

PIN Bulletin For Local Organizers

Volume 11, May 2020

Will you strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being?



THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX

These classic Shaker style berry boxes or baskets, crafted in quarter sawn white pine, were created by PIN activist John Heermans in his Vermont workshop. His inspiration grew out of the 2019 PIN organizational meeting in Chicago, where "think outside of the box" was the theme raised up for local organizing. How can we plan and act, as PIN, in ways that awaken the Episcopal Church to the human rights crisis that is crushing the Palestinian people? And who are we not seeing and engaging outside our box?

The problem with boxes and boundaries is very real for John, who is both a long-time activist for Palestinian rights and a practicing contemplative, acquainted with leaders of the Wisdom School Movement. One of the themes of that movement, expressed by Richard Rohr and others, is that "contemplation and prayer without action is incomplete." In thinking-out-of-the-box mode, John has

articulated a new strategy: to enlarge our PIN target group to include Wisdom School communities with which he is directly or indirectly associated.

Bringing the activist world of Palestinian advocacy into effective conversation with the Wisdom School Movement will be challenging. A mantra of contemplative circles is, "if we want to change the world, we need to change ourselves." How do those who seek to live into our Baptismal Covenant balance the urgent calls for peace with justice and the spiritual process of inner transformation? How do we reach the point where contemplation and action "kiss each other" in a way that is effective for the long haul of engagement in our troubled world? How can PIN invite those in the Wisdom School Movement to be our partners in activism for human rights?

That is where John's berry boxes come in! He plans to personally present a box to Wisdom School leaders. In each box will be an invitation to mutual engagement, along with other PIN resources. The berry boxes are both a gift and a challenge for both partners in the conversation. They are also an inspiration for all of us.

Who else remains "outside PIN's box," waiting to be invited into relationship and mutual action?



PIN's Local Organizing Work Group has completed the final offering in our set of one-page flyers to share with bishops, diocesan General Convention deputations and parishes:

Gaza! We can't say we didn't know.

"The whole of Gaza's civilian population is being punished for acts for which they bear no responsibility. The closure therefore constitutes a collective punishment imposed in clear violation of Israel's obligations under international humanitarian law."

International Committee of the Red Cross, June 2010

"...during the Great March of Return, Israeli soldiers committed violations of international human rights and humanitarian law. Some of those violations may constitute war crimes or crimes against humanity.... Particularly alarming is the targeting of children...122 people have had a limb amputated since 30 March last year (2018). Twenty of these amputees are children."

*The UN Independent Commission of Inquiry on the 2018 Gaza protests
28 February 2019*

The Episcopal Church has long been critical of Israel's illegal blockade of Gaza, where since 2006 a population of 2 million have struggled to survive in the equivalent of an open-air prison:

2006: Our Church called for Israel to end its choke hold on Gaza.

2010: Our Church demanded an end to the Illegal blockade. By this time, Israel had destroyed water sources, sanitation plants, schools, thousands of homes, medical facilities, and agricultural enterprises, cut electric power generation and imports, and caused widespread malnutrition.

2014: Following Israel's brutal 51-day Operation Protective Edge that summer, our Church called for the sustainable rebuilding of Gaza. Israel's 2014 war on Gaza resulted in nearly 1,500 civilian deaths, including 532 children. Over 10,000 Palestinians were injured, 20,000 homes were destroyed, and 108,000 people were rendered homeless.

2018: The Episcopal Church backed the U.N. investigation of the use of lethal force against civilians (General Convention Resolution D027). As of December 2019, the UN and other international agencies placed the number of civilians killed during the border protests in Gaza at over 200. More than 9,000 have been injured, most shot by Israeli snipers and suffering "life changing wounds."

Thus, we have called, we have urged, we have demanded as Israel's violence against the indigenous population of Palestine continues unchecked. Although not uniquely ours, we American Christians share a burden of complicity in that US political support and \$3.8 billion each year in military aid enable Israel's relentless human rights violations. So, with what tools, what mechanism, do we live into our covenant to renounce the evil powers of this world that corrupt and destroy the creatures of God?

We appeal to the Episcopal Church to join faith leaders around the world in endorsing and actively supporting the nonviolent Boycott, Divest, and Sanctions campaign as a tangible expression of our faith.

"And I remain forever hopeful that, like the nonviolent efforts that have preceded it, the BDS movement will ultimately become a catalyst for honest peace and reconciliation for all our brothers and sisters, both Palestinian and Israeli, in the Holy Land." -Archbishop Desmond Tutu, 2014

[Here](#) is the link to this flyer. Please take a look to view a n added bonus: "The Episcopal Church must Renounce the Blockade of Gaza," by eyewitnesses Harry Gunkel and Tom Foster, both of whom visited Gaza before the pandemic. Design is for back/front flyer.

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