

Mar Elias University
Ibillin in the Galilee of Israel
USA Support
1007 N. Wheaton Avenue
Wheaton, Illinois 60187 USA

January 10, 2008

The Honorable George W. Bush
President of the United States

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Dear Mr. President:

Welcome to this Holy Place. It is Holy because of the presence, 2000 years ago, of a most special person. Where you have been walking today, Christ also walked. This is something you will always remember, that you walked where Jesus walked.

The man who has handed you this letter is Archbishop Elias Chacour. He has a very important responsibility. He is the pastor to a very unique flock. His flock, these local people, are the descendants of the same flock that listened while Jesus preached "The Sermon on the Mount". You, sir, are now in touch with the sons and daughters of those who began Christianity.

This man, this modern Archbishop, is really not so important for this connection to the ancient past; he is most important for what he has done in the present and his effect on the future.

As you may know, the Galilee region has been one of the most peaceful regions of Israel. He deserves much of the credit. The principles he espouses and the schools he began over 25 years ago are a beacon of light for how the future can be. Archbishop Chacour began the Mar Elias Schools. Mar Elias is Arab for The Prophet Elijah, a man of 2500 years ago who is still a local hero.

Mar Elias Schools are revolutionary. The schools' faculty and student body is Jewish, Muslim and Christian. It is a place where all religions meet and interact on equal footing, where the value of each human being comes before their form of religion. The Archbishop often says that "Peace will begin on the tops of school desks." Young men and women who learn together, learn cooperation and respect instead of hate. Archbishop Chacour believes education gives each person dignity, self respect, hope and in his part of the world, something that is life-saving and essential: tolerance. The Mar Elias Schools are the model, the best example for how lasting peace can be achieved. He has the proven results that can guide the future

The Archbishop is well known by the leaders and factions in Israel. He has been called upon, in times of crisis, to maintain peace in communities where there have been flashpoints of violence. When a crazed Israeli killed several Israeli-Arabs on a bus, it was the Archbishop who turned a possible riot into a non event. His work never makes the newspapers. However it isn't totally unnoticed. He has been nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize three times.

If the momentum for peace is going to continue, it will need the support of men like Archbishop Chacour. Please open your heart to this man and his vision. Let him help you meet your goal of a lasting peace. Let peace come sooner to Israel/Palestine through the work of young people trained in the Archbishop's school as leaders for tomorrow. With your help and intervention, the Christians, Muslims, and Jews, now learning together will someday lead together.

Thank you Mr. President. While there is support in the USA and the rest of the world for Mar Elias Schools, it can't compare to the influence that you could bring. The Archbishop and Mar Elias Schools would be a wonderful ally in the cause for peace. Joining together the work at the bottom by the Archbishop and yours at the top, there can be hope for peace in this troubled land.

On behalf of the entire Board of Trustees, our sincere appreciation for your consideration,

Susan Drinan
Chairman of the Board USA
Mar Elias University

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