

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Peter Bolton (703-212-8245) boltonwa@aol.com  
or Paul Verduin (301-495-7891) paulverduin@starpower.net

### **SABEEL CONFERENCE IN WASHINGTON D.C., OCTOBER 1-3 2009, WILL LINK AFRICAN-AMERICAN AND PALESTINIAN CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENTS**

*Washington, D.C.* **Sabeel**, a Jerusalem-based international ecumenical peace movement sponsoring public conferences around the world promoting a peaceful and just resolution to the Israel-Palestine conflict, is breaking ground once again with a **three-day conference** linking the African American church's rich experience in the American civil rights movement and the triumphant anti-apartheid movement in South Africa with today's struggle for human rights and self-determination for the people of the Middle East.

**October 1-3 are the dates** for Sabeel's historic conference taking place in an historic Washington, D.C. African American congregation: **Shiloh Baptist Church**, 1500 9<sup>th</sup> Street NW (corner of P Street) in the vibrant Shaw district.

The *Thursday, Oct. 1 plenary session* opens with interfaith worship and a 7 pm address by **Richard Falk, UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in Palestinian Territories**. *Friday's program* includes **Andrew Whitley** of UNRWA, **Rabbi Brian Walt**, a coordinator of Ta'anit Tzedek—Jewish Fast for Gaza, feminist theologians **Rosemary Ruether** and **Bea Morris**, and California academic **Andrea Smith**. **Rev. Dr. Naim Ateek**, director of Sabeel International based in Jerusalem is the 6 pm dinner speaker, who is followed by **Najla Said** reading her one-act play, "Palestine". *Saturday's program* features a panel led by renowned African American civil rights activist **Dr. Bernard Lafayette** (who co-founded the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee), **Dr. Mary King** of American University's Center for Global Peace, and **Dr. Charles Villa-Vincensio** from Capetown, South Africa's Institute for Justice and Reconciliation. At lunch **Three Women, Three Faiths, One Shared Vision**, a trio of Muslim, Jewish and Christian peace champions from Israel/Palestine lined up by Partners for Peace.

Friday and Saturday workshops will be led by theologians, academics and activists including Israeli human rights advocate **Jeff Halper** of the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions; International Solidarity Movement co-founder **George Rishmawi**; authors **Phyllis Bennis**, **Ali Abunimah** and **Mark Braverman**; Churches for Middle East Peace chair **Jim Fine**; **Nadia Hijab** of the Institute for Palestine Studies; and many others. The conference will hear from religious leaders such as **Tyrone Pitts** of the Progressive National Baptist Convention, United Methodist bishop **Forrest Stith**, and **Graylan Scott Hagler** of Plymouth Congregational Church.

Conference organizers said of the event: "We aim to underline the urgent need for peace and justice in the Holy Land and to offer peacemakers new tools for action." ([www.FOSNA.org](http://www.FOSNA.org) for full details.)