

LPF 2016 Advocacy Update... LPF and the FOR Centenary



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LPF and the Fellowship of Reconciliation Centenary

It's the 100th Anniversary of the founding of the F.O.R. LPF is grateful to be one three dozen religious peace fellowships and groups in virtually every faith tradition associated with the FOR.

In 1914, **seeking to prevent the outbreak of war in Europe**, an ecumenical group of Christians organized a **conference** in Switzerland. The conference ended early when war broke out!

At a railroad station in Germany, **two participants** – an English Quaker and a German Lutheran – pledged to find a way of **working for peace even though their countries were at war**. Out of this pledge, Christians gathered in December 1914 in Cambridge, England to found the **International Fellowship of Reconciliation**; the **FOR in the US** was formed in 1915 in NY.

FOR has since become an **international, interfaith movement** with branches and affiliates in **over 50 countries** and on every continent, making it **the largest peace group in the world!** Many **well-known** peacemakers have been FOR members, from **Jane Addams** to **Dorothy Day**, **Thomas Merton** to **MLK**.

A wise FOR decision was to help set up Religious Peace Fellowships to welcome involvement from the various faith traditions. RPFs have been organized in 14 faiths, Baptist to Buddhist, Jewish to Muslim. Twice as many **other faith-based groups** are FOR affiliates like Pax Christi or the Shalom Center.

The FOR and its members have played a **leading role** in developing and supporting **many of the most effective efforts and groups for peace and justice through nonviolence.**

The forusa.org website **lists RPFs and affiliated groups** and information about **FOR history, Centenary events, exhibit, and 2016 FOR-RPF national conference**, July 1-4, Seabeck, WA!



Daniel W. Erlander

The Holy Land is the site of one of the most enduring conflicts in the world, and **there are crucial ways we can help.** We can

- Call for **equal** human dignity and rights for all people in the Holy Land (see Mitri Raheb's letter: brightstarsbethlehem.org).
- Call for an **end to Israeli settlement-building** and the occupation of Palestinian land, which violate international law.
- Urge Pres. Obama and Sec. Kerry to make another push for a **two-state solution**, including UN Security Council endorsement of a balanced and fair **Framework for Peace**.
- Ask individuals and groups to **buy Palestinian products** to help build their economy, and to **avoid** buying products **made in illegal Israeli settlements** built on Palestinian land.
- Urge re-assessing **U.S. military aid** to Israel to ensure compliance with U.S. and international **human rights law** and a possible withholding of aid for noncompliance with those laws. elca.org/peacenotwalls lutheranworld.org nowaytotreatachild.org

The Syrian Refugee Crisis

Terror attacks in Paris, Beirut, and elsewhere have sparked a wide-ranging, **often divisive discussion** on whether to welcome Syrian refugees, of which there are **over 4 million** at this point.

LPF has joined with the **Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service** (LIRS, serving all Lutherans) which offers education, service and advocacy options. **Together, we can work to welcome our brothers and sisters** fleeing terror, violence, and persecution who are looking to us for **hope and life.** (see lirs.org .)

In addition to encouraging our friends and congregations to offer **financial support** for refugees, there are crucial **advocacy** efforts we can support and **urge others to join with us:**

1. **Call on our Governors** to accept Syrian refugees in our state. Sadly, the number of Governors as of early January stating they will ban Syrian resettlement is over 25.
2. Call the offices or write to our **Members of Congress** and let them know that we stand for welcoming Syrian refugees. Urge them to **oppose** any Congressional action that would limit vulnerable Syrian refugees' **access to protection.**

(lirs.org offers education ideas and resources, news updates, worship materials, service opportunities, and advocacy help including a direct link to email members of Congress.)

Climate Change... Israel-Palestine...

We can urge President Obama and Congress to give their strongest support to the **commitments to address climate change made at the COP21 climate negotiations in Paris.**

The scientific evidence is growing that **only the most decisive action** can avert very destructive changes. And rising water levels and changes in animal habitat, rain levels, and farmland **will likely affect poorer nations disproportionately** (e.g. low-lying, often heavily populated areas like Bangladesh).

Lutherans were well represented at the climate conference, and helped bring 1.8 million signatures on an **interfaith petition** for climate justice. See lutheranworld.org

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LPF's blog and our new Facebook page offer helpful ways to stay current on these and other issues: www.lutheranpeace.org Contact us at: lpf@ecunet.org 206.349.2501 1710 11TH Ave, Seattle 98122