



...BRIEFLY

Presbyterian Peace Fellowship

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www.presbypeacefellowship.org ppfwitness@gmail.com

Trusting the Nonviolence of Jesus Christ Today

Hearing the Bethlehem Call

By Rick Ufford-Chase

More than 60 representatives from 15 countries around the world met in Bethlehem in December and agreed to continue the work of Kairos Palestine by calling for a Kairos Movement for Justice around the world. Presbyterian Peace Fellowship Executive Director Rick Ufford-Chase and National Committee member Judith Lee participated in the conference. (See the entire text of the Bethlehem Call on the PPF web site.)

Christian Palestinians cry out from within the suffering in their country. They suffer under the Israeli occupation. They cry for hope in the absence of all hope. These Christian Palestinians gathered over 60 people from 15 countries to Bethlehem to hear their cry, to hear their hearts breaking. Church leaders from every tradition spoke to the *Kairos Palestine* document they wrote two years ago. The group listened to the Christian leaders in Palestine interpret their own *Kairos Palestine*. Those gathered in Bethlehem heard the hearts of the occupied Palestinians breaking, then met in small, diverse groups, and listened to one another.

This conference wasn't just a plea to support the Palestinians; it was an invitation to contextualize the work of Kairos in new places around the world. It was a call to South Africans to awaken the S. African church from the "Kairos siesta" - a complacency which has overtaken them in the years since Nelson

Mandela took office. It was a call to people from India to the Philippines to examine the church's inaction that results in the suffering of the oppressed. It is a call to western European countries to re-examine their own complicity in Israel's ever-expanding occupation of Palestine, and to insist that the church will step-up. It is a demanding call to the churches in the USA to acknowledge the ways in which our timidity has emboldened the USA to cause immeasurable suffering not only to Palestinians but the poor and oppressed throughout the world.

Together, more than 60 representatives from 15 countries around the world agreed that they will take on the work of building a Kairos Movement for Justice. Together they wrote *The Bethlehem Call*. *The Bethlehem Call* is a bold, prophetic, poetic, pastoral and demanding call on Christians around the world to live as God intends and to be concerned for both the oppressed and the oppressor and end systems of injustice.

Kairos USA, led by the Presbyterian Peace Fellowship and other concerned Christians, has taken a first step toward answering Palestinian Christians and The Bethlehem Call by calling Christian scholars, theologians and leaders from around the country to Stony Point to listen, to answer, and to write a Kairos USA document that will be a call to the church to end its complicity in the suffering of peoples around the world. We'll have a progress report on this work at our April convocation (see p 8).

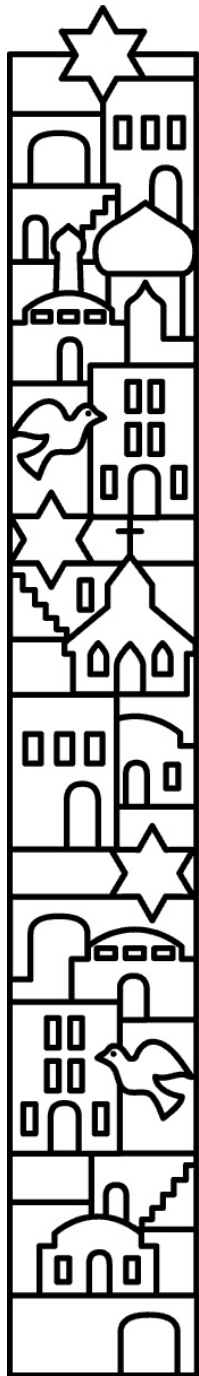
The Journey to Bethlehem

By Judith Lee

Rick and I entered Bethlehem via an Israeli checkpoint that led to a passage through the 26 ft. concrete wall that surrounds Bethlehem. It is a city with an 8-meter wall that even snakes within it, dividing Palestinians from each other. The wall divides family members, businesses from customers, and farmers from their olive groves and their land. Bethlehem is surrounded by illegal Israeli settlements that keep expanding and encroaching into Palestinian land.

Yet I saw faith and hope where there was no reason for either. I sat with Rami (an Israeli) and Bassam (a Palestinian) in a restaurant dedicated to providing a place where all people can meet in peace. Rami's daughter is dead. Killed by a Palestinian suicide bomber. Bassam's daughter is dead. Killed by an Israeli soldier as she skipped home from school. Children killed by this awful, raging occupation and systemic violence. Yet we hugged, and then visited for hours. The lives of Bassam and Rami overflow with the passion to act against the violence, to tell school children how the violence and the occupation must end now. Never have I seen more love than I witnessed that day between these two unlikely brothers. They have chosen one another with faith, hope, and love.

Jesus was born in Bethlehem under occupation by the Romans. Bethlehem is still occupied, but now by Israel. I saw the faith and hope of our Palestinian Christian sisters and brothers, crying out to us. Will we answer? Will we make a difference? Maybe it's our last chance. I thank God for our Muslim, Jewish and Christian sisters and brothers so far away, determined to seek justice nonviolently, in love. How will we respond?



General Assembly Internship with PPF

The Presbyterian Peace Fellowship (PPF) is seeking applicants for an internship at the PC(USA) 220th General Assembly, June 29- July 7, 2012. Applicants ought to be energetic, engaged, and interested in learning about and participating in the General Assembly (GA) advocacy and legislative process—particularly as it relates to peacemaking, nonviolence, and justice. These interns will assist PPF with drafting briefing papers for commissioners, staffing our exhibit hall booth, helping with the Peace Breakfast, monitoring a GA committee, meeting with PPF National Committee members, staff, and our partner organizations, and helping coordinate overtone advocates.

Applicants are to be under 30 at the time of the 220th General Assembly in Pittsburgh, PA, June 29- July 7, 2012. Interns' expenses will be paid by the PPF, including travel, housing, and some GA meals such as the Peace Breakfast. The application deadline is February 15, 2012. See the PPF web site at www.presbypeacefellowship.org for information.

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Carrying a Cross at the SOA Vigil

By Shannan Vance-Ocampo

“Guillermo de Jesús Ariza.”

That was the name on the cross that I was given to carry at the School of the Americas Vigil in November. The SOA research team writes this about the massacre that killed Guillermo:

On 11 November 1988 heavily armed men drove in trucks into the center of Segovia, opened fire and threw grenades indiscriminately, killing 43 people, including three children, and wounding over 50 others. The regular garrisons of the police and military (belonging to the Batallón Bomboná of the 16th Brigade) stood by while the killers moved freely through the town for over an hour. Their entry appeared to have been facilitated by the removal of military checkpoints normally stationed on the road into the town. The paramilitary force made its getaway in three vehicles in which they traveled from Segovia through the neighboring town of Remedios towards Puerto Berrío. No attempt was made by the security forces to detain the group. Local army spokesmen immediately attributed the killing to guerrilla groups, but after the army version was challenged by survivors, the then Minister of the Interior, César Gaviria Trujillo, said a "right-wing paramilitary group" was responsible.

Now I had a cross with his Guillermo's name on it in my hands twenty-three years later, a cross I carried with me all day, lifted high in the air with each “Presente!”, a cross I placed into the gates of a military base in my own country that has trained so many people who have returned to their countries throughout Latin America to commit massacres, torture, and intimidation of their people. I thought about Guillermo all day during the Vigil outside the gates of Ft. Benning—I wondered about his life, and who he was—and I prayed for the family that I am sure is still grieving the senseless loss of his life.

This past year the Presbyterian Peace Fellowship worked tirelessly along with our other grassroots partners to try to stop Congress from passing the US-Colombia Free Trade Agreement. One of the



main reasons for this was that we have been told by our partners in Colombia that the CFTA will allow for great incursion of multi-nationals to take over and exploit the land of Colombia. Our program of Accompaniment in Colombia is with displaced communities and a church that has committed its life and mission to walking beside and serving the displaced people of Colombia. We worked against the CFTA because we know it will only increase land-grabs and forced displacement in Colombia.

The cross I carried at the SOA for Guillermo de Jesús Ariza represents the struggle that we have been about this past year. Land grabs. Multinationals teaming up with paramilitary forces and even parts of the Colombian armed forces to keep local people off the land that multinational interests want to exploit for economic gain. Greed that leads to death of people and death of a way of life.

I was honored to receive Guillermo's cross, to have the opportunity to go back and figure out who he was and to be reminded that the struggle we in PPF were a part of this fall is part of a larger and deeper struggle of conscience against war, militarism, death, and violence. Carrying his cross last Sunday was an act of faithfulness for me. I keep thinking about how honored I was to carry Guillermo's cross.

Peaceseekers to be honored at General Assembly

The Presbyterian Peace Fellowship will present the 2011 Peaceseeker Award to Victor Makari and the 2012 Peaceseeker Award to Alice Winters at the General Assembly Peace Breakfast on July 4 in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

2011 Peaceseeker: Victor Makari

By Len Bjorkman

For 20 years the Rev. Dr. Victor Makari served the PC(USA) as an Area Coordinator with World Mission, relating at various times to partner churches in the Middle East and Asia Minor, Europe, and South and Southeast Asia. His service included working as Coordinator/Executive Director of the Jinishian Memorial Program (ministering with Armenians in Armenia and the Middle East), and relating ecumenically to the Middle East Council of Churches, the Fellowship of Middle East Evangelical Churches, the World Council of Churches, the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, the National Council of Churches in the US, and the PC(USA) offices of Interfaith Relations and Witness in Washington, D.C.

He was instrumental in the formation of four Middle East Mission Networks related to partner churches in Israel-Palestine, Iraq, Syria-Lebanon, and Egypt.

As he related to partners in the several regions, he dealt, through formal and informal consultations, with many sensitive issues among the churches and with all of their interfaith and governmental concerns. As an Area Coordinator, he presented the PC(USA)'s concerns at General Assemblies and their Committees as they formulated policy positions on innumerable aspects of the Church's relationships nationally and globally. In collaboration with the Presbyterian United Nations Office, he represented the PC(USA)'s Middle East policies and concerns (particularly vis-à-vis Israel and Palestine) to the United Nations and its bureaus that relate to international non-governmental organizations.

A regular part of his responsibilities was interpreting the Church's policies to its constituency through public speaking at meetings of congregations and presbyteries, writing for church publications, and consulting with mission committees. Occasionally, he would lead travel seminar groups visiting partners and bringing common and mutual concerns of justice, peacemaking and mission relations to a deeper sense



of awareness. He facilitated invitations of partners from the respective regions he served to take part in programs such as the International Peacemakers, Interfaith Listening, and Ecumenical Advisory Delegates and Representative at PC(USA) General Assemblies.

Among his major duties was the presentation and review of mission position requests coming from our partners, helping in the process of selection and orientation of missionary candidates and the supervision of mission personnel on the field, and facilitating their relations with partners.

Victor was born in Egypt and received degrees from Assiut American College at Assiut, Egypt, and the Evangelical Theological Seminary at Cairo (B. Th., 1959). In the US he studied at Princeton Seminary (M. Div., 1964), Columbia Seminary (Th.M., 1965), and McCormick Seminary (special graduate studies in 1965), and Northwestern University's Medill School of Journalism (special studies, Fall 1965). At Temple University he received an M.A. in 1972, and a Ph.D. in Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies in 1976.

In his retirement he continues his interest in many concerns dealing with the Middle East and Muslim-Christian relations, as is evidenced by his article in the Sept. 2011 issue of *Presbyterians Today*, entitled, "Reaching out to neighbors in faith." The summary is "Understanding what Muslims believe can help us be better peacemakers as well as better witnesses to Jesus Christ."

2012 Peaceseeker: Alice Winters

By Shannan Vance-Ocampo

As the Iglesia Presbiteriana de Colombia writes, the Rev. Dr. Alice Winters is “a woman dedicated to reading and teaching the Bible from the experience and hope of communities.” The Presbyterian Peace Fellowship is overjoyed to present our 2012 Peaceseeker Award to the Rev. Dr. Alice Winters for her service as a Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) mission co-worker in Colombia, South America from 1977-2011. Alice holds a special place in the life of the Presbyterian Peace Fellowship. She has helped us as an organization dedicated to the work of nonviolence and peacemaking to respond to the call of our sisters and brothers in Colombia and to find our grounding in the experience of community and the Bible.

Alice Winters’ career in ministry began in the mid-1970’s with study at Gordon-Conwell Seminary. She then spent time in Guatemala learning and working alongside local base communities. She traveled during that time to Colombia, resulting in a formal invitation from the Presbyterian Church in Colombia to the Presbyterian Church in the United States for her to serve as a mission worker in Northwest Colombia. Alice’s service in Colombia began in 1977 and she served as a traveling preacher and teacher to the congregations of that region. Early in her tenure Alice began to set up teaching academies for lay members of the church in Colombia, offering local leaders instruction on how to teach the Bible, literacy, and preaching. From the start, Alice was committed to empowering and engaging local communities and identifying local leaders. She made special efforts to reach out to women in these communities, and to take the opportunity to preach and teach on the Biblical mandates about the leadership of women in ancient Christian communities.

Alice founded the Bible Institute in Valencia, Colombia, and was a part of the leadership of the Presbyterian Theological Seminary in Bogotá, Colombia, which later became the Reformed University based in Barranquilla, Colombia. She served as Rector from 1987-1991. Alice’s classes in Colombia have always been popular among people of all theological persuasions. Her method of teaching was never to put up theological walls in her classroom, but to allow the Bible and the experience of the people to speak—and to then allow the opportunity and space for people to



come to their own theological convictions. Alice has remarked that because of this open method of teaching, many people who have come into her classrooms have experienced changes in their theological viewpoints.

Alice has modeled throughout her

time in Colombia a deep and profound trusting of the Spirit—allowing its winds to blow when and where God chooses. She has always prioritized the voices of women, displaced persons, farmers, and local communities in her classes and writings on the Bible, allowing their experience to speak to the current reality of life in Colombia and what God is doing in their midst and where they and we are called to in the future.

Over the last eight years, Alice has been instrumental in the formation and support of the Colombia Accompaniment Program—a ministry of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) of community accompaniment at the request of the Iglesia Presbiteriana de Colombia. Alice’s advocacy, in the United States, for the church in Colombia was a key part of the formation of this program and she has taken the time to meet with nearly every accompanier who has served in Colombia and to engage them in the study of the Bible, helping them to hear the voices of the local community and to listen for the leading of the Spirit in their lives. Without Alice this incredible program of direct, non-violent human intervention in places of violence and fear in Colombia never would have taken shape. Its underpinnings are in the many decades of relationships that Alice has built in local communities in Colombia and the United States and in the leadership she has exhibited in the Presbyterian Church in Colombia.

A Peacemaker's Calendar

March 1-5: Colombia Accompaniment Training
Stony Point, NY

Can you give a month to accompany our Colombian sisters and brothers in the Presbyterian Church of Colombia as they work for human rights work and to support of the communities who have been displaced by the over forty years of violence in their beautiful country? They ask us to act as international companions in order to provide a measure of safety—international eyes—for their work. If you believe you could help, then plan to come to one of our upcoming training sessions: March 1-5, August 16-20 and October 4-8, 2012, all at the Stony Point Center, New York.

For more information, visit our web-site at <http://www.presbypeacefellowship.org/two/colombia/accompaniment> and then contact Accompaniment Coordinator Linda Eastwood at colombia@presbypeacefellowship.org. We, and our partners in Colombia, look forward to working with you!

March 23: Compassion, Peace and Justice Training Day at New York Avenue Presbyterian Church, Washington, DC

Join the Office of Public Witness and all the ministries of Compassion, Peace and Justice to explore “Presbyterians and Economic Justice.” Participants will have a full day of practical church based training and investigate the role Christians must play in today’s changing society particularly on issues of economic justice. Topics of plenaries and workshops will include faith-based community organizing, practical tools for simple living, justice as discipleship making, social responsibility through investing, and many more! Learn more and register at <http://gamec.pcusa.org/ministries/washington/>

March 23–26: Ecumenical Advocacy Days
Washington, DC

Join other Christians in seeking a global economy and a national budget that break the yoke of injustice, poverty, hunger and unemployment throughout the world.

Learn about “Economy, Livelihood and Our National Priorities” from plenary speakers Margaret Aymer and Gary Dorrien. PPF Director of Colombia Programs Shannan Vance-Ocampo will lead a workshop on “How Bio-fuel Production Is Causing Bloodshed and Displacement in Colombia.” Learn more and register at advocacydays.org.

April 14-17: SOA Watch April Days of Action
Washington, DC

SOA Watch supporters will return to the streets of DC fresh off the energy from the November 2011 vigil in Fort Benning, and ready to train, lobby, engage in civil disobedience and celebrate the resistance!

Schedule: Wednesday, April 11-Friday, April 13: Direct Action Training Camp - come and learn the skills you'll need to make election year exciting and get the SOA and militarization on the national agenda!

Saturday, April 14 and Sunday April 15: Strategy Sessions - learn about other struggles, the SOA Watch movement and put heads together to see where we are headed, and how we are going to do it!

Monday, April 16 and Tuesday, April 17: Lobbying on Capitol Hill and street actions. Take what you've learned and get your Congress member to cosponsor HR 3368! And don't forget lively parades in the street, and who doesn't want to get arrested speaking out for justice??!

Art, culture and music will be an integral part of the mobilization. Learn more at soaw.org.

April 26-29: Convocation of Peacemakers
Stony Point, NY

Join peacemakers from across the country at the Presbyterian Peace Fellowship’s third annual convocation: Peace Church Beta. Fellowship, planning and organizing will focus on The PC(USA)’s discernment to become a Peace Church, Israel/Palestine, General Assembly Advocacy, Antiracism, Preventing Gun Violence, and Colombia Accompaniment and Advocacy. Learn more at www.presbypeacefellowship.org. Email ppfwitness@gmail.com for scholarship information.

Looking Ahead to General Assembly

Plan now to join the Peace Fellowship at the 220th General Assembly of the PC(USA) in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania June 29-July 7. There is a volunteer opportunity for you if you have an hour to spare or if you want to work with us all week!

The Peace Breakfast

Mark your calendar now for the General Assembly Peace Breakfast, 6:45 a.m. on Wednesday, July 4 at the Westin Convention Center hotel. Please help us honor our peaceseekers, Victor Makari and Alice Winters, and welcome our keynote speaker, J. Herbert Nelson from the Office of Public Witness.

Advocacy

Overtures and resolutions are expected on Israel/Palestine, immigration, Iran, economic justice, and many other peacemaking topics. Help is needed before General Assembly to review overtures and draft briefing papers. Voices for nonviolence and compassion are needed at GA open hearings. Observers are needed to make notes during committee meetings for our summary reports.

Interns

Applicants under 30 are invited to apply for a GA internship with PPF (see page 2). Your housing and transportation costs will be covered.

Media Team

Bloggers, photographers, reporters, tweeters, and facebook artists can help us keep folks at home in touch with the General Assembly action every day.

Hosts

Help accompany our special guests to scheduled events, welcome participants to our breakfast, set up for or lead a booth conversation, or run errands.

To volunteer for any of these opportunities, please send an email to ga@presbypeacefellowship.org Our volunteers will have access to our block of budget-friendly hotel rooms, meaningful work, and great fellowship throughout the GA week. Please also let us know about any overtures that your presbytery is sending to GA.



The Sanctuary of Presente

The fence was transformed
Once again
Into an unseasonable sacred space
A sanctuary of nonviolence
By the power of the spirit

Festooned on chain-links and barbed wire
White crosses and stars hung
Carrying names of the disappeared
Their holy images
And banners with messages of hope

This quiet metamorphosis
Emerged from simple acts of many hands
As tears welled
The remembered rang through stately wood
Of brilliant and falling leaves of autumn

In solemn preparation
Of a joyous spring

Presente

.....Ken Kennon

PeaceChurch

BETA

Waging Peace in a Time of Empire

April 26-29, 2012|

Convocation of Peacemakers

Presbyterian Peace Fellowship
www.presbypeacefellowship.org/



Join peacemakers from across the country to fellowship, plan, and organize:

- The PC(USA)'s discernment to become a Peace Church
- Israel/Palestine
- General Assembly Advocacy
- Antiracism
- Preventing Gun Violence
- Colombia Accompaniment and Advocacy

Stony Point Center, Stony Point, NY

"Beta" is a term used in software development to indicate that the software is still in testing—it's not a final release, and not all questions have been answered. We chose this term to indicate the status of the PC(USA)'s discernment in embracing nonviolence as church policy— what will it look like for the PC(USA) to become a peace church? What questions are yet to be answered? This event aims to be instrumental in helping the PC(USA) ask itself those questions and others. This not a normal conference, but a working meeting for peacemakers, organizers, and activists from across the church to plan together for effective advocacy and action. Register at www.presbypeacefellowship.org Scholarships are available: To inquire about a scholarship, please email us at ppfwitness@gmail.com

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