

December 1, 2008

The Honorable Barack Obama
President-elect of the United States
Presidential Transition Team
Washington, DC 20270

Dear President-elect Obama,

As Christians of the Catholic, Evangelical, Orthodox and Protestant traditions, we are united by a Biblical call to be peacemakers and a commitment to the two peoples of the Holy Land who yearn for a just peace. As Americans, we urge you, Mr. President, to make achievement of Israeli-Palestinian peace an immediate priority during your first year in office.

The conflict between Israelis and Palestinians has gone on too long. It has caused untold suffering for both sides, created economic hardships, and provided a rallying cry for extremists.

As people of faith and hope, we believe peace is possible. Majorities of both Israelis and Palestinians continue to support a negotiated solution based on two secure and sovereign states as the best way to end this tragic conflict.

In order to achieve a durable peace, your Administration must provide sustained, high-level diplomatic leadership toward the clear goal of a final status agreement. Building on past discussions, we ask you to encourage Israeli and Palestinian leaders to make historic compromises necessary for peace.

Your commitment to working for the establishment of a viable Palestinian state alongside a secure Israel can help strengthen U.S. security and improve stability and relationships throughout the Middle East. We believe that Jerusalem – home to two peoples and three religions – has the potential to become a powerful symbol of hope and coexistence for people across the region and the world.

We know the work for a just peace will not be easy. It will require great courage and resolve, but the risk of inaction is even greater. Without active U.S. engagement, political inertia and perpetuation of the unbearable status quo will make achievement of a two-state solution increasingly difficult. Moreover, we are concerned about the negative impact a further delay will have on the Christian community in the Holy Land, whose numbers continue to decline.

We call on all Christians and people of goodwill to join us in praying for the peace of Jerusalem and in supporting vigorous U.S. diplomatic efforts to secure Middle East peace. Mr. President, as you take up the many challenges facing the United States and the global community, we urge you to work for a better future for all the children of Abraham in the land that is holy to us all.

Sincerely,

Rev. Fr. Mark Arey
Ecumenical Officer
Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America

The Most Rev. Archbishop Khajag Barsamian
Primate, Diocese of the Armenian Church of
America (Eastern)

Rt. Rev. Wayne Burkette
Moravian Church in America

Tony Campolo
Eastern University, St. Davids, PA

Sr. J. Lora Dambroski, OSF
President, Leadership Conference of Women Religious

Marie Dennis
Director, Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns

Sr. Donna Graham, OSF
President, English Speaking Conference JPIC Council
Franciscan Friars (OFM)

Rev. Wesley Granberg-Michaelson
General Secretary, Reformed Church in America

Ken Hackett
President, Catholic Relief Services

The Rev. Mark S. Hanson
Presiding Bishop
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

The Rev. Dr. Stan Haste
Minister for Mission and Ecumenism, Alliance of Baptists

Bishop Howard J. Hubbard
Chairman, Committee on International Justice and Peace
U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops

Dr. Joel C. Hunter
Senior Pastor, Northland Church
Member, Executive Committee of the
National Association of Evangelicals

Archbishop Cyril Aphrem Karim
Archdiocese of the Syrian Orthodox Church
for the Eastern USA

The Rev. Dr. Michael Kinnamon
General Secretary
National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA

Rev. Michael E. Livingston
Executive Director
International Council of Community Churches
Immediate Past President, National Council of Churches

Reverend John L. McCullough
Executive Director and CEO, Church World Service

Mary Ellen McNish
General Secretary, American Friends Service Committee

Rev. Dr. A. Roy Medley
General Secretary, The American Baptist Churches

Richard J. Mouw
President, Fuller Theological Seminary

David Neff
Editor in Chief, Christianity Today

Stanley J. Noffsinger
General Secretary
Church of the Brethren

Bishop Gregory Vaughn Palmer
President, The Council of Bishops
The United Methodist Church

Rev. Gradye Parsons
Stated Clerk of the General Assembly
Presbyterian Church, (USA)

Very Rev. Thomas Picton, CSsR
President, Conference of Major Superiors of Men

Dr. Tyrone Pitts
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Bob Roberts, Jr.
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Executive Director
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Metropolitan PHILIP (Saliba)
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Rolando L. Santiago
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The Most Rev. Katharine Jefferts Schori
Presiding Bishop, The Episcopal Church

Dr. Chris Seiple
President, Institute for Global Engagement

Robert A. Seiple
Former Ambassador-at-Large for
International Religious Freedom

Ronald J. Sider
President, Evangelicals for Social Action

Richard Stearns
President, World Vision, United States

The Rev. John H. Thomas
General Minister and President, United Church of Christ

Constantine M. Triantafilou
Executive Director and CEO
International Orthodox Christian Charities

Joe Volk
Executive Secretary
Friends Committee on National Legislation

Jim Wallis
President, Sojourners

The Rev. Dr. Sharon Watkins
General Minister and President
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

The Right Rev. John F. White
Ecumenical and Urban Affairs Officer
African Methodist Episcopal Church

American Christians nationwide are invited to add
their names to the leaders' call for Holy Land peace.
Deadline is Jan. 16, 2009.
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