



## **Christian Zionism**

Statement by the Bishops' Conference, Church of Norway

16. October 2020

The situation in Israel and Palestine is deeply worrying. A just and sustainable peace solution that respects international law and safeguards the security and rights of both peoples, seems more unrealistic than for a long time. Church leaders in Jerusalem have called upon the churches of the world and the international community, to put pressure on both parts to negotiate a just peace solution and end the illegal occupation and discrimination of citizens.

"Zionism" is a broad term. There are some groups who are described as "Christian Zionists" because they support the state of Israel's expansionist policy based on peculiar interpretations of the Bible. Although they belong to Christian churches, they do not listen to appeals from the local churches in the Middle East. They have a special interpretation of history, with apocalyptic last days expectations, where they risk reducing the Jews to an instrument for attaining salvation according to their own theological scheme.

They practice a political theology that ignores international law and human rights. Directly or indirectly, they oppose attempts to create a just peace. These groups are particularly large in the United States, but are also found in Norway.

There is disagreement about how the land promises in the Bible should be interpreted. But we find it unacceptable to interpret the Bible without regard to the ethical consequences. It is problematic to read ancient prophecies so that all political events today are predetermined by God. In this way people are deprived of responsibility for the course of history at the same time as God is diminished. Not least, Christian Zionism complicates the situation for the churches in Palestine and Israel. This calls for solidarity from the Church of Norway.

The Bishops' Conference finds it unacceptable to use the Bible to legitimize oppression or human rights violations, or to differentiate human dignity according to group belonging. The promises of the Old Testament concerning the Jewish people and the land, cannot be used to legitimize the expulsion of Palestinians from their homes or their rights. They also have historic roots in the country and belong there. The Bishops' Conference in the Church of Norway therefore finds Christian Zionism theologically unacceptable and incompatible with human rights

The Church has much to answer for when it comes to its history of anti-Judaism. In confrontation with ecclesiastical and European anti-Semitism, the church has wanted to develop a solidarity relationship with the Jewish people. This is not in opposition to committing to the rights of the Palestinians.



# CHURCH OF NORWAY

Bishops Conference

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Several dioceses in the Church of Norway have friendship agreements with ELCJHL (Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land). The Bishops' Conference wants the Church of Norway to actively support this work. The Church of Norway will continue to seek dialogue with Jews about how we, as believers, can contribute to just peace in the area.

*Mercy and truth are met together;  
righteousness and peace have kissed each other.*  
Psalm 85.11