Gospel of Luke, when he was asked by some of the Pharisees to order

9 The Holy Land consists of the territories associated with Jesus Christ from his birth, mission in life, to his death.

his disciples to stop rejoicing and praising God in loud voices, Jesus said, "I tell you, if these were silent, the stones (buildings in Jerusalem) would shout out."[10]

Today, local Christians in the Holy Land, Palestinian and Israeli Arab Christians are known as "Living Stones." Unfortunately, many of them are leaving the country because of the cultural, economic, political, and social problems that they experience due to their Christian identity and threats to their long-term future and religious identity. For many years, Palestinian Christians of the Holy Land have been concerned about their continued presence as their community dwindles in size. These concerns centre on several key issues related to the unstable political environment, church strategies towards local Christians, religious challenges and a poor economic situation.

The research question in this thesis asks, "**What appropriate actions might help the local Christian community and their Church leaders mitigate the exodus of fellow Christians to other countries in order to preserve a strong Christian identity in the Holy Land?**"

Before presenting a list of actions, several steps must be taken. First, relevant information must be gathered to identify the issues that lie at the heart of each problem. Second, a **SWOT** (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threat) **Analysis** will be performed on the information gathered to ascertain the underlying causes of these problems. Third, an argued conclusion for methods that can contribute towards solving these problems will be made that includes a set of acts that can be transformed into strategic programmes and activities. These strategic programmes and activities could be implemented through schools, churches, parish centres, and Christian organizations. Such programmes should increase the individual and community sense of belonging,

[10] Ibid 1, Luke 19: 38-39.

ownership of religious identity and the future of the Christian presence in the Holy Land. Finally, implementation of the recommendations offered here should mitigate the loss of Christians from the Holy Land due to emigration to other countries.

Almost every church leader, from any of the Christian denominations, in the Holy Land has a major concern regarding the reduction in membership of its community. This trend has been occurring since the beginning of the 20th century, especially after the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 and the many political events that have followed until this day. Local Christians in the Holy Land have tried to combine their concern for their future with their place within the church's strategic mission and goals. Unfortunately, the offered solutions have not had any real benefit.

This research study attempts to provide appropriate solutions by analysing historical and current problems. The outcome solutions will be developed into a set of strategic programmes of activities that could be implemented through schools, churches, parish centres, and Christian organizations.

1.2 Scope and Limits of the Thesis. The thesis focuses on the indigenous Christians who are the Palestinian people who live and work in the Holy Land. The issue of the Christian Palestinians as a people is two-fold. It involves the political aspect of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict as well as the political dilemma existing between Palestinians and Israelis. The dilemma is one connected to the land: each people consider the land as their ancestral home based on historical, political, and religious ideology.

The scope of the research presented here involves the plight of Palestinian Christians who live in the Holy Land. It concentrates on problems affecting their presence and identity as a people. It will offer a means to bolster their presence and identity when

faced with political conflict. The approach involves targeting the major problems affected by Palestinian-Israeli tensions. The thesis is limited to the religious and patriotic beliefs of the Palestinian Christians and their desire for the full rights of citizenship that are afforded to the other religions in the land and not try to solve any political conflict. As a result of the establishment of the State of Israel the Palestinian Christians can be categorized into three different categories: those who are called "Israeli Arabs" living within the northern part of Israel are citizens as they live within the 1948 borders. The second category are the Palestinian Christians who are living in Jerusalem who hold a Jerusalem identification card and they are considered to be residents, but even though Jerusalem is considered part of Israel, they don't have the right to become citizens of Israel. And the third category involves the Palestinian Christians who are located within the West Bank and Gaza Strip, who have Palestinian citizenship.

1.3 Objectives of the Thesis. The objectives of this thesis are to provide practical solutions that the local Christian community and organizations can implement by means of a set of concrete strategic planning programmes. The research objective is to conduct in-depth analysis of the problems facing Palestinian Christians regarding threats to their future presence in the Holy Land and their religious identity. The analysis will be categorized into five major problem areas: Cultural, Economic, Political, Religious, and Social.

An analysis will be conducted beginning with the historical role played by the institutional churches vis-à-vis the Christian community in the Holy Land and ending with an examination of their current role. This will be achieved by first identifying the particular problems facing the current community such as social and economic issues,

emigration, human rights, and living in a multicultural society. Second, a SWOT (Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threat) Analysis will be carried out on the gathered information to find out the causes of the problems. Third, solutions to the problems will be proposed by a set of tested recommendations that will be carried out through a strategic set of programmes and activities. Lastly, the implementations will be categorized from the best to least useful, according to their influence and impact on the Christian community. For instance, programmes based on education will target the youth who attend schools and universities. Clearly, the implementation of educational programmes will have a more direct impact on students. Thus, the outcomes from this research thesis will provide an objective opportunity for community leaders to look at appropriate solutions to the current problems facing Palestinian Christians.

1.4 Methodology. The most appropriate methodology to answer the research question and provide the best solution is considered to be a SWOT Analysis. SWOT evaluates the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of existing problems throughout the various elements of the research. The structural methodology consists of several stages that can lead to the appropriate actions to achieve solutions.

According to Wikipedia, “SWOT analysis is a structured planning method used to evaluate the internal strengths and weaknesses and external opportunities and threats involved in a project or in a business venture. A SWOT Analysis can be carried out for a product, place, industry or person. It involves specifying the objective of the venture or project and identifying the internal and external factors that are favourable and unfavourable to achieve that objective”*. SWOT Analysis “can help in strategic planning by matching capabilities and resources to the environment in which” a venture or project “carries out its operations”*

Choosing the SWOT analysis in this research thesis was considered to be appropriate because the research question asked about factors that affect the migration of Christians from the Holy Land. There are strengths to the Christian community, such as the shared religion with Christians who come on pilgrimages to the Holy Land and the fact that Christians are considered to be the "living stones". There are also weaknesses due to the fact that many pilgrims only come to visit the Holy Sites and do not come into contact with the local Christians. The interest in the Holy Land from Christians overseas is also an opportunity for local and international Christian links that would benefit the Palestinian Christian community. There are also issues that directly threaten the existence of Christians in the Holy Land, such as pressures from Muslim and Jewish neighbours.

The SWOT Analysis is a tool used in both qualitative and quantitative research approaches as a comprehensive way of thinking about conducting research that is used in many disciplines. One of the tools that are used through a qualitative research is to analyse the human behaviour understanding and the reasons that lead to such behaviour. SWOT is often used in the field of sociology to understand government and social programmes[11]. According to Siegel, SWOT analysis can also be used in quantitative research in which meaning, definition, analogy, model or metaphor of some issue of topic is to be studied; for example; the ambiance of a city, the mood of a city, or the unifying tradition of a group.[12] Qualitative research relies on model literature for theoretical constructs and there are several approaches, such as ethnography and phenomenology that may be considered to be appropriate to this research thesis,

[11] Creswell, J. (2007). Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: *Choosing Among Five Approaches*, 2nd Edition, pp.3 - 41. [Online] (Accessed 18 November 2015) available at: http//:www.community.csusm.edu/pluginfile.php/21115/mod_resource/content/1/...

[12] Sidney Siegel, *Nonparametric statistics for the behavior sciences*, (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1956), p.32.

Ethnographic examination of a culture that focus on the methodical collection, analysis description of information and data for the development of different aspect of cultural behaviour and beliefs in their geographic location[13]. This approach will be used in this research thesis by presenting the development of the Christian culture of the Christian community in the Holy Land. The presentation of the development of the culture of the Christian community will bring to the surface the dilemmas that are facing the Christian community which affect their ethnicity and are considered to be important parts of the entire culture of the Palestinians as a people.

Phenomenological examination focuses on the experience, condition or situation of a group through the narration of participants' shared incidents, problems and conditions. This thesis will investigate the narrative of Holy Land Christians' experience in Palestinian society and culture based on the construction of reality in which Palestinian Christians participate in the community and the effects of particular phenomena can encourage or hinder the active presence of Palestinian Christians in that community[14]. The environment in which these phenomena occur will also be explored and the effects of the religious, political and economic environment will be considered.

The phenomena of Palestinian Christian society stay phenomenal unless the participants of that society identify them as problems and not phenomena15. Chapter Two of this research thesis will trace the historical development of Holy Land Palestinian Christian society, the migration of many of those Christians from the Holy Land and the negative effects of this phenomenon on the Christian presence in one of the most holy places in Christianity. Chapter Three of this research thesis will examine the migration phenomenon as a Christian social and cultural problem that is caused by several other factors.

[13] Ibid 12
[14] Ibid 12
[15] PASSIA, Civil Society Empowerment Series. *Research Skills*, Jerusalem, November 2000. P.28.

Gathering qualitative data through field research is conducted in order to achieve an observation of phenomena, by a researcher that goes to the field in order to observe a certain phenomenon. This is achieved through taking intensive notes which will be translated into key issues in order to be analysed through in a variety of ways[16]. The gathering of qualitative data in this thesis will be done by a researcher who is a member of the Christian community in Jerusalem. Data will be collected through intensive field work in the Christian community in different geographical areas in the Holy Land through individual interviews, round table discussion and information gathering from influential or well-informed people from the Christian community. This will enable the researcher to explore common observations of phenomena and problems that have a direct impact on the Christian community. Document analysis will be conducted through the evaluation of the historical and contemporary private or public records, government and church reports in order to validate the data obtained from members of the Christian community. It is hoped that the collection and analysis of this data will frame and highlight the present situation of the Christian community in the Holy Land in such a way as to present a holistic picture that will enable the Christians to stay in the Holy Land and reduce the number who migrate to other countries.

The raising of a generative question can help guide the research process but is not intended to be either static or confining. The research process used in this thesis consists of a mixed method, qualitative and quantitative approach, in which data are gathered through examination of literature and individual and group discussion.

The research begins with data collection in which core theoretical concepts are explored and recognized. These questions will focus on why the Christian community in the Holy Land feels threatened and why it appears to be unstable, why the Christian

[16] Ibid 12

community in the Holy Land feels insecure and appears to be fragile. These questions will guide the research through the analysis process of the research study.

1.4.1 Stage 1: Conduct a literature search. A structured literature review will be conducted to extract information regarding the cultural, economic, political, social, and religious problems faced by local Christians in this limited geographical area. It begins with the historical chronology of the first Christians in the Holy Land, their situation, and the changes that have affected them directly and indirectly. This information will provide a solid baseline from which comparisons can be made between the past and present.

1.4.2 Stage 2: Categorize problems. Particular attention will be paid to categorizing local Christians (past and current) failures, defeats, losses, and ability to find the best possible solutions. Each of the five major problems contains several sub-problems which will each undergo separate analysis.

1.4.3 Stage 3: Analyse data. The analysis of these sub-problems focuses on (1) the history, causes, and context that created them, (2) their effect on the local Christian community and (3) what the future impact will be on the local Christian community.

1.4.4 Stage 4: Categorize results and develop strategic solutions. Following the analysis of each sub-problem, the results will be categorized into one of the five major problems. The strategic solutions will be derived from the results for each problem.

1.4.5 Stage 5: Create strategic programmes. The strategic solutions are the ideas that will be transferred to the strategic programmes. These programmes can be implemented by Christian-related organizations that target the Christian community in the Holy Land.

There are limited reliable, scientific studies performed between 1991-2015 regarding the situation of Palestinian Christians and the problems that have a negative impact on their presence in the Holy Land. These studies have contributed to the understanding of the Palestinian Christian situation and have formed a concrete foundation to this research. The most important of these are presented below:

- Justin McCarthy provided important documentation about the situation of Christians during the Ottoman and British periods in the Holy Land.[17] Prior to the Ottoman period the Christians were the majority group in Palestine but became a minority between the seventh and twelfth centuries because of the vast Muslim emigration into the area. However McCarthy and others would argue that the population data available was sparse and unreliable. Christians continued to be a minority during the British Mandate but began to reduce further as Jewish emigration increased. According to McCarthy, "the Christian population in 1944 was 148,910 and in Jerusalem 29,350, which accounted for around 8% of the total population of Palestine". His analysis showed that the main reason for the decline in the Christian population, in the late nineteenth century and the early twenty century resulted from the Christians leaving Palestine and the decline in birth rate among Christians who remained, as compared with that of their Muslim neighbours. The Christians who migrated hoped for a better economic situation in western countries.

During the British Mandate, there were favourable and unfavourable conditions for the Christian community in terms of religious practice and religious freedom of movement. On a positive note, Wasserstein describes the opportunity the Mandate provided for several Christian religious orders to be present in the Holy Land, especially when the

[17] Justin McCarthy, *The Population of Palestine: Population History and Statistics of the Late Ottoman Period and Mandate* (New York: Colombia University Press, 1991), pp. 37-40.

British issued a set of religious legislative laws that secured their right to representation in the country and provided freedom of religious practice.[18] Conversely, some of these rules and regulations prevented many Palestinians, in particular Christians, to return to the country that they left during the Ottoman rule in Palestine (1517-1917).[19] During that period, Mussallam mentions that many "Palestinian Christians migrated to European countries because of the unstable political situation and the high taxes that were imposed by the governing body".[20] After World War I, the British Mandate in Palestine established an emigration law that facilitated Jewish emigration back to Palestine. However, this law did not apply to Palestinians because the British considered people who left Palestine prior to 1920 as being Turks.[21] Although the British Mandate in Palestine was an era where the Christians had freedom of religion and were involved in political life, the Christian population in the country was reduced due to the laws that the British imposed. McCarthy's study is important because it shows the percentage of Christians during the British Mandate and notes that the total population of Palestinian Christians today is almost the same as in the past and shows a decline in the population of Christians living in Jerusalem. The factors that affected this decline were the new Muslim arrivals from Arab and Muslim countries to the Holy Land during Ottoman times and Christian emigration and Jewish emigration during the Mandate.

- Bernard Sabella, Associate Professor of Sociology at Bethlehem University in Palestine, is a Christian from Jerusalem and among the few who have conducted research on samples of Palestinian Christians. He found that the War of 1948, which established the State of Israel and the Six Day War in 1967 that led to the reunification

[18] Bernard Wasserstein, Royal Historical Society Studies in History Series, Number 10: The British in Palestine, the Mandatory Government, and the Arab-Jewish Conflict, 1917-1929, (London: The Society, 1978), xii, p. 278.

[19] Palestinian Royal Commission Report, Cmd. 5479, (London: H.M.S.O, 1937) p. 331.

[20] Adnan Musallam, *A Nation of Immigrant, the Arab Immigrant*, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1981), p. 6.

[21] Ibid. p. 21.

of Jerusalem and the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, were direct factors in the decline of the Christian population in the Holy Land. Nearly 56% of the Palestinian Christians found themselves outside the country as refugees in 1948. This represented 35% of the Christian population before 1948. Christians who migrated to other Arab countries became traders, businessmen, and developed professional careers; while those who went to North America, formed Diaspora communities.[22] Soudah and Sabella argue that Christian emigration from the Holy Land is due to several factors in addition to the 1948 and 1967 wars. The primary reasons given by the Christians who completed his 1993 survey showed that 88% intended to leave due to the unstable economic and political situation, while 61% blamed only the political situation for their leaving. The findings indicated that the way to stop emigration would be by improving the political and the economic situation. Sabella suggests that Christian emigrants have a socio-economic characteristic that makes them more likely to emigrate in response to unstable situations. He believes that the social-economic profile of the Palestinian Christians in the Holy Land and the interaction with the political situation restricts the prospects of development for the Palestinian Christian community in the Holy Land. It is the Palestinian Christian educational and vocational characteristics, formed through missionary educational church -related institutions, blended with the entrepreneurial spirit of Christian villagers that encouraged their tendency to leave. They also suggested that Palestinian Christian religious identity could be better preserved through the transference of indigenous communities to the diaspora and that emigration was a better alternative than staying in the Holy Land for the future of their children[23]. Regardless of

[22] The Sabeel Survey on Palestinian Christians in the West Bank and Israel was presented at Sabeel's 6th International Conference held from 2-9 November 2006. During the conference, the survey's results were presented by Romell Soudah and Bernard Sabella. See, Michael Prior and William Taylor, eds., *Christians in the Holy Land* (London: The World of Islam Festival Trust, 1994).

[23] Sabella, Bernard, "The Emigration of Christian Arabs: The Dimensions and Causes of the Phenomenon," Paper delivered at the Giovanni Agnelli Foundation Seminar on The Christian

the different perspectives of understanding this issue, it has to do with the Christian situation in terms of their population, financial resources, educational, and their professional profile. The fact is that emigration is not a new phenomenon but has been a relatively long tradition among the Christians.

Sabella shows that the reasons for Christian emigration during the period between the 1948 and 1967 Wars were the political situation and economic hardship. His survey, carried out in 1993, showed that 88% of the Christians who were included in the survey had the intension to emigrate because of the political, economic and social complicity. His research showed a dilemma in solving the problem of the Christian emigration. The results of his research did not show any solution except that of dealing with the political situation in the country. Solving the political conflict in the Holy Land is not simple and is unlikely to happen in the near future, by which time there may not be any Christians left in the Holy Land.

- Jerias Khoury's analysis of the1948 Christian emigration also showed that the reasons for their departure were the political conflict and economic instability. His research focused on the indirect, negative influences that caused Christian emigration. These influences were the ignorance and silence of the global church leaders towards Israeli policies that targeted the Palestinian Christians, the rise of Islamic fundamentalism and the western evangelical Zionist Christians' support for Israel. Khoury's focus on these three issues gives specific information about reasons other than the political situation that caused the Christian emigration.

Since the 7th century, Christians in the Holy Land have experienced dramatic changes in population levels due to various factors. During Ottoman rule (1517-1917), they faced

Communities in the Arab Middle East: Identity, Current Dynamics and Future Prospects, Torino, May 8-10, 1995, p.6.

insurmountable taxation and a bleak economic future that led many to migrate to other countries with greater economic stability. In contrast, during the British Mandate (1917-1947), the Christians who remained in the country experienced some stability in terms of the ecumenical situation and freedom of religious practice. Unfortunately, Palestinian Christians outside the country at that time who wished to return to their homeland were refused re-entry because of some of the legislative laws issued during this time. After the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, once again, Christians left the country due to the war and the occupation of Israel.

Khoury, director of Aliqa Centre,[24] states that the 1967 War was "a bad page" in Palestinian history. [25] The Palestinians initially thought that winning the war would give them back all the land taken by Israel since 1948, but the reality of the 1967 War was that Israel took over all the land of Palestine including Jerusalem. During, and after, the war, international and local church leaders did not take any action or make any official statements against the war. This lack of action from, what Khoury calls, the "mute" church had a negative impact on the local Christians. The effects of the 1967 War were the main influence on Christian emigration from the West Bank and Jerusalem to western and Arab countries, mainly the United States of America and Jordan at that time. The war also affected the Palestinian Christians who lived in the northern part of the country that had been under Israeli control since 1948. They experienced high unemployment rates and difficulties enrolling into Israel educational institutions.

[24] Aliqa Centre is a place of research, study, and dialogue on the religious and cultural traditions, and daily life of the people of the Holy Land and the region. Palestinian Muslim and Christian academic and religious leaders established the Centre in 1982. It has created lively dialogues and has fostered an understanding between the people of these two religions and between them and Judaism. In addition, the Centre has helped to define the role of the local church and to formulate a 'Contextualized Theology'

[25] Jerias Khoury, "*ARAB CHRISTIAN: Rootedness, Presence, Openness"* (Bethlehem: Aliqa Centre, 2006), pp. 110-111.

According to Khoury, the local church leaders' "silent position towards the war, along with its lack of vision in relation to the return of the Palestinian occupied land, weakened the position of the local Christians as Palestinian people". The Lebanese - Israel War in 1982 and the Islamic Revolution in Iran had an impact on the local churches and congregations, especially after the extremism of the Islamic movement. During this period, Israel gave permission to many more western evangelical Christians and Christian Zionists to be resident in the country. Organisations such as the "International Christian Embassy,"[26] that fully supports the State of Israel, weakened the image of the Christians as part of the Palestinian people working side-by-side with their Muslim compatriots against the Israeli occupation. This led the local church leaders and congregations to release a very strong document stating that these religious institutions did not represent local Christians or the local church and they were not part of the Palestinian Christian organizational structure.[27] The first Intifada in 1987,[28] the second Intifada in 2000 and the unstable political situation in the Middle East, and the Holy Land in particular, has played a role in the Christian emigration from the Holy Land. The Arabic word Intifada means "shaking off" and comes from the same root as the Aramaic word Jesus used when he sent out the twelve disciples and told them if

[26] "Evangelical Christian Zionists founded The International Christian Embassy in 1980 to express their support for the State of Israel and the Jewish people. It is known for hosting an annual Christian celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles, which attracts several thousand participants. They chose the location, and name deliberately to show that, unlike other international groups, its members regarded Jerusalem as the capital of the State of Israel". [Online]. Available at: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Christian_Embassy_Jerusalem

[21] Jerias Khoury's newspaper article appeared in the *Al-Quds* newspaper, April 13, 1988.The full version of this document appears in his book entitled, *Arab Christians*.

[28] The word *Intifada* means uprising. In Arabic, it means, "shaking off." It did not originate with the PLO leadership in Tunis. Rather, it was a popular mobilization drawing upon the organizations and institutions developed during occupation. The Intifada involved hundreds of thousands of people, many with no previous resistance experience, including children, teenagers, and women. For the first few years, it involved many forms of civil disobedience, including massive demonstrations, general strikes, refusal to pay taxes, boycotts of Israeli products, political graffiti and the establishment of underground schools (since regular schools were closed by the military as reprisals for the uprising). [Online]. Available: http://www.merip.org/primer-palestine-israel-arab-israeli-conflict-new.

their message was not welcomed to "shake the dust off your feet when you leave" in chapter six in the Gospel of Mark.

Most of the research studies concerning Christian migration from the Holy Land agree that the peak of Christian population decline was during the first and second Intifadas. According to the Christian Information Centre in Jerusalem, the 1994 census showed the population of Christians living in the Bethlehem district was 30,000 amongst a total population of 130,000. For centuries, the Christian population in that district had been the majority.[29] Sabella estimated that 2,766 Palestinian Christians migrated from the West Bank in the first year of the second Intifada between October 2000 and November 2001.[30] Additionally, approximately 600 Christians per year have left since the beginning of the current violence compared with 300-400 per year during earlier periods. The Israeli Civil Administration in these territories estimates the number of Christians who have left since September 2000 is 10,000. Again, the reason for the Christian migration was due, in part, to the unstable political and the economic situation.

Khoury identified some of the causes that contributed to Christian emigration. The more formidable ones include the lack of action of the church leaders during the 1967 and 1982 wars and the presence of the western evangelical Christians and Zionist Christians supporting Israel that embarrassed and compromised the position of the local Palestinian Christians in front of other non-Christian Palestinians.

Local and international church leaders along with their respective organizations have begun to be more concerned about the Christian community vanishing from the Holy

[29] Christian Information Centre, "Statistical Information in the Holy Land" [Online] available at: http://cicts.org/.8T5025.
[30] Bernard Sabella, "*The Situation of Palestinian Christians: Some Food for Thought"* January 2005. [Online] Available at: http://www.al-bushra.org/sabella.htm.

Land and the impact this phenomenon has on the Christian image in the country following the first and second Intifadas in 1987 and 2000. Several documents, conferences, meetings and church publications have addressed the need to find solutions to the problems that cause this migration.

According to the Synod for the Middle East[31] (October 2010), Patriarch Fouad Twal, the Palestinian Archbishop of the Roman Catholic Church said that the "Christian community in the Holy Land was suffering and its numbers were dwindling so much that it represented less than 2% of the total population at that time. The decline is due to the many difficult situations resulting from an environment of conflict, violence, instability and injustice that has challenged their lives, lack of livelihood and anxiety about their future".[32] Following his speech, there was an intervention by Archbishop Michael Sabbah, the Latin Patriarch Emeritus of Jerusalem. He concluded that that although the Christian presence had an uncertain future Christians should not be weak or despondent.[33] He later spoke at the conference of the Catholic Patriarchs of the Middle East Council of Churches (MECC)[34] in 2005. He stated that the declining percentage of local Christians in the Holy Land is an old story, repeated by all church officials in the different Christian denominations in the Holy Land. They point out that the causes are the result of the instability of the political situation and hope that one day there will be peace in the country in order to solve the Christians' dwindling situation

[31] The Special Assembly for the Middle East of the Synod of Bishops took place 10-24 October 2010. This initiative concerned the 'anxiety' of the successor of St. Peter "for all the Churches" (*2 Corinthians* 11:28). This important event demonstrated the interest of the Universal Church of God in the Middle East. Local churches were invited to become particularly involved so the event might be a grace-filled happening in the life of Christians in the Middle East.

[32] Jerusalem, Diocesan Bulletin of the Latin Patriarchate, on the Synod for the Middle East, October 2010. Special Issue. (76).

33 Ibid 26

[34] The Middle East Council of Churches was inaugurated in May 1974 at its First General Assembly in Nicosia, Cyprus. Initially, it consisted of three "families" of Christian Churches in the Middle East: The Eastern Orthodox Church, the Oriental Orthodox Church, and the Protestant Church. The seven Catholic churches of the region joined in 1990 at the MECC Fifth Assembly.

but the Catholic Patriarchs are well aware that peace in this country will not occur in the near future.

Several statements issued by the Middle East Council of Churches (MECC) also addressed the importance of "maintaining a Christian presence in the Middle East in spite of their dwindling numbers and the factors that cause them to leave".[35] They also addressed concerns that Christian migration from the Holy Land is due to the hardships caused by military occupation, the denial of human access between Gaza and the West Bank and the desperate economic situation caused by Israel's policies. They also include land confiscation that belong to the Palestinians in Jerusalem and part of The West Bank, house demolitions, impounding Palestinian Jerusalemites identity cards and the erection of a Separation Wall as contributors to the situation. The Christians look for better conditions for themselves and their children's future. Therefore they are joining their relative and friends through emigration to European countries, north and South America, and other countries. Almost 25,000 Holy Land Christian live abroad and there is a great concern that Christian presence in the Holy Land will become empty of the living communities.[36] A statement issued by Palestinian Christian non-profit organizations, stated that "members of the Christian community in Jerusalem were calling all Christians around the world and the heads of churches to put an end to the Israeli violations of their right to worship freely during Christian feasts in Jerusalem".[37]

Christian charities, humanitarian and non-profit organizations in the Holy Land have been serving the Palestinians since 1948. They have been helping the whole Palestinian people through programmes that help reduce the social and economic problems

35 MECC, Minutes on advisory partners meeting in Aman, Jordan, the council 5th, Letter, 25 September 2000. [Online]. Available at: Visit: www.necc-church.org.
36 Ibid 36.
37 The Palestinian Non-Governmental Organisations' (PNGO) statement issued ahead of Easter celebrations, 20 March 2007.

resulting from the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Part of this assistance goes to the Palestinian Christians, but most goes to Palestinian Muslim communities. Unfortunately, these programmes have not helped the Christians reduce migration or economic difficulties. Some Christian organizations have decided to take a different approach by encouraging and supporting development, guided by the rich social teachings of the Church. "Through your work, you strengthen the bonds of fellowship between people and serve the poor, the marginalized, the sick, refugees, and prisoners without discrimination" [38] is the approach encouraged by the Coordinating Catholic Aid Organizations (CCAO 2011).

Church leaders and church- related organisations have issued several statements regarding their awareness of the Christian problems. All have agreed that the future of the Christian presence is uncertain and there is a need to maintain this presence in the Holy Land but didn't offer any solutions. These statements have been repeated over several years, which have caused the local Christians to feel isolated and neglected because the church leaders have presented the problems with no presentation of any suggested solutions. Christian and church-related organisations have been working towards reducing the suffering of the Palestinians, especially Palestinian Christians from 1948 until today. Part of their mission is to reduce Christian migration. In the meantime, several indications show that these Christian organisations have not set short-term goals that concentrate on solving the Palestinian Christians' internal problems. Unfortunately, a gap exists in the understanding of the consequences of the problems

[38] Coordinating Catholic Aid Organizations (CCAO) meeting held 26 October 2011. It is a consultative coalition consisting of the Apostolic Delegation, Secretariat of Solidarity, Bethlehem University (BU), Caritas Baby Hospital – Kinderhilfe Bethlehem, Caritas Jerusalem, Catholic Relief Service (CRS), Franciscan Custody of the Holy Land, Deutscher Verein von Heiligen Lande (DVHL), Holy Land Christian Ecumenical Foundation (HCEF), Latin Patriarchate General Administration (LP), Pontifical Mission for Palestine (PMP), Saint Vincent de Paul (SVP) and Secours Catholique (SC) Society of St Ives. [Online]. Available at: http://www.saintyves.org/?Lang=1&MenuId=24&PageId=34&TemplateId=info

facing the Palestinian Christians in the Holy Land. This is due, in part, to the fact that church leaders, Christian organisations and other related institutions continue to present the problems but fail to concentrate their efforts on finding appropriate solutions. This gap causes some Christians to feel isolated within the political and religious conflict situation as well as due to the economic, cultural, and social problems. The Christians have an identity crisis in which they face difficulties defining their future in a pluralistic society and dealing with the opposition from religious Jewish and Muslim fundamentalists. Increasing social tensions between Jews and the Zionist ideologist and Palestinian Christians and Muslims are part of everyday life. This tension makes it very difficult for the younger generation of Holy Land Christians who are living under Israeli and Palestinian rule to reconcile their conflicting political and religious identities.

In summary, the documents and statements by church leaders cited indicate that Christian emigration from the Holy Land stems from a combination of problems imposed on them by the historical policies of different countries supporting Israel, which are based on their national agendas and interests. It also appears that church leaders are unaware of the negative impact these problems imposed on their congregations and have subsequently miscalculated the future presence of the local Christian in the Holy Land.

CHAPTER TWO

Christianity and the Holy Land

This chapter presents an overview of Christian history in the Holy Land, including the presence and roles of indigenous and expatriate Christians in the Holy Land and the development of the different denominations. Its purpose is to demonstrate the issues that affect Christians of the Holy Land and every Christian in the world who has an interest or concern to know the history of their faith and that of their fellow Christians of the Holy Land.

Part One

The Historical Development of the Indigenous Christians of the Holy Land

2.0 Introduction.

The focus of this part of the chapter is on the history of the Christian community in the Holy Land throughout different periods. Particular attention is given to what, and how, the relationship has preserved been between the ruling powers and the Christian community in each period.

The very foundation of the current plight of Christians in the Holy Land resides within its religious and historical education. As custodians of Christianity in the Holy Land, local Christians, as well as all Christians throughout the world, are obligated to understand the complex history of Christianity in the Holy Land and the events that

shape the Christian identity and Christian faith of today[39]. Unfortunately, the majority of Holy Land Christians are unaware of the basic religious doctrines and historical facts of their faith. They rely on church leaders, religious scholars and other writers for this knowledge. The lack of educational resources has caused the local Christian community to neglect the study of Christian theology and has also led to the lack of awareness of the international Christian community about the problems facing the local Christians in the Holy Land. This ignorance creates negative attitudes and outcomes for local Christians as they attempt to preserve their identity and presence in the Holy Land.

The complex history of Christianity in the Holy Land can be divided into two themes: the historical development of the Christian church in the Holy Land, and the historical development of the community of local Christians as a continuous, living entity. This chapter focuses on the historical development of the local Christian communities from New Testament[40] times up to the present day. It examines how the historical context influences the current problems faced by the local Christians in the Holy Land as well as their Christian presence and identity[41].

Understanding the history of the local Christian community enables Christians to distinguish themselves within the larger Muslim and Jewish populations. Not surprisingly, the Muslim and Jewish communities have a direct influence on religious, economic, political, and social, interactions of local Christians. Fortunately, the Muslim and Jewish communities have not dismantled entirely the relationships that exist between them and the local Christians.

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[39] Salman Usama, Article *"Institutional Church and the Christian Community in the Holy Land*", Living Stone foundation Magazine, Issue # 36, London 2011. Pp.13 -15. [Online] Available online at: ***http://www.livingstonesonline.org.uk/livingstones36.pdf*.**

[40] Holy Bible, New International Version, Colorado: Biblica: 2011.

[41] Ibid 39.

2.1 The Origin and Development of the Christian Community (30- 622 AD). The first members of the Christian community included the remaining 11 apostles, certain women followers of Jesus (including Mary the mother of Jesus), and His brothers.[42] This community originated as a small sect within the religion of Judaism. According to Christian tradition, the Christian community in the Holy Land began in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost. It was there, in the upper room, that the apostles received the Spirit of God promised by Jesus.[43] Moved by the Holy Spirit, they went down into the public areas and announced the good news of salvation. All present heard the apostles speak to them in their own, native languages, and understood the message. Unlike the chaos that took place among the people at the Tower of Babel,[44] the events of Pentecost brought about new understanding and unity.

After this, people from all over the country and further afield, who gathered in Jerusalem to celebrate Pentecost, heard the celebrated sermon of Peter about Christ and around 3,000 people joined the new community on that day.[45] All this happened on a hill located to the southwest of Jerusalem, known today as Mount Zion.[46] The next sermon delivered by Peter and John in the Temple brought the new community 5,000 more members.[47]

The early life of the Christian community concentrated itself around the Temple in Jerusalem. It was here that the apostles came to pray and preach the teachings of Christ every day.[48] The followers of Jesus held everything in common and those who were rich

[42] Ibid 40, Acts 1:13-14.
[43] Ibid 42.
[44] Ibid 40, Genesis 11:9.
[45] Ibid 40, Acts 2:41.
[46] Bargil Pixner, "Church of the Apostles on Mount Zion" Mishkan 13/II (1990), p. 28. Biblical Archaeological Review *May/June 1990***.** [Online] [Accessed January 2010]. Available at: www.centuryone.org/apostles.html.
[47] Ibid 40, Acts 4:4.
[48] Ibid 40 Acts 2:46; 5:21, 42.

supported the poor.[49] The breaking and sharing of bread in homes is an allusion to the Last Supper where Jesus broke bread and shared it with His apostles.[50] The Christian communities spread very rapidly from Jerusalem to the three Roman provinces of Judea, Samaria, and Galilee. It was in Judea, Samaria, and Galilee where Jesus taught and performed many of His miracles.

The retelling of stories by the local people about Jesus' visits and what he did must have remained very strong. The early believers in Jesus were mostly of Jewish origin and traditional Jews referred to the Judeo-Christians as "minim,"[51] meaning "sectarians." Several members of the community were of Greek and Roman origin and were living in Caesarea, Jaffa, and other Coastal Plain cities.

The Christian community started to grow in different cities such as Jaffa and Lod when Peter performed a miracle that brought back to life a Christian woman named Tabitha. This miracle accelerated the number of converts and increased the community in the city.[52] Those converted included pagans from Caesarea Maritime, the capital of Palestine, a Roman officer, Cornelius and the deacon Philip who in 58 AD, gave hospitality to the apostle Paul on his way to Jerusalem where he was arrested.[53] As for Samaria, Chapter Eight of the Acts of the Apostles relates the foundation of the Christian community at Sebasta and mentioned the evangelization of numerous villages in the region. Sebasta is located in the Nablus district of the West Bank, where the ruins of an ancient Christian village still exist.

[49] Ibid, 42.
[50] Ibid. 41.
[51] Jean Briand, *The Judeo-Christian church of Nazareth first edition,* (Jerusalem: Franciscan Printing Press, 1984), p. 16.
[52] Ibid 40, Acts 9:36-42.
[53] Ibid 40, Acts 21:8.

The Christian community also existed in Galilee. The followers of Christ often lived near, or around, places connected with the Jesus' life. They turned these places into home-churches (i.e. Domos Ecclesia) that became known as holy sites. Hence, the early followers of Jesus unknowingly ensured that these holy sites would not become lost over time. Nazareth is the village where Jesus, "the word became flesh,[54]" lived for several years of his life. It also was known as a holy place because Jesus' family carefully preserved their memories of him being there as well as the family genealogies. His relatives lived in the village until the 3rd century.[55] Since the village was very small, everyone knew one another and that made it easy to track what happened there from one generation to another.

Sepphoris, known as Diocaesarea at the time of Herod, was the capital of Galilee. It may very well be that this Judeo-Christian community organized itself around the paternal house of the Holy Virgin since it is a very old tradition for early Christian communities to grow around such places. In places like Sepphoris,[56] there were many well-known discussions between the "minim" and rabbinic Jews during the first three centuries. There were also Judeo-Christians in Kaubab, a village located several kilometres northwest of Sepphoris. Jules, the African, a 3rd century writer, affirms that around the year 250 A.D., relatives of Jesus were still living there, Today there is a mosque built on the ruins of a religious building that dates back to the 1st century.[57]

Jesus established centres of his apostolic activities in Tiberias, and villages related to His ministry. One such community was in the village of Capernaum where Jesus stayed

[54] Ibid 40, John 1:14.
[55] Eugene Hoade, *Guide to the Holy Land* (Jerusalem: Franciscan Printing Press, 1984), pp. 36-37.
[56] Sepphoris is a village located near Nazareth, Israel.
[57] Ibid 51, pp. 17-18.

at the home of Peter's mother-in-law. The "House of Peter" became one of the first home-churches used by the early Christians for worship in the village.

During the 1st century, the residents of the country lived under different Roman Procurators. Rome ruled the areas of Judea, Samaria, and the Coastal Plain, the Dead Sea area, and Idumea. Agrippa II ruled the Galilee area and a Roman Governor of Syria ruled the Decapolis (an area made up of 10 mostly Greek cities).

2.2 The Holy Land under Roman and Byzantine Emperors (70-622 AD). In 66 AD, the Jewish community in the Holy Land revolted against the Romans. This led to the destruction of villages in Galilee, Judea and the complete destruction of Jerusalem, including the Temple, in 70 AD.58 The disaster of the Jewish War may be one cause of the estrangement between the Jews and the Judeo-Christians. Jerusalem's Christian community left the Holy City on the eve of the siege, taking refuge at Pella, Jordan. Some of them who fled to Pella later returned to Jerusalem, while others stayed behind. The communities founded by the apostles in the Coastal Plain survived, as did some of the Judeo-Christian communities in Capernaum and other cities. The Romans later cruelly suppressed a last, desperate revolt by the Jews under the leadership of Shimon Bar Kokhba, a Jewish leader who led the second Jewish revolt in year 132-135AD. As a result, the Romans built a city called Aelia Capitolina was on the ruins of Jerusalem, erected a temple to Jupiter in the heart of Jerusalem's Old City, and forbade Jews and Christians of Jewish origin to enter the city. During this brief rebellion, the highest religious Jewish authority i.e., (the Sanhedrin) supported Bar Kokhba and saw his government as the sole legal power in the land: Those who opposed Bar Kokhba, or did

[58] Ibid 51. P. 27.

not recognize him as their "Messiah," such as the Christians of Jewish extraction, were persecuted by the rebel authorities.[59]

The missionary work of Paul and other apostles and disciples of Jesus gradually attracted a growing number of Gentiles to the Christian faith, amidst whom the Judeo-Christians in the Holy Land were gradually absorbed.[60] Furthermore, the destruction of Jerusalem, the exile of the Jews and the Judeo-Christians after the Bar Kokhba revolt and the transfer of the Jerusalem bishopric to Gentile Christian control intensified the breach between Jews and the Christians. By this time, most Christians were of Gentile origin and Christianity began to expand outside the Holy Land. The local Christians were left in peace, and treated better by the Roman authorities, especially under the rule of Emperor Antonius Pius.

In 306 AD, Constantine, now Emperor of the Roman Empire, converted to Christianity. He issued the edict of Milan in 313 AD, whereby Christianity became the official religion of his empire. The result of this edict involved major changes in the Holy Land and spread among the Christian community. Constantine sent his mother, Queen Helena, to the Holy Land to oversee the building of churches in places related to Jesus' birth, ministry, death, resurrection and ascension.[61] Jerusalem became the spiritual centre, not just for local Christians, but also for Christians throughout the world. The Holy Land became a place for pilgrimage and flourished during this period. The Christian community founded many local churches and others became national

[59] Aharoni Avi Yonah, *Carta Biblical Atlas* (*Christians and Jews in Palestine after the first Revolt*), the Israeli map and publication company, 2002 Jerusalem. P. 192.
[60] Ibid 40, Acts 15.
[61] Ibid. 55, pp. 35-37.

churches. Today, there are more than 200 ruins of churches and 47 bishoprics exist dating back to the Byzantine era.[62]

The Armenians were the first people converted to Christianity as a nation, even before Constantine became Christian. They sent delegations to the Holy Land to learn to build churches in their country and to maintain relationships with the holy sites. They built churches in a dramatic form all over Armenia and the population of the region reached its peak during the 4th century.

The Christian community in the Holy Land did not enjoy the flourishing freedom of religion for too long due to the Persian invasion of 614 AD. The Christian communities suffered during this time as the Jews allied themselves with the Persians. The Jews took revenge against the Byzantines who had mistreated them and denied them entrance into the Holy City. The Persians destroyed most of the churches and monasteries, including the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, and they massacred many Christians.[63] The brutal invasion left 33,977 dead.[64] Of the Christians who survived the massacre, one of two things happened to them. The victors sold some Christians as slaves to the Jews at low prices who then killed those who wished to remain Christian.[65] The Persians imprisoned the rest of the Christians and later herded them into a huge pool of water near the old city of Jerusalem, where they subsequently drowned.

In Syria and Trans-Jordan, the Christians, often monotheists and hostile to Byzantine intolerance, gave themselves up to the Persians without any resistance.[66] During the 11-

[62] Ibid. 55, p. 36.
[63] Eutychii Annales, *The Library of the Palestine Pilgrims' Text Society*, vol.2, (London 1985), p. 36.
[64] Pierre Medebielle, "Persian and Arab invasion," *The Diocesan Bulletin of the Latin Patriarchate* 2, (1991), pp. 54-55.
[65] Ibid 64.

[66] Raphael Bonanno, "Christian History of Jordan," *Holy Land Magazine* 1, (Spring 1988), pp. 18-19.

year presence of the Persians in the Holy Land, Christians could not participate in any religious practices and were forbidden from visiting any ruins related to their Christian religion.

In 610 AD, Heraclius, now the Emperor in Constantinople, knowing that the Persian forces were scattered, led an army to the heart of Persia. In 628 AD, Chosroes was assassinated by his son and left the whole Persian Empire in a state of anarchy. After his victory, Heraclius marched into the Holy Land, bearing the wood of the cross and started to restore the damage incurred by the invasion with help of the local Christians and some monks of the country.

2.3 The Rise of Islam (622-1099 AD). In 622 AD, the Prophet Muhammad founded the Muslim religion and the first Muslim community began in Medina, Saudi Arabia. The weakness of the Byzantine and Sasanian Empires at that time created a "window of opportunity" for Muhammad to conquer a vast area in the region.[67] The Muslim armies invaded the Holy Land during this period, and captured Jerusalem in 638. The Muslim invasion was bloody and the long-established Christian countryside was devastated. This was the start of 1,300 years of Muslim presence in what the Arabs called Filastin, an Arabic version of the name Palestina, given by the Romans during the 2nd century. After the Byzantine army lost the battle of "Yarmuk" to the Muslims, the Holy Land "Palestine" came under Muslim control and Jerusalem soon fell to the Muslims after that.

The Patriarch of Jerusalem,[68] Sophronius, was the highest religious authority on all affairs related to the Holy Sites, Christian communities, monasteries, and convents. He

[67] Ibid. 4, See Map 3.
[68] Alexander Deriev, "*Who is Who in Churches of Jerusalem*" (Jerusalem: Art Printing Press, 1998), p. 21. This book is published for the 2000th anniversary of the birth of Christ.

surrendered to the Muslims without any resistance to avoid bloodshed in the city. Because of this, Caliph Omar Ibin Khatab, one of main adviser to the Prophet Muhammad, who became the second Caliph after the death of Muhammad[69], issued a proclamation (firman), which granted certain rights to the Christians of the Holy Land and to the Patriarchate.[70] Adjunct to Omar's proclamation, a "shurut" obligation was imposed on Christians that was utterly humiliating to the local Christians. The obligation or "shurut" in the Arabic language was as follows:

> "We shall not build in our towns and their surroundings any more convents, churches, monks' communities (qallaya) or hermitages. We shall not restore, neither by day or night, those of such buildings that should fall into disrepair, or which are situated in the Muslim districts. We shall open wide our doors to passers-by and travellers. We shall offer hospitality to all the Muslims who come to us and shelter them for three days. We shall not give protection, neither in our churches nor in our dwellings, to any spy. We shall hide nothing from the Muslims that could be to their prejudice. We shall not teach the Koran to our children. We shall not make public show of our worship and shall not preach it. We shall not prevent any of our relatives from embracing Islam if such is their wish. We shall be full of respect towards the Muslims. We shall rise from our seat if they wish to sit. We shall in no way seek to resemble them, by their clothing, by the qalanswa (hat), their turban or their shoes, or by the manner of wearing their hair. We shall not use their ways of speaking; we shall not take their kunyas (way of talking). We shall not ride in the saddle. We shall not wear a sword. We shall not keep any kind of armament or carry such on our persons. We shall not have our seals engraved in Arabic characters. We shall not sell any fermented drink. We shall shave our faces. We shall always dress in the same manner wherever we might be; we shall bind the tattle with the zunnar (belt). We shall never show our Crosses or our books on the paths frequented by the Muslims and in their markets. We shall beat the naqus (bells) in our churches but very softly. We shall not make public processions on Palm Sunday or at Easter. We shall not raise our voices when accompanying our dead. We shall not pray aloud on the paths frequented by Muslims and in their markets. We shall never bury our dead in the neighbourhood of Muslims. We shall not use slaves that have been allocated to Muslims. We shall not overlook the dwellings of Muslims.[71]"

[69] Ibid 58.
[70] Anton Issa's "*al-'Uhda al'Umariyya or Firman d'Omar*" Les Minorites Chretiennes de Palestine a Travers les Siceles, (Jerusalem: Franciscan Printing Press, 1976), pp. 110-124.
[71] Ibid. 70, pp. 21-24.

During the 8th century, the Holy Land Christians, in particular, those who were living in Jerusalem, suffered a great deal of persecution from the political and religious changes imposed on them during the rule of the Muslim Caliphates. The Caliphates blamed, and subsequently punished, the Christian community every time there was a war between the Muslim and the Byzantine armies. Omar II (705-735), was one of the radical Muslim leaders who ruled Palestine. He was one of the people that persecuted the Christians and forced them to convert to Islam; failure to do so resulted in the martyrdom of many Christians.[72]

The situation of the Christians became worse after Omar II, during the rule of Abdallah Ibn Ali which began in year 760 CE. In addition to the persecutions, he humiliated and differentiated the Christian community from the other religious communities by having special signs placed on their hands, destroying sacred items used in Christian worship, and pulling down all the crosses from the tops of their churches. The Christian clergy and religious were treated very harshly and obstructed in their worship services. Finally, Abdallah Ibn Ali imposed heavy taxation on Christians that forced many of those living in Jerusalem to leave.

Towards the end of the 8th century, the situation of the Christians became more tranquil due to political changes and the influence of the West, in particular the Franks. Charlemagne (754-814 CE) was a key figure who influenced the reverse of the harsh conditions placed on the Christians by the Muslims. Because of his efforts in converting many pagan tribes to Christianity, Pope Leo III crowned him the first Holy Roman Emperor in 800 CE. He took advantage of the bad economic situation of the Muslim rulers, their need for financial assistance and their need to look to the West for help.

[72] Ibid.70 p. 22.

This provided him with an opportunity to support Christianity both financially and through the renovation of the churches in the Holy Land which had been destroyed during previous wars. The support Charlemagne gave officially became effective by the signing of a friendship agreement with the Abbasid Caliph Harun al Rashid of Baghdad (787-809 CE).[73]

Under Caliph Ma'moun (815-833 CE), the Christians found themselves so persecuted that many went to Cyprus and lands ruled by the Byzantine Empire.[74] Christians in the Holy Land suffered more under Caliph Ma'moun's dictate than under other rulers. Fortunately, 878 CE was a better year for them because the more liberal, lbn Tulon of Egypt replaced Caliph Ma'moun, after the Caliph Ma'moun's assassination by his son. Unfortunately, when Muhammad Ibn Tughli came to power, his harassment of the Christians in Egypt and Jerusalem led to the conversion of several annexes in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre to mosques. He also destroyed churches in Ramleh, Ascalon, and Caesarea in 909 CE.[75] On Palm Sunday, 938 CE, the Moslems attacked the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, burnt its gates and plundered the Anastasia.[76] Several attacks were carried out on the Holy Sepulchre Church, in particular the attack in 966 CE by Moslems who subsequently burned it and killed the Patriarch.

The Caliph Hakem (996-1020 CE) hated the Christians so much that he ordered the churches destroyed and by 1009 CE, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre lay in ruins. Its

[73] Simon Sebag Montefiore, *Jerusalem: The Biography* (Great Britain: Weidenfeld & Nicolson Ltd., 2011), pp. 188-189.
[74] Ibid 73.
[75] Ibid 73 p. 190.
[76] Ibid 73.p. 192

destruction was a way to remove any identifiers of the Tomb of Jesus and other Christian symbols. He took treasures and gold that belonged to the church[77].

Several Muslim rulers took the same approach as their predecessors by endorsing harsh laws upon the Christians; others forced them to become Moslems.[78] Fortunately, other Muslim rulers revoked the order forcing Christians to convert to Islam out of fear that Christian rulers would force Muslims living in other countries to convert to Christianity. Some Muslim rulers went so far as to rebuild the churches at government expense.[79] Emperor Monomachus (1042-1055 CE) gained power over the Holy Land and this resulted in the rebuilding of churches and religious shrines previously destroyed by the Muslims.

The Seljuk[80] of Persia (1071-1098 CE) were a nomadic Turkish group of warriors who established themselves in the Middle East during the 11th century, their origin are from central Asia. They became custodians of the declining Abbasid caliphate. After 1055, they founded the great Seljuk Sultanate, made Baghdad the centre of their empire and included Iran, and Syria in their empire. The Seljuk helped to stop the Shiite Islamic ideology expansion in the region who was imposed by the Fatimids of Egypt.

In the 12th century, the Suljuk were able to defeat the Christian troops at the battle of Manzikert (1071) on the Syrian Coast which give the opportunity to the Turk to open the way for its occupation of Anatolia. They controlled Mesopotamia, (today it would consist of a section of Syria, a small part of Iraq, and Iran) and they reached the Holy Land. Like other conquerors before them, their policies toward Christianity were very

[77] Ibid 73 pp 199-203.
[78] Henri Lammens "La Syrie," *Precis Historique* (Beirut: Imprimerie Catholique, 1921), p. 150.
[79] Ibid.73. p. 151.
[80] Ibid 73 pp.152-159.

harsh and discriminatory.[81] They imposed heavy taxes on the Christian community and an entrance tax to visit Holy Christian sites. The local Christians in the Holy Land, especially in Jerusalem and Christian Holy sites were no longer safe. In desperation, the Christians wrote letters describing the atrocities they were subject to via pilgrims returning to the west. Their demands for help and assistance left a deeply inspiring impression on Western Europe.[82]

The 10th and 11th centuries were very difficult for the Christians in the Holy Land, especially for those who lived in Jerusalem. The harassment and persecution of Christians imposed by the Muslim rulers led to the demise of the Christian presence in the Holy Land. They were forced to become Muslims or die, many official leaders of the clergy were killed and churches and Christian entities and convents destroyed. A particularly devastating blow was the total destruction of the most holy place in Christianity, the Church of the Resurrection. During this era, when Muslims became the majority in the Holy Land, Muslim pilgrims came from other Arab countries and settled in the country.[83]

2.4 The Crusader Period (1099-1187 AD). Pope Urban II, was among the most passionate leaders of the First Crusade.[84] His speech at Clermont, in l085, ushered in the beginning of the Crusades. The Crusaders came to conquer the Holy Land from Muslim control, help local Christians and pilgrims and protect and venerate Holy Christian places. They arrived in l099 and stayed until 1291. During this time, they undertook eight campaigns.

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[81] Ibid. 73, p. 160.
[82] Sabino De Sandoli, "First Seljuk Turk Period 1071-1098" *The Peaceful Liberation of the Holy Places in the XIV Century* (Cairo: Franciscan Center of Christian Oriental Studies, 1990).
[83] Fr. Antoun Odeh chapter entitled, "The Christian Majority reduced to a Minority" *The Christian Minority in Palestine*. [Online]. Available at: www.al-bushra.org/holyland/chapter2b.htm.isit (Accessed July 12, 2012)
[84] Saul P. Colbi, "Christianity in the Holy Land, Past and Present," (Lanham: University Press Of America, 1988), pp. 35-38.

In general, there were three primary reasons that European leaders gave for supporting the Crusades. First, the Crusaders came to retrieve the Land of where Christianity started, and stop the Moslem influence of its invasion and ideology; second, to reduce the gap between Roman and Orthodox rite following the Schism of 1054 AD; and third, to provide a focus on the continuously fighting mediaeval lords and knights into the one cause of "penitential warfare." The Pope offered forgiveness of sins if they joined a Crusade to the Holy Land.

Through the eight campaigns in the Holy Land, the Christian community underwent dramatic changes. First, and foremost, the Crusaders were fierce warriors, who inflicted all the suffering that war could bring. Moreover, the campaigns were, if not religious wars, at least wars between people of different religions, and this difference was an additional cause for suffering among the local population. In some cases, the armies did not distinguish between local Christians and Muslims and Jews. In fact, William of Tyre mentions that some of the Crusaders severely persecuted the Christians of the Holy Land because they sent back unfavourable messages complaining of their treatment to the Pope and the secular rulers in Europe. [85]

However, many men who joined the Crusades were not warriors fighting for religious reasons. They were farmers, merchants, and knights who all joined the campaign for their own reasons. For example, some were looking for power, others were looking for new trade opportunities and some joined because they heard how rich the Middle East was. Farmers were eager to join for the benefits available from the new, fertile places described to them. Knights and warlords were looking for new places to control,

[85] Ibid 83, p. 56.

particularly the "rich" land in the Middle East, and some joined for the idea of pilgrimage because they had been taught about the Holy Land from the Bible.

Thus, the Holy Land was very attractive to the Crusaders, not only for religious reasons, but also because of its beauty. They heard that the country was different from Europe in climate and providentially fertile. There were three harvests per year and people could grow not only corn, grapes and apples but also other fruits unknown in Europe such as oranges, lemons, many varieties of vegetables and sugarcane and forests that produced wood for building. The original inhabitants were more or less dispossessed, and the income gained from the fertile land passed to the new owners.[86]

Different cities in the Holy Land suffered massacres; others were destroyed and their inhabitants expelled. The Crusaders gained much from their victories; often a single man could own an entire village. As Crusaders, they had more opportunity to exercise their trade and further their own interests in the country they had captured.[87]

This situation changed when the Holy Land fell to Saladin's army in 1187. Local Christians could no longer attend church services to pray because their churches were closed and no one was permitted to officiate in them. In 1217, the pilgrim, Titimar, noted that some churches still remained closed. Churches were without worship and without honour, and doors opened only to those pilgrims who paid well.[88]

Saladin, the Muslim general and Richard the Lionheart, the King of England, signed a peace agreement in 1192. Part of the agreement was to give a permission to the Latin

[86]Zoe Oldenbourg, "The Crusader," *The Reckoning*, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1965), pp. 562-563.
[87] Ibid 86.
[88] Sabino De Sandoli performed the Italian translation of Ricardus Canonicus Londoniensis, *Itinerarium Peregrinorum et Gesta Regis Richardi*, 1. III, c. 34 between 1978 and 1985. Michael Olteanu performed the English translation. Excerpts can be found at http://www.christusrex.org/www2/cruce3/index.html. The books are published by at the Franciscan Printing Press in Jerusalem. Cited here are pages 156-158.

Bishop Hubert Walter to return two priests and two deacons, and have them "closed-in" at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, in the Basilica of Bethlehem, and at Nazareth. This "benevolent concession" on the part of the Sultan did not allow this toleration very long, the terms of the agreement being equal to practical captivity.[89] It appears that an exceptional situation continued in the Basilica of the Nativity in Bethlehem, because the majority of native population of Bethlehem was mostly Christian. In spite of the situation of the government in charge regarding the managing of the entrance to the Basilica, the Latin- and Eastern-rite clergy and their bishops did not have any difficulties interfering in the Sanctuary.[90]

At the same time, during all the turbulence in the region between the Christians and Muslims, an important meeting took place between St. Francis of Assisi and the Sultan Malek- El- Kamel in Egypt which positively affects the current situation of the Holy shrine in the Holy Land. After the formation of the Francian friars in the Holy Land by St. Francis of Assisi in 1209 and the foundation of the Franciscan province in the Holy Land at the General Chapter of the Franciscan Order in 1217. St. Francis made visits to Egypt, Syria and Palestine where he stayed several months during 1219-1220. At this time there was war between the Crusaders and Muslims and St. Francis wanted to meet the Sultan and dialogue with him. The Sultan considered the visit an act of respect from someone from a different culture and religion. He was pleased with the visit and opened the door to the Franciscan to be present in the Holy Land and access to several sites that were related to the life of Jesus, such as the room of the Last Supper on Mt. Zion and the right to officiate at the Holy Sepulchre. Since that time

[89] Académie des Inscriptions & Belles-lettre, *Recueil des Historiens des Croisades, Historiens Orientaux,* Vol. III (Paris:Imprimerie Nationale, 1884).

[90] Hugues Vincent and Felix-Marie Abel, *Bethléem. Le Sanctuaire de la Nativité* (Paris: Librairie Victor Lecoffre, 1914), p. 185.

there has been a Franciscan presence in the Holy Land and they have gained control of many of the holy sites and today are called Custodians of the Holy Land[91].

In 1240, the Kawarismian Turks "fell like an avalanche" upon the Holy Land and Syria and plundered Jerusalem, destroying the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. The Turks slaughtered approximately 7,000 Christians, and the women who survived, were carried off into captivity.[92] The Christian officials in several countries and official protested against the massacre and Sultan Ajub had to apologize to Pope Innocent IV, while the Turks denied their knowledge of this massacre. He also informed the Pope that he had handed the keys of the Basilica to two Moslem families who were to open its doors to the pilgrims who arrived at the site. These families did open the church on certain days of the week but only after these pilgrim pay money. Pilgrims payed a heavy taxation in order to see and pray at the church. These pilgrims will be entered the church in a designated area. Having liturgy were possible is subject to a designated altar where they could celebrate their liturgy. This was the time when various groups of people from Mesopotamia, Egypt, Armenia, Ethiopia, Syria, Greece and Georgia established themselves around the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. For example, Queen Tamara of Georgia secured an agreement with the Sultan of Egypt that allowed the Georgian community to be exempt from paying taxes and live within the grounds of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. The local community and pilgrims who came to visit the Church of the Holy Sepulchre passed gifts and food through holes bored into the door of the Basilica. The people viewed their future with a spirit of hope, but lived in a reality marked by emptiness and hopeless delusion. Unfortunately, the liberation of the holy places became impossible. The Khwarismian forces destroyed and burned

[91] Custody of the Holy Land. *The Franciscan Presence in the Holy Land*. Franciscan printing press, Jerusalem 2006. pp.8-11.
[92] Ibid. 91, pp. 47-49.

villages until they reached Jerusalem. A month later, they broke into the city, including the killing of local Christians also they killed monks and nuns and took over convents such as the St. James Armenian Convent. The Christians felt fearful, especially after the Khwarismaian forces killed the Frankish governor. This action led 6,000 Christians to leave Jerusalem.[93]

At the Council of Lyons (June 24, 1245), Pope Innocent IV called for another Crusade; unfortunately, only a few European leaders responded. In 1248, King Louis IX departed from Paris with a large army and they landed in Limassol in Cyprus, then they departed from Cyprus towards the Holy Land, but instead of sailing for the Holy Land, the navy turned toward Damietta in Egypt.[94]

2.5 The Mamluk Period (1260-1517 AD). Mamluk in the Arabic language means "possessed," "slave," or "serf." The Mamluks were soldier slaves captured from Asia by the Egyptians who trained them from childhood to serve in their personal armies. They converted to Islam and became the selected cavalry force in the Muslim army.

Between 1258 and 1259, the Mongols captured Baghdad in Iraq and Aleppo and Damascus in Syria in 1260. Kitbuqa, was a Mongol Christian general was assigned to conquer the Middle East. He was responsible for further Mongol raids southwards towards Egypt and was killed at the Battle of Ain Jalut in 1260.[95] He established his headquarters in Damascus. In September 1260, he led his army into Galilee. They captured and then beheaded him under orders from the Mamluk leader, Sultan Qutuz.

[93] Steven Runciman, *A History of the Crusades, Volume 3* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1954), pp. 224-225.
[94] The Fourth Crusade was diverted to Constantinople. The Fifth Crusade, intending to defeat the Saracens in Egypt, disembarked at Damietta, but was not successful.
[95] Ibid 91, p.50

However, the following month, Baybars ended the influence of Sultan Qutuz by ending his life.[96] As a result, the Mongols retreated to Baghdad.

Sultan Al-Zahir Baybars I (1260-1276), is the founder of the Mamluk Dynasty. The Mamluks were a mixture of Eurasian tribes, mostly of Turkish origin from the Steppes of Central Asia. An Egyptian Sultan had bought them as slaves and they rose to power in his service. During the reign of Al-Zahir Baybars the Christians in the Holy Land hoped for the end of the hardship imposed on them. They were encouraged that Pope Urban IV, (1261-1264) would initiate yet another Crusade. He knew about their situation but unfortunately, the Crusade was not forthcoming because of several reasons; on September 1 1269, James I the King of Aragon, departed for the Holy land with a large fleet but turned back because of a great storm. Later, he decided to return to the Holy Land with another army, while it was diverted to Tunis by his brother Charles I of Anjou, King of Naples and Sicily.

Baybars I became the Sultan of Egypt in 1261. He was the most brutal Sultan against the Christians. His anti-Christian actions resulted in the destruction of the Basilica of Nazareth (1263). He mistreated the Christian clergy, killed monks and forced the Christian inhabitants to wear blue clothes.[97] He demolished a great part of the Crusader construction that strengthened the Basilica of Nazareth.[98] He removed columns and beautiful marble slabs that covered the walls and floors of the Basilica for use in his

[96] Baybars was a commander of the Mamluks in 1250, when he defeated the Seventh Crusade of Louis IX of France. He was under Sultan Qutuz at the Battle of Ain Jalut in 1260, when he decisively defeated the Mongols.
[97] Ibid. 93, pp. 275-277.
[98] Ibid. 93, pp. 276-277.

palace and at the Mosque of Cairo. It seems that at that time there were no obstacles to such actions, although it is not clear what the motivation might have been.[99]

From the end of 1269, when Baybars changed his attitude and policy towards the Crusade of Louis IX, he started to reduce his harassment of the Christians of the Levant. However, when he learned of King Louis IX's death, he went to Tripoli, Lebanon where he behaved as a tyrant. Little help arrived from Europe to aid England's Prince Edward, who embarked for Acre with a thousand soldiers. Taking into account the desperate situation there, Prince Edward, made the most of his advantage and pressed for the very survival of the Christians of Acre. He obtained a truce with Baybars (May 1272) that lasted for nearly 11 years. Afterwards, he returned to England. The Archbishop remained in Acre, where he became Pope of Rome, changed his name to Gregory X. The new Pope was very energetic to convince the princes of Europe to take on a universal Crusade. At the Council of Lyons in 1274, he insisted that one of the principal discussions concentrated towards the idea of rescuer the holy places. However, the result of the Council was unsatisfactory without none of the European prince took the initials to go for the Holy Land.

The early post-crusader period began in the 14th century. During that time, the Sultan of Egypt demonstrated a tolerant approach towards the Christians and the holy shrines in the Holy Land. He hoped to establish mutually beneficial political and trade agreements with the governments of the West. As an act of good will, Christians gained their freedom of worship, prisoners were released, some churches returned, others restored

[99] Sabina De Sandoli, *Itinera Hierosolymitana Crucesignatorum, IV* (Jerusalem: Jerusalem Franciscan Printing Press, 1984), p. 197.

and safe passage for pilgrims was secured.[100] All this was due in part to the diplomacy that ensued between the Sultan and a delegation representing the King of Georgia that arrived in Jerusalem in July 1305. Due to the fact that the delegation included representatives of Andronicus II Palaeologus, the Emperor of Constantinople, the Georgian monks gained rights to control some of the churches (e.g., Church and Convent of the Holy Cross), regained possession of Calvary, and received permission for two monks to stay inside the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Likewise, the Armenians and Copts also gained specific privileges that allowed the preservation and the expansion of their sanctuaries, monasteries, and other possessions (after payment of regular taxes and bribes).[101] The last Mamluk Sultan was al-Ashraf Aqnouk al-Ghuri (1513-1516), his defeat by Sultan Selim I of the Ottoman Dynasty at an important battle outside Cairo effectively ended 250 years of Mamluk rule in 1515 AD.

2.6 The Ottoman Period (1517-1917). The Holy Land remained under the occupation of the Ottoman Turks for four centuries. Military might was the ruling system and the Turks taxed the inhabitants heavily. The Turkish administration neglected both the safety of the people and any infrastructure that encouraged commerce and industry, although Christians and their churches enjoyed an era of some prosperity during the reigns of Sultan Salim I and Sultan Suleiman I.[102]

After the death of Suleiman I in 1566, safety became an important issue for the Christians in the Holy Land due to the instability that existed within the Turkish government. The government in the Ottoman Empire is also called the "Ottoman Porte", which means in Arabic, "high door". It controlled the Empire based on personal

[100] Moudjir Ed-Dyn, *Histoire de Jérusalem et Hebron, traduite par Henry Sauvaire, Fragments de la Chronique* (Paris: Leroux 1876), p. 281.
[101] Ibid 91, pp. 173-175.
[102] Ibid. 91, p. 50.

interests and imposed heavy taxation on the local inhabitants to generate money, inflicted brutal actions against them, and inflamed the radical religious Muslim community against the Christians. Because the government was so weak, it did little to provide safe passage for people travelling through the desert among the Bedouin. They had a reputation of being robbers and thieves and attacked Christian pilgrim caravans.[103]

During the second half of the l6th century until the l9th century, there were some changes in Christian power and authority. In general, the Greek Orthodox Church secured power, at the expense of the Latin Rite Church. Since the Ottoman Empire seemed constantly engaged in war with the Latin Rite Church, the Greeks and Armenians were favoured over the "Franks." During these centuries, whoever control led the holy places remained under the international politics, with the support of the European Latin powers, in particular France were very supported of the Latin interests, and the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople championed the Orthodox Churches. The Armenians relied upon their own resources, in particular, their patriarchate and influential secular magnates in the capital were motivated to protect its subject communities from Latin violations in the holy places, but the Catholics secure their position by pay fees and bribes. The strongest and almost continuous challenge to the Armenian Christians and their holdings in the Holy Land came from the Greek community.[104]

By the second half of the 16th century, local Christians felt more secure because the Turkish government demonstrated good will towards western Christian countries by granting them some rights to local holy places and the right to protect their Christian

[103] Ibid. 91, p. 52

[104] As-Safsafi Ahmad Al-qaturi, (January - March 2007). "The Ottomans and Sacred Places in Jerusalem" The *Fountain, Issue 57*. [Online] Available at: http://www.fountainmagazine.com/Issue/detail/The-Ottomans-and-Sacred-Places-in-Jerusalem.

citizens in the Holy Land. Missionaries, teachers, scientists, and tourists came to the Holy Land along with traders from the west.[105]

European powers began taking advantage of the Ottoman Empire's weakness through military and political penetration that included Napoleon's invasion of Egypt in 1789 and part of Palestine. Likewise, the local people led several revolutions in 1825 and 1834 in protest against their miserable economic situation. The weakness of the Ottoman rulers and their policies affected the holy shrines in the Holy Land and this became the subject of political change and dispute between foreign countries and control of the holy sites.[106] The Ottomans wrote edicts that established and regulated the rights and privileges of all religions in the holy places. These documents pronounced that these rights and privileges could be neither amended nor modified. The main beneficiary of these edicts was the Greek Orthodox Church.

Several events led to Britain and France declaring war on Russia on March 28, 1854. Napoleon III succeeded to in forcing the Ottoman Empire to recognize France as "sovereign authority" in the Holy Land, in which his Napoleonic ambassador to the Ottoman Empire played a major role in convincing the Ottoman Empire with this recognition. Quickly, the Russians opposed to this change in "authority" in the Holy Land. Referring to the two signed treaties, one signed in 1757 and the other in 1774, the Ottomans reversed their earlier decision, by renouncing the French treaty and insisting that Russia was the protector of the Orthodox Christians in the Ottoman Empire. Napoleon III, unhappy with this decision, made a show of force,[107] shared with destructive diplomacy and money that encouraged Sultan Abdel Hamid I to accept a new treaty. This treaty confirmed that the Roman Catholic Church is the supreme

[105] Ibid. 91, p. 52.
[106] Ibid. 91, p. 55.
[107] Ibid 91.

authority in the Holy Land with the support of France. Now, the Roman Catholic Church, not the Greek Orthodox Church, controlled the Christian holy places and held the keys to the Church of the Nativity. The Holy Land and the Christian holy places became the subject of political dispute among the European nations. It became a causal factor that ushered in the Crimean War (1853–1856) fought between Imperial Russia on one side and an alliance of France, the United Kingdom, the Kingdom of Sardinia, and the Ottoman Empire on the other. Likewise, by the end of the 18th century, the Russians claimed defensive rights over the Greek Orthodox community. Jerusalem was neglected after the death of Sultan Suleiman in 1566, in particular during the role of his weaker successor sultans. They assigned minor functionaries to govern the city and eventually it was governed by local Arab families. The Greek Orthodox patriarchs in Istanbul exerted influence in the royal court by offering bribes to the sultans and high-level functionaries. The sultans encouraged corruption, craft and intrigue as a means of keeping adversaries off-balance. The ownership of the holy places changed hands according to who gave the most bribes.[108]

By the middle of the 19th century, total chaos prevailed. There were daily confrontations among Christian denominations for the control and maintenance of the holy places. Competition was so fierce and ruthless between the Greek Orthodox Church and the Latin Rite Church it compelled European and Russian governments to interfere in the internal affairs of the Ottoman Empire. The bitter feuding led to a full-scale war between the European powers.

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[108]Alexander William Kinglake, *The Invasion of the Crimea, volume 9* (London: William Blackwood and Sons, 1901), pp. 1863-1887.

In 1847, a very serious dispute occurred between the Greek Orthodox Church and the Latin Rite Church. It led to bloodshed amid accusations over the disappearance of a silver star owned by the Latin Rite Church. The star had been in the Church of Nativity in Bethlehem. This dispute led to a diplomatic clash between France and Russia, which is so-called "protectors" of the two churches. It gave Britain and France a reason to start the Crimean War. In 1854, the Turkish Sultan Abdul Majid stand with the of his allies against Russia, and defeated the Russians.

In February 1852, Sultan Abdul Majid issued his famous ferman (edict), *Status Quo,* on the status of the holy places. It established and regulated the rights and privileges of all religions in the holy places. The document stated that these rights and privileges could not be amended or modified. The main beneficiary of this edict was the Greek Orthodox Church. Following the defeat of the Ottomans in World War I, the Paris Convention (1856), the Berlin Treaty (1878), Peace Treaty of Versailles (1919), and the British Mandate on Palestine confirmed and recognized the Status *Quo* in 1922, and followed this by adding a statement, "It is understood that no alterations can be made in the *Status Quo* of the Holy Places." This situation continued throughout the British Mandate and during Jordanian rule between 1948 and 1967. Following the 1967 war and the control of Israeli over the city of Jerusalem, the Israeli government continued with the *Status Que* rules and regulations to the Christian sites, preserving their right to those holy places they consider historically and traditionally belonging to the Jewish people.

The Ottoman Empire power became weak in the 18th century. By the 19th century, European powers began taking advantage of the Ottoman Empire's weakness through

both militarily and politically. As a result, the Napoleon III's invasion of Egypt, following British interventions, and French occupation of Lebanon.

2.7 The British Mandate (1917-1948 AD). As World War I ended, on December 9, 1917, the British forces Jerusalem controlled Jerusalem. General Allenby's victory procession to the old city of Jerusalem through Jaffa Gate signified the end of four centuries of Ottoman-Turkish occupation of the Holy Land. The inhabitants of Palestine were happy with the cessation of hostilities, especially those living in the old city of Jerusalem. They were suffering from lack of food, and inflated prices. Few civilians in Jerusalem were not hungry for months at a time.[109] The League of Nations issued a mandate giving military administrative control of the Holy Land to the British. By naming the Holy Land, the "British Mandate for Palestine," the area that is today Israel and Palestine, including Gaza, became the first, and only, geographical region with the name "Palestine", since before the Ottoman Empire in 1517. [110]

During the British Mandate of Palestine, the situation of the Arab Palestinian people, especially Christians, was very good. The British administration worked towards developing the ravaged territory into a modern country. They improved buildings, especially in Jerusalem and the territory's infrastructure with a focus on improving its water management and road construction. The indigenous people were very active in the development of their country, particularly its Christian religious development.[111] An example of the Christian religious development was a survey of Palestine conducted in 1922. It showed that the number of Christians living in

[109] William Thomas Massey, "*How Jerusalem was won" Being the Record of Alenby's Campaign in Palestine* (London: Constable and Company LTD, 1919), p. 196.
[110] "*League of Nations Decision Confirming the Principal Allied Powers' Agreement on the Territory of Palestine*", [Online] [Accessed March 18 2015] available at: http://unispal.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/0/2FCA2C68106F11AB05256BCF007BF3CB.
[111] Salim Tamari, *Jerusalem 1948, The Arab Neighbourhoods and Their Fate in the War* (Jerusalem, The Institute of Jerusalem Studies & Badil Resource Centre, 1999), pp. 32-33.

Jerusalem was 14,699; Muslims totalled 13,413, and Jews 33, 971.[112] In many cases, the British Mandate used the concept of "divide and rule" of which the Palestinian Christians and Muslims disapproved and voiced their condemnation of this British policy.[113]

It became apparent to the Palestinians especially after the Balfour Declaration that one of the strategies of the British Mandate was to establish a national home for the Jewish people. The British Mandate recognized the "historical connection of the Jewish people with Palestine" and called upon the mandatory power to "secure establishment of the Jewish National Home," with "an appropriate Jewish agency" to be set up for advice and cooperation to that end. The World Zionist Organization was specifically recognized as the appropriate vehicle and formally established the Jewish Agency in 1929. Jewish immigration to Palestine was to be facilitated, while ensuring that the "rights and position of other sections of the population are not prejudiced."[114]

The Balfour Declaration was issued in November 1917 by the British government. It was one of the important turning points in the history of the Holy Land. Its impact shaped the politics and the future situation of Palestinian people about their right of existence in their own country as well as destabilising the entire region of the Middle East.

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[112] The figures are from J Shaw, *A survey of Palestine, Vol 1: Prepared in December 1945 and January 1946 for the information of the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry* (Beirut: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1991), pp. 148-151.

[113] Living Together Peacefully, The Experience of Christian-Muslim Co-existence in the Middle East, Europe, USA and Philippines: Proceedings of the Conference "Exploring Christian-Muslim Relations in the Middle East and the West, Held at Bethlehem University in the Holy Land, Palestine, (5-9 September 5-9) 2007, p. 147.

[114] Fayez A. Sayegh, "A Palestinian view." In Y. Harkabi, E. Monroe, F. Sayegh & J. Smith (Eds.), *Time bomb in the Middle East* (New York: Friendship Press, 1969), p. 48.

The Balfour Declaration promised the Jewish people a homeland in Palestine, regardless of what had been promised by the British regarding the protection of the Arab inhabitants in the country according to the correspondence between British High Commissioner Sir Henry McMahon in Cairo and Sharif Hussein of Mecca between July 1915 and March 1916.[115] The Balfour Declaration came into being in 1917 after some years of lobbying the British government by several influential western Jewish and Christian Zionists who worked toward this ideological project to re-establish a Jewish national homeland and a state in Palestine. Zionists claim that all of the biblical Holy Land belongs to the Jewish people and discounts the rights of Palestinians to live in this homeland that belongs to the Jews. The implementation of this ideology was accomplished in 1948 through the establishment of the State of Israel. The two main contributors to bring this project into being were Lord Balfour, British Foreign Secretary and the British Prime Minister, David Lloyd George, both of whom had Christian Zionist sympathies. Christian Zionists at that time were mainly evangelical Christians, who believe that universal redemption can only happen when all the Jews are gathered in their homeland and accept Jesus Christ as their Messiah.[116]

The British Mandate in Palestine encouraged European missionary work among the local people in the Holy Land. They established schools for the Palestinian people, especially the Palestinian Christians as the British Mandate favoured local Christians

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[115] Dr Peter Shambrook. Paper given at the Balfour Project conference, *Britain and Palestine: past history & future role.* Durham, Oct 31st 2015. [Online] available at: www.balfourproject.org.

[116] Rabbi Dow Marmur. *Christian Zionism's flawed vision of Israel.* Posted 30 march 2015 Avalible at: www.blfourproject.org.

culturally and socially.[117] This missionary work in education, especially through teaching foreign languages, had a clear impact on the community and its outlook. The Christian community took advantage of the opportunity these schools afforded them to improve their educational level, which developed their socioeconomic status. According to Sabella, "Scholars argued that the European educational institutions, by exposing local Christians to foreign languages and cultures, accelerated among them the concept of relative deprivation". This relative deprivation was felt first when Christians from the Bethlehem and Ramallah areas compared the difficulties they experienced during the Ottoman Empire with the progress in Europe and America. This comparison stimulated their desire to emigrate to North, Central, and South America." Soon after the British Mandate over Palestine began, the Christian population in Jerusalem and other parts of the Holy Land increased and Jerusalem became the central Christian city, but soon the Christians lost their majority there due to the high birth rate of the Muslim population and emigration of Muslims into the major cities.

The Palestinians, as well as the Arab nations around, began to realize the implications and the effects of the Balfour Declaration and the hidden agenda of the British government as they allowed increasing numbers of Jewish immigrants leading to Palestinian loss of land. In particular, the local Christian community were concerned regarding the support given by western Zionist, evangelical Christian to the vision and agenda of the creation of a national home state for the Jews in Palestine. This support was based on a particular interpretation of Biblical prophecy which seemed to contradict Christian teaching regarding justice and peace. This view denies Palestinians any rights to the Holy Land and this ideology has been strengthened by the expertise of Israeli

[117]Peter H. Madros, "Christians of the Holy Land" *Latin Patriarchate, 2000*. Available at: www.al-bushra.org.

propaganda and continues to projects this image onto all activity that transpires around the "Holy Land".[118]

The situation in the country was unstable due to the tensions between the Arab and the Jews. The British sought to engage Muslim and Christian Palestinian leaders in participating in government with leaders from the Jewish community thinking that this would reduce the tension by creating a representative advisory committee. In fact this did not reduce the tensions between the two communities and led to greater aggression between the Arab and Jewish communities. The Palestinians began a series of, initially peaceful, protests against the Balfour Declaration and the Zionist agenda in Palestine. Anti-Zionist protests occurred during the Muslim Festival of Nabi Musa (Prophet Moses), on the road between Jerusalem and Jericho. This is considered an important Muslim pilgrimage site in Palestine that, according to the Muslims tradition, is the place where Prophet Moses' tomb is located. On April 4th 1920, the Muslims' protest and anti-Zionist speeches turned into a violent action between the Muslims and Jews that led to several deaths and hundreds were wounded[119]. In the following years, Christian participation in the protest activities and processions increased and on many occasions, placards argued that Muslims and Christians were brothers against the British and the Zionist agenda. Serious violent outbreaks occurred in different cities all over the country, in particular in mixed Jewish and Palestinian cities. This resulted in many deaths from Jewish, Muslims and Christian communities, which caused the British High Commissioner, Herbert Samuels to write to the British Colonial Secretary, Winston Churchill on May 1921. The Christian community participated in these riots and were

[118] Naim Ateek. Lecture given to the Ecumenical Theological Fraternity in Israel on February 25, 1988. The lecture is part of a book edited by Dr. Petra Heldt, *Church and Christian Communities in Israel Today* (Jerusalem: Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 2009), p. 285.
[119] Noah Haiduc-dale, *Arab Christians in British Mandate Palestine: communalism and nationalism, 1917-1948.* Edinburgh University Press; 1st Edition (March 31, 2013). P.43

more active in the after math by verbally protesting and signing petitions against Jewish violent attacks against the Christians and Muslims.[120]

The tensions and violence between the Arabs and the British authorities were escalated after the Palestinian parties formed a High Arab Committee under the Mufti and called for a national strike in October 1936. This quickly became out of control and became for many Palestinians a holy war and volunteers started to come from all over the Middle East to join the fight against the British and the Jews.

These actions took place after the British government commissioned Lord Peel, a British ex-Cabinet minister to report regarding his vision for solving the issue of Palestine in light of the Palestinian refusal to accept partition. The Peel Report proposed a two-state solution and the partition of Palestine in which 70 percent of the land would be an Arab area linked Trans-Jordanian and the Jews would take 20 percent. This excluded Jerusalem which would remain a special entity under British control. The revolt exploded again and Mufti Husseini was one of the organizers of the revolt. He called on the Arab population to kill anyone, even Arabs, if they cooperated with the British and the Jews. During this time the British had great difficulties to manage the country with their own military forces and serval cities in Palestine were out of control. Due to this the British started recruiting Jewish fighters from several extremist organizations such as Haganah and the National Military Organization[121]

In response to the Arab revolt in 1936-1939, the British government adopted new policies which were detailed in the White Paper of 1939, in order to reduce the stiffness and the clash between the Arabs and the Jews. The key issue contained in the White

[120] Ibid 119 pp. 45-52.
[121] Simon Sebag Montefiore, *Jerusalem: The Biography* (Great Britain: Weidenfeld & Nicolson Ltd., 2011), pp. 447-449.

Paper was the limitation of Jewish emigration to Palestine to 75,000 for a period of five years. It was not the intension of Britain to form a Jewish state in Palestine and the territories lying west of the Jordan River were excluded from the White Paper. The formation of two areas sharing some form of government was favoured, where the interests of both peoples would be safeguarded. The Palestinians and surrounding Arab countries rejected the White Paper as a betrayal by the British authorities.

The fighting that ensued as a result of the Arab non-acceptance of the Peel Report resulted in the United Nations taking over the Mandate for Palestine from the British. The UN Partition Plan for Palestine was approved by the UN General Assembly on 29 November 1947, based on Resolution 181. The recommended of the resolution is the creation of independent Arab and Jewish states with a special statute about of the city of Jerusalem to be administered as an international city[122].

The surrounding Arab countries supported the Palestinian military forces in the fighting that broke out against the Jewish forces but were no match for the better trained Jewish military, many of whom had fought in the British army in World War II. They invaded all of Palestine, except the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, causing a huge exodus of refugees to Lebanon, Jordan and Egypt and internal displacement of many others to the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. At the end of this war, the Jewish State of Israel was recognised by the UN Security Council in 1948.

2.8 The Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1948 to 1967. The establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 was one of the important, yet distressing, turning points for Holy Land Christians. The 1948 war is considered by the Palestinians, as well as the Arab and Islamic world, as the "Nakbah" which means the "Palestinian catastrophe". As a result of this Palestine

[122] Ibid 121 pp.470-471

was divided and more than 15,000 Palestinian people were killed and around 750,000 Palestinians became refugees and have not been allowed to return to their homes and land by Israel until today. Over 500 villages and towns throughout Palestine were completely depopulated during this time and many of them had Christian congregations and church organisations[123]. Christians suffered the consequences of the Arab-Jewish conflict with the rest of Palestinian society. As part of the Palestinian people, forced to relocate, these 50,000 Christian refugees found themselves looking towards Jordan and the Arab Gulf countries. Others, who chose North America and other destinations, established themselves and their families as part of the Palestinian Diaspora communities there but retained the usual sentimental attachment to their homeland and its fading memories.[124] Palestinian Christians who stayed in their country found themselves relocated to other areas in the Holy Land. They had to leave behind their homes, property, and businesses, while the Jews who settled their benefited from the possessions they had to abandon.

During the 1948 war, the Palestinian Christians stood with rest of the Palestinian people who were defending their land by fighting against the Israeli army. Some of the Christians carried out attacks against the Israeli army and the new Israeli government, while other Christians participated by giving medical assistance to the wounded Palestinian fighters. The Palestinian Christians played, and continue to play, a major role in presenting the Palestinian situation during the war to the western countries through establishing newspapers and other publications to educate Palestinians about the danger of Zionism[125]. Several Christian-Muslim associations were established and

[123] Anders Strindberg, Forgotten Christians. The American Conservative Magazine published: May 24, 2004. [Online] Available at: www.al-bushra.org/latpatra/priests.htm.
[124] Ibid 121.
[125] Fouad Farah, الحجارة الحية, المسيحيون العرب في الديار المقدسة. (The Living Stone, Arab Christians in the Holy Land). Second edition 2005, Nazareth. P. 107.

Christian non-profit organizations were set up to help the Palestinian refugees' access to educational, medical and social aid.

The situation after the 1948 war was very hard on the Palestinians refugees who resettled in refugee camps in nearby Arab countries and the West Bank and Gaza Strip. It was also problematic for the Palestinians who stayed in the country after the war. A dramatic demographic change took place with the Palestinian population in decline and an increase of the Jewish population. Around 800,000 to one million was the estimation of Jewish emigration numbers. They were settled in villages and towns that been captured by the Israeli forces[126]. The church in the Holy Land and its institutions played an important role in reducing the suffering of the Palestinian refugees through opening their convents and pilgrimage hostels to the Palestinian refugees and establishing humanitarian institutions. The Palestinian Christians and the church in the Holy Land played another role in helping to highlight the suffering of the Palestinian to the international community and international humanitarian aid organisations[127]. During the 1948-1967 period Israel implemented its strategic policies against the Palestinians in the areas that they occupied and this led to discrimination in terms of poorer economic, social and topographical infrastructure.

The Israeli government isolated Palestinian cities, towns and villages by establishing Jewish settlement next to Palestinian populated areas in order to prevent any kind of communication and stop natural expansion between these areas. The Israeli government issued several laws and procedures that negatively affected the development of the Palestinian economy. This made the Palestinian economy become more dependent on

[126] Howard Sachar, A history of Israel. From the rise of Zionism to our time, 2007. [Online] Avalible at: http/:www.military.wika.com. Retrieved February 2016.
[127] Ibid 121. P. 111

Israeli production and goods. The domination of the Israelis over the Palestinian people is demonstrated by the acceptance of Palestinians employees within Israeli governmental and public institutions in lower positions while the higher position are given to Israeli Jews without taking into consideration individual job qualifications. Implementation of the Zionist ideology and the discrimination in gaining Israeli citizenship is demonstrated by the way that any Jewish person anywhere in the world is eligible to gain Israeli citizenship. However, Palestinian who live in Israeli - controlled areas are judged by other laws which make it very hard to become citizens[128]. Several years after the war, the Christian presence in post-1948 Israel decreased and the number of Christians who gained citizenship was 30,000, whilst 150,000 Muslims gained Israeli citizenship. The Christians who were living in Israel, including Church leaders, viewed the Israeli government as an occupier who implemented all kinds of discrimination towards the Palestinian people in general and Israel viewed the Christians as part of the Palestinian people. Christian participation in Palestinian social, economic and political life became marginalized between 1948 and 1967, due to the fact that the new generation of Muslims became more educated. They began to take the lead in getting better positions within social service institutions and Arab political entities that provided service to Palestinians within the Israeli government. On the other hand, the Christian population decreased to half due to emigration and the higher birth rate of the Muslims. The Christian population that had been 20 percent of the Palestinian population at the establishment of the State of Israel establishment became 10 percent prior to 1967.[129]

[128] Ibid 121. Pp.110-111.
[129] Ibid 121. pp. 112-112.

One year after the war ended in 1948, Jordan divided the city of Jerusalem into east and west by annexing the eastern part of Jerusalem, while the western part remained as part of the State of Israel. The historical Judea and Samaria changed its name from Trans-Jordan to West Bank after it was occupied by military force in 1948. On April 24 1950, the Jordanian government accepted a UN Resolution making the West Bank and East Jerusalem part of Jordan. This act was denied by most of the international community, in particular the Arab countries, while only Great Britain and Pakistan recognized the Jordanian annexation. The West Bank area became completely controlled by the Jordanians and the Jordanian government issued Jordanian passports to West Bankers to facilitate their travel abroad. In the years following the annexation the Palestinians people and the Jordanian government had no interest in achieving "self-determination" either in Jordan or in the West Bank.[130]

The 1967 War, saw another tragic turning point and extreme important changes to the entire Palestinian society located in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The 1967 War, also called the Six Day War, took place in the Holy Land between June 5th and June 10th 1967. The Israeli officials and military generals claimed that the war was a preventative military effort to counter what they saw as an impending attack by Arab nations that surrounded Israel. Israel won this war, capturing the West Bank, the Old city of Jerusalem, the Gaza Strip, Golan Heights (which was part of Syria) and the Sinai Peninsula (which was part of Egypt). Economic, organisational, political, and social changes took place among rising tensions between the Palestinians, on the one hand the Israeli military authorities and Jewish settlers, on the other. With these changes, and the dramatic changes in terms of population balance between Arabs and Jews in

[130] Palestinian Facts, article: "Jordan Annexed West Bank after 1948 War" February 29, 2012. [Online]. Avalible at: http://www.palestinefacts.org/pf_1948to1967_jordan_annex.php.

Israel/Palestine, some Israelis and Palestinians realised that there is a need for a political solution to end the occupation and protect at least the basic rights for Palestinians.[131]

Local Christians, tried to work towards the conventional and secular political organisations, participated in the efforts of their community to end the occupation and establish Palestinian national rights. Christians, with their middle-class backgrounds, better education among the Palestinians and professional preferences, became progressively delicate to the instability and uncertainty that accompanied long Israeli military rule. Palestinian Christians saw that between 1967 and 1993, the migration of their community was double the national rate. They saw their friends and neighbours leave because of the economic, political, and social challenges. In fact, more than 12,000 of them left East Jerusalem, the West Bank, and Gaza Strip migrated abroad.[132] A census conducted by Israel after 1967 War, shows that 11,000 Christians remaining in Jerusalem. This meant that some 17,000 Christians (or 61%) had left during the days of Jordanian rule over East Jerusalem and the West Bank.[133] Palestinian Muslims from Hebron now occupied the homes of Christian friends and neighbours in the Bethlehem area who had emigrated. The Jordanian rule (1949-1967) in East Jerusalem and the West Bank, as well as the Egyptian regime in the Gaza Strip, brought with them an Arabic Islamic culture. For example, school books in the Arabic language used in the public school system were oriented towards Islam as they are today.[134] After the 1967 War, the Palestinian national sense of belonging was increased among the Palestinian

[131] Bernard Sabella, "Socio-Economic Characteristics and the Challenges to Palestinian Christians in the Holy Land," in *Christians in the Holy Land* edited by Michael Prior and William Taylor (London: The World of Islam Festival Trust, 1994), pp. 34-35.
[132] Palestinian Bureau of Statistics, *Current Status Report, Series No. 1, Demography of the Palestinian Population in the West Bank and Gaza Strip*, (Palestine: Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2006, December 1994).
[133] Albert Hourani's "Introduction," in *The Lebanese in the World: A Century of Emigration*, edited by Albert Hourani and Nadim Shehadi, (London: The Center for Lebanese Studies in Association with I.B. Tauris and Co. Ltd, Publishers, 1992), pp. 5-6.
134 Ibid 126.

people locally and internationally. Palestinian Christian professionals, such as George Habash, established the nationalist Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine which is a left-wing Palestinian organization that aims to liberate of Palestine from the Israeli occupation. Habash served as Secretary-General of the Palestine Front until 2000. His successor was Karim Khalaf who was a Palestinian Christian attorney and served as a Mayor of Ramallah a Palestinian city located north of Jerusalem from 1972 to 1982. He reinforced a policy of denial with the military occupation and advocated a two-state peace solution. Kamal Nasser also a Christian political leader, he was a poet and writer, who was in charge of the creating a Palestinian newspaper from Ramallah and who later he became a member of the PLO Executive Committee and served as a PLO spokesman until he was assassinated by Israel in 1973. Hanna Nasser was an academic and political figure who served as a President of Birzeit University which was founded by his father. Nasser served on the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization between 1981 and 1984 and held the position of Head of the Palestine National Fund between 1982 and 1984. Israel sent him into exile but he later returned until he took a position as ambassador to the United Nations, then based in London. The history of Palestine and the Palestinians demonstrates that Palestinian Christians have played a major role that helped to bring justice to the Palestinian people and active dissemination of the injustices perpetrated to countries throughout the world.

2.9 The First Intifada and Oslo Accords (1987-1993 AD). The hostile political relationships between Israelis and Palestinians created the First Intifada in December 1987. Christians as part of the Palestinian communities in the West Bank and Gaza Strip strongly participated in the Intifada, some became martyrs, others prisoners and still others escapees in hiding from Israeli pursuit. Christian communities reacted collectively as part of the Palestinian community. They pressed for an end to the

occupation and for a new relationship with the Israelis based on mutual respect and recognition of rights. The Palestinians and their leaders perceived the Intifada as a call for peace with Israel based on the presence of two peoples in the land.

The success of the First Intifada was a key factor that made possible the negotiations leading to the recognition of the Oslo Accords by the State of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization on September 13, 1993. These accords fostered the creation of the Palestinian National Authority. With these accords, the stage was set for the political transformation of the country and the natural excitement that accompanied it was felt by all Palestinians. The time of transition and transformation called for an optimistic stance and a departure from the past. Since the Israeli occupation of the West Bank in 1967, through the Intifada, the Christians who were living in these areas had suffered economic difficulties and suppression. Other Christians, with good educational and international contacts, escaped the hardships of life under occupation by migrating into other countries. They hoped for a better future for themselves and their children away from the occupation.[135]

Christians who remain in the West Bank and Gaza Strip continue to suffer with their nationals through the search for a peace process that reduces their suffering. The Israeli policies against the Palestinian residents of Jerusalem is affecting their future presence and their daily life in the city. For example, West Bank Palestinians can no longer obtain residency permits if they want to live in Jerusalem. Likewise, they cannot obtain building permits for new homes construction, or expansion and repair of housing in the

[135] Daphne Tsimhoni, *Christian Communities in Jerusalem and the West Bank since 1948: An Historical, Social and Political Study* (Westport and London: Praefer, 1993), pp. 22-23.

Old City and East Jerusalem. The Israeli policies, have prevented the natural growth of the Christian community and accelerated its reduction.[136]

2.10 The Al-Aqsa Intifada (2000-2005 AD). In September 2000, Ariel Sharon, an Israeli right-wing politician, visited Haram al-Sharif, also known as (Al-Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock) located in Jerusalem, in which it is considered as the third holiest site for the majority of Muslims. While according to the Jews, Haram al-Sharif built on the holiest site in Judaism that was destroyed in 70 BCE. The stated purpose for Sharon's visit was to assert the right of all Israelis to visit the Temple Mount.[137] Muslims interrupted his visit there and considered it as an insult to Muslims and their religion. His visit created the second uprising (i.e., Intifada) between the Palestinians and the Israelis that led to a bloody conflict lasting several years. According to political analysis, Sharon knew his visit could trigger violence and that the purpose of his visit was purely challenging. As a result of this, demonstrations broke out in the West Bank and led to the Israeli government reoccupying the West Bank and avoiding any kind of signed agreement with the Palestinians.

The Al Aqsa Intifada had a negative impact on all the west bank cities including the city of Bethlehem area. The times were very bad economically for Christians living in the Holy Land as many residents there relied upon tourism and pilgrimages for their livelihoods. Travelers were discouraged from visiting Bethlehem, Jerusalem and other parts of the Holy Land because it was said to be unsafe and unstable. In addition to loss of revenue, families experienced shootings, house demolitions and many of the children suffered post-traumatic stress disorder. Muslim militias, from villages in the Bethlehem

[136] From the testimony of Fr. Drew Christiansen entitled, "*Briefing on the condition of the Christians in the Holy Land and the future of Jerusalem,"* **(**Washington, D.C. 7 April 1999). [Online] Avalible at: http://www.al-bushra.org/temp/brieving.htm.
[137] Lee Hockstader, "Palestinians Angered by Test of Sovereignty in Jerusalem's Old City*," The Washington Post*, 29 2000, A22

district which the majority of Christians are its residence, as a cover to attack Israeli settlements and military forces in nearby Giloh, a suburb of West Jerusalem. The residents of Bethlehem district which contains Beit Jala and Biet Sahour found themselves between Palestinian and Israeli crossfire. In this situation, as well as that of the takeover of the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem by fleeing Palestinians, many believe that Muslim militants sought to gain the attention of international Christians to the situation.

Once again, hundreds of Christian families left Palestinian towns such as Beit Jala and Bethlehem due to the political instability and because they feared for their families' safety. Many Christians moved to other countries, leaving everything behind. Some sold their property very cheaply to have the money needed to leave the country and begin a new life abroad.

2.11 The Palestinian Authority Elections (2006-2007 AD). The on-going Israeli-Palestinian conflict repeatedly postponed Palestinian elections. Finally on 25 January 2006, elections were held for the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) and for the parliament of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA). The election was the first PLC election since 1996. The voters were Palestinian who are living in West Bank, East Jerusalem and Gaza. The results showed that Hamas won the election, with 76 seats out of 132 in the Palestinian Legislative Council. Since Hamas held the majority of seats, the party was able to provide a viable alternative to the Fatah party in the PNA. This change in the balance of power led to the setting up of a National Unity Government.[138]

Hamas is the largest Palestinian militant Islamist organisation. In 1987 it came into being at the beginning of the First intifada. Its long-term goal is considered to be the

[138] "Hamas' past casts shadow over peace plans" CNN International News, 27January 2006. Available at: http://edition.cnn.com/2006/WORLD/meast/01/26/palestinian.election/index.html.

establishment of an Islamic state in Palestine. Before coming to power in 2006, Hamas had two main spheres of operation: (1) Social programmes focused on building Islamic schools, hospitals and religious institutions and, (2) Militant operations effected by Hamas' underground Izzedine al-Qassam Brigades.

In June 2007, Gaza Strip was totally controlled by Hamas, destroying headquarters of PNA President Abbas and other government buildings. The violence between Hamas and the people who supported the Palestinian president forced him to dissolved the National Unity Government, a power-sharing agreement, signed by Fatah and Hamas representatives on 9 February 2007. He swore in an emergency government and forced out Prime Minister, Ismail Haniyeh, a member of Hamas. In his place, President Abbas named Salam Fayyad, an independent lawmaker, to the post. Hamas leaders condemned the move and decided not to recognize the changes and insisted that the Fatah-Hamas National Unity government remain in charge of the Palestinian Authority. Intense gun-battles continued in the Gaza Strip on the fifth day of what Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas characterized as an attempted Hamas coup in the territory. At least 88 Palestinians died during the week in battles that escalated significantly. By the evening of 14 June 2007, after a week of fierce fighting between Hamas and Fatah forces, the Gaza Strip had fallen under the sole control of the theocratic Hamas movement. President Abbas declared a state of emergency and suspended certain article of the Basic Law to allow the PNA to retain power in the West Bank, which effectively divided Palestine into two separate parts, each controlled by different political parties, one in Gaza, the other in Ramallah.

2.12 The rise of Israeli right wing extremists in the Israeli government

The Israeli general election in February 2009 brought to power extremist right- wing parties in the Israeli government let by Benjamin Netanyahu. The election that year was a clear sign that the government had shifted its policies further right, based on extremist ideology. Shortly after the general election of 2009, the Knesset[139] appointed Benjamin Netanyahu[140] as the Prime Minister, which gave him the opportunity to form the 32nd government since the establishment of State of Israel in 1948. He formed a coalition government that consisted mainly of right-wing parties, consisting of Likud, Yisrael Beiteinu (Israel Our Home), HaBayit HaYehudi (Jewish Home) and also included several smaller right-wing parties such as Shas which is an Ultra-orthodox political party.

Yisrael Beiteinu is one of the right-wing political parties in Israel and is considered as a national secularist party. HaBayit HaYehudi is another religious Zionist political party that was founded in 2008: part of their basic ideology is opposition to the creation of a Palestinian State and they consider Jerusalem the eternal capital of the Jewish people and not to be shared with anyone. They emphasise the importance of the Israeli settlements in the West Bank for Israel's security and that they should continue to be under Israeli sovereignty. The Shas party was founded in 1984 by the Chief Rabbi Rav Ovadiah Yousef, the chief Rabbi in Israel at the time and one of the foremost Talmudic authorities. Shas represents Israeli's ultra-orthodox Sephardic (Jews of Spanish, Mediterranean, and Middle Eastern descent) community[141]. The main ideology of all

[139] Knesset is a Hebrew word means gathering or assembly, in Israel the Knesset is the parliament house which is the national legislature house of Israel of the government that the Knesset passes all laws and the elects the president, and the cabinet including the supervises the work of the government through its committees.

[140] Netanyahu is the leader of Likud party in Israel. May 1996 officially the Likud–National Liberal Movement is the major center-right political party in Israel. The party was founded in 1973 by Menachem Begin in an alliance with several right-wing and liberal parties.

141 Dani Filc (2010). The Political Right in Israel: Different Faces of Jewish Populism. Studies on the Arab-Israeli Conflict. Routledge. p. 79, ISBN 978-0415488303.

these coalition parties is the unity of the nation, the State of Israel as the national homeland of the Jewish people and no citizenship without religious allegiance[142].

In March 2013 Netanyahu was re-elected as Prime Minister for the 33rd government after his party the Likud[143] and Yisrael Beiteinu[144] won most of the seats in the elections. Netanyahu formed a new coalition with a combination of left and right-wing political parties such as Yesh Atid[145] (There is a future), HaBayit HaYehudi and Hatnuah (The Movement)[146], but excluded ultra-Orthodox parties. Several months after the new government coalition was formed, conflicts were highlighted by the members of the coalition as Netanyahu's government became more supportive of the Zionist militancy of the Settler Movement in order to keep his coalition together. Among the issues that caused the conflict in the coalition was the issue of the Zionist settlements in the West Bank. The Housing Minister Uri Ariel, a radical settler leader who belongs to the Jewish Home Party, called for the construction of more settlements in the West Bank and the Finance Minister threatened to bring down the government if any of the settlements were separated from Israel. This opposition included the Justice Minister and the Religious Affairs Minister who threatened to leave the government for the same reason[147]. Several issues increased the gap between the government coalition members which led Netanyahu to dismiss the Ministers of Justice and Finance and several other ministers resigned which caused the coalition government to collapse and be dissolved. This resulted in an early general election in March 2015.

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[142] Yisrael Beiteinu official site is available at http://www.beytenu.org/the-vision-of-yisrael-beytenu-israel-our-home-2/. Last site visit January 2016

[143] Ibid 142.

[144] Ibid 142.

[145] Yesh Atid (*There is a Future*) is a political party formed in 2012 by Yair Lapid a journalist. His ideology seeks to represent what it considers the centre of Israeli society. It focuses primarily on civic, socioeconomic and governance issues, including government reform and ending military draft exemptions for the ultra-Orthodox.

[146] Hatnuah (The Movement) is a liberal political part formed by Tzipi Livni who was former foreign minister in previous governments

[147] *PressTV-'Bibi, stop annexing settlements in WB'". Presstv.com. Retrieved 17 February 2015.*

As a result of the election Netanyahu was re-elected and given the authority to form a new coalition government in Israel. Just hours before the dead line that was given to form the coalition, Netanyahu managed to form a coalition government with 61 out of 120 Knesset seats148, from the majority of right-wing political parties, which gave him a very slim margin. The coalition were formed by thirty seats for the Likud party, ten seats for Kulanu[149], eight for the Jewish Home party[150], seven for Shas 151 and six seats for United Torah's Judaism[152]. Netanyahu succeeded to form a coalition for the third time since 2009 and is considered to be the longest serving Prime Minister in Israel.

The victory of Benjamin Netanyahu and his ability in forming a right-wing coalition government for three consecutive times brought into prominence right- wing Zionist parties' involvement in decision making in Israeli politics, in particular the policies that deal with Palestinian issues[153]. According to Dr. Ghassan Khatib[154], the rise of the radical Jewish parties in the Israeli government seems to be due to Israeli society being unconcerned about the consequences of violence and willingness to pay any price in the prevention of Palestinians achieving their rights. As an example, Khatib points out that the right –wing coalition government was systematically expanding illegal settlements in the West Bank and as a result blocking peace negotiations and consolidating the

148 According to Israel Radio, Netanyahu came to an agreement with the final party required for a coalition, the right-wing Jewish Home party, at 10:30 p.m. local time.

[149] Kulanu is a political party in Israel that was formed in 2014 by Moshe Kahlon who was former Likud officials. The party focuses on the economic and cost of living.

[150] Ibid 149.

151 Ultra-orthodox political party in Israel founded in 1984 by the Chief Rabbi Rav. Ovadiah Yusef, who was the Chief Rabbi in Israel and is one of the foremost Talmudic authorities

152 Is an ultra-orthodox Jewish party founded in 1992. It was formed by two ultra-orthodox parties the Degel HaTorah and Agudat Israel.

[153] Dr. Ghassan Khatib, "The rise of the Israeli far right & the future of Palestine" Ma'an News Agency, March 28, 2015.

[154] Dr. Ghassan Khatib is a Palestinian politician, former director of the Jerusalem Media and Communications Center (JMCC), acted as advocate of Palestinian-Israeli dialogue. He acted as President of the Board of Directors of the Arab Development Center.

Israeli occupation without taking into consideration any pressure from the international community.

Beside Netanyahu's Zionist ideology, he is also under pressure to implement more radical and extremist ideological policies through his coalition with the right-wing parties, especially issues that deal with Palestinian and the settlements. Such pressure has led Netanyahu to declare on many official occasions, his strong support for Jewish settlements in the West Bank in order to face what he is called "Palestinian terrorism attacks".

His declaration in support of the right-wing ideological groups in building illegal settlements in the West Bank and in East Jerusalem is not a new story but has increased over time, especially during his time as a Prime Minister in coalition with the right-wing parties. In 1996, he visited one of the illegal settlements, Eli[155] settlement in the West Bank, which was then a small settlement with 959 settler residents, Netanyahu's speech to these settlers promised that they would live there permanently and he promised to construct new settlements and increase Jewish communities across the land that the Palestinians claimed as their future state[156]. According to a report by Rudoren and Ashknas, since Netanyahu became the Israeli Prime Minister in 2009, he has said that he will not evacuate any settlements in the West Bank and will continues to show his

[155] Eli settlement counts today around 4,000 settler is one among dozens of isolated settlements whose expansion and entrenchment threaten the prospects of a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict

[156] Jodi Rudoren and Jeremy Ashknas, "Netanyahu and the Settlements" Reports from the West Bank and Jerusalem, Produced by Craig Allen, Larry Buchanan, David Furst, Josh Keller, Yuliya Parshina-Kottas and Derek Watkins. Published in March 12, 2015

support to his right-wing coalition colleagues who are reputed to be the most being brutal in dealing with Palestinians.[157]

The effect of the extreme right-wing government on the Christians in the Holy Land is clear. The fact that the right-wing and extremist Zionist parties are controlling the Israeli government and imposing their ideology on political decisions provides a safe ground for extremist Zionists to implement their agenda towards Palestinians in general and in particular the Palestinian Christian people and churches.

According to the office of the United Nation Commissioner for Human Rights, the settlers attacks against Palestinians has risen by about 150 percent each year since 2008, with 154 attacks in the first half of 2012 alone[158]. Attacks against Palestinian Christians and their churches in the Holy Land by Zionist organization vandalism amounted to twenty four incidents over the past six years, according to Father Pierbattista Pizzaballa, Head Franciscan Custodian of the Holy Land, who is responsible for many of the Christian Holy Sites in the Holy Land. There has been little action taken by the Israeli officials against attacks on Christian properties and Israeli police promises to bring the vandals to justice has unfortunately been slow[159].

These attacks against Christian properties started with writing anti-Christian slogans on the walls of the churches and have escalated to burning churches and shrines and attacking Christian clergy. The attacks consisted of spray painting graffiti and other vengeful words and "price tags" including blasphemous wording against Jesus and

[157] Ibid, 156.

[158] Matthias Behnke, Office of the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights. July 11, 2012.

[159] Josef Federman. "Catholic official worried about Israel attacks" Associate Press, September 20, 2012. Dan Morgan and Kevin Flower, CNN. "Muslim, Christian graves vandalized in Israeli city" posted on October 9, 2011. Avalible at: http://edition.cnn.com/2011/10/08/world/meast/israel-graves-vandalized/index.html

Christians[160]. Other attacks were on Christian cemeteries, where tombstones were defaced, destroying vehicles that belong to monasteries and clergy and spitting on clergy[161]. The Israeli authorities did not take serious action to prevent any further actions. These actions escalated until they resulted in burning churches. On June18, 2015, the Church at Tabgha by the Sea of Galilee, also called the "the Multiplication Church"[162], one of the shrines related to Jesus' miracles near the Sea of Galilee, was heavily damaged by fire. This arson attack was intentionally started by extremist Jews in the middle of the night, causing extensive serious damage to both the inside and outside of the building and phrases were written on the wall of the church from a Jewish prayer urging the "cutting down' of idol worshippers". The Israeli police unit who investigated the incident arrested sixteen youths, who were said to be Jewish religious students from West Bank settlements, but released them shortly after because of lack of evidence against them. According to Saed Bannoura from the International Middle East Media Centre (IMEMC), the Israeli authorities never seriously investigated these incidents163. The previous Latin Patriarch of the Holy Land, Michael Sabah said "The attack is a repetition of what happened to the same church three or four years ago, but no one was punished then because the police claimed the perpetrators were underage, and as a result, no legal action was taken against them.

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[161] Harrretz News. Nov 04, 2011, "Ultra-Orthodox Spitting Attacks on Old City Clergymen Becoming Daily" [online]. Avalible at: http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/ultra-orthodox-spitting-attacks-on-old-city-clergymen-becoming-daily-1.393669.

[162] This is the place where Jesus did the multiplication of fish and loaves miracles according to the New Testament (John 21, 1-24) on the northern side of the Sea of Galilee in Israel.

[163] Saed Bannoura (IMEMC) Article "Catholic Assembly Condemns Burning Of The Loaves And Fishes Church By Israeli Extremists" June 22, 2015. (IMEMC) The International Middle East Media Center, IMEMC, is an independent Palestinian news agency specialized in reporting on Palestinian domestic politics, foreign policy and the Palestine - Israel conflict in English language. Visit website: http://nsnbc.me/2015/06/22/catholic-assembly-condemns-burning-of-the-loaves-and-fishes-church-by-israeli-extremists.

He added “But those responsible this time are not minors. When I keep seeing this happening, I see a government in Israel, and I see leaders who are not doing their job”. Due to the fact that such actions were led by right-wing extremist organizations, “price tag” is the name given by extremist Israeli settlers and members of the right-wing extremist Jews. Their goal is to implement their extremist ideology through vandalism against the Christian properties in the Holy Land. During the period from January 2012 to June 2013, Israeli police registered 788 cases of suspected “price tag” assaults in which 276 arrests were conducted, leading to 154 indictments. During these assaults some Palestinians were killed[164]. Voices among the Israel administration, including the Justice Minister, Tzipi Livini define the “Price Tag” as a “terrorist organization” but this idea was opposed by the State Prosecutor who considered these actions as the acts of individuals. In fact it could be argued that the Israeli government has allowed these extremist Zionist Jews to increase their offensive actions against Christians in order to threaten the Christian presence in the Holy land. On December 17, 2015, one of the right-wing extremist Jewish leaders, Benzi Gopstein, the leader of a Jewish extremist group called Lehava, published an article in Hebrew on the Haredi website. He wrote that he wanted all Christians out of Israel and said “Christmas has no place in the Holy Land: let us remove the vampires before they once again drink our blood”165. He claimed the establishment of the State of Israel was “the most ringing slap in the face the church ever received” after centuries of failed attempts to eliminate Jews166. Gopstein, a political activist, connected with the radical right-wing in Israel was a

[164] ‘Price tag' epidemic: at Ynet, 18 June 2013. Visit website: http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4394072,00.html.
[165]Sharon Pulwer, Harretz News December 22, 2015. Visit website: http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-1.693132.
[166] Sharon Pulwer, 'Jewish Extremists' Leader: Christians Are 'Blood Sucking Vampires' Who Should Be Expelled From Israel,' Haaretz 22 December 2015

student of Rabbi Meir Kahane[167]. He is the leader of those who want to prevent personal and business relationships between Jews and non-Jews in the Holy Land.

The Christian community in the Holy Land has experienced similar attacks by such Zionist organizations since the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948. On May 17 1948, an attack was carried out by Zionist organizations on numerous properties that owned by Christians such as convents, hospices, and churches either destroyed or cleared of their Christian owners and custodians. This led to several Christians being killed and hundreds injured. These actions are considered by the Palestinian Christians as ethnic cleansing with the full knowledge of Israeli leaders such as David Ben-Gurion[168], Therefore, attacks against Christian churches is not a new phenomenon but the recent attacks have increased in severity.

These Zionist organizations are supported locally by Israeli right-wing political parties which are trying to impose their radical ideology within the political system in Israel and their international support is provided by Jewish and Christian Zionist organizations in Europe and the USA. The Christian Zionist organizations, many of whom are from an evangelical Protestant background, have a major role in supporting the State of Israel, including financial support. Christian Zionist groups have played a major role in the decision making of western governments, in particular the United States, since 1948. Their support of Israel is based on a theology that views the Jews as God's "Chosen People" and their support for Israel is based on their belief that God will

[167] Meir David Kahane, he was an ultra-Zionist political figure, his ideology became the foundation the foundation of most modern Jewish militant and far right-wing political groups. He was an ordained as Orthodox rabbi and later served as a member of the Israeli Knesset.

[168] Nasim Ahmed, "The politics behind the flight of Christians from the Holy Land Friday, Middle East Monitor, 25 December 2015, Avalible at: https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/articles/middle-east/23035-the-politics-behind-the-flight-of-christians-from-the-holy-land.

bless those who bless the Jewish people[169]. Others believe that supporting Israel can best save Christians from Muslim persecution in the Middle East.

The Israeli government and the right-wing political parties and Jewish Zionists benefit from this ideology in financial terms as the Christian Zionist lobby is effective in generating financial and political support for Israel in the USA and some European countries. This support for Israel and the Jewish people has negatively affected the life of the Palestinian Christian community and the Palestinian-Israeli conflict in general.

Israeli Zionist extremist actions towards the local Christian community, churches and its institutions, through burning churches, vandalism and bringing to the surface the ideology of hate towards Christians through local and international media. It is a dangerous phenomenon that needs to be closely monitored by church leaders in the Holy Land and world -wide. Israel's lack of responsibility in taking action against Jewish Zionist extremists is affecting the Christian presence in the Holy Land and puts them in physical danger. Jewish Zionist extremists' racist and apartheid actions against the Christians in the Holy Land is based on the belief that the Jews are God's chosen people and God gave them sole rights to the Holy Land. Due to the fact the Israeli government is influenced by the Zionist right-wing party coalition ideologies increases the concerns among local and international Christian Church leaders about the implications of putting these people into such positions of authority. The potential for escalating hatred against the Christians in the Holy Land by the Zionist extremists is great because there is no clear plan by the Israeli government to stop them and because of the ideological and financial foreign support by different Jewish and Christian Zionist organizations.

[169] Genesis 12:3.

Chapter Three

Part One

The Christian Denominations in the Holy Land

Introduction

There is such a range of Christian denominations and churches in the Holy Land, especially in Jerusalem, that it is difficult to get a clear picture of the Christian community as a whole. This part of the chapter aims to provide an overview of the way in which the different denominations relate to each other.

3.13 The Christian Identity in the Holy Land

The Holy Land's Christian identity comes from its church affiliations (i.e., denominations), and local Christian community. There are 13 official denominations of Christianity in the Holy Land. Each denomination has a jurisdiction that serves the mission of existence, that of keeping their church property viable and their parishioners observant. Three Patriarchs reside in Jerusalem; Greek Orthodox, Roman Catholic, and Armenian. In addition, there are 10 other Archbishops and Bishops, five Catholic: (Melkite, Maronite, Syrian, Armenian, and Chaldean); three Orthodox: (Coptic, Syrian, and Ethiopian) and two Protestant: (Anglican and Lutheran).[170]

3.13.1 The Catholic Church

The Catholic Church is a division of Christianity composed of churches that describe themselves as Catholic. It came into being after the Great Schism in 1054 when the

[170] Michel Sabbah "Christian identity in the Holy Land" *News from the Holy Land,* Palestinian Christian**,** Jerusalem, 29 September 2006. [online] Avalible at: http://www.holysepulchre.be/en/Palestine_en.htm.

eastern and western parts of the Byzantine church split. The word Catholic means "universal", and these churches recognize the authority of the Pope in Rome and share certain traditions in theology, doctrine, liturgy, ethics, and spirituality[171].

3.13.1.1 Latin/Roman Catholic Church

The largest communities in the Holy Land in the Catholic Church belong to the Latin Rite. After the withdrawal of the Crusaders, the Franciscans slowly took over the remnants of the Latin Christian community when they settled in Jerusalem. In 1847, Pope Pius IX re-established the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, and the Franciscans became Custodians of the Christian Holy Places.[172] At the time of the restoration of the Patriarchate, there were 10 parishes with 4,270 faithful and after a century, there were 55 parishes with 41,000 faithful. During that time in history, the Patriarchate had jurisdiction over Israel, Jordan, and the island of Cyprus. Currently, the Patriarchate deals with Israel, the West Bank, and Jordan. After the appointment of the first Patriarch, Msgr. Valerga (1847-1872), many parishes were established and schools, seminaries, and other buildings were built. Many religious orders of priests, monks and nuns came into the country when Msgr. Bracco (1872-1889), the second patriarch, and Msgr. Piavi (1889-1905), a Franciscan who became third patriarch, came into office. The events of World War I impeded the expansion that Msgr. Camassei (1907-1919) hoped to accomplish but Msgr. Barlassina was very active between 1920 and 1947 until World War II impeded his building projects. Upon his death, the apostolic delegate, Msgr. Testa, officiated over the church until the appointment of Msgr. Gori (1949-1970) as the Franciscan Custos.

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[171] Oxford Dictionary of English. [Online]. Avalible at: http:www.Oxford Dictionary of English.com

[172] Custody of the Holy Land, [Online]. Avalible at: http://www.custodia.org/default.asp?id=314.

Due to the division of the country when the State of Israel came into being in 1948, it became necessary to appoint auxiliary bishops. Msgr. Gelat became the first Arab Latin bishop in 1948 and Msgr. Kaldany succeeded Msgr. Chiapperre (1958-1963) as the Bishop of Galilee, in 1963. Msgr. Beltritti was the appointed coadjutor in 1965, and became Patriarch in 1970. During Msgr. Gori's appointment, many seminaries opened in the West Bank villages and new churches were built there. By 1977 there were 16 male religious orders and 26 female orders in the country. There were 170 Latin churches and chapels, and 33% of them were considered Holy Places. There were also 186 religious establishments, eight hospitals, eight clinics, and several homes for the elderly.[173]

3.13.1.2. *The Melkite Church* (*Greek Catholic Church*)

The Melkite Church had its beginnings in the Greek Orthodox Church but came under the Catholic Church when some of its bishops converted to Melkite beliefs. The Melkite is an official denomination that is part of Latin Catholic Church. They are Byzantine Rite Catholics of diverse Eastern Mediterranean (Levantine) and Greek origin who come under the authority of the Roman Catholic Pope. They claim links to the early Christians in Antioch. In 1837, the Melkites were granted their own Patriarch and established their Patriarchate in Jerusalem in 1848. By then, they started to build churches and parishes in several cities in the Holy Land such as Galilee, Jerusalem, and cities in the West Bank. Currently, Msgr. Hakim Maximus V, who was once Archbishop in Galilee, is its Patriarch. The Melkite Christians number about 50,000

[173] Maroun Laham, *The Latin Patriarchate in the Modern History*. The Latin Patriarchate Press. Jerusalem 2005. pp. 55-56.

parishioners, and belong to more than 26 parishes and churches, located mainly in Galilee.[174] Until recently Father Elias Chachour was Archbishop in the Galilee.

3.13.1.3 *The Armenian Catholic Church*.

This denomination follows and accepts the leadership of the Roman Catholic Church in the Vatican and they are in full communion with the other Eastern Catholic Churches and the Latin Catholic Church. Since 1740, the Armenian Catholic Church has had its own Patriarchate in Beirut; and by 1855, had a Vicar living in Jerusalem. In 1887, the Armenian Catholics had a church built along the Via Dolorosa, located near the Third and Fourth Stations of the Cross. Many Armenians living in the Holy Land belong to the Latin Rite.

3.13.1.4 *The Chaldean, Coptic and Abyssinian Catholics.*

Chaldean, Copts and Abyssinian Catholics in the Holy Land are very few in number. The Chaldean church originates from Iraq and is also known as the Assyrian Church. Chaldean families have been living in Jerusalem since 1903. The Coptic Catholic church arose from a union between the Catholic and Coptic Orthodox church in Egypt in 1442. There are a few Coptic families living in Jerusalem. They belong to the Franciscan parish and use the Chapel on the 7th Station of the Cross-(located on the Via Dolorosa) for their liturgical services. The Abyssinian Catholic community originates from Ethiopia and consists of several families that integrate within other Christian denominations; however, there are no Abyssinian Catholic families living in Jerusalem. These denominations follow the Roman Catholic Pope in the Vatican while maintaining differences in their liturgical services.

[174] Ibid. 170

3.13.1.5 *The Maronite Catholic Church.*

Members of the Maronite Catholic Church have their origin in Lebanon and still maintain a stronghold there and since 1895 one of its Vicars has lived in Jerusalem. There are still a few Maronite villages in Galilee but most of the others were destroyed during the 1948 war. There are churches in Haifa, Nazareth, Acre, El-Jish, and Jaffa, all of which are subject to the Archbishop of Tyre.[175]

3.13. 2. The Orthodox Church

The Orthodox Church refers to a united group of Christian Churches that share the Christian faith through same theology, tradition, and worship, combining the Greek, Middle-Eastern, Russian and Slavic culture. The meaning comes from the Greek word Orthos ('right') and doxa ('belief'), also it means conventional, and their beliefs, practices and followers are more conservative than Catholic or Protestant churches.

After Constantine the Roman Emperor made Christianity the official religion of the Roman Empire the church hierarchy was based alongside the civil hierarchy of the empire in Byzantium, later named Constantinople and now Istanbul. Christianity spread from its eastern roots westward to Europe, which became more dominant in church politics. After the Great Schism or East-West Schism in 1054 the eastern and western parts of the church divided on doctrinal and political differences and the eastern part of the church continued to observe the traditional orthodox doctrine and practices, while the western church became the Catholic Church.

[175] Halim Noujaim and Pierre Moukarzel, *The Franciscan and Maronite 1233-1516* (Beirut: Manshūrāt Ḥirāsat al-Arāḍī al-Muqaddasah, 2009), pp. 54- 64.

The Orthodox Church believes it is the direct descendant of the Early Church and holds the traditional beliefs and customs that Jesus Christ established. Each of the Orthodox Churches has its own geographical area and title that reflects how the gospel was spread and relates to the cultural traditions of that group of believers.[176]

3.13.2.1. The Greek Orthodox Church

The present Greek Orthodox Church of Jerusalem probably has the largest community of Christian believers in the Holy Land. It has jurisdiction over the Holy Land and Jordan. Cyril II (1845-1872) was the first Greek Patriarch to take up residency in Jerusalem. Formerly, he lived in the Phanar, located in Constantinople and rarely visited Jerusalem. The Greek Orthodox Church suffered from the rise of Russian Orthodox influence, Protestant missionaries and Catholic institutions, yet it made great progress in opening schools and building churches. By 1914, it had no less than 83 schools.

In 1925, the British Government appointed the Bertram-Luke Commission to examine the distressed financial state of the Greek Patriarchate. The commission discovered a long-standing dispute between the Patriarchate and the Arabic Orthodox laity, but failed to suggest a solution. The dispute concerned the administration of church property and the election of the Patriarch. The government at the time confirmed the Patriarch and approved the *modus vivendi* of church organisation

Simon Garfet was appointed the first Arabic Orthodox Bishop in June 1960. Great progress has been made in building churches and schools since then. The Patriarchate has a dozen educational institutions under its jurisdiction, including those in Jordan; most of them primary schools. It has 90 churches and 33% of them are considered Holy

[176] Jack Wellman, "What Do Orthodox Christians Believe?" posted on November 18, 2013. [Online] Available at: http://www.patheos.com/blogs/christiancrier/2013/11/18/what-do-orthodox-christians-believe/.

Places. The Greek Orthodox Holy Synod has 18 members, Archbishops or Archimandrites and the Brotherhood of the Holy Sepulchre has 105 members. There is also a resident Metropolitan in Nazareth.

3.13.2.2. The Monophysite Church or Oriental Orthodox Church.

The word “Monophysite” comes from the Greek language which means “only, single" and "nature". It conveys the theological interpretation of Jesus Christ as having a single and only one nature, in which the historical Incarnation of Jesus Christ is a union of the divine and human as the incarnation of the eternal Son or Word of God. Christians who rejected the Council of Chalcedon in 451 became Monophysitist, such as Christians from Egypt and parts of Syria. Their theological belief maintains that in the one person of Jesus Christ, Divinity and Humanity are united in one. This theology, which may also be called Miaphyticm, is that of the Oriental Orthodox Churches.[177]

The Monophysite Church is comprised of the Armenian Orthodox Church, Ethiopian Orthodox Church, Coptic Orthodox Church and Syrian Orthodox Church. A description of each church along with its history in the Holy Land is presented below.

3.13.2.2.1 The Armenian Orthodox Church.

The Armenians have been in the Holy Land from early times, and in the 7th century, had no fewer than 70 convents. Armenians Orthodox monks lived with the Greeks in monasteries. There has been an Armenian Patriarchate in Jerusalem since 1311. At the beginning of the Ottoman Period, Sultan Salim recognized the Armenian Patriarch as

[177] Metropolitan Bishoy of Damitte, *"Interpretation of the Christological Official Agreements between the Orthodox Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches"*– Egypt Co-President of the dialogue Damascus, 3rd Feb, 1998. [Online]. [Accessed 30 December 2011]. Available at*:* *https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monophysitism*.

head of all the Monophysite churches. At the beginning of the 17th century, he was in financial straits, but Kirkor Baronder (1613-1645) provided the resources to build half of the Armenian monasteries still in existence. In 1667, the Armenian Orthodox Church established a bishopric in Bethlehem. There was a dispute between the Armenians and the Greeks over ownership of the Monastery of St. James, but it was settled in 1833 and they began publishing "Sion", a monthly religious publication at the Patriarchate. In 1843, they founded a theological seminary.

For a long time, there has been dispute over the election of the Patriarch. The Fraternity of St. James, which includes the Patriarchate, runs the election and has to notify the appropriate government authorities the name of the person who resides as Patriarch in Jerusalem, Syria, and Cyprus. The Patriarch in Jerusalem now rules the Armenian Orthodox Church in Israel and Jordan. Besides Jerusalem, there were churches in Jaffa, Ramla and Haifa. The Armenian Orthodox Church owns considerable property in the Holy Land, and co-shares rights with other communities in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, Church of the Nativity, and the Tomb of the Virgin Mary.[178]

3.13.2.2.2 ***The Coptic Orthodox Church.***

The relationship between the Holy Land and Egypt is very ancient, and many of the early monks living in the Holy Land were Egyptian. After the Council of Chalcedon in 451 the Coptic Orthodox Church became autonomous. The Coptic Church, like its sister Oriental Orthodox churches, believes in one nature of Jesus (i.e. monophysitism). They

[178] Ibid 177.

believe that He is perfect in His humanity, but His divinity and His humanity are united in one nature called, "the nature of the incarnate word".[179]

Over many centuries the Copts had several churches in the Holy Land, especially in Jerusalem. During the Mamluk Period, they received preferential treatment and obtained a convent next to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. The first Coptic Bishop in Jerusalem was enthroned during the reign of the Orthodox Patriarch Cyril (1235-1243), and slowly obtained certain minor rights in the major shrines. Although the convent, Deir es-Sultan, is in the hand of the Copts, it is difficult to establish the respective rights of the Copts and the Ethiopians to it.

Since 1838, the Copts have had greater authority and regard the Ethiopian monks as "guests." There is a large Coptic convent in Jaffa, originally intended for use by the Egyptian Coptic pilgrims during Easter. During the rule of Mehmet Ali, Bishop Abraham established the Coptic Khan near the pool of Hezekiah in Jerusalem. After 1850, Bishop Basilios II built St. Anthony's Church and Monastery at the ninth Station of the Cross. Around 1700, they built St. George's Convent and Church and both are located near the Jaffa Gate in the Old City of Jerusalem. They also built other convents in Bethlehem, Jericho, Nazareth, and Jordan.[180]

3.13.2.2.3 The Ethiopian Orthodox Church.

There was a strong bond between the Holy Land and Ethiopia, even before the evangelization of Ethiopia.[181] The Ethiopian community believes that their presence in the Holy Land relates to the biblical story of the meeting of the Queen of Sheba, who

[179] Athanasius, *The Copts through the Ages 3rd edition* (State Information Service, Egypt, 1973), pp. 20-21.
[180] Ibid, 179.
[181] Acts 8:27.

was the ruler of Ethiopia and Solomon, King of Israel. The story dates back to 1000 BCE.[182] Other sources suggest that the presence of Ethiopians in the Holy Land dates back to the conversion of Ethiopia's Queen Candace to Christianity in the 1st century, which resulted from the encounter between the apostle Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch on the road from Jerusalem to Gaza (Acts Chapter 8 verses 26-40). Her conversion led many Ethiopian pilgrims to settle in the Holy Land.[183]

The Ethiopian community in Jerusalem lives in a convent called Deir es-Sultan, which is on the roof of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. The Copts dispute their presence in this convent, and both claim a right of ownership. At one time, the Ethiopian church depended on the Coptic Patriarch of Egypt. The Firman of 1852 confirmed the actual situation, but the Ethiopians always claimed the right to live in the monastery and worship in the Chapel of the Archangel Michael and the Chapel of the Four Living Creatures which opens onto the courtyard of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. In February 1961, the Jordanian government gave orders to return the two chapels, but withdrew the order a few weeks later. In 1970, the Israeli government gave the chapels back to the Ethiopians with the provision that the Copts have the right of passage from their convent.[184] The case of ownership of this convent is still open to dispute because politics are involved more than religious differences, between Israel and Ethiopia. There is a political agreement between both countries allowing Ethiopian Jews to immigrate to Israel.

[182] 1Kings 10:1-3.
[183] Ibid 181, *verses* 26-40.
[184]Ibid. 179, pp. 75-76.

3.1*3.2.2.4 The Syrian Orthodox Church*.

The Jacobites, officially designated as Syrian Orthodox, take their common (if less accurate) name from Jacob Baradai, who built up the Monophysite Church in Syria in the 6th century. They are of the Syriac rite, the ancient rite of Antioch, and they use the Liturgy of St. James. The Bishop lives in St. Mark's Church where there are still some interesting manuscripts and icons. Currently other manuscripts are in the homes of members of the community.

From 793 to 1099, there were Jacobite Bishops in Jerusalem and Tiberias. There has been a permanent bishop in St. Mark's Church in Jerusalem since 1971. They have some minor rights at the main shrines, but are always subordinate to the Armenians. The community is more in number than those living in Jerusalem as there are other Syrian Orthodox Churches and monasteries in the Holy Land, although as part of the Christian community in the Holy Land they many of its members migrated.

As mentioned earlier, the Syrian community believes that the history of St. Mark's Convent in Jerusalem, which includes St. Mark's Church, goes back to the first days of Christianity and they considered a possible site of the Last Supper. Members of its congregation built the Church of the Virgin Mary, located close to the Nativity Church in Bethlehem. The Syrian Orthodox Church also maintains chapels in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem. The Israeli authorities have closed St. John's Monastery, located near the River Jordan since 1967, due to its location in an Israeli Military area. Entry into the monastery is prohibited because mines surround it.[185]

[185] Jacob Koriah, *the Syrian Orthodox Church in the Holy Land,* (Jerusalem: St. Mark's Convent, 1976).

3.13.2.3 The Russian Orthodox Church.

The Imperial Palestine Society, established in 1847, focused on Russian pilgrimages to the Holy Land. Later it assumed responsibility for providing free education to the native Orthodox community. Soon there were schools in Jerusalem, Nazareth, Ramla, Jaffa, and Haifa. In 1844, a Russian Archimandrite arrived in Jerusalem and immediately after the Crimean War Russia began playing a more active part in church affairs in Palestine.

In 1858, Czar Alexander III appointed the first Russian Orthodox bishop in Jerusalem, a Jewish convert named Levinson. The Czar appealed for the support of the faithful and two organizations were set up in Russia and Palestine to deal with pilgrims. Year by year, the number of Russian pilgrims increased. By the end of the century, they numbered 10,000 yearly, many of whom stayed from Christmas until Easter. Their presence necessitated the construction of the Great Russian Hospice outside the walls of Jerusalem in 1860. It was built on what had been the military parade ground. The Great Russian Tower, with its beautiful grounds and churches on Mount of Olives, arose in (1870-1887).

The Russian settlement for nuns started in the village of Ein Karem, in 1871, and the Czar paid the expenses to construct the road from Jerusalem to Ein Karem. In 1883, the members of the Russian Church formed the Orthodox Palestinian Society and in 1888 construction of the Church of St. Mary Magdalene began in Gethsemane. Russia also acquired many other holy sites in the country. In 1902, Turkey granted a firman giving Russia the right to open schools in Galilee and 23 schools were opened.

The Russo-Turkish War (1877-1878) strengthened the Russian position according to the terms of the Treaty of San Stefano (1879). However, World War I halted pilgrims

coming from Russia and this caused schools to close. For years, many of the Russian establishments in the Holy Land that catered to pilgrims faced a loss of revenue so were rented or occupied by nuns because there were very few clergy present, and very few families to minister to. Today, there are two independent Russian missions: the Patriarchate of Moscow oversees one mission, and the Russian Orthodox Church (located outside Russia) oversees the other. Russia does not run parishes for local Christians; mainly their work is serving the Russians who are living in the Holy Land and the Russian pilgrims who come to see the holy sites.

3.13.2.4. The Romanian Church.

The Rumanian Orthodox Church is in Jerusalem does not have a permanent, local community per se. However, the Rumanians who live in the Holy Land live there on a temporary basis and are employed in construction and agriculture in Israel.

3.13.3 The Protestant Church.

There are approximately 20 Protestant denominations present in The Holy Land, most rather small and insignificant in numbers. They larger ones include the Anglicans and Lutherans and others include the Church of Christ, Church of the Nazarene, First Baptist Bible Church, , Jehovah's Witnesses, Mennonites, Pentecostal, Scottish Presbyterian, Southern Baptist Convention, Seventh Day Adventists, Christian Brethren, International Evangelical Church and Quakers. Many of the Protestant denominations are part of the United Christian Churches in the Holy Land group, which fosters their interests in Israel. The first Protestant mission was an American mission from 1838 to 1843. As the Anglicans and the Lutherans are the two largest Protestant denominations they are the only ones to be considered here.

3.13.3.1 ***The Anglican/Episcopalian-Lutheran venture.*** In 1841, the British Parliament issued a law that sanctioned the consecration of English bishops for places outside the British Isles; Palestine was one such place. England and Germany jointly made nominations to the Holy See for a Protestant bishop in Jerusalem.

For many years, the Lutherans had a representative in Jerusalem. He was a converted German Jew, named Alexander Wolfe. He became the first Protestant Bishop of Jerusalem, Michael Solomon Alexander (1841-1845). The general understating was that the focus of the Protestant mission was to minister to the Jews and the Moslems in the Holy Land and not to interfere with Eastern Christians. Christ Church was set up under this joint Anglican/Lutheran authority but the venture ended in 1849, after which Christchurch became an Anglican church under the authority of the British government.

The German nomination, Samuel Gobat (1846-1879), was a Swiss Lutheran, who proselytized among the local Christians. In 1853, he built the Bishop Gobat School, established with the aid of the Church Missionary Society in Jerusalem and left the Bethlehem District to the German Lutherans. The best known of the German Lutherans was J.J. Schneller who founded schools in different parts of the Holy Land. By 1931 the British Church Missionary Society had 31 schools and churches in Nazareth, Jerusalem, Nablus, and Ramallah. Bishop Barclay (1879-1881) followed Bishop Gobat, then there was no Protestant Bishop for six years.

In 1886, when the Lutherans failed to establish an Episcopal mission, Prussia withdrew from the contract. It subsequently became an exclusive Anglican/Episcopalian bishopric, whose jurisdiction extended to all the Middle East (with the exception of Egypt and Sudan, which separated in 1920).

Under Bishop Blyth (1887-1914), the title changed from Bishop of Jerusalem to Bishop in Jerusalem, to appease the Orthodox Patriarch Nicodemus. He had a disagreement with the British Church Missionary Society and gave several of its institutions to a group of Anglican Arab Christians, including St. George's Church in Jerusalem which eventually became the Anglican Cathedral. A Palestinian Church Council that recognized the Bishop only in spiritual matters governed these Anglican Arab Christians. Bishop Blyth founded the Jerusalem and East Missionary Society after his disagreement with the Church Missionary Society over proselytising among the Eastern Christians. Under him, the London Society for Promoting Christianity among Jews began in 1820. He led the Christchurch congregation and, in 1879, he built the English Missionary Hospital in Jerusalem.

In 1958, the first Arab Bishop, Najib Coubain, was appointed, based at St George's Anglican Cathedral and his jurisdiction extended to Israel, Lebanon, and Syria. In 1970, Kenneth Cragg was appointed Auxiliary to the Archbishop; and, in that same year, the Israeli government gave official recognition to the Anglican Church as a religious body under the name, "The Evangelical Episcopal Church".[186]

The Lutheran Church of the Redeemer in the Old City and the Augusta Victoria complex (including a chapel) were built by Kaiser Wilhelm to ensure the Lutheran presence in Jerusalem.

[186]Ibid. 91, pp. 76-79.

Chapter Three

Part Two

The Distinction between Indigenous Christians, Expatriate Christians, and Pilgrims Living in the Holy Land

3.14. Introduction

Theologically speaking, every Christian who comes to live in the Holy Land is automatically considered as a Christian of the Holy Land, as "Jerusalem is the Mother of all Churches." Christians are all considered to be citizens of Jerusalem, since "all were born there." St. Peter talked about the Christians of the Holy Land as being the "Living Stones."[187] In fact, there are two groups of Christians living in the Holy Land; those who are indigenous to the area and those who have moved to the Holy Land from other parts of the world.

3.14.1 The Living Stones; the lives of indigenous Christians

As was discussed in Chapter One, the indigenous people who believed in Jesus' mission and followed him are the ancestors of the early Christian communities and consist of Jewish converts (Judeo-Christians), Greek/Roman converts (Gentile-Christians) and Arab converts (Arab-Christians). Historically, the indigenous Christian community has been affected by local cultural, political, and social changes that shaped its identity.[188]

Parts of the West Bank and Gaza Strip are now under the Palestinian National Authority and Hamas, but overall control of the West Bank is under the control of Israel after the war of 1967. Christians living in Israel are Israeli citizens and Christians living in the

[187] 1Peter 2:5.
[188] Bernard Sabella, Palestinian Christians: Challenges and hopes. (Bethlehem: Bethlehem University, 2000). Available at: www.al-bushra.org/holyland/sabella.htm.

Occupied Palestinian Territories hold Palestinian citizenship. Jerusalem has been part of Israel since that time and Christians there may be citizens of Israel, or have special residency status.

According to the Sabeel study in 2006, out of a total population of 9 million people, there are fewer than 160 thousand Christians living in the Holy Land.[189] The decline in the Christian population poses a very solemn problem to the continuation of a Christian presence in the Holy Land. It is important to note that the Sabeel study (2006) depend on numerous previous surveys that illustrated the decline in the Christian population from the mid-16th century to today. For example, Pergola (2001) benchmarks the rise in the Christian population between the mid-16th and mid-20th century in Israel and Palestine. Christians made up 3.8% (6,000 persons) of the population in the mid-16th century and this number grew to 7.3% (143,000 persons) by the mid-20th century. These figures date from 1947, one year before the creation of the State of Israel.

The Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry survey study that was implemented in between 1945-46[190] focused on the Christian presence in the Holy Land per district. The survey study indicated that highest concentration of Christians is in the District of Jerusalem, 31.8% (46,130 persons), followed by the Haifa District with 23.2%. taking into consideration that Bethlehem, Beit Sahour, and Beit Jala were included in the Jerusalem district numbers. In December 2006 the Sabeel survey conducted a survey showed that Bethlehem District which included the towns of Beit Sahour and Beit Jala, estimated 22,000 Christians and 8,000 Christians living in Jerusalem. Other survey was conducted by the Israel Central Bureau of Statistics in 2005, shows that number of Christians in Jerusalem around 12,000 (with over 2,000 non-Arab Christians). Even

[189] Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics, (2007). [Online] [Accessed April 27 2014] [Available at:] www1.cbs.gov.il/reader/cw_usr_view_Folder?ID=141.
[190] Ibid.188.

with the higher number provided by the Israeli census, the Sabeel survey concludes that, when compared with the 46,130 Christians in 1931, the Jerusalem-Bethlehem area today has a Palestinian Christian population that is at least 12,000 Christians fewer than in 1945. Thus, the Sabeel survey shows that between 1945 and 2005, there has been no increase in the Christian population in Bethlehem. However, during those 62 years, Beit Jala fared a little better; it added about 3,000 persons, growing from 3,540 in 1945 to about 6,400 Christians in 2005. Likewise, Beit Sahour added 2,600 to its 4,770 Christians in 1945; thus, having 7,370 Christians in 2005. Using the estimated 2% annual growth rate of the 1940s, survey analysts argue that the low Christian growth rate is a real cause for concern, since many of the Christian youth are emigrating to other countries.

Based on the 1945 figures the Sabeel Survey indicated that:

- Jerusalem's 31,000 Christians in the 1940s should have doubled to 62,000 by 1980, and reached around 93,000 by 2007.

- In 1980, Bethlehem's 6,490 Christians of 1945 should have numbered 12,980 by 1980 and 19,470 in 2007.

- Beit Jala's 1980 population should have been 7,080, an increase of 3,540 from 1945 and should be 10,620 by 2007, a significantly higher number than its 2005 population of 6,400 as stated by the Israeli Bureau of Statistics.

- Beit Sahour's population should have registered at 9,540 in 1980 and 14,310 by 2007.

The Christian population in other towns and cities that have Christian presence also fall far below the 2% predicted growth rate. Again, based on the 1945 figures, Ramallah's 4,520 Christians and the 3,890 in the surrounding villages of Aboud, Ein Arik, and Jifna, Taybeh and the town of Birzeit should have reached a combined population of 16,820 by 1980 and 25,230 by 2007.The Sabeel Survey put their combined Christian population at approximately 12,950 in 2006. The same dismal numbers are registered in the Nablus district; it had a Christian population of 1,560 in 1945, compared with today's estimated 700. There are about 2,000 Christians in the Jenin district. Although higher than its 1,210 population in 1945, it is still lower than the predicted 2% annual growth rate in 1980 and far fewer than the 3,630 mark for 2007. Furthermore, according to the Sabeel Survey, in 1945, Gaza's Christian population was estimated at 1,300 persons, and the totally population who lived in Gaza City up to the 2006 survey were between 2,500 to 3000.

The Sabeel Survey estimated that in 2006, approximately 50,000 Palestinian Christians populated the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT)). According to the 1967 Israeli census, there were 42,494 Christians in the Palestinian Territories when it was occupied by Israel in 1967. By applying the 2% annual rate to the 1967 census data, the Christian population in the Occupied Palestinian Territories should be approximately 94,000 persons by 2007. Given the current departure rate, it is unrealistic to expect that even with a 2% annual growth rate, that the Christians of the Occupied Palestinian Territories would reach 2007's projected population level in 2013.

The Sabeel Survey goes on to indicate that during the time of the British Mandate, there were about 156,000 Christians living in the Holy Land. while, in 1949, the population

the Palestinians in Israel numbered 160,000, of whom 115,000 were Muslims (69.7%); the Christians numbered 34,000 (21.3%) and there were 14,500 Druze (9.0%).

After the 1948 war, almost 90,000 Palestinian Christians became refugees (60,000 living outside the boundaries of Israel, and 30,000 within areas of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip). In some localities, such as Ramle and Jaffa, which now are part of Israel, only hundreds remain in previously flourishing Christian communities. Haifa is one of the cities with a good size Christian Palestinians presence, ended up with around 5,000 Christians remaining from a 1945 population of almost 34,000.

3.14.2 Expatriate Christians living in the Holy Land. Expatriate Christians came to live in the Holy Land to be part of Christian-based missions. Most are clergy and related personnel who came to work in churches, schools and universities. [191] Some of them were assigned by church leaders to work in the Holy Land, some came to study the roots of their religion, others came from a desire to live in the Land where Jesus lived, others to work with pilgrims and a few were motivated to help the local Christians.

3.14.2.1 **Clergy and members of religious orders**. Over the centuries foreign clergy and pastors have come to minister in the Holy Land's Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant parishes and pastoral centres. They comprise different religious orders with the purpose of serving the local Christians and international pilgrims. Although an accurate number of these centres is not recorded, the Directory of the Catholic Churches in the Holy Land reports that there are more than 202 such Catholic institutions, in addition to 112 Institutions of Consecrated Life, 323 houses, and 1,731 members (priests, monks and nuns). In addition there are many Orthodox and fewer Protestant institutions where expatriate clergy and religious leaders minister.

[191] Directory of the Catholic Churches in the Holy Land, Latin patriarchate press, Jerusalem 2005.

3.14.2.1.1 Educational institutions. In the Holy Land, there are more than 83 Catholic educational institutions, 36 different Orthodox educational institutions, and 25 other Christian denominations with educational institutions

3.14.2.1.2 Specialized school homes. In the Holy Land, specialized boarding schools and orphanages exist to provide for dependent and disabled children. There are 20 such Catholic centres and many Orthodox and Protestant centres but there no accurate information is available on numbers.

3.14.2.1.3 Medical and social services. At present, there are more than 25 Catholic hospitals, clinics, and social services and many others provided to both Christians and non-Christians by Orthodox and Protestant missions in Israel, Jerusalem and the OPT.

3.14.2.1.4 Principal shrines. In the Holy Land, there are more than 39 shrines and more than 39 holy places associated with the Christian religion, many of which are administered by the Franciscans as part of their responsibility as Custodians of the Holy Land. Likewise, there are holy sites available to Protestant international pilgrims, administered by expatriate Protestant volunteers from Europe and North America.[192]

The theology of the Holy Land is important for Christians living in this land because it is where the Christian religion originated. The central figure of the Christian faith, Jesus Christ, considered to be the Son of God by His followers, was born and lived in the Holy Land, in fulfilment of Old Testament prophecies[193]. This land is where Jesus lived His earthy life, where He spoke His most important teachings, such as the Sermon on the Mount,194 the basis of daily Christian life, which affirms the Ten Commandments.

[192] The numbers provided are very limited; and, based on some references. However, the total number is unknown.
[193] Isaiah 7:14 and Micah 5:2
[194] Matthew 5-7

Here He taught His followers the Lord's Prayer, the most commonly spoken Christian prayer in the world. In this land He ministered by the Sea of Galilee, preaching in such towns as Capernaum[195], Bethsaida and other villages[196]. In this land He travelled to nearby areas, such as Caesarea Philippi[197]. In this land Jesus taught in parables which are taught in every church and are often used as moral examples in the Christian life. In this land Jesus performed many miracles, showing his divine power over nature, making the blind see, healing the paralytic, walking on water, and calming a storm. In this land He forgave sins and drove out demons198. In this land Jesus suffered, was crucified, died, buried and raised from the dead for the salvation of all mankind199. In this land the first Christian community began and spread all over the world,200 based on love, mercy, and peace201. This, the land which is called holy, should be the land of every Christian in the entire world.

Conclusion

The historical events presented here show the development of the Christian community in the Holy Land since the first Christian community began to the present day range of denominations. The presenting of the historical chronology of Christian history aims to provide the historical background that has affected the Christian presence in the most holy place in the world for Christians.

[195] Ibid 40, John 6:59
[196] Ibid 40, Mark 8:22
[197] Ibid 40, Matthew 16:13
[198] Ibid 40, Mark 2:1-12
[199] Ibid 40, John 19 and 20.
[200] Ibid 40, Acts 2: 1-13.
[201] Ibid 40, John 15:12-13

The political, social, economic, and cultural development of the Christian community in each era over the last two thousand years is presented in order to learn about the internal and external environment that has shaped the Christian presence in the Holy Land.

Examination of the historical documentation about Holy Land Christians is made in order to develop the historical education of local Christians to strengthen their presence in the Holy Land. Throughout history, local Christians have faced many difficulties including persecution, destruction of their churches, wars and occupation by antichristian invaders. There were political conflicts, religious differences and sometimes there were combinations of both.

The reason for presenting a historical context of Christianity in the Holy Land is to provide a basis for developing educational materials that will help shape the future of Christianity in the Holy Land, the most important place in the birth of the Christian Church. These issues will be dealt with in more detail later in the thesis.

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Chapter Four

Holy Land Christians: An Analysis of the Current Religious, Social, Cultural, Economic and Political Problems

4. Introduction.

Several issues have been identified as problems that affect the Christian community in Jerusalem and the West Bank. The issues presented in this chapter are the result of historical events, as well as government and church decisions. These decisions produced problems within the Christian community. The content of this chapter is based on a reviews of available literature from public and private archives in Jerusalem and discussions and meetings with prominent local religious and lay leaders of the churches in Jerusalem.

Therefore, the focus of this chapter concerns the presentation of these problems before an attempt is made to find solutions to the problems that Christians in the Holy Land face.

4.1 Understanding How Local Christians View Their Situation.

The social profile of local indigenous Christians provides the background for those who are trying to understand how they assess their present situation and prospects for the future. Several elements have shaped the social structure of the local indigenous Christians, during the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries. This has caused them to become a distinct group in terms of religious, cultural, social and political position in the Holy Land.

The Ottoman government granted the Holy Land a special position as an independent district within the Ottoman Empire due to many interested countries and rivalry over the

Christian Holy Sites,[202] associated with the life of Jesus and early Christianity in the Holy Land. These actions gave the Christians additional power in the country and allowed them to gain more rights that benefited the Christian presence there.

Social challenges that present-day Palestinian Christians face are negatively shaping the Christian presence and identity in the Holy Land, in particular in Jerusalem. The status of Jerusalem is at the core of Palestinian-Israeli relations and it is here that officials make political, social, economic, and religious decisions that affect the Christian community.

Decisions about the status of Jerusalem have repercussions throughout the entire country. Jerusalem has the "highest churches per capita" rate the world over; the ratio being around one church per 170 Christians in the city.[203] This has implications for the continuity of the Christian community in Jerusalem, one of the most important cities in Christianity, as there are many church buildings but few "living stones," who are the local Christians. Church officials and experts are concerned that the disappearance of community life in Jerusalem's churches and lack of social activities is leading to Christian emigration.

During the British Mandate, the Christian community in Jerusalem increased in size in 1922, the total population of Jerusalem was 28,607, of which 14,699 were Christians (51.4%).[204] The percentage of the Christian population reduced from 29,350 in 1944 to 10,982 in 1961 and by 1966, the Christian community declined to 10,320 inhabitants (18.2%). Thus, from 1922 to 1966, there was a 33% decrease in Christians living in

[202] Daphne Tsimhoni, "Christians in Jerusalem: A Minority at Risk," *Journal of Human Rights, issue* 4 Hebrew University Publication (2005), pp. 391-417.
[203] Daphne Tsimhoni, *Christian Community in Jerusalem and the West Bank Since 1948: An Historical, Social and Political Study* (Westport: Praeger, 1993), pp. 22-23.
[204] Ibid 202. The population statistics presented in the figures from 1922 extracted from Daphne Tsimhoni's 1993 publication and sources therein. p. 20.

Jerusalem. This decline is partly attributed to the 1948 War, the establishment of the State of Israel and the subsequent division of Jerusalem into east and west parts. Another decline in Jerusalem's Christian population occurred after the 1967 war. With Israeli control of all Jerusalem, the Christian population fell to 4.8%. Because of the transition from Jordanian authority to Israeli government and also a high unemployment rate, many of the remaining Christians left Jerusalem. Others sought refuge in the Old City of Jerusalem and stayed in monastery compounds and church institutions.[205]

Many of the Christians emigrated because of the political-economic conflict and the Christian population in Jerusalem also reduced because of the comparative high birth rate of Muslims and increase of Israeli Jews living in the city.[206] According to the Sabeel Survey (2006), the total population of the Christian community in Jerusalem was then 8,000.[207] Additionally the population of the Christian community in the West Bank faced dramatic demographic changes; the population of Christians there was around 43,290 in 2006, while the population of the Christians before 1948 was 59,160.[208]

Due to the policies the State of Israel has imposed on Palestinian Christians (as part of the whole Palestinian population), a further dramatic decline in the Christian population has occurred that is attributed to their emigration to other countries. It seems as if the Israeli government's goal is to empty the Holy Land of non-Jews. This is especially apparent in Jerusalem where it is imposing negative procedures and policies on the Palestinian Christian community that challenge the Christian presence in the Holy Land. These challenges are categorized below.

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[205] *Statistical Yearbook of Jerusalem No. 15-1997,* ed. Maya Choshen and Naama Shahar, (Jerusalem: The Municipality of Jerusalem and the Jerusalem Institute for Israeli Studies, 1998), Table III/12, p. 44.
[206] *Statistical Abstract of Israel 2003 (no. 54)* (Jerusalem: State of Israel, Central Bureau of Statistic, 2003).
[207] *The Sabeel Survey on Palestinian Christians in West Bank and Israel, (*Jerusalem: Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center) Jerusalem, p. 49.
[208] Ibid 207.

4.1.1 Official level.

The official level describes the political unrest and the occupation policy imposed by Israel on the Christian community as part of the Palestinian community (especially after 1967). The Christian community and its churches face serious challenges in developing and safeguarding their legal rights in the context of political change. Likewise, the activity of the Christian churches and their community are faced with the situation of promoting democracy and the concept of a civil society with rights under a situation of occupation. The problems are described in more detail below.

4.1.1.1 Absence of an official residency policy. The Israeli government has never developed policies or guidelines regarding the Christians living within its Israeli controlled-areas. The Israeli government and its administration, consider the Christian community as a minority group within the Palestinian community. Thus Israeli laws and the regulations imposed on the Palestinians in general do not distinguish between Palestinian Christians and Palestinian Muslims because Christians in the Holy Land are considered to be Palestinians.[209]

The Israeli Department of Christian Communities through the Ministry of Religious Affairs commissions the rules and regulation regarding churches and clergy as well as the official activities of the Christians churches. The Israeli government attitudes toward local Christians are two-fold. Firstly, Christians are part of the Palestinian people; and secondly, they are a religious community looking for their rights.

Although the Israeli government holds a particular perspective towards Palestinian Christians, in most cases, it maintains a good relationship with the heads of the Palestinian Churches. This is because most of the Church officials are of non-Arab

[209] Ibid. 207. p.7.

origin and their church headquarters are located outside of Israel.[210] However, there is a lack of an official, prominent body to oversee governmental dealings with local Christian affairs. Such an official body could initiate a clear and sensible approach towards the government's dealings with the Christians, assist in developing an unsigned protocol agreement between Israel, the Vatican, and other Christian denominations.[211]

4.1.1.2 The influence of extremist right wing Jewish groups on Israeli policies. As has was mentioned in Chapter Two Part One, the growing influence of ultra-Orthodox and Zionist extremists in Israeli society and their influence on the Israeli government has affected the relationship between the government of Israel and local Christians. Since 1959, these various religious parties have run the Interior Ministry and hindered communication between Christians and the State of Israel. These right-wing parties are influential in decision made on religious issues and form policies based on their extremist ideological aspirations for an exclusive Jewish religious state.

Jewish Zionist ideology has its origins in a political movement in 1896 led by the Jewish leader Theodor Herzl.[212]Zionism's goal was to bring the Jews to Israel (Palestine), claiming that the Land of Israel (Eretz Israel) is the national homeland of all people of Jewish descent. Zionist political thinking completely opposes the establishment of a Palestinian State and denies the existence of a Palestinian people. Israeli Jews consider themselves as the people to whom God gave ownership of the Land of Israel (i.e., Palestine) when He made a covenant with the prophet Abraham in the Old Testament saying, "Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt

[210] Complied by Dr. Petra Heldt, *Church and Christian Communities in Israel Today* (Jerusalem: Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 2009), p. 397.
[211] Ibid 210.
[212] Theodor Herzl, was a Jew from Austrian, was recognized as the founder of the Zionist ideology when he published his book, *The Jewish State* in 1896. Within the context of that book, he declared that the cure for anti-Semitism was the establishment of a Jewish state. As he saw it, the best place to establish this state was in Palestine.

unto the great river, the river Euphrates".[213] Jewish Zionist ideology is linked to, and influences, Christian Zionism. Lord Shaftesbury (1801-1885) was an English politician, philanthropist and social reformer who was motivated by a Christian messianic prophetic ideology that argued that the restoration of Israel to the Jews would hasten the Second Coming of Christ. In 1838 he used the term 'a nation without people for people without a nation' even half of a century before Herzl mentioned it.[214] This Zionist ideology has been the main reason for support of the State of Israel from many countries throughout the world.

After victory in the Six Day War, Israel gained full control over the West Bank, Gaza Strip, Golan Heights and East Jerusalem. Consequent upon this, Jewish radicalism increased, linked to ideology of Jewish, exclusive relationship with the whole of the Land of Israel. This view denies any rights for the Palestinian to the Land of Israel but allows Jews from anywhere in the world to live in Israel.[215]

According to the testimonies of Teddy Kollek, the acclaimed Jewish Mayor of Jerusalem (1965-1993) and Amir Heshim, his consultant on Arab Affairs, the Municipality of Jerusalem maintained a deliberate policy of Palestinian representation in urban planning, education, social services and building accommodation for the Palestinian population.[216] Subsequent Mayors have not honoured this policy and have sought to concentrate on redevelopment of the Jewish Quarter and settle more and more Jewish Israelis in the Old City, many of whom are extreme right wing Zionists.

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[213] Genesis 15:18-21.
[214] Nur Masalha, "*Powerful symbols and the British-Zionist alliance: approaching the centenary of the Balfour Declaration" Posted* on September 17, 2013. Available at: http://www.balfourproject.org.
[215] Peter Demant, *Jewish Fundamentalism in Israel: Implications for the Mideast Conflict Volume III, Number 3*. (Jerusalem: Israel/Palestinian Center for Research and Information, 1994), pp. 6-7.
[216] Ibid, 215, p. 4.

4.1.1.3 Preservation of religious identity. The Jews and Moslems in Jerusalem are trying to maintain their religious identity in the city. However, Jewish officials are preserving a vast Jewish majority within the expansion boundaries of Jerusalem. These same officials are formulating policies to empty the city of all other religious communities and thus make Jerusalem an all-Jewish city.

Likewise, Moslem officials are trying to preserve their numbers by issuing a fatwa, a law prohibiting the sale of Moslem properties to non-Moslem individuals or communities.[217] In addition, the Palestinian education system is promoting the idea that the Palestinians are really Arabs and not a distinct group of people with its own language and nationality. Furthermore, they believe that the Holy Land is Muslim and it belongs to them; by holding this belief, they avoid having to explain that Christianity was established in the Holy Land 600 years before Islam.[218]

Alongside this, leaders in some Christian denominations are selling off church property in the old City to non-Christians and Christian churches without considering the impact on the local Christian community.

4.1.1.4. The presentation of Christianity in the Palestinian education system. In general, education of the Christian community in the Holy Land is of a high standard and considered to be a resource that will secure a good income for a decent life. The Christian community in the Holy Land has had a history opportunity for good quality education through international religious education institutions, mostly through European missionary sponsorship of schools to serve the local Christian population. These missionary schools have had an effect on the community and its outlook. The

[217] "Friday prayer speech," *Al-Quds newspaper,* 29 September 2009
[218] UN report on the Palestinian Curriculum, *Studies on the Palestinian Curriculum and Textbooks Consolidated Report*. [Online] [Accessed 2 February 2014]. Available at: http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0015/001515/151551e.pdf

benefit that the Christians community in the Holy Land had in earlier access to education is reflected in the development of a socioeconomic, occupational and employment profile that has caused them adopt a life style associated with the middle class rather earlier than other Palestinians, with its preferences, and limitations. It is argued that the European educational institutions, by exposing Palestinian Christians to foreign languages and cultures, accelerated among them the notion of relative deprivation, which was felt first towards the turn of the 20th century when Christians compared the backwardness of the Ottoman Empire with the progress being made in Europe and America. This started the process of emigration to North, Central and South America. Additionally, one of the tasks of the Christian educational institutions in the Holy Land was to care for the European pilgrims coming to visit the Holy Places. In order to ensure a fruitful visit for these pilgrims to the Holy Land and for the sake of securing work for a number of local citizens as tourist guides, they were keen to create a group of educated citizens, fluent in European languages, especially Italian, considered at that time as the principle European language.[219]

According to the Christian information centre, there are about 108 Christian private educational institutions that provide educational services to Christians as well as Moslems. There are around 50 of these institutions are located in the West Bank and Jerusalem area alone[220]. According to Romell Soudah, 91.4% of Christian students in the West Bank and 67.1% in Israel are in Christian private schools[221] but the majority of students that attend these schools are not Christians. These schools have better

[219] Article by Fr. Halim Nujian ofm, "Terra Santa schools historical Synopsis" websit: www.christrex.org, 2009
[220] Christian information centre. . [Online] [Accessed 2 February 2014]. Available at: www.cic.org.
[221] Soudah Romel, 2006. *Christians in the Holy Land across the Political and Economic Divide.* [Online]. [Accessed 15 June 2007].Available from World Wide Web: <http://www.sabeel.org/pdfs/the%20sabeel%20survey_.pdf>

educated teachers and smaller classroom size than governmental schools and for these reasons many Muslim parents prefer to send their children there.

However attendance at a Christian school is not translating into adult church membership. The Sabeel Survey indicates that 81% of adults from the Christian community are distant from religion and 74% of the adults have no have no relationship with a church. [222] These findings create a question mark regarding the real goal and mission of Christian educational establishments in developing a Christian identity in their students. According to the Consultant Committee of the Latin Church in Jerusalem, one of the weaknesses in the Christian community in the Holy Land is an ignorance of the history of their faith as well as lack of this information provided by the vast number of Christian's schools.[223] All the Christian educational institutions in Jerusalem and the West Bank are obliged to follow the Palestinian curriculum that is required by the Palestinian Authority. The use of this curriculum will increase the problems for future generations in educating the Christian students about Christian history. According to the Consolidated Report Studies on the Palestinian Curriculum, outdated textbooks used in Palestinian schools have been the subject of extensive study for more than a decade. There are newer textbooks that are more representative of modern life that offer more useful insights and findings but they are not being used. These findings seem to give a pessimistic perspective on Christian education and its teaching about the history of Christianity in the Holy Land. The reasons for this are indicated below.

Firstly, according to the UNESCO study "Peace is our Dream: An Impact Study of the Palestinian Curriculum", one of the main findings was that "Students have a strong

[222] Sabeel Survey on Palestinian Christians in the West Bank and Israel, 2006. P. 88- 89.
[223] Consultant committee, Latin Parish in Jerusalem, Problem Analysis Parish Meeting, October 2006.

sense of identity anchored in being a member of a Palestinian family and are beginning to have a sense of their own culture, history and geography. Integrated in their identity are strong values based on Islamic beliefs and these include tolerance".[224]

Secondly, in the Palestinian history textbooks used in several school grade levels, the main subjects, topics and themes start from the birth of Islam to the Abbasid period, Middle Ages, and the history of the Islamic-Arab civilization. The Arabic self-image presented is largely defined by the Islamic religion and not by language or nationality. Another important finding relates to the image of the other. This is usually the second largest section in each textbook review and received major attention by the authors of the study. In the conclusion to the study, 'the other' is also discussed as described in the following quote; "While the textbooks acknowledge important intellectual input from the 'others', they do not offer detailed descriptions of these others". The report describes discussion about the 'image of the other' as very limited. The 'other' is sometimes described as aggressive and greedy intruders and occupiers, although sometimes they are portrayed as courageous. The author calls for teaching more about the 'others', in this case Christians, to be included in the curriculum"[225].

Thirdly, in the part of the study about Palestinian geography textbook, the main finding is that Islamic religious values are imparted explicitly and implicitly in all the textbooks, although defining and discussing an Islamic world climatic region starts with a secular approach that discusses different schools of thought on environmental geography. There is no mention in the three textbooks of naming Israel or of showing it on the map.

[224] *UNESCO Headquarters Paris – Division of Quality Education, Studies on the Palestinian Curriculum and Textbooks Consolidated Report. Study description sheet ""Peace is our Dream (An Impact Study of the Palestinian Curriculum),*

[225] *UNESCO Headquarters Paris – Division of Quality Education, Studies on the Palestinian Curriculum and Textbooks Consolidated Report. Study description sheet ""The New Palestinian History Textbooks for Grades 6-8".*

Palestine is left unclear in terms of territory and demography. Nor is there reference to historical Palestine (under the British Mandate before 1948). Palestine is treated as belonging to Greater Syria in all these textbooks.

Fourthly, in the section of the report on 'Democracy, History and the Contest over the Palestinian Curriculum', the curriculum has been found to be nationalistic but does not incite hatred, violence and anti-Semitism. It does little to support peace but the charges made against it are exaggerated or inaccurate.

Fifthly, in the Palestinian textbooks about the Islamic Religion, Islamic Studies and Civic Studies, the major findings of the UNESCO report concentrated on aspects of Palestinian culture, and the main points are listed below;

- "Cultural concepts are discussed in the context of a conservative Islamic society in which all females are shown covered, classes segregated and only male gender pronouns are used.
- Democracy and human rights are not dealt with. This is diametrically opposite to the textbooks used in Civic Education classes. List of wars fought are related only to the period of the Islamic fast of Ramadan and are used to show that Ramadan is not a period of inertia.
- Cultural, religious and social achievements would have been more appropriate in this section of the curriculum. Issues about Judaism and the people of Israel are not discussed as an issue in its own right, nor is Christianity discussed at all.
- There are factual errors in describing the books of Judaism and Christianity, which are not seen from a Jewish and Christian point of view and only the Quranic view is stated. The report suggested that the curriculum should include reference both the Old and New Testaments of the Bible, as well as the Quran.

- The content of some textbooks does not appear to endorse general freedom of faith or practical advice as to how religious tolerance can be learned. The description of tolerance towards adherents to other religions in some textbook is only partly covered and does not mention the limitations placed on people of other faiths in Islamic societies.

A follow up analysis was done by the Ministry of Education for schools in Jerusalem and the West Bank and published by the Latin Patriarchate Press. The analysis concerned the history text books introduced by the Palestinian Ministry of Education in Jerusalem and the West Bank. The results of this analysis were published in 2012.[226] The report showed that the history books used in the curriculum taught in all the Palestinian government and private Christian schools in Jerusalem and the West Bank avoid teaching the history of Christianity and presents misleading information about Christian history and culture. The results of this analysis are important for church leaders to know what is being taught about Christianity and to enable Christian Palestinian educators to correct information provided in the curriculum. Further examples are provided below.

4.1.1.4.1 History textbook for Grade Five

In the section on the "History of ancient civilization"[227], the textbooks describe the history of civilization from the Stone and Iron Age until the Middle Ages, but avoid the First Century CE and the beginning of Christianity. The book explains that the Middle Ages began when Islam was established. At the same time they discuss the Christian influence in Europe without making it clear that Christianity started in the Middle East

[226] Follow up Committee in the Ministry of Education, in Arabic Language "التاريخ معلم الحياة". Latin Patriarchate Press, Biet Jala, 2012.
227 Palestinian Ministry of Education, 5th. Grade History Book, p.5.

and was brought to Europe through Jesus' apostles and disciples. The church in Europe is described as corrupt and Islam is promoted as the dominant world religion.

The biblical stories that are mentioned in the history book are just the stories that are approved and written in the Quran and not any other historical books and no mention is made of any non-Muslim history books.

Incorrect information about meanings of names of cities and places are written in the text books. The explanation of the name Yemen, an Arab country with that name, is so-called because it is located to the right side of (Al-Kaaba) which is the building at the center of Islam's most sacred mosque in the world located in Mecca. Also the word (Al-Sham) is the region bordering the eastern Mediterranean Sea, usually known as the Levant or the region of Syria, including modern day Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, Israel and Jordan. Al-sham is also another name for Damascus, one of the largest cities in the region.[228] The text book explains that (Al-Sham) is so-called because its location is north of Al-Kaaba. The book explains about the civilization of Arab cities within the Muslim era but ignores any other cities established before Islam.[229]

The author of the book connects the word (Arab) to Islamic culture and history, ignoring other meanings considered to be correct. The word Arab comes from the Semitic language and the root of the word has many meanings such as 'west/sunset or desert' and the Arabic language is the language used by people inhabiting all Arab countries of the Middle East[230]. There is no mention of Christian tribes such as the

[228] Ibid 227. Pp.7-9.
[229] Ibid 227. P. 221.
[230] http://www.dictionary.com/browse/arab

Nabateans, Ghassanids and many others living in the region and are also Arabs. The only other tribes mentioned were pagan tribes before the beginning of Islam.[231]

The author of the textbook refers to all the civilizations that have been in the Middle East region as Arab, which is incorrect. There is reference to the Canaanites, Amorites and Philistines as Arab Canaanites, Arab Amorites and Arab Philistines but no reference at all to the Israelites. These civilisations are originally Semitic origin people who settled in the region[232]. The truth is that these civilizations were not Arab but have contributed much to the rich mosaic of today's Arab culture.

The author refers to the Muslim Arabs as the ones who kept the Greek culture and translated science and philosophy books into the Arabic language which became the basis of European cultural foundations and knowledge.[233] When Greek science and medicine were rejected by European society in the Middle Ages, it was Nestorian Christians who brought that knowledge to the Middle East. It was Christian Arab scholars who translated these books into Arabic and other languages and this knowledge was used to build Islamic culture and knowledge.[234] This knowledge was then taken back into European universities by Muslim, Christian and Jewish teachers.

4.1.1.4.2 History textbooks for Grade Six

The Pre-Islamic (Al-Jahlieh) era is defined as a Pagan era[235] in Palestinian school history textbooks. There is no mention that there were Jewish and Christian civilisations pre-Islam. This is surprising considering that the Quran considers them as the 'people of

[231] Ibid 227. Pp. 22-23.
[232] Ibid 227. Pp. 31-38.
[233] Ibid 227. P.61.
[234] Ibid 227. Pp. 12-13.
[235] 6th. Grade history book. p.3.

the book' and they are the two other religions established in the Middle East since ancient times.

The textbook indicates that the Muslims were very tolerant of the Christians and Jews after they took over the Holy Land during the time of Umar, son of Al-Khattab, and the rulers who followed him[236]. However there is no mention of all the hardships that the Christian were subjected to by the Muslim leaders through having to pay heavy taxes, discrimination, being forced to convert to Islam, not being allowed to build churches and forcing the Christians to wear special clothes to be identified as non-Muslims. It appears that the author of the textbook has tried to hide the destruction of churches by the Muslims that continued from the Islamic conquest of the Holy Land until the time of the Crusaders. This omission makes it appear that the Muslim conquerors were tolerant to other regions when other historical sources present a different picture[237].

4.1.1.4.3 History textbook for Grade Seven

The beginning of the text book deals with the history of the Middle East from 5000 BCE to 476 CE and names this era "Pagan", ignoring the evidence that the area of Israel and Palestine is the cradle of both Judaism and Christianity and that it was from here that the Christian faith spread all over the world238. The UNESCO committee viewed the omission of Christian history in this way as totally unacceptable[239].

The textbook mistranslates some words used in the Christian religion. The words 'Catholic' and 'Orthodox' are said to come from the Latin language whereas they are of Greek origin. The use of the words 'hiring' and 'election' are used in relation to the

[236] Ibid 235. Pp. 56-67.
[237] Ibid 225p. 15.
[238] 7th. Grade history book. p. 5.
[239] Ibid 238, p.17.

appointment of church leaders in the textbook , when they should use the word' appointing' because the church does not hire but appoint clergy and bishops.[240]

There is misrepresentation of the reasons for the Crusaders arrival in the Holy Land. According to the history textbook the Crusader campaigns came about because of fear of the Muslims while the real stimulus for the Crusades was to rescue the holy places from Muslim destruction after the Church of the Holy Sepulchre was destroyed by a Muslim leader in 1099. An additional reason for the Crusades was to provide safe passage for the Christian pilgrims coming on pilgrimage to the Holy Land.[241]

The Crusaders are misrepresented in the history textbook for Seventh Grade pupils. The book states that the Crusaders killed around seventy thousand Muslims in Jerusalem in 1099, when other sources show that the population of Jerusalem at that time was less than one hundred thousand. The book also uses provocative terminology that has led to religious hatred (such as in page 50). The author used the word 'cleansing the Holy Land' from the Crusaders when Salah Edin the Muslim general said he 'cleansed Al-Aqsa from all the crosses and the image of Jesus and Christianity as these images are desecration'. The Follow up Committee has strongly requested that the Ministry of Education remove such words from the history books.[242]

4.1.1.4.4 History textbook for Grade Eight

The title of the history textbook for the eighth grade is 'The History of Islamic Arab Civilization in the Region'. According to the UNESCO committee that did the research, the book shows by its title that the Arab civilization in the region is a Muslim one, ignoring any other civilization in the region before Islam. UNESCO argue that the title

[240] Ibid 238 p. 8-19.
[241] Ibid 238 p.23-24.
[242] Ibid 238. p. 32.

should be the "The history of Islam in the Arab Civilization" [243]. On page 5 of the book it mentions ancient civilizations but when it comes to the Jewish and Christian eras, the author does not mention anything, avoiding six hundred years of Christian history until the Islam came to light.[244]

On page six of the textbook, the author mentions that the Arab Islamic Civilization roots goes back to origins in Palestine and Palmyra an ancient Arab city. However there is historical evidence that Islamic civilisation began in Saudi Arabia and Palmyra is known as an Aramaic city and not an Arab city. On page 10 of the book, the author explains that the Arab Islamic civilization is Arab civilization. In fact the civilizations that were before Islam were Jewish and Christian civilizations and the author avoids mentioning them. On the same page, the author mentions that the Islamic religion and culture is the only religion that respects human rights and the principles of freedom and equality, again not mentioning religions such as Judaism and Christianity with similar principles.

The author of the textbook discusses Islamic culture and social justice[245], He says that Islam created a law and regulations in order to solve any quarrels among the people. Some of these judgements are based on law and regulations that pre-date the Islamic era but the book does not mention this and implies that the judgment system was created when Islam was established. According to Islamic law the judge should be a male and this contradicts previous explanations about the Islamic principle of equality. The money that the Arab Muslims are said to have invented, such Dinars, Fills, and Dirham, are Latin words that have roots from before Islam.

[243] Ibid 238 p. 33.
[244] History book of the 8th. Grade p.5.
[245] History book of the 8th. Grade pp. 35 -60.

On page 88, the author explains that translation of science and cultural books from the Latin and Greek languages helped in development of the Islamic culture but he did not mention that this translation was done by Christians before Islamic times.

4.1.1.4.5 History textbooks for Grade Nine

The history book for ninth grade pupils deals with modern Arab history. The author has a general explanation about the hardship of Christians at the time the Othman Turks invaded the Arab world. The committee recommended additional information be included to show that the reason for the Turkish invasion was the enlargement of the Othman Empire and strengthening of their relationship with the Christian world through protection of the Christian shrines in the Middle East, in particular the Holy Land.

The relationship between Arab countries and the west is considered to be based on the invasion of the western ideologies in Arab countries. While it is true that that western culture has played a role in development of awareness among the Arabs in understanding Arab nationalism, development of political principles and political science for building government, the fact that Muslims called it a cultural invasion indicates a weakness in Islamic culture.[246]

The author tries to make the student believe that Arab Nationalism started within the Muslim ideology, but in fact Arab Nationalism started in the nineteenth century through educated people who studied in the west and learned the meaning of democracy, globalization and nationalism. Many of these people were Christians, both local and

[246] Ibid 245. p. 41.

expatriates, who participated and played a major role in developing the Arab nationalism ideology.[247]

On page 42, the author gives an explanation about the reasons for foreign Christians coming to the Holy Land. He sees it as a political move to control the Holy Sites. According to the UNESCO committee, there is evidence that Christians came from abroad to help reduce the hardship of Christians within the Arab countries.

4.1.1.4.6 History textbooks for Grade Ten

The content of the history book for the tenth grade is about world history in the middle Ages. On page six, the author introduces the idea that science development in Europe was restricted by the Church at that time.

It is true that science was not considered important in the early Middle Ages, because of the break- up of the Roman Empire, although in the eastern part of the Empire science and education remained active longer than in the western part. However the Catholic Church was the leading sponsor of scientific research up to the time of the French Revolution, sending many of its clergy to study science at different universities[248].

The Follow Up Committee[249] indicated several examples of church leaders and their input in the development of science and shows that the Church played a major role in preserving history, science, and philosophy books by having the clergy copy these books and keep them in their libraries. The Church and its clergy developed many scientific phenomena that are used until today. For example, Pope Sylvester II (946 – 1003) was a scholar and endorsed and promoted study in mathematics and astronomy. Hermann of Reichenau (1013 – 1054) was raised in a monastery and was a scholar,

[247] Ibid 245. p.42-43.
[248] History book for the Tenth Grade. p.6.
[249] Ibid 226. p. 47.

composer, music theorist, mathematician, and astronomer. Bishop Robert Grosseteste, (1168 - 1253) considered himself at Oxford in law, medicine, languages, natural sciences, and theology. He became what is now called Chancellor of Oxford University. Pope John XXI (1215 – 1277) was an important figure in the development of logic and pharmacology.

There are many other examples that demonstrate that members of the clergy had a major impact of the development of science in Europe.

The author uses outdated information about the relationship between the church and science that is still believed in the Muslim world today. According to the UNESCO committee, scientific terminology in Greek, Latin, English, French and Germany has been mistranslated into the Arabic language in ways that change meanings. The world "reformation" means to make steady change, or change in certain aspects of society, rather than swift or fundamental changes, as is implied in the Arabic translation.

The Follow Up Committee suggests that other historical references regarding church history in the Middle Ages should be added, not just those found in Arabic and Islamic documents.

4.1.1.4.7 History textbooks for Grade Eleven

In the history book for eleventh grade pupils, the author presents the historical events of the Second Intifada or what the author calls the Al-Aqsa Intifada referring to the Al-Aqsa Masque that was in 2000. He explains it as a Muslim religious conflict with some political elements. The committee suggested that the text book should add a brief description about the role of Christians and the Church in the Holy Land in this Intifada through political, international, social and humanitarian support. Also the committee

suggested that it important for all the Palestinians to know about the Palestinian Christian clergy and other figures that participated in the conflict and have had a major impact in trying to bring justice and peace to the Palestinian people.

4.1.1.4.8 History textbook for Grade Twelve

The history book for twelfth grade pupils deals with the development of European Christian evangelization in the Middle East. According to the committee, there are several mistakes in the book that should be clarified. On page 3, the author argues that the main goal of Christian evangelization in the Middle East and Muslim countries was colonisation. According to the committee,[250] there is no historical evidence for this statement. History shows that when the Muslims came to Holy Land and Arab countries they put heavy taxes on Christians and other non-Muslims unless they converted to Islam and Muslims were afraid to convert to Christianity because they were afraid they would be killed by the Muslim authorities. When countries in North Africa were under French control, the French government forbade Christians to evangelize the indigenous people of those countries. Because of this, the church sent people to open schools and hospitals to help the indigenous people to be educated and gain access to medical treatment.

The author examined the goals of church evangelization through reference to Samuel Zwemer, who was an American missionary, who was called the Apostle to Islam as his work was with the Muslim community. Local Arab churches do not consider missionary work because of their history as a minority within an Islamic context. The UNESCO committee suggested that this issue be omitted as it does not represent the ministry of local Church and Christians.

[250] Ibid 248. P.64-65.

The author argues that educated Palestinian Muslims left their country trying to avoid the effects of this evangelisation on their education. The historical evidence shows that educated Arab Muslims left Palestine to find a better future in western Christian countries.

The author indicates on page 156, that evangelization is an element in the political, military, and economic strategies of western countries from which missionaries come. This statement by the author has no historical substance. The only other effect of western Christian influence is a cultural one.

The author indicates on page 80, that philanthropic work in Palestine has an Islamic basis. This ignores all the Christian organizations that have worked for decades and continue to provide assistance to all Palestinians, both Christian and Muslim.

From the examples mentioned here it can be seen that information that all Palestinian students receive during their education about Christianity is incorrect and provokes intolerance and misunderstanding between Muslims and Christians.

4.1.1.5 The ideology of the Israeli education system.

Christian private schools in the Holy Land are obliged to follow the Palestinian curriculum system if they wish to be recognised by the Palestinian Ministry of Education. Most of the Christian schools in Jerusalem and the West Bank are under the Palestinian Ministry of Education but some Christian schools in Jerusalem and the majority of Christian schools in the northern cities in Israel follow the Israeli curriculum, set by the Israeli Ministry of Education since the establishment of the State of Israel and further developed since then.

There appears to be no research available to evaluate this Israeli school curriculum from the Christian perspective similar to that described in the previous section about the Palestinian government school curriculum.[251] However there are several research projects concerning the Israeli educational curriculum which seem to indicate an attempt to deface Palestinian identity and ignore certain parts of the history of the Holy Land that involve the Christian presence there.

Immediately after the 1948 war, Israel took over control of all the government and administrative systems in the country, including education, and set up new systems based on Zionist ideology. These systems affected Palestinian Arab villages and cities that came under the control of Israel as well as Jewish Israeli towns and cities. This control exerted pressure on the Palestinian Arabs who remained in their homeland to follow and accept Israeli rules and laws about issues such as education of their children.

The newer generations of Israelis, in particular those who made Aliyah to Israel and became citizens after 1948 were inspired by the Zionist leader David Ben-Gurion. His opinion about dealing with Palestinian Arabs who remained in Israel was that "the adults will die and the young will forget." The overwhelming concern in Israel has been the "security" of the state and this has been used to control and supervise employees in various key areas, including that of education. The Israeli Ministry of Education was dominated for decades by the political party, Mapai, which became the largest group in the Israeli Labour Party. It was their officials who chose Palestinian Arab teachers, on the basis of those who showed "devotion" to the State built on the ruins of their own country. Palestinian Arab teachers had to learn to reconcile Israel as a Jewish, Zionist

[251] See section 3.1.1.4. The presentation of Christianity in the Palestinian education system.

state with the ideology that Israel is a democratic state.[252] Israeli government policies imposed on the education of Palestinian Arabs through the Israeli Ministry of Education do not obey the civil justice requirement that institutes a foundation of any independent government, nor is there any effort at educative discrimination for weaker elements of the Palestinian society.[253]

Many of the Palestinian Christian and Muslims, living in Israel and holding Israeli citizenship still consider themselves as Palestinians and part of the Arab culture, yet they are citizens of a country that discriminates between Jews and non-Jews. This is an issue is a combination of identity that contains several elements: as a citizenship (Israeli), as a nationality (Palestinian), as an ethnicity (Arab) and religion (Islamic or Christian). This ongoing identity complexity changes with changes in Israeli policies that involves a complicity regarding Palestinian ethnic democracy and their indigenous and the technocracy of Israeli society.[254] The complicity also accrued through the Palestinians who are citizens of a state that defines itself as the state for Jews and not as a state for all its citizens. The Jewish people are the majority in Israel and often refer to the Palestinian Arabs as if they were a hostile minority[255]. Despite being the state's largest minority, the Palestinian Arabs population faces discrimination from Israeli government policies resulting in lack of resources in almost all aspects of life.[256] Politically, the Palestinians who live in Israel lack political power and influence because of their demographic proportion, even though they have political representation in

[252] Mahmoud Meary, *Arab education curriculum in Israel*. The Follow up Committee on Arab Education and Arab Pedagogy. Nazareth 2015
[253] Au-Asbah, K. (2007). Arab Education in Israel: A minority dilemma. Jerusalem: Floersheimer for Urban and Regional Studies. The Hebrew University of Jerusalem. P. 140.
[254] Diab, K., & Mi'ari, M. (2007). Collective identity and readiness for social relations with Jews among Palestinian Arab students at the David Yallin Teacher training college in Israel. Intercultural Education. pp. 427-444.
[255] Ibid 253.
[256] Suleiman, R. (2002). Perception of the minority's collective identity and voting behaviour: The case of Palestinians in Israel. The Journal of Social Psychology, 142(6). Pp. 753-766.

various parties in the Israeli Knesset. Thus it would be very difficult to change any discriminatory laws that are imposed on the area of education and other areas.[257]

The basic information sources that the Israeli Ministry of Education uses in their school textbooks are books based on Zionist ideology, including publications of the early Zionist founders such as “Rome and Jerusalem" by Moses Hess (1875 1912), the book "Self-liberation" by Inskr Prime of the Lovers of Zion Association (1891 1921) and “The Jewish State” by Herzl (1860 1904). Alongside these sources, ideology from the Old Testament and several rabbinical commentators of the Torah are used. These are the basic resources used in all Israeli schools and promote the philosophy that Israel is a Jewish state and the belief that education in it must be based on Jewish culture and values and loyalty to the State of Israel.[258] There is nothing included in school textbooks that would enable Palestinian citizens of Israel to relate to their own culture and religion within the framework of citizenship.

4.1.1.6 The role of the family in the Christian church.

Part of the teaching of the Christian Church is that the family is the nucleus of the Church. The situation that Christian families in the Holy Land face includes the concerns or the safety of the family as well as opportunity for increasing the number of Christian families living there. The very core of the life of the Christian family who wishes to remain in Israel is threatened at its basic roots, the right of single Christians to meet, fall in love, marry, and create a family are also threatened. The obstacles Christian families encounter are detailed in the next section.

[257] Al-Haj, M. (2005). National ethos, multicultural education, and the new history textbooks in Israel. Curriculum Inquiry, 35(1), 47-71

[258] Prof. Mahmoud Mi’ari. Curricula of Arab Education in Israel- Second Part Critical Studies on Curricula and Text Books of Hebrew, English, Sociology and Non-formal Education. The Follow up Committee on Arab Education and Arab Pedagogical. Council, Nazareth 2015. [Online] Available at: http://arab-education.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Manahej-book-2.pdf.

4.1.1.7 Restriction of movement of Palestinian Christians.

Increasingly since the First Intifada, Palestinians have needed permits to pass through the checkpoints between the West Bank and Jerusalem. This has been, and continues to be, a barrier to family visits, school attendance, hospital appointments and attendance at religious ceremonies at holy sites in Jerusalem. Since the First Intifada, these checkpoints have become increasingly more permanent and extensive and take more time to pass through. This situation has affected both Christians and Muslims and has become worse since the Separation Wall was erected.

In June 2002, the Israeli government began construction of the Separation Wall between the West Bank and Israel. For the most part the separation wall between 9 to 12 meter high concrete walls, some parts is consisted of trenches, barbed wire and electrified fencing with numerous watch towers, electronic sensors and thermal imaging and video cameras. Currently the wall occupies about 123,000 dunums of land from the Palestinian side of the Green Line[259] and could eventually extend a distance of over 815km. This tangible separation has created a feeling of isolation between the Palestinians living inside the wall and those living outside the wall. It has adversely affected almost 50% of the West Bank population by rejecting any chance for them to make a living, by being unable to cultivate their land, reach their work place or attend school on the other side of the Wall. It affects all aspects of communication, socialization, and family integration. The affected Palestinian Christians living in the West Bank are denied access into Jerusalem and consequently, are unable to meet and interact with other Christians the other side of the Wall.

The restrictions imposed reduce the opportunity of single Christians finding suitable spouses. This threatens the basic roots of the Church's well- being and growth by

[259] Stop the Wall, The Palestinian grassroots Anti-Apartheid Wall Campaign. Available at: http://stopthewall.org/.

making it difficult for singles to marry within their faith community, have children and promote family values. According to the St. Yves Society, the Israeli government issued a "temporary law" in which Christians and Muslims who live in the West Bank are declared "resident aliens" according to Israeli legal practice.[260] The Israeli government does not recognize them as natives, or as an indigenous people having the right to live where they were born or anywhere outside the West Bank.

To illustrate the problem, consider the following account. A man, who is from Bethlehem, or another West Bank town, will not be granted residency in Israel (including Jerusalem) even if his wife is from Jerusalem or from elsewhere in Israel. Because of this, he cannot live with his wife there. If she has a Jerusalem identity document (ID) and she lives with her husband in the West Bank she loses her Jerusalem ID. Although husbands and wives may visit each other and have children, they can never live together permanently. This "temporary law" continues to be in effect to this day.[261]

Another example is that of a Christian female from Bethlehem who is married to a Christian man from Jerusalem They have been married for 15 years. Five years after their wedding, she received approval for a temporary residency permit to live in Jerusalem, renewable after two years. Today, because of the "temporary law," the husband still has to apply for a residency permit for his wife that is renewable every year. However, she is not allowed to drive a car in Israel, including Jerusalem, and is obliged to obtain a special entry permit twice a year from the military officials in the

[260] The Society of St. Yves is a Catholic Human Rights Organization working under the patronage of the Latin Patriarchate in Jerusalem. It provides gratis legal assistance, counsel, and advocacy to members of the community. Through its national and international lobby and advocacy activities, it brings the situation of the poor and marginalized to the attention of communities around the world.

[261] This is the personal account of a friend from the Christian community. As a recently married man, he was stopped in Jerusalem by an Israeli military patrol. His wife, from Beit Jala, was with him, but was denied residency due to the "temporary law," and thus, did not have the necessary permit. He received a fine of €1,000 and was obliged to drive his wife back to her family's house in Beit Jala and return to Jerusalem alone.

West Bank. To achieve this involves days or weeks and there is no guarantee of receiving the permit each time it is needed.

There are more than 200 families with similar problems, living in Jerusalem and the West Bank, according to the St. Yves Society, the law firm of the Latin Patriarchate in Jerusalem.[262] There are cases where several Christian children, who were born in Jerusalem but are now citizens in other countries, are restricted entry into Israel due to their residency status in other counties and they may have to enter the West Bank via Jordan each time they visit. In the best-case scenario, they receive entry permits as tourists for three months when they visit their relatives living in their native city. Meanwhile, thousands of Jewish immigrants arrive in the country, obtain citizenship easily with full rights and may be given permission to live in the Old City of Jerusalem. They receive financial assistance for purchasing a new "home" and help finding jobs, because Israel is a homeland for Jews anywhere in the world.

4.1.2 Community level. This section continues with data that pertains to the communities' approaches to dealing with the challenges imposed upon them. As Christian communities in the Holy Land, and Jerusalem in particular, several issues are presented that illustrate how families and individuals are affected as they try to maintain their ancestral roots in the country and also remain in communion with the worldwide Christian Church.

4.1.2.1 Family size. There are two primary factors contributing to the reduction in Christian population levels. First, Palestinian Christian families have a lower birth rate

[262] Ibid. 260.

(1.6%) than their Muslim (2.4%) and equal to their Jewish (1.6%) counterparts[263]. Christian Palestinians value education and often choose to provide expensive private education for their children, inside or outside the country. Second, many Christian families are leaving the Holy Land for a more hopeful future in other countries.

4.1.2.2 Housing. There is huge concern regarding the lack of housing for Palestinian Christians living in Jerusalem and areas controlled by Israel and a desperate need for more housing. The lack of housing has a direct impact on social life and is one of the causes that lead to Christians leaving the Holy Land.[264] The difficulties in maintaining and securing sufficient housing for Christians in Jerusalem, has been a concern for many years. Figures for the last two decades are presented here.

According to Sabella, in the year 2000, there was an immediate need to construct 481 dwelling units for Christians. Of these, more than 176 units needed to be constructed in the Old City, and more than 305 units outside its walls.[265] The concerns, as expressed by the local church leaders, for housing have not diminished but increased over the following 14years. According to the Franciscan Custody of the Holy Land, there are 650 requests for additional housing from Catholic families living in Jerusalem.[266] This is notable, even when considering the high cost of renting housing in Jerusalem and the refusal of the Israeli government to issue building permits to non-Jews that are present

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[263] Ariel Cohen, "Birth-rates among Christians, Muslims, Jews show new trends in Israel" Jerusalem Post June 10, 2014. Available at: http://www.jpost.com/Christian-News/Birthrates-among-Christians-Muslims-Jews-Show-New-Trends-in-Israel-378171.

[264] The annual gathering was held at the Latin Patriarchate between the Holy Land Coordination and the European and North American bishops, in solidarity with the Mother Church of Jerusalem, 8-12 January 2014. The question of housing for Christians in the Holy Land arose over the course of their discussions. Posted on the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem website on 12 January 2012.
Website: http://en.lpj.org/2012/01/10/coordination-de-terre-sainte-quid-du-logement-des-chretiens-a-jerusalem/

[265] Bernard Sabella, "Jerusalem: A Christian Perspective" posted by Al-Bushra magazine June 12, 2006. Visit website: www.albushra.org.

[266] Ibid. 265.

in Jerusalem (or anywhere under Israeli jurisdiction). It would be much easier for Christians if they moved outside the municipal boundaries of Jerusalem. However, to do so would result in the eventual loss of their Jerusalem identity cards and consequently their right to a permanent residence in Jerusalem.

In addition, the local Christians living in Jerusalem who are from the middle class cannot purchase property. In order to build houses in Jerusalem there are two fundamental elements; land and money. The church officials in Jerusalem have contributed to the problem because they have land and money to build additional housing for rent to Christian families but have not done so. The Catholic and Greek Orthodox Churches and the Lutheran World Federation own land within the municipality of Jerusalem and have the money and the ability to raise funds for the construction of new housing. Although the churches have planned several building projects for local Christians, they have been slow in the implementation of building these houses. Partly these plans have come to nothing because of the refusal of the Israeli authorities to grant building permits. This lack of progress may have affected the decision of some of the younger families to leave Jerusalem in favour of living in other countries where affordable home rental and ownership is a reality[267].

4.1.2.3 The influence of substance abuse on the Christian community.

According to Israeli anti-drug authorities, there are around 300 thousand people in Israel who are identified as substance abusers. The report shows that 70 thousand are between 12-18 years of age which present about 11% of all youth in this age group. There are about one third undergoing treatment at one of the facilities in Israel, but the rate for treatment and rehabilitation is low. Among the 18-30 year olds, there has been a

[267] Ibid 265.

increase concern in the use of popular drugs such as hashish, marijuana and ecstasy. This is documented among students, youth and young workers.[268]

Unfortunately, there are no specific studies about substance abuse among the Palestinian Christians in the Holy Land. However, a study by the Arab Thought Forum in (2006) made an in-depth examination of drug abuse among Palestinians in general in Jerusalem. This study found that 5,000 Palestinians in Jerusalem (2.4% of the Palestinian population of the city) were addicts and 10,500 (5.5%) had used illegal drugs at one time.[269] Of the 5,000 users among Arab Palestinians living in Jerusalem, 23% were between 20 and 22 years old. Most people familiar with substance abuse in Jerusalem, such as Cramer reporting for CNEWA (Catholic Near East Welfare Association), agree that abuse is substantially higher among the Christians in the city than among Muslims.[270] Some of the causal factors attributed to Palestinian substance use include lack of educational, professional, and recreational opportunities. Christian Palestinian young people who are disaffected and isolated from their family and church community, described earlier in this thesis, are in the greatest danger of being affected by substance abuse.

Making matters worse are the limited resources available to combat substance abuse in the Holy Land, especially among the Christians of Jerusalem. Although Sayegh (2006) suggests that there is an increase in the rate among Palestinians, the lack of firm data makes it impossible to pinpoint exactly how quickly the rate is increasing. While, according to the Ma'an News Agency[271] there were 50,000 Palestinian drug users in East Jerusalem and the West Bank in 2013.

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[268] Israeli Anti-Drug Authority. *"Overview of the Drug Situation in Israel"*, 2011. Visit website: http://www.antidrugs.org.il/english/pages/1315.aspx.

[269] Arab Thought Forum, Report on Drug Abuse in Palestine, 2006.

[270] Ben Cramer, "Fighting a Modern Plague" *CNEWA* Vol. 33:3, New York. May 2004.

[271] Ma'an News Agency (MNA) publishes news around the clock in Arabic and English. It is among the most browsed websites in the Palestinian territories, with over 3 million visits per month. Considered to

4.1.2.4 Fewer Christian communities. As has already been mentioned, Christian emigration from the Holy Land is not a new story and has been happening for decades. However, there has been an increase in the process since 1967. The Palestinian Christian communities are dwindling slowly and historical landmarks associated with Jesus Christ's birth, ministry, and death are in danger of becoming merely tourist attractions for visiting Christians from other parts of the world, rather than associated with vibrant local Christian communities. Since the late 19th century, Christian families looking for better economic opportunity, freedom of social and religious expression and political stability have migrated from the Holy Land to better living and future in western countries where they have formed diaspora communities.

The results of the Sabeel Survey of 2006 showed several causes of emigration. In that report, 44.7% left to find work, 42.6% left because of the bad economic and political situation, 8.5% left to join family who had already left the Holy Land, and 4.2% left for work and study.[272] Looking at this issue from a different perspective suggests that one of the causes of the Christian emigration phenomena is the lack of a sense of belonging, either to the Holy Land itself or to the Christian community there.

4.1.2.5 Rise of Islamic political ideology. The political instability in Arab countries, in particular, after the "Arab Spring,"[273] has resulted in a significant growth in Islamic radicalism throughout the Middle East. The desire for violence in the name of Islam has been building through most of the 20th century. Islamic radicalism has tended to spring up into mass bloodshed periodically, usually in response to corrupt governments.

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be the main source of independent news from Palestine, MNA has become the first choice for online information for many Palestinians, and is attracting a growing international readership and interest from prominent international news organizations and agencies. For additional details, see "PA: 50,000 drug addicts in East Jerusalem, West Bank," *MNA*, 12 March 2013. [Online] Available on: http://www.maannews.net/eng/ViewDetails.aspx?ID=573708

[272] Romell Soudah, "Christians in the Holy Land: Across the Political and Economic Divide," *The Sabeel Survey on Palestinian Christians in the West Bank and Israel*, (Jerusalem: Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center, 2006), See Table 16, p. 33.

[273] "Arab Spring" is a term for the revolutionary wave of demonstrations and protests (both non-violent and violent), riots, and civil wars in the Arab world that began on 17 December 2010.

Generally, it is an ineffective attempt to impose Islamic religious solutions on some social or political problem, according to Dunnigan (2014).[274] Schow[275] (2104) argues that because of the political instability in Arab countries and the rise of Islamic radicalism ideology, persecution of Christians has significantly increased which has often led to their murder and imprisonment. It may come as no surprise that this has caused many of the remaining Christians in the Middle East to flee to western countries for safety.[276]

It is important the note that Palestinian Christians in the Holy Land are not challenged by the moderate Muslims who live near them and they abide together in a respectful atmosphere. The Christians are more concerned with the Muslim extremists and the rise of the "Islamic political ideology." The impact of religious extremism will be felt on the socio-economic front, according to the Sabeel Survey (2006). Eight per cent of the Palestinian Christians have expressed concerns and challenges with Islamic religious extremism and have indicated that it is one reason for emigration of Christians.[277]

Several social problems facing Christians in the Holy Land, in particularly in Jerusalem, involve discrimination policies of the Israeli state towards non-Jewish communities and its occupation policies against Palestinians in general. Similarly, Palestinian Christians feel that the Muslim extremists are trying to impose Islamic rules and regulations to transform the Holy Land into a Muslim country. The combination of these two pressures has a negative effect on the lives of Palestinian Christians.

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[274] James Dunnigan, "*The Best of Times, the Worst Times*" [Online]. [Accessed 22 January 2014] Available at: http://www.strategypage.com/dls/articles/The-Best-Of-Times,-The-Worst-Of-Times-1-22-2014.asp

[275] Ashe Schow is an editor and commentary writer for the Washington Examiner. Previously, she worked as an editor and writer for the Heritage Foundation and for Heritage Action for America.

[276] "Rise of Radical Islam Made Life Worse for Christians in 2013, With More to Come in 2014," *Washington Examiner*. [Online]. [Accessed 19 February 2014]. Available at: http://washingtonexaminer.com/rise-of-radical-islam-made-life-worse-for-christians-in-2013-with-more-to-come-in-2014/article/2543308.

[277] Ibid. 180, p. 84.

4.2 The Preservation of Christian Culture.

The Christian culture in the Holy Land is a unique mixture of Palestinian culture, the various different Christian traditions, values, practices, and the Christian presence in the country, especially in Jerusalem. However, the strength of Christian culture is connected to the level of participation among the members of the Christian communities, especially in the Old City of Jerusalem. It may be more important to talk about the Christian communities, rather than the Christian community because of the many disagreements between different denominations in Jerusalem, indicating that the churches are not united. The Christian churches own 29% of the real estate in the city of Jerusalem, including approximately 133 churches, Christian educational institutions, and medical institutions.[278] Christians living in Jerusalem as compared with the Church as an institution with its global contacts and influences, own very little property, often renting from churches and convents. This issue creates a dilemma in presenting Jerusalem's Christian culture as a it is difficult to present Palestinian Christian culture as local to the Holy Land when so many church leaders living in Jerusalem are foreigners and appear to represent international church institutions and foreign cultures. Focusing upon the Christian culture in the Holy land brings to the surface some weaknesses within the Christian communities concerning their lack of awareness and ignorance of the Christian culture in the Holy Land.[279] Presented below are three main aspects that contribute to the lack of understanding of the Christian culture and the lack of written materials concerning Palestinian Christian culture.

***4.2.1 Lack of Christian cultural understanding and representation*.** The ignorance of Christian culture by the local Christian communities in the Holy Land is due to several

[278] Ruth Lapidoth, *The Old City of Jerusalem* (Jerusalem: The Jerusalem Institute for Israel Study, 2002). pp. 151-158.
[279] Consultant Committee of the Latin Parish in Jerusalem, 2006. This committee, along with the various sub-committees, has worked over the past two years on analyzing these problems in order to find ways and programs to resolve them.

factors. This ignorance is influenced by their limited access to the written educational materials available on Christian history and culture; the influence of other traditions brought and propagated by foreign church leaders and missionaries and the need to make more widely available writings and documents in church archives in Jerusalem.

4.2.1.1. Written educational materials on Christian history and culture. The Christian culture and history of the Holy Land is largely unknown among the ordinary Palestinian Christian lay people due to the lack of availability of educational resources. It must be assumed there is some research on Palestinian Christian culture, as evidenced by the publication of various books and journal articles. It seems that the fault lies in the fact that there is limited access to these publications only at a limited number of public libraries owned by Christian institutions[280] located in the major Christian populated cities. For example, there are no Christian libraries open to the public in Jerusalem and Ramallah, while Bethlehem has two libraries owned by Christian institutions. These libraries operate as public libraries to serve the needs of the community but their holdings on Christian cultural publications are very limited.

Likewise, there is no designated educational programme or curriculum concerning Christian culture and history among the Christian schools and institutions. In addition, there are very limited courses and programmes available in universities within their theological departments. Of the courses that are available, they are limited in relation to the Christian culture and Christian history of the Holy Land and are more concerned with denominational theological differences. In light of what has previously been discussed about Israeli and Palestinian school curricula it is not surprising that they lack adequate educational materials regarding Christian history and culture. Nor is it surprising that universities have much more information available about Islamic culture

[280] Pontifical Mission, Research on Libraries in Jerusalem and West Bank, 2006.

and history, when it is remembered that most of the universities have an Islamic basis, except Bir Zeit and Bethlehem Universities.[281]

4.2.1.2 Lack of access to centres of learning. The Holy Land Christian history, culture, and heritage are very rich but Christian communities do not appear to have cultural centres or museums that specialize in Christian culture and heritage that could be useful to the local community as well as foreign scholars and tourists. There is much information and documentation that seems to be hidden or placed in Church collections and archives that the local Christians are not aware of and do not have general access to.[282]

4.2.2.1 Origins of educational values and curricula. The educational values of Christian schools in the Holy Land have been promoted by religious missionaries and as part of the normal pastoral work of the various Christian churches. Many of these missionary and religious groups came from the West and imposed their cultures on local Christians by requiring a foreign language and school curricula and course work related to Christianity as it is lived and practised in Europe and other places outside the Holy Land.

An example of such a school is the College des Frères that the De La Salle Brothers established the in1876, to provide quality Christian education to boys living in Jerusalem, teaching them in the Lasallian tradition. This tradition is devoted to the intellectual and personal maturity of each individual student based on western cultural norms.[283] To fulfil their objectives, the Brothers taught the French language as well as European history, concentrating on French history.

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[281] The Ecumenical Committee for the Christian education in the Holy Land. Education project for Christian school in the Holy Land. Jerusalem 2007.

[282] This information is based on my own research regarding lack of Christian museums that provide information about the local indigenous Christians.

[283] The History of the College des Frères-Jerusalem. Available at: www. http://cdf.edu.ps/en/.

Another example involves the schools of the Orthodox Church, the oldest Christian schools in the Holy Land. During the Ottoman Empire, the Orthodox Church was the only organization authorized to build and run schools, and they taught the Greek language and Greek history.[284]

The Schmidt's Girls College in Jerusalem is yet another example. Two German Catholics from the Archdiocese of Cologne established it in the Holy Land in 1886. In addition to the state curriculum, the students were obliged to learn the German language.[285] Most of the other private Christian schools share similar structures and philosophies. Unfortunately, none of them has a programme or educational materials to teach the local Christian culture and heritage of the Holy Land.

4.2.2.2 Lack of programmes concerning the local Christian culture. There are more than 50 Christian organizations, charitable, benevolent, and social Christian organizations whose mission it is to help the Christian community in Jerusalem and the surrounding area of the West Bank.[286] These institutions do not have any programmes concerned with teaching the local Christian culture. Their mission is to provide social help fill the gaps due to the lack of Israeli policies and lack of financial resources of the Palestinian governmental social services. This help is implemented by these organizations in cooperation with the Churches in the Holy Land. The Christian cultural programmes needed are educational activities about the culture of Christian communities and Christian heritage that gives the local Christians in the Holy Land a window of knowledge about the past Christian cultural traditions that have died out over the years.

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[284] St. Dimitry School, Jerusalem.

[285] German Foundation for the Holy Land, Schmidst Girls School, 2008.

[286] Christian Information Center, Custody of the Holy Land, Jerusalem. Since 1973, the Franciscan Custody of the Holy Land has sponsored the Christian Information Centre in Jerusalem. It is located opposite the Tower of David near the Jaffa Gate. Its purpose is to provide information on Christianity and on the Holy Land for those wishing to learn as much as possible about Christianity in the Holy Land and the Holy Land in relation to Christianity.

4.2.2.3 Misrepresentation of the Christian heritage. The churches in Jerusalem are misrepresenting their local Christian heritage. Their presentation of the Christian heritage is as a history of the holy sites relation to the life of Jesus in the Holy Land and not of the history of local Christian people in the Holy Land since that time. The Christian Information Centre in Jerusalem, sponsored by the Franciscan Custody of the Holy Land, aims to provide information about the different Christian denominations in the Holy Land regarding religious, liturgy, culture and Christian services and activities for pilgrims and tourists. The information provided in their documents and on their website assumes that the Christian culture is based on the historical presence and geographical location of the different churches and does not take into account the Christian people as a local community.[287]

The local Christian culture and heritage is a very important issue in the education of both Christians in the Holy Land and Christians throughout the world. Knowing your own culture, heritage, and history promotes the religious identity of what it means to be a Holy Land Christian and should influence Christian pilgrims by making in clear that the Christian faith originated in the Holy Land and there continues to be a Christian witness there. In the Acts of the Apostles Chapter One, verse eight, the apostles were told by the Risen Christ that they should be "witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth." For local Christians, knowing their history and heritage enriches their understanding and identity of what it means to be Christian. This in turn, increases the sense of belonging to the Holy Land and may influence their decision to stay and remain part of that Holy Land Christian culture or leave and become part of an Arab diaspora Christian community in the west. Likewise, it should help Christians throughout the world to have a better sense of their religious obligations

287 Christian Heritage of the Holy Land I, II, III. Studium Biblicum Franciscanum, Franciscan Printing Press, Jerusalem 2009.

towards the Christian community in the Holy Land in helping to solve the above mentioned problems.

There is historical and biblical precedence for this as Paul encouraged the Christians in Corinth to put aside money regularly as a gift for the church in Jerusalem, in the First Epistle to the Corinthians in verses one to four in Chapter Sixteen. In addition, it should increase the motivation of western Christians to develop a political agenda in their own countries to lobby and support the preservation of a local Christian presence in the Holy Land, especially in the city of Jerusalem.

4.3 The Effect of Israeli Politics on Christians in the Holy Land.

Since the beginning of Christianity 2000 years ago, political changes have had an impact, both negative and positive, on the presence of Christians in the Holy Land. In the present time they face new challenges and problems that are partly due to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Historically, this conflict began during, and after, World War I when the Ottoman Empire was fragmented and then divided up between the victors. At that time, Britain made promises regarding historic Palestine through the Balfour Declaration. It documented Britain's support of a Jewish national home in Palestine, provided it did not prejudice the situation of the non-Jewish population there.[288] The Balfour Declaration is a key foundation of the establishment of the State of Israel and the political situation that shaped Jewish-Arab enmity in Palestine and continues to negatively affect the Middle East and the entire world. The implementing of the Balfour Declaration led to massive migration of Jews from all parts of the world to Palestine and has played a role in decreasing the Christian population from the Holy Land. The first part of the Balfour Declaration, concerning a "homeland for the Jews"

[288] Stephen R. Shalom, "Background to the Israel-Palestine Crisis," *Z Magazine*, May 2002. Available at: http://www.zcommunications.org/zmag/may2002.

was implemented but the second part relating to the protection of the existing people in the Holy Land was largely ignored. The situation between increasing numbers of Jews coming to settle and the rise in nationalism of the Palestinian Arabs and their indignation at the unfulfilled promises made to Sheriff Hussein by the British government led to much political conflict, including a General Strike, under the British Mandate.

In 1948, when the British Labour government felt they could no longer fulfil the obligations of the Mandate they handed matters over to the United Nations. The United Nations proposed dividing Palestine between the Jews and Arabs, declaring that the Jewish population, although owning only 5.9% of the land in Palestine would be given a substantial portion of Palestine, on which they could establish their state. Understandably the Palestinians were reluctant to settle for a part of the whole of historic Palestine, all of which they considered as theirs. This situation led to fighting between Jewish forces and armies from the surrounding Arab countries who came to support their Palestinian brothers and sisters. The resulting upheaval led to massacres, on both sides, and much internal migration and deportation of Palestinians. Because of a combination of fear of such massacres as that at Deir Yasin and calls from other Arab countries to leave, huge numbers of Palestinian refugees fled to Lebanon, Jordan, Syria and Egypt. By the end of the Arab-Israeli War in 1948, Israel had seized control of 78% of the country[289]and approximately 750,000 of the Palestinian refugees left areas of conflict or fled to other countries to avoid the results of the war. Among these refugees were 60,000 Christians who subsequently were displaced outside the country. Many others became internal refugees with Christian towns such as Nazareth, Ramle and Jaffa

[289] William Shomali, "*Christianity in the Holy Land Identity, Present Situation, Expectations and Needs,*" a lecture delivered in London, 3 December 2000 during the investiture of the Knights and Ladies of the Holy Sepulchre of England and Wales. Available at: http://www.arabwestreport.info/awr-index/israeli-palestinian-conflict/lebanon-israeli-conflict-2006.

trying to absorb the Christian refugees who were driven from villages and towns on the borders with Lebanon and Jordan.[290]

Between 1948 and 1967 the West Bank (including East Jerusalem) came under the control of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and the Gaza Strip under the control of the Democratic State of Egypt. Those who stayed in what became the State of Israel lived in uneasy and precarious times without political rights and deprived of basic amenities.

In June 1967, Israel launched a war against Egypt, Syria and Jordan in which it seized all of the rest of historic Palestine which consisted of the West Bank including East Jerusalem from Jordan and the Gaza Strip from Egypt. In addition, Israel seized the Sinai Peninsula from Egypt and the Golan Heights from Syria. Large numbers of Palestinians, some living in cities, towns, and villages, and some in refugee camps in East Jerusalem, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, now came under Israeli control. This event meant that half of the Palestinian population ended up living in the Occupied Palestinian Territories within the confines of refugee camps.[291]

The responsibility for Christians in Israel, including the Old City of Jerusalem, during its formative years as a country was in the Department of Christian Communities at the Ministry of Religious Affairs. The Israeli government continues to maintain good relationships with the global Christian Church as an entity, in order to maintain a good reputation in the Christian world. In contrast, on a local level, the Israeli government considers the Palestinian Christians as part of the Palestinian people and deals with

[290] Bernard Sabella, "*Palestinian Christians: Historical Demographic Developments, Current Politics and Attitudes towards Church, Society and Human Rights," The Sabeel Survey on Palestinian Christian in the West Bank and Israel,* (Jerusalem: Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center, 2006), p. 47.
[291] John Dugard, Kamal Hossain, and Richard Falk, "The Question of the Violation of Human Rights in the Occupied Arab Territories, Including Palestine," Report of the human rights inquiry commission established pursuant to Commission resolution S-5/1 of 19 October 2000, E/CN.4/2001/121, 16 March 2001, para 29.

them in the same way that they do with Palestinian Muslims. Unfortunately, this treatment is based on injustice that limits religion, social, cultural, political and economic freedom, for all Palestinians, both Muslim and Christian.

4.3.1 The political struggle of Christians in Jerusalem.

Jerusalem, if not the central, is one of the most important components in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict due to its religious importance for the three major monotheist religions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam practised by the people in the Holy Land. Each faith wants to stamp its religious identity on Jerusalem. Consequently, the issue of Jerusalem has become very complicated, especially since Israel gained full control over the city in 1967. As a result, the presence and identity of the Christian community has been affected because of the political changes that have occurred in Jerusalem. These political changes have led to the reduction of the Christian presence in Jerusalem. During the period between 1948 and 1967, Christians fled to other countries to avoid the conflicts and restrictions. They settled in several other Arab countries and in Europe and the Americas. Due to the Israeli emigration policy relating to non-Jews,, many Palestinians could not return to their homeland while the rest decided to remain in those countries in which they had settled to find a better future for their children.

In this thesis, the political problems that Palestinian Christians face have been categorized into four main problems; (1) the Israeli occupation of Jerusalem, (2) the Church's role in relation to the struggle over Jerusalem and the Christian holy sites, (3) the role of the Palestinian Christians in the political conflict and (4) the lack of Christian economic resources.

4.3.1.1 The Israeli occupation of Jerusalem. The liberation from Jordan and subsequent reunification of East Jerusalem with West Jerusalem by the Israeli Defence Force took place after the Six Day War in 1967. The only time the city was divided was between the years of 1948 and 1967, and it was the result of the Israelis capturing the west part of Jerusalem and making it part of the State of Israel and the Palestinians keeping control of the east part and the subsequent unrecognized annexation of East Jerusalem by Jordan.

On June 27, 1967, Israel extended its legal and administrative jurisdiction to all of Jerusalem that includes East, West and the old city of Jerusalem by expanded the city's municipal borders. At that time, Israel guaranteed to all Christian and Muslim religious leaders in the city to protect the Holy Places in what had previously been East Jerusalem. The Knesset approved a law that gives the protection to the Holy Places and granting special legal status to the Holy Sites and made it a criminal offence to desecrate or violate them, or to impede freedom of access to them.[292]

4.3.1.1.1 Demographic problems.

The Israeli officials and law makers agreed the importance of preserving a Jewish majority within the expanded boundaries of Jerusalem as part of the struggle against the Palestinian influence in ruling of East Jerusalem. Israel translated their plan to preserve a Jewish majority with the boundaries of Jerusalem by creating and preserving a 76:24 (Israeli: Palestinian) demographic ratio in Jerusalem to accomplish this ratio, the Israeli government encouraged Israeli Jewish immigration into the city through the restoration and expansion of the Jewish Quarter and the provision of good quality housing, jobs, and services for Jewish Israelis who moved into the Old City of Jerusalem. Much of this

[292] The Catholic University of America Law Review, Spring 1996.

new Jewish housing was located in the eastern and Palestinian part of the city, while not reciprocating by locating any Palestinian housing in the Israeli side of the city. At the same time, the government devised an array of legal measures to restrict building by the Palestinian population of Jerusalem.[293] Israel also began the construction of Jewish settlements, which now form a ring around the entire northern, eastern, and southern perimeter of the city. The settlements form two rings around the city. The first settlement ring consists of ten settlements in Palestinian East Jerusalem and isolates East Jerusalem from its West Bank hinterland. The second has an outer ring of 20 settlements that splits the West Bank into northern and southern halves.

At the end of the 1967 war, there were no Israeli settlers in East Jerusalem. Today, there are over 180,000 in the expanded borders of the municipality. The presence of these settlers is illegal according to international law, as the Fourth Geneva Convention prohibits the transfer of the population of an occupying power into occupied territory and despite Israel claiming that they reunified Jerusalem, east Jerusalem is still considered occupied land.[294]

3.3.1.1.2 Residency restrictions imposed on non-Jews.

Israeli government regulations have seriously affected the entry to, and residency, of non-Jews in Israel. These regulations have caused great human suffering to all the Palestinians in Israel and in particular the Christian community in Jerusalem because of the small size of their communities. Adding to this are problems caused by the inability of Jerusalem Christians to marry Palestinian Christians from the West Bank.[295] Eli Varon, senior consultant on population administration to the Israeli Ministry of the

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[293] Shmuel Berkovits, *The Battle for the Holy Places: The Struggle over Jerusalem and the Holy Sites in Israel, Judea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip* (Hed Arzi and the Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies, 2000) (in Hebrew), pp. 174-176.

[294] *Ibid 293*. p. 177.

295 Knesset website: Available at: http://www.knesset.gov.il /laws/specials/eng/citizenship_lawhtm.

Interior, commented on the application of the laws and regulations to the Christians of East Jerusalem "they are Palestinian and the law affects all regardless of gender, religion, or race."[296] These regulations isolate Christians who are living in the West Bank and Gaza Strip from Jerusalem by eliminating their free access to Jerusalem. Any Palestinian residing in the West Bank or Gaza Strip wishing to enter Jerusalem must apply for a temporary permit that is extremely difficult to obtain. This closure policy has resulted in the denial of many Christian West Bank and Gaza Palestinians access to their holy sites in Jerusalem, even during major religious holidays.

4.3.1.1.3 The effect of the Separation Wall on Christian communities.

The connection between the local Christians in Jerusalem and Bethlehem and other West Bank areas is of particular significance for them to establish and maintain a coherent Christian structure. The Separation Wall is located between Jerusalem and the West Bank and access to Jerusalem from the south is via the Bethlehem checkpoint and access from the north is via Jalazone checkpoint. The need to gain permission to pass through these checkpoints has created a serious problem for the Christians and damages their communal activities by restricting their free access to social and cultural activities.

4.3.2 The Church's role in the struggle over Jerusalem.

The fate of Jerusalem and other holy places in the Holy Land is linked strongly to the legacy and origins of Christianity. This has been of particular concern to the heads of different religious denominations, in particular, the Catholic Church. The Holy See had led a number of political initiatives designed to guarantee the presence of the Catholic Church in the Holy Land. This concern can be traced back to 1922, when Cardinal Gaspari, the Vatican Secretary of State, publicly expressed fear that the terms of the British Mandate on Palestine might give the Jewish population a privileged position

296 Ibid 290.

over that of other religious groups living in the Holy Land. The concern was that the British Mandate might compromise the rights of the Catholic Church, regarding holy sites. These fears escalated in the following years and led the Holy See to decide that the best solution to protect their interests would be the internationalization of Jerusalem, as recommended by the United Nations at the end of the British Mandate.[297] They continued to be concerned about this issue after the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948.

Israeli government leaders created new procedures, regulation, and laws to strengthen their religious and political identity after taking control of Jerusalem in 1967, (in particular the Old City of Jerusalem). These measures caused concern for all the other denominational leaders, both in Jerusalem and abroad. In response, the heads of the different churches, represented by local church leaders have, issued several statements. Most of these statements called for a stop to all violence against all Palestinians, but particularly against Christian Palestinians attempting to worship, work, study and live in Jerusalem. These public outcries appear to have fallen on deaf ears and the confiscation of land and buildings in Jerusalem has continued despite international condemnation. These actions are considered a clear representation of violence. Church leaders have declared that for Jerusalem to become a city of peace and a place to create harmony between Jews, Christians and Muslims, Israelis and Palestinians, requires effort[298] because "Jerusalem is a symbol and a promise of the presence of God, of fraternity and peace for human kind, in particular the children of Abraham: Jews, Christians and Muslims". Church leaders have called upon all parties concerned to comprehend and

297 Silvio Ferrari, "*The Holy See and the post war Palestine issue: The internationalization of Jerusalem and the protection of the Holy Places*" (International Affairs (Royal Institute of international Affairs 1944), Vol.60, No 2. 1984, pp. 261-283.

[298] Their Beatitudes the Patriarchs and of the Heads of Christian Communities in Jerusalem, "*The Significance of Jerusalem for Christians*," (Israel 23 November 1994). [Online]. Available at: http://www.notredamedesion.org/en/dialogue_docs.php?a=2&id=37&categoria=ecumenici.

accept the nature and deep significance of Jerusalem, City of God. They continue to maintain that none can appropriate it in exclusivist ways and have invited "each party to go beyond all exclusivist visions or actions and, without discrimination, to consider the religious and national aspirations of others, in order to give back to Jerusalem its true universal character and to make of the city a holy place of reconciliation for humankind."[299] From 1948 to the present day, church leaders continue to issue these statements to aim to solve the conflict, without success.

4.3.2.1 The role of the Palestinian Christians in the political conflict. Since the beginning of the Palestinian–Israeli conflict, which began with the establishment of the State of Israel, local Christians have contributed in various ways to find solutions to the conflict using nonviolent approaches in order to bring peace to the region. The creation of the State of Israel has been the most significant factor in regional instability and violence. Palestinian and other Arab Christians have been at the forefront of the conflicts as they defended their people and society. At the beginning of the 20th century, Christians pioneered new ideas about nationalism and democracy and had a role in leading the Arab world through their connections to western countries. However, today, Palestinian Christians have lost their historical role in the Arab National Movement and have lost the ideological war on this front.[300] Nationalism and socialism, created out of Christian initiatives, are not so prominent. The Palestinian Christian role as a bridge between western and eastern culture and values has proven to be an empty dream. One reason for this is that Christians have never had a solid foundation from

[299] This statement was signed by Greek Orthodox Patriarch, Latin Patriarch, Armenian Patriarch, Custos of the Holy Land, Coptic Archbishop, Syriac Archbishop, Ethiopian Archbishop, Anglican Bishop, Greek-Catholic Patriarch Vicar, Lutheran Bishop, Maronite Patriarchal Vicar and Catholic Syriac PatriarchVicar in Jerusalem, 14 November 1994.

[300] Rifat Odeh Kassis, "Palestinian Christians between Dreams and Reality," *The Joint Advocacy Initiative Magazine* 1:1 (Summer 2005): 16-19. [online] available at: http://www.jai-pal.org/files/JAI_Magazine_2005.pdf.

which to work, and have remained torn apart in divided enclaves led and/or funded mainly by the West. Palestinian Christians have never really rooted themselves in the cultural philosophy of the region nor understood and claimed their identity. Kassis (2005) argues that serving as the bridge between the East and West seemed to be far too superficial and devoid of substance. Instead, "It seemed as if Christians were more concerned about, and involved in, the external environment, outside the country, rather than in the internal social and cultural structures". Perhaps this is why ordinary Christian people in Israel and Palestine are confused. They are not sure where, and with whom, they belong. Do they belong with the Vatican, Germany, England, Greece, Russia, the USA, or Palestine? Christians seem to have relinquished their responsibility for this bridging mission and have instead allowed other structures and groups to take over this precious space."[301]

4.3.2.2 Lack of Christian political leaders and political parties. The Christian community lacks the political leadership to exert a role in the politics that exist within the Palestinian government and within the Israeli Knesset. There are no Christian leaders to encourage and direct the Christian population to lobby for their interests and solidify their visions in the political arena and their perspective on solving problems is missing. Christian leaders need to create an environment that can empower the Christian community to believe that they have a role in making decisions as part of the Palestinian people. Some of the weaknesses that the Christian community faces include a lack of political parties within the Palestinian political system as well as the Israeli political system and a lack of empowerment. At the moment, Christians perceive themselves as a small religious minority that does not have any influence in any political decisions that affect their identity and future presence in the country.

[301] Ibid 300.

4.4 Lack of Christian economic resources.

The distribution of the local Christians by occupation is not as artisans or skilled or unskilled workers such as electricians, plumbers or construction workers. Few are skilled mechanics and even fewer are unskilled workers. Christians work in the civil service and teaching, some are self-employed, and others employed in trade and commerce. Unfortunately, there are no updated statistics regarding the Christian employment demographics except for the survey conducted by Sabeel in 2006. That survey presented employment demographics showing that 60% of the Christians with jobs worked in the various service sectors, which gives a clear indication about the occupational profile of the community.[302] The Christian community in Jerusalem forms a distinct group due to their unique position. Nearly every Christian denomination has representation in the Holy City. During the 19th century, Jerusalem attracted the western powers in such a way that resulted in a highly profitable tourist and service industry that benefited local Christians. Local Christians continue to serve as tour guides, tour operators, travel agents, hotel workers, restaurant workers and managers and souvenir shop owners. Consequently, the Christian population in Jerusalem more than doubled by the end of the British Mandate, and the city became the largest Christian city in Palestine because of tourism and pilgrimages.

The Christian community in Jerusalem lost its majority within the Arab population because of the higher birth rate of Muslims in Jerusalem and their immigration into the city.

The hostility and political consequences of the 1948 War brought fundamental changes to Jerusalem. Of primary importance is the fact the Jerusalem was divided into two

[302] Romell Soudah, "Christians in the Holy Land: Across the Political and Economic Divide," *The Sabeel Survey on Palestinian Christians in the West Bank and Israel*, (Jerusalem: Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center, 2006), p. 23.

parts: West Jerusalem consisted of the new western suburbs that became Israeli-Jewish and the Eastern suburbs became Jordanian-Palestinian Arab. The 1948 War and the division of the city affected the local Christian community, not only politically, but also economically. Importantly, prior to the war, nearly half of the Christians resided in the western suburbs of the city. After the war, they were dispossessed of their properties and sought refuge in the monasteries and other centres throughout the 1950s resulted in high rates of unemployment due to the lack of pilgrimage activities and a shortage of other suitable employment opportunities. This led to large scale Christian emigration that reduced the population of Jerusalem from 29,350 in 1944 to 10,982 in 1967.[303] Furthermore, Church leaders lacked an action plan to encourage the local Christians to remain in Jerusalem and failed to discourage them from emigrating. Christians who once controlled the tourism industry and commerce in the Jerusalem left for Jordan and other Arab countries and Western countries. This, in turn, led to many Muslim families from Hebron, a city in the West Bank south of Bethlehem, gradually taking control of Jerusalem's commerce, especially in the Christian quarter.[304]

Not only did the Church leaders have no action plan to discourage Christians from emigrating, but they also allowed Muslims to purchase most of the property in the Christian quarter (e.g., shops). As a result, the Christian Quarter has lost its traditional Christian atmosphere.

Since 1967, while under Israeli rule, the majority of Christians in Jerusalem have faced the deterioration of their economic situation as part of the urban middle class. Due to the growing rate of inflation and the lack of appropriate employment for university graduates, the lack of affordable housing became a special problem. That, coupled with

303 Ibid 302.

a large influx of people from rural villages resulted in fewer opportunities to find suitable jobs in Jerusalem. The economic difficulties of the local Christians in Jerusalem, as in most of the Holy Land, consist of two main streams. The political situation affects the economy of the country and the economic structure of the Christian community. Each of these issues is discussed below.

4.4.1 The political situation affecting the economy. One of the important elements to lack of economic stability in the Palestinian Christian community is the unsettled political situation and the associated unrest. It has been suggested that developments in the political situation would play a determining role in shaping economic stability, not just for the local Christian community, but also for all Palestinians living in Jerusalem. From 1948 to the present, the Palestinian-Israeli conflict has negatively affected the economy. There have been economic losses, high unemployment, decreased participation in the labour force and increased dependency rates. These factors have produced a sharp decline in living standards for the Palestinian population in all the Palestinian areas, including Jerusalem.[305]

A report from the Palestinian Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation puts forward the view that Israel has taken deliberate measures to stall the Palestinian economy by establishing roadblocks, destroying roads, creating military checkpoints and digging deep trenches around its cities and towns. By imposing movement restrictions, border closures (both external and internal) and building the Separation Wall on 40% of the West Bank, the external border closures between the Occupied Territories and Israel restrict imports and exports and inhibits workers from reaching their places of employment. The effects of internal border closures between individual

[305] Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation on the Palestinian Economy, West Bank, 29 May 2001.

West Bank towns and villages decreases the earning potential of farmers, workers and merchants who are unable to obtain merchandize and sell goods in the local markets.

There has been a waning demand for local goods and services that has had detrimental effects on the domestic economy. In light of the issues outlined above, it comes as no surprise that these Israeli procedures have affected the Christians living in the West Bank and Jerusalem. According to "Ha'aretz," an Israeli newspaper, approximately 80% of the Palestinian Arabs employed in the tourism industry are Christians and unemployment in this sector is rampant. For example, the closure of the Jericho Casino in December 2000 left about 1,200 Christians from the Bethlehem and Ramallah areas without work. Moreover, of the hotels operated by Palestinians in Bethlehem, East Jerusalem and Nazareth, more than half of the hotels' employees lost their jobs.[306]

If the political situation does not improve, it is difficult to predict what the economic situation will be in the coming years. During the 1990s, there were clear prospects for a political settlement. However, the Second Peace Process ground to a standstill. It is uncertain if, and when, peace negotiations might resume. Sabella argues that a multi-sector strategy for East Jerusalem needs to be formulated under two different scenarios regarding the future political situation.303 Achieving a more peaceful and stable situation will require moving towards a political agreement between Israeli and Palestinian authorities on the status of East Jerusalem. This will lead to a substantial and sustained drop in unrest and violence. However it is difficult to anticipate what a political agreement on East Jerusalem would require as over the years, a large number of options have been proposed, but none agreed on.

This thesis does not speculate on the nature of such a political settlement, but it does assume that any agreement will result in better prospects for Palestinian autonomy in

[306] Yair Sheleg. "Peace Now Survey Reveals 10 New West Bank Settlements," *Ha'aretz*, 4 October 2001, p. 2.

East Jerusalem. In addition, it assumes that restrictions on links with the West Bank will be reduced, facilitating a more liberal movement of people, goods, services and capital between East Jerusalem and Israel. This scenario could facilitate the provision of donor assistance to East Jerusalem.

4.4.2 The economic structure of the Christian community. The economic profile of Palestinian Christians can provide the context within which one can understand how their present situation can be assessed and considered for the future. According to Sabella, they tend to be over represented in their educational attainments, with many in possession of a university degree. For example, Christians are twice as likely to have a university degree and have a median age of 32 years in contrast to that of the rest of the population which do not access universities and have a median age of 16 years. The older age structure among Christians also relates to the emigration of its younger members and older ages at marriage.[307] Christians are essentially an urban community as 97% of them live in the urban localities of the West Bank and Gaza Strip and only 3% report living in villages and refugee camps. While historically Christians have lived in urban areas, the accelerating rate of urbanization among them is because the villages that were once populated by Christians, especially in the Ramallah and Jenin areas, can no longer economically support their inhabitants from work on the land and related activities. Migration to the cities was a natural process, especially after 1967, as Israeli economic policies made many Palestinian villages into dormitory communities, with most of their labour force commuting daily to work in Israel. As a result, many moved to Jerusalem and other West Bank cities and joined the communities already established

[307] Bernard Sabella, The Diocese of the Latin Patriarchate, Introductory Study of the Social, Political, Economic and Religious Situation (West Bank and Gaza Strip, Jordan, Israel and Cyprus), (Jerusalem: Latin Patriarchate Printing Press, 1990), p. 7.

there.[308] Several problems have occurred within the economic structure of the Christian community as a result of this migration.

4.4.2.1 The economic sector. The Christian community in Jerusalem considers education to be a permanent resource for their children that should ensure a career with a good income and a reasonable lifestyle. Christian students from Jerusalem desire to attend universities such as Bethlehem University and Beir Zeit University which have a good reputation in both Israel and Palestine and equip their graduates to access Master's level studies abroad. Soudah argues that less than 1% of Israeli Arabs attend Israeli universities because of difficulties they experience in meeting the admissions requirements. He also suggests that Israeli universities discourage Arab students from entering. Fewer than 25% of the Christians in Jerusalem and the Israeli controlled areas attend Christian universities,[309] while, only 1.3% of the Christian students attend vocational schools. Vocational schools are not popular for Christians in Jerusalem and the West Bank because the attitudes of the Christian community in the Holy Land who feel that their children should pursue a university decree, rather than a qualification from a vocational school.

4.4.2.1.1 Occupational aspirations. The education that Christians pursue generates a labour force that allows them to work in private sector institutions that provide services to the Palestinian people through not-for-profit and international organizations. [310] Many Christian students are looking for specific field-of-study opportunities that are not available at their local university. Therefore, they seek out scholarships to various

[308] Bernard Sabella, "The Emigration of Christian Arabs: The Dimensions and Causes of the Phenomenon," Paper delivered at the Giovanni Agnelli Foundation Seminar on The Christian Communities in the Arab Middle East: Identity, Current Dynamics and Future Prospects, Torino, 8-10 May 1995, p. 6.
[309] Romell Soudah, "Christians in the Holy Land: Across the Political and Economic Divide," *The Sabeel Survey on Palestinian Christians in the West Bank and Israel*, (Jerusalem: Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center, 2006), p. 19.
[310] Ibid.308, p. 22.

international universities in western countries. In most cases, these students may stay permanently in the countries where they studied. Christian students graduating from local universities may have difficulty finding jobs related to their field of study due to the lack of jobs caused by the political and economic situation. Lack of areas of specialisation in the local universities produces a high percentage of graduates who have the same area of study. This in turn, reduces the chances of finding a job as well as increases the qualification requirements of any positions advertised. For example, in order to apply for basic secretarial work, the applicant must have a university degree. A very low percentage of graduates from among the Christian community have their professional degree in agriculture, construction or commerce.[311] This indicates that the Christian community has a limited field of work.

4.4.2.1.2 Christian resources. Churches, monasteries, and Christian organizations have been built throughout history in the Holy Land. Some of them are living institutions and some are churches that control the Holy Sites related to Christianity, and most of these churches and institutions are not using their Christian resources to develop the economy of the Christian communities. The Church's institutions are not using the local community in constructing development plans to generate income for local Christians in order to survive economically.

4.4.2.1.3 Business productivity thinking.

Jerusalem's Christian community primarily work in service institutions, as employees or work in family-owned long established businesses. Often, their business ethics and working methods are not current or innovative. Many people lack creativity in developing their own businesses. There are many Muslim-run businesses in what were

[311] Ibid. 308, p. 23.

originally Christian-dominated areas of business that are more up to date that similar Christian organisations and gain more share of the business opportunities.

4.4.2.1.4 Absence of economic solutions benefiting the Christian community. There is a lack of Christian economic strategies or solutions developed by the Church, Christian organizations, or the local Christian community to overcome the economic difficulties that local Christians are facing. On a positive note, church leaders and heads of Christian organization are now talking about the Christian economic situation but have no solutions yet.

4.4.2.1.5 Absence of vocational planning advisors. There is a lack of specific educational career consultants to prepare Christian students in selecting the appropriate educational pathway in accordance with what the market needs. In addition, there is a lack of consultancy institutions that develop careers for new Christian graduates.

4.5 Summary. Several issues have been identified by analysing the problems facing Christians in the Holy Land. These issues have negatively affected the Christian presence in the Holy Land and have encouraged them to emigrate elsewhere. These issues are summarized below.

1. The local Christians face many social challenges that are a direct result of the laws and regulations imposed on them. These impositions have historical roots resulting from unclear and sometimes ambiguous agreements between the Israeli government authority and the Church. The agreements pertaining to the local Christians and Christian holy sites have created feelings of isolation by the local Christians about their role in society and their Christian identity in particular.
2. The political instability is a result of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that led to the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948. Events and the presence of extremist

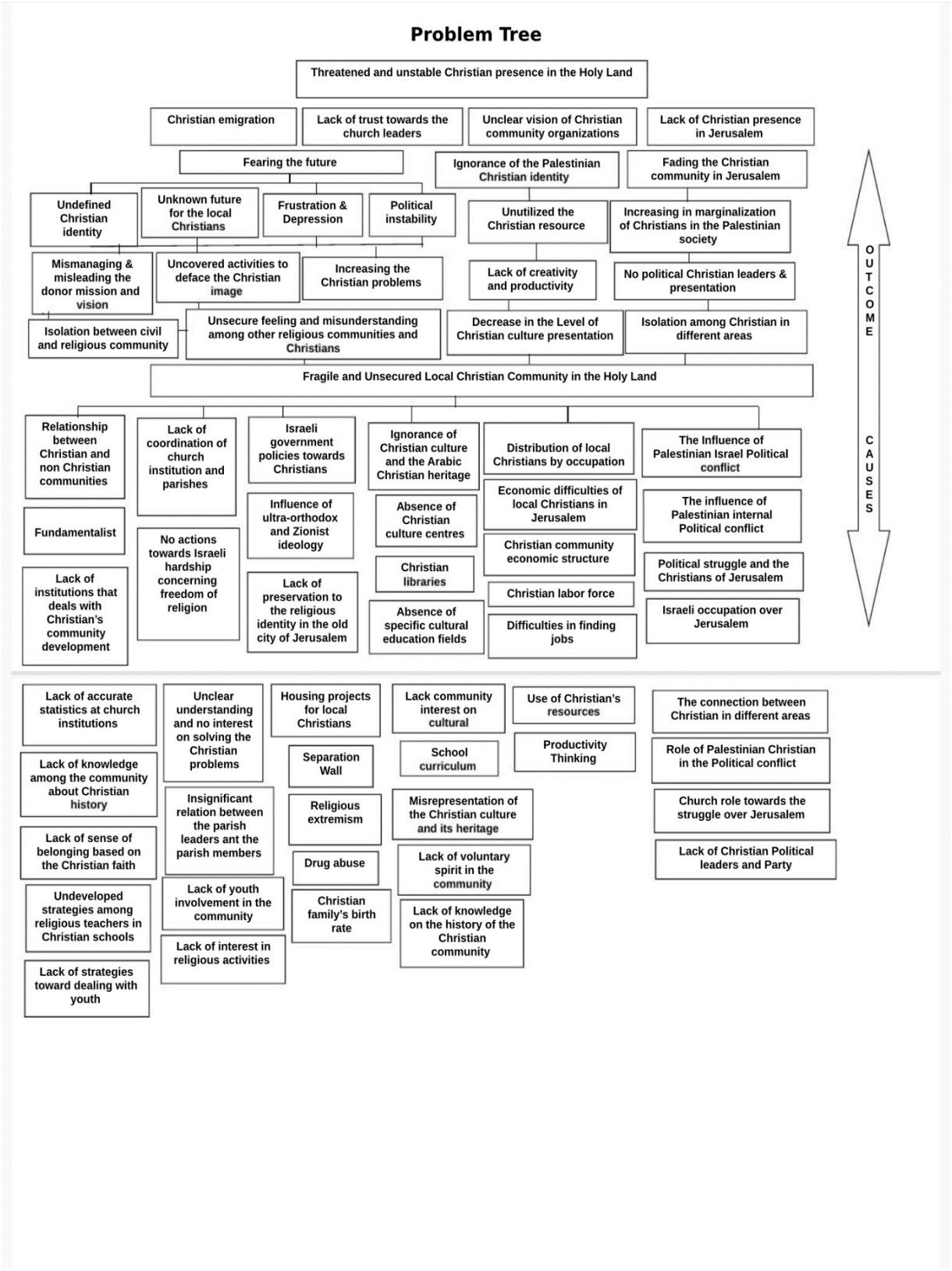
groups within Israel have led to the rise of extremist religious ideology within the governmental authority and its social institutions.

3. The lack of cultural resources and state of existing resources and accessibility of these resources to the Christian community in the Holy Land. Without resources, local Christians are ignorant and lack an understanding and appreciation of their historical significance as Christians in the country.
4. The lack of an economic plan and strategy to develop and improve the trade and industry situation local Christians face. With the development of Christian income generating resources, the financial hardships of many local Christians face could be alleviated.
5. The lack of vision of church leaders and communities and absence of plans to improve the Christian presence in the Holy Land. The short-sightedness of the Christian churches has resulted in the emigration of many of its members to other countries. Church leaders, working together need to develop an action plan to stop further emigration among the local Christians.

The content and links between the different strands of the SWOT Analysis described in this chapter and Chapter One are displayed in chart form in the Problem List shown in Figure 1. It can be seen there how the stability of the Christians in the Holy Land is threatened and weakened by emigration affecting the size of the Christian community, poor church leadership and disorganisation of the Christian community as described in the list above. It can also be seen that this instability affected by external factors resulting from the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip and the unresolved situation of Arab East Jerusalem in not being citizens of Israel but having an Identity Card that, in theory, gives them certain freedoms that Christians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip do not have. The fact that there are strengths within the Christian

community which are not being exploited and untapped opportunities within the wider Christian world will be explored in more depth in subsequent chapters.

Figure 4. Holy Land Christians Problem Tree.



Chapter Five

Strategic Issues

5.0 Introduction.

In Chapter Three an assessment was performed to find out the problems and challenges that Christians are facing in the Holy Land. These problems and challenges have generally had a negative impact that has caused may Christians to emigrate from the Holy Land. Several strategic issues, problems and challenges that have affected the identity, values, and presence of Christians in the Holy Land were identified through the assessment. It is also clear from this analysis that the Christian community in the Holy Land has been so focussed on their weaknesses and the threats to their existence there that they have ignored and not exploited their strengths and not explored the opportunities that being part of the worldwide Christian community could provide.

Strategic planning is the response suggested in this thesis to solving these problems and their effects on the Christian community and focussing attention on their ability to meet the challenges. The assessment of the problems and challenges facing the Christians in the Holy Land has been evaluated in previous chapters. Using these findings to identify strategic issues is the goal of this chapter. This goal will be accomplished by determining which issues are critical in causing the problems and which challenges are the ones on which to concentrate. According to Bryson, strategic issues involve issues pertaining to how, why, where, and what should be done and to whom something should be done to effect a change.[312]

Strategic issues can be examined in a number of different ways. For example, focussing on the goal of a project, the ways and means to undertake it, the philosophy behind it,

[312] John M. Bryson is a Planning and Public Affairs professor. He is specialized on leadership and strategic planning with public science, and non-profit organizations management located in the United States. Published several books on Strategic Planning for Not-for-Profit Organizations and Successful Strategic Planning such as: A Guide for Non-profit Agencies and Organizations. PASSIA publication, Jerusalem, 1994.

the timing of the intervention, persons involved and the advantages or disadvantages of the strategy can be examined. According to Bryson claims that "strategic planning is a disciplined effort to produce decisions and actions that shape and guide what an organization is, what it does and why it does it. To deliver the best results, strategic planning requires effective information gathering, the development and exploration of strategic alternatives and an emphasis on future implications of present decisions".[313] Information gathering has been described in previous chapters and this chapter will discuss the development and exploration of alternative strategies and their relative advantages and disadvantages and evaluate the possible future implications of these strategies for the Christian population in Jerusalem. The goal of the planning is to answer the research question and prevent or reduce the loss of Christian families from Jerusalem. The philosophy behind this is that Christians in the Holy Land are needed to maintain Jerusalem as a city representing the diversity of the three monotheistic religions; Christianity, Judaism and Islam. The timing of this planning is urgent before there are no Christians left in Jerusalem and the key persons concerned in this are local and global church leaders of all denomination working together.

The researcher proposes that a Christian national development plan should be established among the Christian organizations to help define and shape how the Christian community in the Holy Land could overcome its problems and be developed to shape the image of Christian presence and identity. This Christian development plan would include the development of a strategic plan. It would be implemented through a set of recommended courses of action aimed to have a direct impact on the Christian communities. It would emphasize by choosing the right skills, motivation, best knowledge and experience that motivation people to act together and take initiatives to

[313] Ibid 312.

influence social, economic, and political issues and to contribute fully in the democratic process.

To achieve such a plan this researcher considers that using strategic planning methods will benefit this research because it will promote strategic thinking amongst the leaders of the Christian communities. This, in turn will require a serious commitment to analyse the situation of the Christians in the Holy Land and an environmental assessment that will produce a list of requirements. The list produced will provide the basis for the concrete plans for strategic action that can be implemented in an efficient and creative manner by discovering what changes are needed, by whom and how these changes can be effected in the context of the Christian community in Jerusalem.

The researcher has identified five main issues from the assessment of the problems and challenges faced by local Christians in Jerusalem. These issues are made up of several problems that have been emerged from the analysis in Chapter Three, during which each of the problems were allocated a place among the five major issues of religious, social, cultural, economic and political strategic issues. Each of these five issues and their component parts are discussed below.

5.1 Religious Strategic Issues

The religious strategic issues were derived from the analysis of the religious problems related to the Palestinian Christian religious environmental atmosphere. Some of these strategic issues relate to the teaching of Christianity to local Christians and those who are members of other religions, while others relate to the Church itself as an entity in the Holy Land. These solutions are categorised into three sub-strategies that help in realising the different solutions proposed for these problems, evaluated from different points of view. These issues consist of three main conceptual programmes:

(1) A Christian community strategic approach to non-Christian communities in Jerusalem

(2) An educational strategy for Christian educational institutions in Jerusalem

(3) A strategy for Christian institutions in relation to the local Christian communities in Jerusalem.

5.1.1. A Christian community strategic approach to non-Christian communities.

The church leaders in the Holy Land currently maintain a dialogue with other local religious communities but need to rethink the impact of this dialogue and consider new ways of dialogue. Dialogue is one of the elements that can play a positive role in dealing with some of obstacles to implementing a peace process between Palestinians and Israelis. Communication can provide an opportunity for mutual acceptance that can overcome religious misunderstandings and allow people to live in peaceful co-existence. Christians, Muslims, and Jews each consider their religion important because it is part of their unique identity and their connection to the Holy Land. This may make dialogue difficult at times, as each group may argue for an exclusive relationship with the Holy Land.[314] The assessment[315] undertaken in this thesis indicates that interfaith dialogue in the Holy Land has been implemented among church leaders, religious institutions, and a limited number of people that have had direct connection and interest to the subject. However, due to various challenges, these opportunities for dialogue

[314] H.B. Michel Sabbbah. *Living Together peacefully*". Proceeding of the Conference on "*Exploring Christian-Muslim Relationship in the Middle East and West*" held at Bethlehem University, 5 September 2007. Bethlehem University publication, pp. 6-7.
[315] See Chapter Three.

have often lacked the grassroots participation of the local communities from the different religions.[316]

In fact, where lay people have been involved, the quality of dialogue at these meetings has improved and has had considerable impact abroad. However, the importance of such dialogue has not been fed back to the local community, nor has a clear picture been presented about what inter-faith dialogue means and why it is important for the Christian community as a whole. Church leaders in the Holy Land need to emphasize the religious necessity for interfaith dialogue and the need for an open dialogue between the Palestinian Christians, Palestinian Muslims and Jews in the Holy Land. Such dialogue would aim not to change the identity of the different participants, nor hide their differences, but would enable the participants to understand each other as human beings without resorting to religious stereotypes.

The previous Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem has pointed out the need for this dialogue to take into consideration the physical realities in which dialogue takes place between Palestinians and Israelis. The vast majority of Israeli Jews and some Palestinian Muslims have no contact with local Christians and are not aware of the historical importance of the local Christian community to the holy city of Jerusalem. Also information about the historical development of the Christian religion in the west may have affected local Christians.[317]By including the local Muslim and Jewish communities in interfaith dialogue, participants will be able to engage in an exercise in awareness about the importance and historical connection to the land for the Christian religion in

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[316] Al-Liqa Center, the Annual Christian –Muslim Dialogue Conference. The Conference on *"Arab Christian and Muslim Heritage in the Holy Land,"* 1983-Present. This conference is also known as the *"Christian-Muslim Dialogue Conference". Bethlehem, 2011. Visit website: http://www.al-liqacenter.org.ps/eng/.*

317 Meeting with the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, 6 September 2000. Available at: www.al-bushra.org.

general and the faith of local Christians in particular. This should foster greater acceptance and understanding among the participants and hopefully will enable them to share their insights with others in their respective communities. Some suggestions for bringing about better inter-faith dialogue are indicated in the following sub-sections, based on suggestions made by the United States Institute of Peace in 2004.

5.1.1.1 Develop a different approach to interfaith dialogue. Interfaith dialogue between Palestinian Christians and Muslims and Israeli Jewish lay people is an experience that could have an impact on every sector of Palestinian and Israeli society to explore, deepen and root itself in the shared cultural existence as well as renewing and making itself compatible with ever-changing conditions. As an alternative to political conflict between the Palestinians and the Israelis, religion should provide a way to serve peaceful goals within the context of religious faith. It is an important instrument for those who pursue to reduce violent conflicts. Through interfaith dialogue, each participated group from different faith can make its own unique contribution to the common cause of creative co-existence between the Christian, Muslim and Jew communities in the Holy Land. However, for this to happen in the context of Jerusalem it would require all parties to accept the historical and religious links and rights of each other to the city.

5.1.1.2 Encourage interfaith dialogue as a way to peace building. Intervention in areas of conflict by interfaith groups has taken place in the recent past but seems to have been neglected in recent years, perhaps because of the unstable political situation and violent confrontations between Israelis and Palestinians and the increase of fundamentalist thinking on both sides. Proper programmes and informal opportunities can be used in dialogue. Official programmes are those planned and designed as involvement in appraisal to informal opportunities that might occur, for example, when a friendship,

based on shared activities or values, has developed between individuals and groups of different faiths and is found to be helpful in resolving a conflict because those concerned want to continue their friendly relations.[318] The main approach is usually for a neutral third party to reach out to community leaders in different groups, such as religious leaders in the Holy Land. By discussing areas of conflict that exist between the Palestinians and Israelis, some of these conflicts may be resolved through interfaith communication. This approach would fit into a Middle Eastern context as practised by centres such as Wi'am Centre for Conflict Resolution and Transformation in Bethlehem. This organisation works at a grassroots level with Palestinians and Israelis from different religions. They believe that in order to build relationships among all kind of people it is important to consider each of their ideologies in promoting peace and justice, non-violent and human right[319]. There are numerous other means to interfaith dialogue and peace building; but there has been very little research on their effectiveness, especially in The Holy Land context. A comprehensive awareness approach should be taken to the Palestinian Christian and Muslim communities through the implementation of interfaith dialogue programmes. The focus could be on four main areas;

(1) Educational plans need to put in place for teaching about Christianity, Islam, and Judaism, so that individuals and groups learn more about their own religion as well as learning about the faith of the other two religious groups

(2) Educational awareness is needed about the history and culture of each religious group.

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[318] United States Institute of Peace, Special Report on Interfaith Dialogue, 2004. Available at: www.usip.org.

[319] Wi'am, the Palestinian Conflict Transformation Centre. [Online]. [Accessed June 9, 2016].Available at: http://www.alaslah.org/

(3) There is a need to demonstrate the connection between each religion and the Holy Land based on their faith and beliefs,

(4) Promotion of a shared interest and harmony between the three religious communities is needed that will allow the celebration of shared values through extra-curricular activities designed to increase understanding and respect of both similarities and differences.

Additionally, other areas of focus could consider promoting understanding about the diversity of expressions of faith within the different communities, assisting in the establishment of new interfaith networks or building the capacity and sustainability of existing interfaith networks. The understanding of the concept of "love" is the uttermost of our community responsibility to our neighbours. In the book of Leviticus in the Jewish Torah we read in Chapter 19 verse 18 "Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against one of your people, but love your neighbour as yourself" The Prophet Mohammed said in the Quran "None of you has faith until you have love for your neighbour as you have love for yourself." In the New Testament we similarly read, "Whoever does not love his neighbour does not know God" (1John 4:8) and "Whoever does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen" (1John 4:20). God is love, and our highest calling as human beings is to imitate the One whom we worship and translate that concept into every day action.

5.1.1.4 Develop an interfaith awareness plan for institutes of higher education.

An interfaith awareness plan could consist of the development of a series of seminars for local university students. These seminars would focus on issues related to interfaith dialogue between Muslims, Christians and Jews, focussing on conflict resolution, issues that relate to religious practices and the powerful influence that religion can contribute

to violent conflicts among groups of people, such as Christians, Muslims and Jews or Palestinians and Israelis. Interfaith dialogue at Palestinian universities could bring students of the Christian and Islamic faiths can come together conversations sessions. These sessions could help in take many diverse methods and possess a variability of goals and setups. Also it could also allocated to a different social levels that target different forms of participants, including elite community members, mid-level experts, and public activists. At the present time, it would take much effort and determination to set up such conversations between Palestinian and Israeli young people. However, it is possible to do so between Israeli Arab Palestinians and Israeli Jewish youth and there are examples of this kind such as that between Christian Palestinians and Israeli Arab Palestinians and Israeli Messianic Jews sponsored by Musalaha[320] and also Peace Camps bringing together Israeli Jews with Palestinian Christian and Muslims[321]. Motivation to generate interfaith dialogue programmes lead in some ways to create peace building programmes. However, what makes interfaith programmes different is the religious content and spiritual culture that is pervaded through the programmes, distinguishing such programmes from their secular counterparts.

5.1.1.5. Develop an interfaith awareness programme with the Jewish community

An interfaith programme targeting the Jewish community may need to take a different approach than a programme created for the Palestinian community. The implementation of interfaith programmes that target the Palestinian community would be achieved through Palestinian private schools and universities. An interfaith programme involving Christians and Jews might be more complex and require the encouragement of government authorities in Israel, Israeli and Jewish non-profit organizations that work

[320] The project is available at the website of Musalaha. [Online]. [Accessed April 2016] Available at: http//: www.musalaha.org.

[321] Peace Camp: [Online]. [Accessed April 2016]. Available at: www.mideastweb.org/peacechild/

with interfaith programmes and conflict resolution as well as other organizations, that deal with dialogue between different religions, who are already working in this field and could be encouraged to implement the interfaith programmes discussed here. One such organization is "The Parents Circle"[322] that brings together Israeli and Palestinian families whose children have been killed in conflict. Many other similar organizations are listed at www.theocracywatch.org/christian_zionism_reconciliation.

In addition, international non-governmental organizations and civic groups could undertake to foster practical action in the fields of education and humanitarian assistance. Finally, involvement of the media to foster understanding, tolerance and cooperation between the Christian, Muslim, and Jewish communities is needed to overcome intolerance and combat different stereotypes and misperceptions.

The implementation of such programmes would give young people from these three religious communities the opportunity to understand the meaning and the outcome of interfaith work and its aims and goals. Implementing this programme in schools, at a time when they are politically and socially aware, would provide students with knowledge and insights into religious diversity. Furthermore, they would learn the importance, challenges and opportunities for interfaith dialogue and understanding in a pluralistic and diverse society.

5.1.2 A Christian cultural educational approach in Christian educational institutions. The assessment[323] of problems and challenges in this thesis indicates that the Christian community in the Holy Land lacks a sense of belonging to the land based on their religion. As has already been mentioned, most Christian school curricula major on western religious Christian history and neglect the role of Christianity and the local

[322] The Parents Circle. [Online]. [Accessed April 2016] Available at: www.theparentscircle.com.
[323] See Chapter Three.

church in the history and development of the Holy Land. Because of this Christian young people do not have a distinct picture of their identity as Christians living in the Holy Land. This can lead to ignorance of their Christian history, the importance of the Holy Land to the Christian religion and the importance of Christianity in the history of the Holy Land. Because of these issues there is a need for a Christian education plan that would include all the major Christian denominations in the Holy Land.

5.1.2.1 Develop and implement an inclusive Christian education plan.

It is suggested by the researcher that an inclusive education plan should be implemented in all Christian schools and educational institutions to supplement educational materials currently being used within the Christian religious education curricula. The supplemental educational material would be a course of study to be introduced as part of the curriculum for all students in every Christian school. The course of study would consist of several areas of study;

(1) The chronology of Christianity in the Holy Land

(2) The history of the local Christians in the Holy Land from the Day of Pentecost when the Christian Church was born to the present day

(3) The historical policies that have affected the presence of the local Christians in the Holy Land.

These study areas will be explained in the following sub sections.

5.1.2.1.1 The chronology of Christianity in the Holy Land.

Course materials need to be developed that emphasize the historical development of the Church from its beginnings to the present day. To put this into context, the coming of

Christ from the Annunciation of His birth to the Resurrection and Ascension should be included. The study course will provide information to students on topics such as how the Church in Jerusalem developed, starting by the historical events that are written in the book of The Acts of the Apostles and the development of the major Christian doctrines and their impact on the Christian faith. Students will need to understand the historical events that allowed Christianity to spread out from the Middle East, what divided the church into Byzantine and Roman and then the effects of the Protestant Reformation and Catholic Counter-Reformation. The development of the the different Christian denominations in the Holy Land and their differences in doctrine will need to be explored in order to understand why there are different approaches to Christian worship and practice in Jerusalem.

5.1.2.1.2 The history of the local Christians in the Holy Land from their beginning.

There is a need to develop a historical narrative outline of Christian life in the Holy Land from the time of the early church described in the Acts of the Apostles to the present time. The narrative outline would focus on the historical development of the local Christian community through presentation of the different times of prosperity and hardship experienced in the different historical times and would show these changes over 2000 years. It would include a presentation of information about local Christian ancestors and their participation in preserving Christianity in the Holy Land. There would be an examination of both social and cultural aspects of living as Christians in the Holy Land. There would be questions to explore in relation to the positive and negative factors that have occurred through historical events and how they have affected the behaviour of Christians in the Holy Land. Finally, a topic would be introduced about the role of community involvement in society and the structure and function of their presence as it relates to different civilizations, cultures and social justice.

5.1.2.1.3 The historical policies that have affected local Christians' presence in the Holy Land. There is a need to develop classroom instructional materials tracing the political and historical policies that have affected the local Christian presence in the Holy Land at different times and the political motivation that has affected the local Christians and the Church in response. Christian educational strategic plans would be implemented in Christian schools though a course of study that would trace the development of Christian doctrine and its impact on Christian ethics and behaviour among the elementary, middle and high school students. The context of the study course would begin with the early school grades and continue through all the grades so that students in higher grades would learn about all aspects of Christian ethics.

5.1.3 Strategic support of the Christian community by Christian institutions.

Churches, church related-institutions, and Christian independent organizations, including Christian not-for-profit organizations[324] in the Holy Land adopted their mission and goals to provide support through all kind of assistance to the Palestinian community in the Holy Land. Their support can take the form of humanitarian, social, economic and spiritual assistance,[325] such as Catholic Relief Services, World Vision, Caritas and Pontifical Mission for Palestine. Some organizations are involved in advocacy or political resistance work, such as the Society of St Yves and the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI).[326] The Christian Information Centre issued an inclusive peace suggestion in which it identified

[324] Christian not-for-profit organizations that have connections to the Churches in the Holy Land.

[325] Others include the Swedish Organization for Individual Relief, Holy Land Christian Ecumenical Foundation.

[326] The Society of St Yves is a Human Rights Center for Legal Resources and Development.

the drop of the Christian population in the Holy Land directly with the political conflict.[327]

In addition there are organizations and institutions that promote contextual theology, including Christian liberation theology and the theological basis of reconciliation, such as Sabeel and Musalaha. Such contextual theology enables the Christian gospel to be applicable in the daily lives of the indigenous Christians of the Holy Land. Thus they are representing that follows the teachings of Christ regards the work for justice, and seeking peace-building opportunities and the empowerment of local Christians.

On a local level, the Christian churches provide schools for Palestinian community students, such as the Freres Schools in Jerusalem and Bethlehem, St George Anglican School in Jerusalem, the Rosary Sisters School in Bethlehem and Terra Sancta Schools in Jerusalem and the West Bank. Currently there are at least 108 Christian educational institutions across the Holy Land. These expressions of charity and justice have assisted Palestinians facing political conflict and economic dilemma. Almost every Church and church- related organization has created some kind of aid agenda that allocates to help the wider Palestinian population. In addition to programmes that assist with such things as distribution of food tokens and medical aid to people in the community, some churches and church related organization are also working to reduce the problems of unemployment by starting job creation programmes and by employing people from the local Christian community, such as the Shepherd Society outreach programme from the Bethlehem Bible College in Bethlehem.[328]

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[327] The Christian Information Center provides information on Christianity and on the Holy Land–including shrines and holy places, the numerous churches in the region, liturgies, aspects of religious and cultural life, and other activities. http://cicts.org.

[328] Bethlehem Bible College is a small Protestant Christian college that provides theological studies. It provides a means for the global community and Christians worldwide to encourage and financially support the struggling Palestinian people in the West Bank.

There are church and Christian organizations in the Holy Land working in different fields that serve the Palestinian people, many of which have been mentioned in the previous paragraph. These organizations support projects and programmes of emergency assistance and relief of Palestinians displaced or otherwise affected by war, regional conflict, or discrimination. They assist in the repair and reconstruction of homes and educational, medical, charitable, religious and cultural facilities and institutions in the Middle East damaged by war or other acts of violence. They encourage and endow educational programmes and institutions to enable the poor and the oppressed to help themselves through the acquisition of skills and trades, literacy and higher education.[329] Such organizations and programme activities are funded by generous Christian donor organizations from the United States, many European Christian agencies and the European Agency for International Development. The role of the Christian organizations is very important in assisting the Palestinian people to overcome their problems due to the Palestinian Israeli conflict. Unfortunately, these Christian organizations often focus on Palestinian problems in general, which diverts attention from the internal Christian problems. A few organisations concentrate on providing assistance in different forms to Palestinian Christians, such as Living Stones of the Holy Land Trust and the Franciscan Foundation of the Holy Land. However there seems to be a lack of Christian organizations that work together with a focus on the Christian problems and that deal with the issues affecting the Christian community specifically and their presence in the Holy Land. The development of an organization that would involve all the denominations and focus on the Christian problems in the Holy Land is very important to develop solutions to the problems of the Christian community there.

[329] Ibid. 320.

5.1.3.1 Implementation of a career-counselling plan for Christian students. Palestinian students who graduate from school lack the knowledge of what they want to do with their lives and what field of study would fit best with their career goals and interest. In particular, the Palestinian Christians are affected because places in the higher education institutions are limited and there is a lack of governmental resources or research about what field of study is needed based on the local market. When students are preparing to apply for university, they are uncertain about what field of study is right for them, unsure which field of study will allow them a good job and salary and what jobs are available in the local community.

Based on the analysis in Chapter Three, there is a need for a career counselling work plan could be developed in Christian schools to target graduating Christian students. Career counsellors would help students decide on the field that is right for them and would benefit the needs of the Christian community in general. Career counsellors could provide unbiased advice based on an understanding of the economic situation of the student and his family and knowledge of the job opportunities and commercial needs of the community. Such a plan would focus on students individually by examining their talent in a particular interests and the abilities to translate their talent into a career that suits the interest and abilities of those students and also provides the graduate with knowledge. This proposed plan would have a designed plan to deliver cultural conpetent services to Holy Land Christian community students, parents and guardians, school staff and the community in the following areas:
- A School Guidance Curriculum. This curriculum would contain a designed lessons to help students discover their competencies and to provide all students with the knowledge, attitudes and skills appropriate for their developmental level. The school guidance curriculum would be delivered throughout the school's overall curriculum and

systematically presented by professional school counsellors in collaboration with other professional educators in the high school classroom, group activities, and individual student sessions.

- Professional school counsellors should be organise through complete designed program to help students establish individual objectives and develop career plans. The way in which these counsellors would work is explained as part of the responsive services described below.

- Receptive services consisting of involvement activities by encounter students of their future career desires. These desires can be translated through events and conditions that exist in each student's life, school environment and culture. However, students may require counselling, parent's involvement session, educational instructors, psycho-social education of psychological development with a social environment for intervention and advocacy at the systemic level.

The school career-counsellors would improve relationships with students to help them resolve and or deals with problems and growing concerns of any upcoming problems. Another important role is that of system support, which involves, upholding, management events, and improving the total school counselling programme. These activities include professional development, consultation, collaboration, supervision, programme management and operations. School counsellors should be committed to enduring personal and professional development and must be proactively involved in professional organizations promoting school counselling at local, regional and national levels.

5.2 Social Strategies Issues. Based on the assessment, described in Chapter Three[330] several social strategic issues should be addressed at different levels of the community to participate in solving the social problems of the Christians in the Holy Land. These strategic issues are divided into two levels; official church level and community level. These levels are described below.

5.2.1 Official Church level.

There is a need to develop a Christian social strategic plan that will result in Christian political representation in the Israeli Knesset and in the Palestinian Legislative Council. The local Christian community would support these measures if representation were based on Christian social values. The Christian representation could be achieved through the formation of a Christian political movement that would gather together all of the Christian denominations in the Holy Land to work towards facing the social problems that influence Christian identity.

The local Christian community would be encouraged to reflect upon, and work on, democratic policies from an explicit Christian social view point. The mission of the movement would be to fill the gap in the Israeli and Palestinian political landscape and address issues specific to the Christian community. The focus would be the Christian community who live under the laws of the Palestinian National Authority and the State of Israel and in this context develop a new form of Christian social agenda. The aim would be to work towards changing certain social laws that negatively affect the social identity of Christians and their right to live in the Holy Land. Achievement of those changes would be based on Christian religious and culture values. It would be important to create a strategic lobbying plan that would work towards formulating a political force

[330] See Chapter Three.

in both local and international social organizations and groups that would contribute to strengthening the Christian political position. These “official level” social strategies are discussed below.

5.2.1.1 Develop strategies to increase a sense of belonging. The Christians in the Holy Land are in the uncomfortable position of a people who have no clear identity. This experience has fostered a lack of sense of not belonging to the Holy Land based over the past few decades, despite their religious history linked to the Land through the gospels and the early church. This, in turn, has contributed to the social problems among local Christians. Each Christian in the Holy Land needs to have the knowledge and understanding of being part of a unique community that they can believe is important because God chose them to be the “living stones” to be a community in the most holy place in Christianity.

There is a need to clarify the combination of ideas on which the sense of community, solidarity, history, culture, values, and social identity unify into the religion called Christianity as they become an important element in the process of strengthening the Christian presence and identity. Once this occurs, there should be an increase in the sense of belonging of the Christian community in the Holy Land. A sense of maturity needs to ensue to help them understand the importance of being able to live as Christians in an increasingly diverse and multicultural land where each community tends to regard its own values as sacrosanct and dominant. Yet, although belonging to different religions, social lifestyles, and linguistic variations, all religious and ethnic groups need to share one country. It is important is that Christians living among different religious communities should have a strong identity and knowledge of the history, religion, culture of their own community and be convinced that each individual is an important element for maintaining the strength of that community.

The concept of the Palestinian Christian sense of belonging in the Holy Land involves two key components. First, the individual needs access to networks and communities in which members interact and explore the role of each Christian individual in the community. The Palestinian Christian community beliefs and values can be made clear in statements and publications, as in the case of religious groups or political parties, or they can be embedded in the activities and practices that characterize the way in which the group lives out their daily lives.

Strategies that are developed need to be implemented to develop the sense of belonging for the local Christians. In general such strategies entail an ongoing process that involves membership in, or exclusion from, a wide variety of different groups during one's lifetime, one of which is one's religious community. The relative importance that is placed on membership within a community, family, and the kinds of identities that are used to define oneself as a Christian from the Holy Land should evolve with time and experience. This sense of belonging has been eroded among Palestinian Christians because of their minority status and their desire to be seen as part of the Palestinian people. However their Christian identity needs to be restored, while keeping their Palestinian identity.

5.2.1.2 Establish a committee to promote awareness of the situation of Christians in the Holy Land. In many public statements Church leaders in the Holy Land have agreed on the importance of Jerusalem to Christians, Muslims and Jews.[331] Jerusalem is an important place in the Holy Land for Christians because of its connection with the history of salvation of Christ and the place and the life, crucifixion, resurrection and

[331] Memorandum of their Beatitudes the Patriarchs and the Heads of Christian communities in Jerusalem on The Significance of Jerusalem for Christians. 14 November 1994. Jerusalem. The Memorandum was signed by the Greek Orthodox Patriarch, Latin Patriarch, Armenian Patriarch, and Custos of the Holy Coptic Archbishop, Syriac Archbishop, Ethiopian Archbishop, Anglican Bishop, Greek-Cath. Patriarch Vicar, Lutheran Bishop, Maronite Patriarchal Vicar and Catholic Syriac Patriarchal Vicar.

ascension of Jesus Christ. Jerusalem has a community of Christians who have been living there continually since the birth of the Church in the First Century AD. Thus, for local Christians, as well as for Jewish and Moslem community, Jerusalem is not only a Holy City; but also, the city where they live and have a right to continue to live freely.[332]

There is a need for a committee including both clergy and lay people from different Christian denominations in the Holy Land that are supported fully by their different churches to work together for the benefit of the whole Church in the Holy Land.

The mission of such a committee would be to focus on the social problems caused by the Jewish and Muslim communities that affect the Christian presence in Jerusalem. The aims of this committee would be two-fold. First, is to develop support among Christians in other countries through their parish and congregation links, networks and twinning arrangements regarding these social problems faced by Christians in Jerusalem. Second, the committee would advocate for an international Christian lobby to influence Israeli and Palestinian foreign affairs pertaining to any decisions that would affect Christians living in the Holy Land.

5.2.1.3 Develop church diplomatic channels with Israel to foster mobility among Christians in the West Bank and Jerusalem.

When the Israeli government denies West Bank Christians access to Jerusalem, it has created social problems for the Christian communities in Bethlehem, Ramallah and Nablus. Because of this denial these communities in Jerusalem and the West Bank are isolated from one another. The Christian church leaders should work by all means possible to remove the travel restrictions on the Christians of the West Bank that

[332] Ibid 331. p. 16.

prevent them from accessing Jerusalem for religious practices and social activities with their nuclear and extended family members in the Christian community living there. The actions needed to address this issue should be taken at an international level, through the church hierarchies of the different denominations in Jerusalem who, in most cases, have good contacts with foreign countries because of the location of their denominational headquarters in Rome, Canterbury, Athens and other places in Europe. For example the Latin Rite Catholic Church in the Holy Land is represented by the Vatican in Italy, while the Orthodox Rite Church is connected to countries such Greece and Russia and the Anglican Church with the United Kingdom. These countries could become positive channels, through diplomatic means, by which Israel could be persuaded to provide freedom of religion practice to Christians wishing to worship at the Holy Sites in Jerusalem. Many Christian leaders already do put this kind of pressure on the State of Israel but a concerted effort by all of them simultaneously, including church leaders from the USA, might have more effect.

5.2.1.4 Development of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is an international celebration that occurs in every country with a Christian population, During this Week Christians from different denominations come together to pray and worship. In Jerusalem is an eight-day of prayer. It started as ecumenical movement in 1908 by ecumenical scholars living in Latvia and has been sanctioned by the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity and the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches[333]. These prayer services were introduced by a group of The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in Jerusalem could be better used as a way to increase awareness of the importance of

[333] The Sword of the Spirit, *Week of Prayer for Christian Unity*. January 18-25, 2015. [online] [Accessed 13 May 2016] Available at: www.swordofthespirit.org.

these services to the local Christians in the Holy Land. The Week could be better used for dissemination about Christianity in the Holy Land and spiritual connection with the local Christians and the Church in Jerusalem. In practice local Christians tend only to attend services during this Week that are at their own church denomination or other denominations with whom they are in agreement. The presence of more international Christian groups at these services would raise the profile of Palestinian Christians to those Christian pilgrimage groups who are visiting Jerusalem at that time as currently few international pilgrims ever meet local Christians.

It might also encourage the local Christians in the Holy Land to have more participation in the Week of Prayer to demonstrate the unity of Christians and to connect spiritually with their brothers and sisters in Christ from abroad. This international participation alongside their local co-religionists would show Muslim and Jewish neighbours in Jerusalem and the rest of the world that local Christians are part of the worldwide church and not just a small, insignificant minority in Israel and Palestine. The Week of Prayer is attended by some international Christians working in the Holy Land and there are a few international pilgrimage groups that visit Jerusalem at that specific time in order to be part of the services during the Week of Prayer, but much more international support could be gained.

5.2.2 Christian community level.

There is a need to develop a comprehensive awareness plan that will educate the local Christians about the importance of their presence in Jerusalem and the West Bank as the "living stones" of Christianity. As part of this plan, it is necessary to introduce Christian educational materials to parishes about the issues facing the Christian community and

possible measures to prevent the further departure of Christians from the area. Further detail about this issue is given in the following sub-sections.

5.2.2.1 Implement a donor-driven residence-building project.

The researcher suggests that there is a need for the local Christian community, in cooperation with Christian-related donor agencies, to work towards implementing a building project to provide housing for the local Christian communities in Jerusalem. Coordination between church leaders and the local community is essential to start implementing this housing project. The various Christian denominations should act rapidly to solve the housing problem as it is a key to there being a continuing Christian presence in Jerusalem. Such building projects will have a major impact on whether or not there is continued migration of Christians away from Jerusalem.

Implementing Christian housing projects is not an easy thing to do in light of the drive by other religious groups in Jerusalem to impose their religious identities on the city. Notably, the Israeli government has been making policies and endorsing regulations to encourage an influx of Israeli Jews to the Old City and other parts of East Jerusalem. They are given incentives to purchase their own housing units and are exempted them from specific taxes in areas that have previously been Palestinian residential areas of Jerusalem.[334]

The Israeli government confiscated around 24,620 dunum which represent around 35% from the Palestinian own land of East Jerusalem. Most of the land was confiscated before 1980, taken into consideration that the Jerusalem Municipality also has

[334] Arab Study Society, The Multi Sector Strategy for East Jerusalem presented in this report has been the result of a strong collaborative effort between the local and international consultant's teams. Under the overall guidance of the project's steering committee, funded by the European Commission, 2006, pp. 44-45.

confiscated more land since then. The Israeli government offered compensation for the Palestinian land confiscated but in generally the majority not accepted, because of the forced nature of these expropriations, the low prices offered, and because accepting payments would imply recognition of the authority of the State of Israel. And still the Israeli government confiscating land.

The purpose of the land confiscation in East Jerusalem is in order to be used to locate Israeli settlements. These settlements cover around 25,125 dunum and are spread throughout East Jerusalem though 30,000 housing units and 190,000 settler leaving in these housing units. Some of the land that is confiscated are used by the Jerusalem Municipality for various public facilities infrastructure. The remaining lands left for the Palestinian ownership that counts around 39,000 dunum, Israel allocate 24,654 dunum for town or zoning plans while they allocated as residential area around 9,179 dunum, public areas (1,737 dunum), roads (3,576 dunum), green areas (9,157 dunum) and common areas (541dunum). Some 464 dunum of the planned land expropriation have remained unutilised.

Israeli Jews have the additional advantage that they are citizens of the State of Israel while the Palestinians living in Jerusalem have an ambivalent status with regard to citizenship.

There are no specific survey data or information on how many houses the different Christian communities need to solve their housing problems. Therefore, there is an urgent need to conduct an accurate survey of the housing situation among the remaining Christians to assist with the implementation of a housing project.

In light of this harsh situation, the development organisations working with the Christian community need to see the importance of designing programmes to save the

Christian identity of Jerusalem and serve the underprivileged sectors in the city.[335] Several development reports from local and international agencies illustrate the importance of initiating housing programmes in Jerusalem. Hence, it is important to undertake a strategic programme to enable the Jerusalemite Palestinian Christian minority to stay in their home city by facilitating soft loans and improving the possibility of owning their own apartments, which will encourage them to stay and not leave the city. If such a programme prevails it would boost the social justice value for Christians in Jerusalem, especially in the Old City.

5.2.2.2 Develop an early intervention drug-treatment project. There is said to be a drug problem among Christian young men but not much hard data are available to support this assertion. The researcher asserts that there is some evidence that this assumption is true, based on the Israeli anti-drug authority and a small amount of research that was described in Chapter Three Section 3.1.3 and other soft data, who claim that there are 50,000 drug addicts in East Jerusalem and the West Bank[336]. It may not be surprising that there is a drug problem in East Jerusalem when an on-line search of drug problems in Israel brings up many descriptions of the problem there, its prevention and its treatment. In "Drug Problems: Cross-cultural Policy and Program Development" published in 2002 about drug problems in Israel, there is a chapter about the Palestinian drug problem. Caritas Jerusalem has held two conferences on "Drug Abuse", the second being at Bethlehem University in 2014*. This information about drug problems in East Jerusalem is supported by the author's personal involvement in an organization that deals with Christian young people who suffer from drug addiction.

[335] Report issued by the East Jerusalem Multi Sector Review. A project supported by the European Union in 2002.

[336] Israeli Anti-Drug Authority. *Drug abuse in Jerusalem*. [online] [Accessed 12 January 2016] Available at: http://www.antidrugs.org.il/arabic/template/default.aspx?mainCatid=96.

Currently Caritas Jerusalem sponsors the "Old City Counselling Centre" concentrating on the prevention of drug and alcohol abuse but there is also a need to establish a drug rehabilitation project that serves young people who are addicted to drugs during their first stage of detoxification. Its focus should address preparing these young people for physical and social rehabilitation and to pursue long-term treatment at centres located locally and internationally. The aim of such a project is to give those with drug addictions, their families and community a practical and effective solution to deal with a problem that can destroy the family and the social fabric of Christian families and communities. In addition to drug rehabilitation centres, there would need to be an active drug awareness programme made available to Christian schools, with a wider remit than the one already run by Caritas Jerusalem.[337]

5.3 Cultural Strategic Issues.

Christian culture in the Holy Land, especially in Jerusalem, is an important part of the Palestinian culture in general. The difficult situation that the Christians are facing in terms of low incomes, high unemployment, lack of security, political conflict and ignorance of their own Christian culture has created a major impact in defacing the Christian cultural image in the country. Christian culture is connected with the Christian religion, the daily life of the Christian community and part of their religious identity and nationalistic feeling of belonging to the land. Christian culture shares many features with Muslim and Jewish cultures because of the fact that all the three religions who call themselves children of Abraham, began in the Middle East, were influenced by each other and developed and adapted ideas and practices from each other. Such practices include praying, fasting, giving charity and pilgrimage to holy sites. A number of

[337] Independent Catholic News Jerusalem. Article: *young Israelis, Palestinians say no to drugs*. July 9, 2009. [online] [Accessed 12 January 2016. Available at: http://www.indcatholicnews.com/news.php?viewStory=14591

suggestions are made in the following sections to recover Christian culture in the Holy Land.

5.3.1 Develop Christian Cultural Centres in Jerusalem and the West Bank.

A plan should be established to develop multipurpose, interdenominational Christian cultural centres in Jerusalem and the West Bank. There are a few Christian centres at present that belong to different churches, but these seem to mainly provide support activities and do not promote cultural activities. Any new centres that are set up do not necessarily need to be in new locations but could be incorporated into the current Christian support activity centres.

Such cultural centres would bring opportunities for local Christians to engage in a range of Christian activities, in coordination with the different Church authorities and Christian institutions. Each centre would aim to revive Christian culture in Jerusalem and the West Bank. They would offer facilities and services to local Christian communities in various cultural, social and religious fields. The centres would care for the younger generations by offering programmes and spreading awareness about possible solutions to the variety of problems facing the Christian community as a whole.

Over the past decades, the absence of practical plans to solve problems facing the Christian community, has led members of the local Christian communities to find other ways to overcome their difficulties. Some have turned to emigration, drug and alcohol addiction, or have simply tried to ignore the reality of their situation by separating themselves from their Christian community and its tribulations. The establishment of Christian cultural centres would contribute in a direct and effective manner to overcoming many of the cultural, religious, and social problems that the Christian community face. The younger members of the community living in Jerusalem and the

West Bank would be the target group for this intervention. The target goals of the Christian cultural centres are examined in more detail below.

5.3.1.1 Encourage young people to read and engage withe cultural media. There is a need to encourage the younger generations to read a variety of Christian documents, books and other paper-based materials, as well as electronic material that play a role in the perception of belonging and context. The sense of belonging comes from reading publications that contribute to a sense of identity, relationships and processes of acceptance and understanding. Such materials will need to be written in such a way as to be attractive to young people. This method would encourage younger generations to explore their awareness of the different aspects of belonging, including the potential of being enriched or challenged within the community. They would learn how attitudes of belonging are modified over time and would be encouraged to develop their own understanding of the concept of belonging through their engagement with appropriate material and texts. This should result in their awareness of the construction of perceptions and ideas of belonging. Several contexts need to be included in the planning process and are described below:

1- Personal context refers to those elements in culture that are individual and private. Consideration of this context allows a person to “own” the culture.
2- Christian cultural context is complex and refers generally to a Christian lifestyle made up of customs, traditions, heritage and habits, all of which need to be taken into account in order for a true picture of a culture to be drawn. The complexity also refers to intellectual and artistic awareness, education and discernment.
3- Historical context refers to the factual and documented evidence of particular times, such as art produced, music composed, poetry and novels written by members of any cultural group.

4- Social context refers to the larger Christian community as a group of people who belong to the same organisation or hierarchy. Moreover, it refers to those aspects which are civil and public aspects of a society.

5- There is a need to understand diversity within any culture and a need to develop the cultural horizons through cultural programmes for all diverse groups among members of a Christian society. The cultural programmes described earlier would be designed to explore culture as something everyone has and to allow members to realize that each person has a unique cultural identity that continually changes. Each programme would explore different aspects of culture to understand better that a culture is more than race, ethnicity, or nationality and that every individual contributes towards the group culture.

5.3.1.2 Develop a Christian cultural magazine and/or newspaper. There is a need to develop a shared Palestinian Christian cultural heritage by increasing the cultural awareness in the various groups of the local Christian communities. Differences in practice between the different denominations are not well known in other denominations which can lead to a feeling that one's own denomination is the only Christian community. This enhanced cultural awareness could be achieved by establishing a Christian interdenominational periodical magazine or newspaper. There is potential for using publication tools to foster teacher and student understanding of Christian culture and promote teacher and student reflection. Through these publications, scientific studies and articles can be presented that argue for the importance of understanding cultural values. They can also highlight the importance of understanding that cultural values can be made explicit and enhance learning.

5.3.1.3 Enhance the role of young people in community decision-making. Based on the assessment made in Chapter Three in this thesis,[338] Christian teenagers and young adults appear to be excluded from decision making about the social and religious activities available to them. By excluding them from decision-making reflects on the motivation and efficacy of the Christian younger members as they can assume that their opinions are not valuable. Younger members of the Christian community should have the opportunity to participate in local decision-making at church level, it should facilitate whole community collaboration and develop to talent improvement, self-assurance building and proprietorship of their culture that can prepare younger people as they direct toward adulthood.

Church leaders and some Church related organizations only focus on adult recruitment and participation while often it is the younger people who are an active involved in Christian community development efforts.[339] Such involvement contributes towards the development of local Christian's community and the social and psychological development of the young people involved. Also, their involvement could be in community-based organizations, school, local sports teams, and school-based clubs. According to Youniss, McLellan and Yates, "youth involvement in Christian community religious and social activities can increase their willingness to be a part of a greater good. The benefits of youth involvement include feelings of efficacy, the need to be valued and taken seriously by others in the community, increased self-esteem, and

[338] See Chapter Three.
[339] Constance Flanagan and Beth Van Horn, "Youth Civic Engagement: Membership and Mattering in Local Communities," *Focus* (Fall 2001): pp. 1-10. Available at: http://www.ca4h.org/files/1230.pdf.

being a responsible citizen who performs a public duty. Recognition by the community leads to feeling valued".[340]

Chan and Elder argue that other factors, such as "parental involvement can influence youth involvement. Young people whose parents are actively involved in the community are more likely to become active themselves".[341] Fletcher, Elder and Mekos believe that "young people whose parents do not participate in civic activities still may become active in their communities; however, a supportive and reinforcing parental relationship may have a greater contribution to civic engagement through parental modelling".[342]

5.3.1.4 Introduce the Aramaic language to the local Christian community. The Aramaic language is a Semitic language that originated from the language of the Aramaeans.[343] The Aramaic language was spoken in the region of Mesopotamia and Syria before 1000 BC, and later it became the lingua franca of the Middle East before the Christian was born. Aramaic was the language of the Jews in Palestine, Jesus spoke Aramaic and preached as parts of the Old Testament and much of the rabbinical literature were written in that language. It is known that Jesus, his disciples, and his followers spoke and wrote in Aramaic. Christianity spread throughout Palestine, Syria and Mesopotamia

[340] James Youniss, Jeffrey McLellan and MirandaYates, "What We Know About Engendering Civic Identity," *American Behavioral Scientist* 40 (March 1997): pp. 620-631. [Online] Available: https://www.scribd.com/document/36324040/Engaged-for-Success.
[341] Christopher Chan and Glen Elder, "Family Influences on Civic Involvement, (Unpublished manuscript 1999), cited in Fletcher et al., 2000.
[342] Anne Fletcher, Glen Elder, and Mekos, D. "Parental Influences on Adolescent Involvement in Community Activities," *Journal of Research on Adolescence* 1 (2000): pp. 29-48. Available at: http://libres.uncg.edu/ir/uncg/f/A_Fletcher_Parental_2000.pdf?origin=publication_detail.
[343] Aram, which is the Hebrew word for ancient Syria

in this Semitic tongue. [344]

The Aramaic and Arabic scholar, Franz Rosenthal argues for the importance of this language in the Journal of Near Eastern Studies.

"The history of Aramaic represents the purest triumph of the human spirit, as embodied in language (which is the mind's most direct form of physical expression) over the crude display of material power. The language continued to be powerfully active in the promulgation of spiritual matters. It was the main instrument for the formulation of religious ideas in the Near East, which then spread in all directions all over the world ... The monotheistic groups continue to live on today with a religious heritage, much of which found first expression in Aramaic."[345]

Speaking the Aramaic language which Jesus spoke, or at least reading and understanding it, could give a personal uniqueness and strong bond to Palestinian Christian culture, its history, and religion. Therefore, the Aramaic language could be introduced to the local Christian community as part of the strategies to strengthen the Christian culture among local Christians. The Aramaic language could be introduced to all of the local Christian community through school, in extra curricula courses and special courses taught to adults in the Christian community. Introducing the Aramaic language to the Christian community would provide the ability to understand the Christian religious texts in their original language as well the cultural context of that religion and increase their sense of belonging to the land, culture and region.

5.3.1.5 Establish a Christian cultural centre and libraries. Establishing a Christian cultural centre and library that provides access to various cultural materials from all the Christian traditions is a very important asset for enhancing the Christian culture and heritage in the Christian community. These materials and resources would contain information that would relate to Christian people, their lifestyles, future, art, religion,

[344] Klaus Beyer, *The Aramaic Language: Its Distribution and Subdivisions* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1986).
[345] Franz Rosenthal, "A Grammar of Biblical Aramaic," *The Journal of Near Eastern Studies* (1978): pp. 81-82.

and history. In addition, the Christian culture centre and library would be the main resource for the local and international scholars interested in the culture and heritage of local Christian communities.

This cultural centre and library could play a major role in organizing various cultural activities for the young people and students to encourage them to read more and know more about the local Christian culture and heritage in the Holy Land. The goal of the cultural centre and library and its activities would be to foster a sense of belonging to Christianity culture and religion and national identity based on Christian values.

Integral to the development of the Christian community, and its effect on the Palestinian people as a whole, would be the conservation, development, and promotion of the indigenous Christian identity. The centre and library could have the potential to address the challenges facing Christian young people. A major challenge exists to recognise and address their economic situation, community and cultural involvement and educational needs.

It is essential for local Christians to understand the importance of Christian culture, its impact on their presence in the Land and the role it plays on their life. Therefore, there is a need to develop a Christian cultural plan through designated programmes that would strengthen the Christian culture among the Christian community, as well in the Holy Land in general.

5.*3.1.6. The value of Christian culture and heritage as an educational tool.* It is vital to strengthen the local Christian community and its cultural identity by endorsing Christian culture and heritage at both local and national levels. Recombining Christian communities with their situation would promote “good citizenship” practices. Initiatives can act as a catalyst to revive local communities by providing residents with a sense of shared purpose. For this reason, an educational programme should be endorsed based on

the common educational curriculum taught in Christian schools. Visits to Christian museums and visitor centres should be strongly encouraged. Visits by school-aged children, including outreach-programme education could be coordinated with the church education services and should complement the formal teaching curriculum offered in Christian schools.

5.3.1.7 Encourage research into Christian cultural heritage. There is a need to encourage Christian students attending universities and colleges to participate in educational research regarding Christian cultural heritage and development in the Holy Land. The purpose of conducting such research would be to encourage and provide solid, new information concerning the place of the local Christians in the Holy Land. Through various research programmes, students could be given an opportunity to find out more about the history of the local Christian culture and identity. The goal would be to develop a conceptual bridge connecting the questions, problems, and knowledge of local Christian community groups with the resources and academic expertise at research and educational institutions. The programme aims would be to build democratic institutions and improve the quality of life of Christians in the Holy Land.

5.3.1.8 Develop Christian cultural tourism programmes. According to the Israeli Ministry of Tourism, the number of tourists coming into Israel in recent years is more than 3 million.[346] For example, approximately 3.54 million tourists travelled to Israel in 2013, half a percent more than the previous record set in 2012. Jerusalem was the most popular city to visit, and 53% out of the 75% tourists who visited there reportedly were Christians.

[346] Israeli Ministry of Tourism report 2013, visit website: www.tourism.gov.il.

Some Christian groups come to the Holy Land for pilgrimage. Making a pilgrimage to the Holy Land is a unique spiritual improvement as well as to understand the bible culture and history development. It is a time when they recommit themselves to living their Christian lives as pilgrims. For many tourists, going on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land is a unique way to come to know the land where Jesus was born, where he preached, healed, suffered, died, and rose again. This understanding links international Christians to the roots of their faith and thus enhances their spiritual life.

At present many international Christian pilgrim groups are not aware that there are Christian tourist agencies and use those publicised by the Israeli Ministry of Tourism, which may be Jewish or Muslim run agencies. Programmes suggested in this thesis to develop tourism would more clearly link the local Christians and foreign Christian pilgrims together.

Dissemination is an effective tool for providing clear and meaningful information to the international Christian community, foreign churches, and Christian educators about Christian tour companies who can arrange pilgrimages. Tour guides and leaders of such pilgrim groups could be recommended to add to their itinerary of visits to the Holy Sites. A supplement to such a tour or pilgrimage would involve focussing on the traditional, local Christian and other religious culture and customs, and characteristic social practices. Christian cultural tourism includes times when tourists and pilgrims meet local Christians and is the subset of tourism that is defined as travel directed toward understanding the traditional and modern culture, arts, and history of the Christian places. This includes experiencing visual and literary arts, language, museums, tradition, artistries, architecture as well as related films and broadcasting. These activities provide a particular, authentic experience customized for Christian pilgrimages. The local Christian community has a great wealth of interesting people and

places and such visits would develop in the foreign tourist or pilgrim a realization and appreciation of cultural activities, artefacts, unusual architecture, or engaging pieces of history. Trained tour guides can find exciting and unique ways to tell the story of Christian local culture, arts and humanities.

5.3.1.9 Establish a Christian community museum. There is a need to establish a Christian community museum that depicts Christian culture and history in the Holy Land. The museum would serve as the repository of the history of local Christians in the Holy Land. As a "living institution," it would continually deal with the present and imagine how to prepare for the future. It would serve as a new device that could bring local Christians closer together as a community to counter the destruction of families, communities, and traditional cultures. It would provide individuals, families, and groups with a place that draws them together; gathering, meeting, socializing, playing, learning, celebrating, talking, looking for meaning, hoping to belong. There are currently small, denominationally based centres, run by groups such as the Greek Orthodox Church, the Armenian Orthodox seminary and the Christchurch Anglican Hospice, but the value of the museum suggested in this thesis is that it would represent all Christian denominations and portray all communities in one place.

5.3.1.10. Develop advocacy to enhance Christian culture and heritage. Jerusalem has a rich Christian history and culture but it needs to be introduced to locally and international Christians. Local Christians and Christian related organizations should develop a plan to introduce the Holy land Christian culture and heritage values in the absenteeism of a legal framework. Influence is needed to inspire Christian non-for-profit organizations and individuals to preserve and enhance their heritage in Jerusalem. Christian not-for-profit organizations and local Christian communities could establish Christian cultural heritage events and festivals in the Old City of Jerusalem. These

events would have a beneficial influence on informative levels, social unity, inclusion, and capital development.

These cultural celebrations could be held yearly to keep the Christian culture alive through music, art, dancing and educational materials about old Christian customs, crafts, food, and entertainment. Food booths could provide tasty treats from Christian traditional food. Artisan booths could display Christian jewellery, clothing, and art. A festival big stage could feature exciting music and cultural acts, which could provide an opportunity for participants to experience presentations by different religious music groups. Jerusalem would benefit from the promotion of such cultural festivals especially in conjunction with other tourist events and attractions.

5.4 Economic Strategies Issues.

The economy of the Christian community in Jerusalem and major cities of the West Bank has a narrow base. Local Christians receive incomes primarily from tourism, very small retail trade companies and non-profit organization services. In general, the economic situation has failed significantly, especially after the conflict between the Israeli and the Palestinian that started in September 2000 which is called the “Second Intifada”. Decreasing numbers of pilgrimage and tourist have harmfully affected tourism-related business sectors. Christian businesses directly connected to the tourist industry have suffered large financial losses. Furthermore, the tightened restrictions imposed to their business daily life on the mobility of individual and business Palestinian made products between East Jerusalem and the West Bank has had a remarkably contrary impact on businesses in Jerusalem, particularly among businesses that provide to the retail trade and transportation. This problems weaken the economic and remarkable decline in industrial, agricultural, and service sectors affected by the

restrictions forced on any possible continuing development. These restrictions include land expropriation, control of water resources, stringent business licensing, and the high cost of land and capital.

Palestinian employment in Israel, which has become the main source of income for 50% of the East Jerusalem Palestinian workforce, as has been mentioned in Chapter Three is a major policy concern. The implications of this very high dependence on the Israeli labour market has increased labour costs for Palestinian businesses in East Jerusalem and has weakened the prospects for expanding and developing the economy and potential for future expansion and jobs. The outcome of this economic dilemma affected the educated and skilled labour from the Christian community.

Further examination of the trade problems proved that the wholesale of imports are unpreserved goods from Israel. This proposes a significant leakage of resources outside the Palestinian economy and into Israel increased by the strict isolation procedure or "closures", these injustice actions forced the East Jerusalem's economic dependence on Israel. Therefore, it is imperative to develop a master Christian strategic economic plan that addresses, works with, and coordinates activities with local and international Christian Churches and church-related organizations to address these issues and concerns. Aspects of this plan are examined in the following sections.

5.4.1 Using Christian resources in tourism. The Holy Land, especially Jerusalem and Bethlehem,[347] is recognized by every Christian as an important destination for religious tourist. Beside its religious importance for Christians, its rich history and geographic location, as well as its diverse culture increased its invaluable assets. The number of

[347] Palestinian Minister of Tourism, the data can be viewed [Online] available at: www.travelpalestine.ps.

Christian religious tourists dominates the tourist industry.[348] These assets indicate that especially Jerusalem and Bethlehem increase the potential to increase their share of religious and tourist receipts worldwide, which increase the generating employment. The numbers of tourists to Jerusalem have already been mentioned in Section 4.3.1.8 and according to the Palestinian Minister of Tourism two million tourists visited Bethlehem in 2013. Yet, this potential revenue is not actualized because of political uncertainty and Israeli policies, rules and regulations governing the development and growth of tourism in Jerusalem.

Fortunately, a limited benefit from Christian tourism does go to local Christians. However, Christian travel agencies are benefiting only to a small extent because the Israeli travel agencies control the majority of Christian pilgrimages, tourism and hotels. To correct this imbalance, local and international church leaders in collaboration with Christian travel agencies should explore the international Christian markets, including the potential for local, regional, and international joint ventures. Opportunities for partnerships exist, not only between private firms, but also between the public and private sectors.

The researcher suggests that the international and local Christian community should consider ways in which Church leaders and the heads of some Christian churches and Christian organization from abroad who lead groups also act as tour guides when they bring pilgrimage groups to the Holy Land. They need to realise that they are doing the job of local Christian tour guides and unintentionally taking away the job that should be performed by local Christians. In contrast, the Jewish community controls Jewish tourism fully and Muslim tourism is fully controlled by the Muslim community. Just as

[348] Ibid 347.

the Jewish and Muslim communities, the Christian community should have the ability to control of Christian tourism.

5.4.2 Develop a relationship between Christian tourism and Christian churches. There is a need to establish a link between the Christian tourist sector in Jerusalem and Bethlehem and the international churches and parishes whose members are coming on pilgrimage. This could be achieved by enlisting the help of local Christian tour operators for their pilgrimage tours. These Christian tour operators could develop cooperation between parishes and this relationship could be supported indirectly by local and international churches. Christian churches abroad could create and encourage a policy that all their pilgrimages be associated with Israeli and Palestinian Christian guides. The benefit would be that their congregations would experience pilgrimages from a local Christian perspective with the added benefit of helping to improve the economy of the local Christian community.

5.4.3 Encourage development of Christian tourism as a business opportunity. There is a need to encourage local and international Christian businesses to create new ventures to work with the Christian tourism industry. They could develop partnerships that could create Christian tourism services, such as bus companies that provide transportation services for Christian pilgrimages. Such a transportation company could be "limited by shares." The company would have shareholders only from the Christian community and the liability of the shareholders to the creditors of the company would be limited to the capital originally invested. The company would be a private, limited company because the disclosure requirements are easier to operate within Israeli law. However, company shares would not be offered to the public and, therefore, cannot be traded on a public stock exchange.

The establishment of such a Christian transportation company would be the first of its kind. It would give an opportunity to any Christian to invest in a Christian business in which its revenues and operation would directly benefit the Christian community. The operation of this company would generate employment for the local Christian community by hiring drivers, technicians, sales people and operation management.

5.4.4 Regain ownership of Christian property in Jerusalem. As was mentioned in Chapter Two, the Old City of Jerusalem is divided into four quarters: Christian, Moslem, Jewish, and Armenian quarters. The structure of the buildings in each quarter is comprised of mainly two or three levels. The first level is the market place and shops and the other two levels above are dwelling places. Currently the buildings in each of the quarters are owned either by families or by religious institutions.

The area of the Old City is 870 dunums, of which 24% belongs to the Muslim Waqf,[349] which is a form of endowment in Islam. As such, it typically devotes a particular building or plot of land for Muslim religious or charitable purposes. Another 28% of the Old City belongs to private Arab residents. The State of Israel owns approximately 19% of the land in the area or 170 dunums and Christian institutions hold 29% of the property in the Old City.[350] The Jewish Quarter areas covers 133 dunums (approximately 40 acres) and was mainly destroyed during the Israeli War of Independence in 1948 when its inhabitants were evacuated to what became West Jerusalem. It remained under Jordanian rule, as part of what became East Jerusalem, until it was controlled by Israel in 1967 during the Six Day War. The Jewish Quarter today established on 15% of the entire area of the Old City. After 1967 the Jewish

[349] Al Waqf is a Muslim religious institution that controls and owns Muslim properties in Jerusalem.

[350] Nadav Shragai and Haaretz Correspondent, "Israel Cements Ownership of Jewish Quarter in Jerusalem's Old City," *Haaretz*, 11 March 2008. Available at: http://www.haaretz.com/print-edition/news/israel-cements-ownership-of-jewish-quarter-in-jerusalem-s-old-city-1.241108.

Quarter went through massive restoration and renovation over the past 40 years and most of the residence are Jewish. The Armenian Quarter occupies the southwest corner of the Old City. It covers one-sixth of the area contained inside the ancient walls. Armenian Christians are concentrated around the complex of St. James Cathedral and many Armenians live inside the compound of the Cathedral.

The residences in each quarter belong to that particular religious community, mainly the majority of Christians live in the residences in the Christian Quarter; the Jewish Quarter residences are for Jews only and the majority of the Muslims live exclusively in the Muslim Quarter.

However, this policy does not necessarily apply to the shops and commercial markets in each quarter. In the Jewish Quarter 95% of the shops and markets are owned and operated by Jewish merchants and approximately 98% of the shops and markets in the Muslim quarter are owned and operated by Muslim businesses. In comparison, 80% of Christian Quarter shops and markets, in particular, the area around the Holy Sepulchre, are owned by the church while just 20% of the businesses shops are operated by the Christians while the rest of the shops and businesses in the Christian quarter property are operated by Muslims because of the departure of local Christians as discussed in Chapter Three.

There is need of a strategic coordination plan between Christian church leaders and Christian organizations to assist Christians to buy back the shops and markets in the Christian Quarter that are currently being run by non-Christians. This would provide local Christians with the opportunity to improve their economic well-being and bring back the Christian image to the Christian Quarter. This plan is complicated because of two main issues. First, it involves money that must to be raised by the Christian

churches and related organizations to buy back these properties. Second, it involves convincing non-Christians to sell to Christians, which is contrary to the Fatwa that was issued by Muslim religious scholars about selling Muslim-owned properties to non-Muslims. However, the researcher suggests that church leaders should be convinced to negotiate with Muslim leaders in the Old City to attempt to but back these properties

5.4.5 Productive thinking. The SWOT analysis completed in Chapter Three indicates a lack of productive thinking among members of the Christian community that has limited their type of work under the categories of employment and not business. Most Christians living in the Old City work in the service economic sector and those who work in the tourism industry are employed by other people[351] By introducing an economic productive thinking ideology to the Christian community, it could foster its ability to improve the Christian economy, design new products, produce works of art, solve problems in new ways, and develop ideas based on original, novel, or unconventional approaches. Productive thinking would give the Christian community the ability to see things in a new way to solve problems and to engage in mental and physical experiences that are new, unique, or different.

The Christian community in the Holy Land is well educated but there are concerns, that its members may be limited in exercising thinking productively.[352] Productive thinking training programmes could be designed, based on the work by Hurson, to provide immediate help and experience and provide powerful tools to the Christian community. By doing so, the intellectuals would learn how to use Christian resources in professional creative ways and develop strategic thinking and problem-solving effectiveness. They would be able to establish recognised approaches to develop new and enhanced ways to

[351] See Chapter Three.
[352] Latin Parish Consultant Committee, 2008

modernise, improve products and processes, open new market trade opportunities, save money, and become more competitive.[353] According to Hurson, this could be achieved by introducing an innovation vocabulary and mind-set, allowing teams to collaborate more effectively, more efficiently, and more productively as they work through a disciplined, repeatable innovation process. Whether working alone or in teams, individuals would get better results in less time by developing productive thinking skills. The researcher suggests that this approach would be applicable to the economic situation of the Christians in the Old City, but would require the development of team work in the community.

5.4.6 Establish financial resource facilities.

There is a need to establish Christian development funds to improve productive sectors. The funds would be based on medium and long-term financing with a low interest rate. For example, there is a clear need to improve Christian access to money for the Christian private sector. When these financial resources become available, they would finance the investments required for reinvigorating economic growth. This could take place once more peaceful conditions occur.

There is a need to establish Christian faith-based, non-profit organizations to provide new university and college graduates with opportunities to start small businesses. These organizations could help micro-entrepreneurs, who have business ideas to grow and sustain small businesses. Access to this financial fund should be in accordance with a market research analysis by examining the needs of the local marketplace and how the proposed initiative would fit into the needs of the market. The mission of the organization would focus on alleviating the physical and economic poverty of

[353] Tim Hurson, *Think Better: An Innovator's Guide to Productive Thinking*, Seminarian Conference Center, Vitacura, Santiago, 2007.pp. 53-55.

Christians through microenterprise development. The organisation would offer small business loans, with low percentage interest rates.

5.4.7 Establish a Christian recruitment office.

There is a need to establish Christian Recruitment Offices (CROs) in the Holy Land, especially in Jerusalem. They would provide information regarding employment opportunities that have direct and indirect contact with church and Christian-related institutions.

The CRO would be a full-service employment agency, staffing firm and employment recruiting service. It would place local Christians into full-time, part-time, temporary, and long-term Christian-based positions. Each CRO would have the ability to service their local Christian community customers according to their individual needs, rather than adhering to corporate policy. Their concern would be about the needs of the Christian community customers and implementing policies, programs, and services to meet those needs.

Of importance would be the coordination of activities between a CRO and all of the local Christian institutions, churches, convents, retail stores, and different areas of business in the district served by the CRO. Employment opportunities would be advertised so that any member from the local community looking for work could go to a local CRO for job placement.

5.5 Political Strategic Issues.

Until 1967 East Jerusalem was under the control of Jordan and for the Jordan it is was considered as part of Jordan, when Israel took over through occupying East Jerusalem during the Six Day War. Immediately after the war, the Israel government issued an

order that including East Jerusalem within the municipality of Jerusalem. In July 1980, the Israeli parliament approved a law to annexing East Jerusalem and declared that Jerusalem is united Jerusalem and it is the capital of Israel. However, the annexation of East Jerusalem that was declared by Israeli parliament has not been recognized by the international community until today.

The political conflict between the Palestinian after 1967 affected the economic and social developments. Since 1967, Israel has strategically designed a geo-political policy it goals to create what is called the "United Jerusalem" under sole Israeli jurisdiction. The strategic designed policies has employed to accomplish the goals to strengthening the Jewish presence in East Jerusalem, restricting Palestinian development by confiscate expropriate land from the Palestinians-owned land and restrictions on land use and housing construction by Palestinians living in East Jerusalem. Political struggle are also reasons behind the restrictions imposed on the movement of individuals and goods and between East Jerusalem, and the Palestinian territories since 1993.

Since the Israel occupation Jerusalem in 1967, the Palestinians in Jerusalem were against the Israeli political system, both nationally and locally in the Jerusalem Municipality. The population did not gain Israeli citizenship, but maintained their Jordanian citizenship. However, they obtained permanent resident status in the municipality of Jerusalem. Since January 1969, these "Jordanian citizens" have the right to vote in the municipal elections in Jerusalem, but only few Palestinians participate in the election, while any Palestinians from East Jerusalem pursued election to the Jerusalem City Council. This Palestinian resistance has been effective by the lack of legitimacy of Israeli control over East Jerusalem. However Palestinian resistance of East Jerusalem has been affected by the mistreatment by the Israeli municipality

politics that created many of the social and economic problems experienced by Palestinians, both Christian and Muslims who live there.

That fact that the Palestinians were able to live in Jerusalem under the heavy Israeli restriction against these Palestinian residence of East Jerusalem is an important political success in the election process for the Palestinian National Council in 1996. Muslim religious institutions which have established an independent political entity, independent from the Israeli Government and Jerusalem Municipality, have achieved political success for Muslims. A Muslim Council was established and has been one of the main channels for managing the funds that are located by the Jordanian Government to the West Bank through the Muslim Waqf authorities. In addition, the Israeli Ministry of Interior has recognised Muslim Sharia Court system as an official religious entity. Palestinians have been less effective in regaining property in West Jerusalem as offers of compensation made by the State of Israel for property previously abandoned by their Arab owners in 1948 were generally considered not acceptable, because of the conditions attached to those offers.

Wasserstein has reported that "Palestinians feel entitled to what they consider to be their rights under Israeli law and is it considered more acceptable to negotiate with Israeli authorities or use legal means to obtain these rights at this level"[354] Looking at the level of political instability in the Holy Land, and in particular in Jerusalem, it clearly shows that people who tend to lose hope of a constructive socio-political change tend to either seek refuge in religion or in withdrawal. This trend can be seen clearly in the life of the Christian community in the Holy Land.

[354] See Bernard Wasserstein, op cit, p. 221. East Jerusalem 12 Multi Sector Review Project. UNDP, 2012.

The researcher suggests several political strategies that could lead to a reduction in the fears of local Christians about political instability and foster a sense of personal influence on local politics. Concrete Christian political strategies that serve Christian needs concerning the Palestinian-Israeli conflict are necessary. These strategies would deal not only with the Palestinian cause in general but also with the future survival of the Christian community in the country. The different aspects of the political strategies proposed are detailed below.

5.5.1 National aspects of the Christian Palestinian political strategy.

Palestinian Christians are part of the Palestinian people and their position reflects that of the Palestinian people as a whole. Part of their position involves political resistance to the occupation, along with all Palestinians. Another part involves their role in the peace process and reconciliation between Israelis and Palestinians. The Christian and Muslim communities both have those who have been killed in clashes between the Israeli Defence Force soldiers and Palestinian young men. Those Palestinians who have been killed in these situations are considered to be "martyrs" who died for the sake of peace and justice based on the right of the Palestinian people to establish their own Palestinian State according to international law.

Christian Palestinians are aware that the Israeli Government ideology for peace is difficult to achieve because its peace ideology is "security first and then peace." Such ideology can never bring peace. Palestinians feel that justice must come first and then peace will follow. As the prophet Isaiah said, "The effect of justice will bring peace, quietness and security forever."[355] The faith of the Palestinian Christians impels them to work towards peace and oppose, through their churches and their connection to

[355] Isaiah 32:17.

Christians throughout the world, any effort by the governing authority to impose peace in the Holy Land, unless it is based on international law. This researcher believes that local Christians, churches and their institutions should work toward a goal that allows every Jewish, Christian and Muslim individual to live under the same laws. To achieve this, the Israeli government would need to change their attitudes towards the Palestinian and stop the its discriminatory policies. Palestinians believe that they should have the same human rights as Israelis have and that this is the only way that peace can prevail. Each time the Israeli government gives preferential treatment to Israeli Jews over Palestinian Muslims and Christians, it sows the seeds of hatred and violence. If the Israeli government would return confiscated lands to their rightful owners, stop the demolition of homes, release all prisoners and detainees, remove road blocks, and respect all signed agreements, the peace process could move forward to resolution.

The researcher asserts that it is necessary to develop a set of strategies towards strengthening the Christian presence in Jerusalem. Jerusalem is an important key to peace in the Holy Land. Achieving peace there is be one of the more difficult aspects of the issue because Jews and Muslims have aims to claim exclusive sovereignty over the city based on their respective religions. Jewish claims on Jerusalem (especially the Old City) are based on religious history in relation to the Temple and the City of David. Muslim claims are based on the fact that the Prophet Mohammed spent time in Jerusalem and the presence of the Harem Al Sharif.

When Israelis and Palestinians speak of Jerusalem, they often assume exclusivist positions. The Israeli position towards Jerusalem it should remain as the “unified and eternal capital of the State of Israel”, under the absolute sovereignty of Israel alone. While the Palestinians position considered that East Jerusalem should become the capital of the future State of Palestine.

These ideologies have led to an impasse and the Christian presence in Jerusalem is threatened because of their minority status and the absence of strategies to bolster their presence. Therefore, local Christians, their churches, organizations, and institutions need to develop a set of strategies to strengthen the Christian presence in Jerusalem. Jerusalem should be the focus of local and international Christian political action as it is of central importance to the Christian religion and the local and international Christian community must work together to strengthen their Christian image in Jerusalem. Possible ways to achieve this are mentioned in the next sub-sections.

5.5.2 Develop a strategic plan for building living spaces.

Local Christian churches, with the cooperation of the local community, should create a plan to develop new housing projects and purchase apartments for local Christians who have no accommodation in Jerusalem. The building plan would consist of three components.

First, the church hierarchies need to be willing to make available unused land that they own on which subsidized housing projects can be built and individual units rented to local Jerusalem Christians. In fact, some housing projects already exist and one such project is available to the local Latin Catholic community on the Mount of Olives, built by the Franciscans, where tenants pay minimal rental fees. This project has proven to be successful, especially because the funds were donated by several international organizations.

Second, the Church leaders could provide the land while the local community provides the building costs or could possibly find interested donors to fund the building projects.

Third, there is a need to establish local Christian home -buying services or real estate companies. Their goal would be to find affordable houses and apartments in Jerusalem and sell them to local Christians. Another part of the service would be to establish a best purchase programme to facilitate the buying process.

This strategy aims at keeping the local Christians of Jerusalem living in Jerusalem. Is it quite clear that the Israeli government and Jerusalem Municipal Council are trying to reduce the number of non-Jews living there and want the Jewish population to dominate all other religious groups. This can be seen by looking at figures for settlements in East Jerusalem. According to Levin, by 1977, around 50,000 Israelis had moved into East Jerusalem and the new settlements surrounding it. By 1990, the number of settlers had grown to approximately 120,000 and numbers are still increasing today.

5.5.3 Encourage church leaders to pressurise Israel to reunite families. Church leaders should use their international connections to lobby other countries to impose sanctions on Israel to facilitate procedures that would reunify families. To date, hundreds of Christian family reunification cases have been submitted to the Israeli Ministry of the Interior without any resolution. The cases under consideration request that either the husbands or wives from the West Bank (the majority of spouses are from the Bethlehem and Ramallah areas) be given permanent residency status so they can live with their families in Israel and Jerusalem. The Israeli government continues to deny this very basic and simple right of families to live together as one unified unit. Obtaining an agreement with Israel to allow families to dwell together in one place will remove a great hardship and could foster peace. The separation of family members from one another is one of the main reasons that lead to emigration from Jerusalem.

The Israeli Separation Wall has severed family relations even more. Jerusalem has always been the centre of the Christian community residing within the Jerusalem-Bethlehem-Ramallah triangle. Now, the Separation Wall imposes a concrete barrier that increases hardships on the Christian community and prevents social and religious connectedness.

The Wall is reminiscent of the Berlin Wall that separated East Berlin from West Berlin before the reunification of Germany. In relation to that Wall, President Ronald Regan of the USA said to the peoples of the world on June 12, 1987 from West Berlin;

> "There is one sign the Soviets can make that would be unmistakable, that would advance dramatically the cause of freedom and peace. General Secretary Gorbachev, if you seek peace, if you seek prosperity for the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, if you seek liberalization: Come here to this gate. Mr. Gorbachev, open this gate. Mr. Gorbachev -- Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall!"

In a similar fashion, international diplomacy could have the same message from the people of Jerusalem. The Israeli government must be persuaded to tear down the Wall separating families from one another.

5.5.4 Develop awareness strategies.

Part of the political future of the Christians living in Jerusalem is affected by the lack of political representation of the Christians in the Israeli government, Palestine National Authority or Jerusalem Municipal Council and the possible ways they have to deal with any political changes. Awareness strategies could be implemented to increase the ability of Christian community leaders to analyse any political change that has the potential to influence the Christian presence in the City of Jerusalem.

Currently, no one can determine when the conflict will end. Nevertheless all Christians in Jerusalem and all over the world should work directly and indirectly to overcome

what has been lost of the Christian identity. Despite Christians in Jerusalem being few in number, they should be active in preserving their Christian identity. Part of that activity would involve engaging in dialogue, sharing and building in order to overcome their difficulties.

5.5.5 Develop common strategic goals between the Christian community and church leaders.

The local Christian communities and their Church leaders should work towards common strategic goals concerning the Christian presence and future in Jerusalem. The goals are important for the current situation and during future peace talks.

These strategic goals need to be derived from a set of concepts that all Christians can understand and work to fulfil. They should include agreements made by religious leaders to make clear the Christian position in Jerusalem.

On 15 February 2000, Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat met with Pope John Paul II at the Vatican to sign an accord to normalize relations between the Palestinian Authority and the Roman Catholic Church in Jerusalem. The agreement stated the position of the Vatican regarding Jerusalem, the peace process, and Palestinian rights in the following words; “The Vatican has called Israel's annexation of East Jerusalem illegal and does not recognize Israeli sovereignty there”.[356]

This agreement declared that an reasonable solution for the issue of Jerusalem, based on international resolutions, was fundamental for a just and lasting peace in the Holy Land and that unilateral decisions and actions altering the specific character and status of

[356] Basic Agreement between the Holy See and the Palestine Liberation Organization, 15 February 2000. [Online] Available at: http://www.vatican.va/cgi-bin/w3- msql/news_services/bulletin/news/6459.html.

Jerusalem were morally and legally unacceptable. Notably, it called for a special status for Jerusalem, internationally guaranteed, which should safeguard the following:

(1) Freedom of religion and conscience for all

(2) Equality before the law of the three monotheistic religions and their institutions and followers in the City

(3) Acknowledgement of the identity and sacred character of the City and its universally significant, religious and cultural heritage

(4) Freedom of access to the Holy Places and of worship in them

(5) Continuation of the "Status Quo" in those Holy Places where it applies

(6) Recognizing that Palestinians, irrespective of their religious affiliation, are equal members of Palestinian society

(7) A committed approach in promoting respect for human rights, individual and collective, in combating all forms of discrimination and threat to human life and dignity, as well as to the promotion of understanding and harmony between Palestinian and Israeli communities.

In 2009 all the Patriarchs and Heads of Churches in Jerusalem produced the Kairos Palestine Document "A word of faith, hope and love from the heart of Palestinian suffering" in which they said this;

"We the Patriarchs and Heads of Churches in Jerusalem hear the cry of hope that our children have launched in these difficult times that we still experience in this Holy Land. We support them and stand by them in their faith, their hope, their love and their vision for the future. We also support the call to all our faithful as well as to the Israeli and Palestinian leaders, to the international community and to the world churches, in order to accelerate the achievement of justice, peace and reconciliation in this Holy

Land. We ask God to bless all of our children by giving them more power in order to contribute effectively in establishing and developing their community, while making it a community of love, trust, justice and peace".

These documents and many others show that it is possible to mobilise the Christian community across its denominational divides to develop a common strategy to work together for peace.

5.5.6 Develop a Christian and United Nations perspective towards the peace process.

Christians should develop a clear vision about the peace process based on Christian interests and values and the United Nations Resolutions that lead to two nations sharing one Holy Land. Many documents and authors such as Naim Ateek* have had the dream that here could be two independent states, each responsible for the majority of its own internal affairs, working together on issues of common interest. However, together they would form a joint entity, in the form of a Confederation of Independent States. Jerusalem would remain a celebrated city, recognized as the capital of Israel and Palestine, as well as the home of the Confederation government. The Confederation government would administer the Old City, giving every citizen equal ownership. Likewise, this area would be open to all, with joint security teams at every entrance. The rest of Jerusalem would be a united city under the auspices of the Municipality of Jerusalem. State borders would run according to agreed borders; but officially, the land would be classified as a part of "The City of Peace" under divine sovereignty. There should be a Christian presence in any peace talks concerning Jerusalem and the Old City of Jerusalem.

5.5.7 Develop strategies on how to remain relevant in an Islamist-oriented society.

Palestinian Christians are often forced to employ politically astute and theologically radical means in their efforts to appear relevant within an increasingly Islamist-oriented society. The local Christians in the Holy Land and their church leaders have no problem with any religion while they oppose all forms of fundamentalism and radical actions that increase tensions and concerns of Christians.[357] In the Vatican, as Vinocur reports, new voices have begun to be heard. The Foreign Minister, Archbishop Giovanni Lajolo, recently issued a clarion call to take clear and courageous positions to affirm the Christian identity in the Holy Land, "because we know very well that radical Islam exploits anything that it interprets as a sign of weakness." The Middle East convened seven Christian patriarchs from the Middle East in Paris and declared that, "Islam's radicalization is the principal cause of the Christian exodus".[358] Therefore, a clear strategy should be addressed among the Christian community regarding this issue.

5.5.8 Encourage Christian representation in Israeli and Palestinian legislative bodies.

Representation of the local Christian community in the Israeli Knesset and the Palestinian Legislative Council should be implemented. The Palestinian election law established that a number of seats be reserved for Christians, those seats should be allotted to the Christian candidates who obtain more votes than the rest of the Christian candidates. In light of this, Palestinian Christians should set an agenda for those who are representing them on the Palestinian Legislative Council. Participating on the Legislative Council is a national activity and the agenda for the Christian representatives should be based on securing the rights of the Christians within the Palestinian social and political system.

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[265] John Vinocur, "Vatican Shifts the Prism on Mideast Christians," *International Herald Tribune*. 6 June 2006.
[358] Ibid 265.

There is also a need to have Christian Israeli Palestinian representation in the Israeli Knesset to represent Christians living under Israeli control. Since the creation of the State of Israel, no Christian party has gone through the Israeli election process and no Christian party is represented in that governing body. In contrast, Muslims represent 15% of Israel's population and they have 12 members on the Knesset. The representation of Christians in the Israeli parliament would preserve some of the Christian communities' legal rights and presence.

5.6 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the religious, social, cultural economic and political issues considered strategic to the problems facing the Christian community in the Holy Land, especially those living in Jerusalem, The next chapter will consider the plans necessary to address those strategic issues discussed here in order to solve those problems and capitalise on the strengths of that community and the opportunities available.

Chapter Six

Recommendations for the Implementation of Strategic Planning

6.0 Introduction.

The goal of Chapter Five is to translate the strategic issues identified in Chapter Four into required actions based on the SWOT analysis results presented in Chapter Three. These actions involve the implementation of specific programmes and projects whose aim it is to accomplish the goals of each strategic issue. The implementation and recommendations of the strategic planning thus entails religious, social, cultural, economic and political strategic issues. Each of these five strategic issues is presented separately by means of a set of programmes and projects designed specifically for the designated strategic plan. Thus, although the topic of "education" could be grouped across each of the strategic issues, for the purposes of this discourse, "education" appears under each of the strategic planning implementations. Each of the strategic planning programmes and projects has a specific period for implementation, notably, not to exceed 10 years. The strategic planning programmes and projects are derived from the outcome of the SWOT analysis reported in Chapter Three. The outcome designs also are divided among five different areas and they each contain several subareas. A diagrammatic representation of the Objective Tree derived from the Problem Tree shown at the end of Chapter Two is shown on the previous page.

The main objectives to be implemented include the following:

Religious Strategic Issues

Promote a peaceful religious environment

Reduce religious extremism

Develop respectful attitudes towards other religions

Promote interfaith programmes for youth

Integrate youth understanding of other religions

Promote a religious awareness plan

Promote awareness of Christian history

Promote understanding of the Christian past

Improve understanding of the Christian community's future

Develop a Christian sense of belonging.

Social Strategic Issues

Promote love between the different groups in the Christian community

Promote coordination between the church authorities and Christian organizations to solve the community's social defects

Develop social programmes and organizations for the Christian community

Improve the level of cooperation among Christian communities in different areas

Promote the Palestinian Christian identity.

Cultural Strategic Issues

Upgrade and improve the infrastructure by providing proper Christian cultural libraries

Develop education plans about Christian culture in Christian schools Develop and establish Christian cultural centres.

Economic Strategic Issues

Develop a Palestinian Christian economic strategy

Use Christian resources

Promote productive thinking

Initiate a Christian economical foundation.

Political Strategic Issues

Protect Christian rights

Develop a Palestinian Christian political presence

Integrate Christian youth into the political decision making process

Promote a Palestinian Christian presence in political decisions

Promote Palestinian Christian political leadership

Promote lobbying and advocacy activities

Strengthen the Christian voice in politics

Promote and encourage the role of youth in Christian organizations Promote an awareness of the role of the Christian presence as a “living stone” for Christianity in the Holy Land.

Implementation of the strategic issues listed above will be discussed in the next sections of this chapter.

6.1 Religious Strategy Implementation.

Implementation of the religious strategy is suggested as a set of solutions involving innovative programmes and projects designed to address the documented problems identified in Chapter Three and portrayed in the table on “Christian Problems” at the end of Chapter Two. They are practical solutions to problems caused by the discord among the different religious groups living in the Holy Land.

Christianity, Judaism and Islam share the same territorial area and conflicts among these groups has created disturbances that have influenced their relationship. The implementation of the religious strategies suggested here offers solutions to those Christians living in the Holy Land who are affected by the religious issues mentioned.

6.1.1 Interfaith dialogue project plan (IDPP). In the Holy Land, as elsewhere, interfaith dialogue is an important element that contributes to fostering shared values, moral principles, and dedication to serving the common good. It can produce a deeper level of mutual understanding and respect for each of the religions represented in the

Holy Land. It can be a conduit for promoting an interreligious dialogue between Christian, Muslim and Jewish schools, local universities, and their participation in various Israeli organizations. According to Twal (2103) interfaith dialogue could be a means to promote peaceful coexistence in the Holy Land, as it is in Jordan,[359] it could indirectly lead to a better understanding in resolving the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and the religious discord between Christians, Muslims, and Jews. While according to Rabbi Dr. Ron Kronish, the director of Interreligious Coordinating Council in Israel, interreligious dialogue aims to transform the teaching and values of the three Abrahamic faiths from being used to bring about division and extremism into ways of reconciliation, coexistence, and justice and peace.[360] Dr. Mustafa Abu Sway, activist in interfaith dialogue and the Director of the Islamic Research Centre at Al-Quds University in Jerusalem believes that the collective wisdom of the world's religions should be to promote to co-existence, peace, and sustainability through education and activism.[361]

The proposed IDPP would be a joint effort that could be implemented for Christian, Muslim, and Jewish students who attend private schools and students who are active in various non-profit organizations in Jerusalem and the West Bank.

The Palestinian education system is one that all Palestinian governmental and private Christian schools located in the West Bank and East Jerusalem follow. The private schools attended by Israeli Arab Palestinians located in the north of Israel follow the Israeli School Curriculum. In Jerusalem, most of the Christians schools follow the Palestinian curriculum while a few private schools follow the Israeli curriculum.

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[359] Iyad Twal, "Religion and State: The Case of Jordan," *4th International Conference on Christian-Muslim Relations: Religion and State: From Theocracy to Secularism, and in between*," Bethlehem University, Bethlehem, Palestine (2-4 October) 2013.

[360] Rabbi Dr. Ron Kronish. Founding Director of Interreligious Coordinating Council in Israel. Serving as Senior Advisor of ICCI. Please visit website: http://rhr.org.il/eng/icci/.

[361] Interview with Dr. Mustafa Abu Sway. [Online]. Available at: http://themuslim500.com/profile/mustafa-abu-sway/

Students who are enrolled in the Palestinian and Christian private school in Jerusalem and the West Bank sit a general Palestinian governmental examination called Tawjihi at the completion of 12 years of schooling. The Israeli governmental schools, attended by Israeli Arab Palestinians, including a few schools in East Jerusalem, sit the Israeli governmental examination called Bagrut. In both school systems passing the final examination is one of the requirements to allow enrolment in university. Scores in Tawjihi or Bagrut influence which university study programme students are accepted onto.

A brief description of the Israeli and Palestinian education systems follows.

There are four stages of education in Israel, pre-primary school level and gradually enter to the primary and then to secondary levels and then the higher education. The primary school years from (Grades 1-8) as well as secondary education up to high school is almost free while schooling is compulsory until to the 10^{th}. Grade.

There are three forms of high schools in Israel: the academic high school preparing students for college and university studies while these students should pass the national examination certificate called Bagrut. The vocational technical high school prepares students for vocational and practical careers in engineering and commerce, trade and hotel management fields. There are training school institutions that provide education in nursing, and other technical and semi-professional careers. There are seven universities offering bachelors, masters, and Ph.D. degrees. Admission to a Israeli university requires that students pass the Bagrut examination and is also based on the student's army career. This puts Christian and Muslim Israeli Palestinians at a disadvantage if they do not also do army service.

Palestinian parents have the option of enrolling their 4 year olds into pre-primary education and most kindergartens are private and very few of them are gender-

segregated. Upon reaching 6 years of age, parents must enrol their children into primary education.

The organizational structure of education in Palestinian schools consists of a 10year period of free, compulsory basic education that begins at the age of six. Primary education is divided into two parts: Preparation, which is 4 years (Grades 1 to 4) and Empowerment, which is an additional 6 years (Grades 5 to 10). From the 4th grade onwards, pupils not achieving a minimum score on tests must retake a class. Pupils who fail a second time are effectively dismissed from school.

Upon completing the 10th grade, pupils graduate to secondary school after school assessment. Secondary education is a 2-year programme (Grades 11 and 12) that is divided into an academic track and a vocational track. Upon completing secondary school, pupils in the academic track obtain a Certificate of General Secondary Education after sitting an examination (Tawjihi), which grants them access to colleges and universities. Pupils enrolled in the technical and vocational track complete coursework and training either in Industrial, Agricultural, Commercial, Hotel, or Home Economics. Like their academic counterparts, they also receive a certificate but do not further their education at colleges and universities.

The researcher suggests that inter faith dialogue begun while in school, either in Grades 5 to 10 in primary school or secondary school would build on personal friendships and could provide a basis for good relations in adult life. Details about the Inter-faith Dialogue Project Plan are provided in the following sections.

6.1.1.1. Purpose and goal of the interfaith dialogue project plan. The purpose and goal of the IDPP is to increase understanding and respect for religious and differences between Christian, Muslim and Jewish students who live in the Holy Land. The goal is not to change the identity of its participants, although it will not hide the differences

between them. Hopefully, it will foster the development of confidence, openness and mutual acceptance among the students. Finally, IDPP may facilitate the removal of the misunderstandings that are obstacles to the possibility of Palestinian Christians, Muslims, and Jews being able to co-existence peacefully.

The IDPP in the Holy Land will have special elements that other countries do not have as Jerusalem is a city that is shared by its Jewish, Christian and Muslim residents. For most inhabitants, there is no separation between faith and land: they are one. Pope Benedict XVI urged Christians, Jews and Muslims in the region to engage in dialogue to build a holy city where all groups feel at home and have the right to continue to live and to work. They all must be granted, and have secured, the most fundamental rights of freedom of conscience and freedom of religion, freedom of movement, civic and historical rights and a shared future.

Notably, Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran said in 2011,

"For the local Christians, as for the Jews and the Muslims, Jerusalem is not only holy, but also involves ….the possession of their own institutions (seminaries, universities, monasteries, etc.). Of course, all this has to be recognized not only for Christians, but for all the inhabitants of the Holy Land……. History, like religion, teaches us that there is only one future: a shared future."

He then quotes the Roman philosopher Seneca;

"What is important is not to stop, but rather to continue our dialogue, our pilgrimage towards the truth, with the conviction that 'it is not because things are difficult that we do not dare; it is because we do not dare that they are difficult".[362]

6.1.1.2. Implementation of the interfaith dialogue programme plan.

It is one thing to propose an IDPP, but it is another thing to implement it. The Christian schools can play a major role in implanting interfaith dialogue among the three religions, because in the Christian private schools there are both Christian and Muslim

[362] Jean-Louis Tauran, "Intervention," *International Conference on Christians in the Holy Land*, Lambeth Palace, London (18-19 July), 2011 [Online] [Accessed 13 July 2014]. Available at: http://www.rcdow.org.uk/holyland2011/transcripts/tauran.pdf].

students. Muslim parents often send their children to Christian schools because class sizes are smaller, teachers are better qualified and educational standards are usually higher than in government schools. For these reasons there is a common foundation for students to discuss their different religious faiths.

The IDPP could be introduced as an extracurricular activity to students from different religions who attend private schools, Christian[363] university students who attend universities such as Bethlehem University or Bir Zeit University and students who participate in Israeli non-profit organizations. The extracurricular activity could be presented as a 45-minutes class once a week during the academic year. This extracurricular course of study could be implemented in secondary schools,[364] from Grades 10-12.

The Catholic General Secretariat of Christian Schools[365] and administrators of Christian schools in other denominations would need to approve and provide facilities for the implementation of the IDPP in their schools. The General Secretariat is a committee of 56 school principals responsible for 25,000 Christian and Muslim students and 2,000 teachers. Of these students, 9,636 (38.7%) are Christians. It would be helpful to start the IDPP in the schools under the General Secretariat as a pilot study and gradually incorporate Orthodox and Protestant schools into the plan.

A curriculum committee would need to be established to develop the content of the IDPP. The committee would consist of a group of specialized educators who possess expertise in interfaith education, religion and history.

6.1.2. Additional Christian educational curricula.

[363] The Christian schools are from different Christian denominations.

[364] Secondary School, also called High School, involves grades 10 to 12. Upon completion, students sit for their Secondary School Certificate. Those who receive this certificate may apply for admission to a college or university.

[365] The Christian schools are from different Christian denominations.

Initially, the interfaith dialogue activities could be introduced only within the Palestinian Christian Schools as a pilot programme. Courses that had been developed by the curriculum committee and approved by the General Secretariat of Christian Schools in Palestine would be added to the established curriculum. Then, as the programme is tracked and data collected, the lessons learned can be used to modify the programme so it meets its goals. Thus, the suggested materials in the following sub sections will address programme development within a limited population of students.

6.1.2.1 Awareness Programme on the Christian history of the Holy Land. It is important for local Christians in the Holy Land to know their identity in terms of their ethnicity, nationality, race, religion, and beliefs. In a country that has multifaceted concepts relating to religion and nationality, the identity of Palestinian Christians (based on religion within Palestinian society) is very important to increase their sense of belonging, the sense of being a Palestinian Christian in the Holy Land. The Christian community needs to be aware of the concept of belonging, (i.e., its social identity) because it is central to how local Palestinian Christians in the Holy Land define themselves. According to the Social Issues Research Center in the USA (SIRC),[366]

"The idea of belonging is central to the understanding of how people give meaning to their lives. Christian sense of identity is founded on social interactions that show their belonging to particular communities through shared beliefs, values, or practices."

6.1.2.2. Christian history educational programmes in Christian schools.

As was explained in a previous (Chapter Three) there are mistakes and misleading information in the Palestinian curriculum about Christianity that is taught in Christian schools[367]. It is extremely important for local Christians to have a firm understanding of their Christian history and culture in the Holy Land. It will be an ongoing strategic programme within the IDPP and can help to develop a strong generation of Christians

[366] The Social Issue Research Center (SIRC) conducted research on "Belonging" in May 2007.
[367] See 3.1.1.4, the presentation of Christianity in the Palestinian Education System.

who understand the development of historical context. The programme will contribute to the identity of the individual and the individual as part of a group by building a strong belief as to who they are. The programme will reinforce their identity and emphasise the importance of their presence in keeping the Christian religion vital within the context of the place where Christianity first began (in Jerusalem) and spread from there globally.

The suggested Christian education programme to be implemented in Christian private schools would add a course of study to the school curriculum. Each pupil within a particular grade level would receive a set of course materials that would be studied for 45-minutes each week throughout the school year. The pilot programme would be limited to students between the ages of 10-18 enrolled in Grades 5-12, who would use a set of educational teaching materials that would focus on the chronological history and development of Christianity in the Holy Land.

Age and grade appropriate information would be presented to the students. For example, they will learn about Christian history presented in the New Testament of the Bible as well as the interpretation of historical events based on the documentation provided by the major Christian denominations in the Holy Land. There will be four major objectives of this course.

First, they will study the historical and the geographical context associated with the life of Jesus, the apostles, and the establishment of the early Christian church in the Holy Land.

Second, they will study the chronological development of the Christian community in the Holy Land up to the present day.

Third, they will study the political, social, and economical changes that have shaped the Christian community in the Holy Land.

Fourth, they will learn about the importance of Jesus and the Christian religion to the Holy Land.

Fifth, they will study the historical development of the Christian denominations and their influence on mission, for example the Protestant Reformation and the Catholic Counter-Reformation.

In addition, this course will provide the students with information to correct the misrepresentation of Christianity and Christians in the history books and textbooks that are provided by the Palestinian Ministry of Education that must be taught in Christian schools.[368]

6.1.2.3. Desired learning outcomes for students in Primary and Secondary School derived from the IDPP objectives.

5.1.2.3.1.. Grades5 to 10 (Empowerment curriculum) in Primary School.

In the students' 5th academic year (Grade 5), they will be taught that information about the life of Jesus and the birth of Christianity is not limited to the New Testament. Other materials will bring into focus the historical, archaeological, geographical, and social aspects presented within and outside the gospel accounts. Furthermore, they will explore the story of Christianity by examining the historical and social information contained within the Bible stories. Some of the course materials will outline of the life of Christ from his birth to the beginning of his ministry (5 B.C.-27 CE), Judean Ministry (27 CE), Galilean Ministry (28-29 CE), and Death and Resurrection (30 CE). Students will receive a set of educational materials that are supported by geographical information tracing the journeys of Christ and the different incidents of his ministry linked to the places where these incidents occurred.

[368] Ibid 367.

In the 6th academic year (Grade 6), students will study on information in the texts of the Old and New Testament, especially in the context of other languages and literature. Some of the materials will present the Patriarchs and Church Fathers of the Old and New Testaments, from Abraham to St. Paul. They will examine the geographical areas, rulers and their areas of control and the policies of authorities in the different parts of Filastin /Palestine. For example, students will discuss the politics and law during the time of Jesus, his trial and how Roman law affected indigenous people living under Roman jurisdiction. Likewise, within the context of economics, the gospel references to coins, taxes, tax collections, tributes, money changes, bills, wages and means of livelihood will be examined. Finally, students will learn about sociology, botany, zoology, weather, medicine and other fields that have value for understanding the Bible.

During the 7th academic year, students will be introduced to the origins of Christianity, Judeo-Christianity, and the church's relationship with Judaism. Course materials will examine the social and cultural transformation in the lives of the followers of Jesus after His death, resurrection and ascension. They will learn how Christianity was spread throughout Palestine, Transjordan, Syria, and the rest of the Roman Empire. Part of the course will entail learning about how Christians were persecuted in the first centuries and the effects of Constantine's conversion to Christianity. An introduction to this will include the First Jewish Revolt in year 67 A.D., the Fall of Jerusalem the Second Jewish Revolt in 135 A.D. and end with the establishment of the Byzantine Empire in the 4th century.

During the 8th academic year, students will learn about the Byzantine era. Special attention will be given to the contributions and influence of Emperor Constantine and his transformation of the Holy Land into a Christian country. They will learn about the building of churches during this time at the sites where events related to Jesus's life had

occurred and the importance of these religious sites in the preservation of a Christian identity in the Holy Land. Church traditions along with hierarchical structures, terminology and the roles and responsibilities of early church leaders will be presented. The course will conclude with materials about the establishment of the monastic movement in the 4th century.

During the 9th academic year, students will be presented with materials related to the Christians' situation during the Persian invasion and the beginning of the Islamic presence in Holy Land. Course materials will present the major reasons that lead to Muslim control of the country within a short time period and with a relatively small army. A brief history will follow of what it was like for Christians to live under Muslim authority. The focus will be on how Christians have positively interacted with Arab Islamic society, how it has shaped Arab civilization and the role of Christians in establishing Islamic civilization, especially during the Abbasid Caliphate era. The course will culminate with the historical development of Islamic rule in the Holy Land and its relationship to the local Christian community.

During the 10th academic year, students will be presented with materials about the split between East and West parts of the Church, what it meant to be a Crusader and the historical events that created the ideology of the Crusader and Holy Wars. Course materials will cover the history of the Crusader campaigns beginning with the First Crusade and ending with the Third Crusade. It will also cover the history of the country, especially the Kingdom of Jerusalem, after the Muslim ruler Saladin defeated the Crusaders (1187 to 1517). Materials will examine the influence of the wars on the Christian communities and its churches.

6.1.2.3.1. Secondary school curriculum (Grades 11 and 12).

During the 11th academic year, students will be presented with materials involving the Christian situation in the Holy Land under Muslim rule and the attitude of Muslim authorities toward the church. This will be followed by the situation of the Christian community and the local church under Ottoman rule, its attitudes toward the Eastern and Western church and conclude with life under the British Mandate and the influence of Protestant missionary work in Palestine.

During the 12th academic year, students will learn about the Christian situation after the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948. The content of this course will examine the Christian migration from the Holy Land, Israel's influence on the Christian image in the Holy Land and the role and responsibility that the younger generations have to strengthen or diminish the Christian presence in the Holy Land.

***6.1.3. Increase awareness about Christianity among students from other religions*.**

The attitude of Christians in the Holy Land to Islam and Judaism and toward those who embrace them exerts a very important influence in the social life of Christians. The suggested strategic awareness programme for Muslims and Jews living in the Holy Land will inform them about Christian teachings and beliefs. The programme is not intended to evangelize or convert non-Christians to Christianity. It is hoped that this programme will be a powerful tool to reduce, and prevent future, tension and hatred created by extremists from other religions. There is a role for the Christian schools in preparing pupils to take an informed and thoughtful part in a pluralistic society and be willing to share information about their faith with Muslim and Jewish friends and colleagues.

Initially, the programme could be implemented in private Christian schools.[369] It will provide non-Christian students with information about Christian values and its history through studying the Christian scriptures. The awareness programme provides an opportunity for the inclusion of Christian history and culture within the context of a governmental study curriculum set by the Ministries of Education in Israel and Palestine. For example, Islamic culture and history influence the Palestinian history curriculum (see Chapter Three), but there is no information presented to the students regarding the history of Christianity.[370] This awareness programme will rectify the absence of information about Christian influence on Palestinian history. In similar fashion, Christian influence will be presented in other study curriculums such as Geography, Arabic language and literature and General Studies.

The curriculum focus will be on informing non-Christian students about the importance of Christianity in the history of Palestine, its cultural heritage, current events and its role in bringing about resolutions, peace, and social justice. Christianity will be presented as an important contributing factor in Palestine's national and international events.

6.1.4. Summary of Awareness Programme on Christian History of the Holy Land

The introduction of this Awareness Programme into the primary and secondary school curriculum in the Holy Land is an important strategy that will have a significant impact on future generations of Christians in the Holy Land. Students who participate in these extracurricular programmes will have the opportunity to learn and become more aware of the Christian history of the Holy Land.

Furthermore, students presented with these course materials will benefit from learning more about historical events that had both positive and negative influences on the

[369] Targeting Jewish, Druze, and Muslim students who attend governmental schools is not feasible at this stage. It would require coordination and governmental decisions based on the national educational plan.

[370] UNESCO Headquarters, Paris – *Division of Quality Education, Studies on the Palestinian Curriculum and Textbooks Consolidated Report. Study description sheet "Peace is our Dream (An Impact Study of the Palestinian Curriculum).*"

development of Christianity over time. They will better appreciate and understand their religious identity within the political context of the Holy Land and see that the political identity of the country is influenced by Judaism, Islam and Christianity. As they mature, they will learn more about what it means to be a Christian in the Holy Land and how the political context has shaped them. Likewise, its historical and current influence shapes the Christian presence in the Holy Land. By knowing in more depth about the Christian history and their identity in the Holy Land should increase their religious sense of belonging. This course should affect their future decisions regarding strengthening their Christian presence in the Holy Land and thereby reduce the ideology of leaving the country.

6.1.5. Educational Awareness Programme (EAP) for members of the local Christian community.

The Educational Awareness Programme for the Christian community could be implemented as part of the religious services in local church denominations. According to Christian tradition, most of the church denomination in the Holy Land have similar church liturgies which include a reading from the Old Testament and from one of the Gospels (Mathew, Mark, Luke, and John) in the New Testament and some use readings from one of the Epistles (the letters by the apostles to different early Christian communities). The Old Testament reading reflects important themes from the Gospel and Epistle readings.

As an example, the Latin Catholic church liturgical year begins on the First Sunday of Advent (usually late November) and the readings are determined according to the liturgical calendar. This system operates in the Latin Catholic church, some Anglican churches and a few other denominations. In Year A, readings are mostly from the Gospel of Matthew, in Year B, from the Gospel of Mark and Chapter Six of the Gospel

of John and in Year C, from the Gospel of Luke. The Gospel of John is read during the Easter season in all three years. Given that this is 2016, the Catholic Church is currently in cycle.

The EAP could only be implemented after the local authorities of the different denominations in the Holy Land accept it. Once this occurs, it could be integrated into church services at the point that the homily or sermon or at the end of the service is delivered by the priest or minister. If it follows the Bible readings described in the previous paragraph it would further enrich and explain the gospel message to the congregation. It may be necessary to design supplementary educational materials the focus on the social, historical, and cultural components from which priests could draw when preparing their homilies. During the preaching of their homilies, priests could explain these aspects within their historical context and then relate them to the daily lives of the contemporary members of their congregations. It is important for Palestinian Christians to understand the formation of early Christianity in the Holy Land. Of similar importance are the effects that various aspects of all Christian denominations in the Holy Land had on their ancestors and how that society still influences them today. The programme materials would illuminate and contextualise the readings of the New Testament.

Some questions that could be presented and answered through the homily are listed below;

"Why did Christianity succeed in the Holy Land?

What elements allowed Christianity to take root in the Holy Land and spread all over the Roman Empire?

What detained Christianity to spread during a particular period?

The essentials reasons of Roman culture and society became obstacles to the Christian mission?

What can be learned from St. Paul and the early Christians to strengthen the Palestinian Christian community in the Holy Land?"

Furthermore, the priest could trace the roots and development of Palestinian Christianity based on historical facts. The culture of these early Palestinian communities could be presented by examining the relationships between these people and the way they lived both whilst Jesus was alive, after he died, and during the establishment of the Early Church. Christianity could be emphasised as a way of life with unique, radical teachings on righteousness and goodness with a cultural and social structure of its own, relevant to modern life.

The different aspects of the Educational Awareness Programme are described in the following sections.

6.1.6 Develop a Church-Community Relationship Project

Another goal of the IDPP is to improve the cohesion between the Christian church hierarchies and the Christian communities among different Christian denomination in Jerusalem in particular, and the Holy Land in general. The IDPP aims to address this problem by establishing the Church-Community Relationship Programme (CCRP). This project would be for all parish clergy and local lay Christian organizations that work within the local Christian community in the Holy Land.

The CCRP will provide educational materials to address the perceptions of community development by sponsoring workshops for the local parish priests, Christian organizations and lay members of the Christian community. The workshops would focus on understanding that the primary goal of community development is to assist the

members of a community to decide, plan, and take action to improve their physical environment and social amenities. The CCRP will have two aims.

First, to impart the idea that change in people's attitudes is more important than changes in their physical amenities.

Second, that the ways in which change can take place is more important than material ends.

Thus, workshops will be structured in such a way to present participants with information about the relationship between people, their environment and the processes by which they can encourage individuals in the community to order and control their physical and social settings.

The CCRP could consist of a set of projects that could be implemented under several themes. One suggested project could be "Working with the Christian community programme" and another project, "The Church-Community Mediator Committee". Prior to these two programmes this researcher considers it important to engage local Christians in a study programme to deepen the spiritual understanding of the whole Christian community.

6.1.6.1. The development of renewal strategies.

It is suggested that there is a need to inspire the Christian community, both clergy and lay, to learn more about spiritual and pastoral ways to renew the Church and transform their attitude towards sharing the gospel. This strategy could be formed through the Christian religion educational institutions to provide education opportunities to the local Christians, clergy, Christian religious teachers and other members of the community who want more knowledge in this field. The field of study would provide the opportunity for a journey that would combine history, scripture, interpretation of

prophecy in the Christian faith and the connection to the Holy Land. These education opportunities would consist of two parts:

1. *Adult Leaders' Faith Formation*

This would involve a course of study for parish leaders to develop strategic plans for adult faith formation courses that can be implemented at the parish level and would renew the spiritual lives of adults in the parishes and prepare them to witness about the life of Jesus in the Holy Land through a new conceptualisation of evangelization. The course of study will concentrate on issues related to the challenges and opportunities of adult faith formation. This would occur through fostering the development of adult faith, parish efforts in setting up the goals and principles of adult faith formation and emphasis on key parish roles of leadership and service and effective strategies and marketing for adult Christian formation in the Holy Land.

2. *Development of a study programme for lay people in the Church*

This programme would aim to give a clear understanding of the Bible and help participants to uncover the story woven through Scripture through a Bible Timeline to make sense of it. This course of study will focus on the fourteen narrative books that tell the story of Scripture, from beginning to end, the twelve time periods that act as chapters in salvation history and following God's "family plan" from Adam and Eve to Christ and the Church and the religious connection to the Holy Land. The books and time periods involved in salvation history are listed below; the programmes mentioned to implement the Christian-Church Relationship Programmes are described below.

6.1.6.2 The Working with the Christian Community Project.

This programme would help participants understand more thoroughly the concept of being part of a Christian community. As such, they would learn how to develop the concept of building communities by working with, rather working for them. Christians

would be working as equals with people from Christian communities who are not affiliated with the local Church and make their own special contributions. The goal behind working with the community rather than working for it is to encourage the participants to improve their sense of esteem and sense of belonging to the Christian community and the church as part of one body. Once this occurs, they would gain a sense of empowerment and could enter into an equal partnership with every member of the community, and begin talking in terms of "us" instead of "them".

There are a few organizations and parish committees within the Christian different denomination that do work in this field, keeping a low profile. This work can be developed and their programmes built up and become more involved within the Christian community in order to make a difference. Organizations such as Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Centre in Jerusalem aims to educate the Christian community on the political situation, fosters a sense of solidarity, strengthens the capacity of the community to grow spiritually and helps to collectively address social realities to build a better future371. Also, there are several other organizations, such as the Diyar Consortium which includes the International Center in Bethlehem and Dar Al Kalima University College of Arts and Culture[372]dedicated to providing quality education that meets the social, cultural and economic needs of the Palestinian people. Diyar[373] is a Lutheran-based, ecumenically-oriented organization, meaning "home" or "homeland" in Arabic. The organization works with young people, women and the elderly through programmes that are contextual and holistic in nature. Their programmes aim to build a country; stone by stone, empower a community; person by person, and create institutions that give life in abundance through their programmes. Their actions have brought many Christian young people into Christian activities in

[371] Available at: http://sabeel.org/communityprogram.php.
[372] Available at: http://www.daralkalima.net/daralkalima/index.php?&Lang=1
[373] Available at: http://www.diyar.ps/?TemplateId=info&PageId=9&MenuId=3&Lang=1

Jerusalem and the Holy Land in general. Such initiatives need to be developed into a central organization to bring the Christians of the next generation to become part of their Christian community and to improve their sense of esteem and sense of belonging to the Christian community and the church as part of one body.

6.1.6.3. The Church- Community Mediator Programme.

The structural representation of the work of the church-community mediator committee will be directed towards helping the Christian community develop its ability to strengthen their sense of community. It would work in partnership with Christian organizations by helping the Christian community solve their problems; such as improving their physical environment and social amenities.

The focus of the committee would on community problems that can be translated into actionable solutions. Members of this committee would be selected based on their specialized professions. Lay members of the local community and clergy would be drawn from different Christian denominations, local Christian organizations, and local community specialists from the fields of religious, social, cultural, economic and political development. This committee would be responsible for working on problems that affect the whole Christian community.

The process by which the committee would operate is shown in Figure 1.In this process, the Church-Community Mediator Committee learns about a problem facing part of the community or the community as a whole. The problem is examined, an analysis conducted and a needs assessment initiated. From these findings, the next phase involves the presentation of the solution to the problem and a set of recommendations offered. The churches and related organizations then initiate an implementation project. This is followed by feedback from the community to the committee on the success or failures of the solution and the cycle may need to begin again.

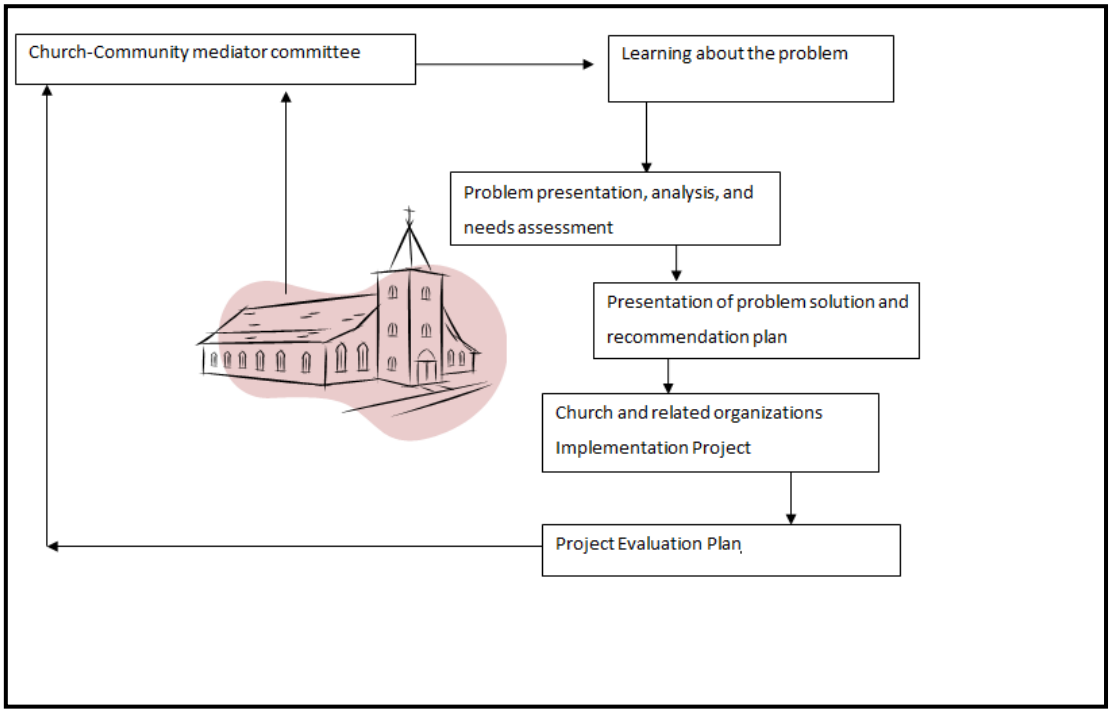

Figure 3. A structural representation of the work of church-community mediator committee

6.1.7 Community Mentor Project.

The goal of the Community Mentorship Project (CMP), as part of the Educational Awareness Project, would be to develop and maintain long-term friendships between those members of the community who would like regular one-on-one social contact and mentoring. It would be staffed by volunteers who would need to be trained in mentorship skills. The volunteers would attempt to encourage these relationships and connectedness. The mentorship programme could introduce or develop existing activities into the Christian community and encourage its members to share activities such as attending free public events, religious activities, sporting events, leisure activities as bowling, skating, playing soccer and other types of social events. This programme aims to provide companionship by which its participants obtain a better

cultural and religious understanding of the community so they can more easily become part of it.

Likewise, mentors would help improve religious awareness and social skills. They could help to make people make positive changes in their lives by assisting them in their journey to understand the importance of the Christian religion in Palestine and its influence on the daily life of Palestinian Christians, help them discover their strengths and enable them to set and achieve individual goals. A mentor could encourage positive choices, promote self-esteem and introduce new ideas and perspectives.

A pilot project has been introduced to local Christians through the Seeds of a Better Life Centre. This is a non-profit organization that is concerned about all what is happening to the Christians in the Holy Land in particular in Jerusalem. A group of young Christians from the Christian Quarter in the Old City of Jerusalem decided to open a Facebook page that provides all available information to the Christian community regarding all Christian religious, social and cultural events It later became the information centre for all the Christians in Jerusalem to participate in any activity or Christian presentation anywhere in Israel and Palestine, with permission from Palestinian and Israeli officials.[374] This pilot project needs to be developed to reach all the Christians community throughout the Holy Land and this programme can be used as a foundation to develop other programmes that coincide with the mission of the Community Mentorship Project. The details of this project are described below.

6.1.7.1. The Orientation Project.

The Orientation Project would provide knowledge and information through group discussion sessions regarding laws affecting minorities and information about ethnic community groups. The representatives of the programme could meet with other

[374] Available at: https://www.facebook.com/Seeds-of-Better-Life-Center-411185492411735.

relevant groups as well as Palestinian Christian organizations. Meetings could be located in Christian places of worship and community and parish centres. By providing workshops and seminars for Christians, the Orientation Project could help members of the Christian community to use their skills, talents, interests, and hobbies to facilitate opportunities to establish friendships with other members of the community. One result could be the growth and strengthening of the Christian community in the Holy Land based on Christian teaching, values and culture. The purpose of this project would be to help the members of the Christian community improve the quality of their lives and encourage them to improve their physical environment and social amenities.

6.1.7.2 The Nuclear Family Project.

The Nuclear Family Project seeks to introduce the ideals of the family to husbands, wives and unmarried children. The aim would be to create activities that encourage the participation of parents with their children to strengthen family bonds and strengthen family relationships with the community based on Christian teachings. This project would be a great tool to enrich the lives of families through Christian fellowship and learning about Jesus and the teachings of the Early Church about families. This project will give the opportunity to Christian families in the Holy Land to understand the true meaning of marriage and how to live it out together through discovering the spiritual, emotional and practical realities of marriage through Scripture, Tradition and Church Teaching. Understanding this will lead the better understanding how to deal with their children based on Christian teaching.

6.1.8. The Christian Community Lifestyle Project. This project focuses on members of the Christian community developing the friendships and the social networks that are importance to them. They would be encouraged to define the kinds of lifestyles and the types of social capital, social status, shared values and cultural religious practices that

they and their community want to identify with. This project would be an important element to foster an increased sense of belonging in which members actively decide which activities to engage in and which to avoid. For many project participants, thinking about lifestyle choices could reveal a far more deep-seated sense of “brand” and group loyalty than they had initially expected, or were not prepared to admit.

Clearly, friendship is an essential component in establishing a sense of belonging. Since the creation of the internet, new digital technologies allow individuals to connect with others in new ways. The establishment of projects like the Christian Community Lifestyle Project could provide a solidarity movement that focuses on issues important to the Christian community discussed in a communications forum. For example, social media such as Facebook and Twitter allow individuals to connect with other Christians in different geographical areas. By posting their thoughts, opinions and facts related to different issues related to their communities on their Facebook page, blog, community or web page, a dialogue would emerge among internet participants. However it is important to be aware of the possibility of antagonistic input from readers and bloggers outside the Christian community. There is a need to put in place safeguards against such interference.

National identity is a major factor in defining belonging. Introducing the Christian Community Lifestyle Project could focus on the Christian community locally, regionally, nationally and internationally. It could advocate for making the Christian cultural a part of the Palestinian national identity. Because of technological advances, global interconnectivity exists. It is increasingly common for people to pass through the borders of individual countries, both physically and virtually (via the internet). The internet now provides a greater awareness of the flexibility of Palestinian national identities, and the ability to shed one identify for another. Through the internet, people

may question what it means exactly to be a 'Palestinian Christian' or an 'Arab Christian.' In response, a dialogue may begin and information about being a 'Palestinian Christian' or an 'Arab Christian can be exchanged.

Establishing, participating in, and supporting sports teams originating in the Palestinian Christian community would encourage and strengthen a sense of belonging and connectivity within one's family, community, and nation. The availability of sports related-activities to Palestinian Christian children and youth would provide them with opportunities to be part of something and feel a sense of belonging. However, local sports activities are not enough. There is a need to develop professional national teams that can compete internationally. In some cases, it is no less important than social class, ethnic background, or political affiliation as a way of bonding.

In the case of South Africa, Nelson Mandela knew that watching the South African national team compete during the Olympics, World Cup, or other prominent sporting events, promoted a sense of belonging and encouraged national pride (Korr, 2008, 2013). He had the Springbok rugby team go out into the black community and engage young people there in rugby drills. He knew that by bringing the national sport to the community level, a sense of belonging would take place among the black Africans. When that happened, rugby overcame apartheid in Africa. Mandela knew that the Springboks could be used as a dissemination tool to educate, not only Africa, but also the entire world. This could also be the case in the Palestinian Christian situation.

6.1.9 The Church-based Christian Sunday Pre-school Project.

The Christian Sunday Pre-school Project would be limited to Christian children. It would provide primary Christian teaching to children between the ages of three and five in all parishes in the Holy Land. Classes could take place every Sunday morning and help young children to acquire basic knowledge of the teachings in the Bible and its

relevance to their lives. This pre-school group would prepare them for the Christian educational programmes they would participate in once enrolled in private Christian schools.

6.1.10. The Career Consultancy Plan (CCP). This plan would assist Christian high school students to choose the most appropriate course of study and career. Consultants would help students choose the right field of study based on their knowledge, skills, ability and interests also taking into account the needs of the Christian community (e.g., there may be too many dentists but not enough doctors). Presently, there is a lack of assessment programmes to support Christian high school students within their school environments. The CCP would provide support to the academic development of students so they can benefit and use their abilities despite a limited number of local opportunities. The CCP would work with Christian students to identify positive and negative factors that affect student success, by taking into consideration three factors that Brigham et al consider to be important:

1) The important of academic skills development

2) Academic institution involvement in the cultural and social life.

3) Self-confidence to compete with their peers.[375]

By identifying and developing students for academic and social success, they will have clearer ideas about which careers best suit them and will also benefit the Christian community. This in turn, will increase their sense of belonging to the Christian community by having them fill the gaps in projected future career needs of the Christian community.

[375] T. A. Brigham, S. A. Moseley, S. Sneed, S., and M. Fisher. (1994). Excel: An intensive and structured program of advising and academic support to assist minority freshman to succeed at a large state university. *Journal of Behavioural Education, issue 4,* pp. 227-242.

The Career Counselling Project would be composed of several committees, with each district serviced by a separate committee. Each committee would include professional education consultants who have the appropriate education, knowledge, and skills to work with students. The committee members would know the needs of the Christian community in their designated district. Each of the designated district committees would work with the high school students in their district through periodic meetings where they would evaluate assigned projects that would enable students to demonstrate their abilities and skills. The committee would write an evaluation and recommendation report pertaining to each student. A committee member would discuss the report with students and their parents. The committee would then establish connections with local and international education institutions to facilitate the enrolment of these students in their colleges and universities. Details of the CCP are discussed below.

6.1.10.1. The Learning to Think Project. This project is a training programme available to high school students. It would teach them how to think critically and write intelligently. The programme aims to develop the special students in their academic skills. They would learn about different discourse styles of writing (e.g., expository, narrative, essay) and understand the importance of structure and mood in their writing. The project would offer a unique opportunity for Palestinian students with special talents to attend overseas institutions to develop their talents. There, students would experience different cultures, architecture, food, attitudes and many other things that would influence and challenge them intellectually.

6.1.10.2. The School-based Student Exchange Project. The career consultancy committee would initiate an exchange programme that would be managed by the schools themselves. The exchange programme would be between Christian private

schools in the Holy Land and Christian schools and colleges with good academic reputations elsewhere in the world. Unlike the "Learning to Think Project," that would focus on the placement of individual students, this programme would provide an opportunity for groups of students and their teachers to exchange experiences about teaching and learning approaches that will allow Palestinian Christians to learn how other students learn and share their own learning experiences with Christians from overseas. It would also provide an opportunity for teachers to exchange experiences and learning and teaching skills. Such a project would also allow teachers to learn more about other learning and teaching styles and techniques. The project would be implemented in different church-affiliated Christian denomination schools.

6.1.10.3. Awareness Strategies through Christian Tour Guides.

Christian tour guides in the Holy Land can be used as an important instrument for dissemination regarding the Christian problems in the Holy Land. Christian guides in the Holy Land have a direct connection with, and impact on, the Christian pilgrims coming in the Holy Land to walk in the footsteps of Jesus. The position of a tour guide can play a major role in educating pilgrims about the Christians and their real life situation. This education strategy could help the Christians in the Holy Land to be presented to the whole world through specific education information that would be given by the Christian guides to the pilgrims they meet. Such pilgrims would go back to their home countries and spread the word to promote support to strengthen Christianity in the Holy Land. Christian tour guides should be given education sessions and seminars on how to present the Palestinian Christian cause to these pilgrims. This information could be incorporated into Tour Guide Training Programmes, such as are taught at Bethlehem University and Bethlehem Bible College.

6.1.11. Conclusion. The Awareness Education Programme is a formulation of contextual Christian religious education that attempts to address the problems facing Palestinian Christians. It is based on Christian religion and faith with an emphasis on the real life faith and practice that has often not been obvious or explained either to Christians themselves or fellow Jerusalemites of a different faith. This lack of clarity about beliefs and practice has led to the separation of the Palestinian Christians from their religious and cultural roots. The implementation of educational programmes to restore religion to the centre of Palestinian Christian education and the development of better relationships between church authorities and the community would strengthen the importance of religion within the Palestinian context.

6.2 Social Implementation Plan.

It is important to establish a Christian Political Democratic Programme (CPDP) that would operate in two, parallel streams. One stream would operate in conjunction with the Israeli government and the other with the Palestinian Authority. The CPDP would be a political movement, based on Christian concepts and constitute a secular society for Christians. This idea will be more developed in Section 5.5 Political Implementation. What will be discussed here will be related to advocacy. The main goals would be to protect the rights of Christians as a minority in the Holy Land and preserve the democratic stability of local Christian communities. A minority rights' perspective, with an emphasis on all minority rights and the prevention of discrimination of minorities, cannot be effectively ensured until the members of the particular minority group actively participate in the decision-making processes that would ensure the protection of local Christians. Without the participation of minorities in the political process, other mechanisms of minority rights protection can be substantially weakened. Advocacy would be needed at official and community levels.

6.2.1. Promotion of social advocacy for Christians at an official level. The CPDP would promote coexisting ideology between the Palestinian and Israeli in order to improve the ideology of peace and justice on a human and national rights based on Christian laws, justice and peace, in accordance with the international law. The Christian Palestinian identity would need to be recognized as being part of Arab society, so that the Christians and Moslems could build together the nation of Palestine. The CPDP would advocate the promotion the introduction of new laws by the authority to protect the rights of Christians to preserve their heritage and culture as part of Palestinian and Israeli national interests. It would promote the Palestinian cause to the Christian world as an important part of preserving the Christian identity in the Holy Land. Furthermore, it would promote education among all the people concerning the need for freedom of religion in Israel and Palestine. Finally, the CPDP would have an active role in promoting peace between Palestinians and Israelis based on international law. Work would need to be done at the local and international levels to preserve the Christian presence and image in the Holy Land.

6.2.2. Promotion of social advocacy for Christians at the community level.

Church leaders in the Holy Land are fully aware of the social problems of the Christian community and that these problems have a major impact on Christian emigration. The Christian church leaders and parishes should form a committee of clergy and lay people from different Christian denominations in the Holy Land to focus on the social problems that affect the Christian presence in Jerusalem. The mission of the committee would be to advocate for the Christian community in the Holy Land. First, they would inform parishes in different countries about the problems that Holy Land Christians encounter. Second, they would stress the importance of having an international

Christian lobby to advocate for Holy Land Christians. This advocacy could be implemented through a set of programmes described in the next sections.

6.2.2.1. Develop better relations between parishes and denominations.

The researcher suggests that a programme be developed between parishes located in different areas of the Holy Land, in both Israel and Palestine to improve relations between them. Implementation of such a programme would provide an opportunity to establish meetings between these different parishes so they can share their difficulties. The parishes outside Jerusalem could help to appreciate the difficulties faced by churches in Jerusalem and vice versa and develop some cooperation between them as they become more aware of each other's challenges. Such as programme could provide a common bond in which Christians recognise that all parishes have problems to solve, even if the details of those problems differ from place to place.

This programme would create opportunities for parish members to exchange visits and create social harmony between Christians who attend different parishes and different denominations. The outcome of exchange visits between parishes could lead to new relationships between parishioners and create opportunities for socially cohesive relationships between parishes, as a form of "twinning". During their meetings, parishioners might create economic connections and decide to link with parishes in other Christian denominations and thus improve their sense of belonging to a larger Christian community.

It would be possible to establish exchange programmes and planned activities that involve international visitors on scheduled pilgrimages to the Holy land and various local parishes working together. Tour companies and travel agents could arrange for their pilgrims to visit different parishes in the Holy Land. Local Christians could tell the pilgrims how their parish practices Christianity. In a similar fashion, pilgrims can share

how Christianity is practiced in their country and parish. This exchange would improve the understanding of cultural differences, provide information about how each culture practices Christianity and the advantages and disadvantages that strengthen or weaken their congregational spirit. There could be discussions about the possibilities of working towards some kind of concrete partnership and friendship between local and parishes and parishes abroad that might strengthen their relationship.

Such an exchange or "twinning" programme could be implemented bi-directionally. For example, the Holy Land Christian congregation could visit a congregation in Europe and the next year the local congregation in that country could visit the congregation in the Holy Land.

There are already some individual friendship and twinning arrangement between local parishes in the Holy Land and Europe, encouraged by such networks as the British Palestine Friendship and Twinning Network (www. Twinningwithpalestine.net/twinning.html). Much can be learnt by parishes about twinning opportunities from the city, village and organisational twinning information already available on such websites.

6.2.2.2. Develop better relationships between clergy and the young people in the community.

The Christian church in the Holy Land recognizes that its younger members are disconnected from their home parishes and are not using their time constructively. A programme could be developed to improve the relationship between churches and their younger members, to facilitate better involvement of younger people in parish activities. Clergy can use several approaches to achieve this. Such approaches could involve periodically visiting young people in their homes, where they could talk with them about their past and present problems and future concerns. Younger clergy or lay youth

leaders could hold group meetings with other Christian young people whose families belong to the same parish, or combine with other parishes. Through these encounters, young people could be helped to acknowledge and define their problems, discuss them and how they can help one another and the role that the church might play in their lives. As a result, some mutually beneficial ideas and plans may emerge. By taking on the role of facilitator, clergy can encourage the young people to solve their own problems by working with them to sort through the various options available. As a result of such groups, young people may become more involved in their church and its organizations. It is important to note that clergy may need special training in youth work or may need to delegate this work to lay members of the community.

6.2.2.3. Establish a rehabilitation centre for people with drug and alcohol addictions.

There is a real need to establish drug and alcohol rehabilitation centres in Jerusalem and the West Bank because, although there are such centres in Israel, there is limited availability. The centres would work mainly with people with drug and alcoholic addictions within the local Christian community but will consider including people with addictions from non-Christian communities. The mission of the centres will be to locate young people with drug and alcoholic problems from among members of the Christian community and encourage them accept a course of treatment in professional drug rehabilitation centres. The Christian-based centres will also develop drug and alcohol awareness programmes for Christian schools about the negative effects of drugs and overuse of alcohol on the Christian community. Finally, they will develop instructional materials about research findings and concerns about drug phenomena within the Christian community and its causes. They will be able to build on the work done by the Counselling Centre in the Old City sponsored by Caritas Jerusalem.

6.2.2.4 Conclusion. The social implementation plan suggested here consists of a set of goals that could be initiated at different levels within the Christian society. The nature of the social problems of the Christian community will determine which level is the most appropriate place to begin. One level is the establishment of an entity that deals with the problems of the community that are caused by regulations that ensue from governmental or social institutions connected to the Jerusalem Municipality and Israeli government. Another level involves the Church authorities taking a more active role in initiatives to solve the identified social problems. They could begin by increasing their efforts through direct coordination with members of the local Christian community. By working together, objective solutions can be obtained. A third level recruits new Christian professionals who are interested in sharing their experiences in solving the Christian community problems. Together, these three levels of involvement would work together to coordinate and solve social.

6.3 The Cultural Implementation Plan.

There are two components to this plan, one in relation to the Palestinian Christian community itself and the other in relation to the international Christian communities.

Proactive Christian cultural centres could encourage the local Christian community by providing its members with places to go that promote their Christian lifestyles though education, physical activities and wholesome social settings.

Dissemination of information to international visitors would need to involve a proactive educational programme for tour guides to include relevant information to pilgrims and tourists about the Christian communities in the Holy Land.

Details of these two strands are given in the next section.

6.3.1 Proactive Christian cultural centres.

The proposed Christian culture centres would aim at reviving Christian culture in Jerusalem and the West Bank. They could do so by offering services to the local Christian community in various cultural, social and religious fields. These services could focus on providing programmes and spreading awareness about the everyday lives of individual Christians and the Christian community as a whole. The establishment of Christian culture centres would also contribute in a direct and effective manner to overcoming many of the cultural, religious and social problems faced by the Christian community. Although all members of the Christian community in Jerusalem and the West Bank could participate, the programmes would focus on the younger generations in the Christian community. The centres would implement several programmes, concentrating on cultural and social activities, based on appropriate goals.

6.3.1.1 Cultural goals.

Each cultural centre could develop and increase the sense of belonging among the members of its Christian community. This would be achieved by having various types of reading materials, both paper- based and electronic, available in the centres displayed in an attractive way. This learning resources environment would have an emphasis on different Christian cultural materials. Volunteers at the centres would encourage the younger generation to interact with attractive and interesting materials regarding Christianity, such as age-appropriate periodical magazines, blogs, web pages and DVDs. This would foster the development of children and teenagers' cultural horizons through material that could capture their imagination. The centres would provide an enjoyable, relaxing environment, complete with music, refreshments, relaxing chairs and side tables, lamps and art work, where younger members of the Christian community could learn more about the Palestinian Christian cultural heritage. These environmental factors would create a cultural awareness for the various groups who

visited the centres. Thus, through various activities, learning resources and a culturally relevant environment, the cultural centres could become places that members of the community will want to make part of their lifestyle.

The cultural centres would promote different Christian cultural and religious programmes to promote a spirit of mutual care, cooperation, and tolerance in the community. These programmes would include lectures, seminars, special educational materials, movies and field trips to Christian holy sites, Christian villages and villages that once had a Christian presence. Through these programmes participants would gain an increased awareness of the Christian values held by Jesus and the Early Church, Field visits to these sites would introduce and reinforce Christian traditions and heritage, enable young people to re-discover Palestinian holy places, and the lives of local saints. All of which will enrich their Christian identity.

Oral history projects such as that completed by students at Saint Joseph's School for Girls in Bethlehem (2001) could also provide a small scale model for intergenerational cultural projects that could be incorporated into the cultural implementation plan[376].

6.3.1.2 Social goals.

Within the cultural centres will be areas where businesses would be able to advertise work opportunities to unemployed Christians. Work fairs could be set up that utilize and create links with the Christian institutions. During these events, there would be an opportunity to develop a spirit of cooperation and unity between the Christians in various areas of the community and in different denominations. Different social events could be advertised. There could be a small gymnasium, swimming pool, arts and crafts room, games room with laptops and computer games where members of the community could gather and enjoy shared activities and interests. Family ties and family unity

[376] A Palestinian Oral History Project. "*Your Stories Are My Stories*" Published by St Joseph School for Girls, Bethlehem; Wi'am Conflict Resolution Centre, and the Arab educational Institute. 2001.

would be strengthened through these shared activities by increasing individual family member awareness of mutually shared interests in various subjects and through physical activities. An initiative could be developed for the young people to work with adult volunteers to create a monthly newspaper or website that would provide information about the Christian community in the Holy Land and Christian related issues that connected to their Christian daily life.

6.3.2 Dissemination of information to international visitors.

For the most part, foreign Christians who come on pilgrimage to the Holy Land do not know about the lives of local Christians. Many of these Christians are not even aware there are Christians living in Jerusalem, West Bank and Gaza Strip, despite the fact that the majority of international visitors to the Holy Land are Christians taking part in religious tours and pilgrimages. In 2016, 3.1 million people visited the Holy Land that is a four per cent drop from the previous years. However, 3.2 percent were only one-day visitors to East Jerusalem and Bethlehem, thus there was a 27 percent drop from 2016.

According the Israeli Minister of Tourism, there are approximately five thousand tour guides licensed by the Ministry of Tourism. Among these licenced tour guides there are less than two hundred that are Christians. Study on an Israeli Tour Guide programme and an examination at the Israeli Ministry of Tourism is required in order to gain the Israeli guiding licence that allows a guide the opportunity to work all over the Holy Land,

There are other educational institutions that provide that same educational programmes, such as Bethlehem University and Bethlehem Bible College. Unfortunately, these courses are not recognized by the Israeli Ministry of Tourism. Therefore, tourism students who study at non- Israeli schools such as Bethlehem University or Bethlehem Bible College are not eligible to do the Israeli examination. These guiding courses are

approved by the Palestinian Ministry of Tourism and students will be examined by the Palestinian Ministry of Tourism in order to obtain a Palestinian guiding licence. The field of work will be only religious and touristic sites within the Palestinian Territories and they cannot guide in any of the religious sites within Israel. Unfortunately, most of the Christian and tourist sites are within Israel, inside the Green Line.

Tour guides are in the best position to provide Christian pilgrims and tourists with information about the lives and plight of Christians who live in the Holy Land. This, in turn, may encourage the local Christians solve some of their problems and learn that they are part of a world-wide church whose members care for each other. However most tour guides are Israeli Jews and not Christians, so are not always able, interested or willing to raise these issues with foreign pilgrims. There are two levels in the suggested strategic dissemination programme; these involve educating Christian tour guides and producing learning outcomes and goals to enable Christian tour guides to share information about Palestinian Christians.

6.3.2.1 Educating Christian tour guides.

The suggested educational programme for tour guides would be based on the dissemination of information to their clients. To disseminate, in communication terms to educate these foreign Christians about the local Christians in the Holy Land. The communication process involves a sender transmitting information, a receiver collecting that information, processing it, and sending information back, much like that of a telephone line.[377]

The implementation of such dissemination activity under this programme, a disseminator must use a methodically allocated information or knowledge through a diverse ways to potential users or beneficiaries.

[377] John Durham Peters, *"*Communication as Dissemination,*"* in *Communication as... Perspectives on Theory,*ed. by Gregory J Shepherd, Jefferey St. John, and Ted Striphas (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2005), pp. 211-222.

According to Mace-Matluck, there are five characteristics needed to a successful dissemination system.[378]

Firstly, “it is important to be oriented toward the needs of the user, incorporating the types and levels of information needed into the forms and language preferred by the user”.

Second, “varied dissemination methods should be used, including written information, electronic media, and person-to-person contact”.

Third, “both proactive and reactive dissemination channels should be used. This would include information that users have identified as important, and information that users may not know to request but that they are likely to need”.

Fourth, “sufficient information must be provided so that the user can determine the basic principles underlying specific practices and the settings in which these practices may be used most productively”.

Fifth, “linkages need to be made to resources that may be needed to implement the information, and this will usually involve technical assistance”.

The principles listed here can be used to develop a training programme for tour guides to enable them to discuss the issues associated with the presence of the local Christian community in the Holy Land.

***6.3.2.1.1. Learning objectives and goals*.**

The key to the success of the dissemination of information by tour guides to their clients about Palestinian Christians is learning the goals of the local Christian community in the Holy Land. The participating Christian guides will be learning, or re-learning, about the historical development of the indigenous Christians in the Holy Land. This should have a two-pronged effect.

[378] Betty Mace-Matluck, Research-based strategies for bringing about school improvement (Austin TX: Southwest Education Development Laboratory, 1986).

First, it will enrich the tour guides' awareness about the different Christian communities in the Holy Land so that they can share that information with their clients.

Their clients, in turn, will be able to take that information home with them and share it with members of their own communities. Slowly, the world will learn about the lives of Christians in the Holy Land and the seriousness of these problems and possibly share ways to solve them. Hopefully, useful recommendations from those who have been on pilgrimage would be forthcoming regarding the political, economic, and social problems facing Holy Land Christians.

Often there are periods of time during which Christian tourists and pilgrims are travelling on a bus from one religious site to another. It is during this time that the tour guide can share information about the area, the holy site just visited and the next one on the tour. Tour guides learn, not only when, but what information to provide during that segment of the pilgrimage. For example, they may discuss the issues for local Christians and suggest ways to help local Christians through the creation of social and religious networks that would provide support for them and help to stop the decline of the Christian population from the birthplace of the Christian church. They could introduce ideas about fostering economic development, providing help in building small businesses and improving the local and international market place for Christian businesses.

The importance of these pilgrimages to the local Christian community can reduce the sense of alienation, abandonment and isolation. Pilgrimages can bolster the local economy and build bridges between Christian from all over the world and the local indigenous Christians.

6.3.3 Conclusion.

The idea of creating a network of communication is to facilitate the diffusion of interest among groups of Christians. It would be created prior to assigning local Christians to nodes in the network. Tour guides can play an important role in 'getting the information out,' as they are but one of the nodes. Communication between Christians in the network may be controlled and modified to promote diffusion of the desired interest, that of the lives of local Christians in the Holy Land.

With the creation of the internet, there can be direct connection between people, through chat rooms, blogs, and user-groups, concerning updates on relevant issues. These networked communications will help interested and concerned international Christians learn more about the Holy Land, the lives of Christians there and how they can be supported by help from abroad. Parishes could create exchange programmes between local Holy Land parishes as well as between international parishes and local parishes. There would be opportunities to exchange ideas to develop business activities between different Christian communities as well as establishing an international Christian lobby that would support and strengthen the Christian presence in the Holy Land.

6.4 The Economic Implementation Plan.

The economic condition of local Christians is one of the problems that influence the decision of some Christians to immigrate to other countries. Without economic stability and satisfaction, the emigration problem will not be curtailed. The proposed economic implementation plan could provide an opportunity to help reduce the economic suffering of local Christians. It has already been mentioned in Chapter Three that they need affordable housing, employment, and business opportunities. Strategies are presented in the form of projects and programmes that could foster the economic recovery of the Cristian community with the application of available Christian resources

both locally and internationally. The different strategies for economic improvement are discussed in the following sections.

6.4.1 The development of housing projects. The Christian Church hierarchies present in the Holy Land are big and powerful entities. They could use their power to preserve the Christian identity in the Holy Land through the encouragement of Christian communities not to leave. The Church, with all its denominations, maintains many places related to Christianity such as religious shrines and historical churches, and they maintain them very well. However, they also need to maintain and support the Christian identity of Christian parishes too.

All religious leaders in the Holy Land are well aware of the problems of the local Christians. In all fairness, many of them are trying to help; however, their help in neither well organized nor strategic. An example would be the Franciscan Custodians of the Holy Land who are considered to be the most powerful and the largest of the Catholic religious groups and provide support to the local Christians. They understand that it is difficult it is to maintain the Christian identity. Fr. Pizzaballa, the Holy Land Custo states;

"Because there are so few Christians and they live in such a difficult situation in the Holy Land, it's much more difficult to maintain the identity and Christian character of the Holy Land and the Christian identity there."

He goes on to say, "As we have decreasing public visibility, for Muslims, we're a reality that is increasingly distant and artificial"[379].

According to the SWOT analysis presented in Chapter Four, all the Christian denominations in the Holy Land need to support and maintain the suggested economic strategic plan.

[379] Pizzaballa, Pierbattista, "*Christian identity in the Holy Land is in danger*" July 20, 2010. [Online] [Accessed 14 July 2014]. Available at: http://www.romereports.com/pg157-search-en?pesquisa=Christian+identity+in+the+Holy+Land+is+in+danger%E2%80%9D.

The suggested housing project addresses the need for the provision of housing for the Christians in the most important Christian places, in particular in Jerusalem. As has already been discussed, it is very difficult for the Christians in Jerusalem to build or to purchase houses because the land is very expensive for the average Christian family, due to delays imposed by the Israeli Governmental (typically many years), and the high cost of obtaining a building permit. These factors, when taken together, make it almost impossible for a Christian family to build or to buy a new home to accommodate their growing family size.

The Christian churches in the Holy Land should work together to build housing projects in Jerusalem and other cities to help alleviate the critical shortage of housing. At the same time, this would strengthen the dwindling Christian presence in the Holy Land. The thirteen different Christian denominations could pool their resources to carry out an analysis that would identify how many Christians rent houses, pay high rent, and need bigger houses. The target population would be Christians living in major and important cities in the Holy Land, especially Jerusalem. Once the demographic data are available, designated Christian communities with subsidized housing could be developed. The housing projects could be built near historical churches with significance to the Christian religion. One example is the Saint Francis housing project in Bethpage. It consists of sixty eight apartments that are located next to a historic church. According to Christian tradition, this church is where Jesus rode a donkey from the Mount of Olives to Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. After the apartments were completed and Christians moved into them, they started to attend Mass at this historic church. Prior to that, it was just a place where tourists came to visit and now it is an active church with approximately 350 Christian parishioners and is still a place that tourists can visit. Such housing projects are mutually beneficial to the church authorities and the Christian

community. Christians can obtain affordable housing and the church congregation grows in the number of parishioners to which it ministers.[380]

6.4.2 Improvement of the local economy through Christian tourism. Whilst the previous section on tourism focused on education and training of tour guides, this section will deal with the role of the community in fostering economic growth through tourism.

To improve the Christian economy in the Holy Land, there is a need to establish a committee comprised of both religious and lay people to promote tourism to the Holy Land. The committee could develop an awareness campaign through different church and parish links around the world and encourage these parishes to conduct pilgrimages to the Holy Land. They would aim to use Christian resources connected to local Christians such as Christian travel agencies, restaurants and souvenir shops. Incoming pilgrimages would be encouraged to use local Christian resources and travel agencies would put together a travel package that would include guides, transportation services, hotels, restaurants and meetings with local Christian congregations. It would be an important way of serving local Christians as well as foreign pilgrims.

A church affiliated Christian Tourism Department could have an important impact on preserving the Christian identity in the Holy Land. Through its successful marketing campaign, there could be a greater involvement of Christians working in tourism resulting in a continued Christian presence in the land of Jesus. An influx of tourists would bring with it economic prosperity for the local Christians. Christians who have dreamed of opening, or re-opening small pilgrimage services such as travel agencies, souvenir shops, restaurants, and other services would be able to create contacts and build up a clientele. Christian tour guides would take them to shops and restaurants

[380] For more information about the Bethpage Housing Project, [Online] available at: www.fransicanfoundation.org.

owned and operated by other Christians. Currently, the majority of the people who benefit from Christian pilgrimages are from other religions.

A pilgrimage to the Holy Land is different and have unique characteristics from any touristic visit because it connect the pilgrims with the land of Bible. It provides an opportunity for them to pilgrims to combine the store of the bible with archaeological and the history of the Jewish people and Jewish followers of Jesus and witness the Christian presence. Pilgrims can have the opportunity to meet local Christians who will share some of their experiences as guardians of Christianity. By this means, Christian pilgrims and tourists will be more aware of the events occurring in the Holy Land and feel a connectedness with the local Christians culturally, socially, and religiously.

6.4.3 Tourism as a business opportunity.

In Section 5.3 of this chapter, the proposed cultural implementation programme considered the benefits of international parish exchanges to develop the religious, social and cultural aspects of the local Christian communities. This section deals exclusively with economic benefits of such ventures for the Christian community.

Special tours could be arranged to encourage merchants and business people from other countries to come to the Holy Land to explore possible business opportunities with local Christians. Local and international Christian executives, proprietors and entrepreneurs could be encouraged to create new businesses that deal directly with the Holy Land Christian tourism industry. For example, chartered bus corporations may want to expand their operations to include the Holy Land. Christians who own these luxury coach companies would be able to hire Christian bus drivers, have Christian mechanics, and obtain their fuel from local Christian petrol stations.

A strategic coordination plan could be initiated between Church leaders, Christian organizations, and prospective venture capitalists to re-acquire all the shops previously

sold to non-Christians. Once returned to local Christians, the shops would be used to improve the local economy and restore the Christian image to the Christian Quarter of the Old city. The Christian business persons, who come to the Holy Land as part of an organized tour, would be afforded an opportunity to invest their money in redeveloping the Christian Quarter of Old Jerusalem.

6.4.4 Improvement of Palestinian Christians' productive thinking.

As mentioned in Chapter Four, the majority of the members of the Christian community who live in Jerusalem are employed in the service industries. These occupations require very little productive thinking. These members are employees in other people's companies and are not business-oriented and have a general lack of motivation to start their own businesses.

The Christian community needs to develop the concept of creative thinking and the ability to think productively. The Christian community members to develop new inventions, produce works of art and develop ideas based on original, novel, or alternative approaches that has connection to Christianity and the land . The creative arm of the Christian community is stagnating when it should be flourishing. By encouraging and developing creative thinking programmes, the Christian community would grow in its ability to look at things in new ways, to see how to solve problems that no one else may know exist and to engage in mental and physical experiences that are new, unique, or innovative.

Although well educated, the Christian community in Jerusalem in general lacks creative thinking. Several strategic programmes could be implemented to target people in the community who are able to improve their ability for creative and productive thinking. There are already a small number of workshops and cooperatives working in the Bethlehem area that are keeping alive the ancient crafts of Palestinian Christians.

Bethlehem Icon Centre (www.bethlehemiconcentre.org) is attempting to “renew the dwindling Christian population by restoring an essential element of their ancient culture; the practice of icon making”. In Beit Sahour the Gloria Enterprise (www.hadeel.org/) coordinates the sale of olive wood and mother of pearl for workers in about 300 small workshops and the Holy Land Cooperative Society (www.hihc.org/) involves more than 30 workshops and is based on Fair Trade principles. The proposed development of productive thinking could learn from these small ventures in the West Bank.

The target members from the Christian community for training in productive thinking would include students in secondary schools, students attending colleges and universities and women seeking employment.

The first group would consist of Christian young people (15-17 years of age) who attend secondary school in grades 11 and 12. It is during this stage of their educational growth that all students decide where to proceed with their education. They choose either the academic track (universities, colleges), or vocational track. It is during this time, once they decide which track to pursue, that a proper course of study involving creativity and productivity thinking for their future goals would be useful. Such students would benefit from the development of their creative thinking as they make plans for further education or work opportunities.

Christian students completing their last year at local universities and colleges in the Holy Land would form the second group. Targeting these students before their graduation could encourage them to become creative thinkers. Such thinking would provide them with the opportunity to explore new and innovative horizons and make better use of their own intrinsic capabilities.

The third group would include Christian women who have not been able to find employment, those who perhaps did not have opportunities for higher education because they looked after their home and took care of their young children. Now that their children these women have more free time to think about what can be useful to their family and what would benefit the community most.

Each group of participants would be offered a course, based on their level of education, available time, and social agenda. The educational courses will be adjusted accordingly to their needs.

6.4.4.1 Prototype of an educational course for high school and university students. A Introductory course on Creative Thinking would explore their knowledge regarding science and techniques of critical thought. It would be presented as a way to establish a concrete foundation for applied action. Students would explore how so-called established facts, theories, and practices viewed from one perspective may be in conflict with other perspectives. Views commentaries and understanding, reasoning and interpretation, prizing and judging and the improving of knowledge in its social context will be measured. Special consideration would be paid to the interpreting what is learnt into strategies, resources, and involvements for use in the students' own educational, professional and cultural settings.

6.4.4.1.1 Educational Course objectives.

The following list covers the suggested educational course objectives based on the analysis that was done in Chapter Three;

- To develop the existing creative thinking expertise of participants and enable them to apply these skills in their in life and work environments.
- To help participants to comprehend what creative thinking is and how to apply the expertise and strategies of creative thinking in a wide variety of settings.

- To help participants improve the ability to help and recruit new participants to become better creative thinkers in a varied diversity of settings, whilst modelling a supportive creative thinking community through in-class experiences

6.4.4.1.2 Educational Course Work Plan.

Students would be required to participate actively in all classroom activities and discussions, complete assigned readings between classes, keep a micro-journal of critical thinking observations, questions, and ideas based on daily life and work. As part of a small group, students would design and conduct an in-class learning experience that reflects and applies their understanding of critical thinking. The course will use a Creative Thinking Manifesto synthesize the student's view of creative thinking.

6.4.4.2 Prototype of an educational course for women in the community. This course would be for women in the community and consist of two phases.

Phase 1 would involve "Empowering women in the business world." Women who are interested in seeking employment outside of the family would first participate in educational sessions designed to help them develop clear concepts of how they can become influential and productive in the Christian community.

Phase 2 would be "Developing a business plan." It would teach women who want to become entrepreneurs techniques on how they can start a small business based on their own talents.

6.4.4.2.1 Phase 1: Seminar on empowering women in the business world. The purpose of Phase 1 is to help the Christian community by encouraging women who wish it, to become active wage earners. The women who attend and participate in this seminar will complete a set of instructional sessions that are designed to increase their awareness of the dynamics of the community economics and commerce. They could use their talents in the world of commerce to supplement the family's income by creating their own job

opportunities, become active in modernization efforts to increase the employment of women in addition to the availability of job opportunities for women, and expand their areas of employment in the course of establishing a cooperative market.

Seminars in Phase One

Session One

- Communications skills, including concepts of how oral and written skills leads to power of self-confidence and transform it into a power tool.
- The importance of focusing on visions and ideas, such as methods for safeguarding that both verbal and inscribed communication skills are powerful, positive reflections of their capacities and skills.

Session Two

- Conflict management skills, including how to stay calm, focus, and how to deal with conflict situations.
- Conflict as a destructive or a positive force.
- Appropriate attitudes and knowledge during conflict resolution and its effect on productivity.
- Different techniques for conflict avoidance, such as the Win-Win conflict resolution technique.
- Learning what to ask for and how to get it, how to say no politely turn down requests, and ways to avoid difficult situations.
- Reflective evaluation of different personalities and strategies for revolving indefiniteness into self-confident action
- How to remove behaviours that can be considered weak or uncertain
- How to say no, and mean it, without hurting feelings, creating misunderstandings, or creating an aggressive stance.

Session Three

- Roles in management, including project leader and how to use leadership skills successfully
- Delegation and facing challenges
- Long term planning in an encouraging and supportive environment.
- How to deal with problematic individuals and to appreciate a factual benefit in today's workplace.

Session Four

- The ability to changing of discomfort situations and deactivate the impact of a difficult personalities.
- How to express anger in healthy, constructive ways

Session Five

- How to present themselves as successful women.
- Strategies for creating a powerful and positive image
- The importance of personal appearance
- How to keep from sabotaging their own success

By participating in a step-by-step programme, participants would be transformed into strong women who can trust their instincts, ask for what is needed, take calculated risks, get what they want and what their jobs demand. These sessions would help them promote their characteristics, skills and vision to take the lead and be successful.

6.4.4.2.2 Phase 2: Seminar on developing a business plan.

Phase 2 would lead Christian women through a seminar on how to start a small business. There would be three key components to the seminar and each is discussed below.

Component One

- Introduction to the concept of a business plan.
- Mechanisms of develop a business plan through executive summary, creating balance sheet, income statement and introductory cash flow estimation.
- The concept of business risk and operations

Component Two

- Market strategies and research, including presentation of market research analysis and target markets
- Identifying the target market through defining the requirement of production, circulation channels and advancement strategies.

Component Three

- Financial planning and strategies, including starting a business, making a profit, estimating time it will take before a business is self-supporting and projecting income potential.

6.4.5 Preserve Christian social and cultural future by intersectional linkage.

Intersectional linkage is an integrated approach to develop and strengthen links between different Christian communities and sectors in different cities in the Holy Land, to reinforce the effectiveness of developmental efforts that will improve the quality of life of the residents. Sectors are linked together as suppliers and consumers of goods, services, health, social welfare, Christian organizations and churches. Links between Christians from different sectors give rise to multiplier effects; that is, as one section experiences improvement, the total enhancement in all sectors will develop the improvement in this one sector as well as cross relations between sectors enhancing effectiveness and competence.

The effects of these cross relations can be carried out based on input-output or by applying a social accounting matrix through a quantitative analysis. Unfortunately, it is

not possible to apply these tools to the East Jerusalem sector because there is a lack of data. As an alternative, a qualitative outline will be introduced to the main cross relations that exist between the remaining Christian sectors. Importantly, the cross relations effects are cumulative, replacing multiple of iterations, which are sometimes problematic to define fully in a qualitative analysis. These principles are defined in detail in the following sections.

6.4.5.1 Development of the Christian private sector.

Taking advantage of investment opportunities can lead to increased employment opportunities income for skilled workers, which create an increase the product that be provided by the private sector and to promote private-sector development through educational levels into the labour market. Improvement of the private sector would be assisted by development of the tourist industry, access to land, and availability to a public infrastructure.

6.4.5.2 Development of a niche for the private Christian sector.

Culture and heritage preservation requirements may affect the development of the Christian sectors. In this perspective, the goal of the Christian private sector strategy is to strengthen the environment in which it operates, which will facilitate employment opportunities. Credit and business support services would need to be made available. In selected areas, such as tourism, the improvement of centres of business activities would also need to be addressed.

6.4.5.3 Development of effective tourism.

The tourism industry in particular the Christian pilgrimage is affected by the quality of services provide and urban infrastructure, to improve the access to qualified workers and tourism industry services. It requires collaboration and coordination of the related businesses sectors that represent a combined tourism cluster. The strategy suggested in

this thesis aims to provide support to individual businesses in the Christian community through the development of private-sector business-support programmes. In addition, there would need to be a co-operation between related private sector institutions. A tourism educational awareness program would be introduced at schools and strengthening the existing tourism programmes at related colleges and universities.

6.4.5.4 Development of education and training.

Another important factor would be an asset is to improve their capabilities in private and public sector is through education and training so they can performance as full members. Education is part of urban infrastructure. As an example, Jerusalem and other cities in the West Bank in particular the cities that has Christian presence, would promote education awareness of the importance of the Christian culture and heritage. Such education program aims to improve the quality education in East Jerusalem and improving the quality of schools by attracting better specialized teachers.

6.4.6 Conclusion. The economic implementation plan is a set of economic programmes that could help to solve the economic difficulties facing the Palestinian Christians in the Holy Land. The plan offers potential solutions to several problems identified from the SWOT analysis conducted earlier. The solutions would concentrate on the three areas presented below.

First, providing sufficient housing for the Holy Land Christians especially in the city of Jerusalem is a priority to prevent further emigration to other countries. By establishing and funding housing projects in Jerusalem and the West Bank, this would help to solve one of the major problems that the Palestinian Christians are facing due to lack of home ownership.

Second, by exploiting tourism, the economic situation facing Palestinian Christians would begin to improve. The economic implementation plan targets

Christian pilgrimages and tourism by generating business opportunities whilst increasing the income this industry could generate for the local Palestinian Christian community.

Third, the development and growth of the Palestinian Christian community should improve once productive thinking was encouraged. Courses and workshops in such thinking would lay a foundation in which economic productivity was central. Subsequent increased economic productivity would result in the the creation new businesses and improved Christian economic development.

6.5 Political Implementation Plan.

The participation of Palestinian Christians in defending the Palestinian cause is not a new story, and the achievements that they made in the past were remarkable. Unfortunately at the present time, many Palestinian Christians and Muslims know neither about these achievements nor about their historical significance. Because of this lack of understanding the next section will contain a review of the political achievements of Christian Palestinians before moving on to discuss possible political solutions for the present.

6.5.1 Historical involvement of Christians in politics.

At noted in Chapter One, the outcome of World War 1, the Balfour Declaration, and the British Mandate all had disastrous effects on the Holy Land and the Christian population as part of the Palestinian people. However one positive unforeseen outcome was the increased the sense of Palestinian national identity.[381]

As Khalidi quoted, "Although Muslims and Christians had somewhat different conceptions from one another about what made Palestine a Holy Land and of its

[381] Leonard Marsh, "Palestinian Christians: Theology and Politics of the Holy Land," in *Christianity in the Middle East: Studies* in Modern History, Theology, and Politics, ed. by Anthony O'Mahoney. (London: Melisende, 2008), p. 205.

boundaries and size, they shared a similar general idea of the country as a unit, as being special and holy."[382]

The presence of strong Christian communities in places such as Bethlehem, Nazareth and Jerusalem had strong links with communities abroad which assisted them to learn and other languages and develop their economic situation. As Musleh observed, "In Bethlehem, the manufacture of souvenirs and articles of ornament was mainly controlled by such Christian families."[383]

Prior to World War I, Palestinian Christians owned the two major newspapers distributed in Palestine, "Al Karmel" published from the City Haifa and "Filastin" published in the city Jaffa. The "Filastin" newspaper was founded by Issa al Issa was part and active member with the Arab nationalist movement.[384]

"Al Karmel", founded by the Palestinian journalist Najib Nassar, was the first Palestinian nationalist newspaper. Najib was first to publish the dangers of Zionism for Palestine, even before the Balfour Declaration. In 1913, he wrote, "Should we allow the Zionists to revive their nationalism at the expense of our nationalism? Have we agreed upon selling them our land piece by piece until they expel us from our land in groups and on an individual basis?" [385] Najib Nassar founded an association to convince the Turkish government to stop helping the Zionists through land selling and to boycott any Jews products.[386]

The first Palestinian politician were found in the country mainly in Jaffa, Haifa and Jerusalem and were organized by Palestinian Muslim - Christian associations living in

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[382] Rashid Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity: The Construction of Modern National Conscience* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), p. 150.
[383] Mohammad Muslih, "The Origins of Palestinian Nationalism" (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), p. 26.
[384] *Ibid* 383. p. 254.
[385] *Ibid* 386. P. 82
[386] Abdelaziz Ayyad, "Arab Nationalism and the Palestinians: 1859-1939" (Jerusalem: Passia, 1999), p. 47.

Palestine. In 1919, members of these associations, political party, activists and other educators from the Palestinian community founded the first Palestinian National Congress. The Palestinian National Congress was formed by Palestinian Muslin and Christian's representative. These selection of representatives are based on the population statistics calculation. While the Christians representatives at the Palestinian National Congress were over and not based on the population due their better education and their influence economically.[387]

During the last general strike that lasted for a period of six months in 1936, the Arab Higher Committee consisted of three Palestinian political movement appointed six board members of which one-third were Christians. The Committee was considered the official spokesman for the Palestinian people at that time.[388]

These examples illustrate some of the information that is absent from most history books. Neither Palestinian Christians nor Muslims today know how they worked together for the good of the Palestinian people as a whole. Unless these accounts are made known, future generations will also be ignorant of the contributions Christians made to the Palestinian cause. Ignorance may lead younger generations to avoid actively participating in the political agenda that could help solve some of the current problems that are affected by religion and nationalism.

6.5.2 Establishment of a Christian political movement.

The researcher suggests that a Christian political movement is needed to create a concrete foundation for a role in changing the policies that influence the Christians living in Israel and Palestine. Christians living in Israel must participate more actively in elections, either through the existing Arab Coalition Party that has representation in the

[387] *Ibid.*383

[388] *Palestine Remembered*. Available at: http://www.palestineremembered.com/Jaffa/Jaffa/index.html [Accessed 14 July 2014].

Israeli Knesset, or by setting up a new party to gain seats in the Knesset. The charter of such a Christian political movement would need to address issues related to preserving the Christian presence in the State of Israel. All human beings have the right to practice their religious beliefs freely, without fear of persecution and this is what Palestinian Christians desire. The Christian presence in the Holy Land, especially in Jerusalem with its different denomination, churches and sanctuaries would need to be assured of peaceful unity and cohesive prosperity through international guarantees. The three major religious communities need to be ensured right of access to their respective holy places, of profession of faith and of development. Christians living under the Palestinian Authority would need to be free to access to all places of worship, especially on holy days. The Old City of Jerusalem and its holy places should be granted international guarantees that will be applied and implemented, working towards improving peace between Israelis and Palestinians based on international resolutions.

There is also a need for international Christian authorities to act as mediators between the local Christian and Muslim communities and the Israeli authorities regarding the hardships faced by Palestinians under Israeli rule and occupation.

Active Christian Palestinian participation in local and national politics would provide a means for a political voice in the Jerusalem Municipal, Knesset and Palestinian Authority elections and offer a mechanism for issues to be highlighted that apply particularly to the Christian community.

Such a Christian political entity will work in Israel to gain support from the international community to stop the Israeli government disenfranchising non-Jewish citizens (Palestinian Christians and Muslims) under Israeli law, making them into second class citizens with less rights than Israeli Jews389.

[389] Christine Amanpour at CNN, Interview the Israeli Arab Member at the Kinnest regarding the bill that the Israeli Prime Minister was trying to pass by making Israeli a Jewish State.

A Christian political group in East Jerusalem would aim to regain Christian rights in the city, the West Bank and Gaza Strip and make the Christian voice heard in the Palestinian Authority.

In international terms the establishment of the State of Israel is legitimate. It was approved by a vote in the UN Assembly. What is not legitimate under international law is the continued occupation of territories captured in 1967, the settling its citizens in the occupied territories and the incorporation of East Jerusalem into the "united and eternal" capital of Israel. In Israel it is not illegal to prevent some categories of citizens being treated equally but it is an infringement of their human rights.

6.5.3 Conclusion

The political component in the Holy Land involves a mixture of politics and religion and each of the three religious groups are trying to ensure that their religious beliefs are predominant. Therefore, it is very important for the Christians in the Holy Land to establish their political foundation in order to gain their religious freedom through the political action. The suggested political entity should be supported by the local and international churches, including Christian politicians from all over the world to promote the ideology of religious freedom for all groups through political influence. The development of a set of strategies through the participation of Christian politicians in the relevant political processes in Israel and Palestine would be used to influence Israeli and Palestinian political decisions to bring about peace, reconciliation and freedom of religion.

6.6. Overall Conclusion

The presentation of the proposed "Recommendations and Implementation of Strategic Planning" that is discussed in this chapter is based on the problem analysis presented in Chapter Four. The plan presented in this chapter involves all the five areas discussed

encompassing religious, social, cultural, economic and political issues affecting the Christian community in the Holy Land, especially in Jerusalem. Taken together the plan provides a concrete foundation for a Christian national strategic plan that will work towards accomplishing the revitalisation of the Christian community in the Holy Land. These recommendations and implementations will focus on the problems described in this thesis in order to turn these problems into effective solutions that aim to strengthen the Christian community in the Holy Land through increasing the community stability and decreasing the emigration of Christian community from the Holy Land.

Chapter Seven

Conclusions

7.0 Introduction.

This final chapter will evaluate the success of this research in answering the question posed in Chapter One and the usefulness of the SWOT analysis. Then, a reflection will be offered on the specific scholastic and academic contributions this project makes to the field of study and alternative approaches to data collection and analysis. This thesis could serve as a springboard for others to further the work and research presented here and recommendations for further study will be made.

The strategies that are set out in this research have identified possible new directions to meet the needs of the Palestinians Christian in the Holy Land. In particular, these strategies, if carried out, could help to reduce the phenomenon of emigration of Christians from the Holy Land that negatively affects the Christian presence there. Achieving these strategic goals is not an easy task and to fulfil them will require several agreements between local Palestinian Christians, church leaders, and church-affiliated organizations in the Holy Land.

In light of the recent history of strong disagreement between Catholic, Orthodox and Armenian Christians over ownership and rights of worship in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, such agreement will not be easy to achieve. It is also notable that the only time most church leaders from the different denominations worship together is during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity once a year and even then some church leaders do not attend at all and others only attend the services at churches with whom they are friendly. Lay Christians from the different denominations tend to attend only services at their own denomination during the week and many do not attend at all. These

agreements will need to lay a concrete foundation for what has been called in this thesis, the Christian National Plan that would develop through the implementation programmes and projects presented in Chapter Five to meet the strategic goals.

Because the researcher is from a Latin Catholic background and lives in Jerusalem, it is suggested that this overall plan and individual projects and programmes within it be piloted within the Catholic Church environment in Jerusalem before extending the plans to the wider Christian context in Jerusalem and beyond.

7.1 Research Question.

The research question posed in Chapter One was;

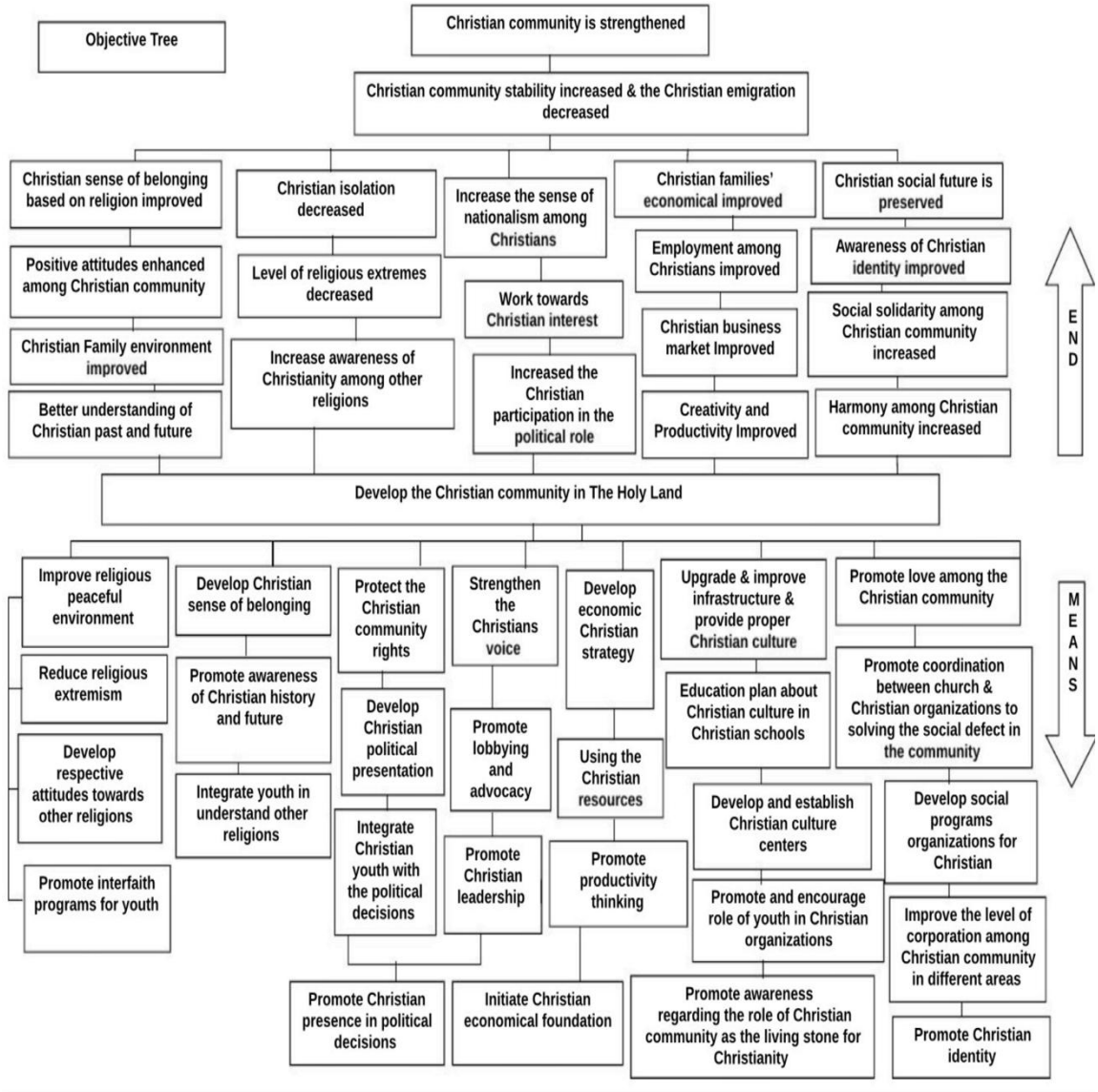
"What appropriate actions might help local Christians mitigate the exodus of fellow Christians to other countries while preserving a strong Christian identity in the Holy Land?"

The research presented in this thesis provides background to the situation described in previous chapters and clarification regarding appropriate actions that can be taken to mitigate the flight of Christians from the Holy Land to other countries. In order to answer the research question, a systematic approach was applied through implementing several steps.

First, it was important to gather relevant information involving the situation in the Holy Land. Research reports, news articles, journal articles, internet searches, personal communications with key people and group discussions commenced. Information sources were varied and often obscure. Some information, commonly known in the Palestinian Christian community, could not be substantiated by valid academic research and some data was only available in church libraries and records with limited access to

a lay researcher. This was followed by a SWOT analysis on the data collected to identify the problems and underlying fundamental causes at the heart of each issue. These data were presented in diagrammatic form in a "Problem List" to allow the researcher clarity in analysis. The results derived from the SWOT analysis were evaluated to discover the underlying contributions that would allow for the development of a set of actions. This is portrayed in diagrammatic form as the "Objectives List" shown below.

Figure 5. Holy Land Christians Objective Tree



These actions, in turn were translated into strategic programmes and projects that could be introduced into the Christian schools, churches, parish centres, and Christian organizations in the Holy Land.

The approach used to answer the research question enabled the researcher to perceive that the data could be grouped under the headings of religious, social, culture, economic and political problems. Possible solutions were examined separately for each of the identified problems and factors affecting these problems. The outcome of this examination resulted in the proposal of five implementation plans that would address the research question in each of the five problem areas.

7.1.1 The Religious Level. At the religious level, the data analysis and the outcome solutions provide the opportunity to develop the Palestinian Christian community in the Holy Land. Several approaches suggested in this thesis can be introduced to obtain the desired goals.

7.1.1.1 The development of understanding and respect of diverse religions. The importance of dialogue between the Palestinian Christians, Palestinian Muslims and Israeli Jews in the Holy Land has been highlighted. This aims neither to shape the identity of its participants, nor to hide the differences between them. Rather, it aims to develop a mutual understanding of each other. Through dialogue, the goal will be to foster the development of confidence, openness, and mutual acceptance in order to overcome the issues that are obstacles to Christian, Muslim and Jewish co-existence in Israel and Palestine. Interfaith dialogue in the Holy Land has special elements not present in other countries because of its interconnectivity with the land and the three Abrahamic faiths of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, all of whom claim links with the land.

Dialogue between the three Abrahamic faiths will give the Palestinian Christian, Palestinian Muslims and Israeli Jews an understanding of each other's religious beliefs, which is an important key to tolerance, since the three religious faith traditions in the Holy Land often define a significant part of a person's identity and culture.

7.1.1.2 The development of the sense of belonging of the Palestinian Christians to the Holy Land. Through a series of historical educational programmes about the Christianity in the Holy Land, Palestinian Christians should develop an increasing the sense of belonging. These programmes will reconnect the bond between Christian religious affiliation and everyday life as a witness in the Holy Land. Christian history education will be endorsed by Christian schools and developed within the Christian community. This will have a major impact on the Christian students and adults in building their identity which will shape their behaviour characteristics and have the ability to enhance the sense of relationship with and connection to the Holy Land and its Christian community, based on Christian history, culture and faith.

7.1.1.3 The development of an increased awareness among local Palestinian Christians regarding the Christian history of the Holy Land.

According to the letter to the Romans Chapter 15 verse 4: "everything that was written in the past was written to teach us" how to live our faith in the present. Learning about the historical events that have affected Christianity in earlier years and the outcome of these events on the lives of present day Palestinian Christians should increase their ability to learn from the past to solve current problems. Furthermore, it provides an opportunity for them to learn and understand their religious identity within the political context of the Holy Land. This is important because of the fact that political identity in the country is connected to Judaism, Islam, and Christianity. Knowing their Christian

identity allows Palestinian Christians to live within the diverse political context that affects the Christian presence in the Holy Land today.

7.1.1.4 The development of increased awareness among the Muslim and Jewish communities about the Christian faith and religion. Educating Muslims and Jews about Christianity should help to reduce the tensions that currently exist between the Christian and other religious communities. Once members of other religions learn that Christianity poses no threat to their way of life, there should be a reduction in tension between the religious communities in the Holy Land.

7.1.1.5 The development of improved relationships between the Christian church authorities and local Christian community. Christian church leaders must reach out to their communities to remove the sense of isolation and "left alone feeling," many Christians feel. The church authorities should create coherent relationships with the local Christian community so they can work together to overcome the problems they each face and strengthen the Christian presence in the Holy Land. In order to achieve this, church leaders of the different denominations in Jerusalem need first to reach out to each other and respect each other's Christian traditions and approaches to worship.

7.1.2 The Social Level.

Analysis of the social problems and the resulting implementation programmes are the foundation for introducing a practical strategic solution to the social problems affecting the Palestinian Christians in the Holy Land. The social implementation plan proposed here is an active solution to promote social justice to reduce the suffering of the Palestinian Christian community.

The addressed solutions are a set of programmes and projects that will engage the local Christian community with local churches, organizations and institutions. Implantation of this strategic solution will create many positive outcomes.

7.1.2.1 Promotion of Christian rights within Israeli and Palestinian governmental institutions though official Christian body representation. The official Christian body is an entity that consists of members from different Christian denomination, many of who are expatriates and whose church headquarters are in countries outside of Israel/Palestine. This researcher argues that the official church body needs to work towards formulating new laws and regulations to protect Christian heritage, culture and the mobilization of human and national rights of the Palestinian people. In addition, it has an obligation to promote a just peace for Palestinians and Israelis based on Christian laws, democratic principles and respect for international law. Finally, it will need to promote the political identification of Christian Palestinians as being a part of the society decision-making process in building Palestinian society.

7.1.2.2 The development of positive Christian inter-church relationships.

It is important for Church leaders of the different church denominations in the Holy Land to work together under one vision and common goals towards strengthening the Christian identity and helping to equip local clergy and lay Christians to solve the problems facing the Christian community in the Holy Land. This is necessary because most local church members take their lead from their clergy and church hierarchy. Without such leadership from the top Palestinian Christians have little motivation to change their attitudes towards working together with their fellow Christians in other denominations.

It is important for the different Christian denominations in the Holy Land to become more proactive in developing coherent relationships between all their parishes and local Christian groups. This is essential for forming the strong relationships that are necessary for developing an ecumenical, united Christian community that can deal with social

problems as one unified body.

7.1.3 The Cultural Level

The Palestinian Christian culture in the Holy Land has a unique characteristic that makes it different from other Christian cultures. Notably, there is an infusion of Christian religious affiliation in to the daily lives of those practicing Christianity in the place where Jesus exercised His ministry. The SWOT analysis showed that the Palestinian Christian culture is affected negatively by a combination of factors, of which the influence and imposition of other religious cultures is often detrimental. The strategic cultural implementation programmes proposed in this thesis are designed to mitigate this influence by bolstering Palestinian Christians understanding and participation in their Christian culture.

7.1.3.1 The establishment and promotion of a Christian cultural entity. Several cultural programmes could be developed in the Christian community to increase the awareness of the various cultural problems facing the Palestinian Christian community as a whole. Such programmes suggested in this thesis could contribute in a direct and effective manner to overcoming many of the cultural problems that the Palestinian Christian community faces.

7.1.3.2 The formation of international lobbying efforts. The promotion of an international lobbying initiative through the dissemination of information concerning the Palestinian Christian situation and the difficulties they face in the Holy Land is proposed. This is a plan to introduce Christian pilgrims and tourists to the daily lives of Palestinian Christians. It also provides for future "twinning" and friendship relationships between the local Christians and Christian in other countries in order to find ways to strengthen the Christian presence in the Holy Land.

7.1.4 The Economic Level.

Economic stability for the Palestinian Christian community is an essential component to reduce their continuing departure from the Holy Land. The strategic economic implementation solutions proposed in this thesis would offer opportunities to improve their current economic situation with the prospect that once the economy improves, they will remain in the Holy Land.

The plan involves a set of economic programmes centred on Christian tourism, church resources and exchange relationships between local and foreign parishes to promote business possibilities. The achievement of economic stability in the Palestinian Christian community is not an easy goal. However, with appropriate vision and leadership, the Christian community, its churches in the Holy Land and interested foreign churches and their business -related institutions could come together to implement the economic target plans. Taking into consideration that the Palestinian Christian community is relatively small and does not exceed 150,000 Christians in Jerusalem, the West Bank, and Israel, the plan requires active participation from all community minded leaders.

The tourism and Christian pilgrimage industry is a main income resource in the Holy Land. According to the SWOT analysis, the main benefits of the economical implementation plan proposed provide an opportunity for local Christians to profit from the international Christian tourism industry by tapping into the tourism market.

The churches in the Holy Land also have the potential to improve the economy by providing housing for local Christians, especially those in Jerusalem. New construction would boost the economy. Materials, employment and an increase in population would all stimulate the economy. The Christian churches own a lot of property and they have the potential to raise the financial resources that need to be assigned to such

programmes. The provision of additional housing in Jerusalem would boost the Christian population and increase the influence of local Christians in all aspects of life of the city.

7.1.5 The Political Level.

The political situation, in particular the ongoing Palestinian-Israeli conflict, is one of the major causes of Palestinian Christian emigration. The Palestinian Christians and their Churches in the Holy Land are part of the Palestinian people and serve as witnesses to the ongoing conflict, as well as experiencing the effects in their daily lives. The political implementation plan proposed here offers an opportunity for local Christians and their church leaders to play a role in solving the political conflict. Their involvement could help reduce Christian emigration from the Holy Land.

The consideration of the combined religious, social, cultural and political levels is important as they all link together and impact together on the lives of Palestinian Christians in the Holy Land. This combined approach is considered necessary to make changes. The whole programme is considered to be necessary to answer the original research question posed at the beginning of the thesis about what appropriate actions would mitigate the exodus of Christians from the Holy Land. The author of this thesis also argues that implementation of such a plan would maintain and enhance the Christian identity in the Holy Land.

One target goal that could be implemented is the promotion of international advocacy such that the Christian world would be kept current about the Palestinian-Israel conflict and its effects on the Palestinian Christian presence in the Holy Land. Another advocacy group would target the local Christian community and keep its members informed about

the political framework in the Israeli and Palestinian context, and the role they should take to gain political and social rights. Representation in the political process within the Israeli and Palestinian governments and political contexts would be addressed in the goals of this plan and could promote a vision of hope and change at a time where Palestinians and Israelis are losing hope for a lasting peace.

7.2 How useful was the methodology used?

The methodology that was used in this research project is considered to be effective in identifying the problems of the Palestinian Christians in the Holy Land. The tool used was SWOT analysis, which considered the Strengths and Weaknesses within the Christian community and the Opportunities and Threats in the surrounding environment that impact on the situation of Christians in the Holy Land and their ability to reduce and prevent the exodus of members of the community. It provided for an in-depth analysis to evaluate the issues involved through the various stages of the research process that enabled the researcher to formulate and plan appropriate actions that could become solutions.

The analysis of the problems focused on the history, causes and environment that created these problems, their effects on the local Christian community and what the future impact and consequences might be on the local Christian community. The strategic solutions that followed the problem analysis are the ideas that can be turned into strategic solutions. The local Palestinian Christian community, its churches, and Christian-related organizations and institutions can implement these strategic solutions.

The usefulness of this approach is that the analysis allows the researcher to consider the wide breadth of factors affecting the situation of the Palestinian Christian community.

Additionally the implementation of the identified strategic solutions can be achieved at different levels, locally in the Holy Land and internationally with Christian organizations in other countries with ties to local Christians and churches in the Holy Land.

7.3 The specific contribution that this research makes to scholarship in this area

The contribution made by this research presents an opportunity for interested parties to benefit from the application of the designated methodology. The researcher is not aware that the analysis and solutions presented here have been suggested in such a combination before. Other writers have suggested parts of the programme but the author believes that the situation for Christians in the Holy Land is so complex that all the issues mentioned here must be tackled together.

Students and scholars alike would benefit from using the literature referenced, the collected data and method of analysis regarding the Christian presence in the Holy Land and other complex issues in the Holy Land and in other similar situations. This work also provides an opportunity for church leaders and congregations in the Holy Land to apply the information gathered and analysed and the proposed strategic solutions to implement the plans suggested here in all their parishes.

The research also contributes to the work of local and international Christian organizations by providing them with a practical strategic programme and projects that they can implement through their organizations. It suggests the type of coordination that needs to occur between these organizations to benefit the Christian community in the Holy Land and provides a set of strategies to work towards common goals to strengthen the Christian presence in the Holy Land.

The research resources and solutions give the end-users vital structural information available for making plans, appropriate strategies for disseminating their programmes and the mobilisation of the global Christian community to act as an effective lobby on behalf of Palestinian Christians. Resources used in this thesis also provide a source of motivation to church leaders, both clergy and lay leaders to mobilise the whole Christian community to improve their situation and regain their rights as members of the Palestinian and Israeli community in the Holy Land.

Furthermore, proposals made in this thesis give local Palestinian Christians the opportunity to become more aware of weaknesses currently within their society and the threats that they are facing from outside that society. This research provides strategies for Palestinian Christians to capitalise on their own strengths and the opportunities available to them to help them solve their problems. Finally, it provides the end-users with an opportunity to work together towards solving some of the identified problems using a recognised scientific approach and developing strategies that are derived from conducting in-depth, focused analysis.

7.4 Recommendations for further research

This research presents a SWOT analysis that has led the researcher to propose solutions to the problems that face Palestinian Christians in the Holy Land. The outcome is a set of focused strategic goals that local Palestinian Christians, their churches and local and international Christian organizations can apply to solve problems and strengthen the Christian presence in the Holy Land. The resulting implementation plan is structured in a way that can be used as a Christian National Plan that could serve as a first step in protecting and preserving the presence of Palestinian Christians in the Holy Land. However, there are concerns and problems in the Palestinian Christians' situation in the

Holy Land that are beyond the scope of this project. Recommendations to deal with these problems are indicated below.

7.4.1 Promotion of the adoption of this national plan.

A deliberate and sustained campaign should be implemented concerning the content of this research project. The campaign to promote the adoption of this project will be made to local Christians, church authorities and leaders and Christian organizations in the Holy Land. It is obvious that there is a need for a committee to oversee the complete plan and that each programme and project presented in this research needs to have a set budget and designated financial resources.

The author is himself a resident of Jerusalem and, as such, an interested party in seeing this plan succeed. He has suggested that this plan, initially be piloted in the Catholic community of Jerusalem, of which he is a member. He has expressed his willingness to work closely with other clergy and lay leaders in the Christian community to provide the best foundation to start work on implementing the plan.

7.4.2 Develop further survey to gather demographic data about the different populations in the Holy Land.

The researcher has been made aware, during data collection for this thesis, of the limited reliable and valid scientific data currently available and accessible about the Palestinian communities living in the Holy Land, especially in Jerusalem, This has been a barrier to the collection of data for the SWOT analysis.

Additional information is needed in terms of the population characteristics and the views and opinions of the Christians living in the Holy Land regarding their present

living conditions and future prospects. The following sections indicate the first steps towards gaining that understanding.

7.4.2.1 Census data about the Christian population.

There is need for a survey that would provide the actual number of Palestinian and Israeli/Palestinian Christians living in the Holy Land by villages and cities, without the inclusion of foreign Christians living and working there. Data provided by local churches from their registration records is currently not complete and does not include non-practicing Christians in the area.

The development of such a census would require the cooperation of national and local Israeli and Palestinian government authorities and church leaders in all denominations and an appropriate definition of who is a local/Palestinian Christian. The survey should provide a full and accurate data base on the Christian community to include all Christians who reside in the Holy Land, those who possess the Israeli identity card (including those who have Israeli citizenship) and those who hold Palestinian citizenship.

This survey study would need to include all Jerusalem and West Bank Christians who are temporarily abroad for tourism, social visits, educational or health reasons. Christians who possess Jerusalem identity cards and live outside the physical borders of Jerusalem, such as Bethlehem, Ramallah, Al Ram, will also be part of this study. Despite the difficulty, special attention will be paid to this group as they are currently at risk of losing their residency and social rights because they cannot afford to live in Jerusalem.

To include all Palestinian Christians in the survey, those living in the Gaza Strip should be included. Such a piece of research would need to be undertaken by Christians living in Gaza as access to the Gaza Strip from either Israel or the West Bank is very difficult at the moment. This community is very small (about 1,200 people) and is getting smaller as many young Christians from Gaza are emigrating. The fact that there is a separate government in the Gaza Strip would make inclusion of statistics on Gazan Christians a difficult proposition but they still consider themselves as part of the Palestinian people.

7.4.2.2 Survey of the opinions and attitudes of non-Christians about the Christians in the Holy Land.

Comprehensive research is needed to find out how other religious groups in the Holy Land view Christianity in general and how they consider the Palestinian Christian community within the Palestinian society context. This would raise the profile of Christians in the Holy Land, provide a foundation for the work of inter-faith dialogue proposed in this thesis and possibly contribute to better relations between the different religious groups.

7.4.2.3 Survey the role of churches in strengthening the Palestinian Christian presence.

A detailed survey is needed about the role and importance of the churches in the Holy Land in the lives of Palestinian Christians and the strategies they have, and could develop, to strengthen the Christian presence in the Holy Land and reduce further emigration.

7.4.2.4 Survey of the distribution of tourism profits.

A detailed survey is needed regarding the finances generated through tourism and the proportion of profits that benefit Christian, Muslim, and Jewish companies and communities. Such a survey would provide data for planning Christian tourism projects and activities and perhaps motivate Christian business people, locally and abroad, to take back responsibility for introducing international Christian pilgrims to the Holy Land.

7.4.3 Wider implications for the findings in this thesis

The researcher has already indicated that living as a Christian community in the Holy Land is a unique situation because of the relationships between the three Abrahamic religions. However, there are some similarities with other contexts. Christians living in Muslim-dominated countries do have to work out their role and place in an Islamic society. Because of this Christians living in Jordan, Egypt and other countries in the Middle East could learn from the proposed inter-faith dialogue project mentioned in this thesis. As recent history has shown, minority Christian communities in Iraq and Syria have been almost lost because of the persecution and mass exodus from those countries to the west. In light of this, it would benefit the Christian communities still existing in the Middle East to consider the proposals discussed here.

7.4.4 Overall conclusion

As custodians of Christianity in the Holy Land, local Christians, as well the Christians world-wide, have a responsibility to better to understand the complex history of Christianity in the Holy Land and the events that have shaped their present faith and identity. Unfortunately, the majority of Holy Land Christians, as well as Christians from

other countries, are aware of neither basic religious doctrine nor historical facts, needing to refer to church leaders, scholars and other writers for this. This lack of educational background has caused the local Christian community to be as ignorant of Christian theology as the international Christian community is of the problems facing the Christian community in the Holy Land. The complex history of Christianity in the Holy Land can be divided into two parts; the historical development of the church in the Holy Land, and the development of local Christians as a continuous living community. The church authorities in the Holy Land have serious concerns about the religious message presented in their local parishes which determines the relationship between the church hierarchy and the local Christian community[390].

This research presents vital evidence that Christians in the Holy Land are part of the indigenous people of the Holy Land community. They are not immigrants, invaders or expatriates but people who can trace their ancestry back to New Testament times and earlier. They have their own unique traditions, language, nationality and religious liturgy. The Christian presence in the Holy Land, as well as in the rest of the Middle East has played a major role in setting a concrete foundation for the cultural and social developments that are the basis of Christian teachings on justice and peace.

It is now time for the world Christian community to understand the indigenous Christian community's right to live beside Muslims and Jews, celebrate their own feasts, follow their own customs in the Holy Land, and also contribute to the political, social, economic and of their homeland, culture and society.

The documentations presented in this research gives detailed information about the Christians of the Holy Land through analysis of the cumulative historical development of their political, social, cultural, economic and religious circumstances and the effect

[390]Salman Usama, Article *"Institutional Church and the Christian Community in the Holy Land*", Living Stone foundation Magazine, Issue # 36, London 2011. Pp.13 -15. Available online at: ***http://www.livingstonesonline.org.uk/livingstones36.pdf*.**

on the presence of the Christian community in the land where the Christian religion began and from where it spread all over the world. It is clear from the number of Christian pilgrims who visit that the Holy Land today is still a sacred place for all Christians.

Christians the world over owe a debt of gratitude to Palestinian and Palestinian Israeli Christians for their perseverance in maintaining their presence as living stones. The fact that this presence is fading because of emigration should be a serious concern to the international church. Christians outside the Holy Land have an obligation to help prevent the loss of the living stones from the Holy Land. In the First Epistle to the Corinthians Chapter 16, the Apostle Paul urges the Corinthian church to support the church in Jerusalem financially and spiritually. Today's church in Jerusalem has within its own hands the capability to finance themselves but it still needs the economic, social, religious, political and cultural support of the church outside the Holy Land.

The vision behind this research is a create a Christian National Plan in order to strengthen the Christian presence in the Holy Land through a general strategic plan that will be introduced and implemented by Christians from different denominations, church leaders, and foreign Christian organizations and believers working together. The proposed goals will help to overcome the Christian dilemmas that affect their presence in the Holy Land through the following means;

- The establishment of a concrete foundation of mutual understanding "trialogue" among the three faith groups, through a strategic programme that will enable the believers of these three faiths to come together. This will involve not just scholars and church leaders, but also women and men, youth and teenagers to understand and respect each other based on an understanding of God is the creator of all mankind and that each of these groups have its own unique way to serve God. These strategic programmes will

be involve study between local communities in the Holy Land from the three religions in order to promote understanding of the religious beliefs of each religion and their role in the current religious conflict and possible role in creating peace in the Holy Land.

- The establishment of new approaches towards communication between Christians in the Holy Land and Christians from all over the world to work together under one vision among all Christian denominations to strengthen the Christian presence in the Holy Land. This should also promote a sense of belonging to the Holy Land based on religion among the local Christians as well as Christians all over the word.

- To promote among international Church leaders and Christian political bodies the need to pressurise the government of the State of Israel to promote religious, educational, and medical and other civil rights to Palestinians and stop Zionist extremist actions against Christians and churches in the Holy Land, based on differences in religion or race.

- To address with Christian, Jewish and Muslim religious leaders the misrepresentation of Christian history and culture in Christian school curricula due government educational systems. This research provides a plan to set up educational strategies to increase the awareness of local Christian about Christian culture and history.

- To introduce local Christian and non-Christian students to additional information about Christian history and the development of Christianity in the Holy Land and the role that Christians played in the development of the country. The introduction of Christian history and culture to local Christians and non-Christians will bring to these students a clearer picture of Christian culture and history that is not presented in the history curricula imposed schools by the governmental Ministry of Education.

- To create economic stability in the local Christians by advancing the Christian tourism industry and creating new opportunities through a strategic ecumenical strategies and programmes.

Over all, the implementation of these research proposals will give light and hope to the Christians in the Holy Land. This light will help the local Christian community see a way forward out of the darkness of their present situation. This hope that every Christian in the Holy Land dreams of, is to feel part of a universal church that cares about and supports that part of the church trying to keep Christianity alive in the place where everything is started, the Holy Land.

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