

## Can You Imagine?

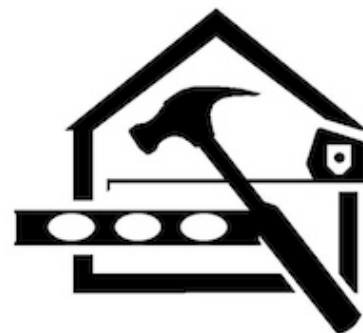
*Sue Lyke shared this “Aha” Moment while living in East Jerusalem with her family.*

There’s a new Jewish Orthodox group trying to take over a private home in our mostly Moslem Palestinian and Christian neighborhood. This house is just opposite to some strange caves down in the wadi. Perhaps the caves have some symbolic or religious significance to one group or another. It turns out that this particular orthodox group, which often leads tours through our area, has been watching for “vulnerable” houses.

A “vulnerable” house seems to be one which lends itself to being taken over or demolished. In this case, this Moslem Palestinian

family was building on to its present house. The potential settlers assumed it was an illegal, unauthorized addition. They were wrong, but that wasn’t learned until they’d climbed on top of the house roof, chanting, and swarmed into the family’s walled yard. The altercation ended with the wife-mother lying beaten in the road and taken away by an ambulance.

Can you imagine this? Can you imagine the self-righteousness of this to allow such inhumane human actions? Can you imagine a theology that centers on an image of God as One who tolerates and sanctions



such cruelty? Can you imagine God as caring more for one than another of his creatures? Can you imagine the wake of insecurity that family — especially the children — must contend with?

I’m becoming able to imagine these things — not only because I see them in all their raw ugliness — but because I’m beginning to realize that there’s a bit of this self-righteousness inside me, too. And I, too, sometimes erroneously believe God to be on “my side” of an argument, action, or perspective...with the “other,” as with me.