

Justice in Palestine & Israel Community meeting at the Alliance of Baptists in Atlanta

April 18, 2015

17 people signed in – a good number more told us they were interested, but had other meetings to go to at the appointed time.

For the fall gathering Sept. 18-20 in Winston-Salem, NC:

1. Volunteered for the program committee:

Paul Hayes (GJ already asked him, but he confirmed interest.)

Ben Wagner from Knollwood Baptist (already on mailing list)

Eda Ruhiye Uca

Eda is a divinity student at Yale and recently spent several months working with Sabeel in Jerusalem. She's eager, has time, and has done conference organizing in the past.

2. Program content for the gathering

a. BDS – what a congregation can do; steps beyond the local congregation? Seminaries? Alliance investments? MMBB?

b. How to get started, for congregations that haven't taken on the Palestine/Israel issue

c. Hear Palestinian voices

d. Palestinian artwork? Wasn't there some art exhibited/sold at Cavalry?

e. Fundraising project – water stations in Gaza. Watts St. Baptist Church in Durham raised \$15,000 for this recently. Could be an Alliance-wide children-to-children project or youth project.

f. Connections with other issues, see the next point, below.

3. NEW and exciting:

a. **G4S campaign** – FOSNA – here's a link: <http://fosna.org/howtostopg4s>

What we liked about this: It's a way to link our focus with the various "Black Lives Matter" campaigns around the country. G4S is a for-profit prison and security system company operating prisons for Palestinians in Israel and prisons across the U.S. and around the world.

b. **Countering racism** – make this an explicit part of our work. G4S campaign is one way to do this, but there's more. Why have Palestinians in the US been reluctant to speak out, and why has the movement infrequently asked them to? Because they're not white? Are Palestinians perceived as less white than Israelis, who seem to many Americans like our "natural" allies? It was Eda who brought this up at the Community gathering Saturday, and she made a point that this approach is particularly likely to resonate with young people.

4. **Resources:** We need a regular, ongoing, online way to keep people informed; including lists of videos/films and links to organizations and alternative sources of information. Alliance Connect now works and should be a way to do this. Kristy Pullen (kristy@allianceofbaptists.org) promises prompt tech support if we have any problems with it. Mark and Leslie will start posting some resources we are aware of, as soon as we have time. Mark will send out info again on logging onto Alliance Connect.

It would also be great to have our own web site, but we'd need an experienced volunteer to pull that off.

5. Staying in Touch: Mark will continue to keep a mailing list independent of Alliance Connect, based on conference registrations etc. that GJ sent. Let him know of additions or updates at Mark@ML1945.com.

Notes by Leslie Withers (leslie@ML1945.com)