

## Ronald J. Young, Consultant

*National Interreligious Leadership Initiative for Peace in the Middle East*

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### **Available to Speak at Congregations, Colleges and Community Forums**

#### **Suggested Topics for Lectures and Discussion**

- President Obama Has Made Arab-Israeli-Palestinian Peace a High U.S. Priority: Grassroots Interfaith Advocacy is Essential
- American Jewish, Christian and Muslim Leaders United on How the U.S. Can Help Achieve Arab-Israeli-Palestinian Peace
- Report on a Trip of Jewish, Christian and Muslim Religious Leaders to Jordan, Israel and the West Bank, December 2009
- On Campus: Being Pro-Israeli, Pro-Palestinian and Pro-Peace and Working Together to Help Get There
- Sharing Jerusalem: Impossible Dream or Essential Goal for Regional and World Peace?
- American Jews, Christians and Muslims: Conflict or Cooperation for Mideast Peace?
- Religion: Source of Peace or Source of Violence?

#### **Biographical Information**

*2003 – present: Consultant for the National Interreligious Initiative for Peace (NILI)*  
Ron works with leaders of 25 U.S. Jewish, Christian and Muslim national religious organizations to develop consensus advocacy positions and mobilize public support for active, fair and firm U.S. leadership for Arab-Israeli-Palestinian peace. In September 2010 Ron accompanied a NILI delegation to meetings at the White House and with Secretary of State Clinton. In December 2009 Ron led an interfaith delegation of 15 Jewish, Christian and Muslim leaders to Jordan, Israel and the West Bank. In May 2009 the leaders wrote to President Obama commending his decision to make Arab-Israeli-Palestinian peace a high priority, supporting his appointment of George Mitchell and urging steps the United States should support to provide urgent leadership for peace. Ron is available to travel nationwide to meet with local religious leaders and speak in congregations, schools, and community forums on interreligious cooperation for Arab-Israeli-Palestinian peace

Building on the work of the U.S. Interreligious Committee for Peace organized by Ron in 1987, the National Interreligious Leadership Initiative was organized in 2003. In 2004-05 Ron held meetings with local religious leaders in 40 cities. In June 2005 the Initiative organized 50 local host sites for a Town Meeting for Peace (via the Internet) sponsored by A Different Future with speakers from Jerusalem and

Washington DC. NILI leaders met with Secretaries of State Colin Powell and Condoleezza Rice, and had regular high-level meetings at the State Department. Despite discouraging developments and challenges, majorities of Israelis and Palestinians support a two-state solution; the Arab Peace Initiative offers the prospect of a comprehensive peace, including Syria and Lebanon; and there are benchmark principles and practical ideas for resolving even the toughest issues, including refugees and Jerusalem. These factors create a context in which active leadership by the Obama Administration, supported by interreligious advocacy with Congress can help achieve Arab-Israeli-Palestinian peace.

Ron Young has spoken and written widely on the Middle East and interfaith cooperation; he taught a course on the Arab-Israeli-Palestinian conflict at Haverford College; organized Interfaith Convocations for Peace; and generated statements and other resources endorsed by Jewish, Christian and Muslim leaders. The White House invited Ron to the Israel-PLO Oslo Declaration signing in 1993. Ron has lectured at the Chautauqua Institution, speaking on peace in the Middle East, and "Religion As a Source of Violence or Peace." He was Chautauqua's chaplain on the theme "Iraq and Its Neighborhood."

*1987: Organized the U.S. Interreligious Committee for Peace*

This is a national organization of 2500 Jews, Christians and Muslims, working together based on the deepest values in their traditions. Ron organized the first National Interfaith Convocation and Congressional Visitation for Mideast Peace in March 1989; he has led ten interreligious leadership trips to the Middle East.

*1986: Authored Missed Opportunities for Peace: U.S. Middle East Policy, 1981-86*

This book earned praise from Jewish American and Palestinian American leaders, and by prominent U.S. policy analysts.

*1982 – 1985: Middle East Representative for American, British and Canadian Quakers*

Ron and his wife, Carol Jensen, lived in Amman, Jordan and traveled regularly in Israel, the West Bank and Gaza, Egypt, Syria and Lebanon to explore Arab and Israeli views about opportunities and obstacles for peace and how the United States could help to achieve peace.

*1972 – 1982: National Peace Education Secretary, American Friends Service Committee*

Ron coordinated peace education work nationwide on a range of international issues, including Vietnam, arms control, human rights and the Middle East.

*1965 – 1972: National Youth Secretary for the Fellowship of Reconciliation*

Ron was a popular speaker at hundreds of high schools and colleges; and National Coordinator of the Marches on Washington for Peace in Vietnam in November 1969 and May 1970.

*1960 – 1965: Student at Wesleyan University in Connecticut*

As a student at Wesleyan, Ron participated in the Student Interracial Ministry in Memphis as Assistant to the Reverend J.M. Lawson, Jr. in black Methodist congregation; served as Youth Minister at a Congregational Church in Connecticut; and in March 1965 Ron worked with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in Selma, Alabama.