

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 2010/2011 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

13 February 2010, PASSIA, Jerusalem

Topic: **The Islamic Higher Committee in Jerusalem**

Participant(s): Sheikh Ikrima Sabri; Sheikh Jamil Hamami; Dr. Mustafa Abu Sway.

20 July 2010, PASSIA, Jerusalem

Topic: **Muslim Holy Sites**

Participant(s): Hafida Talhaoui, Student, Utrecht University; Samira Talhaoui, Student, Amsterdam University.

1 September 2010, PASSIA, Ramallah

Topic: **Palestinian Christian Issues**

Participant(s): Ghassan Khatib; Dr. Bernard Sabella; Father Mitri Raheb; Dr. Mahdi Abdul Hadi; Mr. Ziad Bandak.



29 December 2010, PASSIA Office, Jerusalem.

Topic: **Religion, Politics and the Future of Palestine**

Participant(s): Kevin Carnahan, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Philosophy and Religion, Central Methodist University; Naser R. Ideis, Senior Information Specialist, Consulate General of the United States of America, Jerusalem.

Dialogue Sessions and Roundtables

10 May 2010, Ecole Biblique, Nablus Rd., Jerusalem

Topic: Open discussion of the new PASSIA publication "HAMAS from Resistance to Government?"

Speaker(s): The author Paola Caridi, and discussants Amira Hass and Joharah Baker, Journalists

Participants: Audience of over 100 Palestinian, Israeli and foreign participants.



10 October 2010, PASSIA Office, Jerusalem

Topic: Jerusalem and the Religious Environment

Participant(s): Bishop Michel Dubost, Bishop of Evry (near Paris) ; Mr. Pierre Levene, Secretary General, Secours Catholique, Caritas France; Mr. Henry Jacolin, Board Member, Secours Catholique, Catholic France, (former Ambassador of France to Cyprus); Father Michael P. O'Sullivan, Director Maison d'Abraham, Secours Catholique, Caritas France, Jerusalem.

Seminars and Workshops

20 March 2010, Ambassador Hotel, Jerusalem

Topic: Islamic Higher Committee in Jerusalem

Participants: Fakhri Abu Diab, Committee for the Defense of the Land Silwan; Fouad Dakkak, Consulting Engineering; Mustafa Abu Sway, Lecturer, Al-Quds University; Muhsen Ghousheh, Engineering; Farouq Abdel Rahim, Doctor; Hisham Hidmi, Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs, Al-Quds Open University; Fathallah Al-Husseini, Lawyer, General Director Legal Affairs, Ministry of Waqf; Muhammad Nuseibeh, Engineering; Khaled Abu Arafah, Engineering; Abded Abu Diab; Mustafa Abu Zahra, Engineering; Yakoub Farrah; Darwish Hijazi, Engineering ; Jamil Hamami, Lecturer at Al-Quds University ; Mahdi Abdul Hadi, Chairman, Palestinian Academic

Society for the Study of International Affairs; Ibrahim Sabri, Member of Appeal Court ; Abdel Rahman Abbad, The Muslim Scholars & Ulama' in Palestine; Ahmad Hashem Zughair, Chairman of Jerusalem Arab Chamber of Commerce Industry; Ahmad Al-Batsh, Al-Rafah Committee; Hatem Abdel Qader, Jerusalem File, Fateh official; Nabil Hamoudeh; Ikremeh Sabri, Chairman of



Higher Islamic Council; Ibrahim Shaban, Lawyer & Lecturer at the Faculty of Law, Al-Quds University; Abdel Rahim Mahmoud; Hesham Al-Bakri, Chairman of the Jerusalem branch of the Engineers Association; Yousef Al-Dajani, Chairman of the Jerusalem District Electricity Company; Mazen Sinokrot, Businessman; Adnan Hussein, Governor of Jerusalem; Sari Nuseibeh, Head of Al-Quds University; I'tedal Al-Ashhab, Former Deputy Director of the Educational Jerusalem; Sana Dwaik, Accountant; Na'elah Sabri, Head, Islamic Women Society; Saidah Ekermawi, Al-Iman Secondary School for Girls; Bahieh Abdeen, Al-Iman Primary School for Girls.

27 April 2010, Ambassador Hotel, Jerusalem

Topic: Second Meeting of the Islamic Higher Committee in Jerusalem

Participants: Yousef Al-Dajani, Chairman of the Jerusalem District Electricity Company; Khaled Al-Kaloti, Engineer; Hesham Al-Bakri, Chairman of the Jerusalem branch of the Engineers Association; Ahmad Al-Shurafa, Jerusalem branch of the Engineers Association; Abdel Qader Hussein, Head, Faisal Hussein Foundation; Dr. Ikremeh Sabri, Chairman of Higher Islamic Council; Athallah Al-Husseini, Lawyer, General Director Legal Affairs, Ministry of Waqf; Issam Al-Anani, Lawyer; Adnan Hussein, Governor of Jerusalem; Ibrahim Shaban, Lawyer & Lecturer at the Faculty of Law- Al-Quds University; Ishaq Budeiri, Head, Arab Studies Society; Sheikh Jamil Hamami, Lecturer, Al-Quds University ; Mustafa Abu Zahra, Engineering; Ibrahim Sabri, Member of Appeal Court, Jerusalem; Abdel Rahman Abbad, The Muslim Scholars & Ulama' in Palestine; Firas Zaghaf,



Advisor, Dimensions; Farouq Abdel Rahim, Doctor; Khaled Abu Arafah, Engineer; Mohsen Ghosheh, Engineer; Issam Awad, Engineer; I'tedal Al-Ashhab, Former Deputy Director of the Educational Jerusalem; Dr. Mohammed Salim Ali, Lecturer, Al-Quds University; Darwish Hijazi, Engineering, Ahmad Al-Batsh, Al-Rafah Society; Sana Dwaik, Lawyer; Mazen Sinokrot, Private Sector.

10 May 2010, PASSIA Office , Jerusalem.

Topic: Third Meeting of the Islamic Higher Committee in Jerusalem

Participants: Sheikh Jamil Hamami, Lecturer, Al-Quds University ; Fathallah Al-Husseini, Lawyer, General Director Legal Affairs, Ministry of Waqf; Ibrahim Sabri, Member of Appeal Court, Jerusalem; Abdel Rahman Abbad, The Muslim Scholars & Ulama' in Palestine; Mazen Sinokrot, Private Sector.



8 June 2010, Legacy Hotel, Jerusalem

Topic: The Holy Places of Jerusalem: Emerging Actors & New Challenges since 2000

Speaker: Prof. Michael Dumper, *Professor in Middle East Politics, Exeter University, UK*

Participants: Kathy Bergen, Program Coordinator, The Friends International Center in Ramallah (FICR) ; Dr. Tarek Barakat, Director, Makassed Society; Elham Salameh, Director, YMCA; Paul Raymond, Communications Officer, Ecumenical Accompaniment Program in Palestine & Israel (EAPPI); Khalil Assali, Jerusalem Press; Nora Kort, Community Development; Dr. Mustafa Abu Sway, Lecturer, Al-Quds University; Dr. Bernard Sabella, PLC member, Jerusalem; Sune Fahlgren, Swedish Christian Study Centre, Lebona Mokhalajoe, Political Advisor, South African Representative Office, Ramallah; Gretchen Upholt, Volunteer Coordinator; Hisham Hidmi, Assistant Vice President, Academic Affairs, Al-Quds Open University; Dr. Arafat Hidmi, Chairman, Board of Directors, Makassed Charitable Islamic Society; Nora Carmi, Sabeel Coordinator; Dr. Munib Younan, Bishop, The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan & the Holy Land (ELCJHL); Baul Lent, Reverent; Muna Sheikh, Lawyer; Osama Halabi, Lawyer; Mohammad Zahaika, Journalist; Ian Alexander, Sabeel; Phadime Choshane, Diplomat, Representative Office of South Africa; Mohammad Abu Khair, Journalist, Al-Quds Newspaper, Jessle Park, International Development Student; Jaya Karsemeyer, Teacher; Ali Barakat, Engineer, Khalid Khatib, Engineer; Thomas Neu, Director, Carter Center, Ramallah; Lani Frerichs, Researcher; Bashir Barakat, Msc.; H. Sulayman, Professor

of General Linguistics & Comparative Religion; Peter Abu Shanab, Chairman, Holyland; Mazen Quity, Lawyer; Fadwa Al-Shaer.



16 June 2010, Ambassador Hotel, Jerusalem

Topic: The People of the Book: Between the Sacred Texts & Practice Life

1st Session: The People of the Book: Comprehensive Introduction

Speaker: Dr. Mohammed Salim Al-Awwa, *Secretary-General of the World Association of Muslim Scholars, Head of Egypt's Society for Culture & Dialogue, Cairo.*

2nd Session: The People of the Book: Between the Sacred Texts & Practice Life

Speakers: Rev. Dr. Jamal Khader, *Head, Religious Studies Department, Bethlehem University (Christian Reading)*; Rabbi David Rosen, *Director of Interreligious Affairs, Jerusalem (Jewish Reading)*; Dr. Abdel Rahman Abbad, *Lecturer, Al-Quds University (Muslim Reading)*



Participants: Fouad Abdeen, *Director Consultant*; Nora Carmi, *Sabeel Coordinator*; Khalil Assali, *Jerusalem Press*; Nora Kort, *Community Development*; Jamil Hammami, *Lecturer, Al-Quds University*; Khalid Kaloti, *Engineer*; Bashir Barakat, *Msc.*; Hanna Hallaq, *Lecturer, Bethlehem University*; Munib Younan, *Bishop, The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan & the Holy Land (ELCJHL)*; Baul Lent, *Reverent*; Rami Assali, *F.M.*; Mazen Nusseibeh, *Teacher*; Fouad Dakkak, *Engineering*; Katie Hight, *Executive Officer, Jerusalem Micro Finance*; Jamal Abdeen, *VT Director*; Imad Hirbawi; Mohammad Dajani, *Professor, Al-Quds University*; Dr. Hala Hallaq, *Dentist, Darwish Hijazi*; Engineer; Itidal Al-Ashhab, *Former Deputy Director of the Educational Jerusalem.*

28 June 2011, PASSIA, Jerusalem

Topic: Virgin Mary in the Christian Heritage and Islamic Faith

Speakers: Dr. Rev. Naim Ateeq, President, Al-Sabeel - Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center, Jerusalem; Dr. Rev. Rafiq Khoury, President, Latin Patriarchate Schools, Birzeit; Sheikh Dr. Mohammed Salim, Lecturer, School of Qur'an & Islamic Studies, Al-Quds University, Dr. Abdul Rahman Abbad, Lecturer, Al-Quds University.

Participants: Sheikh Dr. Ikremeh Sabri, Council for Waqf & Islamic Affairs; Dr. Bernard Sabella, PLC member, Jerusalem; Dr. Mustafa Abu Sway, Lecturer, Al-Quds University; Sheikh Jamil Hamami, Lecturer, Al-Quds University; Dr. Najeh Bkerat, Researcher; Abed Abu Diab, Advisor.



Conferences

4-6 March 2010, Cairo, Egypt

Topic: Muslim-Christian Dialogue

- (1)- Dialogue program with World Council of Churches
- (2)- Program on Jerusalem (24-27 October 2010)
- (3)- Muslim-Christian Relations: The case of Egypt
- (4)- Muslim-Christian Relations: The case of Lebanon

Organizer: Arab Group for Muslim-Christian Dialogue



25 July 2011, Best Eastern Hotel, Ramallah

Topic: The People of the Book - Common Roots and Shared Responsibilities

Organizer: PASSIA

Speakers: Dr. Mustafa Abu Sway, Professor, Al-Quds University, Jerusalem; Sheikh Jamil Hamami, Lecturer, Al-Quds University, Jerusalem; Father Dr. Mitri Raheb, Dar An-Nadwa, Diyar, Dr. Hussein Tarturi, Hebron University, Hebron; Bethlehem; Father Dr. Jamal Khader, Head, Religious Studies Department, Bethlehem University; Dr. Sa'ed Suliman Al-Qaq, Dean of the Shari'a College, Al-Quds University; Dr. Musa Al-Baseet, Al-Quds University; Dr. Hafez Mohammed Al-Ja'abri, Hebron University.

Participants: Ayman Nathmi Daoud, Director, Palestine Academy, Ramallah; Ahmad Abbas, Ministry of Planning, Ramallah; Lane Pope; Samir Hejazi, Accountant, UNRWA; Hanan Emseeh, General Director, Ministry of Local Government; Abdel Rahman Abu Arafah, General Director, Arab Thought Forum; Ali Sabri Alloush, Al-Quds Open University; Isam Badran, Al-Quds Open University; A. Smith,



Lawyer; Dr. T. Jayasinghe, Representative of Sri-Lanka, Ramallah; Rania Filfil, Translator; Dr. Sadat Jaber, Al-Quds Open University; Imad Khatib, Palestine Academy; Amani Asmar, Ministry of Local Government; Fadyah Abdel Hadi; Dr. Isam Muslat; Adnan Sha'rawi; Abd Al-Mohsen Abed; Shadia Makhoulf, Head of Quality Department, Al-Quds Open University; Khoulod Al-Masri, Member, Nablus Municipality; Jalal Khader, Lawyer; Khaled Zawawi, Ministry of Waqf; Awni Fares, Silwad School, Ramallah; Dr. Isam Abu Snaineh, Al-Quds Open University, Hebron;

Dr. Abdel Rahman Abbad, The Muslim Scholars & Ulama' in Palestine; Aziz Abu Ras, Al-Quds University; Nabil Hamoudeh, Al-Aqareyeh; Dr. Ali Mohamad Abu Ras, Arabic Institute, Abu Dis, Jerusalem; Isam Abdel Rahman Awad, Architect; Yacoub Abu Assab, Masar; Dr. Ibrahim Abu Salim, Member, PLC; Bassam Qatnani, Al-Marsad; Bushra Awad, Al- Marsad; Iyad Al-Masrouji.



PROGRAM:

9.00-9.15 **Welcoming Address**
 Dr. Mahdi Abdul Hadi, *Head of PASSIA*

SESSION I:

9.30-10:00 **The Clash of Civilizations**
 Dr. Mustafa Abu Sway, *Professor, Al-Quds University, Jerusalem*

10.00 -10:30 **Islamic Perspective on the “Other”**
 Sheikh Jamil Hamami, *Lecturer, Al-Quds University, Jerusalem*

10.30-11.00 **Religion and State**
 Father Dr. Mitri Raheb, *Dar An-Nadwa, Bethlehem*

11.00-11.30 General Discussion

11.30-11.45 Break

SESSION II:

11.45-12.15 **The Jurisprudence (*Al-Fiqh*) of Muslim Minorities in Non-Muslim Societies**
 Dr. Hussein Tarturi, *Hebron University*

12.15-12.45 **The Christian Faith and the “Other” (Vatican II)**
 Father Dr. Jamal Khader , *Head – Religious Studies Department, Bethlehem University*

12.45-13.15 **Ahl Ath-Thimma (Protected Minorities) and Citizenship**
 Dr. Said Al-Qaq, *Dean of the Shari’a College, Al-Quds University*

13.15-13.45 General Discussion

13.45-14.45 Lunch Break

SESSION III:

14.45-15.15 **The Judeo-Christian Heritage in Islamic Literature (*Israeliyyat*)**
 Dr. Musa Al-Baseet, *Al-Quds University*

15.15-15.45 **The People of the Book in the Islamic Faith**
 Dr. Hafez Ja’abari, *Hebron University*

15.45-16.45 General Discussion

Publication

Virgin Mary in the Christian Heritage and Islamic Faith

Various contributors

August 2011 (Arabic, 53 pages)

In addition to an introduction by Dr. Mustafa Abu Sway, this book compiles papers by Dr. Abdul Rahman Abbad (“Mary – The Lady of Universe”), Fr. Rafiq Khouri (“Virgin Mary in the Christian Heritage”), Rev. Dr. Naim Ateek (“The Saint Virgin Mary”), and Dr. Mohammed Salim Ali (“The El-Sidiya – Virgin Mary in Islamic Faith and Heritage”), which were presented at a workshop that formed part of the 2011 activities of PASSIA’s Religious Studies Unit.

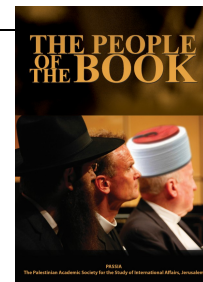


The People of the Book

Various contributors

September 2011 (Arabic)

This publication contains the papers presented at a PASSIA conference (“*The People of the Book - Common Roots and Shared Responsibilities*”), which discussed and explored the three Abrahamic religions (Judaism, Islam and Christianity) in terms of spirituality, history and tradition as observed by each faith, their perspectives on the “other,” their relationship with the state, as well as issues related to jurisprudence and the treatment of minorities.



Palestinian (Muslim/Christian) Holy Sites in Jerusalem

by PASSIA Team

September 2011 (English)

This book is the outcome of a special research project on *Palestinian (Muslim/Christian) Holy Sites in Jerusalem*, which lists and describes those holy sites, their religious significance, as well as their Biblical/Qur’anic origins and references. The book serves as a guide to the mosques, churches, burial places, and other Muslim or Christian sites of worship in the Holy City.

