

Middle East Resources

*The resources below have been compiled by Global Mission Office staff: some are our personal recommendations or the contents of our libraries, and others have been suggested by members of diocesan mission Networks. While we have not personally read all of these, we hope that they provide a helpful starting point for those who are looking to learn more about global mission and the regions with which we partner. **We welcome additions to this list!** If you have book recommendations or comments on the resources catalogued here, please email Lauren Zook at lzook@diomass.org.*

All resources are available from online retailers unless otherwise noted.

Guidebooks

DK Eyewitness Travel Guide: Jerusalem, Israel, Petra & Sinai. 2014.

This guidebook explores the culture, history, and architecture of this region, accompanied by full-color photographs, 3-D cutaway illustrations, and floor plans of must-see sights. It contains detailed maps and listings of hotels, restaurants, shops, entertainment, tours, scenic walks, and more.

Fodor's Israel. 2015.

This guidebook from the world's largest publisher of English-language travel and tourism information highlights Jerusalem's holy sites, Tel Aviv's cafés and shops, Galilee's nature reserves and ruins, and more, as well as color photos, maps, travel tips, and hotel and restaurant recommendations.

Insight Guides: Israel. 2015.

This guidebook covers the history and peoples of Israel in depth, while also delving into topics including cuisine, conservation, and diving. In addition, there is detailed coverage of the West Bank, including Bethlehem's shrines and the Negev's ancient sites. Full-color photography and maps aid navigation, while detailed "Travel Tips" provide the practical information needed to plan a trip.

History and the Holy Land

Armstrong, Karen. ***A History of Jerusalem: One City, Three Faiths.*** 2005.

In this comprehensive and elegantly written work, Karen Armstrong traces the turbulent history of Jerusalem from the prehistoric era to the present day. Armstrong is a knowledgeable guide, and her account is a sober and articulate tour of a complex subject and a city where, as she puts it, history is a dimension of the present.

Aslan, Reza. ***Zealot: The Life and Times of Jesus of Nazareth***. 2014.

Reza Aslan examines the historical person of Jesus through the lens of the tumultuous era in which he lived. Balancing Scripture and scholarship, he describes a man rife with contradiction, explores why the early Church preferred to promulgate an image of Jesus as a peaceful spiritual teacher rather than a politically-conscious revolutionary, and grapples with the riddle of how Jesus understood himself.

Boochny, Ety. ***The Holy Land: Follow the Steps of Jesus***. 1999.

This book provides information about various sites of interest in the Holy Land and contains color photographs, color maps, and an introductory essay on the life of Jesus.

Borg, Marcus J. and John Dominic Crossan. ***The Last Week: What the Gospels Really Teach About Jesus's Final Days in Jerusalem***. 2007.

Using the Gospel of Mark as their guide, Marcus Borg and John Dominic Crossan present a day-by-day account of Jesus's final week of life. The account reveals Jesus as a new kind of moral hero—a more dangerous one than the one enshrined in the Church's traditional teachings—who gives up his life to protest power without injustice and condemn the rich who lack concern for the poor.

Carroll, James. ***Jerusalem, Jerusalem: How the Ancient City Ignited Our Modern World***. 2012.

This book uncovers the history of Jerusalem and explores how it came to define culture in both the Middle East and America. Carroll shows how the New World was shaped by obsessions with Jerusalem from Christopher Columbus to Ronald Reagan, and he contends that understanding Christian fervor for Jerusalem gives us our best chance to reimagine peace in Israel and Palestine.

Feiler, Bruce. ***Where God Was Born: A Daring Adventure Through the Bible's Greatest Stories***. 2007.

Taking readers to Biblical sites not seen by Westerners for decades, Bruce Feiler's journey uncovers little-known details about the common roots of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, and affirms the importance of the Bible in today's world. He asserts that the Bible argues for interfaith harmony and urges moderates to take back the Bible and use its powerful voice as a beacon of shared ideals.

Shadid, Anthony. ***House of Stone: A Memoir of Home, Family, and a Lost Middle East***. 2012.

In the summer of 2006, racing through Lebanon to report on the Israeli invasion, Anthony Shadid came across his great-grandfather's once-magnificent estate in Marjayoun; one year later, he returned to rebuild it. In this memoir, Shadid traces the house's renewal alongside the history of his family's flight from Lebanon to America and provides profound insights into a shifting Middle East.

Christianity in the Middle East

Sennott, Charles M. *The Body and the Blood: The Middle East's Vanishing Christians and the Possibility for Peace*. 2002.

Charles M. Sennott examines the dwindling Christian communities of the modern Middle East in search of answers to the following questions: Why is Christianity dying out in the land where it began? And what are the consequences for the future of Christianity and for the Middle East itself? Sennott finds that the themes resonating today are the same as those that convulsed the region at the time of Christ.

Islam & Christianity

Esposito, John L. *What Everyone Needs to Know about Islam*. 2nd ed. 2011.

This brief and readable book by one of America's leading authorities on Islam is the best introductory source for information on the origin and traditions of Islam, new developments in Islam, and the faith, customs, and political beliefs of the more than one billion people who call themselves Muslims.

Griswold, Eliza. *The Tenth Parallel: Dispatches from the Fault Line Between Christianity and Islam*. 2011.

More than half of the world's Muslims and 60% of the world's Christians live along the line of latitude 700 miles north of the equator. Investigative journalist Eliza Griswold demonstrates that religious conflicts are also conflicts about natural resources, that local and tribal issues are often shaped by religious issues, and that, along the tenth parallel, faith is geographic and demographic.

Volf, Miroslav. *Allah: A Christian Response*. 2012.

In an exploration of every side of the issue, Miroslav Volf, one of the world's foremost Christian theologians, argues for a unified understanding between Islam and Christianity. In answering the question, Is the God of the Qur'an the same as the God of the Bible?, he reveals how the prevalent belief that these traditions worship different gods is directly linked to violence around the globe.

Volf, Miroslav, Prince Ghazi bin Muhammad Bin Tala, and Melissa Yarrington (Eds.). *A Common Word: Muslims and Christians on Loving God and Neighbor*. 2009.

In late 2007, Muslim leaders from around the world issued an open letter to Christian leaders entitled "A Common Word between Us and You," inviting cooperation as a step toward peace. This book includes that letter, the collaborative Christian response "Loving God and Neighbor Together," and subsequent commentary and dialogue from Muslim and Christian scholars.

Judaism & Christianity

Carroll, James. *Constantine's Sword: The Church and the Jews, A History*. 2002.

James Carroll maps the profoundly troubling two-thousand-year course of the Church's battle against Judaism and faces the crisis of faith it has provoked in his own life as a Catholic. From Gospel accounts of the crucifixion, to Constantine's transformation of the cross into a sword, to the Holocaust, Carroll reconstructs the dramatic story of the Church's conflict not only with Jews but with itself. The 2007 documentary adaptation (dir. Oren Jacoby) also comes recommended.

The Abrahamic Faiths

Feiler, Bruce. *Abraham: A Journey to the Heart of Three Faiths*. 2002.

This book tells the story of one man's search for the shared ancestor of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Traveling through war zones, braving violence at religious sites, and seeking out faith leaders, Bruce Feiler uncovers the defining yet divisive role that Abraham plays for half the world's believers and offers a vision of unity that redefines what we think about our neighbors, our future, and ourselves.

Halevi, Yossi Klein. *At the Entrance to the Garden of Eden: A Jew's Search for Hope with Christians and Muslims in the Holy Land*. 2002.

This book chronicles its religious Israeli Jewish author's two-year exploration of the faiths of his Christian and Muslim neighbors. He followed their holiday cycles, befriended their monastics and mystics, and joined them in prayer in monasteries and mosque; his account describes how he fought to reconcile his own fears and anger to relate to Christians and Muslims as fellow spiritual seekers.

Harries, Richard, Norman Solomon, and Timothy Winter (Eds.). *Abraham's Children: Jews, Christians and Muslims in Conversation*. 2005.

This book brings together essays by leading scholars of each faith to address key issues for the faiths and to collaboratively identify common ground and pose challenges for the future. It seeks to inspire readers in the process of interfaith dialogue, contribute clearly to vital religious issues of contemporary world concern, and help readers understand faiths that are different from their own.

Kuschel, Karl-Josef. *Abraham: Sign of Hope for Jews, Christians, and Muslims*. 1995.

This book offers a sign of hope to all who seek greater understanding among Jews, Christians, and Muslims. Karl-Josef Kuschel examines the character each of the three traditions claims as "father," gives a careful historical and theological account of the place of Abraham in each tradition, and articulates "an Abrahamic ecumene" that does not seek to ignore or eliminate differences.

Newell, John Philip. *Praying with the Earth: A Prayerbook for Peace*. 2011.

This collection offers prayers for Jews, Christians, and Muslims that articulate the deep longings for peace that unite these great spiritual traditions. For each morning and evening of the week, John Philip Newell provides strikingly beautiful and profound prayers that call us to be the people Jesus named blessed.

Peters, F.E. *The Children of Abraham: Judaism, Christianity, Islam*. 2006.

In this rewritten version of a work originally produced in the 1970s, F.E. Peters traces the three Abrahamic faiths from the 6th century BC to the Middle Ages and points out that all three faith groups share much common ground—most notably, the practice of worshiping a God who intervenes in history on behalf of God’s people.

Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

Ateek, Naim, Cedar Duaybis, and Maurine Tobin (Eds.). *The Forgotten Faithful: A Window into the Life and Witness of Christians in the Holy Land*. 2008.¹

This collection offers a broad look at the history of Christianity in the Holy Land, the contributions of the historic churches, the tradition of pilgrimage, the effect of cultural context on Biblical reflection, and the current realities of Palestinian life both for those living under Israeli occupation and for those who are Israeli citizens.

Ateek, Naim Stifan, Marc H. Ellis, and Rosemary Radford Ruether (Eds.). *Faith and the Intifada: Palestinian Christian Voices*. 1992.

This collection of essays, which grew out of papers given at a 1990 symposium on Palestinian liberation theology, articulates an emerging theological framework for Christian support of the Palestinian cause. It is divided into five parts: The Palestinian Reality; Palestinian Christian Identity; Power, Justice, and the Bible; Women, Faith, and the Intifada; and International Responses to the Quest for Palestinian Theology.

Ateek, Naim and Hilary Rantisi (Eds.). *Our Story: The Palestinians*. 1999.

Oppressed people around the world have often felt the need to counter the false images of what has been done to them. Aware that the majority of people, especially in the western nations, are unfamiliar with the Palestinian story, the contributors to this volume take up the task of telling it, through words and images that speak volumes for themselves.

¹ Naim Ateek is the founder and director of the Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center, a Palestinian Christian organization that seeks justice and peace in Israel/Palestine and advocates for a two-state solution to the conflict. Several of Ateek’s works are listed here, and many more resources can be found at sabeel.org.

Baker, Joharah and Nadia W. Awad (Eds.). ***Viewpoints from Palestine: Selected MIFTAH Essays from 2006-2008***. 2009. [available at miftah.org/Publications/Books/Viewpoint_From_Palestine.pdf]

This collection of essays published by the Palestinian Initiative for the Promotion of Global Dialogue and Democracy (MIFTAH) discusses both internal Palestinian affairs and the Israeli occupation between 2006 and 2008, providing a glimpse into the Palestinian situation as seen through the eyes of those who live in it.

Baltzer, Anna. ***Witness in Palestine: A Jewish American Woman in the Occupied Territories***. 2007.

For eight months over four years, young Jewish-American Anna Baltzer lived in the West Bank and worked with farmers, Palestinian and Israeli activists, and the families of political prisoners, encountering countless Palestinian grievances and witnessing firsthand the devastation wrought by expanding settlements and the Wall. Her honest examination provides a fresh look at the region today.

Carter, Jimmy. ***Palestine: Peace Not Apartheid***. 2006.

Former President Jimmy Carter presents an informed and readable chronicle of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and puts forth his blueprint for peace. While pointing out many counterproductive moves of Palestinian groups, he assigns ultimate blame to Israel, arguing that the country's leadership—and their Washington backers—have routinely undermined the peace process.

Carter, Jimmy. ***We Can Have Peace in the Holy Land: A Plan That Will Work***. 2009.

Former President Jimmy Carter describes the history of previous peace efforts in the Holy Land and why they fell short. Arguing that the road to a peace agreement is now open and that it has broad international and regional support, he lays out a practical and doable path to peace.

Jewish Voice for Peace. "Israel & Palestine: A Very Short Introduction." jewishvoiceforpeace.org/israeli-palestinian-conflict-101/.

This 6-and-a-half-minute animated video offers a concise introduction to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, with answers to FAQs following on the page below. Jewish Voice for Peace is a Jewish organization that seeks an end to the Israeli occupation, security and self-determination for Israelis and Palestinians, a just solution for Palestinian refugees, and peace and justice for all peoples of the Middle East.

Palestine Israel Network. ***Steadfast Hope: The Palestinian Quest for Just Peace***. 2011.

This booklet and companion DVD, published by an action group of the Episcopal Peace Fellowship, challenges common myths and misperceptions about the origins of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict,

presents a snapshot of the present situation on the ground, and offers a guide to the challenges that lie ahead in the quest for peace.

The Stones Cry Out. Directed by Yasmine Perni. 2013. [available for purchase at thestonescryoutmovie.com/order/]

All too often, media coverage of the conflict in Palestine has framed it as a fight between Muslims and Jews, largely ignoring the fact that Palestinian Christians have played a critical role in their land's history and the struggle to maintain its identity. In this documentary, leading Palestinian Christians recount the unwavering and sometimes desperate struggle of all Palestinians to resist Israel's occupation and stay on their land.

Tolan, Sandy. ***The Lemon Tree: An Arab, a Jew, and the Heart of the Middle East***. 2007.

In 1967, Bashir Khairi, a 25-year-old Palestinian, journeyed to Israel to see the beloved stone house with the lemon tree behind it that he and his family had fled nineteen years earlier. When he found the house, he was greeted by Dalia Eshkenazi Landau, a 19-year-old Israeli college student, whose family left Europe for Israel after the Holocaust. On the stoop of the stone house, Dalia and Bashir began a rare friendship that would be tested over the next half century in ways neither could then imagine.

West Bank Story. Directed by Ari Sandel. 2005. [available at [youtube.com/watch?v=mqQfCUNf0no&t=376s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mqQfCUNf0no&t=376s)]

A musical comedy set in the fast-paced, fast-food world of competing falafel stands on the West Bank! David, an Israeli soldier, falls in love with Fatima, a beautiful Palestinian cashier, despite the animosity between their families' dueling restaurants (Kosher King and Hummus Hut). Can the couple's love withstand a 58-year-old conflict and their families' desire to control the future of the chick pea in the Middle East?? A parody of West Side Story, this 21-minute musical won the 2006 Oscar for Best Live Action Short Film and is absolutely adorable.