

Kumi Now

Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center

432 pages, US\$ 30.00

Please order at www.kuminow.com or by emailing kumi@kuminow.com

Around the world there are nonprofits, faith-based groups, NGOs, university student groups, government agencies, and concerned citizens focused on the problems in Palestine-Israel. But what, exactly, are they doing? They are, of course, doing something – whether writing letters or raising money or compiling reports or giving lectures or holding events. But these efforts are often done in isolation; they can get lost in the noise or be easily ignored by those in power.

Sabeel, a grassroots Christian organization centered in East Jerusalem, decided to bring together these disparate groups in a creative way to magnify their power by organizing their actions on a weekly basis. This resulted in the launch of the Kumi Now project and the publication of *Kumi Now: An Inclusive Call for Nonviolent Action to Achieve a Just Peace*.

The book is aimed at groups and individuals around the world, scholars and neophytes alike, who want to find a nonviolent solution to the conflict. There are a number of features that allow everyone to be part of the project and build their knowledge. It is divided into 52 weekly entries, 42 of which address specific issues and are linked to an organization involved in that issue. The other 10 are set aside for events and reflection. Each of the 42 entries includes a short essay that outlines an issue, a description of the organization, a case study or personal story, an excerpt from a work of literature, an advocacy action, and links to additional resources (articles, videos, and others) found online.

The advocacy actions (“Kumi Actions”) are what make the book unique, as they are designed to be easy activities that anyone can complete. And herein lies the real potential: for while anyone could, for example, raise awareness about Gaza by posting signs, or oppose Israel’s treatment of the Bedouin by sending letters to the government, those messages are likely ignored when done in isolation. But if 1,000 or 5,000 or 10,000 people do it all at once... well, you can imagine. In addition, since the creators of *Kumi Now* have done much of the creative thinking, they have come up with fun ways to complete those actions. You’ll have to actually buy the book to see what that entails.



The danger in attempting to draw together diverse organizations, dozens of issues, and groups around the world is that the resulting book could end up a disjointed mess. However, the organization of the book (backed by a glossary and an index) has produced the opposite effect. Not one bit is overwhelming, and everything is doable by everyone. Aware that more has been written about Palestine and Israel than any other conflict in the world, Sabeel chose not to produce just another book for the shelf. Few, if any, books like this exist. That this is so is a reflection not only of a deeply entrenched problem within the nonviolent movement (favoring research and discourse over action) but also of the potential of *Kumi Now*.