

CORNER STONE

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“Injustice and oppression will never prevail”

Desmond Tutu

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WITNESSES TO THE TRUTH

“For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice” (John 18:37)

Easter was celebrated this year ritually with great ceremony in the churches of Jerusalem, but the mood of the Palestinian people was more like that of Lent and Passion Week. Even the acclamation “Christ Is Risen” was spoken with heavy hearts, lacking its usual joyous ring. Many Palestinians feel that they are living an extended Good Friday, which is referred to in Arabic as “Sad Friday.” After all, our brothers and sisters throughout the West Bank have been confined to their homes under curfew, many of them without electricity, water or food. Some have been killed or seriously wounded. This has been an experience of suffering, crucifixion, and death — not resurrection. We have chosen *Ecce Homo* for our meeting tonight because for us as Christians, it contains great and powerful echoes from the life and passion of our Lord.

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The New Testament recounts that after a last supper with his disciples, Jesus went to the Garden of Gethsemane and spent time in prayer. While he was in the garden, soldiers arrived, arrested him and took him to the home of Caiaphas, the chief priest. Jesus was tried by the highest religious council. He was found guilty of blasphemy and condemned to death. Early on Friday morning, he was brought here to Fort Antonia to be tried by the Roman governor, Pilate.

The Roman governor's official residence was Caesarea. However, on major Jewish feasts he came to Jerusalem to ensure peace and quiet. The Gospels indicate that Pilate could tell that the religious leaders had flimsy accusations against Jesus, and the writer of Acts implies that Pilate wanted to release him (3:13) But he eventually acceded to the Jewish leaders' wishes and sentenced Jesus to death. So Pilate brought Jesus out and told the people, "Ecce Homo," "here is the man;" thus delivering Jesus to die. Tradition is that it was somewhere in this area where Jesus stood as Pilate spoke those words.

I would like to bring to our memory the last exchange between Pilate and Jesus because it has significance to what we are going through these days in our country.

In that exchange, as reported in the Gospel of John, Jesus told Pilate that his kingdom was not of this world. Had it been, Jesus' followers would have resisted his arrest. Pilate asked him, "Are you then a king? Jesus replied, "You are saying that I am; for this I was born and for this I came into the world, to witness to the truth. All those who are of the truth listen to my voice." Pilate asked him, "What is truth?" Then Pilate came out again and told the Jewish crowd, I see no fault in him, there is no case against him. Anyway, there is a custom during Passover that I release a prisoner to you, should I release this man, they shouted, no give us Barabbas who was a criminal, or a Zealot - freedom fighter or terrorist. (John 18:28-40)

What did Jesus mean when he said that his kingdom was not of this world? Many Christians have interpreted this text to mean that Jesus was referring to a spiritual and otherworldly kingdom.

Therefore, they say, we must not be too concerned about this world. Christians should not be involved in struggling for political or economic or social justice for the poor and oppressed of this world. We must look only for God's heavenly kingdom. When I study the words of Jesus, I am convinced that he is saying something quite different.

When Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world", he was referring to the world of Pilate and the Jews of his day. The kingdom of Christ is not similar to the kingdoms that most of his contemporaries in first century Palestine were familiar with. It is a different kind of a kingdom. If it were like other kingdoms, it would be based on violence, so his followers would have to fight for their king. Such are the kingdoms of this world. Jesus' kingdom is not that kind of a kingdom. Jesus' kingdom can be in the world but it is not of the world. Its source of power is different from the power of this world. Jesus and his disciples were living in the world, but they belonged to a different kingdom than the kingdom of Pilate or the kingdom the religious leaders were looking for. This is very significant for us. We belong to Christ's kingdom and we pray daily, "Your kingdom come on earth". So we work to bring about Christ's kingdom here on earth.

Pilate asked, "If you are talking about a kingdom, then are you a king?" Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king." "For this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice" (John 18:37). Christ's kingdom is a kingdom of truth. The kingdoms of this world are built on political intrigue, violence, military power, deception, personal and national interest. Christ's kingdom is not like that. Paul, writing to the Romans, says, "The kingdom of God is righteousness (justice), and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit" (14:17). Christ's kingdom is of the world that God created, not the world that human beings have corrupted. It is a kingdom founded on truth and justice, on love and goodness, on peace and mercy. It is a kingdom marked by love of God and love of neighbor. It is a kingdom that brings back to God's creation, God's order of things - where the meek inherit the earth, and the peacemakers are the children of God. Pilate did not understand this, so he asked "What is truth?" The truth we are talking about is the reality of God in this world, the God of love, peace, and compassion.

So the first things we can say about truth is that it is the truth of God, who is its source. This truth stands in direct contrast to falsehood, lies and deception. It is the truth that exposes lies, injustice, and crimes. Those who are committed to this truth do not use the weapons of military power, or power politics or psychological pressure, but with honest integrity, speak and act in truth and justice. God's truth links word and deed. This truth is part of the armor that Christians wear in their struggle against injustice. Paul says, "Stand therefore, and fasten the belt of truth around your waist" (Ephesians 6:14). It is truth that frees people. "You shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32).

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"Occupation is Oppression" - by Archbishop Desmond Tutu

Thank you for how you cared for us in South Africa during the apartheid regime. You showed so much solidarity with us, supporting us and supporting sanctions against the regime. You know we are free in South Africa because of



people like yourselves, people who cared. You cared even when it looked totally impossible. So I want to thank you for that, and for being here.

God is weeping over what He sees in Middle East. God has no one except ourselves, absolutely no one. God is omnipotent, all-powerful, but also impotent. God does not dispatch lightening bolts to remove tyrants, as we might have hoped he would. God waits for you for you to act. You are his Partner. God is as weak as the weakest of his partners, or as strong as the as the morally strongest.

The title of my topic is "Occupation is Oppression." I would like to change that to "Give Peace a Chance; for Peace is Possible" for we are bearers of hope. God's people, Israeli Jews and Palestinian Arabs, we want to say our hearts go out to all who have suffered; violence of suicide bombers and of military incursions. I want to say to all, peace is possible. These two people's are God's chosen and beloved, with a common ancestor in Abraham. I give thanks for what the Jews have given us. During Apartheid we told our people God has heard their crying. And God will deliver us as God delivered Israel from bondage. God intervened (stories from Old Testament); this God never abandoned us through tribulation and suffering. In our struggle against Apartheid, the great supporters were the Jews. Jews almost instinctively had to be on the side of the disenfranchised, of the voiceless ones, fighting injustice, oppression and evil. I have continued to feel strongly with the Jews. I am patron of holocaust center in South Africa.

I believe Israel has right to secure borders. What is not so understandable, not justified, is what it did to another people to guarantee its existence. I've been very deeply distressed in my visit to the Holy land; it reminded me so much of what happened to us blacks in South

Africa. I have seen the humiliation of the Palestinians at checkpoints and roadblocks suffer like us when young white police officers prevented us from moving about. They seemed to derive so much joy from our humiliation.

We know of the horrific attacks on refugee camps, towns, villages, and Palestinian institutions. We don't know the exact truth because Israelis won't let the media in. What are they hiding? Perhaps more sinister, why is there no outcry in this country about the Israeli siege in the West Bank. You do see the harrowing images of what suicide bombers have done, something we all condemn, but we see no scenes of what the tanks are doing to Palestinian homes and people. On one of my visits to the Holy Land I drove to a church with the Anglican Bishop of Jerusalem. I could hear tears in his voice as he pointed to Jewish settlements. I thought of the desire of Israelis for security. But what of the Palestinians who have lost their land and homes. Desperation. I have experienced Palestinians pointing to what were their homes, now occupied by Israeli Jews. I was walking with Canon Naim Ateek (Head of Sabeel). In Jerusalem as he pointed in a direction and said "Our home was over there." We were driven out of our home; now occupied by Israeli Jews. My heart aches. I say why are our memories so short. Have our Jewish sisters and brothers forgotten their humiliation? Have they forgotten the collective punishment, home demolitions, and their own history so soon. Have they turned their backs on their profound and noble religious traditions. Have they forgotten that God cares deeply about the downtrodden.

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Israeli Incursions

On March 30th, Israeli Prime Minister Sharon gave the orders for a massive re-occupation of all major towns within the West Bank. People around the world watched as the Israeli army entered Ramallah, Bethlehem, Jenin, Nablus, Tul Karem and Qalqilya as well as tens of other small villages. It quickly became a humanitarian crisis with a lack of water, electricity and telephones. The injured and ill were unable to receive medical care, and food was in short supply. Israeli soldiers continue their massive scale house-to-house searches detaining thousands of men, destroying personal property and terrorizing the civilian inhabitants.

During the Sabeel Solidarity Visit, Dr. Hanan Ashrawi broke away from her negotiations with diplomats and governments about the offensive taking place to share with the Solidarity Visitors her feelings and thoughts on the incursion. Later, two women affiliated with Sabeel also wrote about their experiences of the re-occupation of Ramallah in March and April. Together these writings open a small window to the wider experience for the two million Palestinians in the West Bank in the last few months. Daily incursions continue as we publish and stories like these and worse are repeated again and again.

Dr. Hanan Ashrawi:

It is a very difficult time for me. I really do not know where to begin. Every time I give a speech, I say this is a crisis, or a difficult time or a turning point. But this time it is much worse. This time we see a government, the government of Israel, bent on taking us back to 1948, to the beginnings of the Palestinian question. This incursion is not a reactive policy by the Israeli government. This is a deliberate premeditated plan that was already conceived in the minds of Sharon, Mofaz and others, and it is being deliberately and systematically implemented, every step of the way. It is an escalating plan that targets every aspect of Palestinian life. Sharon wants to liquidate the Palestinian question, and he is doing it in a variety of ways.

Actually, when he came into office he said he was going to unravel and negate the peace process and the Oslo agreements with all their flaws. Obviously, what we are seeing now is the systematic dismantling of the peace process. He is attempting to block off any possibility of future peace. He is attempting to undermine the very foundations of Palestinian reality, as a people, as a national identity, as a nation with the right to our own land and to our own independence; actually, to our freedom. He

is attempting to strike at our institutions. The Israeli army targeted places like the Ministry of Education. I do not know what kind of terrorists they find in the computers and the hard discs of the Ministry of Education. They destroyed the servers. They entered every single institution. We are not talking about the security institutions now. We are talking about the institutions that maintain the fabric of Palestinian life and society like the Ministry of Culture, the Department of Statistics and others. They are just systematically destroying the memories and the work of these institutions. Also targeted, deliberately of course, are the security systems because they "didn't do their job" as defined by Sharon, that is, they did not protect the security of Israel.

Sharon defined the role of the Palestinian Authority and the Palestinian security systems as being in the interest of the Israel's security, as being responsible for the security of every single Israeli, while the Palestinians are denied every aspect of safety and security. Sharon systematically and long before the incursion shelled and bombed the Palestinian security headquarters. In a series of assassinations, he targeted the security leaders, individuals and the police. Many of these people do not have families to live

with, they do not have homes, as we saw in the latest incursions, they were living out in the open because their headquarters were destroyed and they were sleeping out in the cold. Many of them were assassinated or arrested. They were paraded in humiliating lines with their hands tied behind their backs and blindfolded.

Sharon also attempted to destroy the Palestinian Authority as a leadership, and by doing that to destroy the democratic process in Palestine. The fact is that we did have elections, that we did elect a leadership and a president. Actually Sharon is using Arafat as a scapegoat, a convenient scapegoat. Israel placed all the sins and all the blame on the shoulders of Arafat even while they held him hostage. For all practical purposes Arafat is a prisoner. He is a prisoner in his own headquarters and everything around him is shelled. Every night and every day there is shelling and shooting and tanks moving around. It is a psychological warfare. Then the water is cut off, the electricity is cut off, and food is cut off, and Sharon says, "We are just trying to isolate him". This is the banality of Israeli euphemisms and it knows no end point.

As the Israeli army enters every town or refugee camp, the first thing they target is the water and

the electricity networks, then the streets and the roads. They enter homes and destroy them including computers, television sets and VCRs. There is looting of homes and supermarkets. Their tanks smash cars and destroy everything in their way. They act like a gang of terrorists, of hit men and assassins. This is the brave Israeli army that can hold a people captive, besieged for months, unable to move, and they invade as though there was a war and they were facing another army. They invade with tanks, Apache gun-ships, F16s; they shoot from the skies - which is very brave - for the Palestinians are loaded with anti-aircraft guns and anti-tank weapons. Actually, only a handful of Palestinians have individual firearms. The moment they see a Palestinian attempting to use the right to resist they call him a terrorist, as if by using that label and repeating that name "terrorist" we are given another identity and it gives them license to destroy and to kill. This is part of the systematic dehumanization of the Palestinians. Instead of looking at their own sins they place the blame on Arafat immediately and say, "This is a war of self-defense". The demonization of Arafat is used as a scapegoat.

What a great war against a captive civilian population. What non-terrorist actions when you can kill people from the sky and you cannot see them? They are not targeting Palestinians, because they are doing it from the sky and there is distance between them and their victim. They use high-tech, state-of-the-art equipment in the refugee camps, where the alleyways are too narrow they decided to bulldoze their way through people's homes. The tanks are actually bulldozing their way through people's homes, and the people are given a choice. They can come out of their homes and surrender, and then they are

shot. Or they could stay in their home and have it destroyed while they are in it. As one person in Jenin told me yesterday, "They gave us a choice between death and death."

Right now, as we are speaking, there are children looking in the rubble for their parents and trying to excavate them. There are still dead bodies, scores of them. We do not know how many. We do not know how many people died in Jenin and Nablus and other villages. In Ramallah the army executed the men and then their bod-

As the Israeli army enters every town or refugee camp, the first thing they target is the water and the electricity networks, then the streets and the roads. They enter homes and destroy them including computers, television sets and VCRs.

ies were thrown in the streets. Twenty-nine bodies had to be buried in an anonymous, temporary mass grave because the morgue could not take any more. There are decomposing bodies in Nablus and Jenin. There are decaying bodies in Bethlehem, those of a mother and her son. The Red Cross suspended its work because it was too dangerous. For security reasons they had to curtail their work. They are being shot at and their ambulances stopped. The paramedics are being arrested, also the doctors, many of whom were killed. A humanitarian crisis is emerging.

We heard that many in the Jenin camp have had to drink sewage water because they did not have any drinking water. This is hap-

pening in the twenty-first century and the world is not up in arms. Whenever any Israeli is hurt, all Palestinians are branded as terrorists. Here we have war crimes being committed and we do not hear an outcry. Those of you who have the distortion of having CNN as your only source of information might come to believe that the Palestinians deserve it because after all we stood in the way of the Israeli tanks and gun-ships, while Israel is engaged in self-defense, defending itself against its own victims. To add insult to injury President Bush, your own president, is saying that Arafat must stop the violence. Arafat must call his people to stop the violence. He is saying this ad nauseum.

Bush called upon Sharon to stop the incursions and withdraw without delay. Semantically, that is very interesting. How do we define "delay"? Sharon said, "Fine, when I finish my job I will withdraw without delay". And then they decided that maybe Sharon's English is worse than Bush's English, if that is possible. So they said, "Without delay' means 'now'". So he said, "Yes we will withdraw now, as soon as we finish".

In the end, it is not governments who moved, it is people like you who moved. The International Solidarity Movement, the Grassroots International Protection Movement, people of conscience and courage who decided that where governments fail the human spirit continues. And they are here. People like you who take risks to come here. Many have defied the army, the checkpoints to enter Bethlehem and Ramallah, Nablus and Jenin. That is why we need you not just to bear witness but also to be there to empower the victims and to tell them that they are not alone. I have never felt before as I feel now, along with the rest of the

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Palestinian people, that we have been abandoned. Nobody should use the excuse and say, "we did not know", nobody.

We worked very hard to get a constituency for peace, to get people to overcome the legacy of distrust of the past and to accept the historical compromise of 22% of historic Palestine as our homeland, our state, and 78% being Israel. That was not easy or just, but it is the only solution that can work. Now, even that Sharon finds unacceptable. He wants to continue taking more land, building more settlements, destroying more Palestinian lives, paralyzing the whole nation and thinking that he can win - but he cannot. His liability is a moral liability. We do not need to hire PR firms and Hollywood experts. All you need to do is to look at your foreign policy. Your greatest liability is your blind support of Sharon and his role in the occupation. That is where the problem is - not with the Palestinian or Muslim world's lack of understanding of the American culture. We know the American culture. Our problem is American policy.

So please stop supporting Sharon and giving him cover. Please start thinking in terms of the global applicability of international law, and not of states being above the law and others being outside the law and, therefore, deprived of the protection of the law. That is what needs to be done.

My concern is also the collective trauma and the youth. What are we going to do with children, not just those who are looking in the rubble for their parents right now, but also those who are imprisoned in their homes for ten or eleven days with little or no food, electricity or water, being shelled day and night and hearing the tanks rumbling along. They are unable to

look outside the window without seeing death itself. We already have the highest percentage of traumatized children in terms of nightmares, bed-wetting, and involuntary twitches. What are we going to do with the invisible victims, like people with cancer, kidney problems and other kinds of diseases who need medical attention or medicine and could not get it? These are not part of the counted victims. What do we do with people whose lives have been disrupted? What do we do with a traumatized nation who has been asked to make peace?

With such a lethal combination of Sharon and Bush it is going to be very very difficult to see a viable,



the future and visions for the future, let us start at the beginning. The oppression has to be stopped. Israel has to let the Palestinian people go. The only way there will be peace is for the occupation to end. It has to end not in the mind of Mr. Powell but actually on the ground. The Israeli army has to withdraw and the Palestinian people have to be set free, only a free people can make peace.

My vision for the future is very simple. I want a free, independent, democratic, viable State of Palestine with Jerusalem as its capital and all the territories occupied in 1967, and I want the right of return for the Palestinian refugees. I was one of the people who launched the peace process, so I



Bethlehem Police Station (3-3-02, 3-4-02) before (left) and after (top) Israeli shelling.

just or workable peace process or even to envision peace. President Bush has been telling us of his vision of a Palestinian state time after time after time. What we want to see is a link between that vision and acting upon it. We need to see an awareness of the realities on the ground and an engagement in the changing of that reality. That we have not seen. A Palestinian state is a right, it is not an idea, it is a right.

What we need is action, outside intervention. What is happening is a war crime: a captive, defenseless population being targeted and traumatized. Before we talk about

believe in a peaceful resolution. I think what we need is third-party intervention, global intervention, in order to set up a just peace process. There is no military solution. I do not believe in it and I do not think it will work. The only solution is peaceful and it has to be just, effective, with a time frame and it has to be quick.

Hanan Ashrawi is a member of the Palestinian Legislative Council and the Secretary General of Miftah, the Palestinian Initiative for the Promotion of Global Dialogue and Democracy.

Patricia Rantisi:

"The Angel of the Lord encamps all around those who fear Him and delivers them". Psalm 34:7

As I write this during Easter in England, how different the world looks! The sun is shining; the yellow daffodils are gloriously displaying their beautiful trumpets all along the highways and byways to proclaim the awakening of spring and the symbolic message of the Resurrection. How quiet and peaceful it is!

What a contrast to the world I have just left behind in Palestine, where the ugly signs of military hardware abound, where families live in fear and poverty, where bloodshed and destruction are the daily norm.

It was around 2am on Monday March 11 that we were woken up in Ramallah by the rumbling sounds of Israeli tanks slowly creeping up the Tireh road. In fact the whirring noise of the helicopters and the rumbling of tanks was sometimes undistinguishable. I had a Canadian guest, Kent Wilkins staying with me and by Tuesday evening we were both aware that the Israeli army had entered our building, parking their armoured vehicles right outside the main front door. I was on the phone to my daughter Hilary when the soldiers came into my apartment, so I quickly put the phone down. They ordered me to get dressed (I was in pyjamas) and leave the house. I was told I could not phone back but I dialed her number anyway with the soldiers standing over me at gunpoint.

We walked down the stairs, and then were given orders to go to Dr. Shukri's apartment on the second floor. There were twenty-three of us including ten children. We were not allowed to ask questions, telephones were banned and outside

the home was out of bounds. Two soldiers stood in the doorway with their guns menacingly pointed at us.

Another doctor who normally lived on the first floor jokingly told his 18-month-old son to approach the soldier and take his gun! The little boy toddled fearlessly towards the soldier when his father reversed the order. It was around two a.m. when the soldiers shut the door, which they had broken anyway, and left us. Meanwhile we could hear the thud of heavy machine guns, sandbags, and other equipment being carried up the stairs. (They had deliberately destroyed the elevator). We tried to make ourselves com-

The mess left behind was horrible. Broken doors, sand, bits of food, furniture thrown around, broken glass...

fortable on chairs, sofas or on the floor, but it was impossible to get a wink of sleep with the gun battles going on above us. The next day I realized I had forgotten my medicine but no matter how many times we asked the soldiers if I could go and get it they made me wait for about eight hours. Finally, when I did go upstairs, accompanied, of course, by a soldier, I discovered they had broken the door of my apartment and parked all their gear in my sitting room.

Fortunately, Dr. Shukri's freezer was full so food was plentiful though the water was running low. The children played happily together and were extremely well behaved seemingly without fear in spite of the constant boom of gunfire. On Thursday, we received a fax from the British Consulate, which came to the Evangelical School a few yards away. Sister

Vreni braed the curfew and the gunfire to bring us the message. We then discovered we could use the fax machine without the telephone (which the army had removed), but soon after the electric power was cut which put an end to our little faxing game!

Late Thursday evening one of the soldiers came to the door to warn us not to go near the door or windows until eight a.m. as "they had an operation to finish". The gun battles became more intense and frightening until around two a.m. when we heard the heavy sound of tramping up and down the stairs with their equipment. Suddenly at three a.m. all went quiet and at six-thirty in the morning the Palestinian police arrived to inspect the damage and to check for any explosives left behind. Our ordeal as over! Exhausted, I wanted only to climb into bed, but it was impossible with the phone ringing non-stop and the media wanting interviews.

The mess left behind was horrible. Broken doors, sand, bits of food, furniture thrown around, broken glass... Some sachets of ketchup were squashed on the stairs and landing making me think at first that it was blood, but we did find a blood soaked shirt stuffed into one of the toilets. Then we found notes written in Hebrew and English: "Don't worry, we are coming back". But for now, we were happy to be free and thanked God that none of us was harmed. Truly the angels had been busy!

Postscript: As I write this on March 29, the Israelis are back in the same apartment block and the three remaining families are locked up again.

Pat Rantisi is a volunteer at Sabeel and has lived in Ramallah for thirty-seven years.

Salwa Daibis:

*War against Terrorism
at my Door Step*

This is my Twelfth Day under house arrest in my little house, together with my mother, my sister and her daughter. On Thursday March 28, following a horrific suicide bomb in Israel, a rumor spread around that the Israeli army was going to invade Ramallah by dawn. My mother, who lives in a house near Arafat's headquarters together with my sister and her ten year old daughter Juman, decided to spend the night at my house which is located inside a church compound. This would save my niece the possible fierce fighting that might take place around Arafat's complex, or at least so we thought. Sure enough, we woke up on Friday morning to the sound of Israeli tanks and armored vehicles rumbling.

Heavy bombing and shelling of buildings around my house and all over Ramallah took place non-stop during the first three days. Electricity was cut off and my telephone line died. All four of us spent unforgettably dreadful three sleepless nights. On the fourth day my running water supply was cut off, and that was when I panicked. Luckily it was raining, I spent three hours trying to collect enough rainwater to use in the bathroom, and with bullets flying over my head and loud explosions all round me. I couldn't fit a bucket under the gutter so I used a shallow saucepan, my neighbors supplied me with enough drinking (bottled) water.

I live in a one bedroom flat in St. Andrew's compound together with four other families. The oldest person is an elderly man with complete kidney failure. A nurse used to attend to him daily but not anymore, he is developing bedsores. The

youngest is a four-year-old girl Lana. I was not prepared to host three guests in my house including a child for more than three days, the little fresh milk I had in my fridge went sour when the electricity was cut off. I made a daily count of the remaining bread slices. To make up for the lack of variety I decorated the plate I gave my niece. We couldn't shower for more than a week, and dirty dishes piled up in my sink

On the fifth day the Israeli radio announced in the Arabic news bulletin that the curfew was going to be lifted later that day for three hours to allow us to buy basic food and supplies. At one o'clock the curfew was lifted, I spent the first hour running up and down the streets of downtown Ramallah, looking for a shop that was open and asking by-passers for directions to the store where they got their food. The scale of destruction was beyond my worst nightmares, shattered glass everywhere, burnt out commercial buildings, my friend's dental clinic was covered with black soot. I also found out that the front metal door to my office which is literally across the street from my house, was no longer where it usually is, my office was turned into an operations headquarter for the Israeli army in Ramallah. Three tanks were parked right in front of the entrance, with three soldiers guarding them. When I finally found an open store all I was able to find on the shelves was shampoo, detergents and some tinned peas.

Like everybody else in town, Kindy, my 14-year-old neighbor who also became my niece's friend during the last couple of days under siege, went out with his father to look for bread and milk. The street was busy with cars and pedestrians all focusing on one mission, to buy food. As he turned

around the corner he heard a shot. He instinctively ran in the direction of the house and felt warm liquid running down his right leg below the knee. He looked down and saw a hole in his trousers and blood streaming down his leg. He shouted to his father "I was shot I was shot". His father had already started to head back home not knowing what had happened. One of the three soldiers outside my office suddenly decided it was time to try out his gun.

Kindy managed to skip back to the courtyard where he bled for 45 minutes before an ambulance could find its way to our house through tens of army barriers and tanks. All the neighborhood children watched the puddles of blood as they formed where Kindy was sitting, wrapped with blankets and surrounded by adults who did a wonderful job pretending they were calm. Kindy later developed fever. He spends his day watching the other kids play.

While all this took place, a journalist, who knew my sister, happened to pass by. My sister told her that she, her daughter and my mother left their house near Arafat's offices to save Juman my niece some inevitable horror. My sister explained that since the invasion on Thursday all telephone lines in the neighborhood were cut off. News about their house was unknown. The journalist offered to drive us to the house in her car marked in very capital letters "T.V". All possible streets leading to the house were either blocked with dirt piles, or cars crumbled and piled up on top of each other, or by army tanks. The journalist tried speaking to the soldiers explaining that the curfew was lifted and we are allowed to move around, but to no avail. When we finally gave up and tried to turn back, a soldier aimed his gun at us, he aimed it at the side where Juman

was sitting. Juman put two and two together. An hour earlier her friend was shot in the leg for no obvious reason, and now a soldier aims a gun at her. Her face turned yellow and she was shaking as she clung to her mother's neck turning her face away from imminent death. We all went back home wishing the curfew was never lifted.

The morning of the following day was very "quiet", no shooting, no shelling, no apache helicopters roaming above our heads, no loud explosions. We sat down to eat lunch.

Just as we finished lunch we heard loud explosions which seemed to be nearby. The sound got louder and louder, my floor began to shake. We all gathered in the living room. A horrifying thought came to my mind. I was sure a tank was going to break through the wall into my living room. Torn between running out for my life and sparing whatever was left of my niece's sense of security, I froze. My mother instinctively stepped out, I followed her and my sister and niece stood at the door trying to keep their options open. The neighbors came out and we all ran to their house where we spent the following three hours until things quieted down.

The following day was a quiet "normal" day and we thought to ourselves that from now on it can only get better, but we were mistaken. At 9:30 a.m. on the following day we heard very loud banging and smashing and breaking of metal doors and glass. We named all the shops and entrances behind my house on the main street and couldn't think of anything that wasn't already damaged, we wondered what it might be. Fifteen minutes later we heard a loud noise of something falling in the floor above me which is not inhabited.

We knew that they had broken into the flat above and were sure that our turn was next. Sure enough they were banging at the front gate. Between twelve and fifteen soldiers dressed with stupid-looking camouflage hats and guns like the ones they aimed at Juman entered the courtyard. They aimed their guns at us as we went out to "meet" them. I freaked out when one of them aimed his gun at my kitchen window. They asked to come into my house to search it. I insisted to go in with them. Four smelly soldiers entered my apartment, cluttered with Juman's stuffed ani-



mals. They made me take my clothes out, and asked to look inside shoeboxes. When my mother asked what they were looking for, one soldier said, "we are looking for weapons". My mother then responded by saying that our only weapon is the justice of our cause, a weapon they cannot find in the closet or under the bed and can never take away from us. He was about to kill her right there. They went into the church and the attached offices and youth center. They also went into my upstairs neighbor's house, uncovered the sick old man and frightened the children.

Two days later, the curfew was lifted again. This time my mother was determined to walk to her house to check it out. My sister and I divided tasks between us. We agreed that I would go to the bakery to buy some bread, and she would go and buy whatever she could find. My mother and I start

walking in the same direction and then we split. Three minutes later I rushed back to her to make sure she had the key to the house with her. She assured me she did. I continued to the bakery and stood in line for one hour before I could buy some bread and listened to the horror stories of everybody else in line including two young girls and two elderly women dressed elegantly who were panicking they were running out of time.

When we all came back home after our "adventures" my mother had the most horrifying story to tell. She told us how she walked through back yards and gardens to get to the house. When she got there she found the glass on the door to the sun porch broken. Signs of attempts to break the door were clear, the key she had was useless. She walked to the back door to try to get in only to find that the door was not there! She looked at the key in her hand and walked in only to find a horrifying mess. Soldiers had stayed in the house for God knows how long. Family pictures were lying around on the floor with spots of ketchup, tuna fish and crumbs all over. One picture of my mother, myself and my sister in law at her wedding was ripped off lengthwise into three pieces, Juman's clothes were on the floor and her books spread out all over. Curtains were ripped off, and the dining table had lost its rectangular shape. The bathroom was used (or more accurately abused) in a way that made my mother's stomach turn. The stone wall in the garden was knocked, either by a falling comet, or most probably, by a tank, it now stands in an angle that makes my head spin when I look at it. Again we gathered in my living room wishing the curfew was never lifted. Juman tried as hard as she could to visualize the mess in her room, she named all her toys, clothes, stuffed animals and books, and my mother could not satisfy her upset mind.

(Continued on page 11)

(Continued from page 2)

This is the truth that Christ represented in his life and teaching, and in his death and resurrection.

Even in the darkest of all hours, Jesus did not compromise his principles. He did not submit to falsehood. When Christ summarized his life's mission, he boiled it down to one sentence, "For this I was born and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth and those who belong to the truth are those who listen to my voice." To testify to truth is to live in freedom. To live in freedom is to live responsibly; to live responsibly is to live faithfully, by championing the cause of the oppressed of the world. Ultimately, God will triumph, truth will be victorious. Jesus says to us, as he said to his disciples, "In the world you face persecution. But take courage, I have conquered the world." (John 16:33)

PALESTINIANS ON THE CROSS

I believe that any person who is unjustly condemned can be represented by Jesus who was unjustly condemned before the religious and political leaders of his day. By extension, this also applies to nations and whole peoples that are oppressed and condemned to death. Palestinians have been condemned as a nation by Israel, and sentenced to destruction. The accusations of people in power are strikingly similar throughout history to the charges leveled against Jesus in this city — terrorist, evildoer, a rebel and a subversive person. Palestinians are being crucified today for refusing to succumb to Israel's demand for greater concession on land. I realize how terrible and detrimental the suicide bombings have been, and we condemn them. But we know that they are not the cause of the conflict; they are instead the product of an evil and brutal occupation.

Palestinians are killed today because they refuse to agree to live under Israeli domination, under an Israeli system of apartheid that is worse than the apartheid practiced by South Africa. And since Palestinians dare to rebel, they are placed on the cross. By your coming here, you are standing at the foot of the cross on which Palestinians are placed. You are our witnesses.

My friends, you have come here this week to bear witness to the truth, because you are followers of him who is the truth. You have come to witness to the truth of what you will experience, of what you will see and hear. The Bible tells us that God's eyes are always focused on the oppressed and the poor. Once you have God's focus, your perspective on life and on people is forever changed.

You will see things that many around you do not see. People in power often have eyes but do not see and have ears but do not hear. But you will see the oppressed people of Palestine and hear their cry, as God sees them and hears them. And so we stand with God in doing justice and in loving mercy. We testify to the truth and we become servants of the truth as we serve others.

In a recent incursion into Ramallah, the Israeli soldiers went into Cedar's home (a Palestinian Christian woman) looking for weapons. She said to them (in Hebrew), "We do not need your kind of weapons. Our weapon is the truth, and this you will not find hidden under the bed or in the closet. It is a weapon that you cannot take away from us."

In this place, Ecce Homo, 2000 years ago, a young man stood before the representative of the greatest power on the earth of his day and said, "I have come to testify to the truth." We are Christ's disciples. He has gathered us here to witness to the truth. I pray to God that tonight as we begin the programs of this week under circumstances of so much grief, anxiety, and uncertainty, we may begin by renewing our commitment to the truth. As we look at an earthly "empire" in the face, as Jesus did, we see a challenge between the reign of Caesar, represented in the occupying power of the state of Israel today and the reign of God, the kingdom of truth.

These walls heard the cry, "We have no king but Caesar." Tonight they hear our cry, "We have no king but Christ." Jesus refused the path of zealotry, the path of armed and violent resistance, on one hand, and the path of collaboration, and cowardly submission on the other. He chose the path of truth. He remained faithful to the kingdom of God, to God's reign of love, justice, and truth, while rejecting and condemning the powers.

He said, "for this I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice." Our prayer tonight is, "Lord Jesus, we are listening to your voice. Be with us as we stand with you and testify to the truth, even if that means having to carry the cross."

This sermon was delivered by Reverend Naim Ateek at the opening worship service of the Sabeel International Solidarity Visit, held at Ecce Homo, Notre Dame de Sion, Jerusalem on Sunday, April 7, 2002.

Friends of Sabeel North America

Update: July 2002

Report from the Chair

Dear Friends,

So much has happened since our last Cornerstone. The destruction in the West Bank, the continual military incursions and the almost daily bombings, are all putting a strain on Israelis and Palestinians that is simply incredible. I, along with forty-five other people from around the world, joined in the solidarity visit to Sabeel in Jerusalem during April 2-14. It was right at the time of the destruction of the Jenin Refugee Camp, the closures in Ramallah, and the standoff at the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem. Daily we heard of new atrocities by both sides but felt once again the extreme pain of the Palestinians who have no rights in the West Bank.

The ongoing closures, curfews, checkpoints and incursions remain because of the occupation. Why can't people see that the violence on both sides comes from the occupation? Peace will never occur until the occupation ends and a just resolution for the Palestinian people happens. It is so frustrating! And so painful. The second night I was in Jerusalem I found myself sitting on my bedroom floor crying out of the pain of frustration and helplessness. But I also knew that we are on the side of justice with out Sabeel work and that in time justice will prevail. I am encouraged by new movements underway to wake people up to the realities of the occupation. I attended the inaugural organizational meeting of the U.S. Campaign to End the Occupation held in Chicago on June 1 & 2. One hundred participants worked to form the framework of a campaign that includes many grassroots groups working specifically to end the occupation. At least a third of the participants were people representing the Jewish community and groups such as Not In My Name, Jews for Global Justice, and the Jewish Voice for Peace. This is a hopeful sign that opens doors for the kind of coalition building so desperately needed to be effective.

Please read more about the U.S. Campaign to End the Occupation at their web site: www.endtheoccupation.org. And please read the enclosed articles, pray for the people of Israel and Palestine, and pray that people of goodwill may have a stronger voice in our government to effect real change.



Faithfully,

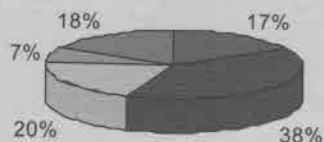
Rev. Canon Richard K. Toll
National Chairperson

Sabeel Solidary Visit: October 2002

A Sabeel-sponsored tour of Palestine/Israel in October will include tours in Jerusalem, East Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, Bethlehem, Hebron, Ramallah, Nablus, Jerico, and Jenin (contingent upon restrictions of curfews and closed military zones). Accommodations will be in tourist-quality hotels and hostels. Most meals provided. Includes visits to holy sites and meetings with Palestinian and Israeli justice and peace groups. Approximate cost: \$2500 per person. To get on the list, or for more information, contact:

Sr. Elaine Kelley, Administrative Officer
Friends of Sabeel—North America
Ph: 971-544-1313 Email: kelleysfcc1@aol.com

**Sabeel Program
Budget 2002**



- Operating (Admin/Dev)
- Sabeel Jerusalem Support
- Conferences & Delegations
- Cornerstone & Educational Materials
- Church Outreach



A Palestinian Damage Suit to the World Court? A Proposal

by Rosemary Radford Ruether

The United States destroyed the Nicaraguan revolution by systematically sabotaging economic development. The U.S.-funded contra army never engaged the Sandinista army in battle, but rather concentrated on blowing up literacy centers and economic cooperatives. In 1989, then Nicaraguan Secretary of State, Miguel d'Escoto, compiled a record of the damages done to Nicaragua by the United States and its surrogate Contras and took it to the World Court in a damage suit. Nicaragua won, and was awarded \$17 billion in damages against the United States. The United States was perturbed enough by this result to engage in extensive bribery to get UNO candidate, Violeta Chamoro, to repudiate this judgment by the World Court, funneling large amounts of cash into her campaign and promising major grants of aid. Chamora won the election and repudiated the World Court decision, although little aid was actually given to Nicaragua.

The defeat of the Sandinistas prevented Nicaragua from following up on its victory, but this case might provide a precedent for the Palestinians. Israel's treatment of the Palestinians since 1948 has been one of continual economic destruction. This has escalated in the recent invasions of the Occupied Territories in systematic destruction of Palestinian civil society. Israel entered all the Palestinians ministries, as well as health and media institutions, destroying their computers, records and data, as well as furniture. Many personal homes and stores were also vandalized, while in some areas, such as Jenin, whole blocks of homes were destroyed. The purpose clearly was the strike a major blow as Palestinian survival as a people.

Is this the time to think of a major damage suit for this destruction to be taken to the World Court? It would be important to simply compile as complete a record as possible of the destruction of personal and community property that has taken place, just during the Second Intifada and particularly in 2002. But this information needs to do more than just circulate among solidarity groups. It needs to have a world forum. One way to create such a world forum for this information would be to take it as a damage suit to the World Court and thus organize world opinion to be aware of this destruction.

Some might say, "but Israel will simply put together a counter-suit for the damage done by terrorists." Let them. This would allow there to be an objective comparison of the actual destruction done to Palestinian daily life done by the Israeli army, in comparison to the destruction done by a few suicide bombers. It might also allow Palestinians to have some other outlet for their frustrations than suicide bombing. It would mean taking the struggle to the courts of international law, and out of the vastly unequal contest between an Israel armed with the weapons of one of the most powerful modern armies, compared with Palestinians armed only with their own bodies as weapons. **Send your comments to Rosemary Radford Ruether:**
rruether@psr.edu



Sabeel Photo Exhibit, "Our Story: The Palestinians"
—censored and dismantled by Illinois Governor's Office
—re-installed following widespread protest

Reported by:

Jennifer Bing-Canar (American Friends Service Committee, Chicago)

"Stuck With The Truth"

**A 30-minute documentary about the Palestinians' search
for a just peace.**

Produced by Canadian Friends of Sabeel



- background footage of Palestinian Christian communities in Jerusalem and the West Bank
- scenes of worship and prayer
- interviews with Rev. Canon Naim Ateek, Director of *Sabeel* in Jerusalem and comments from key church leaders and community members
- clips showing the realities of Israel's illegal military occupation
- international groups working for justice and peace in the Holy Land

To order "***Stuck With The Truth***" complete the form on the back and mail with your check in the envelope provided.

"Stuck with the Truth" is an excellent resource to use for small group reflection and discussion in your church or home. As a leader, you can facilitate learning by offering questions to the group. These questions can be given to the group prior to meeting for personal reflection, given to the group prior to viewing the video, or given to the group after viewing the video to stimulate discussion and facilitate learning. You can also plan to use a combination of questions, with some before and some after the video. Small groups are preferred to facilitate the involvement of all participants. If you break up into small groups, you can come together in a large group at the end to report a summary of each group's discussion.

"Stuck With The Truth"

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"Justice and Only Justice"

Book

A Palestinian Theology of Liberation

By Nam Stifan Ateek

A book covering the prospects, challenges, and unique role of Palestinian Christians in the Holy Land. Orbis Books. Maryknoll, NY. Dec. 1991.

Foreword by Rosemary Radford Ruether

How many books? _____

Price: \$15 each (includes postage)

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Yes! I will make a donation (or pledge of monthly support) for Sabeel's important work.

Enclosed is my first gift of:

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- \$15.50 per month (50¢ per day)
- Other amount: \$ _____
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Sabeel Photo Exhibit, "Our Story: The Palestinians"
—censored and dismantled by Illinois Governor's Office
—re-installed following widespread protest

Reported by:

Jennifer Bing-Canar (American Friends Service Committee, Chicago)

Del Leppke (Sabeel member, Chicago)

In June, the Arab American Arts Council and the American Friends Service Committee got permission from the Illinois Governor's office to exhibit a Palestinian display of history, art and culture at the Thompson State of Illinois Center in Chicago. The exhibit included a three-panel display developed by AFSC which highlights Palestinian arts, dance, food and architecture, which has been displayed in Chicago-area public schools this year and a collection of photographs developed by Sabeel that follows the Palestinian experience from 1948 to 1998. The Sabeel exhibit, entitled "Our Story: The Palestinians" consists of 50 photographs which were installed on display boards in the Thompson Center.

Within an hour of the installation, the exhibit was taken apart by a staff person from the Governor's office who said they had already received complaints about the exhibit. Of the 50 photographs, 8 generic photos were "allowed" to represent the Palestinian history. The three panel arts and crafts exhibit also was allowed to stay up.

The local organizing group, including Sabeel member Del Leppke, organized people all around Illinois to register complaints with the governor's office. And it worked. According to Del, the governor's office was "inundated" with calls complaining about the exhibit's dismantling. The display has since been reinstated. Readers may view photographs of the "Our Story" display at the Sabeel web site www.sabeel.org. Churches and other organizations may rent the display for local events by contacting Friends of Sabeel in Oregon. Shipping the display round-trip costs approximately \$100.

Send thank you notes to:
Governor George Ryan
100 W. Randolph Street
Chicago, Illinois 60601
Phone: (312) 814-2121
Fax: (217) 524-4049
Email: governor@state.il.us



Salaam

Report from Friends of Sabeel—New England

The New England Chapter is organizing an outreach campaign that includes contacting members of congress and the news media. We have started an active group that is involved in responding to editorials and news reports which tend to misinform or incite prejudice. If there are other chapters or groups in other parts of the country who are interested in coordinating efforts with the New England Chapter, please send an email to:

sabeelconference@aol.com Attention: M. N. Germanus

Please let us know if you are interested in video tapes of presentations at the conference on "Ending the Occupation" that was held in Boston April 12-13. We are working on putting together one tape with talks by Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Rev. Naim Ateek, Sara Roy, and Phyllis Bennis. If there is enough interest we might consider editing the four tapes down to one. So please send an email and let us know if you would order the condensed version.

sabeelconference@aol.com

The Church: A Sign of Hope as Healing

After an excellent four-day conference in Beirut entitled "The Church: A Sign of Hope as Healing in the Middle East," sponsored by Evangelicals for Middle East Understanding, we spent a week and a half visiting Christians in Lebanon and Syria and with Martin and Betty Bailey we journeyed into Israel/Palestine for a week.

At one checkpoint outside Ramallah, we watched soldiers randomly shoot into the Palestinian side of the road. At that same checkpoint we watched a Palestinian van stop at the checkpoint and then begin to move on. Soldiers ran from all over, cursing and shooting their guns in the air. With the butt ends of their guns they tried to break the van's windows and finally pulled the driver out of the van—kicking, shoving and threatening him. We were left not knowing what could have provoked such action by the IDF. Unfortunately, this type of event was not uncommon for Palestinians.

The Israeli "matrix of control" and military domination is everywhere, but it is not accomplishing security for the Israeli public. It is, however, suffocating the Palestinians. In Bethlehem, we toured the Christmas Lutheran Church where soldiers had broken 36 doors, 54 windows, smashed office equipment and scattered files, shot up the heating and air conditioning equipment, defecated and dumped garbage everywhere and wrote graffiti on the stone walls, i.e., "Nation of Israel Lives," and "Bethlehem is in our hands." All of this is being justified as part of Israel's search for "terrorists." A similar act of intentional destruction was visible at Bethlehem University, a Catholic university run by American Christian Brothers. Here we toured a new classroom building built with US AID funds and dedicated in 2000. Israeli gunners had targeted the new building with guided missiles, ironically manufactured in the U.S., blowing huge holes in the side of the building and destroying two classrooms on two floors. No resistance had come from either the church or the university. There is a widespread sense of hopelessness and despair mixed with determination among the Palestinians with whom we spoke. An Israeli Rabbi, who works with Rabbis for Human Rights, expressed the belief that given the present Israeli leadership, this state of affairs is likely to go on for a long time.

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Sabeel Conference on Christian Zionism: Baylor University, Waco, Texas

A group of scholars, theologians and interested observers gathered for a conference at Baylor University in Waco, TX, from March 13-15, and hosted by Dr. Marc Ellis, professor of American and Jewish Studies at Baylor. We began with a working definition of Zionism from Don Wagner's book *Anxious for Armageddon* which states that Zionism is a "theology that defends racism and apartheid on biblical grounds, is directly implicated in the denial of basic human rights, is complicit in the destruction of the indigenous Christian community in Israel/Palestine and is fueling the fire that may ignite into an apocalyptic war between Islam and the West." A Christian Zionist therefore, is a Christian who supports the aims of the State of Israel.

Christian Zionism dates back to the early 19th century and is represented by over two hundred evangelical movements, such as the International Christian Embassy in Jerusalem, Bridges for Peace, and others.

All Christian Zionists are defenders of and apologists for the State of Israel and believe that scripture contains the mandate which gives Israel the divine right of statehood. This divine right causes them to dismiss any claims of Palestinian statehood, labeling it anti-Semitism. Some of our modern evangelists like Pat Robertson, Oral Roberts, Jerry Falwell, and others always support the State of Israel and never question the means by which Israel has acquired and occupied the West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem. In 1967 when the Moral Majority began, Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson switched from a heavenly view of the fulfillment of prophecy to a political view.

According to Rev. Stephen Sizer, "Christian Zionism is an exclusive theology that focuses on the Jews in the land rather than an inclusive theology that centers on Jesus Christ." A concern discussed was the lack of biblical scholarship today. A new lectionary, based on sound theological understanding is needed. God stresses justice but our present lectionary and sermons based on this lectionary do not reflect this. In fact, Arab Christian history is not taught in seminaries at all.

There were numerous presentations. Among them: "God and Baal: Covenant People and Kingship in the Jewish Scriptures" from Dr. George Mendenhall; "Reclaiming the Vision: Zionism and the New Jerusalem" by Tony Graham; "Zionism, the Bible and Revolution" by Don Wagner.

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(Continued from page 3)

Israel will never get true security and safety through oppressing another people. A true peace can ultimately be built only on justice. We condemn the violence of suicide bombers, and we condemn the corruption of young minds taught hatred, but we also condemn the violence of military incursions in the occupied lands and the inhumanity that won't let ambulances reach the injured.

The military action of recent days, I predict with certainty, will not provide the security and peace Israelis want; it will only intensify the hatred. Israel has three options: revert to the previous stalemated situation; exterminate all Palestinians; or, and I hope this will be the road taken, to strive for peace based on justice, based on withdrawal from all the occupied territories, and the establishment of a viable Palestinian State on those territories side by side, both with secure borders.

We in South Africa had a relatively peaceful transition. If our madness could end as it did, it must be possible to do the same everywhere else in the world. South Africa is a beacon of hope for the rest of the world. If peace could come to South Africa, surely it can come to the Holy Land. My brother Naim Ateek has said what we used to say.

"I am not pro- this or that, I am pro-justice, pro-freedom, I am anti-injustice, anti-oppression." But you know as well as I do that somehow the Israeli government is placed on a pedestal, and to criticize it is immediately dubbed anti-Semitic as if they Palestinians were not Semitic. I am not even anti-white despite the madness of that group. And how did it come about that Israel was collaborating with the Apartheid government on security measures? People are scared in this country [USA], to say wrong is wrong because the Jewish lobby is powerful, very powerful.

Well, so what? This is God's world. For goodness sake, this is God's world. We live in a moral universe. The Apartheid government was very powerful, but today it no longer exists. Hitler, Mussolini, Stalin, Pinochet, Milosovik, and Idi Amin were all powerful, but in the end, they bit the dust.

Injustice and oppression will never prevail. Those who are powerful have to remember the litmus test that God gives to the powerful. What is your treatment of the poor, the

Injustice and oppression will never prevail. Those who are powerful have to remember the litmus test that God gives to the powerful. What is your treatment of the poor, the hungry? the voiceless? And on the basis of that, God passes God's judgment. We should put out a clarion call to the government of the people of Israel, to the Palestinian people and say: peace is possible, peace based on justice is possible, and we are meeting today, and we will continue. And we will do all we can to assist you to achieve this peace, because it is God's dream and you will be able to live amicably together as sisters and brothers.

Highlights of keynote address by Nobel Laureate Archbishop Desmond Tutu at the Boston Conference on Ending the Occupation held on April 13, 2002. The conference was co-sponsored by Friends of Sabeel and by the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts.

(Continued from page 9)

She cried to the thought that her books may have been destroyed because her teacher at school once said there weren't extra books to hand out.

Today, Tuesday April 9th is our Twelfth Day of house arrest under curfew. I have 50 Shekels (about \$11.5) left in my pocket, my checkbook is in the office which is still occupied by soldiers, and the cash card in my pocket is useless since it seems easier to get to Mars than to my bank in Jerusalem.

We cannot complain much, the water supply has been re-connected, and the sun is shining. We are planning to invite our neighbor for lunch, string beans and "baba ghanouj", and to catch up on laundry. The only remaining shock awaiting me, or so I hope, is when I go in to inspect the damage in my office. I miss my friends and colleagues. I miss my usual daily routine. The future looks bleak and uncertain, but one thing I know for sure; when this nightmare is over I'm going to play my flute like never before.

Salwa Daibis is a member of the Mattin Group which is a human rights NGO based in Ramallah. She wrote this piece on April 9, 2002.

The bent-over ones

Old woman of Palestine tends
her onions and mint
the slow bend of head
reverences earth
she doesn't own
hears the moan of wind
in the olive grove.

Old woman of Palestine bends
to be invisible
to the horizon's glare
bends to bury her voice
beneath the olive tree
believes in new shoots.

Anne Powell
New Zealand

Where do we go from here? Two Perspectives

In separate public lectures entitled "Where to", Mgr. Michel Sabbah, the Latin Patriarch in Jerusalem, and Sheik Ekirma Sabri, the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem and the Holy Land, set forth their visions for the future awaiting the Palestinian people. The following two pages include excerpts from their speeches presented on March 7, 2002 and May 15, 2002 respectively.

Monsignor Michel Sabbah:

Peace and Justice

It is every citizen's right to demand peace and justice, freedom and the right to claim one's land. Both Palestinians and Israelis are entitled to security. We want security and justice for all. Currently, the Israeli need for security is used to perpetuate occupation and siege. Security for all would remove the excuse. A clear vision of a peaceful future will replace the reigning darkness. It is in Israel's hands to have or not to have security because it is in Israel's hands to continue the occupation or to end it. The end of occupation means security for all.

When will peace come? Not for a long time. It is a long wait that requires patience and steadfastness and the ability not to lose hope, for justice will one day prevail. The solution may be sooner or later depending on whether the choice is an ongoing occupation with all its difficulties or an end to occupation that will grant both peoples the right to live with dignity. The facts on the ground predict more suffering and a long wait, but amidst it all, we, Palestinians, have to create a state, nurturing the individual Muslim and Christian being.

A new state and civil society with renewed Christian-Muslim co-existence

We are heading to a new birth of a civil society, a healthy and sane entity in which both Muslims and Christians adopt a new approach to education. Then the residue of fear and apprehension will be replaced by love and respect, and united in their rich heritage, our society will be empowered with wisdom that can stand against the many forces of corruption prevailing in our actual society.

The state belongs to all. The Arabic proverb says "Religion and faith belong to God, but the country belongs to all" meaning that our God is everyone's God. God brings people together whether of the same faith or not in one shared country. The question raised by many Christians today is: "Will the Palestinian State be a Muslim state governed by Islamic Shari'a law?" We clearly state that we want to embark on a new way, a new entity where the Muslim is at ease and lives his Islam to the full, and where the Christian is at ease and can live his Christianity to the full. They both join in to build one state and one country where

Muslims and Christians feel they are equal citizens. Islamic law, Shari'a will then be one of the sources for legislation. The president of the state may be a Muslim, but all other positions and posts will be fairly filled by capable, skilful Muslims or Christians based on their qualifications. So far, Chairman Arafat has taken particular measures to ensure a continuous Christian presence. Christian mayors preside in certain communities, he maintains good relations with Church leaders, a Christian Education curriculum has been introduced in public schools - these are only a few examples. Historically, Islam has expressed generosity and hospitality to visitors and guests but the Palestinian Christian is not an outsider guest who requires special treatment or protection. The Palestinian Christian is an indigenous rightful citizen, an integral part of the same nation with equal rights, and not subject to the mercy of another religion. The acceptance of such a concept of equality is a process that needs to be translated into stands and actions.

Shouldn't we be ready, after a century of strife, bloodshed, sacrifices and demolished homes to create and build a new image for ourselves? If anything, we need to read our history together. Our heritage/history is that of a joint Muslim/Christian Arab civilization closely connected to both local and global Christianity. There have been wars but there was also an exchange of culture and civilization. For the average Muslim, there is still a misconception about Christianity as a faith and western politics. This is one aspect that needs to be clarified: Christianity as faith, religion versus politics in order to safeguard the healthy relation between people of faiths, both Muslim and Christian. Another aspect to be clarified and studied is the legal status that defines relations between Muslims and non-Muslims. Despite differences in belief and creed, there are uniting points in our common culture.

The Western World opted for secularism and the absence of religion in order to find a meeting point among human beings through equal opportunities in work and service, regardless of creed. The West met the challenge of honoring human beings as equal citizens because they are human. What are the options facing the Palestinians? We, Palestinians strive to remain faithful to God in our institutions, finding in God a unifier and not a divider of faith. What are the

choices? Peace, affiliation to political parties and the unique nature of the Holy Land that God chose as the cradle of religions. How can the two concepts at different ends of a pole meet? On the one hand there is the adherence and faithfulness to religious values, on the other, equality among citizens of different faiths. This is our challenge to create a Palestinian society that can merge faith and respect of human beings in the one land.

The saying "One's faith belongs to God but the State belongs to all" may be an attempt of ensuring equity among citizens, but the need for religion as a positive force combating exclusive religious powers still exists. So our challenge is to embark on a new way, create and live in a new image achieved through a holistic and comprehensive approach of understanding and feeling with the "other" — a new system of religious education that promotes openness and respect for the other. The inner attitude of excluding the other surfaces sometimes openly and at other times is suppressed, diffused in order to prevent the lighting of a fuse of discord. By being truly loyal to God, one cannot but be true and loyal to all God's creation regardless of creed and faith.

A renewed Christian Education to bring one's faith alive

As Christians, we heading towards a conscious awareness about the requirements of faith. Faith is not only religious practice. It is a way of life, one's personal relation with family, neighbors, a spiritual commitment to one's community and church, but with an openness to other denominations of faiths. Faith is an acceptance of all that is earthly, the universe in all its implications. It is also the way leading to a spiritual and celestial goal. The suffering of others is also mine. I cannot be a stranger or not show apathy. Because of my faith, my participation in church life, fasting and prayer and my involvement, I serve my country. It is faith in God that brings the faithful to love humanity. Because of the misconception that faith is religious practice and traditions only, disconnected from life, many Christians who have joined political parties and become in national work have abandoned faith, working as loyal Palestinian individuals, but void of faith and all spiritual empowerment. Faith does not impede or isolate; faith is life and practices are means to enrich it in all its aspects, economically, politically, even at war times when we have to demand freedom and rights to land, but no matter how hard circumstances are, we have to retain love. The role of the Church is to educate Christians about their role as Christians, enhance their potential spiritual strength, and deepen their responsibility to help enrich the Palestinian society.

Sheik Ekirma Sabri:

Where Are We Heading?

The most urgent solution is the ending of the occupation. How will the people survive? What are the booster or glucose injections to support us at such times?

- Financial support for housing, education tourism and the building of the infrastructure.
- A constant presence of institutions and civil society centralized in Jerusalem to ensure existence and continuity.
- Cooperation and coordination of self-sufficient organizations in Jerusalem
- A special contingency budget in Jerusalem, to allow the purchase of buildings and homes in order to protect them from Israeli confiscation.

We have a long wait ahead of us and we have to be psychologically ready for more difficult times. We have to prepare ourselves for the worst in order to be able to resist. A year and a half of this second Intifada is not a long period of struggle in the in the history of peoples striving for independence. Twelve years ago, in a sermon I preached about patience and the psychological readiness to face the unbearable. It is even more important today. If we have been struck by the immense losses during the last incursions, it is because of our inability to have honestly faced the truth.

The illusion that Palestinians had already obtained freedom and statehood made the people forget that Israel was still in control of every aspect of our lives, water, air, borders, etc.. We floated over thin water and were therefore shocked when faced with these facts. There is a Palestinian Authority (with corruption) but there is no viable Palestinian State. Palestinians are looking into reform, now after the incursions and the destruction of the infrastructure. Where are our vision, our realism, our planning and action?

Our history is a series of repeated catastrophes and we should not forget any of them. Today's losses are greater than in 1948 because of the more destructive American machinery and weaponry. It is our duty to keep the narrative alive for our children and generations to come that we will not give up our rights as Palestinians.

Three Impressions of the Solidarity Visit

We were prevented from seeing the violence that was taking place in West Bank towns such as Bethlehem.

We did, however, look across to the besieged Church of the Nativity from the roof of the Tantur Ecumenical Center beside the main Jerusalem-Bethlehem checkpoint. And as we prayed, tank after tank rolled down the otherwise deserted road from Jerusalem to Bethlehem.

We were, however, able to see how this occupation involves violence of forms other than physical aggression.

The daily humiliation of the ID checks at checkpoints (and the randomness of whether or not individuals will be allowed to pass), the curfews that prevent children from going to school and everyone from obtaining medical assistance, the injustice of the marked discrepancy in services between (Palestinian) East Jerusalem and West Jerusalem (despite the fact that residents throughout Jerusalem pay the same taxes), and the appropriation of Palestinian land to build large Jewish settlements are all violent acts.

The Sabeel statement says, 'We believe that justice for the people of Palestine demands an immediate end to Israel's occupation. Only justice can lead to lasting peace and, ultimately, to reconciliation.' It ends by asking people of conscience to pray for the peace of Jerusalem, Israel and Palestine; let our prayers be for a just peace.

Maureen Jack
Scotland

Tuesday, April 9th, was one of the most troubling and difficult days of our visit. On the one hand, the annual Holocaust Memorial Day in Israel fell this year on April 9th. And on the other hand, April 9th is also the same day that the Deir Yassin massacre took place in 1947. Therefore, Sabeel decided to concentrate the attention of the Solidarity Group for this day upon an earlier phase of the Israel/Palestine conflict, the 1947-49 war. To do so, we visited the remains of three Arabic villages, Lifta, Deir Yasin and Ein Kerem. Though these sites are located in what is now West Jerusalem, in 1947 they were small villages of several hundred people located a few miles west of what was then the border of the city of Jerusalem. Both Lifta and Ein

Kerem are situated on the steep western slopes of the Wadi Salman (Hebrew Nahal Soreq), one of the major ravines that

lace the central mountain ridge of Palestine/Israel. Deir Yasin lies a little southwest of Lifta at the edge of the valley.

Since Lifta and its adjoining villages to the north controlled the access road from Jerusalem to Tel Aviv, it and its neighbors were

among the first sites to be attacked by Jewish forces soon after the UN Partition Plan was passed in November 1947. Lifta was attacked a number of times by both Menachem Begin's Irgun and Yitzhak Shamir's Stern Gang during December 1947 and January 1948, and by February, 1948 all its residents had been violently driven out of their homes. Most moved to the Palestinian populated eastern side of Jerusalem.

Though many of the 420 stone houses of the village of Lifta were destroyed in the fighting, the rest of the village was not bull-dozed into oblivion after the war, as were almost all the other Palestinian villages that were not taken over. The houses of Lifta that remain are spread along a small ravine that runs down into the larger valley below, standing deserted and unused for the past 54 years, except for the occasional homeless person. All of our group who were able made the rather steep climb down the clearly marked trail to the spring at the bottom, north of which the mosque and the village club are still visible, as well as a cemetery now covered with bushes and wild grass. It was requested that we spend a few minutes in silent meditation over and remembrance of the tragedy of the Palestinian people that these mute remains represent.

After visiting Lifta, we drove to the site of the massacre of Deir Yasin. Deir Yasin was a small village southwest of Lifta and about a mile west of the boundary of Jerusalem. In February 1947, Deir Yasin had concluded non-belligerency agreements with the Jewish communities of Jerusalem, particularly the nearby village of Giv'at Sha'ul, and had actually refused to



Waiting at the Beit Hanina checkpoint.

allow an Arab militia to use the village as a base. Nevertheless, on April 9th, 1947 elements of both the Irgun and the Stern Gang attacked the village and, when resistance ended, brutally massacred many of the inhabitants in their homes, including many women and children. Twenty-five of the men who were taken alive were paraded the next day through Jewish sections of Jerusalem, and then stood against the wall of a quarry and shot. Today all that is left of Deir Yasin is a building that is now used as a mental hospital.



Trying to get humanitarian aid to Ramallah.

At 10:00 AM Tuesday morning April 9th, sirens sounded all over Jerusalem and all traffic in the city halted for three minutes so that all might silently remember the victims of the Holocaust. Our Sabeel group tried carefully to time our journey so as to arrive at Deir Yasin at that hour, so that we might silently remember the victims of both tragedies. And indeed, as the sirens sounded, we had all just disembarked from the bus at the gate of the mental hospital. And so we stood, heads bowed, in silent remembrance of the victims of both tragedies.

From Deir Yasin we drove to Ein Kerem, the traditional site of the birthplace of John the Baptist. Here, Sabeel had arranged for us to hear the story of the massacre of Deir Yasin from one of the survivors, an elderly woman whose name is 'Um Salah Zainab Al-Yasiny, who on April 9th, 1947, was a pregnant young woman of 20. I will not attempt summarize the story of what she went through that day. Suffice it to say that we listened in prayerful and horrified silence.

On the day that commemorates both the Holocaust and the massacre of Deir Yassin, it was a troubling experience to visit the remains of Lifta, and to meditate on the tragedy it represents. It was an even more deeply troubling experience to visit the site of Deir

Yassin and then to hear the tragic story of one of the survivors. Though mute and silent, the old, decaying buildings of Lifta and the one building that remains of Deir Yasin, spoke loudly to us of the tragedy of the "Naqba," the Catastrophe, by which one people who needed to escape the terrible persecution of the Christian nations of Europe, found their own safe space by dispossessing another people of their homes, villages and land, mostly by brutal force, destroying their culture and driving over 700,000 of them into refugee camps. I feel I ought to end this account with some profound observation. But I have none.

Fredrick Bush
California

During our week's stay in Israel/Palestine, the telling stories are actually what we did not do and what we did not see, for they speak of the restrictions and the limitations and the losses of the Palestinian peoples. We did not get into Ramallah. We did not get into Bethlehem. We did not even try to get into Jenin. We DID get into Hebron and Jericho. We DID wait at checkpoints and we did see the humiliation and abuse that is foisted upon the Palestinians, daily, as they try to cross over into Israeli occupied land. We did see the imbalance in power, the injustices perpetrated and we - some of us - did stand against the Occupation with Peace Now, the Israeli Jewish group that has a permanent protest set up in front of Ariel Sharon's house. In joining with the Peace Now people, we sparked a counter-rally that formed across the street. A group of young men sang songs, waved enormous Israeli flags, and emotionally grew from the level of a friendly fraternity party to an ugliness that was chilling.

Can you imagine the frustration of hearing the gunfire - of hearing the tanks - of knowing that a people are being systematically besieged and unable to do anything? I can, because I was there. We waited at the checkpoint in Ramallah - our bus was full of food and milk and necessary items for the people of Ramallah. The curfew had been lifted, but we were not allowed in. Why? Because we were told it was dangerous. I said to the IDF officer, "You wouldn't shoot me, an American, would you?" He said, "No, but the others would" (meaning the Palestinians). I said, "But we are taking food and other needed items in to them, they would not shoot us." "There are problems," he responded. The "problems" were that the IDF was beginning to bomb and move - once again - against those in Ramallah even as the supposed curfew was lifted. We took the supplies to Jericho: a city whose people are restricted from harvesting its large crop of grapefruit, oranges and lemons; a city where few are allowed in or out; a city designated as a closed military area; a city waiting in expectation for what they feel will be THEIR turn - their time - of warfare.

(Continued on page 16)

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While we were in Jericho the machine guns fired and the tanks shot at targets just outside the walls of the city. Sometimes psychological warfare is as difficult to withstand as the physical reality of war.

From my meetings with Israeli and Palestinian citizens, it is my impression that the majority of both want to return to a "normal" life, living in peaceful coexistence. The ongoing Palestinian cry is to end the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian land. The ongoing Israeli cry is for security. One will not come without the other. It is my opinion that the Occupation must end before Israel will begin to feel secure. No one would deny the horror of the Holocaust and the abuse that the Jewish people have experienced in the past. However, at this moment, I see the actions of the Israeli government as classic examples of the abused becoming the abuser - the victim becoming the victimizer. It appears that all of the terrors of recent wars are being thrust upon the Palestinians. Homes in Ramallah were marked, destroyed, violated - individual identity cards have special colors to show if one is Palestinian or Israeli - in a complex gradation that allows for or reduces the freedom of one's movements. There is hatred and anger on both sides, that is spilling out in actions carried out by the extremists. The suicidal bombings are not acceptable. Neither is the destruction of lives and towns by the IDF. The world is waiting for the United States to take substantial action: strong action, definitive action.

Constance Hammond
Washington

News briefs from Friends of Sabeel

Canadian Friends of Sabeel Releases its First Video!

At the end of February CFOS released the video *Stuck with the Truth* as an educational tool for the benefit of faith groups seeking insight into the conflict in the Holy Land. It is hoped that viewers will also be inspired to become active in striving for peace with justice. Most of the footage was shot in February 2001 during the conference, "Speaking Truth, Seeking Justice" sponsored by Sabeel. Included with the video is a Video Resource Kit with a Leader's Guide and Study Guide. These resources are designed for personal study as well as an aid in inviting others to learn

more about Sabeel. We hope that this new resource will help us to share the story of Sabeel with many more people than ever before as Friends of Sabeel. To get a copy of the video you can either email Monica (pallen@lonergan.on.ca) or Elaine (kelleysfcl@aol.com).

Gathering to Launch the Video in Canada

On Saturday, March 9th, 2002, about 75 people gathered at Saint Paul University in Ottawa for the first official screening of *Stuck With The Truth*. The video was introduced by Rosemary Radford Ruether, Roman Catholic theologian, author and member of the FOS-NA Steering Committee. Bishop John Baycroft, former Bishop of the Anglican Diocese of Ottawa, closed with some reflections on the video. Having just returned from a visit to South Africa, Bishop Baycroft compared the situation in the video to what he had just seen on his trip. He reminded us that through the work of Sabeel, we will see "a triumph for freedom and human dignity even in this evil situation."

Sabeel Scandinavia Annual Conference in October

Torbjoern Jagland will be one of the speakers at the "Sabeel Scandinavia" Annual Conference, from October 12th - 13th 2002 in Grefsen Church. Torbjoern Jagland is one of Norway's most profiled politicians, leader of Norwegian Labour Party, former-prime minister and foreign minister, now Member of Parliament ("Stortinget"). As member of "The Mitchell Committee" he came close to recent events in Israel/Palestine. He is an engaged and skilled contributor to the ongoing political process. His lecture will be: "The Middle East between Real Politics and International Law". Other participants of the conference will be Norwegian church leaders, representatives for the Palestinian milieu in Norway, and a representative from "Sabeel"/Palestine.

"Things undreamt of are daily being seen, the impossible is ever becoming possible. We are constantly being astonished these days at the amazing discoveries in the field of violence. But I maintain that far more undreamt of and seemingly impossible discoveries will be made in the field of nonviolence."

M.K. Gandhi

(Continued from page 17)

and Christians. The session was chaired by Father Elias Oudeh (Latin).

Outreach to needy families:

Sabeel participated in the local campaign of relief initiated by the local NGOs and charitable organizations that rushed to the assistance of the besieged Palestinian population after the Israeli incursion in March and April. Sabeel continued with its own outreach program through the parish priests involved in the clergy program. With generous contributions from all over the world, Sabeel was able to help over 200 schoolchildren, orphans, widows, and unemployed in many towns and villages of the West Bank both financially and in kind.

As members of the community, Sabeel members were involved in the civil society activities that included receiving and occasional training of delegations offering international protection for Palestinians, in the planning of conferences on non-violence and preparations for non-violent activities. Sabeel has participated in roundtable discussions and workshops with other NGOs and CROs and joined in non-violent marches including carrying the Holy Saturday Light on Easter to the Bethlehem checkpoint with hundreds of other Christians.

Women's Programs

Women of all walks of the Christian community are regular participants in all Sabeel's programs. One of the Lent reflections on "Fasting" was presented by Elaine As-Nasser from the Melkite Church in Jerusalem. Most of the participants of the Day of Fasting and Prayer on April 17 were faithful women. Jerusalem women were present at all public lectures including the ones presented by Dr. Hanan Ashrawi and Dr. Azmi Bishara during the Sabeel International Solidarity Visit.

To celebrate International Women's Day, Sabeel organized a women's spiritual and recreational outing in the peaceful atmosphere of St. Joseph's Sisters Center at Abu Gosh among the hills of Jerusalem. The first stop was a visit at the Latroun Monastery. The spiritual guide for the day was Father Marwan Di'dis, a Franciscan Monk. Leila Tarazi also spoke to the group on the issues of Palestinian women.



Father Marwan speaking at St. Joseph's Sisters Center

For better coordination among Christian women's groups, Sabeel invited representatives of churches, church related organizations and women's groups to meet together on June 6 to brainstorm about the most creative and efficient means of working ecumenically. The theme of the discussion was "Together, we can build" for a better society.

Clergy Programs

The past five months have witnessed a renewed revival in the clergy programs. The first three monthly gatherings were enriched with lessons given by the Rev. Kamal Farah from the Episcopal Church on the contextual meaning of the conversion of Saul to Paul and the letters of Paul. The parish priests, affected by the siege and the attacks on even churches have

shown more compassion with and involvement with the local population. Though most parishioners could not come to the churches in areas under curfew, the priests demonstrated their solidarity with each other.

Sabeel organized two solidarity visits for the Jerusalem priests to both Ramallah and Bethlehem. In Ramallah, Rev. Ed Bacon from California, Archmandrite Atallah

Hanna and Rev. Naim Ateek accompanied by Sabeel staff and volunteers observed the ravages of the latest Israeli incursion, the destruction of buildings in Ramallah and visited some of the priests there as well as a young Episcopalian child who was shot in the leg by the Israeli army while shopping for bread as the curfew was lifted. The Ramallah clergy who could not be on the tour joined the others for lunch at the Orthodox Club.

As soon as the curfew on Bethlehem was lifted and the Church of the Nativity became accessible, a vanload carrying six Jerusalem priests and two Sabeel staff members headed towards the checkpoint and actually drove through to Bethlehem. The first stop was at the Lutheran Church where they were joined by priests from Beit Sahour, Beit Jala and Bethlehem. After examining the

damage there, they walked up to the Syrian Orthodox Church, where after a short prayer and a quick visit with the parish priest, they went into one of the badly damaged homes opposite the church. The house was a total mess, but the psychological damage for the widow who lived in the house was much deeper. The group then met with the Syrian Catholic parish priest, and had lunch at the Melkite Church where Zoughbi Zoughbi, director of Wi'am Conflict Resolution Center, and journalist George Zeineh, joined them. Over lunch, the same issue of "where are we heading to" was discussed including practical solutions for the serious employment crisis. The final stop was the Nativity Church. The Greek Orthodox priests welcomed the Sabeel visitors and led them to the grotto for a joint thanksgiving prayer. Then Franciscans and Armenians shared their experience of living under siege for 38 days. It was clear that at no time did the Palestinians who took refuge in the church hold them hostage. In spite of slight damage, the church stood firm and strong, a refuge for all.

This year's annual trip was to Nazareth. From Jerusalem the priests left to spend the morning reliving the experience of Nazareth of the first century at the Nazareth Village project. Four Galilean priests and several members of the Sabeel Committee there joined them. Lunch was at the YMCA, and then they all had a short visit to the Greek Orthodox Church of the Annunciation. The afternoon's program was the public lecture presented by three clergymen (see community building above).

Youth Programs

Due to the deteriorating political situation most of the young people's programs were put on hold.

On May 19, 2002 Franciscan Father Amjad Sabbara gave a presentation at the YWCA sharing his experience at the Church of the Nativity as a witness with the young people in Jerusalem. Though the invitation was primarily for youth groups, an equal number of adults attended.



Clergy visit to Nazareth Village project.

Father Amjad brought out the positive aspects of the living experience of over 200 people for a period of 38 days. He stressed upon the ecumenical bond that was built among the priests. Many of the locals, including the governor of Bethlehem, who suffered through the experience, were touched by the compassion and humility of the clergy. That was the true witness.

International Program:

Many groups came to visit with Sabeel, discuss the deteriorating situation and participate in the Contemporary Way of the Cross. The groups were diverse including three CPT delegations; pastors and laypeople from Lyon, France; interfaith groups from Ann Arbor and Boston; clergy from Sweden; theologians from Scotland; bishops, clergy and laypeople from the dioceses of Boston, Southern California, and Olympia Washington; United Methodist bishops and clergy; and many others.

The highlight of the International Department work - with major assistance from the Local Department - was the Sabeel International Solidarity Visit, which was held from April 6-13, 2002. Held at the height of the Israeli incursion in the West Bank, the 54-member group experienced real solidarity with

Palestinians living under curfew and renewed military aggressions. Some of their memories are shared in this issue of the Cornerstone.

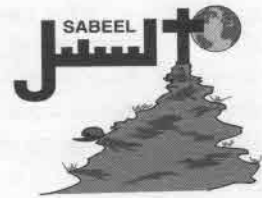
*God our protector,
watch over us all, and
set our feet on the right
path. Walk with the
children who cannot
trust the ground be-
neath them; give cour-
age to those who seek
out the hidden danger;
and strengthen the
injured to live and
work again.*

Prayer from Christian Aid

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.



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