



**PC(USA) Past General Assembly Moderators
Support Letter for the Middle East Study Committee Report**

June 15, 2010

Dear Commissioners to the 219th General Assembly,

Thank you as elders and ministers for taking the time to serve the church in your local congregation and session, presbytery, synod and now on our highest governing body, the 219th General Assembly. We know the amount of reading material before you can be overwhelming. You are in our prayers as you discern the will of God and seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit for our beloved PC(USA) on all the issues before the Assembly.

The purpose of our letter is to ask you to support and approve the Middle East Study Committee report for the following reasons:

- 1. The committee membership was chosen by the Moderators of the 218th, 217th and 216th General Assemblies (2008), (2006), (2004) to represent the church, and consisted of different points of view. One from our midst, Rev. Susan Andrews who was the Moderator of the 215th General Assembly, served on the committee.**
- 2. Their mandate was to write a comprehensive report about the Middle East - focusing on Israel/Palestine, in the context of the whole region. They were asked to talk with the people in the region, particularly our Christian partners, and Jews and Muslims. Their mandate did not focus solely on talking with the American Jewish community. That dialogue is essential as we move forward, but this is a Presbyterian statement and is a work in progress.**
- 3. Their report builds on - and assumes - all the reports and statements that have been adopted by the GA in previous years - including the many statements that give voice to a Jewish and Israeli perspective. This report gives voice to the Palestinian Christian voice in a way that has not been heard before - in response to the urgency of the moment and the plea of our Christian brothers and sisters in the region to be heard. There is unanimity among all the many diverse Christian voices in the region in a way that has never happened before. It is a voice of suffering and urgency - and is echoed by moderate Muslim partners. The window of opportunity is closing for a peaceful solution to the problems in Israel/Palestine, and the threat of renewed violence is everywhere. The Christian presence has dwindled significantly in the past 50 years in Palestine/Israel, and so, the voice of reconciliation that Christians have always represented in the region is being silenced.**

4. Their report reaffirms what the PCUSA has wanted for decades – a desire for commitment to a peaceful two state solution, within secure and recognized borders, in a nuclear free Middle East; the right of return or compensation for refugees, the security barrier pulled back to the 1967 borders, the end of settlement expansion, the right of Israel to exist next to a sovereign, independent and economically viable Palestine, a shared Jerusalem, all with a clear repudiation of anti-Semitism.

5. Their report lifts up the Kairos document for study - not approval - so that a collaborative Palestinian Christian voice can be heard. The study team report affirms the emphases in the Kairos document on non-violence and reconciliation and hope. The report does not affirm or endorse language about boycott, divestment, or sanction, although, it reaffirms corporate engagement and other non-violent ways to end support for the occupation.

6. The biblical and theological section clearly repudiates any hint of Christian Zionism or supercessionism. What it does do is tie responsibilities for justice, human rights and hospitality to the biblical understanding of land rights.

In light of the urgency of the situation in Israel/Palestine, the 43 years of Israeli military occupation over the lives of 4 million Palestinians in the West Bank, East Jerusalem and Gaza, the continuous building of settlements is making the two state solution increasingly difficult.

We urge you to be a prophetic assembly by approving this report to help the whole church begin a two year study of Israel and Palestine and asking our people to travel and meet Israeli Jews, Palestinian Christians and Muslims, and see the situation for themselves. Our church must continue to love both Israeli Jews and Palestinian Arabs and continue to struggle with them to work for truth, freedom, justice, reconciliation and peace.

Again, we urge you to support and vote in favor of this report.

**Sincerely in the service of Jesus Christ,
(Our names below indicate our support)**

Rev. Bruce Reyes-Chow	2008-2010	218 th
Elder Rick Ufford-Chase	2004-2006	216 th
Rev. Fahed Abu-Akel	2002	214 th
Rev. Jack Rogers	2001	213 th
Rev. Syngman Rhee	2000	212 th
Elder Freda A. Gardner	1999	211 th
Rev. Douglas W. Oldenburg	1998	210 th
Elder Patricia G. Brown	1997	209 th
Elder Marj Carpenter	1995	207 th
Rev. Robert W. Bohl	1994	206 th
Rev. David Dobler	1993	205 th
Rev. John M. Fife	1992	204 th
Rev. Dr. Herbert Valentine	1991	203 rd
Elder Price H. Gwynn, III	1990	202 nd
Rev. Benjamin Weir	1986	198 th
Rev. Dr. Albert C. Winn	1979	119 th
Elder Jule C. Spach	1976	116 th