

*Felt*

## PRIMATE MEETS LEADERS OF ISRAEL AND PALESTINE

The Archbishop of Canterbury and the Church of Ireland Primate, Archbishop Robin Eames, have completed a series of meetings in Jerusalem and Gaza with religious and political leaders. The two Anglican leaders flew to the middle east at the urgent request of the Bishop of Jerusalem who had appealed on behalf of Christians who are living under extremely dangerous conditions as tensions rise throughout the region.

Dr Carey and Dr Eames met the Prime Minister of Israel, Mr Sharon, in Jerusalem together with his advisors to urge renewed efforts to reach a peaceful outcome to the current negotiations following the publication of the plan produced by Senator George Mitchell.

In Gaza the two Primates had a lengthy meeting with President Yasser Arafat and members of the Palestinian cabinet. They visited the community at Beit Jala, scene of recent rocket attacks, the Rehabilitation Center in Beit Jala which is supported by contributions from Christian Churches throughout the world and attended a large gathering of Church leaders from throughout Israel.

Archbishop Eames said :

“The fear and uncertainty we encountered throughout the visit, the suffering of thousands imprisoned within the Gaza strip because they are prevented from leaving the area and the apprehensions within Israel because of terrorist attacks, presented a dismal picture of what the future may hold for the Holy Land. We did our best to encourage the Christian and other religious traditions in our face to face meetings. It

was sad to find the historic holy places deserted because visitors are afraid to travel. We had a simple agenda : *to listen, to encourage and to pray*. We have been encouraged by our welcome from political and religious leaders as we stressed the importance of dialogue to answer the divisions and fear. "

The End  
31.7.01.