



His Beatitude Michel Sabbah, the Latin Patriarch in Jerusalem, visits Jenin, on the West Bank. The war against Iraq, he said, "opened the gates of hell, and who knows who will be able to close these gates now."

. . . Jesus Christ did not call on anyone to make war.

EIR: What about the people such as Pat Robertson, or some of the so-called Evangelicals from the United States?

Sabbah: To these people I say, you have to be Christians. You go back to your main basic commandment: Love your neighbor, love your enemy. It is good to love the Jews, very good. It is also good, very good, to love the Palestinians, so your role is not to make one stronger than the other, that means to make one more able to make war against the other. Your role is to bring both to reconciliation—to make them equally loving each other. This is the role of a Christian. . . .

EIR: How do you see the relationship between what is going on in Iraq, the occupation there, and the occupation in the Palestinian territories? Do you see a connection?

Sabbah: Of course. The war of Iraq was meant to demolish a potential enemy to Israel. . . . Iraq was the only country that could present a real threat against Israel, and therefore it had to be demolished. And therefore it was not done for the benefit of the Iraqi people, to free them from their dictator, because after the war they put the Iraqi people between hands harder than the hands of Saddam, conditions harder than those from which they suffered under Saddam. So they opened the gates of hell in Iraq, and who knows who will be able to close these gates now.

EIR: Do you think the threats now being made toward Iran are of the same order, the same thing?

Sabbah: The same thing. Because again, it is a force, a potential force, which is not going in the line of the United States, and the Israel situation. And so that's it. It is an effort to reduce all these forces, to put them get in line; if you're

in line, you can get all the weapons you want, or the money you want. If you are not in line, you are not allowed to have any arms.

EIR: Do you think the United States invasion of Iraq has made the situation worse for the Palestinians?

Sabbah: Much worse, for both the Iraq people and the Palestinians. . . . It was more and more perceived, that the fight and the question in Palestine was only a question of fighting terrorism, not of a people who asked for its freedom. So fighting terrorism, means you can do whatever you want.

Interview: Bishop Munib A. Younan

Palestinian Christians Can Serve as a Bridge

The Right Reverend Munib A. Younan was born in Jerusalem, and has been the Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jerusalem since 1998. Bishop Younan was interviewed by Edward Spannaus during the Holy Land Ecumenical Foundation conference in Washington, on Oct. 23.



EIR: You mentioned yesterday the sharing of water as a necessity, which is something which our organization has been very active in.

Younan: Well, I think that the war in the Middle East in the future will not be a war over land, because we already know what the solution is—the two-state solution—I mean every state is now established in the Middle East. But I think the water resources are really the problem now in the Middle East. We noticed now there are tensions, maybe between Turkey and other neighboring countries, on the water issue. And once you really make a two-state solution, you cannot give one state more resources than the other. You cannot give one state more water resources; otherwise they will flourish [and the other will not]. This country is not so much blessed with water as the United States of America, or other parts of the world. So this is the reason we insist also that in any political solution, there must be a political solution for sharing water resources, among the two states—the Palestinian state and the Israeli state.

EIR: Yesterday you spoke of the significance of the Palestinian Christians, and of the importance of their existence, and

remaining there. . . .

Younan: If we read about the Muslim writers' analysis right now, in the Arab world, the Arab political analysts, they see that the Middle East needs the Arab Christians, because they are the guarantor of democracy and civil society in the Middle East.

I think you know, at the same time, the Archbishop of Madrid, in Spain, after the March 11 explosion, said in a challenging way, that we have to learn from Arab Christianity, how to live with Islam. And I believe that this is very important, that our living for 1,400 years with Islam, has taught us how to have constructive dialogue with them, or even on conflicting issues, but even at the same time, how to live together as one nation.

What I am really thinking is that we as Palestinian Christians and Arab Christians in the Arab world can be a bridge between East and West, North and South, on these issues. We are asking the world to please use us, because understanding Islam is not easy. And you cannot really put all the eggs of Islam in one basket, as you cannot put all the eggs of Christianity in one basket. We are a multifaceted Christianity, and Islam is multifaceted, like Judaism is multifaceted, you see.

We have to teach the world how to live with Islam, and even with Judaism, because we have good experience in how to live with both religions, and we have the three religions, and as Palestinian Christians, to encourage. to find common values—for justice, or peace, or reconciliation, or family, for tolerance, for moderation, for environment, for ecological awareness, whatever it is. I think, in the Middle East, we can really raise these problems, because we want to teach the world that anti-Semitism is racism and cannot work. Islamophobia is racism, and it cannot work. Xenophobia is racism, it cannot work. Arabophobia is racism, it cannot work. Americanophobia is also racism, and we have to get out of these racist feelings which are sometimes existing, because of stigmatization or demonization of the other.

And we have to see God in the other, and accept the otherness of that person.

Then we can have mutual recognition of our human, civil, political, racial, and religious rights. Only then can we really change our globe to be more human, and we Palestinian Christians, and Arab Christians, we are always the initiators of dialogue, with all. And we are ready to teach Europe and the United States of America how to live with others, who are different.

EIR: How are your relations with the Palestinian National Authority?

Younan: Our relations are good with all the governments in the area. Of course, we are in dialogue on various issues, and the constitution issue and civil society, on other things. Of course, we don't intervene in politics, but we always intervene when there are issues pertaining to human rights.

But Christians, I would say, are living well under the

Palestinian Authority; we don't have any kind of persecution, as some people are trying to say. Because what is persecution? Persecution is forbidding you to preach. or to go to church whenever you wish, and that doesn't exist. Because I preach, nobody censors me, my pastors preach, and so on.

So we really have to be careful in using the word persecution, because when you use that word, you are really driving us to a dark area which is not acceptable. We are not persecuted.

EIR: You must have heard some of the statements made by Christian Zionist groups here, who say that the Christians *are* persecuted by the Muslims.

Younan: Don't use Palestinian Christianity and Arab Christianity as a political means for a political agenda. If you use us as a political agenda, that is wrong. You have to see that we are an integral part of Palestinian Arab society, and as such we are accepted.

EIR: You were interviewed by a Danish newspaper, on Christian Zionism, and declared that to be heresy.

Younan: It is not only me. Also the Catholic Bishops in Illinois, in June 2003, said they [the Christian Zionists] are false prophets. Why? Because they are really promoting the destruction of the Dome of the Rock, of the Muslims, building the Third Temple, which is against even the Jewish understanding—the Jews understand the Third Temple comes with the Messiah. And thirdly, by this they think they are hastening the Second Coming, and then they come to the Armageddon War.

The Armageddon War means that Christ will be the warrior, the Christ of this world, not the Christ of the cross. We believe in Christ of the cross, and as such, I believe it is a heresy, because my Lord, my Christ, is always Christ of the cross, who is a servant for all human beings. He is never a Christ of war, he is never a Christ of bloodshed, he is never a Christ of scenarios. He has come to save all the world equally, not only Christians, everybody.

For this reason, from that perspective, I look at them as a heresy, because they are not reading well the New Testament, where Jesus so loved the world that he wanted to save everyone, and at the same time Jesus has never been coercive. *Jesus has never been coercive*. If somebody does believe, he says, just leave it where you are.

But they are bringing in things which are strange to Christianity, and if we don't speak up, if you American Christians don't speak up about these Christian rights, you are leading the nation into difficult things, because they are influencing many naive people. For this reason we have to speak up, and very clearly, without any fear.

EIR: If you had one message for the President Bush, what would you say?

Younan: I would tell him to be an honest broker, and look for justice in one standard, and not in two standards.