

# ***Church Leaders' Inaugural Letter to President Bush***

January 21, 2005

The Honorable George W. Bush  
The White House  
Washington, DC

Dear Mr. President:

As leaders of Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant Churches and Christian organizations with millions of members across the country, we encourage you to lead a political process that will end the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. As you begin your second term, the vision of a two-state solution is coming back into focus after having faded into obscurity. Will Palestinians finally be free? Will Israelis be secure at last? As people of faith and hope, we say yes!

This is the time for you and for the 109th Congress, and for friends of Israel and Palestine, to have the courage to be peacemakers, and to press both Israelis and Palestinians to seize the future; where each recognizes the other's right to exist and is willing to work together for security and economic well-being.

For the sake of our own country as well, Mr. President, we appeal to you. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict has become a threat to the people of the United States. Every day the conflict continues, hatred of the United States government is fueled. With each news report of Palestinian suffering -- whether the death of an innocent child, the demolition of a family's home, or the confiscation of farmland for the separation barrier -- popular support in Arab and Muslim countries for terrorism grows and the threat of attacks directed at the United States increases. The continuing conflict has also resulted in suffering and loss of life among Israeli citizens. We want Israelis, too, to live without fear or threat in their own country.

A hallmark of your campaign was the commitment to defeat terror and make our country more secure. We believe that the promise of peace in Jerusalem is the best defense against terrorism. We encourage you to maintain the faith, the courage and the resolve to work with other world leaders toward negotiations that guarantee two viable states, Israel and Palestine, living side-by-side and sharing Jerusalem as their capital.

Finally, Mr. President, we urge you to follow the examples of the great prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah, who declared that God calls all nations and all people to do justice to one another. We join you in praying for peace in the Holy Land and at home.

Sincerely,

Rev. Dr. Leonard B. Bjorkman, Co-Moderator, Presbyterian Peace Fellowship

Marilyn Borst, Director, Global Ministry, Peachtree Presbyterian Church, Atlanta

Simone Campbell, SSS, National Coordinator, NETWORK, A Catholic Social Justice Lobby

Anthony Campolo, President, Evangelical Association for the Promotion of Education

Br. Kevin Cawley, Deputy Province Leader, Eastern American Province, Christian Brothers

Sister Ardis Cloutier, OSF, Franciscan Sisters of Little Falls, MN

Marie Dennis, Director, Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns

Christopher J. Doyle, President/CEO, American Leprosy Missions

Rev. Robert Edgar, General Secretary, National Council of Churches USA

[and many others]