

The Interfaith Community for Palestinian Rights,
Friends of Sabeel-North America &
Pax Christi USA

present

...to loose the chains of injustice...

-Isaiah 58:6

AMERICAN CHURCHES
and the
PALESTINIANS



February 11 and 12, 2005

*Featuring **The Rev. Naim Ateek**, Director, Sabeel Ecumenical Center, Jerusalem; **The Rev. Dr. Donald Wagner**, Director, Center for Middle East Studies, North Park University; and leaders of the Presbyterian, Episcopalian, Methodist, and Lutheran Churches, and Pax Christi USA*

Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary
100 East 27th Street
Austin, Texas 78705

Why?

News from Israel/Palestine troubles the pages of our newspapers every day. The agony of all those who live in a land we often refer to as “holy” cannot fail to evoke sadness, despair, and even righteous anger in all of us in the American Christian community.

Our primary bond as Christians is to the current and historic Christian communities in Israel and Palestine, with whom we are united in the body of Christ. However, justice and peace for *any* community in the region requires justice and peace for every community.

At the beginning of the penitential season of Lent, we read the prophet Isaiah asking: ***Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the chains of injustice, . . . to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke?*** The aspiration and the commandments are clear, but the way is challenging, demanding of each of us wisdom, moral clarity and courage . . . and the strength of a community of commitment.



The focus of this conference is on the work of the churches for a just peace in Israel-Palestine. National leaders of the Presbyterian, United Methodist, Evangelical Lutheran, Roman Catholic and Episcopal churches will address the history, strategy and future directions of American mainline church involvement in this issue.

We invite local members of each of these communities to join us and hear their national leadership.

Speakers and Panelists

The Rev. Naim Ateek is a Palestinian Episcopal priest, founder and director of the Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center, Jerusalem.

The Rev. Dr. Donald E. Wagner is director of the Center for Middle East Studies, North Park University in Chicago.

David Robinson is the national coordinator of Pax Christi USA and executive editor of The Catholic Peace Voice.

Ann Hafften is coordinator for Middle East Networking, Division for Global Mission, Evangelical Lutheran Church of America.

Maureen Shea is director of Government Relations for the Episcopal Church USA. In 2004 she traveled to Palestine and Israel with a group of American bishops.

The Rev. Wendy Mathewson, Assoc. Pastor, Northminster Presbyterian Church, Evanston, Ill., worked with Sabeel in Jerusalem and the Middle East Office of the Presbyterian Church.

Nelda Reid is the Peace with Justice Coordinator for the North Texas Conference of the United Methodist Church.

The Rev. Richard Toll is the national director of Friends of Sabeel North America.

Craig and Cindy Corrie, founders, Rachel Corrie Foundation for Peace and Justice, are the parents of Rachel Corrie, a 23-year-old activist with the International Solidarity Movement, killed by an Israeli military bulldozer in March, 2003.

Workshop Leaders

Rizk Ikhrais is a peace activist and a member of ICPR. He was born in a Rafah refugee camp in the Gaza Strip to parents who were displaced during the 1948 Palestinian Catastrophe.

Dr. Robert Jensen is a professor of journalism at The University of Texas and member of the NoWar Collective and the Third Coast Activist Resource Center.

The Rev. Dr. Henry Bucher, winner of the 2003 Peacemaker Award from the Dallas Center for Peace, teaches Middle East and African Studies at Austin College.

Sylvia Shihadeh is Palestinian born and raised in Jerusalem; she lives in Austin and is a community organizer and activist.

Luke Peterson has studied the Palestinian-Israeli conflict extensively. During the summer of 2004, he lived in the Bethlehem District and worked as a volunteer for the city of Beit Jala.

Conference Schedule

Friday, February 11th

1:00 - **Registration opens**

2:00-2:30 - **Welcome and opening remarks**

2:30-3:30 - **Panel:** *Why should the American Churches be concerned about the Palestinians?*

Wendy Mathewson, Presbyterian Church USA
Nelda Reid, United Methodist Church
David Robinson, Pax Christi
Richard Toll, Sabeel-NA

3:45-5:15 - **Workshops**

The Divestment Campaign - Henry Bucher
Drawing Connections: Palestine-Iraq-Afghanistan-Washington - David Robinson

Going there: Alternative Travel to the Holy Land
- Ann Hafften

History 101 - Don Wagner

Myths of the Conflict - Rizk Ikrais

The Root Causes of the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict and the Condition of Occupied Palestine Today
- Sylvia Shihadeh and Luke Peterson

The Silence of the American Churches
- Richard Toll

The U.S. Media Reporting on the Israel/Palestine Conflict - Robert Jensen

5:30-8:00 - **Dinner at the McCord Center**

Craig and Cindy Corrie: *Rachel Corrie through Her Parents' Eyes*

Plenary Address by the Rev. Naim Ateek: *A Palestinian Cry for Justice and Compassion*

8:00 - **Film showing**

Saturday, February 12th

8:30 - **Registration opens**

9:30-10:45 - **Plenary Address by Don Wagner:**
Anxious for Armageddon

11:00-12:30 - **Workshops**

Christian Zionism - Don Wagner

The Divestment Campaign - Henry Bucher

Drawing Connections: Palestine-Iraq-Afghanistan-Washington - David Robinson

Going there: Alternative Travel to the Holy Land
- Ann Hafften

Myths of the Conflict - Rizk Ikrais

The Root Causes of the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict and the Condition of Occupied Palestine Today
- Sylvia Shihadeh and Luke Peterson

The Silence of the American Churches - Richard Toll

The U.S. Media Reporting on the Israel/Palestine Conflict - Robert Jensen

12:30-1:30 - **Lunch at the McCord Center**

1:45 - **Panel of Church Leaders:** *American Churches and the Palestinians*

Ann Hafften, Evangelical Lutheran Church of America

Wendy Mathewson, Presbyterian Church USA
Nelda Reid, United Methodist Church

David Robinson, Pax Christi-USA
Maureen Shea, Episcopal Church

3:30-4:30 - **Closing Program and Liturgy with The Rev. Naim Ateek**

About the Conference

Friends of Sabeel-North America (FOSNA) promotes a solution to the conflict in the Holy Land based on principals for a just peace as explained in the Jerusalem Sabeel document. FOSNA is a member of Sabeel International and works in partnership with Christians, Jews, Muslims and others, to provide regional and conferences featuring speakers from Palestine/Israel, and alternative pilgrimage and Christian witness in the Holy Land. <http://www.fosna.org/>

Pax Christi USA strives to create a world that reflects the Peace of Christ by exploring , articulating, and witnessing to the call of Christian nonviolence. Pax Christi USA commits itself to peace education, and, with the help of its bishop members, promotes the gospel imperative of peacemaking as a priority in the Catholic Church in the United States. Pax Christi USA is a section of Pax Christi International, the Catholic peace movement. <http://www.paxchristiusa.org/>

The Interfaith Community for Palestinian Rights (ICPR) is an Austin-based grassroots organization of Christians, Jews, and Muslims, and others dedicated to promoting peace with justice for the Palestinians through outreach and education. For more information contact Ed Hartwell, Coordinator, icpr@austin.rr.com.

Co-Sponsors (to date)

Episcopal Peace Fellowship
First Methodist Church
Hardt Peace Fund
Kettle Moraine Presbyterian Church,
Hartland WI
Marakesh Café
Palestinian Children's Welfare Program

Pax Christi Austin
St. Catherine's Catholic Church
St. David's Episcopal Church
St. James' Episcopal Church
Westminister Presbyterian Church
Veterans for Peace, Neil Bischoff Chapter

- With special thanks to the Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary, conference host. -

More Information

Look throughout the conference for *Palestinian Handicrafts, Books and Literature Tables, and Films*.

Lodging for Out-of-Town Travelers: Reduced-rate rooms at the Drury Inns are available though January 27 at the rate of \$59 for conference attendees. Call Drury Inns, 1-800-325-0720, and mention that you will be attending the ICPR Conference. Other nearby hotels include Doubletree Inn, Days Inn-University, Courtyard Marriott Central.

For more information: Email: <ICPRconf@aol.com>

Phone: (512) 708-8293, Monday - Friday, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. (CST)

American Churches and the Palestinians

Conference Registration Form (please print)

Name(s) _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Please check your registration preference:

- \$50 - Full conference program per person (Friday dinner, all presentations & workshops).
Vegetarian meal? Y / N
- \$40 - Full conference program per person without dinner.
- \$30 - Registered student, seminarian, full conference program. Vegetarian meal? Y / N
- \$20 - Registered student, seminarian, full program without dinner.

Please check your registration preference:

- Check enclosed. (*Please make check out to **Friends of Sabeel NA.***)
- Visa or Master Card (*Please circle one.*)

Card No. _____ Exp. Date _____ / _____

Name as it appears on credit card (print) _____

Signature _____

Total Enclosed _____

Mail form with payment to: ICPR Conference, 509 Bellevue Place, Austin, TX 78705