



October 2023

One of the first things I sensed about Jerusalem when I first went there in 2001 was that it was a place brimming with energy. But this energy was tense and uneasy. It was the energy of mistrust and resentment. Was there also joy and kindness? Of course, but those life-giving energies were overwhelmed by the death-dealing energies of hate and cruelty.

Israel/Palestine is a place of great pain—old pain, new pain, and pain to come. You cannot defeat the forces of resentment, cruelty, and hate with violence and carnage. This is so obviously true that it hardly needs to be said. But I say it because pain is the lens through which I understand this fraught place. When this current round of intensified violence comes to an end, and it will, what will remain is great pain.

Israelis will be left with the pain created by the terror of Hamas and other Palestinian militants. Palestinians will be left with the pain of the devastation that Israel will inflict on Gaza and the West Bank. The vast majority of deaths will be civilians, certainly for Palestinians and likely for Israelis. Then things will return to a status quo, in which the Israeli military uses force and surveillance to oppress and control Palestinians. Under this status quo, Israeli lives are largely safe, free, and prosperous, and Palestinian lives are largely precarious, confined, and impoverished.

This status quo of the Israeli occupation guarantees more of what we are seeing now. This is no justification for the brutality we are seeing from Palestinian militants. There is no justification for such brutality. On this, basically all of the world is in agreement. I stand with them. But the world community has proven incapable of addressing the brutality of the Israeli occupation. If we want to see an end to all of the unnecessary pain in Israel/Palestine, the world community must be able to address all of its sources.

So our work, begun by Marlin and Sally, and continued by Chris* and me, remains the same. We will advocate for an end to the Israeli occupation of East Jerusalem, the West Bank, and Gaza. The longer it continues, the longer Israel/Palestine will be a place defined by and motivated by pain.

In the coming weeks, we will be sharing several podcasts and videos that Chris and I taped a few weeks ago in Israel/Palestine with the individuals in [The Law and the Prophets](#). This will give you even more context for understanding the tragedy of Israel/Palestine. We'll share these podcasts and videos on social media (@visandchris on Facebook and Instagram) and we'll share links in a future email.

In the meantime, feel free to watch our documentary on the history and current realities of the Israeli occupation. You can do so with [this link](#), and the following password: tlatpamorzao_vis.

Sincerely,

Would you like to receive these updates digitally? Please email Kelli at kgilmore@rca.org to be added to the email list. You will receive more timely updates from the missionary you support and help us be good stewards of our resources.

Josh and Chris (*[Chris DeBlaay](#) took over Sally's role in April 2023. Sally is happily retired!)