

**Dr. Mubarak Awad and Rev. Alex Awad Call for Peace in Israel-Palestine at
NYAPC War, Peace & Justice Forum**

On September 12, 2008, Palestinian brothers, Dr. Mubarak Awad and Rev. Alex Awad, spoke of their lives as Palestinians in Jerusalem, the history of the Israel-Palestine conflict, and the efforts by Palestinians and Jews to work together for peace. Dr. Mubarak Awad has promoted nonviolence in Palestine and throughout the Arab world. He was deported from Israel in 1989 because of his nonviolent action against the Israeli occupation, and currently is on the faculty of The American University. He also is Executive Director of Nonviolence International which sponsors nonviolence projects in six regions of the world, including 22 Arab nations and Iran.

Dr. Mubarak said it is difficult to work for peace in a land with different cultures and languages, and when one of the parties is occupied by a powerful government. He said the choice is guns or nonviolence, and guns have not brought peace. He asked, “What is it with Israelis and Palestinians that they don’t want to solve the problem? Is it religion, stubbornness, or love of war?” After giving a brief historical background to the conflict, Awad said that religion can play a role in unity and peace, not divisiveness.



He assured that Palestinians and Israelis can get along well and the problems can be resolved—and it is important to the people who suffer every day that they find a peaceful resolution to the conflict. He further said that Palestinians have become equated with terrorism, and a concept of good and bad has been developed as labels for one or the other group. In fact, Dr. Awad said that many Israelis and Palestinians are working for peace.

Rev. Alex Awad is pastor of the East Jerusalem Baptist Church in Jerusalem and authored a recently published book about his mother and family, *The Story of a Palestinian Mother and her People*. Rev. Awad explained that their mother lived 90 years, 1916—2006, and was witness to “the Palestinian experience.” He described his family of parents and 7 children being forced out of their home in a West Jerusalem neighborhood in 1948 when the Zionist underground took over and Christians and Muslims fled. His mother refused to go to a camp with the family, and instead went to college to study nursing and temporarily put the seven children in an orphanage. Despite danger and challenges, the family stayed together and survived. After reporting the facts of camps, tents, uprisings, Jewish settlements and UN accords, Rev. Awad said there are many Israeli groups trying to stop the “land grabs” and are working for peace. He said Palestinians need equal rights and justice, and models of cooperation can be found in places like Haifa where Arabs and Jews are working together.