

**“CALMING THE STORM:
MIDDLE EAST PEACEMAKING IN A TURBULENT TIME”
CMEP ADVOCACY CONFERENCE
~ WORKSHOPS ~**

First Workshop Session: Morning (10:45-11:45am)

1. The Situation of Palestinian Christians: Preserving the Living Stones of the Holy Land

Dr. Bernard Sabella, Middle East Council of Churches and Member, Palestinian Legislative Council

Moderator: Marty Shupack, CMEP Board, Church World Service
Location: 6ABC

The indigenous Christian community in the Holy Land continues to dwindle due to the political and economic instability of the unresolved Israeli-Palestinian. Dr. Bernard Sabella, a Palestinian Christian sociologist and leading expert on Christians in the Holy Land, will discuss the challenges faced by this historic Christian community. Among the topics explored will be current trends in emigration, the primary factors causing the Christians to leave, as well as the vital role that Palestinian Christians play within Palestinian society and in promoting peace.

2. Working with Jews and Muslims for Arab-Israeli-Palestinian Peace: the Moral Imperatives, Advantages and Challenges

Ron Young, Co-founder and Consultant for the National Interreligious Leadership Initiative for Peace in the Middle East (NILI)

Moderator: Catherine Gordon, CMEP Board, Presbyterian Church (USA)
Location: Executive Boardroom

One of the most encouraging recent developments is the way that advocacy positions of several major "pro-Israeli" and "pro-Palestinian" organizations have converged. The National Interreligious Leadership Initiative for Peace (NILI) brings together heads of 25 Jewish, Christian and Muslim national religious organizations, including heads of many organizations involved in CMEP. Ron Young will discuss NILI and how you can relate to it's national and local interreligious network.

3. International Response to the Calamity in Gaza

Thomas Neu, American Near East Refugee Aid (ANERA)

Moderator: Ann Staal, CMEP Board, Reformed Church in America
Location: 4ABC

The humanitarian crisis in Gaza is a catastrophe of untold dimensions. According to a recent report, it is at its lowest point in 40 years. More than one million people or 80 percent of Gaza's population is now dependent on food aid and Gaza's power, water and sewage systems have

collapsed. Take a close-up look at the deteriorating health, sanitary, economic, education, environmental and political situation in Gaza and discuss what the International community is doing to help - and what it is not.

4. Engaging Congregations in Israeli-Palestinian Peacemaking

Tom Charles, CMEP Grassroots Advocacy Project Coordinator, New Jersey

Charles P. Lutz, CMEP Grassroots Advocacy Project Coordinator, Minnesota

Anna Rhee, CMEP Grassroots Coordinator

Location: 1AB

Local congregations that want to learn more about Israeli-Palestinian peacemaking can find it difficult to know where to begin and how to approach the complicated terrain. Presenters will discuss useful models and tools for encouraging study and action by congregations.

5. Israeli and Jewish-American Views on Annapolis and Beyond

MJ Rosenberg, Director of Policy Analysis, Israel Policy Forum

Moderator: Maureen Shea, CMEP Board Chair, The Episcopal Church

Location: 5AB

This workshop will discuss political dynamics in the American Jewish community and in Israel regarding the peace process. What are the remaining obstacles in the U.S. and Israel to accepting the idea of a two state solution? How much scope is there for US and Israeli politicians to win sufficient support from their constituencies for a peace agreement in the foreseeable future?

Second Workshop Session: Afternoon (2:15-3:15pm)

6. Congress and Israeli-Palestinian Issues: Building Support for Peace

Bill Harper, Chief of Staff - Rep. Betty McCollum (MN-4)

Julie Schumacher Cohen, CMEP Legislative Coordinator

Location: 6ABC

This workshop will explore how Congress addresses Israeli-Palestinian issues, including the policy and politics behind Congressional action, and discuss effective ways that Members and advocates can build support for peace. Key Congressional initiatives and legislation related to the peace process will be discussed as well as the impact of increased cooperation among Christian, Jewish and Arab-American organizations in pressing for greater U.S. diplomatic engagement.

7. Iran's Role in the Middle East: Confrontation or Cooperation?

Trita Parsi, President of the National Iranian American Council

Moderator: Jim Fine, CMEP Board, Friends Committee on National Legislation

Location: 1AB

Poor relations between the US, Israel and Iran obstruct progress toward building a peaceful Middle East. Their geopolitical rivalries often take precedence over positive diplomacy and dialogue. Dr. Parsi, author of "Traacherous Alliance- The Secret Dealings of Israel, Iran and the

US”, will discuss the role of Iran and the impact of its relationships with the US and Israel on regional peace and security. Can the national aspirations and legitimate security concerns of all three countries be addressed? Should the US help reintegrate Iran into the regional order? If so, can the Israeli-Iranian rivalry be tamed to make it so?

8. Syria: Key to Middle East Peace?

Ambassador Ted Kattouf, President and CEO, America-Mideast Educational and Training Services, Inc. (AMIDEAST)

Moderator: Warren Clark, CMEP Executive Director

Location: Executive Boardroom

A lasting peace between Israel and Palestinians is not possible without Syria’s agreement. Ted Kattouf recently returned from Syria where he served as U. S. Ambassador. This workshop will discuss the Syrian viewpoints on its role in the regional conflicts, its relationship with the U.S., and the U.S. role in peacemaking. What are the prospects for peace between Israel and Syria? What are the factors working for or against an Israeli-Syrian peace agreement? How would a settlement with Syria affect Israeli’s conflicts with the Palestinians and Hezbollah?

9. Evangelical Peacemaking and a Two-State Solution:

Chris Seiple, President, Institute for Global Engagement

Moderator: Ann Staal, CMEP Board, Reformed Church in America

Location: 5AB

In June 2007 thirty-four prominent evangelical Christian leaders wrote to President Bush supporting his efforts to bring justice and peace to all the people of the Holy Land. These efforts continued in November 2007 with a statement signed by over 80 evangelical educators and ministry heads reiterating the call for a two state solution to the Israel-Palestinian conflict by creation of a Palestinian state living side by side with Israel in peace and security. This workshop will review the role and activities of US evangelicals in supporting Israeli-Palestinian peacemaking.

10. Sharing Jerusalem? Discussions and Diversions on the Way to Final Status

Lara Friedman, Ir Amim and Americans for Peace Now

Moderator: Maureen Shea, CMEP Board Chair, The Episcopal Church

Location: 4ABC

Jerusalem is a final status issue in Israeli-Palestinian talks. Following the Annapolis conference in November 2007, discussions between negotiators on both sides have reportedly included the future of the holy city- breaking past taboos- yet settlement activity has increased since the conference and the March Yeshiva terrorist attack was a grim reminder of the threat of violence. Ms. Friedman will discuss the significance of current events and the possibility of finding a solution for Jerusalem that allows it to be shared by the two peoples and three faiths.