

Sabeel
1st International Gathering
2nd - 7th December 2019



Invitation & Rationale

Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Centre is preparing for its 1st International Gathering this year. The dates are Sunday 1st (the gathering will begin on Monday 2nd) to Saturday 7th December 2019, in Bethlehem, Palestine.

We begin this introductory rationale with a big welcome to every one of our friends. We would love to have you join us. Come and bring your friends. It will be a great encouragement to have you with us.

It is said that theology is like a cross which vertically leads humanity to God, and horizontally leads us to our neighbour. For Palestinian Christians, this link was damaged during the Nakba. Unable to go back to our former theological thinking while struggling to find a way forward. Whether it was Western feelings of guilt, the theology of Christian literalists, or the ideology of Zionism, the bible was used to grant approval to the **tragedy of the Palestinian people**. This is the Faith Nakba, from which various Palestinian Christian theologies have sprung. We at Sabeel believe it is now time to celebrate these theologies, the answers they provide, and the questions they raise; and **to gather to recommit ourselves to keep on the struggle until justice, liberation, and peace are realized.**

As many of you know, Sabeel has been able, over the years, to address many pertinent issues including that of Jerusalem, Christian Zionism, Jubilee, Palestinian Christianity, the Bible, and many others. In our 1st international gathering we hope to do the same by looking at some of the pressing issues that challenge and threaten the very existence of our people. Confronting and addressing these issues are an essential part of our faith and commitment to both oppressed and oppressors. We must take seriously the words of Christ to love our neighbour as we love ourselves.

The Gathering is a chance to learn/be updated about the current political situation and about the ongoing realities on the ground. Alongside this, you will have the chance to worship and have fellowship with the Christian community and to meet with our Muslim and Jewish brothers and sisters.

What is special about this gathering?

1. **Working within the Christian community**

This gathering will bring together various organisations working for a just peace in Palestine and Israel. Individual organisations will take part of the programme to illustrate their work and you will have a chance to meet, interact, question, and work alongside these organisations. Sabeel believe that, in order for work towards justice and peace to be effective, it needs to be a joint effort. Therefore, we have brought together the following organisations from a variety of backgrounds: Kairos Palestine, Bethlehem Bible College, Musalaha, al-Liqa, and Dar al-Kalima. Each organisation will concentrate on a specific topic from cultural resistance to Christian Zionism.

2. **Nonviolent action to achieve a just peace**

Taking the lead from the Kumi Now initiative the gathering will explore how, alongside organizations from across the world, we can form a worldwide community of action to achieve a just peace in the land of the Holy One.

We will explore how Kumi Now works, it's effects so far, and hear from some of the

organizations involved in the first year of the project.

Based on the principles of inclusivity, justice (in accordance with international law), and nonviolence, we will seek to develop on the work of the Kumi Now project and, with the help of various speakers, will begin to explore how this can be developed internationally, creating a Kumi Now Global initiative to sit alongside Kumi Now Palestine.

Again, we call on our friends to come and join us in this important gathering. Your presence gives us hope and encouragement as together we continue on the path of peace and justice.

*Rev. Naim Ateek
Chair, Sabeel Board*

Costs & Information

The Gathering is scheduled to take place following the Kairos Conference (29th November) to allow those wishing to attend both to do so.

The cost of the Gathering is \$1,250 (\$400 single supplement) and this will cover accomodation, lunch, dinner and all conference costs.

Following the conference, Sabeel will hold a visit for those who wish to spend some time visiting the Holy Sites in Nazareth, Sea of Galilee, Bethlehem, Jerusalem, and the Jordan River. This will cost an additional \$750 (\$200 single supplement) and numbers are limited.

**To register go to
www.sabeel.org**