

# Churches for Middle East Peace



110 Maryland Avenue NE, #311 • Washington, D.C. 20002 • (202)543-1222 • Fax: (202)543-5025 • info@cmep.org • www.cmep.org

Maureen Shea, Chair  
Corinne Whitlatch, Director  
Anna Rhee, Program Consultant  
Julie Schumacher Cohen, Legislative  
Coordinator

Alliance of Baptists

American Friends Service  
Committee

Antiochian Orthodox Christian  
Archdiocese of North America

Armenian Orthodox Church

Catholic Conference of Major  
Superiors of Men's Institutes

Christian Church  
(Disciples of Christ)  
Common Global Ministries Board

Church of the Brethren

Church World Service

Episcopal Church

Evangelical Lutheran Church  
in America

Franciscan Friars (OFM)  
English Speaking Conference,  
JPIC Council

Friends Committee on National  
Legislation

Greek Orthodox Archdiocese  
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Maryknoll Missioners

Mennonite Central Committee

Moravian Church in America

National Council of Churches

Presbyterian Church (USA)

Reformed Church in America

Unitarian Universalist Association

United Church of Christ  
Common Global Ministries Board

United Methodist Church  
General Board of Church and Society  
General Board of Global Ministries:  
Women's Division

August 9, 2007

The Honorable....  
Campaign Headquarters  
Address

Dear Sen./Gov./Rep./Mayor...,

We write as Board members of a coalition of Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant denominations, churches and agencies, for whom peace in the Holy Land and the welfare of Christians – as well as Jews and Muslims – are vitally important. Our church members and congregations are deeply concerned over the continued impasse between Israel and the Palestinians in their struggles for security, identity, and acceptance. We are joined in this appeal to you by members of our Leadership Council, prominent individuals who each hold a particular expertise and connection to the Middle East.

**Churches for Middle East Peace urges you – as a candidate, and if you succeed, as President – to support a two-state peace between Israelis and Palestinians as a top priority from the beginning of your administration and to commit yourself to stronger American diplomatic leadership toward the goal of a comprehensive regional settlement.**

The tragic, century-old Israeli-Palestinian conflict is a struggle between two proud peoples who have, thus far, been denied the blessings of peace and security. Both have been victims of epic tragedies and repeated wars and violence. Both sides have made serious mistakes. Neither has grasped the suffering of the other, and peace making efforts by the United States and the international community have been inadequate.

In the absence of effective mediation, especially after the collapse of the Oslo peace process, each side has resorted to force. Nevertheless, many experts share our conviction that this conflict can be resolved. Years of discussions and polls reveal that Israeli and Palestinian majorities are willing to make concessions for peace and understand

that it can only be achieved through two states, a withdrawal from settlements, and a shared Jerusalem as the capitals of Israel and of Palestine. Even the refugee issue is soluble in the context of a comprehensive regional agreement.

We urge that in your campaign you promise strong Presidential leadership in resolving this conflict, the appointment of a special envoy who can act with your full authority, and a balanced policy that addresses the basic needs of both Israelis and Palestinians, in the context of a broader Middle East peace. In reality, their respective interests are interdependent. All Israelis and Palestinians will continue to suffer without peace and security for Israel, and freedom, dignity and sovereignty for Palestinians in a viable state of their own. The future of the Palestinian Christian community is at particular risk. Lacking peace and economic opportunity, Christians are prone to emigrate, depleting the Palestinian population of its natural religious diversity.

**The United States must show empathy and support for both Israelis and Palestinians if we are to help resolve this terrible conflict. We appeal to you, therefore, to rise above the polemical rhetoric that has too often characterized political commentary on this conflict.**

Such American leadership is needed, not only as moral imperative on behalf of suffering protagonists, but to restore the goodwill that the United States once enjoyed in the region. The unwillingness of the U.S. government to engage constructively to resolve the conflict has created deep mistrust and hostility toward our country in the Arab and Muslim world, and elsewhere. Our principles of justice, equality and peace are at risk, and our security interests depend on more effective leadership in helping resolve this historic struggle.

We know that a great many American Christians would respond very positively to your promise to make Israeli-Palestinian peace a high and urgent priority for your Administration. Moreover, based on our long experience and cooperation with other American religious communities, we are persuaded that you would also find strong support in the American Jewish and American Muslim communities for such leadership.

Respectfully yours,

Churches for Middle East Peace Board  
Churches for Middle East Peace Leadership Council

(names and affiliations of signatories follow)

**The following signers are Churches for Middle East Peace Board Members**

***Archbishop Vicken Aykazian***  
Armenian Orthodox Church

***Bishop Wayne Burkette***  
Moravian Church in America

***Jim Fine***  
Legislative Secretary for Foreign Policy  
Friends Committee on National Legislation

***Dennis W. Frado***  
Director, Lutheran Office for World  
Community  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

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

***Rev. Dr. Stan Hastey***  
Minister for Mission and Ecumenism  
Alliance of Baptists

***Rev. Elenora Giddings Ivory***  
Director, Washington Office  
Presbyterian Church, (USA)

***Rev. Phillip L. Jones***  
Director, Washington Office  
Church of the Brethren

***R. Aura Kanegis***  
Director of Public Affairs  
and Washington Office  
American Friends Service Committee

***Rob Keithan***  
Director, Washington Office for Advocacy  
Unitarian Universalist Association of  
Congregations

***Dr. Antonios Kireopoulos***  
Associate General Secretary for  
International  
Affairs and Peace  
National Council of Churches USA  
and Representative of the  
Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America

***Rev. James Kofski, M.M.i***  
Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns

***Dr. Peter E. Makari***  
Executive, Middle East and Europe  
Global Ministries of the  
United Church of Christ and  
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

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

***T. Michael McNulty, SJ***  
Justice and Peace Director  
Conference of Major Superiors of Men

***The Very Rev. George Rados***  
Representative  
Antiochian Christian Orthodox Archdiocese  
of North America

***Maureen Shea***  
Director of Government Relations  
The Episcopal Church

***Ann V. Staal***  
Social Witness/MidEast  
Reformed Church in America

***Jim Winkler***  
General Secretary  
Board of Church & Society  
United Methodist Church

## The following are Churches for Middle East Peace Leadership Council Members

***Ann Zwicker Kerr***

**Chair, CMEP Leadership Council**  
Board of Trustees,  
American University of Beirut  
American University of Kuwait

***Landrum Bolling***

President Emeritus, Earlham College  
Director (ret), Tantur Institute, Jerusalem

***Anne Stokes Brown***

Elementary school teacher (retired)  
Presbyterian Church member

***L. Carl Brown***

Garrett Professor in Foreign Affairs Emeritus  
Princeton University

***Rt. Rev. Edmond Browning***

XXIV Presiding Bishop  
The Episcopal Church

***Lincoln Chafee***

Former US Senator  
Visiting Fellow, Brown University

***Rev. Drew Christiansen, S.J.***

Editor in Chief  
**America** magazine

***Helena Cobban***

Friend in Washington with the  
Friends Committee on National Legislation,  
Middle East affairs writer

***David Dodge***

American University of Beirut, Former President

***Robert & Roberta Grimm***

United Church of Christ members, Buffalo, NY

***Dr. Amy Blatchford Hecht***

Dean & Professor Emeritus, Temple University

***Dr. James L. Hecht***

DuPont Company (1953-1985)

***Khalil E. Jahshan***

Executive Director, Washington Intern Program  
Pepperdine University

***The Rev. David L. Johnson***

Lutheran World Federation,  
Jerusalem Office (1989-97)

***Douglas S. Kerr, MD and Mary Ann Kerr***

United Methodist Church members, Cleveland, Ohio

***The Rev. Dr. Charles A. Kimball***

Professor of Comparative Religion  
Wake Forest University

***Carol Schersten LaHurd***

Coordinator, Middle East peace strategy  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

***John B. Lindner***

Director, Department of External Relations  
Yale Divinity School

***Scott McConnell***

Editor, **The American Conservative**

***Amb. (ret) Richard W. and Anne Murphy***

Ass't Secretary of State (1983-89) for  
Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs,  
Amb. to Syria (74-78) and Saudi Arabia (81-83)

***Phyllis E. Oakley***

Deputy Spokesman for the State Department.  
Assistant Secretary of State (retired)

***Amb. (ret) Robert B. Oakley***

Dep't of State and National Security Council  
Special Envoy to Somalia (1992-94)

***The Rev. Walter L. Owensby***

Presbyterian Church (USA), retired.

***Betty H. Sams***

Advisory Board, Center for Contemporary  
Arab Studies, Georgetown University

***Dr. Shibley Telhami***

Anwar Sadat Professor, Peace & Development  
University of Maryland

***Amb. (ret.) Patrick N. Theros***

Rep. of the Greek Orthodox Patriarch of Jerusalem

***Amb. (ret.) Philip C. Wilcox, Jr.***

President  
Foundation for Middle East Peace