



December 2023

Dear Friends,

Merry Christmas from Oman!

I have been asked recently by my Omani friends about my views of peace as a Christian. Like the rest of the world, they are deeply troubled by the violence in Israel and Gaza. My response: I shared with one of my friends a sermon that I preached recently at the Protestant Church in Oman while providing pulpit supply as they wait for their new pastor to arrive.

In the sermon, I noted that Arabic and Hebrew are from the same language family and that the word for peace is similar, Shalom (Hebrew) and Salam (Arabic). If we look at the words in their native script, they both contain the same root letters S-L-M. Both Arabic and Hebrew speakers use it as a greeting. For both, it is a central concept of their life and faith.

Shalom/Salam, or peace, is not just the absence of conflict or violence. It is the active process of being well, healthy, prosperous, and sustained. When greeted with Shalom or Salam Aleikum, it is a prayer for the one you are greeting.

Jesus, in the Sermon on the Mount, says “Blessed are the Peacemakers” or blessed are the makers of Shalom. Blessed are those who bring wellness and wholeness to the community. He didn’t say blessed are the peaceful, or ones in a state of peace. Instead, he said blessed are the ones active in bringing Shalom into their community and the world, for they will be known as children of God.

It is not enough to not be in conflict with each other, we must be active in bringing peace, working for peace, and for something that will last beyond a moment, a day, or a year.



Justin with Bidget Ganguly in honor of her six years on the board (Cross made from tree from old Al Amana School).



Justin with Omani Diplomats and International Peace Mediators.

Would you like to receive these updates digitally? Please email Kelli at kgilmore@rca.org to be added to the email list. You will receive more timely updates from the missionary you support and help us be good stewards of our resources.

My Omani friend shared the sermon on social media and networks here in Oman. I don't know how many people have seen it or watched it, but it is enough to know it is out there as we actively work for peace/shalom/salam at the Al Amana Centre in the name of Christ.



*Meyers Family in the closest they get to winter
(Arctic Exhibition in Seaworld Abu Dhabi)*

So as we wait for the Prince of Shalom/Salam to come and bring shalom/salam to all, we will continue to work in the ways we can to make peace in our world. We thank you for your support and ask that you continue to find ways to actively bring wellness and wholeness to the communities in which you live and to the world where you can.

Peace,

Justin, Stephanie, Gavin, and Collin