"Take Good Care of Him": A Call to Faithful Accountability

A Biblical Reflection by Bishop Dr Imad Haddad, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land

To speak about being accountable to my neighbor is to stand near the heart of the Gospel. In Scripture, accountability is never merely administrative or moral; it is covenantal. It is born from God's faithful commitment to humanity and from the web of relationships into which God has placed us. Covenant is God's own decision to bind Godself to humanity — and in doing so, God has bound our lives to one another. Being accountable to our neighbor is therefore never optional; it is a faithful response to the God who has first bound Godself to us.

From the beginning, God created us for life together. The Creator declared, "It is not good that the human should be alone." Accountability was thus woven into human life from the dawn of creation, because we were created not for isolation but for one another. Formed in the image of the Triune God — a living communion of love — our humanity is inherently relational. Community and accountability are not an afterthought of creation; they belong to God's covenantal intention for human life.

This is why Cain's question continues to unsettle the conscience of every generation: "Am I my brother's keeper?" Scripture does not leave the question unanswered. In the light of God's covenant faithfulness, the answer is unmistakable: **Yes — we are.** Not as masters over one another's lives, but as those entrusted with one another's dignity, freedom, peace, and well-being. Covenant always creates a responsibility that holds us accountable for one another.

Such accountability begins with truthfulness before God. Before we can faithfully accompany our neighbor, we must stand honestly before the One who created and loves us. We come not as self-sufficient, but as people held by mercy — fragile and beloved at the same time. When we know ourselves sustained by grace, we are freed to practice a love that endures. Responsible love grows out of received mercy.

The church — the *ecclesia*, the called community — is itself a covenant people. Called each by name yet never into isolation, we are gathered through Word and Sacrament into one body and one community accountable to one another. Our belonging to Christ binds us together in a communion where the suffering of one member concerns the whole. When anyone is abandoned by the roadside of history and reality, the Body of Christ cannot claim innocence but is held accountable.

Jesus 'parable of the Good Samaritan makes this covenantal love visible. The Samaritan sees the wounded man, is moved with compassion, and acts. After binding the wounds and bringing him to safety, he instructs the innkeeper: **"Take good care of him."** Here love becomes structured, mercy becomes shared responsibility, and compassion becomes accountability to one another. The Samaritan creates a

circle of care in which the neighbor's healing becomes a communal trust. This is covenantal love in motion — not heroic individualism, but sustained, accountable love within the body of Christ.

From where I stand as a Palestinian bishop, this vision speaks deeply. Our people know what it means to ask whether a circle of care will truly hold. We know the difference between momentary sympathy and solidarity that organizes itself for the long journey. In places of prolonged suffering, what preserves life is not occasional kindness, but faithful, coordinated, accountable accompaniment.

Therefore, beloved sisters and brothers, accountability to our neighbor today calls us to build and strengthen such circles of care. The wounded of our world have already been placed within the church's reach. Cain's ancient question still echoes: **"Am I my brother's keeper?"** In the light of God's covenant faithfulness, the church must answer with clarity and humility: **Yes — we are.**

If this is our calling, let us hear anew the Samaritan's word: **"Take good care of him."** May we live as a covenant people — forming living circles of care and remaining near to the suffering in faithful, accountable love.