

Couples Program - In preparation for Sabeel's 6th International Conference, the couples group continued their study of Fuad Farah's book, *The Living Stones: Christian Arabs in the Holy Land*. On May 19, the group had an interesting, inspiring, and fruitful discussion with Mr. Farah at the Sabeel office.

Historical Journey Around Galilee - Fuad Farah also led a group of 40 men and women to Arab villages near the beautiful Sea of Galilee on May 21. Mr. Farah imparted much knowledge, some of which is only available through oral record, on the modern history of Israel and Palestine since 1948, especially the history of Christians in the land during this time.

The group shared Sunday Mass with the Melkite Father Elias Daw and the parishioners of Deir Hanna. Then, they visited Druze villages and "Bahaa El-Din," a sacred Druze place, and met with Druze community leaders. This visit was very important for interfaith dialogue at Sabeel, because it is the first time any of the participants held discussion with Druze in their own context. Finally, the group journeyed through the Christian villages of Fassouta Meiliya and passed through the several mixed villages of Muslims and Christians.

- faculty and administration from Berea College, Kentucky, US, led by Richard Cahill,
- a group from Amos Trust, a British justice and peace group, led by Rev. Garth Hewitt.

In addition to informing international groups about our mission and programs at Sabeel, we discussed the past and current situation in Palestine and Israel, and encouraged people to become involved in our International Friends of Sabeel Chapters in their home communities.

The Contemporary Way of the Cross - Requests for the Contemporary Way of the Cross are increasing. A group of 16 professors and administrators from Berea College, Kentucky, led by Richard Cahill, chose to "walk" in the footsteps of Jesus Christ on May 30. Starting on the roof of the Casa Nova Pilgrim House in Jerusalem, they reflected on the suffering of Jerusalemites. Then, participants headed towards the dominating settlement of Har Homa (once a green mountain known as Jebel Abu Ghnaim), crossed through the new terminal in Bethlehem, and stared shockingly at the wall that encircles the peaceful convent of the Emmanuel Sisters, where the group rested for meditation and reflection. The next painful station of the cross was the Aida refugee camp, with its vertical growth of overcrowded homes and schools without windows, but where children learn to express their feelings through art and music. The group also experienced the psychological stress and humiliation that Palestinians endure at checkpoints. People could not believe their eyes when one of the women soldiers pulled up the t-shirt of a three year-old boy and asked him to remove his shoes! The last stop was in Lifta, the Palestinian abandoned village on the outskirts of Jerusalem. How long, O Lord? Before peace comes to your Land!

NAZARETH

The blooming month of May has been flourishing in activities for Sabeel in Nazareth. The young adults had weekly meetings that gathered a group of 30 people to discuss a variety of important issues affecting the lives of Christian Palestinians in Israel, including:

- the lack of Palestinian Christian perspective in the educational system,
- whether or not and how a Jewish State can be democratic,
- the Arabic language in Arab and Jewish society,
- mutual cultural understanding between Jews and Arabs,
- the effects of the separation walls on Arabs inside Israel,
- Palestinian Christian self respect, and our role in the State and civil service,
- the meaning of Israeli Independence Day,
- the power of Israeli and international economy and media, and
- what a two-state solution means for Arab Palestinians living inside Israel.

Abeer Kubty, from *Mussawah*, an organization advocating for the rights of Israeli Arabs, led these three lively and important discussions. Abeer became well known in Israel for her knowledge as articulated on the Israeli TV program, "We Need A Leader."

YOUTH

On May 19, 10 young adults journeyed on Sabeel's Contemporary Way of the Cross. Beginning at Anata Boys School, where the Separation Wall runs through school property and where soldiers are constantly harassing students, the group reflected on the effects of the Wall and the refugee crisis among the Palestinian people. The group then traveled to the abandoned village of Lifta, to focus on the Nakba of 1948.

Finally, the Contemporary Way ended in Ein Karem, where the young people prayed about what the next "station" will be. Then, they enjoyed a hopeful end to the evening, a peaceful, sociable dinner provided by the community at Notre Dame de Sion Convent.



Youth Service Project - On May 7, teenagers accompanied more than 20 girls and boys from the Lazarus Home on a fun, Sunday afternoon outing. The teenagers raised money to provide meals for the children at Yummy Yummy Restaurant, where the children also played in the ball pit and enjoyed time away from the Home. Because the children enjoyed the event so much, and because teenagers still have money from their fundraising, the youth are planning to have a similar event soon!

INTERNATIONAL

Sabeel's international ministry of education and advocacy was blessed in the month of May to host and speak to many tour groups that visit Jerusalem from around the world. In May, we greeted more than 200 people from Canada, Japan, Norway, the United Kingdom, and the United States, including the following groups:

- a group from Texas, US, led by Dr. Saleem Ateek,
- Canadian Mennonites led by Prof. Gordon Matties,
- the National Council of Churches - Norway, led by Hans Morten Haugen,
- the Palestinian Jewish Unity Group from Canada, led by Rizq Faraj,
- a group from the Baptist Church and Bath Abbey, led by John Rackley,
- seminarians from Union Seminary, in Denver, Colorado, US,
- Anastasia Pilgrimages, led by Rev. Nicholas Porter,
- the Presbyterian Mission to Israel, led by Shannon Shibata,
- the Christian Peacemaker Teams May/June Delegation to Israel-Palestine, led by Rev. Pieter Niemeyer,

WOMEN

According to the Roman Catholic tradition, the month of May is dedicated to Mary, the mother of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. At Sabeel, we make a special effort to have at least one women's activity during this month. This year, on May 10, seventy Sabeel women from Jerusalem and Nazareth spent a memorable day at Ein Karem, the historic site of Mary's visit with Elizabeth. These "sisters" from different areas of Israel and the Palestinian territories renewed acquaintance, deepened their scriptural knowledge and understanding of the



"Magnificat," and discovered at least one new way to glorify the Creator, that is, through liturgical dancing. Sister Anna Khoury from the Rosary Sisters spoke first, drawing a picture of Mary the saint, mediator, and intercessor, and she explained the repeated recitation of the rosary in connection with the mysteries in the life of Jesus and his mother. The Rev. Monica Styron (PCUSA) then presented Mary as an archetype of a woman who fears and trusts God, and the mother of a new creation who, in her humanity, embraces unity with God and endows our lives with spiritual significance. Through Cedar Duaybis' translation, the Sabeel women expressed their appreciation to Monica for opening their minds and hearts for service to God. Andrea Dalton, volunteer at Sabeel, lifted up

spirits and souls through her artistic performance of a liturgical dance and graceful movements. Fellowship and social bonds strengthened throughout the day over a delicious lunch and amidst the peaceful atmosphere of the Notre Dame de Sion Convent and the loving care of the nuns and the Chemin Neuf community. It was another glorious day, an added step in the journey of faith and the empowerment of women.



LOCAL PROGRAMS

The May heat wave added to the grievances of the Palestinian people, who are already frustrated by the latest international economic embargo imposed on them, and the failing national dialogue between the various factions. How can we avoid venting our anger at each other? How can we affirm life despite it all? These are issues that the Sabeel ministry has to constantly address through its local programs.

CLERGY

On May 26, 2006, 5 clergy from Jerusalem met at Sabeel to discuss the Open Forum discussions on parish priests and the parishioners. Father Afram, from the Coptic Church, opened the meeting with prayer, before Father Ibrahim Faltas, of the Roman Catholic Church, led a Bible study and discussion on John 10:1-21 and Jesus as the Good Shepherd.

Rev. Naim Ateek presented what had been discussed at the previous Open Forum program - the role of clergy and the congregations, and whether or not, and how, they are fulfilling their roles. Clergy agreed to meet with parishioners of the Open Forum on June 2.

COMMUNITY-BUILDING

The Open Forum - The third and concluding session of the series, "The Good Shepherd," in the monthly Open Forum program brought together an ecumenical flock of 60 (mostly women) congregants and four clergy in a productive and healthy gathering held at the YWCA. Sandrine and Johnny Amer started the meeting with a beautiful song about unity and concluded with the hymn, "We Are Joined By The Spirit". Before the discussion began, Rev. Naim Ateek offered some guidelines for a healthy and honest conversation. Then Coptic priest Father Afram gave an inspiring Bible study on the text of John 10, and Father Issa Touma, of the Greek Orthodox Church, and Rev. Ibrahim Azar, of the Lutheran Church, joined in to respond to questions raised by the audience. The discussion emphasized a need for better cooperation and interdependence of parish priests and their congregations. For transformation and revival of the Church to occur, it is imperative to use the talents and skills of all. The young people present demanded to be acknowledged, recognized and invited to share in Church activities. The intentions for reform are existent, but it remains for all of us to contribute and work together for change.



Sabeel Snapshots
Of our Activities: June 2006

The Sabeel Board's FIRST ANNUAL FUNDRAISING EVENT

The Sabeel Board had their First Annual Fundraising Event on May 6, 2006. Sabeel (The Way of) Giving was the theme of the evening event, held at the Seven Arches Hotel. The evening opened with Wassef Daher introducing Rev. Naim Ateek, Director of Sabeel, who spoke briefly about the purpose and present focus of Sabeel. His words were inspirational, giving all, new and old, food for thought and support for the challenging days ahead.

Over 100 people (locals and internationals) participated in purchasing event tickets, and everyone who attended participated in the added attraction of the night- a raffle and auction. Craig Bradfield & Kate Eakin of the Edward Said Conservatory of Music provided music for the evening, and raffle and auction prizes were donated by the local community. Marwan Tarazi with his enthusiastic, yet sensitive, approach made the drawings and bidding a delightful experience. As Marwan said of the auction, "People who really wanted something bid on it and Sabeel gained as well. We are all happy." There were smiles on people's faces as they left late in the evening. We heard such positive comments as: "I really enjoyed the evening and felt the warmth of your supporters in the society," and "I really had a good time... I'd come next year for sure and bring more people."

We extend our special thanks to the board, staff, and volunteers and all of you who purchased event tickets, donated funds and prizes, shared talents, and gave us special discounts, as each made this first event a true success.

The following is the **final report** for the event-
Income/Expenses and funds raised for Sabeel.

Gross Income (+)	29,450 (\$6,849)
Expenses (-)	7,872 (\$1,830)
Net Income for Sabeel (=)	21,578 (\$5,018(+/-))

PLEASE CHECK OUR WEBSITE, www.sabeel.org, for current information regarding our two upcoming conferences:

1st International Young Adult Conference:

Together: Facing Challenges...Finding Hope
July 26 - August 6, 2006 and

6th International Sabeel Conference:

The Forgotten Faithful: A Window into the Life and Witness of Christians in the Holy Land
November 2-9, 2006.