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NEWSLETTER

The Center for Religious and Heritage Studies in the Holy Land

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The Arab Spring, January-June 2011

EDITORIAL

The Major upheaval in the Arab East and the Arab West since January 2011 is being called "The Arab Spring". For the uprisings of the masses in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Bahrain, Yemen and Syria signal a very important change, that is the beginning of the end of tyrannical rule in the Arab World and the loud demand of the Arab masses for the downfall of the regimes which since 1948 had put on hold all creative and authentic Arab movements, gave a chance for Israel to exploit and further Arab disunity, and contributed to persisting illiteracy, economic backwardness and foreign exploitation of Arab countries. Enemies of the 2011 Arab spring, on the other hand, accuse these mass movements as being part of Western conspiracies and not as authentic movements demanding real change in the Arab Political system. However, most of those supporting the 2011 Arab Spring wholeheartedly also question the real motive

behind Nato's military involvement in Libya as well as the motives of other Western countries. We, at Al-Liqa' Center, believe in the authentic Arab Spring of 2011 as long as foreign powers keep their hands off the self-determination of our people from the Arabian Persian Gulf to the Atlantic Ocean.

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Theology and the Local Church in the Holy Land Conference
(Palestinian Contextualized Theology Conference)
18th Session

From an Identity of Faith to an Active Presence

24 - 26 February 2011

St. Elias Monastery (Stella Mares) - Haifa

The 18th session of the conference was convened for three days, 24 February to 26 February 2011, at the St. Elias Monastery (Stella Mares) under the title "From an Identity of Faith to an Active Presence".

In the Inaugural opening of the conference, H. B. Patriarch Michael Sabbah focused on faith and society while Archbishop Elias Chacour spoke about divisions between the faithful and the clerics and called for shared living with fellow Muslims in language and culture. Bishop Dr. Atallah Hanna of the Orthodox Church followed with an emphasis on the nationalist role of Christian Arabs and their participation in building the Arab culture. Dr. Geris Khoury on his part discussed the title of the conference and the challenges it poses.

During the daily proceedings of the conference prayers and meditations preceded the lectures and panels.

The first lecture of the conference in the evening of Thursday the 24th was by Fr. Dr. Rafiq Khoury on "An evaluation of Christian presence in the East since the 19th century". Mr. Ziad Shlewit was the moderator.

On Friday the 26th H. B. Michael Sabbah lectured on "Features and characteristics of the personality of a faithful in our country". He stressed two elements, the need for the faithful to be real in his/her faith as well as active in his/her society. The lecture was moderated by Mr. Yousef Matar. He was followed by Fr. Dr. Fawzy Khoury who focused on "Church profile in our country and challenges

that it faces." Fr. Fawzy pointed out the state of churches in the past indicating that Israel's aim is to weaken the role of Christian Arabs and to strengthen the role of non-Arab Christians.

Dr. Gerjes S. Khoury followed with "An emphasis on the qualitative presence of Christianity in our society and the challenges it faces". He called for fellow Muslims to remember that the Arab nation without Christian presence will become a nation of the past. He asked fellow Christians to become a mirror of Christ's teachings. Dr. Imad Qassis moderated the lecture. Ms. Ibtisam Mu'Allem lecture was on "We and the others", and was moderated by Rev. Fu'ad Dagher.

On Saturday the 26th, Fr. Dr. Elias Daw lectured on "A reading in the proceedings of the Synod of Catholic bishops for Easter churches."

In the final panel of the conference Bishop Boulos Marcuzzo of the Latin Church spoke on how to develop quality of faith in our country, Bishop Boulos Sayyah of the Maronite church stressed on how to develop the prevailing church profile, Archbishop Elias Chacour of the Melkite Catholic church in Galilee followed with comments and questions on whether Christian presence is at a dead end road, and Dr. Gerjes S. Khoury on his part focused on new horizons in our relations with others. The panel was moderated by Dr. Hatem Khoury.

There was a distinguished Muslim presence in the proceedings of the conference through the active presence of a friend of Al-Liqa', Attorney 'Ali Rafe' of Galilee, who played an active role. Conferees recommended a more active Muslim presence in future conferences.

Furthermore, there was a more active local and international mass media presence in the conference as seen in Italian television's activities in the conference.

In concluding the conference, Dr. Khoury thanked the Galilee branch of Al-Liqa' for preparing the 18th session of the conference, lecturers, panel members and moderators as well as attendees and those in charge of Mar Elias Monastery. He then read the final communiqué of the conference



as follows:

1. There is a dire need to establish an official web site of all churches with the aim of familiarizing others with Bible, the role of Christian Arabs in history and Arab civilization and for furthering interfaith dialogue and knowing the other.
2. There is a dire need to focus in private Christian schools on religious education, the historical role of Christian Arabs and identity of local churches.
3. There is a dire need to serious work for a qualitative Christian presence which will guarantee our continuous existence and presence.
4. There is a dire need to a serious pastoral work especially with young people.
5. There is a dire need to pay more attention to the correct reading of the Bible in order to understand better our Christian faith.
6. There is a dire need to interfaith dialogue with all monotheistic religions, in order to foster the basis of our common life on mutual trust and respect.



Al-Liqa' Center's Activities in Bethlehem



5 January 2011
Al-Liqa Center, Bethlehem

Condemnation of Bloody Attacks on Churches in Iraq and Egypt

Al-Liqa' Center held a meeting for leading clerics and lay people representing several sectors of Palestinians in the Bethlehem Governorate on the 5th of January 2011. Attendees discussed bloody attacks on Christian churches in Baghdad and Alexandria. They characterized these acts as unethical committed by savages who ignored heavenly principles, freedom of worship and human dignity. Attendees reiterated the need for national unity in Palestine, the rock that all attempts of disunity are being wrecked by it. A communiqué was issued by attendees urging Egyptian and Iraqi governments to continue to investigate these inhumane acts until culprits who commit wrongs to Islam, the religion of tolerance, and to national unity which the peoples of Egypt and Iraq, Muslims and Christian, have built throughout the centuries are brought to justice.

Attendees suggested several recommendations including the continuation of holding panels and meetings that focus on national unity and shared living in Palestine. They added as well suggestions that revolve around religious discourse's focus on brotherly ties and national unity. There is also a dire need to organize a conference to discuss the importance of shared living and the respect of the "other" as a pre-requisite to setting up of our Palestinian state with Arab Jerusalem as its capital.





12 February 2011 The Peace Center, Bethlehem

At the invitation of Al-Liqa' Center, a meeting and a lecture was held at the peace Center on Saturday 12 February 2011 titled "Recent Happenings in the Arab World and their impact on Israel." Prof. 'Aziz Haidar of Al-Quds University was the main speaker while Dr. Geris S. Khoury served as the moderator. Prof. Haidar emphasized that Israel is worried about the current uprisings and their impact on Israeli Society and economics. He added that it is difficult to ascertain the future of the regimes where uprisings are taking place hoping that transformations will take place into a more democratic system where the individual freedom and dignity will be preserved. Dr. Khoury opened the meeting with an emphasis on Christian-Muslim unity as was seen in Cairo's Liberation Square and other Egyptian cities and villages.





Islam in Austria: Facts, Problems and Perspectives in the European Context

**Lecture given at the Al-Liqa Centre,
Dr. Prof. Ingeborg Gabriel, University of Vienna**

Bethlehem, April 14th 2011.

On 14 April 2011 at Bethlehem hotel and was attended by a large number of local scholars and people interested in the subject.

At the beginning of her speech Prof. Gabriel thanked Al-Liqa Center and said: I am deeply impressed by the work which has been done here for so many decades to improve human and interreligious relationships in this region of the world, which is so dear to us all who believe in God and which at the same time is

such a troubled and torn place. Prof. Gabriel spoke in her lecture about three points:

An introduction on her understanding of interreligious dialogue and the importance it has in today's world; then she spoke about the legal and social situation of the Muslim community in Austria and a final point on the question of the future of the Christian and Islamic encounters.

The lecture was followed by questions and answers session. (The lecture text is on al-Liqa website)



The Impact of Reconciliation on the Palestinian Problem

Bethlehem Hotel, Bethlehem

May 25, 2011



Al-Liqa' Center for Religious and Heritage Studies in the Holy Land, Jerusalem/Bethlehem held a panel which was attended by large number of clerics and lay people including academicians from the Bethlehem and Hebron Governorates. The panel was titled "The impact of reconciliation on the Palestinian Problem". Brig. 'Uthman Abu Gharbiyyeh and Mr. Muhammad Barakeh took part in it. Prof.

Thiab Ayyoush moderated the panel.

Prof. Ayyoush on his part, as moderator, stressed national unity because without it, no one will be victorious. He added that reconciliation had met with much success even though many appose it. There were as well questions and answers session. Both panel members were able to answer questions candidly.



Al-Liqa' Center Visitors

20 February 2011

Rev. Alison Tomlin, president of the Methodist Church Convention and her assistant Deacon Eunice Attwood and Mr. Steve Hucklesby, from the Joint Public Issues Team (JPIT) who arranged and accompanied them on the trip, visited Al-Liqa' Center's office in Mar Elias College / Ibilin. They met Dr. Geris S. Khoury who briefed them on Al-Liqa' Center activities including interfaith and cultural dialogue and on local Palestinian theology.



1 April 2011

A group of Danish visitors met Dr. Geris S. Khoury who briefed them on various activities of Al-Liqa' Center including interfaith dialogue in general, focusing in the process on Palestinian Christian and Muslim dialogue whose aim is to further national unity and shared living. In addition, Dr. Khoury traced the development of local Christian theology. He stressed that this theology is an inclusive one and not exclusive, and its aim is to help the Palestinian faithful to understand their faith. A question and answer session followed the presentation.



11 April 2011

Dr. Geris S. Khoury met a group of pilgrims led by Fr. Raimondo from the city of Verona-Italy, and briefed them on Al-Liqa' Center. Dr. Khoury focused his presentation on the local church and present challenges. In addition, he stressed the importance of interfaith dialogue with Muslims. He pointed out the need of the church in the West to dialogue with Muslims who reside in the West in order to give the Muslims the chance to learn and know more about Christianity and Western civilization. A prolonged session focused on Palestinian local theology and the Bible and challenges faced by Christians in the Holy Land. Furthermore, Dr. Khoury discussed the future of Arab countries in light of the popular revolutions taking place.



13 May 2011

Bishop Brian Castle, Anglican Bishop of Rochester, United Kingdom and Dr. Henry Ralph Carse, both accompanied by Shatha Bannoura, visited A-Liqa Center on the 13th of May 2011. They were welcomed by Al-Liqa's members of the Board of Trustees Prof. Thiab Ayyoush, Dr. Adnan Musallam, Dr. 'Abd Al-Rahman 'Abbad and Dr. Peter Qumri. Following introductory remarks by Prof. Thiab Ayyoush and Dr. Ralph Carse, Bishop Castle introduced the concept of "reconciliation" as seen in Bishop Castle's book: "Reconciling One and All: God's Gift to the World", London, 2008.

Discussions followed in which members of Al-Liqa' took active part in the clarifications of "reconciliation" from a Palestinian point of view.



10 June 2011

His Beatitude Michael Sabbah, President of Al-Liqa' Center's Board of Trustees, visited the center and was briefed on all new development including the new features of Al-Liqa' quarterly review and its separate collection of indexes. Former Latin Patriarch Sabbah discussed with Dr. Khoury and Mr. Laurence Sammour on a follow up of the last October 2010 Synod of The Oriental Catholic Churches in Rome, and agreed to form groups that will be entrusted with research and study of Christian presence and its future in the Holy Land.



10 June 2011

Dr. Maria Haarmann, Director of Middle East program in MISEREOR - Aachen, Germany, visited the center and discussed with Dr. Geris S. Khoury Al-Liqa' activities and programs. She was briefed on the financial aspects of the various programs that have been funded by MISEREOR and discussed the importance of continued support of the center's activities and publications by MISEREOR and other Church organizations.



10 June 2011

His Excellency Bishop Atallah Hanna visited the Center and discussed the theme of the upcoming Christian and Muslim Dialogue Conference. In addition, he searched for references concerning the Christian presence in the Holy Land and their relationship with Muslims as well as present challenges.



20 June 2011

Dr. Geries S. Khoury met with German theologians from the German city of Bonn and its suburbs at Mar Elias College in 'Ibellin. Dr. Khoury spoke to the group about Christian presence in the Holy Land, Al-Liqa' Center and its programs including the local theology and interfaith dialogue. Following Dr. Khoury's presentation general discussion followed. The German group wanted to know more about local theology and Al-Liqa' Center and how to read and understand the Holy Book in the context of the daily life of the local church in the Holy Land. Many questions were asked by the group concerning the Christian Muslim dialogue at Al-Liqa' Center.

Al-Liqa' Center's Most Recent Publications 2010

December 2010 - June 2011

1- Al-Liqa' Journal, vol. 35, December 2010

Contents include a variety of articles on the crusades, role of Arab Christians, Islamophobia, the Pan-Arab Peace Initiative as well an article on classic Arab economic contracts. Contents include coverage of the special assembly of catholic Synod and Al-Liqa' Center's 22nd Session of the Christian-Muslim Conference.



Quarterly review. In addition to the editorial on the march of the review all articles deal with all angels of the review's coverage in the last 25 years. For example it focuses on local theology, Christian presence, the phenomenon of emigration, the Palestinian problem, revival of Christian Arab heritage, Palestinian press, to just mention a few.

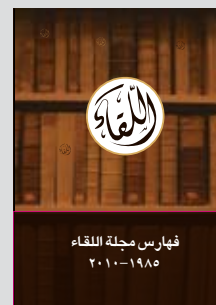
2- Al-Liqa' quarterly reviews, year 26, no's 1 and 2 (2011)

The contents focus on the Silver Jubilee of Al-Liqa'



3- Indexes of Al-Liqa' quarterly review, 1985-2010

These comprehensive indexes include index of authors and subjects, index of authors and articles, index of subjects, index of documents, and index of reviewed books.



List and Prices Of Al- Liqa's Publications 1982-2011

(All publications are in Arabic unless specified)

Christian - Muslim Dialogue Conference (1982 –2010)	
1. Proceedings of the First Conference, <i>Jerusalem</i> 1983 to 12 th Conference, <i>Bethlehem</i> 1994	\$10
2. 13 th Conference, <i>Bethlehem</i> . 1995. (see no. 9 Miscellaneous)	\$10
3. 14 th Conference, <i>Bethlehem</i> , 1996	\$10
4. 15 th Conference, <i>Bethlehem</i> , 1998	\$10
5. 16 th Conference, <i>Bethlehem</i> , 2001	\$10
6. 17 th Conference, <i>Bethlehem</i> , 2003	\$10
7. 18 th Conference, <i>Bethlehem</i> , 2005	\$10
8. 19 th Conference, <i>Bethlehem</i> , 2007 (See Al-Liqa' quarterly review, year 22, no. 4, 2007)	\$10
9. 20 th Conference, <i>Bethlehem</i> , 2008 (See Al-Liqa' quarterly review, year 23, no. 3, 2008)	\$10
10. 21 st Conference, <i>Bethlehem</i> 2009 (See Al-Liqa' quarterly review, year 25, nos. 1,2, 2010)	\$10

Al- Liqa' Journal (in English) 1992 – 2010

Vol. 1; August 1992 – Vol. 35; December 2010

Annual subscription:

Individuals	\$20
Institutions	\$30
Price per one issue	\$8 + postage

Al-Liqa' Center's Documents

(Available in Arabic and English)

1. Theology and the Local Church in the Holy Land, (16 pages)	\$4
2. In Jerusalem, Justice and Peace Embrace Each Other, (5pages)	\$2

Al-Liqa' Arabic Language - Quarterly Review (1985 - 2011)

Year 1-Year 3 (3 issues each year)
\$20 per Year

Year 4-Year 26 (4 issues each year)
\$40 per Year

Price per one issue
\$10

Miscellaneous

1. Fr. Peter Madrou, <i>Paul the Apostle and the Man</i> (67 pages)	\$5
2. Najib Nassar, <i>Under the Protection of the Arabs</i> (91 pages)	\$5
3. Younis Amr, <i>Jerusalem the City of God</i> (152pages)	\$5
4. Louis I. Hazboun, <i>Principles of Sociology of Religion</i> (162 p.)	\$5
5. <i>Western Christian Zionism</i> , (43 pages)	\$3
6. <i>Jerusalem Between Religious Freedom and Political Sovereignty,(in English)</i> (78pages)	\$5
7. <i>Christian Feasts between Unity and Pluralism</i> , (96 pages).	\$5
8. Qustandi Shomali, <i>El-Carmel</i> (534 pages)	\$10
9. <i>Jerusalem: Palestinian Muslim- Christian Studies</i> (600 pages)	\$10
10. Anton Shomali, <i>Collected Poems</i> (255 Pages)	\$7
11. Fr. Dr. Rafiq Khoury, <i>Contextualized Eastern Churches</i> (393 pages).	\$7
12. Jamal Salsa', <i>Palestinian Poetical Message Between Religion and Nationalism</i> (174 pages)	\$6
13. Thiab A. Ayyoush, <i>Social Problems: An Islamic Perspective</i> (212 pages) (in English)	\$7
14. Sami Adwan, <i>Reality of Religious Education, both Muslim and Christian, in Palestinian Schools</i> .(404 pages)	\$10
15. Fr. Dr. Rafiq Khoury, <i>Say your Word and Go! Quick Inputs into Vital Files</i> (273 pages)	\$7
16. Fr. Dr. Rafiq Khoury, <i>The Book of Days: In Search of the Lost Word</i> (159 pages)	\$7
17. Series S. Khoury, <i>Arab Christians: Rootedness... Presence... Openness</i> (278 pages)	\$10
18. Series S. Khoury, <i>Arab Christians and Muslims: Past... Present... Future</i> (272 pages)	\$10
19. 'Abd Al-Rahman 'Abbad, <i>Dialogue in Islam</i> (188 pages)	\$10
20. <i>Al-Liqa' quarterly review indexes, 1985-2010</i> (266 pages.)	\$10

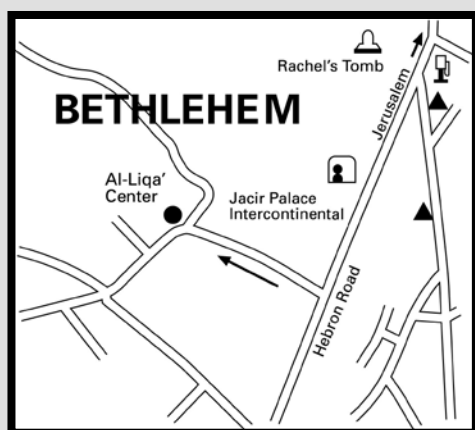
Palestinian Contextualized Theology Conference (1987-2010)

Proceedings of the First Conference, <i>Jerusalem</i> 1983 to the Eighth Conference, <i>Jerusalem</i> 1995	\$7
Ninth Conference, <i>Bethlehem</i> , 1996 (Contained in Al-Liqa' Journal, Vol. 9/10, (1997)	\$7
10 th Conference, <i>Bethlehem</i> , December 1998 (See Al-Liqa' quarterly review, year 19, vol 1+2, 2004)	\$10
11 th Conference, <i>Bethlehem</i> , June 2003 (There are no published proceedings)	\$10
12 th Conference, <i>the Galilee</i> , 2004 (contained in Al-Liqa' quarterly review, year 20, vol 1+2, 2005)	\$10
13 th Conference, <i>Bethlehem</i> , 2006 (contained in Al-Liqa' quarterly review, year 21, vol 3+4,2006)	\$10
14 th Conference, <i>Ibillin</i>	\$10
15 th Conference, <i>Ibillin</i> (contained in Al-Liqa' quarterly review, year 23, vol. 1, 2008)	\$10
16 th Conference, <i>Bethlehem</i> 2009 (contained in Al-Liqa' quarterly review, year 24, vol. 1, 2009)	\$10
17 th Conference, <i>Haifa</i> 2010 (contained in Al-Liqa' quarterly review, year 25, vol 3+4 2010)	\$10



Al-Liqa' Center

In Jerusalem, the city sacred to billions of diverse believers, a Palestinian interfaith initiative led to the establishment of "Al-Liqa' Center", a unique place of research, study and dialogue on the religious traditions, institutions and daily life of the people of the Holy Land and the region. The program includes, interfaith dialogue, Palestinian Contextualized Theology in the Holy Land, international activities, and the publication of journal, newsletters, books and occasional papers. H.B. Patriarch Michel Sabbah, President, Board of Trustees; and Dr. Geris S. Khoury, Director.



Al-Liqa' Center's Headquarter 54-56 Al-Quds Jerusalem Str.

The Center is located less than 200 meters to the southwest of Rachel's Tomb at 54-56 Al-Quds Jerusalem Street. After passing the Jacir Palace Intercontinental to the right on the Hebron-Jerusalem Rd, take a right turn at the first intersection at the end of which Al-Liqa' Center is situated on the right side of the street.

Website of Al-Liqa' Center

www.al-liqacenter.org.ps

We hope you will have the opportunity to visit Al-Liqa's web site, and to send us your reflections

Announcements

Al-Machriq

We, at Al-Liqa' Center, are happy to inform all of our friends who follow the Center's programs that we have bought a collection of Al-Machriq (Beirut) Jesuit review and it is located at the Center's library. Those desiring to review or use the collection can do so in the working hours of the Center, 9:00 am – 16:00 pm

Index of Al-Liqa' quarterly review

On the occasion of Al-Liqa' Center's celebration of Al-Liqa' quarterly review Silver Jubilee, we would like to inform our friends and readers that the Center's administration have decided to post Al-Liqa' quarterly review on the center's Website beginning with volume 26, no's 1 and 2 (2011). It has decided as well to publish all the indexes of Al-Liqa' 1985-2010 to include index of authors and subjects, index of authors and their articles, index of subjects, index of documents, and index of reviewed books.

Al-Liqa' Upcoming Events

23rd Session of the
Christian-Muslim Dialogue Conference
15-17 September 2011
Bethlehem

on
**"The impact of Arab revolts
locally, regionally and
internationally"**

19th Session of the Palestinian Contextual
Theology Conference
16-18 December 2011
Bethlehem

On
**"An Arab Christian vision for an
Arab and Palestinian Future"**