

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)

**Ken Hackett**  
President, Catholic Relief Services

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

**The Rev. Dr. Stan Hastey**  
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. Grady 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**

General Secretary  
Progressive National Baptist Convention, Inc.

**Bob Roberts, Jr.**

Pastor, NorthWood Church, Keller, TX

**Leonard Rodgers**

Executive Director  
Evangelicals for Middle East Understanding

**Metropolitan PHILIP (Saliba)**

Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North  
America

**Rolando L. Santiago**

Executive Director, Mennonite Central Committee U.S.

**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