

INTERNATIONAL CHURCH ACTION FOR PEACE IN PALESTINE AND ISRAEL

3-9 June, 2007



A Just Peace for all People

IF CHRISTIAN communities are to advocate for a just peace for the people of Palestine and Israel, the question must be asked, What kind of God desires a just peace? Is it a life-giving God who loves all the created world and all of its people? A liberating God who wants to see people freed from oppression?

In the Old Testament the land and its promise is a significant theme. For a people in exile and longing for a home, the gift of land was the gift of a better life. The better life was God's promise and dream of dignity, justice and peace lived on the land and guided by the special responsibility to care for the weak and oppressed.

Shaped by the coming of Jesus, the New Testament dramatically re-articulates the promise of dignity, peace and justice. God's promise, dream and call for liberation with responsibility is for all - not for one people or one land. Recognition and inclusion of the weak, the alien, the poor and oppressed, is God's desire for all

DESMOND TUTU, FORMER ARCHBISHOP OF CAPE TOWN:

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. 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".

Approaching the issue of Palestine and Israel justly, means affirming the dignity, the traditions, the culture, the experiences, identity and value of all those involved. Instead of accepting the building of a separation wall, the stealing of land and water and daily killings, the God of love and liberation calls us to the sometimes uncomfortable task of speaking and acting for justice and a meaningful peace for all.

Australian iCAPPI Actions and Supporters

BRISBANE

Ecumenical Prayer Service at St John's Cathedral
3pm on 3 June at St John's Anglican Cathedral, 373 Ann Street Brisbane
Contact: Greg on 07-35147415 or info@icappi.org.au

CANBERRA

PeaceWalk to call for peace in Palestine and Israel
1pm on 3 June beginning at the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture, Blackhall Street Barton Canberra
Contact: Gillian or Patricia on 0418793512 or icappiweekact@gmail.com
To download the Canberra PeaceWalk Newsletter go to <http://www.icappi.org.au> and click onto *Canberra Newsletter*

SYDNEY

Reflective Prayer Service welcoming people of all faiths and denominations, followed by the planting of an olive tree as a symbol of the commitment to work for a just peace in the Middle East.
2.30pm on 3 June at the Melkite Catholic Centre, 80 Waterloo Rd. Greenacre
Contact: Catherine on 02-92992215 or cloy@ncca.org.au
To download an information flyer go to:
<http://www.icappi.org.au/SydneyICAPPI.pdf>

MELBOURNE

Melbourne action is currently being planned and details will be available from the *Events Calender* at the ICAPPI website at <http://www.icappi.org.au>

The Palestinian Liturgy will be posted on the ICAPPI website as soon as it becomes available. This liturgy will be used in Jerusalem on 3 June and in Bethlehem on 6 June. Please plan to use it on 3 June, 9 June or shortly after ICAPPI Week.

AUSTRALIAN SUPPORTERS OF iCAPPI

Christian World Service
The ACT Churches Council
The New South Wales Ecumenical Council
Pax Christi New South Wales
Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, Peace and Justice Centre, Sydney
Ecumenical Working Group Palestine - Israel, Canberra
Friends of Sabeel - Oceania

You can view the World Council of Churches ICAPPI Invitation Letter on the National Council of Churches website at: <http://www.ncca.org.au>



End 40 years of
illegal occupation
negotiate a just peace
now



Choosing Hope and Working for Peace

In 2002 I was in Southern Sudan, sitting in a village roundhouse with local leaders and rebel soldiers, all of them male. As we sat, atrocities were recounted, atrocities experienced within 21 years of violence aimed at clearing out the local population. A local war widow walked in, unannounced and uninvited. She told the men what she thought of the senseless violence. Suffering was etched on her face but her strength was evident. If the men did not stop fighting, the women would give them no more children to fight for them.

Her choice for hope rather than surrendering to despair inspires me, as does the strength and commitment of Palestinian women to building a society in which their children can not only live safely but flourish as human beings.

JOHN HENDERSON,
*General Secretary, National Council
of Churches, Australia.*

SINCE the creation of Israel in 1948, the World Council of Churches has worked closely with its member churches for peace in Palestine and Israel. In 2007, two major initiatives have been launched, renewing the WCC commitment to peace. These two initiatives are the *International Church Action for Justice and Peace in Palestine and Israel* or ICAPPI and the *Palestine-Israel Ecumenical Forum* to be held in Jordan between 19 – 21 June.

Recognising that sustainable peace cannot be created without just realities on the ground, the WCC is focusing its work on advocacy, protection of the most vulnerable people and learning from successful experiences of non-violent peace-making and reconciliation. The Ecumenical Accompaniers Program in which trained volunteers live within Palestinian communities is one example of active, committed non-violent peacemaking.

Affirming the humanity of all people affected by the Palestine-Israel conflict, the long-standing position of the World Council of Churches is to advocate for a just, sustainable peace negotiated in accordance with international law. Ending the illegal occupation of Palestine by Israel is the first step towards justice for Palestinians and secure, sustainable peace for all people. Restoration of the human dignity and the life opportunities of work, family life, education and health will enable Palestinians to create a future free of oppression. For Israel, security and peace without on-going violence and fear can be achieved.

Christian communities around the world have a central role in supporting advocacy and sustainable peacemaking.

In Australia, churches, organisations and individual people are involved in community advocacy, information sharing, education, attending the *Palestine-Israel Ecumenical Forum* and supporting the visits of peace advocates to Australia.

iCAPPI around the World

For a full list of actions go to <http://www.icappi.org.au>

IN JERUSALEM An ecumenical service will be held on 3 June in Jerusalem and 6 June in Bethlehem. The Jerusalem Heads of Churches are creating an international advocacy message. A full list of events in Palestine and Israel is available on the ICAPPI website.

IN CANADA Delegations to government, information and advocacy materials and local community events with former Ecumenical Accompaniers

PAX CHRIST INTERNATIONAL A joint advocacy statement signed by significant organisations and leaders, focused on promoting action by the European Union, governments, leaders and the media.

IN SOUTH AFRICA Radio shows featuring former Ecumenical Accompaniers, press releases and prayer and liturgy focused on Palestine and Israel.

IN SWITZERLAND A civil society caravan travelling from Geneva to the capital Bern, visiting churches and community groups and focusing on government advocacy in Bern. The arms trade with Israel will be an area of specific attention.

IN SWEDEN A bus tour hosted by local churches offering seminars, cultural events, workshops, services and advocacy material. A major seminar, Europe and the Middle East Conflict will focus on the EU's role within the Palestine – Israel conflict.

IN DENMARK A major report on the effect of settlements and the contribution of Danish government and business policies to the creation of settlements.

IN THE UNITED STATES A large cooperative peace campaign in Washington DC. A website focusing on morally responsible investment is being created to disseminate information about this non-violent response to the occupation.

Further Reading and References

One Land and Many Voices: Strands of Christian Thought about who lives in the Holy Land

<http://www.christian-aid.org.uk/indepth/410theology/index.htm>

Facts on the Ground: The End of the Two-State Solution?

<http://www.christian-aid.org.uk/indepth/410israelopt/index.htm>

A Nonviolent Response to the Occupation: A call for Morally Responsible Investment

<http://www.sabeel.org/pdfs/mri.htm>

Build a New Life and a New Society For All: The Lenten Message of the Patriarch of Jerusalem, 21 March 2007

<http://www.lpj.org/newsite2006/patriarch/archives/2007/02/careme2007-en.html>

Photography: Paul Jeffreys

If one member suffers,
all members suffer with it.

1 CORINTHIANS 12:26