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October 5, 2011

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ in Palestine,

We in Mennonite Church USA have received your statement “Kairos Palestine: A Moment of Truth.” Though it has been nearly two years since you made this appeal the urgency of your situation remains and we feel compelled to respond even at this late date.

For more than sixty-five years, Mennonites have lived, studied and ministered in Palestine and Israel. Some of us have developed deep friendships and bonds of faith with brothers and sisters there. Our faith has been challenged and nurtured by you.

We open our hearts when we again hear of the suffering you experience in an occupied land as homes are taken from you, families and communities are separated by walls and checkpoints, and countless large and small indignities and humiliations are visited upon you each day.

We are challenged and inspired by the way you cling to hope and love, even in a situation you describe as a dead-end tragedy with no room for positive expectation. We are moved by the way you maintain hope because it comes from God. We are humbled and grateful for the way, even in your situation, you trust in the power of love as modeled and inspired by Jesus Christ. We are deeply moved by your testimony that even in the midst of cruel circumstances, you bear the strength of love rather than that of revenge. We are inspired by your continued vision that the only way forward is for Palestinians and Israelis to see the face of God in each other.

We hear in your call the appeal of Christ to us. Therefore, we welcome your invitation to come and see your reality. We commit ourselves to promote and expand opportunities for our leaders and members to visit you and learn firsthand about your suffering. We pray God will continue to open our ears and soften our hearts.

We also seek to study scripture together within our own church and with you, that we may be released from the grip of unjust ideology and may grasp more fully what God desires for your part of the world and for all of us. Further, we will continue to wrestle with the way our lives are enmeshed in the policies and implementation of occupation through our economic practices and seek to turn from them.

In the Kairos document, you again remind us that the way of the cross binds together great love for every person and courageous resistance to injustice and sin. We pray that as we journey together we will grow in our faithfulness to the one who leads the way and whom we proclaim as Lord and Savior.

In the peace of Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ervin Stutzman".

Ervin Stutzman
Executive Director, Mennonite Church USA