

An Open Letter to President Barack Obama

Dear President Obama,

We greet you in the name of Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace.

We, Bishops of The United Methodist Church, whose names appear below, are deeply concerned about the escalating war in Afghanistan.

We call upon you to set a timetable for the withdrawal of all coalition forces by the end of 2010

The war has now lasted over 7 years, and there is no end in sight. During that time, 911 members of the US military and 591 coalition forces have been killed. October was the deadliest month since the war began. Tens of thousands of Afghans have been killed in the war.

The position of The United Methodist Church is that “war is incompatible with the teachings of Christ.” Our vision is a world in which people live together in peace and with mutual respect. Our Church, the third largest religious denomination in the United States, has 11 million members with 40,000 local congregations in Africa, Asia, Europe and the United States.

We pray that you will take our concerns seriously. Several years ago, more than 120 Bishops issued a “Statement of Repentance” for our failure to speak out early against the war in Iraq. We do not want to make that mistake again of remaining silent in the face of another widening war.

We believe there is no path to military victory in Afghanistan. We believe that human values must outweigh military claims as governments determine their priorities.

We know that issues you face are difficult and complex. We pledge to uphold you with our prayers as you seek a just and peaceful resolution to the tragic war in Afghanistan.

God bless you.

Respectfully,

Christian Alsted, Copenhagen, Denmark
Edsel Ammons, Evanston, Illinois
Daniel C. Arichea, Jr., Paranaque City, Philippines
Thomas J. Bickerton, Cranberry Township, Pennsylvania
Bruce P. Blake, Winfield, Kansas

W. Earl Bledsoe, Plano, Texas
Heinrich Bolleter, Oberentfelden, Switzerland
Warner H. Brown, Jr., West Sacramento, California
Monk Bryan, Dallas, Texas
Minerva G. Carcaño, Scottsdale, Arizona
Kenneth Carder, Durham, North Carolina
Ray W. Chamberlain, Winchester, Virginia
Judith Craig, Powell, Ohio
Emilio J.M. de Carvalho, Luanda, Angola
Sudarshana Devadhar, Eatontown, New Jersey
Sally Dyck, Eden Prairie, Minnesota
R. Kern Eutsler, Mechanicsville, Virginia
Violet Fisher, Wilmington, Delaware
Elias G. Galvan, Scottsdale, Arizona
William Boyd Grove, Charleston, West Virginia
Grant Hagiya, Normandy Park, Washington
John Wesley Hardt, Dallas, Texas
Susan W. Hassinger, Schenectady, New York
J. Woodrow Hearn, Galveston, Texas
Kenneth W. Hicks, Little Rock, Arkansas
Robert T. Hoshibata, Portland, Oregon
John G. Innis, Monrovia, Liberia
Neil L. Irons, Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania
S. Clifton Ives, Portland, Maine
Alfred Johnson, Matawan, New Jersey
Peggy A. Johnson, Phoenixville, Pennsylvania
Charles W. Jordan, Upland, California
Rodolfo A. Juan, Baguio City, Philippines
Hee-Soo Jung, Chicago, Illinois
Charlene P. Kammerer, Richmond, Virginia
Kainda Katembo, Lubumbashi, Democratic Republic of Congo
Deborah L. Kiesey, Mitchell, South Dakota
Walter Klaiber, Tuebingen, Germany
James Lloyd Knox, Gadsden, Alabama
Linda Lee, Sun Prairie, Wisconsin
Ernest S. Lyght, Charleston, West Virginia
Joao Somane Machado, Maputo, Mozambique
Marcus Matthews, Baldwinsville, New York
Felton E. May, Riverdale, New York
J. Lawrence McCleskey, Lake Junaluska, North Carolina
Calvin D. McConnell, Portland, Oregon
Marshall L. Meadors, Jr., Anderson, South Carolina
Jane Allen Middleton, Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania
William W. Morris, Gallatin, Tennessee
Susan M. Morrison, Rehoboth Beach, Delaware
Albert F. Mutti, Kansas City, Missouri

Abel T. Muzorewa, Harare, Zimbabwe
Alfred L. Norris, Jonesboro, Georgia
William B. Oden, Santa Fe, New Mexico
Donald A. Ott, Pewaukee, Wisconsin
Bruce R. Ough, Worthington, Ohio
Gregory Vaughn Palmer, Springfield, Illinois
Jeremiah J. Park, New Rochelle, New York
Sharon Z. Rader, Chicago, Illinois
Beverly Shamana, Los Angeles, California
Ann B. Sherer-Simpson, Lincoln, Nebraska
Leo A. Soriano, Davao City, Philippines
C. Joseph Sprague, Columbus, Ohio
Elaine W. Stanovsky, Denver, Colorado
Forrest C. Stith, Upper Marlboro, Maryland
Melvin G. Talbert, Brentwood, Tennessee
Lito C. Tangonan, Manila, Philippines
Mary Virginia Taylor, Columbia, South Carolina
Solito K. Toquero, Cavite, Philippines
Jack M. Tuell, Des Moines, Washington
Hans Växby, Moscow, Russia
Hope Morgan Ward, Jackson, Mississippi
Peter D. Weaver, Reading, Massachusetts
Timothy W. Whitaker, Lakeland, Florida
D. Max Whitfield, Albuquerque, New Mexico
William H. Willimon, Birmingham, Alabama
Joe A. Wilson, Georgetown, Texas
Rosemarie Wenner, Frankfurt, Germany
Joseph H. Yeakel, Smithsburg, Maryland