



May 2024

Dear Friends,

It has been an interesting spring here in Oman. The weather has remained cooler longer than usual, though, as I write this, the outside temp is over 100 Fahrenheit. In April, we hosted a group of religious leaders from Finland that included the Bishops of the Lutheran, Catholic, and Orthodox churches. They were joined by other Christian leaders from Helsinki as well as the chair of the Jewish Council in Helsinki and an Imam of a mosque in Helsinki. To help round out the group we invited a Palestinian Christian leader of a reconciliation organization based in Jerusalem, a Bishop in the Church in Pakistan, and the leader of a Muslim Christian dialogue course from Mekane Yesus Lutheran Seminary in Ethiopia. It was a good and eclectic group.

While the trip was generally upbeat, there was a tense session when talking about the war in Israel and Palestine. The Palestinian talked about the day that many Israelis started emigrating into Israel/Palestine and the Palestinians were forced off their land and out of their homes. He said that was the saddest day in Palestinian history in the last 200 years. The Jewish man talked about how that was the happiest day in his people's lives in the last 200 years.

The room was so tense that you could feel it. One Finnish pastor blurted out "Just listen to each other!"

It highlighted for me why this war is at such an impasse.

At the end of the day, however, they shook hands and agreed they needed to work for peace and that both people needed a land they could call home...but they still deeply disagreed on what that home should look like.

It is hard to wrap your head around how one group's happiness has to come at the cost of another group's devastation. However, I am proud of Al Amana Centre for creating the space for this to happen. While we didn't solve any problems, we let people and their stories be heard. Al Amana Centre creates a unique place and space for this kind of exchange and learning to happen.



*Finnish and other Religious Leaders at Orthodox Church in Oman.*

*Would you like to receive these updates digitally? Please email Kelli at [kgilmore@rca.org](mailto: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.*

This summer we will be bringing 10 Omanis to the West Michigan area. We will be having a Photovoice Exhibition at Hope Church on July 7. If you would like more details on how you can join us, email me at [jmeyers@alamanacentre.org](mailto:jmeyers@alamanacentre.org).

We are excited that this will likely be the first of many times we will be bringing Omanis with us to the U.S. Like Christians who come to Oman and experience what it is like to be in the religious minority in Oman, we hope to help the Omanis have empathy for minority religions by experiencing Christians and Muslims in the United States. We also hope to expose Omanis to people in West Michigan so that their only information on Americans and Christians does not come from our TV, movies, and the news. This is a first for Al Amana Centre to bring a group of this size to the USA, so if we can't connect you with Omanis on this trip, hopefully the next trip we can come to your area. We are doing this in partnership with Hope College in Holland, MI.

Our family is also experiencing two transitions:

1. We just found out our landlord is not going to renew our lease because his newly married son wants to live in the house. We moved into our current house during COVID-19 and thought it would be our forever home in Oman. However, we are facing a summer of unknowns as we will be in the U.S. all summer and can't move until we return to Oman in August. Our lease is up in September. Please pray that we find another suitable (and affordable) house to rent in the fall.
2. Gavin is leaving Oman to go to college this fall. He will be attending Eckerd College in St. Petersburg, FL, to study Marine Biology and Coastal Management. He is taking his love for God's creation and wanting to learn how to care for and steward our oceans better. Pray for him, and us, as we will now live an ocean apart for the first time.



*Gavin and Collin on Gavin's Birthday and the family on Stephanie's birthday.*

**Support Needed:** We are still in need of both personal support for our personnel budget with the RCA and scholarship funds to bring people together in Oman for the invaluable space to meet each other in safety and openness. Please contact me to explore giving to Al Amana Centre's mission and programs through the RCA.

Peace,  
Justin, Stephanie, Gavin, and Collin

*RCA Global Mission does not receive denominational assessments or covenant shares. We depend on the faithful generosity of churches and individuals.*