

They said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?" . . . They got up and returned to Jerusalem . . . and they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread. While they were talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you."

~Luke 24:31-36

Historically, each of the three Abrahamic traditions—Judaism, Christianity, and Islam—has been slow to respond to the Abrahamic mandate of *tikkun olam*, yet all too ready to hear a divine mandate to dominate or destroy their enemies. The Crusades, European colonialism, the Jewish settlement movement, and more recent acts of invasion, occupation and terrorism: In these, adherents of all the Abrahamic faiths have sullied their common heritage, even while claiming to act in God's name.

Nowhere has this perverse history been played out so fully and so persistently as in Israel/Palestine. This has become the defining conflict of our times. Many Episcopalians are pro-Israel, seeing a kinship with the Jewish people in our Judeo-Christian traditions, and a biblical basis for Israel's claim to the Holy Land. Other Episcopalians are pro-Palestine, motivated by their compassion for the suffering of Palestinians, particularly their Palestinian brothers and sisters in Christ.

Is there a way to be both pro-Israel and pro-Palestine? What does that look like? How can we as Episcopalians support the highest aspirations

of both sides without seeming to approve of the violent or oppressive tactics of either side? How can we act as honest brokers without being morally neutered? How can we stop feeding the conflict, and start bringing healing to the Holy Land?

Anglicans generally, and Episcopalians in particular, have a unique calling with many gifts to contribute to the establishment of a lasting peace in the Holy Land. But we have not yet fully grasped these gifts as a church, nor understood how to develop them and bring them to bear upon the festering crisis in Israel/ Palestine.

Where to Begin?

May 19-21, 2008, **Reconcilers. net**, in conjunction the **Hands in Healing Reconciliation Task Force** of the Diocese of Los Angeles, will host *Facing Jerusalem: The role of The Episcopal Church in the Middle East*, a training institute to impart the vision, tools and techniques of faith-based reconciliation. More than a seminar, it will be a supported and facilitated conversation between Episcopalians who share a deep concern for the situation in the Middle East, yet who may disagree sharply about the causes, and the desired outcome, and strategies for handling this conflict. It will be a workshop for building a shared vision of what we as The Episcopal Church can contribute to the cause of reconciliation in the Middle East, where we can begin developing strategies for bringing healing to the profoundly wounded peoples of this region.

While we will devote time and discussion to the history of this particular conflict and to the pathology of conflict generally, our primary focus will be on the Abrahamic tradition of faith-based reconciliation, embodied most clearly in Jesus of Nazareth. It is through this lens that we will try to

discern the path we are called to follow. This conference will be more concerned with personal transformation than with international diplomacy.

Conference Framework:

Eight speakers will present the principles of faith-based reconciliation as a moral vision:

- Pluralism
- Inclusion
- Peacemaking
- Social justice
- Forgiveness
- Healing historical wounds
- God's Sovereignty
- Atonement

These principles will provide us with a framework for analyzing the conflict in the Middle East—and within ourselves. Along the way, we learn to recognize the spiritual forces that drive and aggravate the conflict, and we will invoke the help of the Holy Spirit to overcome unforgiveness and heal relationships.

Participants, who will include representatives of all three Abrahamic faiths, will learn key skills like listening and ethical speech; strategies for healing personal relationships, transforming conflict, building bridges, making a meaningful corporate apology and healing historical wounds.

As we are introduced to these tools, we will apply them immediately to the conflicts at hand: their origins, development and consequences. We begin envisioning new ways of being in community that permit us to contain conflict, creatively channel it, and turn it to God's purposes. Ultimately, participants come away with an experience of the transforming love of God reconciling the world to God's self.

The presentations will alternate with small and large group exercises, and plenary sessions, culminating in a Service of Reconciliation. In addition to imparting principles and skills, these create

a context and a climate for God's work of transformation in human hearts. Woven into this process is a Learning Conversation; a supported and facilitated dialogue which explores intractable identity-based conflicts. This approach consists of five steps:

- Sharing life journeys and finding common ground
- Sharing perceptions of the conflict
- Sharing different communities' narratives of history and perception of historical wounds
- Sharing where each has experienced and caused offense to the other
- Engaging in problem-solving using a reconciliation lens

Conference Goals:

The conference is intended to empower individuals as reconcilers; develop a shared vision for bringing healing to the Middle East; provide the training called for by General Convention '06 resolution A-039; and assist dioceses in setting up their own reconciliation teams.

Conference Leadership:

The seminar will be directed by Canon Brian Cox, with a team of trained reconcilers gathered from around the nation. Canon Cox, through his experience with the International Center for Religion and Diplomacy in Washington, DC brings a rich experience in both the Abrahamic tradition and the Middle East, where he is currently spearheading two faith-based reconciliation initiatives.

About reconcilers.net

Reconcilers.net is a growing movement of Episcopalians working to impart faith-based reconciliation as both a spirituality and a moral vision for our life together in the Episcopal Church. This is a dynamic living movement, growing and evolving as

existing methods are applied in new settings. An earlier stage in this movement was the New Commandment Task Force, which held several conferences of this type in 1999-2000. Those conferences led to the adoption of Resolution D023a by General Convention in 2000. That resolution proclaimed that the first 12 years of the 21st century will be a Season of Reconciliation within the Episcopal Church.

About Hands in Healing

Hands in Healing is a ministry of the Diocese of Los Angeles to teach alternatives to violence. It has provided a platform for the Los Angeles core group of reconcilers.net. In 2001, the "Diocesan Reconciliation Team" as it was then known, was commissioned by the Bishop of Los Angeles to train 70 leaders of his diocese. In 2003, graduates of that training hosted "A National Conversation About the Conflict in the Episcopal Church." That conversation produced a statement which evolved into Resolution A-039, adopted by General Convention in 2006. It urges the leadership of The Episcopal Church to get formal reconciliation training and to carry those tools back to their dioceses.

Registration & More Information:

Visit our website, www.reconcilers.net for further information about reconcilers.net and how to register for *Facing Jerusalem*.

Visit www.handsinhealing.org for information about Hands in Healing.

reconcilers.net
in conjunction with
HANDS IN HEALING

Three great faith traditions trace their spiritual roots to Abraham. As children of Abraham, they share the "Abrahamic mandate" of *tikkun olam*: To heal, repair and transform the world. But this heritage has a dark side, a side which might be called the "Abrahamic dilemma": How to respond when God seems to inspire hostility and violence?

2ND ANNUAL RECONCILIATION TRAINING EVENT

**FACING JERUSALEM:
THE ROLE OF THE EPISCOPAL
CHURCH IN THE MIDDLE EAST**

MAY 19 TO 21, 2008 ■ LOS ANGELES, CA