

*Palestinian Christians: Historical Demographic Developments,  
Current Politics and Attitudes Towards Church, Society  
and Human Rights: The Sabeel Survey on Palestinian Christians  
in the West Bank and Israel – Summer 2006*

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**Introduction:**

The Sabeel Survey undertaken in the Summer of 2006 of Palestinian Christians in both the West Bank and Israel has presented new material for understanding the responses of the Christian communities to a variety of issues. The Survey with its richness has also provided a challenge to look at the historical-demographic or population context in which Palestinian Christians in both the West Bank and in Israel find themselves. Accordingly, the following article starts with a historical overview of the Palestinian Christian population. The establishment of the state of Israel caused a population shock that saw numerous localities in Israel lose their Christian populations. A comparison of Jordan's Census of 1961 with Israel's census of 1967 and pitting the figures and data of these two censuses with most recent estimates give an idea about what happened to the Christian Palestinian population over the more recent years. The more recent developments and Israeli control measures such as the Separation Wall bring us to the expected repercussions of these measures particularly on emigration of Palestinian Christians. The internal Palestinian situation that was characterized by a political impasse, factional infighting and institutional paralysis over the last year since the Palestinian elections in January 2006 is also discussed as of its impact on migratory pressures on Middle Class Palestinians, among whom are most Palestinian Christians. The Sabeel Survey and its various results and background characteristics of the Palestinian Christian population are discussed in depth and so are some of the findings particularly those pertaining to Church Affiliation, Locality of Residence and the responses to the various statements posed in the Survey.

This is an essay in which all the respondents participated and I sincerely hope that its findings and conclusions will give all of us some light as to how to progress towards building a society and a region that is at peace with itself and among its various nationalities and religions.

**The Palestinian Christian Population since Mid-16<sup>th</sup> Century**

**Table 1: Population of Palestine by Religion Mid-Sixteenth Century to Mid-Twentieth Century**

<i>Year</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Muslims</i>	<i>Christians</i>	<i>Jews</i>
1533-1539	157,000	145,000 - 92.4%	6,000 - 3.8%	5,000 - 3.1%
1690-1691	232,000	219,000 - 94.4%	11,000 - 4.7%	2,000 - 1.0%
1890	532,000	432,000 - 81.2%	57,000 - 10.7%	43,000 - 8.1%
1914	689,000	525,000 - 76.2%	70,000 - 10.2%	94,000 - 13.6%
1922	752,000	589,000 - 78.3%	71,000 - 9.4%	84,000 - 11.2%

1931	1,033,000	760,000 – 73.4%	89,000 – 8.6%	175,000 - 16.9%
1947	1,970,000	1,181,000 – 59.9%	143,000 – 7.3%	630,000 – 32.0%

Source: Sergio Della Pergola: “**Demography in Israel/Palestine: Trends, Prospects, Policy Implications,**” IUSSP XXIV General Population Conference, Salvador de Bahia, August 2001 S64. Population Change and Political Transitions.

An examination of population numbers and percentages between the mid-16<sup>th</sup> Century and the mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century show an increasing Christian community in absolute numbers from 6,000 or 3.8% of the total population in the mid 16<sup>th</sup> Century to 143,000 or 7.3% of the population in the mid 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Percentage wise, the Christian population declined throughout the centuries as more Jews made their way to the country. This is also applicable to the Muslim population of the country, **in spite of its higher absolute numbers and a higher growth rate.**

### **The Anglo-American Survey 1945-1946**

In 1945, according to a survey conducted by the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry, the breakdown of the 145,060 Christians in Palestine according to district of residence was as follows:

<b>Table 2: Demographics of Palestine by district as of 1945</b>							
<b>District</b>	<b>Muslim</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Jewish</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Christian</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Total</b>
Acre	51,130	69%	3,030	4%	11,800 – 8.1%	16%	73,600
Beersheba	6,270	90%	510	7%	210 – 0.1%	3%	7,000
Beisan	16,660	67%	7,590	30%	680 – 0.5%	3%	24,950
Gaza	145,700	97%	3,540	2%	1,300 – 0.9%	1%	150,540
Haifa	95,970	38%	119,020	47%	33,710 – 23.2%	13%	253,450
Hebron	92,640	99%	300	<1%	170 – 0.1%	<1%	93,120
Jaffa	95,980	24%	295,160	72%	17,790 – 12.3%	4%	409,290
Jenin	60,000	98%	Negligible	<1%	1,210 – 0.8%	2%	61,210
Jerusalem	104,460	42%	102,520	40%	46,130 – 31.8%	18%	253,270

Nablus	92,810	98%	Negligible	<1%	1,560 – 1.1%	2%	94,600
Nazareth	30,160	60%	7,980	16%	11,770 – 8.1%	24%	49,910
Ramallah	40,520	83%	Negligible	<1%	8,410 – 5.6%	17%	48,930
Ramle	95,590	71%	31,590	24%	5,840 – 4.0%	4%	134,030
Safad	47,310	83%	7,170	13%	1,630 – 1.1%	3%	56,970
Tiberias	23,940	58%	13,640	33%	2,470 – 1.7%	6%	41,470
Tulkarm	76,460	82%	16,180	17%	380 – 0.3%	1%	93,220
Total	1,076,780	58%	608,230	33%	145,060	9%	1,845,560
Data from the Survey of Palestine <sup>[4]</sup>							

**Source:** *A Survey of Palestine: Prepared in December, 1945 and January, 1946 for the Information of the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry.* Institute for Palestine Studies. (1991).

From the district data, Jerusalem district which included then the Bethlehem, Beit Jala and Beit Sahour towns is placed number one with 31.8% of Christians followed by Haifa district with 23.2%; Jaffa with 12.3%; Acre and Nazareth with 8.1% each; Ramallah with 5.6% and Ramle with 4.0%. Some localities in Israel such as Tiberias, Safad, Beisan and Beersheba which had small Christian populations in the 1940s have none today. Others such as Haifa, Nazareth, Jaffa and Ramle continue to have Christian populations but only in Nazareth does the number of Christians today surpass their numbers in 1945. In the other localities, the numbers have definitely dwindled down or altogether disappeared.

### **The Palestinian Christian Population in the Palestinian Territories**

In the Palestinian Territories, the Jerusalem and Bethlehem Christian population today is definitely lower than what it was in 1945. Today's estimates place the number of Christians in Bethlehem, Beit Jala and Beit Sahour towns at roughly 22,000 while the estimate for Jerusalem is 8,000 (the Israel Central Bureau of Statistics in 2005 places the Arab Christian population of Jerusalem at slightly over 12,000 with over 2,000 non-Arab Christians) which makes for a total of 32,000 Christians. If compared with the figure of 46,130 Christians back in 1945 with 31,330 in Jerusalem and 6,490 in Bethlehem and 3,540 in Beit Jala and 4,770 in Beit Sahour then we can conclude that Jerusalem has today less than one-third of its population in 1945 even if we subscribe to the higher numbers of the Christian population in Jerusalem given by the Israel Central Bureau of Statistics for 2005. The Jerusalem-Bethlehem areas have today a Christian Palestinian population that is, at least, less than 12,000 of the numbers of 1945. Bethlehem town

itself has kept to the same numbers, more or less, after 62 years! The fact that there is no population growth in Bethlehem means that Bethlehem has been on a zero population growth due primarily to the emigration of its Christians, especially the youth among them. The situation in Beit Jala is slightly better with roughly 6,400 Christians there which means that the town, in spite of massive emigration especially to Central and South American countries, has added close to 3,000 to its population in 62 years. Beit Sahour also scores better than Bethlehem with an additional of 2600 to its population since 1945. But whereas Beit Sahour is known for less emigration trends than its neighboring Bethlehem and Beit Jala, nevertheless if we would estimate that the growth rate of Christians in the 1940s was 2% then it should have taken Jerusalem with 31,000 Christian population to double this population to 62,000 by 1980 and to roughly 93,000 by 2007. Using the same formula Bethlehem should have had a population of 12,980 by 1980 and 19,470 by 2007. Beit Jala's figures should have been 7,080 by 1980 and 10,620 by 2007 if no emigration were to take place and if the growth rate of 2% per year held. Likewise, Beit Sahour's figures should have read 9,540 in 1980 and 14,310 by 2007.

### **The Christian Population in Jericho, Ramallah, Nablus Districts and the Gaza Strip**

In discussing the Jerusalem district population, special attention needs to be given to Jericho where traditionally a living Christian community has taken roots. While the statistics for 1945 do not specify Jericho, most likely it is included in the Jerusalem district statistics. Today Jericho's Christian community is estimated at roughly 450. The community runs schools, has convents and offers social and caritative services to the larger community. It lies in proximity with the baptismal place of Jesus on the River Jordan.

If we look at Ramallah and the villages surrounding it in the Palestinian Territories, Ramallah itself had a Christian population of 4,520 in 1945. This population should have increased to 9,040 in 1980 and should be, according to the prediction formula used, 13,560 by 2007. The villages surrounding Ramallah numbered 3,890 in 1945 using the same calculation method; these villages should have reached a population of 7,780 by 1980 and 11,670 by 2007. At present Ramallah Christian population is estimated at 6450 while the villages of Aboud (roughly 1200); Ein Arik (400); Jifna (1100); Taybeh (1600) and the town of BirZeit (2200) if their Christian populations are added together will not exceed 6,500.

The Nablus district with Rafidia being the suburb where most Christians reside had a Christian population of 1,560 in 1945 today the estimates are that Nablus and its villages has a population of 1000. The Jenin district with Zababdeh a major Christian population center had a population of 1,210 in 1945 most living in Zababdeh and only 160 living in Jenin itself. Today the Jenin district has a Christian population of roughly 2000 but if we apply the same calculation method of expected population growth then Jenin district should have had a Christian population of 2,420 in 1980 which would be 3,630 by 2007. So in spite of the apparent steady numbers in Jenin district, still the effects of emigration are apparent, even though indicators of emigration trends in the Jenin district point to internal; i.e., rural-urban migration rather than external out of the country as is most often the experience of Christians in Bethlehem, Jerusalem and Ramallah areas.

The Gaza Strip area has had a Christian population for centuries. The historical fact that Gaza was one of the first localities where Christianity spread is authenticated by the relics and archaeology of the place and by the fact that the Gaza Christian community is alive and

participates actively in the concerns and welfare of the larger society. In 1945 Gaza's Christian community was put at 1,300 mostly congregating in Gaza City itself. Today, Gaza's Christian population is estimated roughly at 2,500-3,000 mostly Greek Orthodox. Like in the Jenin district, while the continuity of the community is ensured still in the most ideal conditions the Christian community today should have numbered over 4,000 today.

### **Israel and the Christian Palestinian Population**

Towards the end of British Mandate in Palestine the total number of the Christian population was estimated at 156,000. When in 1949, the population of Israel was first broken down by religion, the Palestinians in Israel numbered 160,000 of whom 111.5 were Moslems or 69.7%; the Christians numbered 34,000 or 21.3% and the Druzes 14,500 or 9.0%. (Population by Religion and Population Group, **Statistical Abstract of Israel**, 2006 p.85.) Based on figures that speak of between 50,000 to 60,000 Palestinian Christians, roughly 35% of all Palestinian Christians, who became refugees following the 1948 Arab-Israeli war and the establishment of Israel, and considering the figure of 34,000 Christians who remained in Israel, then the Christian inhabitants of the West Bank and Gaza Strip in 1948 should have numbered 62,000. This is confirmed by figures of the Table above of **Demographics of Palestine by district as of 1945** which gives the total number of Christians in the localities of the West Bank and Gaza Strip at 59,160 in 1945.

Of interest is to compare the number of Palestinian Christians in the various Israeli localities at 2005 (according to Israeli Statistics of the Central Bureau of Statistics) and these numbers given in 1945 for the same localities according to the Anglo-American Survey:

**Table 3: Christian Palestinian Population by District 1945 and 1948 and Estimated Number of Refugees and Displaced and Christian Population in 2005 and Expected in 1980 and 2007**

Locality	1945	1948	Estimated Number of Christian Palestinian Refugees or Displaced	2005	Expected 1980	Expected 2007
					<i>Based on 1945 Data on 2% annual rate of growth</i>	
Acre – Shefar'am	16,800	10,900	-5,900	40,900	33,600	50,400
Beersheba & South	210	270	+60	400	420	630
Haifa	33,710	5,184	-28,526	15,200	67,420	101,130
Jaffa Tel Aviv	17,790	1,900	-15,890	35,580	71,160	106,740
Jerusalem	31,330	1,100	-30,230	62,660	125,230	187,845
Nazareth	11,770	10,900	-870	23,540	47,080	70,620
Ramle & Lod	5,840	1,400	-4440	3,700	11,680	17,520

<b>Total</b>	<b>117,450</b>	<b>31,654</b>	<b>-85,796</b>	<b>96,300</b>	<b>234,900</b>	<b>534,885</b>
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*The figures for 1945 are from the Demographics of Palestine by District as of 1945 of the Anglo-American Survey while the figures for 2005 are from the Statistical Abstract of Israel 2005 – Central Bureau of Statistics – Jerusalem 2006.*

The above Table indicates what happened following the 1948 War in the localities where Palestinian Christians were found. Almost 90,000 of Palestinian Christians became refugees outside the boundaries of Israel (60,000 Refugees) or displaced within the newly created Jewish state (estimated at 30,000 Internally Displaced Christians) considering all areas of Israel. In some localities, such as Ramle and Jaffa only hundreds remained of what used to be flourishing communities. Haifa, one of the largest cities with Christian Palestinian concentration, ended up with roughly 5,000 Christians from a population of almost 34,000 in 1945. While in general the 145,060 Palestinian Christians in 1945, given an annual growth rate of 2% then would have become close to 534,885 in 2007. But even if we would calculate the expected population in 2007 by basing it on the lower growth rate of 1.5% in 1980 then the expected Christian Palestinian population today, worldwide, should number no less than 400,000 at a conservative estimate.

If this conservative figure is to be trusted and given that in Israel the number of Christians today is 110,000 (not including East Jerusalem) and in the Palestinian National Authority close to 50,000 (including East Jerusalem, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip) the conclusion hence is that there are 160,000 Christians left in the Land called Holy (or 40% of all Palestinian Christians worldwide) while 240,000 Palestinian Christians (or 60% of all Palestinian Christians worldwide) are living outside their homeland. Some would dispute the total number of Palestinian Christians worldwide presented here as being too low and would argue for the higher number thus placing the total population of Palestinian Christians as well over half-a-million.

In any case the statistics, even the conservative ones, speak of a sad reality. The creation of the State of Israel in 1948 was a major push factor that resulted in Christian Palestinians, as other Palestinians, leaving their homes, towns, villages and cities. Yet, since the 1948 exodus the trek of emigration of Palestinian Christians towards the East Bank of the Jordan became a virtual stream where tens of thousands have found their way either to neighboring countries but most often to further destinations such as Australia, USA, Canada and the other traditional places of refuge in Central and South American countries.

### **Jordan Census 1961, Israel Census 1967 and 2006 Estimates of Christian Population in the Palestinian Territories**

Figures and data from both the Jordanian Census of 1961 and the Israeli Census of 1967 following the June War of 1967 give a view of Christian Palestinian numbers at specific years that can be compared with the latest estimates.

**Table 4: Palestinian Christian Population According to Jordanian Census 1961 Israeli Census 1967 and Estimates 2006**

<b>Locality</b>	<b>Jordanian Census 1961</b>	<b>Israeli Census 1967</b>	<b>Estimate December 2006</b>
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Bethlehem	7246	6405	7000
Beit Jala	4530	4271	7000
Beit Sahour	3458	3730	8000
Jericho	1212	539	450
Jerusalem	10795	10813	8000
‘Abud	716	500	1200
‘Ain Arik	260	86	400
Ramallah	8745	6966	6000
Jifna	--	538	1100
Bir Zeit	--	1351	2200
Taiyiba	--	1156	1600
Nablus & Rafidiya	--	688	700
Tulkarm	--	100	50
Jenin Birquin	--	123	300
Zababdeh	--	922	1800
Gaza Strip	--	2478	3000
Total	45,855*	42,494**	48,800

\* The Jordanian Census of 1961 divides the West Bank into three major census areas with Nablus covering all the North West Bank with 3,069 Christians; Jerusalem in the Center West Bank with 42,618 Christians and Hebron in the South West Bank with 168 Christians. See Jordan Department of Statistics, **Census of Population and Housing 1961**, Vol. 1, Amman, 1964, p.115.

\*\* (10813 Christians in Jerusalem are drawn from State of Israel, Central Bureau of Statistics, **Census of Population and Housing, East Jerusalem, 1967**, Jerusalem 1968 and 29,400 Christians in West Bank are drawn from Israel Defense Forces, **Census of Population 1967 Conducted by the Central Bureau of Statistics, West Bank of Jordan, Gaza Strip and Northern Sinai, Golan Heights**, Vol. 1. Jerusalem 1967.)

Today at a most generous estimate the total number of Palestinian Christians in the Palestinian Territories would not surpass the 50,000 mark. If again using the calculation method based on 2% annual growth back in 1967, the Christian population by 2007 should have been at least 100,000. Accordingly the total number of Palestinian Christians, and their children born abroad who have left the Palestinian Territories since 1967 would be estimated at no less than 50,000 Christians. Only in the years since 2000 with the political impasse caused by continued Israeli occupation that prompted the Second Intifada did close to 4000 Christian Palestinians leave, primarily from the Bethlehem area.

### **Palestinian Christian Emigration: The Israeli Separation Barrier and Other Measures of Continued Military Occupation**

The current situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territories is not helping in reducing the urge towards emigration among Middle Class Palestinians, including Christians who most often characterize themselves as belonging to the Middle Class. This situation speaks of continued Israeli occupation measures and methods, highlighted by the Separation Barrier and its impact on the Jerusalem-Bethlehem-Ramallah area in terms of exodus of Middle Class Palestinians, including Christians. The negative effects of the Separation Barrier touch all Palestinians in all

geographic areas of the West Bank, such as in Qalqilya and Tulkarm in the North and Hebron in the South where the population suffers daily at the hands of the few hundred Jewish settlers, as documented by B'Tselem, the Israeli Human Rights Organization. The special situation of Bethlehem-Jerusalem calls for an in-depth examination since the traditional historical religious ties between the two biblical cities make a pilgrimage visit to the Holy Land unthinkable without free access and mobility between these twin cities. Nowadays, the Separation Barrier has made a concrete separation between the two cities that is neither aesthetically acceptable nor does it do any honor to the One born in the city 2000 or so years ago. For any visitor or pilgrim the sight of the Separation Barrier makes one's heart cry and saddened by the ugliness of surrounding Bethlehem of the Nativity with such a concrete structure. The claim, by the Israeli authorities, that all this is being done for security reasons is actually leading to thousands of Palestinians in Bethlehem and in Jerusalem being denied access to each other's city. All this is encouraging the exodus of Christians from the Holy Land and from the Bethlehem area in specific. Israel should be held responsible as its measures of population control are clearly a factor that pushes Palestinians in the Bethlehem area, as elsewhere, to leave for good. Those who speak of "good will" gestures in order to advance peace and conflict resolution prospects should be reminded that the denial of freedom of movement and access to Jerusalem, Bethlehem and to numerous other localities in the West Bank and Gaza are pushing Palestinians to leave, particularly those with skills, some capital and entrepreneurial capacities. This migratory end result of denial of free movement and access goes specifically counter to efforts at peace and conflict resolution in the troubled land.

### **The Need for Political Stability and Law and Order in the Palestinian Territories**

But there are also other factors that are push factors for emigration. The absence of political stability is one such factor. This is felt by the ineffectiveness of the agents of Law and Order in the Palestinian Territories, the ongoing factional impasse between Hamas and Fatah and the breakdown of institutions such as the Palestinian Legislative Council. The January elections of Hamas and the subsequent international boycott of the Palestinian government have led to increasing economic and psychological pressures that touch everyone, irrespective of social standing or religious background. The boycott has economic repercussions that affect the lives of almost everyone in the Palestinian Territories. The international methods undertaken by the International Community such as the Temporary International Mechanisms (TIM) to ease the situation are helping some but do not address the core issues of economic, social and institutional needs. The victory of Hamas in the Palestinian parliamentary elections necessitates also some reflection on the role of the Palestinian Christians in politics as well as a more in-depth examination of the current inter-religious relations in Palestinian society. Palestinian Christians have had an important part in building the national identity as an open, nationalist, secularist identity in which religion plays a tolerant and accommodating role. This has become so much part of the Palestinian culture that whenever Christian Moslem relations in Palestine are discussed, they are referred to as exemplary and model relations.

As the Sabeel Survey indicates most Christian Palestinian respondents would want to have open and frank relations between Moslems and Christians and to nurture more trust in ongoing dialogue. Without frankness and without subscription to joint agendas, rather than strictly religious agendas, for ending occupation, building an open and pluralist Palestinian society, there is fear that the gulf that separates may increase and that those who attempt to use religion to separate may unfortunately have the upper hand. In the Gaza Strip, the factional fighting is quite

serious and could have some far reaching repercussions on the entire population including the small Christian community. Besides Israel has made out of the Gaza Strip a virtual big prison which has no secure crossing either to Israel or to Egypt because the Israeli Occupation Authorities use freedom of crossing the Rafah and the Erez Crossing points to Egypt and Israel, respectively as pressure chips and not as basic human right for the over 1.4 million Palestinians living in the Gaza Strip. In such a situation the enterprising groups and citizens would start thinking seriously about leaving. Stability and normalcy, beside open links to the outside world, are all necessary if the Gaza Strip is going to be viable as integral part of the Palestinian Authority and Territories. If the current state of affairs continues then there is real fear that what is left of the Christian Palestinian community there, estimated at 3000, would opt to go somewhere else, thus ending centuries of indigenous Christian presence in that part of Palestine. All these factors, the political, economic and social are interdependently becoming the PUSH factors that lead to emigration of thousands of promising Palestinians, including Palestinian Christians. In particular, educated, skilled, intelligent and aspiring young people, irrespective of religious background, are the first to be tempted to leave.

### **The Sabeel Survey: Palestinian Christians by Church & Locality**

**Table 5: Palestinian Christian Respondents Sabeel Survey by Church and Locality**

Church	West Bank	Israel	Total
GOrthodox	377 – 54%	322 – 46%	699 – 100%
GCatholics	35 – 15%	207 – 85%	242 – 100%
Latins	271 – 81%	62 – 19%	333 – 100%
Others	67 – 30%	159 – 70%	226 – 100%
Total	750 – 100%	750 – 100%	1500 – 100%

The concentration of the Greek Orthodox is 54% and 46% the West Bank and Israel, respectively. The Greek Catholic respondents have uneven percentages of 15% West Bank to 85% Israel; the Latins also have an uneven distribution that goes the other way with 81% West Bank to only 19% in Israel; Others are 30% West Bank and 70% Israel respondents, respectively.

### **Church by Education – Percentage within Church**

**Table 6: Palestinian Christian Respondents Sabeel Survey by Education Level by Church**

Church	Preparatory	Secondary	Diploma	BA	MA	PhD
GOrthodox	51 - 47%	96 – 14%	270 – 39%	113 – 16%	138 – 20%	18 – 3%
GCatholics	18 – 7%	19 – 8%	77 – 32%	41 – 17%	74 – 31%	6 – 3%
Latins	24 – 7%	50 – 15%	115 – 35%	53 – 16%	70 – 21%	14 – 4%
Others	9 – 4%	12 – 5%	94 – 42%	42 – 19%	57 – 25%	11 – 5%

Once again these statistics on education of respondents by Church point to a community intent on education. The Greek Orthodox have 78% of their respondents with a Diploma and higher; the Greek Catholics with 83%; the Latins with 76% and Others with 90%. The

Greek Orthodox have the highest percentage of those reporting only Preparatory education while on Secondary education, they are similar to the Latins with 14% and 15% respectively. The Greek Orthodox and Others are highest on Diploma with 39% and 42% respectively. But when counts of BA and above degrees are made, the Greek Orthodox and Latins have lower percentages with 39% and 41% respectively to those of Greek Catholics and Others with higher percentages of 51% and 49% respectively. With respect to education and with the exception of the Preparatory category, both Greek Orthodox and Latins are rather similar while Greek Catholics and Others show similar educational trends

**Education and Locality:**

On educational level of respondents by locality, the following are the figures and percentages:

**Table 7: Educational Level of Palestinian Christian Respondents Sabeel Survey by Locality**

<b>Educational Level</b>	<b>Preparatory</b>	<b>Secondary</b>	<b>Diploma</b>	<b>BA-MA</b>	<b>PhD</b>
West Bank	52	120	265	131-152	19
Israel	50	57	291	118-187	30

The educational background of respondents is more or less similar. In the West Bank the respondents with Secondary level education are twice as many as those in Israel. The other noticeable difference is that there are more PhD respondents in Israel than in the West Bank. There are relatively more respondents with a Bachelor degree in the West bank (131) to (118) in Israel but more respondents with a Masters degree in Israel (187) to only (152) in the West Bank. **This educational background points to an indigenous Christian population that is actively pursuing education and while, for the purpose of this study, there are no comparative data with Moslem or Jewish neighbors, it is clear that educational achievement is one of the background factors of a Middle Class community which is a characteristic of the Christian Palestinian community.** In circumstances of political instability and economic depression, this educational background could become a factor that would propel emigration as those whose prospects are constrained by the bad political and economic conditions opt to go somewhere else to fulfill their potential and to develop their career and life prospects. This is important since it points to the personal element in making the choice of emigration. **In practice, this choice of emigration, as has been argued again and again by population and migration experts, is least affected by inter-religious factors, in our case. People, especially young people, leave or start the process of emigration because on personal and career levels they see no real prospects for advancement.** Certainly, the general circumstances and conditions, including heightened inter-religious tensions, help in the process but the choice remains personal and for practical reasons rather than for ideological-religious reasons. One other important conclusion on educational achievement of Palestinian Christians is that historically educated groups have been able to conduct an active community life amidst very difficult odds. Hence the educated Christian Palestinians could be challenged themselves to stay put and to find means, especially with the help of their educational achievement, to persevere rather than to give up and opt for emigration as a way out.

**The Civil Status of Respondents by Church Affiliation:**

**Table 8: Civil Status of Palestinian Christian Respondents Sabeel Survey by Church**

Church	Single	Married	Divorced	Widow
GOrthodox	112 – 42.1%	549 – 47.9%	11 – 61.1%	27 – 46.6%
GCatholics	41 – 15.4%	177 – 15.4%	4 – 22.2%	20 – 28.6%
Latin	69 – 25.9%	251 – 21.9%	1 – 5.6%	12 – 17.1%
Others	44 – 16.5%	169 – 14.7%	2 – 11.1%	11 – 15.7%
TOTAL	266 – 100%	1146 – 100%	18 – 100%	70 – 100%

The Latins are the most Single with 21% among them reporting a Single status; Others are similar to the Latins with close to 20% reporting Single status. Both the Greek Orthodox and the Greek Catholics have similar percentage of Single reporting with 16% and 17% respectively. Those reporting Married status are similar across the Churches with slightly more reporting Married status among the GOrthodox with 79% to 73% among Greek Catholics and 75% each for Latins and Others. Even though the numbers are too low to make definite conclusions, those reporting Divorced status are higher among Greek Orthodox and Greek Catholics as are those reporting for widowed than their parallel among Latins and Others.

**One conclusion from these figures and percentages is that the Christian Palestinian community in both West Bank and Israel is a marriageable community; i.e., marriage is one of the essential cultural and social factors.** This is similar to the overall Palestinian society and culture and reflects the fact that Palestinian Christians are impacted by their cultural and social environment, irrespective of whether in West Bank or in Israel. The fact that there are more Latins reporting their status as Single may in reality reflect the preference of Latins and likewise of Others to marry at a later age in contrast to Greek Orthodox and Greek Catholics. At least in some localities, such as in Jerusalem, Latins are known to marry at a later age.

### **Church and Employment**

**Table 9: Employment Status Christian Palestinian Respondents Sabeel Survey by Church**

Church	Employed	Self-Employed	Unemployed	Student	Other
GOrthodox	270 – 38.6%	194 – 27.8%	33 – 4.7%	38 – 5.4%	164 – 23.5%
GCatholics	95 – 39.3%	51 – 21.1%	14 – 5.8%	13 – 5.4%	69 – 28.5%
Latins	129 – 38.9%	94 – 28.3%	20 – 6.0%	23 – 6.9%	66 – 19.9%
Others	96 – 42.5%	56 – 24.8%	10 – 4.4%	12 – 5.3%	52 – 23.0%
Total	590 – 100%	395 – 100%	77 – 100%	86 – 100%	351 – 100%

The Table on church and employment shows a rather more or less uniform employment status for the respondents across Churches. Others tend to be slightly more Employed; Latins tend to be slightly higher on Self-Employed; Latins and Greek Catholics show slightly higher percentages of Unemployed while Latins show slightly higher percentage on Student.

### **Economic Standing by Church Affiliation and Residence**

**Table 10: Income Christian Palestinian Respondents Sabeel Survey by Locality and Church**

West Bank	Greek	Greek	Latin	Other Denominations
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	Orthodox	Catholic		(Lutherans, Anglicans, Armenian Orthodox & Catholic, Syrian Orthodox and Catholic, Copts, Maronites, Others.)
Less than 2500 NIS	133 – 35%	15 – 42%	105 – 38%	16 – 23%
2500 – 4999 NIS	172 – 45%	16 – 45%	99 – 36%	28 – 41%
5000 – 7499 NIS	54 – 14%	2 – 5%	47 – 17%	21 – 31%
7500 NIS +	16 – 4%	2 – 5%	20 – 7%	2 – 2%
Israel				
Less than 2500 NIS	3 – 1%	9 – 4%	0 – 0%	8 – 5%
2500 – 4999 NIS	43 – 17%	33 – 17%	3 – 6%	19 – 13%
5000 – 7499 NIS	79 – 32%	43 – 23%	9 – 18%	35 – 24%
7500 NIS +	122- 49%	100 – 54%	38 – 76%	84 – 57%

In the West Bank the Greek Orthodox have 80% of respondents reporting income in the 2 lowest income brackets in comparison to 87% of Greek Catholics; 74% of Latins and 64% of Other Denominations. In contrast there are 18% of Greek Orthodox who report income in the 2 highest brackets; 10% of Greek Catholics; 24% of Latins and 33% of Other Denominations. Judging from these figures, the Greek Catholics in the West Bank are reporting the lowest income of all denominations with 87% in lowest 2 brackets and only 10% in highest 2 brackets; the Greek Orthodox are second in reporting lowest income with 80% in lowest 2 brackets and only 18% in highest 2 brackets. The Latins come in third place with 74% reporting income in the lowest 2 brackets and 24% reporting income in the highest 2 brackets. Others in the West Bank fare best with only 64% reporting income in lowest 2 brackets and 33% reporting income in the highest 2 brackets.

In Israel all Denominations are reporting higher percentages in the highest 2 income brackets when compared to the West Bank. The Greek Orthodox in Israel have only 18% in the lowest two income brackets while 81% of them report income in the two highest brackets with almost 50% above 7500NIS+. The same applies to all other Denominations in Israel; the Greek Catholics with only 21% reporting lower income brackets and 77% reporting higher income with 54% in the bracket of 7500NIS+; the Latins have only 6% reporting lower income brackets with 94% reporting higher income brackets of whom 76% are in the 7500NIS+ bracket. Others fare as much in terms of income reporting with only 18% reporting lower income brackets and 81% reporting higher income brackets with 57% of them over 7500NIS+ bracket.

### **Church and Income Irrespective of Locality**

**Table 11: Church and Income of Christian Palestinian Respondents Sabeel Survey Irrespective of Locality**

Church	0 – 2499 NIS	2500 – 4999 NIS	5000 – 7499 NIS	7500 NIS +	Total
GOrthodox	136 – 21%	216 – 34%	133 – 21%	138 – 22%	623
GCatholics	24 – 11%	49 – 22%	45 – 20%	102 – 46%	220
Latins	105 – 33%	102 – 32%	56 – 17%	58 – 18%	316
Others	24 – 11%	47 – 22%	56 – 26%	86 – 40%	213

The Latins overall appear to report in the two lowest income brackets with 65% and only 35% in two highest brackets. In contrast the GOrthodox report 55% in the two lowest income brackets and 43% in the two highest; the GCatholics report almost the exact opposite of Latins with 33% in the two lowest brackets and 66% in the two highest. The Others report similarly to the GCatholics.

Judging from these figures and percentages and comparing them to the figures and percentages presented in the previous Table, it becomes clear that the ranking of Latins as reporting the two lowest incomes is affected by the preponderance of numbers of Latins in the West Bank in contrast to Israel. The same argument applies to the Greek Orthodox. But these conclusions do not change the overall reporting picture which is that Palestinian Christians in Israel consistently report themselves in higher income brackets than their parallels in the West Bank. **This is important in confirming the thesis that Palestinian Christians in the West Bank migrate because of the bad economic conditions (employment specified number one reason for emigration by one of highest percentages of West Bank respondents) caused by continued political turmoil of occupation, separation wall, internal political strife and other destabilizing factors (Political Conditions specified number one reason for emigration by one by one of the highest percentages of West Bank respondents.) The fact that there is no large indigenous Christian migration out of Israel is due primarily to the overall relatively good economic conditions and the relatively stable political situation.** I would need to emphasize the word 'relatively' because in the Sabeel Survey it was clear also that Palestinian Christians in Israel are not altogether comfortable with Political Conditions or with Employment as 30% and 22% of Israeli respondents, respectively pointed out these two as primary reasons for emigration. But there are other factors that help Palestinian Christians in Israel stay put among which is the educational background of Arabs in Israel with limited acquisition of foreign languages, a facilitating factor in migration; a more limited history of migration out of the country especially after 1948 due to restrictions by the Israeli government for the then historically and politically expedient security reasons. That West Bank Palestinian Christians could have more access to educational opportunities than their parallels in Israel may be concluded from the fact that 13% of Israeli respondents pointed to Education as primary reason for emigration to only 4% of West Bank respondents. This thesis is further confirmed by the fact that Nazareth, the largest Arab city in Israel, has one of the highest unemployment rates in the country and yet there is no strong trend towards emigration among the unemployed there. The reason is that the unemployed are generally unskilled or semi skilled and lack beside knowledge of foreign tongues the small capital, which is usually an additional facilitating factor in making the choice to emigrate. Besides, the Israeli system of social security which caters to the unemployed helps in keeping the unemployed youngsters within the country while it also contributes to a host of social and other ills.

### **Reporting on Income: Disparities between the West Bank and Israel Respondents**

Palestinian Christians show clear differences on reporting on income in Israel and in the West Bank. Christians in the West Bank are far poorer in terms of income reported than their counterparts in Israel. **In the lowest income bracket (0 – 2499NIS) there are 269 in the West Bank who report their families in this bracket in contrast to only 15 in Israel. While in the highest income bracket (7500NIS+) only 40 reported their families in this bracket in contrast to 344 in Israel.**

Overall, 78% of Palestinian Christians in the West Bank report income less than 5000NIS monthly in contrast to only 17% in Israel who so report. In the income brackets of 5000NIS and above, 21% of West Bank Christians report their families as having this income in comparison to 81% in Israel. These are exact opposites overall on income reporting by Palestinian Christians in the West Bank and Israel. **The only income bracket or group in which both groups come closest to each other is the income bracket of (5000 – 7499 NIS) with 122 in the West Bank (16%) to 166 in Israel (26%) report their families as in this income bracket.** The significance of this is that there is a group of Christians in both the West Bank and Israel that tend to cluster towards a “Middle Income” group. And while this group is stronger in Israel, according to the Sabeel Survey respondents, still the figures and percentages presented here point to similar socio-economic developments or trends that are happening among Christians in the West Bank and in Israel. It is clear, once again, that the political situation with its economic repercussions in the West Bank leaves its constraining effects on the full development of socio-economic processes that stop Palestinian Christians and the general population in the Palestinian Territories from realizing their prospects. This apparently impacts the painful decision of people to eventually opt for emigration out of the political and socio-economic conditions prevailing in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

### **Palestinian Christian Respondents: Reasons for Emigration and Challenges to Community**

The importance of the Sabeel Survey of Palestinian Christians that was supported by Diakonia is that it reflects the thinking of Christian Palestinian respondents on some of the problems and concerns that confront all Palestinians and Christians among them. If placed within the context of the historical demographic-population realities that were explored above and the background characteristics of respondents in both the West Bank and Israel then it should lead all concerned to think of a strategy that would enable Palestinians, including Palestinian Christians, to overcome the challenges and to stay put in their country as it strives to end Israeli occupation and to start on the road to reconstruction and independence. The emigration of Middle Class Palestinians, besides weakening those who can be instrumental in reconstruction efforts, can also weaken secularist forces that believe in an open and pluralist society.

### **Political Conditions and Employment: Primary Reasons for Emigration**

In the Sabeel Survey conducted on a random sample of 1,500 Palestinian Christians equally divided between Israel and the West Bank during the summer months of 2006, it was clear that reasons that drive to emigration are political and economic in the first place. **36% of the respondents chose Political Conditions as number one reason for emigration while one-third of the respondents chose Employment as the number one reason that leads to emigration.** There was no significant difference among the Church communities on the primacy of Political Conditions as cause for emigration as 37% of Greek Orthodox to 34% of both Greek Catholics and Others and 35% of Latins placed Political Conditions as number one reason for emigration. As to Employment, the Latin (Roman Catholic) respondents placed it number one with 44% of respondents while 22% of Others (which include Lutherans, Anglicans, Armenians, Syriacs, Maronites, etc...) placed it the number one reason. The Greek Orthodox had 35% of respondents and the Greek Catholics had only 25% designating employment as number one reason for emigration. One tentative conclusion on this specific response could be that Greek Catholic and Other respondents are more secure with employment and that Greek Orthodox and

Latins are least secure. What is surprising is that 3 out of 10 in Israel (30%) point to Political Conditions as reason to emigration in comparison to 42% in the West Bank. This says that the Christians in Israel do worry about the political side of things and that the apparently relative political stability in Israel is not that problem-free. Even though almost double the respondents in the West Bank (44%) place Employment as primary reason for emigration; in Israel, the fact that 22% also chose this as number one reason for emigration points to the overall precarious situation in which Palestinian Christians in Israel find themselves. **This finding confirms most clearly previous studies undertaken by the author and others since the early nineties that point out the primary reasons for emigration out of the Palestinian Territories are political and economic conditions.**

Clearly, all Palestinians are faced with the overarching political and economic challenges that result from a situation of prolonged military occupation by Israel and from lack of equal rights within Israel itself. Again, it is easy to argue for the need to end Israeli occupation, to make peace, to bring down the Separation Barrier and to remedy all other ills that stand between the two neighbors living side by side in relatively good neighborly relations. It is clear, though, that without a permanent resolution of the current Arab-Israeli conflict, the political conditions will remain a number one reason for emigration for a substantial number of Palestinians, Christians included. Palestinian Christians in Israel as these results show are not immune from the same pressures and push factors, albeit to a lesser extent, than those affecting their counterparts in the West Bank. The status of the Palestinian Christian and other Arab Palestinian citizens of Israel does need to be addressed in the long run in order for them to feel more security about their prospects as equal citizens in a democratic and pluralist state. (See Appendix I)

#### **Joys of life, Education, Religious Extremism and Joining Family Members Abroad: Respective Secondary Reasons for Emigration**

Only 9% of the respondents specified Joys of Life as primary reason for emigration. The Greek Orthodox with 8%; the Greek Catholics with 10%; the Latins with 7% and Others with 17%. Education was picked by 8% of the respondents as primary reason for emigration with 10% of Greek Orthodox; 11% of Greek Catholics; 7% of Latins and 5% of Others. Religious Extremism, like Education, was chosen by 8% of the respondents as primary reason with 6% Greek Orthodox; 11% Greek Catholics; 5% Latins and 19% Others. Finally, Joining Family Members Abroad was chosen as primary reason by 5% of respondents with 5% of Greek Orthodox; 9% of Greek Catholics; 2% of Latins and 5% of Others.

Clearly the primary reasons remain the political and the economic. The fact that Religious Fanaticism has received 8% should be cause for concern and for bringing attention to possible remedial action that should be taken in order to minimize negative effects. Palestinian society traditionally and historically has been known, and continues to be known, as an open, tolerant and accommodating society. Christian and Moslem Palestinian children go to schools together, especially to the private schools in the Jerusalem-Ramallah-Bethlehem areas; they join the same social, sports and political groups; they make friendships of a lifetime and they aspire similarly to an end of Israeli occupation and to the times that they can all contribute to reconstruct an independent Palestinian state. This is not ideal utopianism but the experience lived between Christians and Moslems as they both went through the refugee experience of 1948 and the dispersal of their people. They also experienced together the effects and constraints of Israeli occupation since 1967 and they joined in efforts to get rid of Israeli occupation and to liberate

themselves as a people. It is in this context, and with the respect to the rich heritage of Moslem-Christian relations, that the heightened religiosity of the public sphere becomes a point for further examination and discussion. An exclusive religious parameter or preference that can interfere with the history and heritage of a pluralist, tolerant and an open Palestinian society calls for a serious reflection not simply by Christian Palestinians but by all Palestinians. Our society is likely to lose if sectarianism becomes a dominant feature replacing the all accommodating national and social agenda so characteristic of Palestine and its culture of openness, frankness and mutual trust and accommodation.

### **Challenges as Perceived by Palestinian Christians**

The number one challenge picked by 25% of respondents is **Job Opportunities** with 26% of Greek Orthodox specifying it as number one challenge to 14% of Greek Catholics; 35% of Latins and 17% of Others. It seems that the Greek Catholics and Others are relatively well secure in their employment if compared with Latins and with Greek Orthodox, if judged from this response. **Housing Projects** as primary challenge was picked by 21% of respondents with 22% among Greek Orthodox; 17% among Greek Catholics; 20% among Latins and 23% among Others. Thus, one out of 4 respondents consider Housing Projects as a primary challenge that needs to be addressed. This explains why the Churches of the Holy Land have been active in promoting housing projects among their faithful. Surprisingly, only 18% of all respondents chose **Emigration** as number one challenge with not much difference in percentage points between the highest Latins with 21% and the lowest Others with 13%. 19% of Greek Orthodox and 15% of Greek Catholics place Emigration as number one challenge. On challenge of **Justice and Peace**, 17% of respondents find it as a number one challenge with 26% of Greek Catholics; 24% of Others; 16% of Greek Orthodox and 9% of Latins. **Religious Fanaticism** is chosen by 11% as number one challenge with 9% among Greek Orthodox; 10% among Latins; 12% among Greek Catholics and 16% among Others. **Education** is placed number one challenge by 9% of the respondents with 15% of Greek Catholics; 9% of Greek Orthodox; 8% of Others and 6% of Latins.

### **Challenges as Perceived by West Bank and Israel Christians**

Of interest in assessing challenges according to whether respondents are in the West Bank or Israel is that there are clear differences on **Job Opportunities** where 39% of West Bank respondents to only 11% of Israel respondents place it as number one challenge. **Justice and Peace** is a challenge for 7% of West Bank respondents in contrast to 27% of Israel respondents while for **Religious Extremism** 7% of West Bank respondents place it as number one challenge in contrast to 14% in Israel. Surprisingly, only 19% of West Bank respondents place **Housing Projects** as number one challenge to 22% of Israel respondents. **Emigration** is a worrisome challenge for 23% of West Bank respondents to only 13% in Israel while **Education** evokes the concern of only 6% of West Bank respondents to 13% in Israel.

Clearly, West Bankers worry first thing for employment opportunities followed by emigration and by housing projects. The other issues of peace and justice, religious extremism and education are not high on their agenda of concern and worry. In Israel, the picture is somewhat different with justice and peace issues a top priority followed by housing projects and almost equally by religious extremism, emigration and education. Employment opportunities is least of the Israeli respondents with only 11% of them mentioning it as a primary challenge.

These results speak to the environmental concerns of the two populations: in the West Bank employment and economic conditions are on the mind of 4 out of 10 respondents while in Israel it is only 1 out of 10. West Bankers are also worried about employment prospects as these pose a real challenge which within an unstable political environment become even more of a pressing challenge. Emigration and Housing are also challenges on the mind of 2 out of 10 respondents but almost double the percentage of respondents in the West Bank (23%) are worried about Emigration to only (13%) in Israel. Both populations are similar on their worries over Housing Projects with 22% in Israel to 19% in the West Bank. In Israel, almost 3 out of 10 are concerned about issues pertaining to Justice and Peace while less than one person out of 10 is so worried in the West Bank (7%). But of interest is that double the percentage of Israeli respondents (14%) to those of the West Bank (7%) chose Religious Extremism as a challenge. (See Appendix II).

### **Church Affiliation, Locality and Attitudes on Issues**

Church affiliation and locality of residence (West Bank or Israel) point to significant differences among respondents on issues of importance to the community and the society. Because these differences could reflect the religious and socio-economic and political context in which the various church respondents find themselves, it is imperative to take a closer look at them. (The full percentages by Church and Locality are given at the end in Appendices III and IV.)

The Survey was divided into questions pertaining to five areas: 1) Adult Religious Education; 2) Participation in Church and Parish Life; 3) Participation in Public Life; 4) Inter-Religious Dialogue and 5) Church and Human Rights and the Separation Wall.

### **On Adult Religious Education**

**Greek Orthodox** agree most that there is no close relationship between Church and most adults (78%) and agree also most that there is not enough interest from religious authority in adult education (76%).

**Greek Catholics** agree least that there is no close relationship between Church and most adults (64%) and agree also least that there is not enough interest from religious authority in adult education (63%).

**Latins** agree second least after Greek Catholics that there is no close relationship between Church and most adults (68%) and agree least that audio visual technologies are to blame for distance from religion (63%).

**Others** are foremost in saying that adults are distant from religion (86%); that there is no close relationship between Church and most adults (81%) and that audio visual technologies are to blame for the distance from religion.

**West Bank respondents** are less convinced that adults are distant from religion (77%) while Israel respondents are more so with (84%).

**West Bank respondents** and Israel respondents are similar on that there is no close relationship between Church and most adults with 73% and 75%, respectively.

**West Bank respondents** are less for the statement that audio visual technologies distant people from religion (61%) to (75%) respondents in Israel who believe so.

**West Bank respondents** are more of the belief that not enough interest is found in religious authorities in adult education (78%) to only (66%) in Israel.

Conclusions:

- Others perceive furthest distance from the Church; Greek Catholics perceive closest distance to the Church and its interest in adult education.
- Greek Orthodox perceive furthest distance from the Church and its interest in adult education; Latins perceive second closest relationship to the Church and are least convinced that audio visual technologies are the reason for distancing oneself from religion.
- Overall the Church authorities ought to be worried that close to three quarters of respondents perceive no close relationship between Church and most adults; that 7 out of 10 respondents perceive not enough interest from religious authority in adult education. On distance between Church and most adults as well as on interest of religious authorities in adult education, the responses are a clear warning call to all churches in spite of some apparent differences in responses among different church respondents. Some churches may have a more severe problem but all of the Churches do face the same problem with a majority of the respondents, irrespective of Church affiliation.
- One general conclusion about respondents by Locality on obstacles to adult religious education is that the Israel respondents seem to be less religious judging from the responses they give. More of them than the West Bank respondents think that adults are distant from religion and they think that audio visual technologies are the reason for this distance. Two-thirds of them agree that there is not enough interest from religious authority in adult education to almost 8 out of 10 respondents in the West Bank. The lower percentage of agreement by the Israel respondents does not necessarily mean that they are looking for more interest by religious authority; on the contrary it could point out to a possibility that they care less or they actually do not know what the religious authority is doing on adult education.

### **On Participation in Church and Parish Life:**

**Greek Orthodox** are highest in agreeing that they do not see real cooperation between Parish Priest and Laity in apostolic activities (61%) and also highest in agreeing that the Church does not undertake activities special to the family (63%).

**Greek Catholics** are highest on esteem of Priests and Nuns (89%) and lowest on that Priests and Nuns should do more (57%) and lowest on do not see real cooperation between Parish Priest and Laity (52%) and lowest on agreeing that the Church does not undertake family activities (43%).

**Latins** are highest on Christian family commitment to Sunday Mass (91%) and highest on Priests and Nuns should do more (75%).

**Others** are second highest on Priests and Nuns should do more (74%).

**Israel respondents** are less committed to the attendance of the whole family of Sunday Mass (79%) to (91%) of West Bank respondents who show such commitment.

**Israel respondents** though show more esteem to Clergy (84%) than West Bank respondents (81%).

**Israel respondents** are less of the opinion that Priests and Nuns should do more (61%) to (81%) for West Bank respondents who believe so.

**Israel respondents** show less agreement with interdependence between Clergy and Laity as basis for a spirit of mutual support and solidarity in the Church (62%) to (79%) in West Bank who agree with this statement.

**Israel respondents** agree less with the statement that there is no real cooperation between Parish Priest and Laity (50%) to (63%) of West Bank respondents.

**Israel respondents** are less willing to agree that the Church does not undertake activities or programs special to the family (48%) to (61%) among West Bank respondents.

#### Conclusions:

- Well over 85% of all respondents are committed to Sunday Mass with Latins highest.
- 8 out of 10 respondents respect Priests and Nuns.
- Only Greek Catholics differ from rest in that only 57% of them believe that Priests and Nuns should do more to 71% of the rest of the respondents. More Greek Catholics are apparently satisfied with the performance of clergy.
- Greek Orthodox differ significantly from others (61% to 53%) in that they do not see real cooperation between Parish Priest and Laity and they do not see that Church undertakes activities special to the family (63% to 46%).
- Overall, Sunday Mass is the event that holds most respondents together followed by the esteem and respect to clergy. But clearly Priests and Nuns are expected to do more by 7 out of 10 respondents and almost 6 out of 10 respondents do not see that there is real cooperation between Parish Priest and Laity while slightly more than 5 out of 10 respondents do not see the Church undertaking family activities. **The Churches can be happy that the basis of perception on Sunday Mass and role of the Clergy are very positive but they need to work in order to improve cooperation between Parish Priest and Laity in apostolic activities and especially in family activities.**
- One general conclusion about responses by Locality shows that the West Bank respondents have clearly higher expectations from the Church and religious authority. This is exemplified by their wanting the Clergy to do more and by stressing interdependence between Clergy and Laity as basis of Church solidarity. They also seek, 6 out of 10 of West Bank respondents, to have more cooperation between Parish Priest and Laity and for the Church to undertake more family activities and programs. Over 91% of them show a clear commitment to the whole family attending Sunday Mass. Israeli respondents hence can be characterized as having gone some way in secularization but they still maintain a religious orientation as exemplified by 82% of them showing respect for Priests and Nuns who are active in community life. This means that the Church could do more to attract them more closely to the Church and its activities. While in the West Bank the Church needs to examine how best to keep the faithful within the

Church by offering and encouraging activities that appeal to most groups. In particular, the Church can in both West Bank and Israel develop these activities based on Sunday Mass participation of families. Shyness of using this very important and significant event in the life of the Christian family can lead to further distancing of adults and the lack of interest by the younger members of the community.

### **On Participation in Public Life:**

**Greek Orthodox** are lowest on active participation of CROs (36%)

**Greek Catholics** are highest on the Christian is like others in participation in public life (98%) but they are lowest in seeing presence of Christian in public positions as affirmation of commitment to country (74%). They are as low on CROs active participation as the Greek Orthodox with (37%).

**Latins** are second highest on Christian participation in public life (97%) and highest on presence in public life as commitment to country (85%). They are also highest on the Church should develop potential of needy person rather than give charity (85%).

**Others** are highest in seeing that the CROs are active (53%).

**West Bank respondents** are more in agreement with the statement that the Christian is like others in bearing the burden of participation in public life (98%) to (93%) of Israel respondents.

**West Bank respondents** see overwhelmingly that the presence of Christians in public positions is an affirmation of commitment and loyalty to country (92%) to only (63%) of Israel respondents.

**West Bank respondents** agree overwhelmingly that Church should work to develop the potential of the needy person rather than becoming a charitable society itself (90%) to (68%) in Israel.

**West Bank respondents** are more of the opinion that Church Related Organizations (CROs) are not participating actively to fill the needs of the society (44%) to (37%) in Israel who are of the same opinion.

Conclusions:

- Almost all respondents are unanimous with 96% that they are like others in bearing burden of participation in public life.
- 76% see service in public positions as affirmation of their commitment and loyalty to country with 85% of Latin respondents adopting this perception.
- Almost 8 out of 10 respondents see Church role as empowering needy people and not in charity again Latins most agreeing with 85%.
- Church Related Organizations do not receive high scores as only 4 out of 10 respondents think that they are participating actively in filling society's needs. Others tend to be more conciliatory to CROs as 53% of them see them actively participating.
- Overall, Christians see themselves as integral part of their society. Commitment and loyalty through public participation scores relatively high points but it is problematic, especially when locality is considered as will be shown below. The challenge posed by

almost 8 out of 10 respondents is that the Church should stop being a charity organization and should set itself on a course of empowering the needy. This challenge goes hand in hand with a rather clear disapproval by a majority of respondents on the performance of the CROs.

- The conclusions on responses by Locality show that 96% of all respondents are committed to bearing the burden of participation in public life like others in the society. But more in the West Bank see participation in public life as a sign of commitment and loyalty to country. This is understood since in Israel serving in public positions is an ambivalent situation in terms of loyalty and commitment to the country in contrast to the West Bank. But also in Israel serving in the public sphere could be seen as a competitive proposition in a non-sectarian and open environment and not necessarily a reflection of loyalty or commitment. West Bank respondents do not want their Church to be a charitable institution rather they seek empowerment that can set them on the road to fulfill their needs. This is perhaps reflected in the fact that there is a split of 41% (pro) to 44% (con) CROs and their work in society. Hence the expectations in the West Bank are higher from the Church and its involvement in society and public life than is the case in Israel.

### **On Inter Religious Dialogue:**

**Greek Orthodox** are highest on starting Christian Moslem dialogue centers (78%) and second highest on reminding participants of Christian Jewish dialogue of the injustice suffered by the Arab Palestinian people (57%).

**Greek Catholics** are lowest on that inter religious relations today are characterized by lack of understanding and lack of frankness (76%) and high on benefit of starting Christian Moslem dialogue centers (77%). They are highest on that religious dialogue with Judaism is necessary (69%) and high on the purpose of Christian Jewish dialogue as instilling spirit of mutual respect (85%) while they are highest on no need to remind Christian Jewish dialogue participants of the injustice suffered by the Arab Palestinian people (44%)

**Latins** are highest on urgent need for mutual understanding of religious principles of monotheism (91%) and lowest on benefit to start Christian Moslem dialogue centers (73%). They are lowest on Christian Jewish dialogue as instilling spirit of mutual respect (79%) and highest on reminding Christian Jewish dialogue participants of the historic injustice suffered by the Arab Palestinian people (58%).

**Others** are highest on staying in open dialogue between Islam and Christianity (85%) and on inter religious relations today lacking understanding and frankness (88%). They are highest, similarly to the Greek Orthodox, on the benefit of starting Christian Moslem dialogue centers (78%) and also highest in seeing that Christian Jewish dialogue would instill a spirit of mutual respect (86%).

**Israel respondents** are less in agreement on urgent need for mutual understanding across monotheistic religions (85%) to (91%) in West Bank who agree to an urgent need.

**Israel respondents** like West Bank respondents are of the same opinion on need for open dialogue with Islam (83%) in both localities agree.

**Israel respondents** are slightly less in agreement that inter religious relations today lack understanding and frankness (81%) to (85%) for West Bank respondents.

**Israel respondents** definitely see dialogue with Judaism as necessary (57%) to (42%) of West Bank respondents.

**Israel respondents** are less concerned about reminding Christian-Jewish dialogue participants of the historic injustice that befell the Arab Palestinian people (45%) to (60%) of West Bank respondents who believe so.

#### Conclusions:

- Almost 9 out of 10 respondents are for mutual understanding of religious principles of monotheism.
- 83% of respondents want ongoing dialogue between Islam and Christianity.
- 83% believe that there relations between the religions today are characterized by lack of understanding and needed frankness for a fruitful dialogue.
- 77% of respondents are for starting Christian Moslem dialogue centers.
- At least 50% believe that religious dialogue with Judaism is necessary.
- 82% expect Christian Jewish dialogue to instill spirit of mutual respect.
- One out of two respondents wants to remind Christian Jewish dialogue participants of the historic injustice suffered by Arab Palestinian people.
- Overall the Christian respondents are dialoguers par excellence. While overwhelming majority would want to have Christian Moslem dialogue a similar majority would want to see more understanding and frankness in order to make the dialogue fruitful. Even with Judaism half the respondents believe that dialogue is necessary and an overwhelming majority is of the opinion that such a dialogue should instill spirit of mutual respect and understanding of the various religious positions, irrespective of political positions. Half of the respondents believe that Christian Jewish dialogue should also include reminder of the injustice suffered by the Arab Palestinian people.
- The overall conclusion on responses by Locality is that the Christian Palestinians, irrespective of locality, seek dialogue across religious lines. But they also realize that inter-religious relations lack frankness and needed openness to bear fruit. They are almost synonymous in their majority agreement of having a dialogue with Islam and of establishing Christian-Moslem Centers for this purpose. They disagree, however, on the necessity of dialogue with Judaism even though 1 out of 2 respondents think that such a dialogue is necessary. Christian respondents in Israel are in favor of dialogue with Judaism by (57%) to only (42%) of West Bank respondents. More of West Bank respondents, though, make dialogue with Judaism conditional on reminding participants of the historic injustice that befell the Palestinian people. Clearly the Israeli and West Bank respondents are shaped by their social, religious and overall environments. But the fact that 4 out of 10 Palestinian Christians in the West Bank favor dialogue with Judaism, given the current political situation is a strong indication of a realistic and pragmatic approach to understanding the religions of others. It is possible that such a basis could lead all of us to see things in others that could bring forth some hope that the current situation in which we all find ourselves is amenable to a working solution after all.

## **On Church, Human Rights and the Separation Wall:**

**Greek Orthodox** are highest on Separation Wall provides security to Israelis (15%)

**Greek Catholics** lowest on Separation Wall provides security to Israelis (10%)

**Latins** highest on the Church important role in a society based on respect of the person and her/his rights (94%) and lowest on the Church taking a courageous stand on issues of Peace and Justice and Human Rights (50%). The Latins are highest on the Separation Wall increasing hatred, enmity and violence (95%) and that it has increased the suffering of Palestinians (98%). Latins are also second highest in thinking that Separation Wall provides security to the Israelis (14%).

**Others** are highest on Church takes a courageous stand on issues of Peace and Justice (65%) and lowest on Separation Wall providing security to Israelis (10%).

**West Bank respondents** are more inclined to think that the Church has an important role to form a society based on respect of human rights (93%) to (88%) in Israel.

**West Bank respondents** think less that the Church takes a courageous stand on issues of Peace and Justice (49%) to (62%) of their counterparts in Israel.

**West Bank respondents** think more that the Separation Wall increases hatred, enmity and violence (95%) to (90%) in Israel.

**West Bank respondents** think less that the Separation Wall will bring security to the Israelis (10%) to (15%) of Israel respondents who think so.

**West Bank respondents** are almost unanimous that the Separation Wall has increased the suffering of the Palestinians (99%) to (90%) of Israel respondents.

### Conclusions:

- 9 out of 10 respondents believe that the Church has an important role to form a society based on respect to the person and her/his rights.
- 55% think that the Church takes a courageous stand on issues of Peace and Justice and Human Rights.
- 93% of respondents believe that the Separation Wall increases hatred, enmity and violence.
- Only 13% believe that the Separation Wall provides security to Israelis.
- 94% believe that the Separation Wall has increased the suffering of the Palestinians.
- Overall the respondents are of the opinion that the Church has a role and an important one for that in building a society based on respect of human rights. But only a slight majority of 55% thinks that the Church takes a courageous stand on issues of Peace and Justice and Human Rights. Hence the perception is that the Church is expected to act on Human Rights but that it is not doing enough. The Separation Wall is not seen as providing security to the Israelis; on the contrary it is seen as increasing hatred and the suffering of the Palestinians.

- On the responses by Locality, it is clear that there is a consensus of over 9 respondents out of 10 in both localities that the Separation Wall is conducive to more hatred and to cause more suffering to the Palestinians. A small minority of respondents in both localities think that the Wall provides security to the Israelis. But the main agreement of both localities is that of the important role of Church in forming a society that is based on respect for the person and her/his rights. This is indeed affirmative of the tendencies and preferences of educated, entrepreneurial and aspiring Middle Class communities. This is also proof that such a Middle Class community would want an open, pluralist and most likely a secular system of governance.

## **Appendix I**

### **Reasons for Emigration according to Church by Church Affiliation:**

	GO	GC	Latins	Others
Political Conditions (36%)	37%	34%	35%	34%
Employment (33%)	35%	25%	44%	22%
Joys of Life (9%)	8%	10%	7%	17%
Education (8%)	10%	11%	7%	5%
Religious Fanaticism (8%)	6%	11%	5%	19%
Joining Family Members Abroad (5%)	5%	9%	2%	5%

### **Reasons for Emigration by Residence:**

	WB	Israel
Political Conditions (36%)	42%	30%
Employment (33%)	44%	22%
Joys of Life (9%)	7%	12%
Education (8%)	4%	13%
Religious Fanaticism (8%)	3%	14%
Joining Family Members Abroad (5%)	1%	9%

## **Appendix II**

### **Challenges Confronting Christians in the Holy Land by Church Affiliation :**

	GO	GC	Latins	Others
Job Opportunities (25%)	26%	14%	35%	17%
Housing Projects (21%)	22%	17%	20%	23%
Emigration (18%)	19%	15%	21%	13%
Justice and Peace (17%)	16%	26%	9%	24%
Religious Fanaticism (11%)	9%	12%	10%	16%
Education (9%)	9%	15%	6%	8%

(GO stands for Greek Orthodox; GC stands for Greek Catholics. Others include Lutherans, Anglicans, Syriacs, Armenians, Maronites, and Copts.)

### **Challenges Confronting Christians in the Holy Land by Residence:**

	WB	Israel
Job Opportunities (25%)	39%	11%
Housing Projects (21%)	19%	22%
Emigration (18%)	23%	13%

Justice and Peace (17%)	7%	27%		
Religious Fanaticism (11%)	7%	14%		
Education (9%)		6%	13%	

### **Appendix III – Church Affiliation and Responses to Statements**

#### ***Among the obstacles that stand in the way of adult religious education:***

<b><u>Statement</u></b>	<b><u>GO</u></b>	<b><u>GC</u></b>	<b><u>Latins</u></b>	<b><u>Others</u></b>
There is no close relationship between The Church and most Adults	78%	64%	68%	81%*
Audio Visual technologies that Distant people from religion	66%	69%	63%	79%*
Not enough interest from Religious authority in adult education	76%	63%	71%	72%*

#### ***About Participation in the Church and Parish Life:***

The Christian family has to commit to attend Sunday mass with all its members	85%	80%	91%	81%*
I esteem and respect Priests and Nuns that I know because of their willingness to Participate in the Parish life and to care For families' religious, spiritual and Material needs	82%	89%	80%	81%*
Priests and Nuns should do more than What they are doing now in Parish activities especially those related To parochial matters	72%	57%	75%	74%*
I do not see that there is real cooperation Between Parish Priest and Laity in apostolic Activities and confronting evil And corruption	61%	52%	54%	56%*
I do not see that the Church undertakes Activities or programs special to the family And its various issues	63%	43%	49%	48%*

#### ***About Participation in Public Life:***

Christian is like others in bearing The burden of participation in public life	95%	98%	97%	93%
The presence of Christians in public positions And in various fields of public life is an Affirmation of their commitment and Loyalty to their country	76%	74%	85%	76%*
Church should work to develop the Potential and capacities of the needy person Rather than to turn itself into A charitable society	78%	78%	85%	76%*
Church Related Developmental and Charitable organizations are participating Actively to fill the needs of the society And its various demands	36%	37%	45%	53%*
<b><i>About Inter Religious Dialogue:</i></b>				
There is an urgent need for mutual Understanding of the religious principles of the monotheistic Religions	87%	87%	91%	88%
We need to stay in open dialogue between Islam and Christianity	83%	84%	81%	85%
Unfortunately, relations today are Characterized by lack of understanding And lack of the needed frankness For a fruitful dialogue	86%	76%	78%	88%*
I see it is beneficial to start Christian – Moslem dialogue centers Wherever possible	78%	77%	73%	78%
Religious Dialogue with Judaism Is <b>not necessary</b> now as long as The political situation is unresolved	41%	19%	42%	32%*
(Religious Dialogue with Judaism Is necessary)	(44%	69%	43%	57%*)
Christian – Jewish dialogue should instill The spirit of mutual respect and to understand The various religious positions of each religion, Irrespective of political positions	82%	85%	79%	86%

In any Christian-Jewish dialogue, there is Need to remind participants of the historic Injustice suffered by the Arab people In Palestine	57%	36%	58%	48%*
(In any Christian-Jewish dialogue, there is No need to remind participants of the historic Injustice suffered by the Arab people In Palestine)	(28%	44%	26%	36 %*)

***About Church and Human Rights and the Separation Wall:***

The Church has an important role to Form a society that is based on respect For the person and her/his rights	89%	90%	94%	91%
The Church takes a courageous stand From issues of Peace and Justice and Human Rights	53%	61%	50%	65%*
The Separation Wall increases hatred, Enmity and violence	93%	88%	95%	93%*
The Separation Wall provides security To the Israelis	15%	10%	14%	10%*
The Separation Wall does not provide Security to the Israelis	78%	77%	78%	83%*
The Separation Wall has increased The suffering of the Palestinians	95%	86%	98%	96%*

**Appendix IV– Locality of Residence and Responses to Statements**

***Among the obstacles that stand in the way of adult religious education:***

<b><u>Statement</u></b>	<b><u>Total</u></b>	<b><u>WB</u></b>	<b><u>Israel</u></b>
Adults are preoccupied in matters Distant from Religion	81%	77%	84%
There is no close relationship between The Church and most Adults	74%	73%	75%*
Audio Visual technologies that Distant people from religion	68%	61%	75%*

Not enough interest from Religious authority in adult education	72%	78%	66%*
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***About Participation in the Church and Parish Life:***

The Christian family has to commit to attend Sunday mass with all its members	85%	91%	79%*
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I esteem and respect Priests and Nuns that I know because of their willingness to Participate in the Parish life and to care For families' religious, spiritual and Material needs	82%	81%	84%
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Priests and Nuns should do more than What they are doing now in Parish activities especially those related To parochial matters	71%	81%	61%*
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The spirit of mutual support and Solidarity in the Church depends in the Final analysis on interdependence Between Clergy and Laity	71%	79%	62%*
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I do not see that there is real cooperation Between Parish Priest and Laity in apostolic Activities and confronting evil And corruption	57%	63%	50%*
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I do not see that the Church undertakes Activities or programs special to the family And its various issues	54%	61%	48%*
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***About Participation in Public Life:***

Christian is like others in bearing The burden of participation in public life	96%	98%	93%*
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The presence of Christians in public positions And in various fields of public life is an Affirmation of their commitment and Loyalty to their country	76%	92%	63%*
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Church should work to develop the Potential and capacities of the needy person Rather than to turn itself into A charitable society	79%	90%	68%*
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Church Related Developmental and Charitable organizations are participating Actively to fill the needs of the society And its various demands	41%	41%	40%*
(Church Related Developmental and Charitable organizations are NOT participating Actively to fill the needs of the society And its various demands	40%	44%	37%* )

***About Inter Religious Dialogue:***

There is an urgent need for mutual Understanding of the religious principles of the monotheistic Religions	88%	91%	85%*
We need to stay in open dialogue between Islam and Christianity	83%	83%	83%
Unfortunately, relations today are Characterized by lack of understanding And lack of the needed frankness For a fruitful dialogue	83%	85%	81%
I see it is beneficial to start Christian – Moslem dialogue centers Wherever possible	77%	76%	78%
Religious Dialogue with Judaism Is <b>not necessary</b> now as long as The political situation is unresolved	36%	45%	28%*
(Religious Dialogue with Judaism Is necessary)	(50%	42%	57 %*)
Christian – Jewish dialogue should instill The spirit of mutual respect and to understand The various religious positions of each religion, Irrespective of political positions	82%	82%	82%
In any Christian-Jewish dialogue, there is Need to remind participants of the historic Injustice suffered by the Arab people In Palestine	53%	60%	45%*
(In any Christian-Jewish dialogue, there is No need to remind participants of the historic			

Injustice suffered by the Arab people  
In Palestine) (31% 24% 39 %\*)

***About Church and Human Rights and the Separation Wall:***

The Church has an important role to  
Form a society that is based on respect  
For the person and her/his rights 90% 93% 88%\*

The Church takes a courageous stand  
From issues of Peace and Justice and  
Human Rights 55% 49% 62%\*

The Separation Wall increases hatred,  
Enmity and violence 93% 95% 90%\*

The Separation Wall provides security  
To the Israelis 13% 10% 16%\*

(The Separation Wall does not provide  
Security to the Israelis 78% 82% 74 %\*)

The Separation Wall has increased  
The suffering of the Palestinians 94% 99% 90%\*