

# 5 Religious Studies Unit

## Introduction

Interfaith matters and religious issues have always had a special place in PASSIA's regular meeting program, and having realized the increasing need for better understanding between the various religious communities, in early 1998, PASSIA decided to establish a *Religious Study Unit* devoted to inter-religious dialogue and activities. The unit's work focuses on the role and significance of religion for different people and tries to promote understanding of, and respect for, others in order to address this religious diversity. Subjects discussed include the causes and consequences of problems within and between the established religious communities and activities that contribute to the elimination of misconceptions and stereotypes.

The PASSIA Religious Studies Unit combines the following activities, some of which are held 'off the record' to allow for the frankest exchange and debates possible:

**Coordinating Meetings and Briefings:** Meetings and brainstorming sessions involving members of PASSIA's Religious Studies Unit and local and foreign counterparts/project partners from the three monotheistic religions with the aim of fostering coordination of ongoing and future activities.

**Dialogue Sessions and Roundtables:** Meetings with representatives from one or more of the three monotheistic religions, which usually include a guest speaker presenting a certain topic related to inter- or intra-religious issues followed by a discussion.

**Seminars and Workshops:** Encounters on a specific topic, involving either members of the three monotheistic religions or only representatives of the Christian or Muslim community. These seminars and workshops are intended to help participants to find common ground and to allow different religions to work in harmony and on an equal footing.

**Conferences:** Participation in conferences, here and abroad, that deal with aspects of religion, belief and interfaith relations, or foster an open and free debate on religious issues and aspects as they concern the people in the Holy Land.

*Publication:* Documentation and publication of research studies or proceedings from meetings/seminars.

Activities of the Religious Studies Unit in 2005 were all attended by Dr. Mahdi Abdul Hadi, Head of PASSIA; they included the following (presented in the following order: date; place; topic; speaker; participants):

## Coordinating Meetings and Briefings

29 January 2005, PASSIA, Jerusalem

Topic: **Contemporary Palestine**

Participant(s): The National Council of Churches of Christ, USA (NCCCUSA Delegation): Bishop Vicken Aykazian, Clergy, Ecumenical Officer, Diocese of the Armenian Church of America; Sylvia Campbell, PhD., CCC-Speech Language Pathologist, Speech & Language Evaluations, Language Therapy and Consultive Services, Professor, Alliance of Baptists; Rev. Thelma Chambers-Young, Vice President, Progressive National Baptist Convention, Inc.; Rev. Seung Choi, General Secretary, Korean Presbyterian Church, America; Rev. Bob Edgar, General secretary, NCCCUSA, United Methodist Church; Bishop C. Christopher Ecumenical Officer, Episcopal Church; Ms. Ann Hafften, Middle East Outreach Coordinator, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; Bishop Thomas Hoyt, President, NCCCUSA, Christian Methodist, Episcopal Church; Rev. Dr. Michael Kinnamon, Allen and Dottie Miller Professor, Eden Theological Seminary; Dr. Antonios Kireopoulos, ASG, International Affairs, NCCCUSA, Greek Orthodox Church; James Winkler, General Secretary, Church & Society, The General Board of Church and Society of The United Methodist Church, Washington. ▼



14 February 2005, PASSIA, Jerusalem

Topic: **The Church & Jerusalem**

Participant(s): Rev. Chris Ferguson, Jerusalem representative Commission of the Churches on International Affairs, World Council of Churches

17 March 2005, PASSIA, Jerusalem

Topic: **Issues on Interfaith-Dialogue**

Participant(s): Maria Hevzy, Norway

22 March, 2005, YWCA, Jerusalem

Topic: **Renting Houses to Israelis in the Old City of Jerusalem**

Attended by: Hayat Al-Alami, PASSIA

Organized by: PNGO Net

2 April 2005, Belgian Consulate, Jerusalem

Topic: **Pope John Paul II and the Palestinian - Israeli Conflict**

Participant(s): Dr. Abdullah Sa'feen, Al-Jazeera TV

29 October 2005, PASSIA, Jerusalem

Topic: **Religious Dialogue in Palestine and the Role of Foreign Organizations**

Participant(s): Mazen Qubty, Lawyer, Jerusalem; John Shattuck, Chief Executive Officer, John Kennedy, Library Foundation, Massachusetts, USA.

14 November 2005, Bethlehem University, Bethlehem

Topic: **Muslim-Christian Relations**

Speaker(s): Dr. Mitri Al-Raheb; Dr. Rafiq Khoury; Dr. Mahdi Abdul Hadi

Participant(s): BU Staff; BU Students; Bethlehem Community.

1 December 2005, PASSIA, Jerusalem

Topic: **Political Islam**

Participant(s): Jesse Levinson, Political Officer, US Consulate, Jerusalem; Engineer Adnan Hussein, Director, Islamic Waqf, Jerusalem; Sheikh Jamil Hamami, Lecturer, AL-Quds University, Jerusalem.

5 December 2005, PASSIA, Jerusalem

Topic: **Asian Islamic Countries & Jerusalem**

Participant(s): Michael Vatikiotis, Regional Representative, Center for Humanitarian Dialogue.

## Dialogue Sessions and Roundtables

12 February 2005, American Colony Hotel, Jerusalem

- Working Dinner with Christian & Muslim Religious Leaders & Academics on the occasion of the Visit of PM Kjell Magne Bondevik

Topics: **(1) Inter-Religious Dialogue;**

**(2) The Situation of Muslims and Christians in Jerusalem under Israeli Occupation;**

**(3) The Role of Education in Promoting Understanding of Other Religions**

Norwegian PM Delegation: Kjell Magne Bondevik, Prime Minister of Norway; Odd Jostein Saeter, State Secretary, Office of the Prime Minister; Sten Arne Rosnes, Representative of Norway, Ramallah; Jorg-Willy Bronebakk, Deputy Secretary General, Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Bente Angell-Hansen, Director General, Office of the Prime Minister; Oivind Ostang, Director of Information, Office of the Prime Minister; Arne Bjornstad, Senior Adviser, Office of the prime Minister; Guri Solberg, Adviser, Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Runar Kinn, Police Chief Superintendent; Oivind Holm, Police Inspector, Ulf Anders Dobloug, Police Inspector; Einar Bern Farstad, Police Inspector.

Participant(s): Sten Arne Rosnes, Representative of Norway, Ramallah; Dr. Jonas Jolie, 1st Secretary Political, Representative of Norway, Ramallah; H.B Msngr Michel Sabbah, Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem; Rt. Rev. Dr. Munib Younan, Evangelical Lutheran Bishop of Jordan & the Holy Land; Rt. Rev. Riah Abul Assal, Anglican Bishop of Jerusalem, Anglican St. George's Cathedral; Dr. Emile Jarjou'i, Member, PLC & PLO; Dr. Albert Aghazarian, Lecturer, Translator, Expert on the History of Jerusalem; Adnan Hussein, Engineer, Director General of the Islamic Waqf (Religious Institutions & Property); Nazmi Ju'beh, Assistant professor of History, Birzeit University; Nahla Assali; Sheikh Dr. Mustafa Abu Sway, Professor of Philosophy, Director, Islamic Research Center, Al-Quds University;

15 March 2005, PASSIA, Jerusalem

Topic: **The Church & Jerusalem - Perspectives of the Vatican & the World Council of Churches**

Speaker: Rev. Chris Ferguson, Jerusalem Representative Commission of the Churches on International Affairs, World Council of Churches

Participant(s): Ray Dolphin, UNRWA; Andy Pring, Sabeel; Dr.Naim Ateek, Sabeel; Adnan Hussein, Engineer, Waqf; Jamil Hamami, Lecturer, Al-Quds University; Russ Siler, Lutheran Pastor; Hasan Al-Qiq, Engineer; Mohammed Nusseibeh, Engineer; Simona Gallotta, Political Analyst; Samer Nusseibeh, Engineer; Samia Khoury, Volunteer; Kjell Jonasson, Secr. Int.; Robert Traer, Ethics Teacher; Elise Aghazarian, PASSIA.

20 July 2005, PASSIA, Jerusalem

Topic: **Islamic Schools of Jurisprudence: Discussion of Methodologies**

Speaker: Dr. Abdul Rahman Abbad, Islamic Science and Appealing Committee

Participant(s): Mohammed Salim Ali, Lecturer, Al-Quds University; Dr.Mustafa Abu Sway, Director, Islamic Research Director, Al-Quds University; Abdul Karim Zurba, Imam, Al-Aqsa Mosque; Mazen Ahram, Imam; Sayel Sheikh Ali, Director, Furqan School; Abed Abu Diab; Yasmine Kaloti, Social Worker, PLPPA; Aysa Wazwaz, Student, Contemporary Islamic Studies; Maryam Wazaz, Student.▼



17 October 2005, Ambassador Hotel, Jerusalem

Topic: **Muslim-Christian Meeting (Ramadan Iftar)**

Organized by: PASSIA

Participant(s): Sheikh Mohammed Hussein, Director, Al-Aqsa Mosque; Sheikh Azzam-Al Khatib; Sheikh Jamil Hammami, Lecturer, Al-Quds University; Adnan Hussein, Engineer, Director, Islamic Waqf; Dr.Mustafa Abu Swai, Director, Islamic Research Center, Al-Quds University; Abdul Qader Tahboub, Engineer, Ibrahim Abu Lafi; Muez Nashashibi, Engineer; Jamal Ghosheh; Ahmed Hashem Zughayyar, PLC; Hatem Abdul Qader, PLC; Isam Anani, Lawyer; Abed Abu Diab; Albert Aghazarian, Historian, Freelance Translator; Dr. Bernard Sabella, Director, DSPR; Wisam Touma, Air France; Dr. Emil Jarjou'i, PLC; Suheil Dawwani, Father; Attalla Hanna, Patriarche; Father Humam, Latin Patriarchate; Archbishop Munib Younan. ▲



14 November 2005, Bethlehem University, Bethlehem

Topic: **Muslim-Christian Relations**

Speaker(s): Dr. Mitri Al-Raheb; Dr. Rafiq Khoury; Dr. Mahdi Abdul Hadi

Participant(s): Bethlehem University Staff and Students; Bethlehem Community

## Seminars and Workshops

10 January 2005, Notre Dame of Jerusalem Center, Jerusalem.

**Topic:** Meeting with Ecumenical Accompaniers in Palestine and Israel

**Organized by:** World Council of Churches, Geneva

**Attended by:** Former US President Jimmy Carter

9 February, 2005 PASSIA, Jerusalem

**Topic:** Prophet David in Islamic & Christian Sources

**Speakers:** Fr. Rafiq Khoury, Sheikh Jamil Hammami

**Participant(s):** Sayel Sheikh Ali, Al Furqan School; Sister Vicky Giacaman, Principle of St. Joseph's School; Mahira Dajani, President, Board of Trustees, D.T.A; Sheikh Ekrima Sabri, Mufti of Jerusalem & Palestine; Samer Nusseibeh, Engineer; Dr. Mustafa Abu Sway, Lecturer, Al-Quds University; Mohammed Nusseibeh, Engineer; Adnan Hussein, Engineer, General Director of the Jerusalem Islamic Waqf; Fadi Hidmi, Welfare Association; Hasan Al-Qiq, Engineer; Jacob Abu Asab, Administrative Director; Elise Aghazarian, PASSIA.

13 April 2005, PASSIA, Jerusalem

**Topic:** Prophet David in the three Monotheistic Faiths

**Speakers:** Rabbi Michael Klein-Katz; Dr. Mustafa Abu Sway; Fr. David Neuhaus



Rabbi Michael Klein-Katz



Dr. Mustafa Abu Sway



Fr. David Neuhaus



**Participant(s):** Mitzi Waddell, SOAS, University of London; Bill Belk, Businessman; Michael Barner, Lecturer, University of London; Eman Abu Sway, Teacher; Irmey-Stocher, Physician; Mohammed Nusseibeh, Engineer, Member, Higher Islamic Council; Alfonso Estrada, Student; Chris Ferguson, WCC, Jerusalem Representative; Sally Klein-Katz, Educator; Samer Nusseibeh, Engineer; Rhonda Amer, Program Coordinator, Sabeel; Nora Carmi, Community Building, Sabeel; Niall Holohan, Diplomat, Irish Representative Office, Ramallah; Elise Aghazarian, PASSIA. ▲



8 November 2005, Martin Luther Center, Old City ◀

**Topic: Ecumenical Action in the Region**

**Participant(s):** Chris Ferguson, WCC; Moses Musonga, FWCC-AS (Quakers); Anne Veiteberg, Norwegian Church Aid, Kenya; Thabisile Msezani, South African Council of Churches; HE Archbishop Seraphim Kykkotis, Africa; Ebesharde Renz, WCC; Jonathan Frerichs, WCC; Sjoend Hangsma, Protestant Church, Netherlands; Hans

Moter Hauger, Norwegian Church Aid; Janet Timsk, South African Council of Churches; Costandi Mustaklem, WCC; Metropolitan Ciennadios, WCC.

## Conferences

10 January 2005, Knights Palace Hotel, Old City, Jerusalem

**Topic: Meeting of the Assembly of Catholic Ordinaries of the Holy Land with Bishops of Europe and North America to discuss the General Situation in Palestine and Israel**

**Speakers:** Dr. Mahdi Abdul Hadi, Chairman of PASSIA; Mr. Stuart Schoffman, Associate Editor of the Jerusalem Report

**Organized by:** The Latin Patriarchate, Jerusalem

**Participant(s):** Archbishop Brendan O'Brien, Archbishop of St John, President, Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, Canada; Mgr William Fay, General Secretary, USCCB, USA; John Carr, Secretary, Dept of Social Development and World Peace, USCCB, USA; Fr Rob Waller, Holy Land Christian ecumenical Foundation, USA; Father Jose Antonio Martinez, Secretariat, Spanish Bishops' Conference; Andreas Weyringer, Secretary to Bishops Andreas Laun, Austrian Bishops' Conference, Austria; Mgr Piergiuseppe Vacchelli, Under-Secretary, Catholic Bishops' Conference of Italy, Italy; Hermann-Josef Grossimlinghaus, Executive Director of the Commission for International Church Affairs, German Bishops' Conference, Germany; Bishop William Kenney CP, Cathiloc Foundation, Gothenburg, Sweden; Mgr Pierre Burcher, Auxiliary Bishop, Diocese of Lausanne, Geneva & Freiburg, Swiss Bishops' Conference, Switzerland; Dr. David Ryall, Assistant General Secretary, Department of international Affairs, CBCEW, UK; Mgr Mario Paquette PH, general Secretary, Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, Canada; Bishop William Skylstad, President, USCCB, USA; Rateb Rabie KHS, President, Holy Land Christian Ecumenical Foundation, USA; Bishop Joan Enric Vives I Sicilia, Bishop of Urgell, Co-Prince of Andorra, Spain; Bishop Dr. Andreas Laun OSFS, Auxiliary Bishop of Salzburg, Austrian Bishops' Conference, Austria; Mgr Andre Lacrampe, Metropolitan Archbishop for Eastern France, Bishops' Conference of France, President, National Council for Solidarity, France; Dr. Ulrich Poner, Director, department for International Church Affairs and Migration, German Bishops' Conference, Germany; Dr. Rudolf Solzbacher, Director, Dept for International Church Affairs of the Archdiocese of Cologne, Germany; Mgr Peter Fleetwood, Council of European Bishops' Conferences, CCEE, Switzerland; Archbishop Patrich Kelly, Archbishop of Liverpool, Vice-President, CBCEW,UK; Dr Michael Whelan, Knights of the Holy Sepulchre, UK; Tracey McClure, Journalist, Vatican Radio, USA; Brother Vincent Malham FSC, President, Vice Councillor, Bethlehem University, Bethlehem; Fr Emilie Salaitah, Latin Patriarchate; Fr Robert Fortin AA, Latin Patriarchate; H.B. Msgr Michel Sabbah, Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem; Father Pierre Grech, Secretary General, Assembly of Catholic Ordinaries of the Holy Land; H.E. Msgr Giacinto-Boulos Marcuzzo, Latin Patriarchal Vicar for Israel; H.E. Mgr. Jean-Baptiste Gourion, Auxiliary Latin Patriarch; H.E. Archbishop Paul Nabil Sayah, Maronite Patriarchal Exarch; Fr William Shomali, Latin Patriarchate; Claudette Habash, Caritas Jerusalem; Maher Turjman, Regional Director, Pontifical Mission for Palestine; H.E. Msgr

Kevoork Khazoumian, Armenian Catholic Patriarchal Exarch; Rev. Fr. Pierbattista Pizzaballa OFM, Custos of the Holy Land; Rev.Fr. Paul Collin, Chaldean Patriarchal Vicariate; Donald J Rogers; Fr Majdi Siryani, Latin Patriarchate Director, Legal Department; Fr Shawki Bateriaian, Latin Patriarchate; H.E. Pietro Sambì, Apostolic Nuncio to Israel; Fr Markus Stephan Bugnyar, Rector, Austrian Hospice; H.E, Mgr Georges Haddad, Apostolic Administrator, Haifa; Brother Cyril Litecky FSC, Assistant to Vincent Malham, Bethlehem University, Bethlehem; Fr Michael O'Sullivan, Director, Maison d'Abraham, Secours Catholique- Caritas France; Arvid Weinlich, German Association of the Holy Land ; Rev Archimandrita Mtanios Haddad, Greek Catholic Patriarchal Exarch(Melkite); H.E. Msgr Gregor Peter Malki, Syrian Catholic Patriarchal Exarch; ; Fr Romano Stephen Almagno, USA Holy Land Commissary, Custos of the Holy land.

4 February, 2005 Beirut, Lebanon

**Topic: Christians & Muslims: Together for Jerusalem**

1. Meeting with: Cardinal Mar Nasrallah Butros Sfeir, Patriarch of Antioch and the Middle East for Maronites.
2. Meeting with: Sheikh Abdul Amir Qabalan, Deputy-President, Shi'ite Higher Council; Sheikh Ahmad Qabalan, the Ja'fari Mufti.
3. Meeting with: the Arab Group for Christian-Muslim Dialogue: Rev. Riad Jarjour, Sec. Gen., Arab Group for Muslim-Christian Dialogue; Judge Abbas Halabi, President, Arab Group for Muslim-Christian Dialogue; Sheikh Hani Fahs, member.

26 February-I March 2005, Bahrain Kingdom

**Topic: Moderation in Islam between Theory and Practice**

Organized by: The Arab Thought Forum, Amman, Jordan

20-23 March 2005, Cairo, Egypt

**Topic: Christian-Muslim Relations & Future**

Organized by: Arab Group for Christian-Muslim Dialogue, Beirut, Lebanon

6-10 June 2005, Geneva, Switzerland

**Topic: Critical Moment in Inter-religious Relations and Dialogue: Thinking Together, Assessing the present and Imagining the Future.**

Organized by: The World Council of Churches ▼



9-11 September 2005, Makkah Al-Mukarramah, Saudi Arabia\_

Topic: **Forum of Scholars and Intellectuals Preparatory to the Extraordinary Session of the Islamic Summit Conference**

Organized by: The Organization of the Islamic Conference

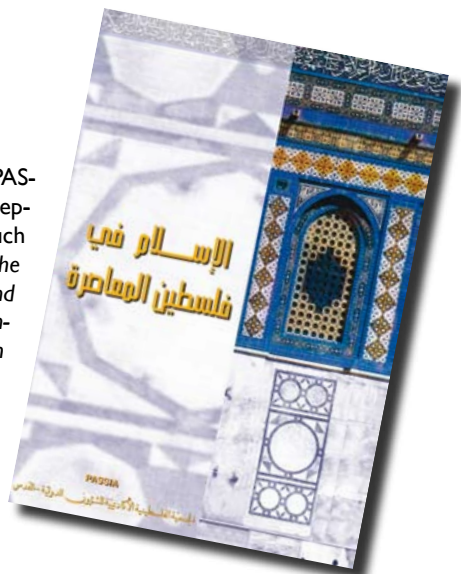
## Publications

### ■ **Islam in Contemporary Palestine**

November 2005 (Arabic, 110 pages)

by *various authors*

This publication contains the proceedings of a PAS-SIA conference held under the same title in September 2004. Papers are dealing with subjects such as *The Islamic Movements; Islamic Movements, the PA and Israeli Occupation; Jerusalem, Holy Places and Conflict Resolutions; Islamic-Christian Relations: Convivencia and Interfaith Dialogue; Islam and Women Issues in Palestine; Islam and the Palestinian Constitution; The Islamic Movement within the Green Line; Muslims in Europe and the Palestinian Issue; and The Image of Islam in the US Media and the Palestine Question.*



### ■ **Introduction into Islamic Culture**

December 2005 (Arabic, 105 pages)

by *various authors*

This publication is presented as a text book to be used in universities and elsewhere and contains 12 academic papers dealing with subjects such as *History of Islam, Faith in Islam, The Concept of Sunna and Hadith, The Islamic Economy, Women in Islam, Islam and other Monotheistic Faiths, Islam and Science, and Arabic Language and the Islamic Culture.*

