

**COUNCIL OF RELIGIOUS LEADERS OF METROPOLITAN CHICAGO  
OPEN LETTER TO PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH ON IRAQ**

December 5, 2002

President George W. Bush  
The White House  
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. President:

*We are sending you this letter on behalf of the Council of Religious Leaders of Metropolitan Chicago. The Council is composed of chief leaders of the Greater Chicago area's Roman Catholic, Episcopal, Eastern and Oriental Orthodox, Protestant, Jewish and Islamic communions and institutions. The churches, synagogues and mosques represented around our table embrace nearly four million men, women and children. Our seminaries prepare clergy and lay teachers for service in the Greater Chicago area, and throughout the world. The Council embraces a broad diversity of theological, ideological and political orientations. It is a microcosm of American religion as it exists in a great city that lies in the American heartland.*

*In years past, the Council has frequently been unable to find consensus on the role of military action as an instrument of peace. Some of our constituent institutions supported Operation Desert Storm; others did not. Some endorsed the use of force in Afghanistan; others urged alternative means to combat terrorism. Once again, we are confronted by the possibility of our nation going to war, and once again we find ourselves seeking to discern the will of God in this most grave of matters.*

*Some members of our Council hold to the faithful judgment that war in its very nature is an affront to God and can never be justified. Some believe that war can be justified, but only under the most rigid of conditions. Among them are members who are convinced that the despotic regime that governs Iraq has offered sufficient grounds for military action against it. However, it is the judgment of the Council that in the present situation conditions justifying war have not been met.*

*We still lack compelling evidence that Iraq is planning to launch an attack. Nor have diplomatic pathways been exhausted. We believe that there is ample time and latitude for pursuing alternatives that could avert warfare, saving untold thousands of lives.*

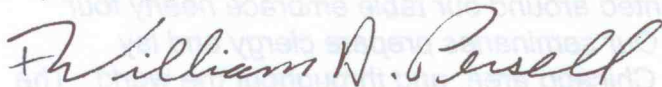
REV. PAUL H. RUTGERS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
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Moreover, a singular focus on war draws attention from America's responsibility to provide guidance and material assistance essential to overcoming economic and social conditions that destroy human dignity. The world's only military superpower must strive to be a nation that promotes peace with justice. We ask you to lead our nation and the nations of the world in a new commitment which will offer long-term stability in the Middle East and around the globe.

We commend you for bringing the issue of Iraq to the United Nations and for your assurances that war can be averted and remains among the last options our nation might elect. We urge you to continue working with our allies and other nations to achieve greater security in the region while avoiding, if at all possible, a costly, dangerous and destructive war.

We join you in praying for the peace of America, and for world peace.

Respectfully yours, for the Council of Religious Leaders of Metropolitan Chicago



Bishop William Persell, President of the Council, Bishop, Episcopal Diocese of Chicago



The Rev. Paul H. Rutgers, Executive Director, Council of Religious Leaders, Executive Presbyter Emeritus, Presbytery of Chicago

And also signed by the following members of the Council

The Rev. Dr. Thomas Baima,  
Provost, University of St. Mary of the  
Lake

The Rev. Dr. Cynthia M. Campbell  
President, McCormick Theological  
Seminary

The Rev. Claude Christopher,  
Presiding Elder, AME Zion Church

The Rev. Dr. David Coleman, Jr.,  
Presiding Elder, Southern District  
Chicago Conference, African  
Methodist Episcopal Church

Rabbi Ellen Dreyfus, President,  
Chicago Board of Rabbis, Rabbi of  
B'nai Yehuda Beth Shalom



*The Rev. Dr. Jane Fisler-Hoffman,  
Conference Minister, Illinois  
Conference, United Church of Christ*

*His Eminence Francis Cardinal  
George, O.M.I., Archbishop, Catholic  
Archdiocese of Chicago*

*Dr. Asid Husain, Council of Islamic  
Organizations of Great Chicago*

*His Eminence Metropolitan Iakovos,  
Greek Orthodox Diocese of Chicago*

*The Rev. Deacon Aren Jebejian, St.  
Gregory the Illuminator Armenian  
Orthodox Church*

*His Grace Bishop Job, Orthodox  
Church in America, Diocese of the  
Midwest*

*The Very Rev. Demetri Kantzavelos,  
Chancellor, Greek Orthodox Diocese  
of Chicago*

*Dr. Mohammed Amin Kholwadia,  
Council of Islamic Organizations of  
Greater Chicago*

*Bishop Paul R. Landahl, Bishop,  
Metropolitan Synod, Evangelical  
Lutheran Church in America*

*The Most Rev. Timothy Lyne,  
Auxiliary Bishop, Catholic  
Archdiocese of Chicago*

*Bishop Cody V. Marshall, Church of  
God in Christ*

*Sister Joan McGuire, Ecumenical  
Officer, Catholic Archdiocese of  
Chicago*

*Dr. Angela Merkert, Central Midwest  
District Executive, Unitarian  
Universalist Ass'n*

*The Rev. Dr. Calvin Morris  
Executive Director, Community  
Renewal Society*

*The Rev. Kenneth R. Olsen,  
Immediate Past Bishop, Metropolitan  
Chicago Synod, Evangelical  
Lutheran Church in America*

*The Rev. Dr. Robert Reynolds,  
Executive Presbyterian, Presbytery of  
Chicago*

*Rabbi Herman Schaalman, Rabbi  
Emeritus, Temple Emanuel*

*The Rev. Dr. Donald Senior, C.P.,  
President, Chicago Theological  
Union*

*Bishop C. Joseph Sprague, Bishop  
of the Northern Illinois Conference,  
United Methodist Church*

*The Rev. Dr. Leonard Thompson,  
Sr., Executive Minister, American  
Baptist Churches of Metropolitan  
Chicago*

*The Rev. Dr. Larry K. Ulrich, Church  
of the Brethren*

*His Eminence Archbishop Vsevolod,  
Western Eparchy, Ukrainian  
Orthodox Church, U.S.A.*

*Rabbi Ira Youdovin, Executive Vice-  
President, Chicago Board of Rabbis*

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