

Grant Barclay, a Church of Scotland Minister and former Convener of the Council of Assembly, visited Israel and the occupied West Bank on Study Leave to film and share people's real-life stories in 2017, exactly a century after the Balfour Declaration.

This film records their varied views in a thought-provoking way to stimulate conversation.



The displacement of three-quarters of a million Arab refugees from Israel, and of a similar number of Jews from Arab lands during the conflict and confusion of events in the fifty years after 1917 still impacts the lives of many millions today. Yet the Balfour Declaration of that year offered Jewish people a national home in Palestine, a place where they might be safe following centuries of persecution. Since 1948, Israel has made astonishing advances in science and technology, medicine and culture and is, probably, presently the only fully-fledged democracy in the Middle East.

Yet the Balfour Declaration expressly preserved the civil and religious right of non-Jewish communities in Palestine. Half a century of Israeli occupation of the West Bank, the annexation of the Golan Heights and East Jerusalem, and the blockade of Gaza presents an enduring hardship for millions of people. Non-Jewish Israeli citizens, one fifth of the country's population, suffer discrimination. Continuing settlement-building in the occupied West Bank in breach of international law seems difficult to square with a nation committed to justice and the rule of law.

All of this is happening in the land where, centuries before, the prophets called for justice, mercy and peace; where Jesus told stories which challenged his hearers to be neighbours across ethnic divides. In this land the then-occupying military force bowed to popular pressure and crucified him. Probably on a small, stony beach on the north-western shore of the Sea of Galilee, the risen Jesus invited his friends to enjoy his company again and to give their lives to serve his kingdom-bearing mission.

Partner organisations of the Church of Scotland have consistently asked simply that those who had come to see might return home and tell. However, rather than telling what he saw in his own words, Grant Barclay seeks here to share real stories through the actual words of people of diverse backgrounds who live in these lands. Visiting in the autumn of 2017 for a period of six weeks, he travelled around as much of Israel and the West Bank as possible. He talked to as many people as possible, from as broad a selection of views as he was able to find. This documentary film, *Between the Lines*, gives a flavour of some of the issues from a range of viewpoints.

The combination of the comments shared here against the backdrop of the painful present reality for many people in this land demands a response.

The film, which lasts 50 minutes, is now available and can be provided for group showing and further discussion.

**Visit grant-barclay.co.uk
Or contact Grant Barclay at
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for more information or to arrange a showing.**