



## Church of the Brethren

### **Things That Make for Peace in the Middle East October 6<sup>th</sup>, 2010**

[The Church of the Brethren](#) has consistently been a witness for peace throughout our history, dating back to 1785. We have also been consistent witnesses for peace between Israel and Palestine, joining with [On Earth Peace](#) to support [Christian Peacemaker Teams](#) in their witness and accompaniment in the region. The Church of the Brethren has also supported the [World Council of Churches Decade to Overcome Violence](#), which in [2009 sent a Living Letters delegation to the region](#) and has also sponsored [Accompaniment Teams](#), and works with [Churches for Middle East Peace](#).

We now stand at a critical juncture in the Mid-East peace process. On Sunday, September 25<sup>th</sup>, Israel's freeze on West Bank settlements came to an end, and the peace talks between Israel and Palestine are now in flux. Israel has so far declined to extend the freeze, and Palestinian Authority President Abbas said that it would be "very difficult" for talks to continue if Israeli construction resumes. This impasse threatens to end what careful progress has been made towards an agreement thus far.. It is vital that in these times members of the Church of the Brethren keep highlighting alternatives to the violence of the region, and call for another way.

“Budros” is a film produced by JustVision which documents how a community in Palestine battled the building of the Separation Barrier. It follows a Palestinian community organizer, Ayed Morrar, who unites local Fatah and Hamas members along with Israeli supporters in an unarmed movement to save his village of Budrus from destruction by Israel’s Separation Barrier. Success eludes them until his 15-year-old daughter, Iltezam, launches a women’s contingent that quickly moves to the front lines. [Click here to find a screening of this film near you – and if there isn’t one, offer to host it.](#)

It is also vital that we call for a continuation of peace talks. [Click here to take action now.](#) Tell President Obama and Secretary Clinton to ratchet up the pressure on both sides to stay at the negotiating table. The time is now to keep talks going for a just and comprehensive peace for Israelis and Palestinians.

#### **Church of the Brethren Policy:**

**1970 Annual Conference Statement, [Statements of the Church of the Brethren on War](#)** reads: The Church of the Brethren, since its beginning in 1708, has repeatedly declared its position against war. Our understanding of the life and the teachings of Christ as revealed in the New Testament led our Annual Conference to state in 1785 that we should not "submit to the higher powers so as to make ourselves their instruments to shed human blood." In 1918 at our Annual

Conference we stated that "we believe that war or any participation in war is wrong and incompatible with the spirit, example and teachings of Jesus Christ." Again in 1934 Annual Conference resolved that all war is sin. We, therefore, cannot encourage, engage in, or willingly profit from armed conflict at home or abroad."

**1991 Annual Conference Statement, [Peacemaking: The Call of God's People in History](#)** reads: The church and Christians are called by God to witness to the gospel of peace with such intensity that nations repent and history is changed. Less than a radical witness can only lead us to accept idols of materialism, personal and national security at the expense of justice, blind nationalism, the glorification of military strength, and dependence on technological solutions for human problems.

Therefore, the Church of the Brethren shall:

1. continue to commit funds, staff and energies to a presence in Washington, D.C., helping our members keep abreast of public issues and speak truth to the principalities and powers;
2. develop networks on the district and national level for study and action on public policies of concern to the church, and to mobilize the church to respond;
3. advance efforts toward a more peaceful world order through supporting the peacemaking efforts of the United Nations and recognizing the jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice;
4. work for a more just international economic order in which all people are able to secure their basic human needs;
5. support policies and legislation which radically reduce military spending and convert our national priorities to peaceful and life affirming production;
6. encourage the demilitarization of international relations and promote non-violent forms of defense (civilian-based defense);
7. advocate the forging of bilateral and multilateral agreements and treaties which abolish nuclear, biological, chemical and conventional weaponry;
8. affirm policies which foster human rights at home and abroad.

For more information about the witness ministries of the Church of the Brethren, contact Jordan Blevins, Advocacy Officer for the Church of the Brethren:

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