



September 2004

Friends of Sabeel--North America

Incorporated as: *Friends of Peace & Justice in the Holy Land*

INTRODUCING NEW FOSNA NEWSLETTER

This is the first issue of the new Friends of Sabeel--North America (FOSNA) newsletter. You will still receive the *Cornerstone* theological journal published in Jerusalem which provides lengthy in-depth articles and analyses from a Christian perspective. The aim of the FOSNA newsletter is to highlight our activities in North America, especially our program of educational conferences, and to lead readers to resources available--books, videos, website, and other organizations--helpful in educating American Christians and their churches about the Holy Land, its peoples, and the issues important to understanding the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. The FOSNA newsletter will be published as needed, to announce conferences, Sabeel-sponsored trips to Palestine/Israel, and to encourage support through volunteerism and financial contributions.

NOTES FROM THE CHAIR

Dear Friends of Sabeel,

While at the Sabeel international conference in Jerusalem in April, I was appalled by the targeted assassination of Abdul Aziz Rantisi, by the ongoing construction of the illegal wall around Palestinian towns and villages, the confiscation of more land and water resources, the demolition of homes, and to see all that Palestinians endure every day. How long will it take for the international community, especially the United States, to identify the extreme injustice against an entire people and their culture? What is encouraging is the growing support we see for the Palestinian people. 630 people attended the Jerusalem conference--275 from the U.S.! These will receive a special letter from me with this newsletter. More and more people are going to the Holy Land to serve as witness and support--by joining a Sabeel solidarity visit, or the World Council of Churches Ecumenical Accompaniment Program, with the International Solidarity Movement, Christian Peacemaker Team or other coordinated effort. We invite you to join this worldwide movement of faith through action.

Rev. Richard Toll

PAX CHRISTI USA & FRIENDS OF SABEEL PARTNER FOR ST. PAUL CONFERENCE

Pax Christi USA, the Catholic peace movement, is joining Friends of Sabeel--North America in sponsoring an educational conference in St. Paul, Minnesota, scheduled for October 22 and 23 at the University of St. Thomas. *Hope for the Holy Land: Toward a Just Peace in Palestine/Israel* will feature major presentations by Palestinians, Israelis and others, including workshops, a catered Middle Eastern dinner, Palestinian handicrafts and resources for education (see enclosed program and registration information). Dave Robinson, executive director of Pax Christi USA who was a presenter at Sabeel's Portland, Oregon, conference last year, invited FOSNA administrative officer Sister Elaine Kelley to participate as a delegate on the Middle East section of the Pax Christi International gathering held in New Jersey in May and has expressed his wish to form a working partnership with Sabeel. (See conference program and registration info inside).



The Rev. Dr. Michael Prior, 1942 - 2004 IN MEMORIAM

We dedicate this first issue of the new FOSNA newsletter to the memory of The Rev. Dr. Michael Prior, C.M., who died July 21 after a fall from a ladder at his home in Strawberry Hill, U.K. Father Michael, a Venetian priest, teacher, writer, and

activist, was a longtime Friend of Sabeel and of the Palestinian people to whom he dedicated much of his life. At Father Michael's requiem mass Fr. Fergus Kelly stated: "Many of us here today -- all of us -- would recognize that sparkling light in his eyes that came when he launched out into what he called "an unsolicited lecture" on another injustice, which he had uncovered. There were no half measures with Michael -- it was all or nothing. (continued inside)

MICHAEL PRIOR (continued)

Michael was passionately dedicated to the Palestinian cause and a prolific liberation theologian whose life changed after spending a sabbatical year in Jerusalem and another at Bethlehem University as a visiting professor of theology. In 1982 Michael founded *Living Stones*, a program pre-dating Sabeel and very similar in its purpose--connecting Palestinian Christians with Christians in Britain. His books, journals, and articles are too numerous to list. Said Rev. Naim Ateek, "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."

SABEEL HAWAII HELPS PASS STATE RESOLUTION

The Hawaii chapter helped draft a resolution on Israel/ Palestine, which passed unanimously out of the Foreign Affairs Committee at the State Democratic Party Convention. It also passed with no discussion on the convention floor. The resolution calls on the U.S. (1) to mentor new negotiations leading to an equitable establishment of just borders between the two states, (2) make any further U.S. financial aid to Israel contingent upon Israel's cooperation in this peace process and (3) press for international enforcement and guarantees. If you have questions about this effort, please contact our Hawaii chapter coordinator: Margaret Brown maggieb@lava.net

2004 PARLIAMENT OF THE WORLD'S RELIGIONS

Sabeel board members Rosemary Ruether and Donald Wagner were among 8,000 participants in the 2004 Parliament of the World's Religions held in Barcelona July 7-13. The event, which occurs about every five years, is an interreligious gathering of thousands of international attendees from various religious and spiritual backgrounds who convene to find inspiration and renewal and forge new pathways to peace. Participants commit to address religious violence and other pressing issues facing the global community. Don did a paper on the influence of the Christian right on US policy in the Middle East with a discussion on Christian Zionism. For more information, visit the CPWR website: www.cpwr.org



SABEEL HEADS TO NEW YORK FOR UN CONFERENCE ON PALESTINE

Sabeel board members are headed for New York to participate in the UN International Conference of Civil Society in Support of the Palestinian People--to be held September 13 and 14. FOSNA is a member organization of this UN body and has attended conferences during the past three years. The theme this year is: *Ending the Occupation: A Key Prerequisite for Achieving Peace in the Middle East*. Plenary sessions will cover (1) Facts on the ground, (2) Occupation and international law, (3) The role of Civil Society, and will be followed by workshops and a presentation on a plan of action. See the UN website for more information: www.un.org

NETWORK FOR ALTERNATIVE TRAVEL

www.HolyLandResources.net

2004 Sabeel International Visit *Witness for Peace and Justice*

November 5-12, 2004

Sabeel trip to the Holy Land

Updates will be posted at: www.sabeel.org

Extra Days in Jerusalem. Betsy Barlow and Abba Aranki will be guides for those who wish to arrive prior to the Sabeel program begins on Nov. 5. A special FOSNA delegation is leaving (tentatively) on Friday, October 29. From October 31 through November 4 Betsy and Abba will guide the group to places not included in the Sabeel program. If you are interested in more information please contact Betsy Barlow by Sept 20 (in Michigan) <bbarlow@umich.edu> Ph: (734) 665-5773

UPCOMING FOSNA CONFERENCES

St. Paul, MN (October 22 and 23, 2004)

Austin, TX (February 4 and 5, 2005)

Dallas, TX (TBA 2005)

Birmingham, AL (TBA 2005)

Atlanta, GA (TBA 2005)

CANADIAN FRIENDS OF SABEEL is hosting Rev. Naim Ateek from October 6-19. CFOS coordinator Rev. Robert Assaly in Ottawa, Ontario, has scheduled speaking engagements in a number of locations. Contact: (613) 731-9249
Email: robert_assaly@sympatico.ca

SABEEL SOUTHEAST The Southeast region sent 24 representatives to the Sabeel conference, "Challenging Christian Zionism," in Jerusalem this past April. Outreach to the faith community continues this fall with follow-up programs on Christian Zionism and showings of the documentary video, "*Peace, Propaganda, and the Promised Land*." Mary Lou Leiser Smith will facilitate travel to Jerusalem for anyone wishing to attend the November 5-12 "Sabeel International Visit: Witness for Peace and Justice." (919-97-5181) contact@peace-with-justice.org

SAN DIEGO HOSTS NAIM ATEEK

Sabeel organizers in San Diego are hosting Rev. Naim Ateek from Jerusalem. Naim will preach at St. Paul's Episcopal Cathedral in San Diego on Sunday, October 3, at the 10:30 a.m. service. He will do an educational forum at the same church prior to the service, at 9:15 a.m. A public event at St. Paul's will be held Monday, October 4 at 7:30 p.m. Naim will report on recent development with "the wall" and other issues. For more information, contact Jack Lindquist: (858) 487-2225 Email: pastorjack@LCIncarnation.org

SABEEL UTAH

The Utah group has been showing "*Beyond the Mirage, The Face of the Occupation*" at Catholic parish Utah, an effort endorsed by Utah's Catholic Bishop, Bishop Neiderhauer. An Apartheid Wall display will be at the Peace Festival September 11 in Salt Lake City. Jeff Halper's is coming to Salt Lake in October. His schedule includes Universities, Colleges and a conference of the Knights of the Holy Sephulecher (a Catholic Order) with about 800 attendees. Contact: Frances Remillard, Email: remillar@allwest.net

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH USA. The 216th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church adopted three major resolutions: (1) condemning the wall; (2) challenging Christian Zionism; (3) a study to support selective divestment of multinational corporations doing business in Israel/Palestine. Divestment is one of the strategies that U.S. churches used in the 1970s-80s to end apartheid in South Africa. More info at www.pcusa.org

Hope for the Holy Land

Toward a Just Peace in Palestine and Israel

A two-day conference for peacemakers
Friday and Saturday, October 22 and 23, 2004
Opens Friday, 1pm; concludes Saturday, 5pm
University of St. Thomas, St. Paul, Minnesota

Presented by:

Friends of Sabeel & Pax Christi USA



Conference

CONTACT FOR INFORMATION

Mary and Nick Eoloff
St. Paul, Minnesota
Phone: (651)-698-1493
Email: eolof001@tc.umn.edu

Registration Form

PLEASE USE THE BACK OF THE ENCLOSED ENVELOPE TO REGISTER

FRIDAY

- 1:00pm** Registration
1:30pm Welcome
2:00pm Presentation: Donald Wagner
"Whose Land? Problems Raised by Jewish and Christian Scriptures and Their Interpretations"
Panel Response
Christian Respondents:
Rosemary Ruether, Robert Smith, Corrine Patton
Jewish Respondent: Jesse Benjamin
Muslim Respondent: Kamal Abu Shamsieh
3:45pm Break
4:00pm Workshops
5:15pm Networking, Book sales & signing, handicrafts
6:00pm Middle Eastern Dinner in Murray-Herrick Hall
7:30pm Keynote Address: Jonathan Kuttab
"Power, Morality and Justice in the Quest for Holy Land Peace"

Workshops (Friday 4pm; repeated Saturday 10:15 a.m.)

- Challenging Christian Zionism: Biblical, Political and Practical Responses* (Donald Wagner)
The Theology of Promised Land and Christianity: Christian Zionism in Mainline Christian Churches (Rosemary Ruether)
The Contributions of Christian Zionism to U.S. Foreign Policy (Robert Smith)
"The Problem of the 'Promised Land.' Reading Old Testament Text in the 21st Century" (Corrine Patton)
The Christian/Jewish Zionist Embrace: Whiteness and Modernity in the Unholy Alliance (Jesse Benjamin)
Settlements, Land Appropriation and Confiscation in Palestine (Kamal Abu Shamsieh)

LODGING FOR OUT-OF-TOWN TRAVELERS

Please make your own lodging arrangements.
These hotels are close to the conference site:

Days Inn

1964 University Ave. W.
St. Paul, MN
(800) 329-7466

Four Points Sheraton

400 Hamline Ave.
St. Paul, MN
(800) 535-2339

SATURDAY

- 8:00am** Registration, book and handicraft sales
8:45am Welcome
9:15am Plenary Address: Mubarak Awad, *"Can There Be Peace in the Middle East?"*
10:15am Friday workshops repeated

Additional workshops:

- Faith and Politics in the Future Palestinian State*
(Jonathan Kuttab and Mohammed Bamyeh)
International Solidarity Movement
(Flo Razowsky and Brian Avery)
Tentative Presentation by visiting Israeli Refusenik
11:30am Executive Box Lunch
12:30pm Presentaton: Phyllis Bennis
"The U.S. Campaign to End Israeli Occupation in Palestine"
Panel Response
Craig/Cindy Corrie (parents of Rachel Corrie)
Flo Razowsky and Brian Avery (ISM)
Josh Ruebner (Israeli draft-card burner)

2:30pm Break

2:45pm Workshops

- Ecumenical Accompaniment* (Lynne Rigg and Don Christensen)
Divestment from Israel (Students for Justice in Palestine, UofMinn.)
Palestine and Iraq: Dual Occupations (Phyllis Bennis)
U.S. Policy—Problem, Promise (Corinne Whitlatch)
WMDs in Israel (Mary and Nick Eoloff)
Creative Nonviolence (Mubarak Awad)
Hope in a Situation of Grief (Craig and Cindy Corrie)
Grassroots Advocacy (Josh Ruebner)
Joint Israeli-Palestinian Schools (tentative)
4:15pm Closing: *A Celebration of Hope*

SABEEL CONFERENCES: GROWING LIKE MUSTARDSEEDS

Friends of Sabeel has sponsored seven very successful conferences since the first one held in Boston in April 2002 featuring Archbishop Desmond Tutu as keynote speaker. Other conferences have been held in Pasadena, Detroit, Portland, Seattle, Chapel Hill, and Salt Lake City. Upcoming events are scheduled for St. Paul (Oct. 22/23), Austin and Dallas (Feb. 5/6 and 11/12 respectively). An event in Birmingham will also be announced for 2005. The success of these events is measured by the number of new churches and members brought into the Sabeel movement, increasing church and individual participation in Sabeel visits to the Holy Land and adding significantly to our financial base to enable expansion of Sabeel programs. Sabeel "goes fishing" for new support by inviting other organizations--churches as well as Jewish and Muslim organizations, to share in the event as co-sponsors. For example, our Portland conference had 35 co-sponsoring organizations, each drawing participants from their own communities. Like this we grow. It is the "mustardseed conspiracy."

RESOURCES

Speaking the Truth About Zionism and Israel

edited by Michael Prior
(2004 Melisende, London)
+44 (0)20 8498-9768
www.melisende.com



Michael Prior's last book. Sabeel's international patron, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, states the following in his forward to Michael's book: "My visits to the Holy Land remind me so much of South Africa: apartheid is back, complete with the 'Separation Wall' and bantustans. History, it seems, repeats itself. Yet, if peace could come to South Africa, surely it can come also to the Holy Land. I welcome this book that exposes some of the hardest truths about Israel-Palestine. The distinguished contributors--from Israel, Palestine, the US, the UK and Ireland, women and men, Jews, Christians, and Muslims--speak their Truth. Reconciliation will follow later."

FRIENDS OF SABEL AREA COORDINATORS

Southeast: Mary Lou Smith <contact@peace-with-justice.org>
Southwest: Rev. Darrel Meyers <darrelmeyers@webtv.net>
Northeast: Issa Azar <sabeelconference@aol.com>
Hawaii: Margaret Brown <mbrown@lava.net>
Iowa: Sue and Darrell Yeany <sue-dy@avalon.net>
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Texas: Saleem Ateek <sateek@hotmail.com>
Utah: Frances Remillard <remillar@allwest.net>
CANADA: Robert Assaly <robert_assaly@sympatico.ca>

DEVELOPMENT

THANK YOU to everyone who responded to our phone campaign membership drive. Over the summer we contacted over 200 supporters who updated their memberships by making a donation. Your membership in Friends of Sabeel pays for your subscription to *Cornerstone* and helps to fund our important programs, including: educational conferences in the U.S., pilgrimage and witness visits to the Holy Land, the programs of Sabeel in Jerusalem (like youth activities and international conferences), U.S. church outreach, Sabeel chapter and group development, Sabeel's participation in the United Nations, the FOSNA newsletter (NEW!), and our efforts in interfaith work and coalition building.

Donations to Friends of Sabeel are tax-deductible.

Non-Profit Tax Exempt Org. ID# 38-3419440

FRIENDS OF SABEL--NORTH AMERICA

PO Box 9186
Portland, Oregon 97207
(503) 653-6625
www.fosna.org
Email: friends@fosna.org

PLEASE DONATE

DONATION ENVELOPE ENCLOSED

Bethlehem Besieged: Stories of Hope in Times of Troubles

by Rev. Mitri Raheb

1-800-328-4648, www.augsburgfortress.org

Synopsis of book review by Rosemary Radford Ruether
([Complete review available by request: friends@fosna.org](mailto:friends@fosna.org))
Short of a personal visit, perhaps the next best way to understand what occupation means for Palestinians is a well crafted book such as the recent volume by Mitri Raheb, pastor of Christmas Lutheran Church in Bethlehem, *Bethlehem Besieged: Stories of Hope in Times of Trouble* (Fortress Press, 2004). The author explains in his introduction that to tell one's stories by writing such a book is a primary act of non-violent resistance, the refusal to be silenced. The stories Pastor Raheb tells in this book are not only about the victimization of Palestinians. More importantly, they are about their refusal to become victims, their insistence on renewing their capacity to be creative and hopeful human beings, and to reach out to others, mostly notably to Israelis, to reciprocate. It is a book that urgently needs to be read by those longing for signs of hope in what is surely one of the most troubled places on earth.

SABEL IOWA

Congressional Accompaniment Project

The Congressional Accompaniment Project is an effort to assist representatives and foreign policy Aides to be more informed regarding the "facts on the ground" in Israel and Palestine. The CAP offers an opportunity for local church, ecumenical or community groups to accompany their own Congressional representatives or aides on a guided fact-finding tour led by the Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center in Jerusalem. The CAP can be a powerful tool toward changing perspectives and policymaking in the Middle East toward something more balanced, fair and even handed. Trips will include meetings with Israeli and Palestinian governmental officials, American Embassy and Consulate staff, as well as non-governmental professionals, educators and people in all walks of life. It will include travel around Israel and the Palestinian West Bank and Gaza to see the wall, house demolitions, settlements, checkpoints, and more. This effort is endorsed by a number of religious groups including Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP), the Presbytery of East Iowa of the Presbyterian Church (USA), The Washington office of the Episcopal Church USA, the Eastern Iowa Coalition for Peace and Justice in Israel/Palestine, and the Sabeel Ecumenical Christian Liberation Theology Center in Jerusalem. Contact Sue and Darrell Yeany at 319 354-7877 or email <sue-dy@avalon.net> for further information. First tour scheduled for early spring, 2005.

CHRISTIAN PEACEMAKER TEAM DELEGATION

SEPTEMBER 27- OCTOBER 9, 2004

Quaker representatives in Jerusalem, will lead a study tour with Palestinian and Israeli partners. Includes visits with peace activists on both sides, human rights groups, ordinary folks, and settlers. CPT is looking for friends who are committed to nonviolence and will work following the delegation. For more information contact: CPT at (773) 227-0253 or qiar@quakerservice-jer.org. Total cost: US \$1800. Apply at: www.cpt.org/delegations/delegat.php