This special issue of Cornerstone celebrates the 10th anniversary of the Sabeel Center. During our international conference in April we took some time to reflect and give thanks for all that has taken place in the life of Sabeel over those years. With this issue of Cornerstone we want to share those reflections with our readers, and also to look forward to the future.

IN THANKSGIVING TO GOD

SABEEL, TEN YEARS ON

by Naim Ateek

THE HEART OF THE MATTER

We pause to give thanks to God for the work of Sabeel. We come together to recognize God’s goodness to us, to give God the glory, and to ask for strength in the days and years ahead. With the Psalmist we say, “Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless God’s holy name” (Psalm 103:1). And with St. Paul we say, “...thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Cor 15:57).

WE DO NOT LOSE HEART

On this occasion of celebrating ten years of the work of Sabeel, I want to lift up a scriptural verse that seems appropriate. Second Corinthians 4:1, “...Since it is by God’s mercy that we are engaged in this ministry, we do not lose heart” (2 Corinthians 4:1). This verse calls attention to three important truths. First, it is God who is the source of our work. Everything that has been accomplished through the work of Sabeel is due to God’s mercy. Secondly, this verse calls attention to the presence of a ministry that is taking place, “we are engaged in this ministry”. Sabeel has continuously emphasized the fact that the work which we do is a ministry. God has called us to it. In fact as the Apostle Paul has said, we labor with God (2 Corinthians 6:1).

The third truth in this verse is this, “we do not lose heart”. This sentence reflects the difficulties and hardships that faced Paul. Similarly for us, it reflects the difficult context in which we live. Indeed, we live in a context of injustice, oppression, hopelessness and despair. Yet we are determined to continue the work in spite of all the wrongs around us. The source of our strength is God and God’s
mercy on us. We do not lose heart because we are con-

nected with the source of power and might. We are peo-

ple of hope.

So as we come to offer our gratitude to God, we affirm

this basic conviction that “since it is by God’s mercy that

we are engaged in this ministry, we do not lose heart”.

The seed of Sabeel goes back to 1990, fourteen years ago

when we had our first international conference at Tantur

at the height of the first intifada. My book Justice and

only Justice had been published a few months before. We

were not known as Sabeel then. We used the acronym

PLT, Palestinian Liberation Theology. Thanks to Kathy

Bergen who helped us organize the conference and for

Rosemary Ruether who supported us through her pres-

ence and in editing the book that contained the confer-

cence proceedings Faith and the Intifada published by Orbis


For the next three years, we continued with sporadic pro-

grams largely within the Jerusalem Christian community.

We were seeking God’s guidance as to the future of this

work. By the end of 1993, the small ecumenical commit-

tee of clergy and lay felt we must go ahead and become

officially established. The name Sabeel was then adopted.

Tonight we are celebrating ten years since the ministry of

Sabeel became more intentionally organized.

The choice of the name Sabeel is significant and mean-

ingful. As you know, it has a double connotation. It is

the path or the way as well as the spring of water. More

significantly, the earliest followers of Christ here in Jeru-

salem were known as the people of the way. The people of

Sabeel are those who were followers of him who said he

was the way. The name Sabeel re-

mains an inspiration for us. We

are walking the Sabeel of justice

and peace, the Sabeel of freedom

and reconciliation.

A PALESTINIAN THEOLOGY

OF LIBERATION

Sabeel is a small movement and I

must not exaggerate its influence.

At the same time, it is significant
to understand its emergence within the broader context of the

Palestinian struggle.

When the first intifada started at the end of 1987, the

PLO (Palestinian Liberation Organization) had not been

recognized by Israel as the legitimate representative of the

Palestinian people. The West Bank and the Gaza Strip

were still under the direct rule of the Israeli army. The

Israeli oppression was increasing in its brutality. The

intifada erupted as a national uprising by the whole Pale-

stinian community against the illegal Israeli occupation. It

was largely a nonviolent movement. The unity and soli-

darity among the people was to a great extent exemplary.

Palestinians, Muslims and Christians rose up together to

confront the Israeli oppression. It was popular and very

effective. It was not based on any religious sentiment but

on the national aspiration of a whole people.

For the first time, the media including TV channels were

showing the reality of the situation on the ground. The

Israeli army was seen for what it is, an occupying army —

brutal and oppressive. The old symbols changed. In the

1967 war, the perceptions were that little David was Israel

and the Arabs were Goliath. In the first intifada, little

David became the Palestinians and Goliath became the

Israeli army. The sympathy of many people in the world

was turning towards the Palestinians. Israel started to cen-

sor and control the outside international media reporting

and seemed determined to curb the tide against it. Israel

realized that the Palestinian community had arrived at a

very formidable weapon, namely, that of nonviolence. It

was determined to crush it.

I still remember in those days how we started hearing about

the possible sprouting of two movements encouraged by

Israel itself. For the first time, we heard the acronym

HAMAS that stood for the Movement of Islamic Resist-

ance (Harakat al mukawamah al-Islamiyeh). We also heard

the acronym HAMAM that stood for the Movement of

Christian Resistance (Harakat almukawamah almasihiyeh).

Israeli intelligence knew the

power of religion in Middle East-

ern society. They wanted to break

up the Palestinian community

and shatter its unified national

movement. They knew that if

they can succeed in steering the

Palestinian resistance into an

armed struggle, Israel could then

justify the use of military force

against it. Israel knew that reli-

gion is a very potent weapon that
can weaken nationalist feelings within the Palestinian community and divide Muslims and Christians into religious loyalties. In its shrewd and cunning ways, Israel promoted the establishment of two movements based on a religious basis that can espouse the armed struggle. It could then crush them and escape international condemnation. Indeed, religious sentiment is more powerful, electrifying, and polarizing than nationalism itself.

HAMAM, the Movement of Christian Resistance was suppressed by the Christian community. HAMAS, however, found fertile ground within the Muslim community; and it sprouted. Hamas adopted the armed resistance as its approach to counteract the occupation and found support from many quarters.

At about the same time, the seed of Sabeel, though not yet known by that name was being nurtured by the Grace of God. It is worth mentioning that Hamas came into being founded on the basis of faithfulness to Islam. Sabeel, the PLT came into being lifting the banner of nonviolence and basing its emergence on the foundation of the Christian faith.

From my perspective, two liberation theologies and two liberation movements came into being approximately around the same time. Both were Palestinian and both rooted in the context of their life and in the experience of the Palestinian struggle for liberation and freedom. HAMAS in essence came to represent an Islamic liberation theology, though not using this kind of vocabulary, while Sabeel came to represent a Christian liberation theology, specifically using this kind of vocabulary.

It so happened that both HAMAS and Sabeel went back to the source of their separate religions. HAMAS chose the more violent part of its faith tradition and felt the need to utilize that in its struggle against a violent and oppressive occupation. Had HAMAM emerged it could have chosen violent sources in the Bible to justify the armed resistance as well. Tragically, many parts of the Bible are replete with violence and were used in Christendom to justify war and violence of the so-called Christian countries. Sabeel in-

The people of Sabeel are those who were followers of him who said he was the way. The name Sabeel remains an inspiration for us. We are walking the Sabeel of justice and peace, the Sabeel of freedom and reconciliation.
stead went back to the tradition of the early Christian community in the land of Palestine and chose the nonviolent way of Jesus Christ.

I must clarify that the Muslim community was not bound to adopt the armed resistance for its struggle. It could have been possible for it to adopt also the method of non-violence. HAMAS emerged and its presence was felt more quickly than Sabeel largely due to the presence of the larger Muslim community and due to its commitment to the armed struggle. Sabeel emerged slowly as an independent grassroots movement gradually affecting change within the Christian community in spite of the apathy and skepticism of some of the religious leadership. From an evaluative approach, this is the way I assess the emergence of Sabeel and its witness today. It is yeast that is slowly leavening the dough and calling attention to a more effective way of witnessing to God by resisting injustice.

Through its meager and humble resources, Sabeel has been faithfully lifting a witness to God in the midst of the reality of the Israel-Palestine conflict. Its weapon is the word of truth. Its guns and tanks lie in the power of justice. It is uncompromising in its stance for the rights of the oppressed. In its own unobtrusive way, it reminds Israel of the words of one of the greatest ancient Hebrew prophets, Amos who defined and compared justice as a stream of water that flows uninterruptedly. When he said, “Let justice flow like water and righteousness like an ever flowing stream”.

Sabeel is a movement within the small Palestinian Christian community of the land. It has re-discovered from the heart of its faith that the power of nonviolence is a million times more potent than the most sophisticated lethal weapons which Israel possesses. And against human propensity and predisposition for the use of violence, Sabeel reaches back to its source of faith and lifts up the words, “Do not repay anyone evil for evil” (Romans 12:17, 1 Peter 3:9), “Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you” (Matthew 5:44). We must not mirror evil. We must mirror Christ. We must not become what we loathe. As Walter Wink has reminded us that Jesus gives us “a way by which evil can be opposed without being mirrored, the oppressor resisted without being emulated, and the enemy neutralized without being destroyed” (The Powers That Be, 1999, p. 111). We know that on the one hand, it is right to resist the evil occupation of our country, while on the other hand, in resisting the oppressive, inhuman, and brutal occupation, there is a danger that Palestinian organizations can become evil in the process. This reminds me of the words of Laurens van der Post who said that the greatest issue of our time “is not racial prejudice or color prejudice ... It is this question of how we overcome evil without becoming another form of evil in the process” (A Walk with a White Bushman Penguin Books, 1987 p. 281).

THE VISION

Sabeel’s vision is long term and multi-dimensional. As we look to the future the three general foci will continue to occupy our attention.

1. The first is the focus of addressing the inner Christian agenda. Sabeel works only ecumenically. Our motto in this regard will continue to be the words of Christ “By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another” (John 13:35). In our specific context, this means the importance of transcending denominationalism and finding our true identity in Christ. No matter how small in number we are, we must continue to be salt and light. Our objective is to bring the Christian community closer together in love and to bear witness to the love of God for all people in our land.

2. A second focus is that of relationship with our brothers and sisters of other religions and faiths. In particular today, our relationship with Muslims. Three key words must be emphasized: respect, understanding, and acceptance. We must promote these interfaith values. We must do everything we can to build a community that is multi-religious and where religious differences are respected.

3. Our third focus is the struggle for justice and peace. This is the highest calling that we have today. It continues to be our primary task. Our commitment is to God and not to any political platform, be that Palestinian or Israeli. We work with Muslims and Jews. Our message stems directly from the basis of our faith. We believe in the power of nonviolence. We believe in justice with mercy. Without mercy, justice can be cruel and harsh. Mercy without justice is spineless and feeble. We insist on justice for the Palestinians. This means that Israel must withdraw from the West Bank and Gaza Strip. A sovereign Palestinian state must be established along side the state of Israel. Both states must respect the territorial integrity of each other. We want to see both states living in peace with each other. Israel must end its occupation. There must be no compromise with injustice, violence, and oppression whether that comes from the government of Israel or the extremist Palestinian groups. (See The Sabeel Jerusalem Document: Principles for a Just Peace
in Palestine Israel, revised edition 2004)

THE WORDS THAT DESCRIBE SABEEL'S MINISTRY:

There are seven words that describe the work of Sabeel. Every word expresses one dimension of what Sabeel stands for:

- Ministry
- Ecumenical
- Grassroots
- Interfaith
- Nonviolent movement
- Prophetic
- Inclusive

As we look to the next ten years, I would like to highlight two important challenges that need our concerted and collective effort:

The FIRST has to do with our continued responsibility to tackle the biblical questions that face us. From the first day of its inception, Palestinian Liberation Theology had to confront a formidable biblical and theological agenda. The Bible remains both a blessing and a curse. It is a curse whenever it is used to justify injustice and oppression. Many crimes have been committed and continue to be committed in the name of God and the Bible. We must not be ashamed to confess and expose these crimes; and we must do everything we can to put a stop to them. The Bible, however, is a blessing when it is used to draw people closer to God and lead them to salvation and liberation.

Two years ago, the Jerusalem Report (May 20, 2002) quoted Oklahoma Republican Senator James Inhofe's speech to the Senate, “God appeared to Abram and said, 'I am giving you this land’ - the West Bank. This is not a political battle at all. It is a contest over whether or not the word of God is true.” In April 9, 2004 the Jerusalem Post included an article about the National Unity Coalition for Israel which is composed of 200 American Christian fundamentalist organizations. They were lobbying President Bush against any territorial compromise because they are opposed to any Israeli withdrawal from the Palestinian territories, citing the Biblical promise of the land to the Jewish people.

The Bible has been misused and abused. We have an important task in interpreting the Bible in both its Old and New Testaments to our people. We have made some strides in this endeavor. We thank God for competent biblical scholars who have done excellent research in this field. I am grateful to a number of our western friends who heard our cry and have done significant research and written books that answered certain aspects of our struggle. We are able to use their scholarship and benefit by it. But there is so much more to be done.

In addition, as I look at our own local Christian situation, Palestinian Liberation Theology must rise above the narrow religious denominationalism of Middle Eastern Christianity. Thank God for those who have transcended the past and strive to meet the challenges of the present. Unfortunately, these are very few. Many are still bogged down with antiquated interpretations that reflect narrow understanding of God and exclusive interpretations of the Bible that have imprisoned and choked Christians for generations. Thank God for teachers whose minds and spirits have been liberated and who can communicate the message of God’s love for all.

We need a more radical biblical revolution for our churches here and abroad. A revolution that, at one and the same time, takes the Bible seriously and elucidates its deeper message, but also rejects the violence and terrorism found in it and refuses to sugar-coat it, spiritualize it, or justify it with untenable explanations.

The more I study the Old Testament, especially the material written after the exile the more I see a critique of narrow nationalism, violence and war, exclusivity and discrimination, and even kingship and statehood. This continues in the New Testament. Jesus was able to cut through the many layers of the superficial religion of his day that had accumulated over many years and to emphasize the heart of authentic faith in God and proclaim that the kernel of true religion is to belong to the Kingdom of God - a kingdom of righteousness, justice, and peace.

The Bible is meant for the liberation of people. We must not allow it to become an instrument of oppression and injustice.

The SECOND important challenge facing us is the challenge of empire. More and more people in our world today are realizing the presence of an American Empire. Its doctrine of pre-emptive war can already be observed. The core ideas were laid down after the first Gulf War in what was to become the Project for the New American Century. Duane Shank has written, “It was a strategy of maintaining and strengthening unchallenged U.S. military superiority... through preemption rather than containment and unilateral military action rather than multilateral internationalism...the real or exaggerated fear of terrorism is being used to drive the militarization of U.S. foreign
We find ourselves today living in the midst of empire. God is a kingdom of righteousness and mercy for all the oppressed. We must proclaim that the kingdom of have fallen captive to evil and to work for the freedom of news to the poor, to proclaim liberty for all those who must be clear as they were clear to him — To bring good forces of evil through love and nonviolence as he did. We import the neighbor was the enemy. He taught his disciples the religion based on love of God and love of neighbor even if a small community of faith. He witnessed to authentic empire. Yet under empire and under the occupation he built the corrupt religious leaders and the brutal political forces of the occupation. Indeed, he lived in the midst of empire. Yet under empire and under the occupation he built a small community of faith. He witnessed to authentic religion based on love of God and love of neighbor even if that neighbor was the enemy. He taught his disciples the importance of living nonviolently. We must conquer the forces of evil through love and nonviolence as he did. We must speak and live the truth as he did. Our priorities must be clear as they were clear to him — To bring good news to the poor, to proclaim liberty for all those who have fallen captive to evil and to work for the freedom of the oppressed. We must proclaim that the kingdom of God is a kingdom of righteousness and mercy for all.

We find ourselves today living in the midst of empire. The greatest tragedy of Israel lies in the fact that it has walked the way of Christendom. It now lives in “Israeldom.” I believe that by supporting the militarization of Israel, the United States Administration and many Christian Zionists are supporting empire. Israel will never experience peace and security so long as it commits injustice against the Palestinians and refuses to recognize their legitimate rights to the land.

Duane Shank ends his article with the words that we must insist that “militarization and pre-emptive war is not the path to real security. We must advance the vision of a world where international institutions [like the UN] are strengthened rather than destroyed, where global poverty is seriously addressed, where all countries, including the United States, are disarming their weapons of mass destruction, and where human rights are taken seriously...”

As we struggle against empire, Jesus Christ remains for us the model and the paradigm. As I have repeated many times, Jesus was born under occupation, was brought up under occupation and was killed by the collusion between the corrupt religious leaders and the brutal political forces of the occupation. Indeed, he lived in the midst of empire. Yet under empire and under the occupation he built a small community of faith. He witnessed to authentic religion based on love of God and love of neighbor even if that neighbor was the enemy. He taught his disciples the importance of living nonviolently. We must conquer the forces of evil through love and nonviolence as he did. We must speak and live the truth as he did. Our priorities must be clear as they were clear to him — To bring good news to the poor, to proclaim liberty for all those who have fallen captive to evil and to work for the freedom of the oppressed. We must proclaim that the kingdom of God is a kingdom of righteousness and mercy for all.

Theologically speaking, empire exists wherever and whenever socioeconomic and sociopolitical forces coalesce in such a way as to contribute to the exploitation of the poor, the exercise of coercive military force, the domination, suppression and dehumanization of people. This is what is happening in Iraq and this is what has been happening in Palestine for many years. The great challenge before us today is how to resist empire? The message of the book of Revelation is to reject empire and to live in New Jerusalem. New Jerusalem is found “wherever the human community rejects the lies and violence of empire and places God at the center of its shared life” (Unveiling Empire, Orbis, 1999, p.158). When you and I reject the lies and violence of empire and are faithful to the way (Sabeel) of God, we are living in New Jerusalem. Revelation exhorts its readers to come out of empire and to dwell in New Jerusalem.

CONCLUSION
Sabeel’s vision of ministry remains comprehensive as we look to the next ten years and as we seek to be faithful to God in the tasks that God has given us.

Yes, we give thanks to God for the blessings we have received. Let us together continue to walk the Sabeel of justice and peace through the power of love and nonviolence. Thank you for your prayers. Thank you for your support. Let us continue to meet the challenges before us with faith and determination.

A number of years ago my friend Brian Grieves told me the story of the chicken and the pig that went to visit New York City. They were walking through its streets and were noticing signs in restaurants that read, “Ham and Eggs”. The chicken was thrilled and turned to the pig and said, “Isn’t this wonderful? We are famous.” The pig started crying. He said, “For you it is a contribution, for me it is total commitment.”

When I see empire sacrificing the lives of so many people in war for greed and in lust of power and domination, I cannot but wonder how much more important it is for all of us to sacrifice and to commit ourselves for the sake of the peace and well being of our oppressed brothers and sisters in the world.

“Thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

This paper was delivered at the Fifth International Sabeel Conference on Saturday, April 17, 2004 Jerusalem.

The Rev. Naim Ateek is the director of Sabeel.
For over ten years, “snapshots of our activities”, a regular feature of Cornerstone, has kept you informed about the Sabeel family, its growing members and friends as we share our thoughts, aspirations, concerns, activities... and lives with you all. In this issue 34, we shall walk down memory lane to highlight, largely through photographs, the milestones of “the way” and “the spring of water”, Sabeel, the name given in 1993 to a movement that started with a vision.....

THE BEGINNING...PLANTING THE SEED

From the moment Naim Ateek articulated a Palestinian Liberation Theology (PLT) in *Justice And Only Justice* (1989), he planted the seeds of a challenging grassroots movement that could and would raise the voice of the forgotten Palestinian Christians seeking a revival of their faith anchored in Jesus Christ, the Palestinian Jew, who revealed the nature of a loving and merciful God. In short, PLT calls for a contextual reading of the Bible which is often misinterpreted in order to justify the plight of the Palestinian people.

A group of international theologians and local community organizations explored this new approach at a conference held at Tantur Ecumenical Institute for Advanced Theological Studies in March 1990, the proceedings of which were published by Orbis books in *Faith and the Intifada*, edited by Naim Ateek, Marc Ellis and Rosemary Ruether. A theology of justice for the Palestinians living under the oppressive Israeli occupation shone like a ray of hope in the midst of the darkness of doubt, mistrust, frustration and hopelessness. The challenge to translate theory into practice was readily accepted by the local ad-hoc committee who became the ten founding members of PLT. Right from the start, two goals were defined: a spiritual ecumenical ministry for indigenous Christians and an awareness building ministry for the rest of the world interested and concerned about a just peace. With the encouragement and support of international volunteers, the venture began with one part-time staff member, Cedar Duaybis, working at a small white table placed and moved around in the Anglican Parish Hall of St. Georges where Naim Ateek served as pastor.

LAYING THE FOUNDATIONS...

The first two years were a testing period upon which the programs would be founded and developed. Renowned theologians and visiting scholars addressed current affairs e.g. “The Bible and War-The Just War Theory,” new approaches to theology e.g. “Breaking the Spiral of Violence”, and opportunities to reflect more deeply on the life of the Christian community e.g. “The Christian and the Old Testament.” Efforts to expand the movement in Nazareth also started.

A “Speaker’s Bureau” recruited twenty-five people from Jerusalem and the West Bank for a two-month training period helping them to share the Palestinian narrative with thousands of visitors about issues of justice and peace, the Christian community and the current situation in Palestine and Israel.

In the summer of 1993, fifty three young Christians from Ramallah and the surrounding villages participated in an Ecumenical Summer Camp for Youth, followed by similar camps in consecutive years. Issues discussed were identity, non-violent resistance and human rights.

In September 1993 the unexpected handshake of Palestinian and Israeli leaders in Washington, and the Agreement propelled the work of the PLT movement as daily life under occupation did not change. With persisting closures, continuing violence and increasing numbers of prisoners and casualties, disappointment and fears mounted even among the stubbornly committed justice and peace activists, hope began to fade...

However in a small room at the back of the St. George’s school, the same white table, a computer, a telephone and an intercom line became the tools for new part-time staff, Nora Carmi, and Canadian volunteer Monica Lambton to carry the torch, despite set backs and obstacles.

In December 1993, Sabeel was “born”.

SNAPSHOTS
OF OUR ACTIVITIES
OVER THE LAST TEN YEARS

by Nora Carmi (staff member)
BREAKING GROUND....

The first Cornerstone issue was created in spring 1994, typed and formatted on a desktop, graphics cut and pasted manually, and photocopied in the Church office! The humble eight page newsletter reported on the growing youth program, the revolutionary introduction to Jesus Christ through Donald Kraybill’s ‘Upside Down Kingdom’, and Sabeel’s contacts with South African Theological groups. Cornerstone then fluctuated in size until it finally settled at 20 pages in order to allow Friends of Sabeel International to enclose their own news.

In 1995, Sabeel initiated another “first” test-program: monthly meetings of local parish priests. Slowly but surely, the Clergy Program shaped itself, yielding fruits at the First Ecumenical Clergy Conference in 1999.

At the same time, preparations for an international conference to be held at the beginning of 1996 started. The one-room operation headquarters of Sabeel on Nablus Road (another one across the street) crowded up with staff and volunteers whose joyous voices mixed with the moaning sound of the photocopier filled the quiet of the night long after office hours were over.

THE BUDDING SHOOT...

January 1996 ushered in “The Significance of Jerusalem for Christians and of Christians for Jerusalem” conference, one day after the long awaited Palestinian elections. What timing! The proceedings of the Conference appeared in Jerusalem: What Makes for Peace edited by Naim Ateek, Cedar Duaybis and Marla Schrader was published by Melisende. God’s blessings continued to pour on Sabeel throughout that year. Friends of Sabeel, North America, the inauguration of the Sabeel Center and the Peace March in Jerusalem with religious leaders and the Jerusalem community fertilized the soil for the expansion of the ministry.

Strengthened in faith, encouraged by friends and better equipped, Sabeel started budding... Advent and Lent programs brought new understanding of Biblical themes connected to the daily suffering of the people. Laity and Clergy shared reflections, producing material to be used by the larger Christian Community abroad.

‘Let my people Go’ by Carlos Mesters, a guide to the Book of Revelations that had given hope to South Africans significantly also helped the Palestinians. The message to the seven...
churches was experienced in a study trip to Turkey.

The preparations for a Third International Conference “The Challenge of Jubilee: What Does God Require” included a calendar, and a fifty-black and white photo exhibit telling Our Story. In 1998, the conference gave new insight into the fifty years of dispossession of the Palestinians eclipsed by the statehood of Israel. Over 800 people came to Bethlehem giving business and hope to the local inhabitants. Professor Edward Said was the keynote speaker. The proceedings Holy Land, Hollow Jubilee, edited by Naim Ateek and Michael Prior were again published by Melisende.

The photo exhibit then traveled extensively throughout the country and Israel, as well as different parts of the UK, Scandinavia, Canada and the USA where Friends of Sabeel chapters were mushrooming. The photo exhibit was also introduced at the “Padare” WCC General Assembly in Zimbabwe, and later printed as a book that sold out like hot cakes, along with the calendars, tiles, Christmas cards and books on the Center’s shelves.

As the flow of fact-finding ‘pilgrims’ increased, Sabeel adapted a new program “Ahlan wa Sahlan” with options of lectures, cultural evenings, ecumenical worship services, and a contemporary Way of the Cross. Sabeel also organized special seminars for visiting Parliamentarians and theologians.

**SPRING BLOOMS**

Sabeel’s local blooms flourished in 2000. “Together ... Towards New Horizons” a mobile conference, brought a distinct refreshing breeze into the nine West Bank and Israeli towns and villages that welcomed the music, drama and talks. Women, Clergy and Youth all joined in to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ, and to renew their commitment to faithfully continue witnessing despite the deplorable political conditions of living under occupation. Unfortunately, the program was disrupted in September.

PLT had germinated at the height of the first Intifada. Now, a second intifada erupted from the frustration of a people thirsting for recognition, justice and statehood.
Since women have been the largest constituency of Sabeel ever since its inception, more women have been involved in making the gospel relevant in their every day life. For the past four years, a program entitled “Together, we build” combines education, recreation, spirituality through social gatherings, workshops and trips that rebuild bonds severed by political and geographical borders.

In April 2004, Sabeel dared to “Challenge Christian Zionism” in its fifth international conference. Preparatory workshops paved the way for the local community to be involved and sometimes in compensation for their inability, as West Bankers, to attend the conference in Jerusalem. The conference videos and DVDs can be purchased from the office in Jerusalem, until the proceedings come out in a book. A picture gallery and highlights of the conference are posted on the website www.sabeel.org.

FLEXIBILITY... AND RESILIENCE

Sabeel, an integral part of the Palestinian community could not be crippled and had to take emergency measures to meet the new challenges. Sabeel raised its voice and issued The Jerusalem Sabeel Document: Principles for a Just Peace from a theological, moral and legal basis. It also expressed its views on the road map, the suicide bombers, the ‘hafrada’ wall and the Palestinian Constitution. When neither the days of fasting and ecumenical worship services nor organizing non-violent training courses could satisfy the basic demands of an impoverished society, an outreach program to help the needy families ‘survive’ was launched.

When restrictions on travel almost cancelled the fourth international conference “Seek Justice and Pursue it”, a modified Alternative Assembly gathered activists and theologians in an unprecedented show of solidarity, crossing checkpoints and exposing the atrocious conditions in areas shelled, bombed and destroyed under the guise of security.

With the translation of Justice and only Justice into Arabic, Palestinian Liberation Theology reached more local people.

In April 2004, Sabeel dared to “Challenge Christian Zionism” in its fifth international conference. Preparatory workshops paved the way for the local community to be involved and sometimes in compensation for their inability, as West Bankers, to attend the conference in Jerusalem. The conference videos and DVDs can be purchased from the office in Jerusalem, until the proceedings come out in a book. A picture gallery and highlights of the conference are posted on the website www.sabeel.org.

WHAT NOW? WHERE TO?

Sabeel has just finished its restructuring process with a confirmed dedication to the Ecumenical, Interfaith and Justice and Peace Ministries.

Ten years later, Bible studies, seminars and workshops con-
continue to remain basic tools of empowerment in all the local programs that fall under the Ecumenical Ministry. The latest Advent and Lent Booklets, “For he is our peace and has broken down the dividing wall” and “Challenging Illusions” are being circulated among International Friends of Sabeel.

Two updated courses for the Speakers Bureau, the latest organized in 2003, enabled young professionals to continue witnessing and advocating for a just peace. The need has not ended. So many people are still in the dark. New courses are on the way, including one in the Galilee.

Seven youth coordinators in the ten year span have moved the program forward. Leadership training courses through drama and role play prepare young Christians to be actively involved in the community, encouraging them to rise above denominationalism and serving their own youth groups with maturity and open-mindedness. A first large Youth Conference rallied youth leaders, networking between 58 groups in the country. Musical festivals, teenagers/mothers programs, voluntary work and spiritual reflections are varied means to reach the youth.

The past 33 issues of Cornerstone have covered varied topics focusing on women, children, refugees, human rights, peace, justice, Jerusalem, the millennium, suicide bombers and Christian Zionism, all studied from a Palestinian Liberation Theology perspective. Though a considerable number of readers have access to the web newsletter, many prefer to have a hard copy of Cornerstone on their coffee tables to share with friends.

The ongoing Clergy Program is a witness of stewardship bonded by the love of Christ

The Women’s Program has reached a very high level of maturity and openness. By the time this issue comes out, the first conference for the local women will have taken place in Haifa and two other mini-conferences in Ramallah and Bethlehem will follow at the end of November.

The Community-Building program is stronger and the “open forum” will provide the whole family with opportunities of active involvement within the society.

The movement will evolve according to the needs. As we celebrate Sabeel Day on October 20, we renew our commitment to tell the truth, pursue justice and preserve the sanctity of humanity.
More than ever, in the early 1990’s Palestinian Christians in Galilee realized that our existence as a community was threatened. We were facing a disintegration in our identity and our faith. It was then that Rev. Naim Ateek and Cedar Duaybis met us in Nazareth to encourage us to do something, to begin to serve and perhaps to start a branch for Sabeel there.

I could not but accept immediately, the need was evident and it was high time to start.

We started; we had no office, no computer, no room, no table, no chair, no telephone.

A committee was formed from all the churches in Nazareth as a grass roots ecumenical committee.

The imminent need was to create a Palestinian Christian forum and focus on the Palestinian Christian Israeli identity.

We started Bible studies that continued for three years with Father Elias Chacour. A group of about 200 met once every two weeks. This group became the nucleus for more activities: lectures, prayer meetings, special celebrations for Christmas and Easter, special guided tours to discover our Christian roots in our country with Bible studies on the location, meeting other Christians in their churches all around the country and in the West Bank when possible. We held workshops in preparation for the conferences in Jerusalem and worked together with the Jerusalem local department on youth and women’s programs; meeting groups from solidarity visits, and spiritual concerts in Nazareth and Haifa.

The group expanded to a much larger number of people, from all churches.

We started a group for young married couples, together with their families. They have monthly meetings for the adults and special programs for the children.

We are now working on starting a group for young adults.

It was in 1999 that we started an office, a small room with a modest table and chair and part time secretary. In 2003 we added another larger room to make a decent office (a home) where we can meet, receive groups, internationals and locals, and where we hold many of our programs. Now with a full time staff person we can plan for much more.

During Sabeel’s 2nd International Conference in Jerusalem in 1996 discussion was begun by some of the participants as to how they could do more intensive follow-up in their respective countries in support of the work of Sabeel. Through the initiative of a few key people, Friends of Sabeel-North America and Friends of Sabeel-UK were established shortly thereafter.

The first priority was to identify other supporters who would be interested in becoming part of the organizing
committees; steering committees were established, advisory boards were set up, and a basic accounting system was put in place. The second priority was to begin to educate the general public, especially by working closely with area churches, and to begin identifying people to become “members”; people who would be willing to mobilize or become active in the work for a just peace.

As interest in the ministry of Sabeel grew, so did the number of friends. Scandinavia (Norway, Denmark, Sweden) was the next to become organized followed by Australia and other countries. As the network grew it became necessary to hold meetings with the coordinators of the different chapters to establish certain criteria, coordinate efforts, discuss finances, and set events calendars, keeping in mind that each country has a different area of focus and different financial structures. The structure developed into continental chapters divided into national chapters that, in some countries, are subdivided into smaller regional chapters.

The event gets widespread publicity and attracts and engages local churches and other organizations in the Sabeel movement for justice in the Holy Land. Past conferences have been held in Boston (MA), Pasadena (CA), Detroit (MI), Portland (OR), Seattle (WA), Salt Lake City (UT), and Chapel Hill (NC). Future conferences are scheduled in St. Paul (MN), Dallas and Austin (TX), Atlanta (GA) and Birmingham (AL). An important function of the conferences is to attract mainstream churches. This brings in many new people to Friends of Sabeel who continue to support our work. The conferences also provide opportunities to announce Sabeel solidarity and witness visits, international conferences, and to recruit new participants in these important events. The upcoming conference in St. Paul, Minnesota, for example, is a joint effort of FOSNA and Pax Christi USA. The local coordinating committee includes Mary and Nick Eoloff, the local Pax Christi leaders who attended the Sabeel International Conference in Jerusalem and who are the adoptive parents of Mordecai Vanunu-Israel’s nuclear whistle blower who was recently released after serving 18 years in an Israeli prison.

FOSNA has joined the wider justice and peace movement by partnering with national groups like the US Campaign to End Israeli Occupation and Pax Christi USA (a large Catholic peace movement). Elaine participated as a delegate to Pax Christi International, Middle East Section, representing Sabeel. Dick Toll and other FOSNA leaders attend major national events like the recent Fellowship of Reconciliation conference in Los Angeles and the United Nations International Conference of Civil Society in Support of the Palestinian People.

Our development work includes mailing the Cornerstone to about 3,500 people in the U.S. and funding appeal during Lent and Advent. Our latest mailing is the new FOSNA newsletter, different from the Cornerstone, in that it highlights in short paragraphs the work of FOSNA chapters, upcoming conferences, national events, new resources (books and videos), and other news that is helpful to Sabeel supporters. It is a tool and information resource in typical newsletter format that is quick and easy to read. Another growing part of our development work is our annual summer telephone membership drive. With over 5,000 names in our database, 3,500 receiving the Cornerstone, there is a lot of potential.

FRIENDS OF SABEEL UK

By Jan Davies

Prior to the 1996 Sabeel International Conference in Jerusalem many of us had stood amongst the excited Palestinian crowds in Jerusalem, as they filed into the polling stations to record their votes for the first time, and to date the only time, for their President and the Palestinian National Authority, closely watched from every vantage point by Israeli troops from the turrets of the walls of the Old City to the polling stations themselves.

There were many signs of hope and optimism and those of us attending the Sabeel International Conference from many
countries found ourselves caught up in that euphoria. Hence my acceptance of Naim Ateek’s invitation to coordinate Friends of Sabeel UK, being greatly encouraged at that point by Tony Graham and Garth Hewitt who had shared the Jerusalem experience with me. FOS-UK was launched at Christmas 1996 by a letter of invitation to friends and colleagues across a wide network of churches, missions and aid agencies.

For the first six years, FOS-UK was coordinated from my home. During that time, the work and commitment of people grew in an amazing and exciting way to the extent that an office base was urgently required. It was providential that on the 20th September 2002 the Revd Dr Naim Ateek, accompanied by Janet Lahr Lewis from Sabeel Jerusalem was able to come and dedicate the Friends of Sabeel UK office based in Friends Meeting House, Liverpool, alongside Christian Aid with Linda Tiongco and the Ecumenical Officer for Merseyside and Region, Martyn Newman. The work of the office could not continue without the support I continue to receive from Wendy Ross-Barker and Charlotte Hastings and many other volunteers. Among many people we have welcomed over the past two years to take part in a variety of events have been Professor Marc Ellis, a patron of Friends of Sabeel UK; Paul Eisen, UK Director of Deir Yassin Remembered; Garth Hewitt, who helped us celebrate our first birthday in September 2003, and Nahida Yasin, a 1967 Palestinian refugee who is active in Liverpool Friends of Palestine.

Friends of Sabeel UK continues to move forward with major tasks including the support of a mailing list of nearly 1,000 people, who are invited to become involved in regional groupings, theological reflection and Lent and Advent Study courses. We encourage members to visit Sabeel Jerusalem, now a Christian Aid Partner, and to lobby our British political representatives on issues such as the Apartheid Wall being built with American money.

We have come a long way since I first met Naim in 1984 when he was in Haifa and I was on Christian Aid staff. Our vision for the future is that Friends of Sabeel UK might encourage the churches to find a prophetic voice in relation to the tragedy of Israel/Palestine, in growing ecumenical fellowship with Jews and Muslims who share our concern for peace through justice.

It is amazing how the fruits of our labour multiply when we gather together; this is the story of Canadian Friends of Sabeel. In 1997 I was living in Ottawa, after having spent a year working with Sabeel in Jerusalem. Robert Assaly and his family were also back in Ottawa after having spent several years working with the Middle East Council of Churches in Jerusalem. In Toronto, Rhonde and Richard LeSueur were putting down new roots after three years at St. George’s College in Jerusalem. All of us wanted to stay connected to the work of Sabeel, to make a contribution, but the question was how?

In that same year, John Baycroft, Anglican Bishop of Ottawa, led a group of Anglican clergy on a pilgrimage/visit to the Holy Land. Robert helped to plan the group’s itinerary, which included a visit with Naim Ateek and Sabeel. Deeply moved by the grace filled work of Sabeel, Bishop Baycroft promised never to forget them. Upon his return to Canada, he preached a sermon on Christmas Eve at the Anglican Cathedral in Ottawa. His topic was Bethlehem today. A few days later, he was surprised to see himself in the newspaper headlines. A simple gesture of Christian solidarity had quickly become life changing. Gathering key people together, Bishop Baycroft set out to deepen his commitment, beginning with a conference in Ottawa in November 1998. I was profoundly grateful for the invitation to be part of the planning - finally a channel for all of my energy and desire to “do something!” that had been building since my time with Sabeel and my return to Canada three years earlier.

Following a successful Conference, a group of Canadians from across the country pledged to form a national Friends of Sabeel group. We included Canadians who had spent time in Jerusalem and who knew Sabeel, as well as others new to Sabeel but with a desire to work for justice and peace and with many talents to share. Our first National Steering Committee consisted of Rev. Robert Assaly, who continues to serve as our chair, Magi Abdul Masih, Awad Eddie Halabi, Monica Lambton, Rhonde LeSueur, and Betty Marmura.

We were a good ecumenical mix (Coptic, Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Anglican, and United Church of Canada) stretching from Toronto to Halifax. In the fall of 1999, members in Toronto held a second conference in Canada, thereby inspiring a local group of Canadian Friends of
Canadian Friends of Sabeel is a chapter of Friends of Sabeel North America (FOS-NA). The steering committee has completed several projects, including the publication of *Truth and Reconciliation: Voices for Peace in the Holy Land*, a book and study guide based on the Ottawa Conference, and the production of the video *Stuck with the Truth*, based on the 2001 Solidarity Visit in Jerusalem. In addition, CFOS coordinates other projects focused on education and advocacy, such as the sponsorship and co-sponsorship of speaking tours and conferences, meetings with government officials, solidarity visits and networking with Canadian churches and other groups working for a just peace. Some highlights of this work include several exhibitions of the Photo Exhibit, including Toronto City Hall, a briefing paper to the Prime Minister of Canada and cooperative work with the Arab/Muslim communities. CFOS strives to do meaningful work across the country and with FOS-NA in partnership with Jerusalem.

**FRIENDS OF SABEEL IRELAND**

*by Elizabeth Wright*

In January 2003 Naim Ateek visited Ireland and spoke at several venues about the work of Sabeel. Following these meetings several people wanted to show support for Sabeel and so got together to discuss the possibility of forming Friends of Sabeel Ireland. We subsequently formalised the group and are now approaching our first anniversary. We imported olive wood crafts from Palestine last year and sold them during the Advent period in several places round the country. The profits from these sales were donated to Sabeel. We are planning to do the same thing again this year.

We were delighted that our Chairman, Rev Ken Thompson, and his wife Sheila were able to travel to Jerusalem for the Fifth International Conference last April. Ken gave us a very interesting and challenging report on his return.

We will have our first Annual General Meeting on 6th October and Rev Garth Hewitt, Amos Trust, has agreed to speak at it. He will also give a concert on the following evening in Dublin. Our membership has remained quite small but we hope to add new members following the AGM, and increase awareness during the coming year.

**KEERPUNT (FRIENDS OF SABEEL IN THE NETHERLANDS)**

*by Jan den Hertog*

The working group Keerpunt/Turning Point is a small group with a short history, but the contacts with Sabeel via the Global Ministries existed already during many years. As a volunteer of the Commission on Interchurch Aid of the Netherlands Reformed Church, I visited the Sabeel Conference of January 1996. That was my first acquaintance with Sabeel; in my theology-education, Palestinian contextual theology was not part of the curriculum. And I fear that this is still the actual situation on most of the theological faculties. During the 1996 conference I strongly felt the appeal done by Naim Ateek and others, not to be afraid to make our hands dirty. During the closing worship we all got a small stone; and my hands were dirty......

Most of the members of Keerpunt are former members of a Middle East Commission of one of the Protestant churches in the Netherlands. Displeased with the choices of the Protestant church leaders and their attitudes with respect to the human rights and the rights of the Palestinian people, the members of Keerpunt decided to form an independent working group outside the church, and at the same time concerned in (the discussions of) the churches. We are aware of the fact that the conflicts in the Middle East get more and more loaded with so-called biblical and theological arguments. That means in our opinion a very dangerous and undesirable development. Injustice must never be approved by theological views; unfortunately this is daily practice in our churches. So we write articles in newspapers and church bulletins, and also letters to church leaders and members of parliament. We are involved in discussions inside and outside the churches on different levels, we give lectures, participate in demonstrations and try to be part of a network of human rights- and peace-groups. As one of our recent actions, we spread the Sabeel Jerusalem Document among many individuals and groups, among them several politicians.

Holland is president of the European Union during some months, so the lobby with (Christian) political parties is more important than ever. One of the problems we meet in the Dutch discussions is the fact that many Christians feel a special bond, not only towards the Jewish people, but even towards the land and the Jewish state. The often very emotional discussions with Christian Zionists are important, because many people don’t risk the accusation of being anti-Semitic or anti-Jewish. We hope that a change in the attitude of church members will stimulate a change in the actions of the political parties. We continue to be active.
On my first day at work as an international volunteer with Sabeel I got lost trying to find the office. That’s the kind of space we had, renting a small office from the school behind St. George’s Cathedral, having to pass through several doors and corridors with no signs for direction or name on the door! Sabeel has come a long way since then, moving twice, and now residing in an impressive center with many offices and meeting room facilities and a beautiful name plaque for the entrance.

I arrived in Jerusalem in September 1993 and spent a year working with Nora Carmi and Rev. Naim Ateek, who at that time was also full time pastor to the Palestinian congregation at St. George’s Anglican Cathedral. I was the second international volunteer to be with Sabeel; the first was Jen from Australia. Although we were a small staff group, we had tremendous support from an excellent Board.

I picked a good year to be in the Middle East. Arriving in September on the tail of the signing of the Oslo Accord, we were blessed with a year of relative calm and optimism. So many plans were being laid. I was surrounded by a sense that for the first time in a long time something substantial was happening. Unfortunately things began to unravel in February, and have only continued to worsen. I am sure that my husband Paul and I were amongst the last people to visit so many of the outstanding places in the Holy Land, as they have now been uprooted, destroyed, or laid siege to, by the violence that has been escalating since 1994.

Despite these hardships, we accomplished so much in the time I was with Sabeel, and we saw the beginning of many things. It was an exciting time - choosing the Sabeel logo, naming our newsletter “Cornerstone” and launching the first edition, and beginning the discussion of international “friends” groups that would be established a short time later. It was truly a privilege to work with so many talented and dedicated individuals who were very generous to me and my husband as we learned how to live in a different political environment with a new culture and new language.

One of my most poignant memories is travelling on a bus with Assis Naim, Nora, and many board members and Sabeel supporters. We were headed for Gaza, to meet with our Christian brothers and sisters, and to be witness to the hardships of life there, as well as the various programs and individuals working for change. For many of the Palestinians on the bus, it was their first trip to Gaza. Like me, they were nervous and excited, not sure what we would experience there. We were unnerved as well by the many checkpoints and security measures. It was a startling lesson for me to learn that communities so close together geographically, and with so much in common, could be so separated. It was a day of pain and anguish, as we realized the depth of suffering brought about by the constant and intense military presence in Gaza. It was a day of triumph as well, as we reflected on our experiences, and pledged ourselves never to forget or forsake the people that we had met that day. There is no fence high enough to keep love and compassion from flourishing.

When I returned home to Canada I missed Sabeel and Jerusalem very much. I missed the friendships, the spirituality and the meaningful work. It was almost exactly four years after my return that I received a call from Rev. Robert Assaly, asking me to help plan a conference in Ottawa. From there Canadian Friends of Sabeel was born and I agreed to serve as its secretary. Despite the deteriorating political situation, and the tragedy that unfolds daily around Sabeel, we continue to move forward. The joy that I experienced during my year in Jerusalem continues to be present today. The people that embraced and nourished me then, continue to strive for justice and peace. I am proud to stand beside them in solidarity and am grateful for the prayers and best wishes that are exchanged across an ocean - for now - until I am able to be back with Sabeel in Jerusalem, treasuring our time together.

Monica Lambton is Secretary of the CFOS National Steering Committee

By Monica Lambton, Montréal, Canada
The number of church faithful in the Holy Land is dwindling and the share of Christians in the general population is impoverished in all Middle Eastern countries. The withdrawal of the Christian communities is demonstrated in the physical shape of the church buildings. The gates become narrow.

This book seeks to give a comprehensive view of the origin and historical narrative of Christianity in the Holy Land - From the birth of the Church up until and through the birth of Islam. It also delves into the foundational background of the various national churches in Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, Palestine, Israel, Jordan and Iraq. Special attention is also given to detailing what effect the Crusades, European travelers, and the more modern European colonial rules have had on the Christians in the Middle East, as well as the various struggles in Palestine and Israel (since 1948 war).

Furthermore comparisons between different churches are made, including some suggestions and conclusions, in order to resolve the current predicaments they find themselves in.

Well-known author Atallah Mansour is the only Arab Christian to have served on the editorial board of a major Israeli newspaper writing for Ha’aretz, Israel’s Elite paper, over a period of four decades.

A WORD OF THANKS

Sabeel would like to say a big thank you to all the volunteers, staff and friends who have been a part of the Sabeel movement over the last 10 years. Your willingness to serve and your commitment to justice and peace continue to encourage all of us involved in this ministry.
It is with deep sorrow that we mourn the sudden death of the Rev. Dr. Michael Prior - a wonderful friend, a priest of the church, a meticulous researcher and scholar, a stimulating lecturer and educator, a liberation theologian, a courageous intellectual, and a passionate advocate and activist for justice and peace.

The news of his death reached Sabeel in the early hours of Friday morning, 23 July, 2004. From the information we received he died in his garden at home from a massive heart attack. I have tried to find more details on the circumstances of his death, unfortunately, as yet I have not been able to do so.

Michael devoted the better part of his life in the service of justice and liberation for the Palestinians. He visited Palestine/Israel on a regular basis, sometimes for extended periods. He interacted with people from all walks of life in the course of his research and analysis. He authored and edited a number of books on a variety of topics including those that directly addressed the different aspects of the conflict over Palestine. Among those were, The Bible and Colonialism - A Moral Critique (1997) (in English and Arabic), Zionism and the State of Israel - A Moral Inquiry (1999), and Speaking the Truth about Zionism and Israel (2004). In the last two years, he also founded and edited the journal of Holy Land Studies.

Michael's passion for justice was unflinching and unshakable. He was compelling and provocative in his writings. He sought to expose the lies and deceptions that underlie the Zionist project and that led to the conquest of Palestine. He also showed how the Bible has been abused by colonial powers to oppress others. Although, he has left us and we mourn his loss, he is “still speaking” through his books, lectures, and various publications. His voice will continue to be heard in many places throughout the world. His strong prophetic message will reverberate until justice for the Palestinians is done and peace and reconciliation are achieved in the Holy Land for all of its people.

We give thanks to God for the life and witness of our brother and friend Michael Prior and we commend him to the love and mercy of God.

IN THANKSGIVING FOR THE LIFE AND WITNESS OF MICHAEL PRIOR

“He died, but through his faith he is still speaking” (Hebrews 11:4c)

Naim Ateek
Director, Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center. 23 July, 2004
Merciful and loving God, we give you thanks for the many blessings you have so graciously given us. Thank you for your presence and guidance as we walk the way of peace. Bless the work of Sabeel and its friends, local and international. Guide its ecumenical, interfaith, and justice ministries. Grant us all the courage to confront oppression. Strengthen our commitment to the work of justice, peace, and reconciliation among all people and especially between Palestinians and Israelis. Help us all to see your image in each other. Empower us to stand up for truth and to respect the dignity of every human being. And to you alone be glory and honor now and forever. Amen.
**Purpose Statement of Sabeel**

*Sabeel* is an ecumenical grassroots liberation theology movement among Palestinian Christians. Inspired by the life and teaching of Jesus Christ, this liberation theology seeks to deepen the faith of Palestinian Christians, promote unity among them, and lead them to act for justice and love. *Sabeel* strives to develop a spirituality based on justice, peace, non-violence, liberation, and reconciliation for the different national and faith communities. The word ‘Sabeel’ is Arabic for ‘the way’ and also a ‘channel’ or ‘spring’ of life-giving water.

*Sabeel* also works to promote a more accurate international awareness regarding the identity, presence, and witness of Palestinian Christians as well as their contemporary concerns. It encourages individuals and groups from around the world to work for a just, comprehensive, and enduring peace informed by truth and empowered by prayer and action.

For more information on *Friends of Sabeel* groups in your area please contact our International representatives or the Sabeel Center in Jerusalem.

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