

MOVING STORIES

Commitment
for **Life**

Life-giving Faith | Defiant Hope | Generous Love

Committed to supporting | our global partners | **PALESTINE/ISRAEL**

Prayer and Reflection

It helps, now and then, to step back and take a long view. The kingdom is not only beyond our efforts: it is even beyond our vision. We accomplish in our lifetime only a fraction of the magnificent enterprise that is God's work.

Nothing we do is complete, which is a way of saying that the Kingdom always lies beyond us.

No statement says all that could be said.
No prayer fully expresses our faith.
No confession brings perfection.
No pastoral visit brings wholeness.
No program accomplishes the Church's mission.
No set of goals and objectives includes everything.

This is what we are about.

We plant the seeds that one day will grow.
We water seeds already planted, knowing that they hold future promise.
We lay foundations that will need further development. We provide yeast that produces far beyond our capabilities.
We cannot do everything, and there is a sense of liberation in realizing that.
This enables us to do something, and to do it very well.

It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning, a step along the way, an opportunity for the Lord's grace to enter and do the rest. We may never see the end results, but that is the difference between the master builder and the worker. We are workers, not master builders; ministers, not messiahs.

We are prophets of a future not our own.

Ken Untener, Saginaw.

Since 1967, Israeli checkpoints have been a common feature of the occupation. Of course, if you go on a standard 'pilgrimage' to Bethlehem, you might not notice going through the checkpoint because tour buses are simply waved through. But for most Palestinians, these barriers have become progressively more constraining of their movement. Members of the 2019 URC educational trip to IOPT had a taste of this in Hebron (see photo.)

Gaza has effectively been sealed off. It is extremely difficult to obtain a permit to leave or enter Gaza without a compelling justification. In the West Bank, there are over 700 holdups: from 60 or so military checkpoints to earth mounds and concrete blocks across roads to restrict or thwart movement by Palestinians. The cumulative effect of corralling Palestinians into approximately 190 enclaves, surrounded by settlements, settler-only roads and checkpoints renders the free movement of people and goods impossible for some, and for those able to travel, stressful, uncertain, expensive and time consuming.

Such restrictions violate International Human Rights Law. They cause significant human suffering. They separate families. They throttle the Palestinian economy and can turn a journey that ought to take ten minutes into a major schlep that could take hours.

Commitment for Life fully endorses the Christian Aid report, *Where is Palestine?* We make every effort to bring about a just and peaceful resolution to the ongoing oppression of ordinary Palestinians. Your support is deeply appreciated by our partners in Israel and Palestine.

Members of the URC held up at a military checkpoint, Hebron 2019. Photo Ray Stanyon

