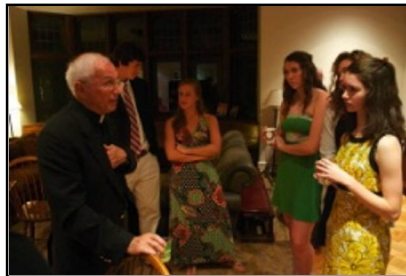


St. Andrew's School

Rev. Naim Ateek provides glimpse into Palestine

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St. Andrew's was privileged to welcome Dr. Naim Ateek as the Wednesday night Chapel speaker on September 30. Dr. Ateek is a Palestinian Christian who ministers in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory. As a child, he and his family became refugees when Zionists forced them from their home in Beisan, south of the Sea of Galilee. After settling with his family in Nazareth and completing his secondary school education, he received a scholarship to Hardin-Simmons University, Abilene, Texas, and earned a B.A. degree in 1963. Subsequently he earned his Master of Divinity degree from the Church Divinity School of the Pacific in Berkeley, California. He then returned to Nazareth and started his ministry after being ordained in the Episcopal Church. In the early 1980s, he returned to the United States to complete his doctoral studies at San Francisco Theological Seminary.

Dr. Ateek was the first to articulate a Palestinian theology of liberation in his book published by Orbis Books in 1989, *Justice, and Only Justice, a Palestinian Theology of Liberation*. The book laid the foundation of a theology that addresses the conflict over Palestine and explores the political as well as the religious, biblical and theological dimensions. From a position of faith, Dr. Ateek seeks to find solutions based on the faith principles of justice, peace, and nonviolence. He has edited and written other books and articles. As a former Canon of St. George's Cathedral, Jerusalem, he lectures widely both at home and abroad.

After 30 years of parish ministry, Dr. Ateek took early retirement and dedicated his time to the ministry of Sabeel, an Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center that he helped found at the beginning of the 1990s. As director of Sabeel, he expanded its ministry both inside the country as well as abroad including ecumenical work within the Christian community in Palestine/Israel, work for justice and peace, and also inter-faith work between Christians and Muslims. Sabeel has expanded internationally, and Friends of Sabeel have been established in North America, the United Kingdom, Australia, Iceland and Scandinavia. Dr. Ateek's new book *A Palestinian Christian Cry for Reconciliation* was published in 2008.

In his sermon to the St. Andrew's congregation, Dr. Ateek first explored the concept of identity, proudly declaring himself to be at once Arab, Palestinian, Israeli and Christian. Ateek explained that the Palestinian Christians trace the heritage of their faith directly to the disciples of Christ, and were never subject to religious conversion as the political power in the region passed to various faith denominations, though emigration has dwindled their numbers to less than two percent of the population in Israel and Palestine. Realizing that the intricacies of the Palestinian lands in more recent times might not be familiar to all in the audience, Dr. Ateek attempted to offer a brief window into his work with Sabeel, where he seeks an end to the oppression and injustice endemic to 40 years of occupation in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and the logistical strain of a population of 4 million Palestinian refugees. Sabeel ultimately advocates a two-state solution, Israel and Palestine living in peace as neighbors. While the topic is daunting, Dr. Ateek hopes that Jerusalem can be elevated to an international, interfaith city that is shared by Jews, Muslims and Christians alike.

Following the Chapel service, students and faculty had the chance to discuss Palestinian issues in further detail with Dr. Ateek during a reception in the faculty lounge.

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