



Interfaith Council for Peace & Justice

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ICPJ Listening Project, summarized results

November 2006 to January 2007

What do ICPJ members and constituents care about most?

What do they see as the most important elements in ICPJ's work?

How do they see ICPJ balancing multiple issues with the need to focus?

What wisdom do they have for facing challenging issues such as the Israeli/Palestinian conflict?

These are just a few of the questions that we asked as we went through a "listening project" to consult our members and allies on a range of topics relating to the future of the organization, and our members were happy to share their wisdom.

When we compiled the full results of the project, the data filled 51 pages. Here, we've summarized that data in just 20 pages (with plenty of charts and graphs). We've also categorized similar answers together to help you see the themes and trends in the results. If you wish to read the full results, please visit www.icpj.net/listeningproject.

We've learned a lot from this project, and our board and staff are still pouring over the results to find the lessons from this project. Some lessons are clear: there is *strong* support for ICPJ's role as an interfaith/spiritual/religious organization. War and economic injustice are top concerns for our members. And most of all, we are blessed with passionate members willing to think deeply and share their opinions.

By the end of February, we will have this information condensed down yet one more level to a few high-priority themes. Please keep checking back to find that report.

A special word of thanks goes to our intern, Scott Tharp, for his help facilitating listening sessions and coding the data. And we are especially grateful to Lisa Dugdale who helped design, implement, and analyze the data. Without her expertise, this project could not have happened.

In peace,

Chuck Warpehoski, Director

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Survey of ICPJ Members, fall/winter 2006

Because of the large number of responses, answers to essay questions have been coded and placed in categories. A representative sample of responses for each category have been shown. To view all answers, see the full survey at www.icpj.net/listeningproject

1. In the last two years, how involved have you been with ICPJ's events, programs and taskforces?

Very Involved	Somewhat Involved	Not Involved
22 (17%)	75 (59%)	31 (28%)

2. What were your primary reasons for being involved?

Desire for Peace & Justice (18)

- ◆ Help promote peace and justice.
- ◆ the great need for the many issues of peace and justice
- ◆ Interest in racial and economic justice issues
- ◆ Because our nation is badly in need of peace and justice. ICPJ works with such a wide variety of issues and works full force even through the summer.
- ◆ To aid in promoting social justice and peace awareness in the community
- ◆ A desire for the world to be at peace based on justice.
- ◆ The ICPJ is a comfortable fit for my nonchurchgoing Christian upbringing and my philosophical leanings in the areas of peace and justice.

General Support of ICPJ's Philosophy and Organization (17)

- ◆ As a person of faith and deep commitment to social justice and work for peace, I find many of ICPJ's events and programs hold special meaning for me.
- ◆ Great staff at ICPJ Appreciation for the role of ICPJ in the community, and a desire to see it continue to grow in depth and breadth
- ◆ The events are always engaging and helpful for my personal growth- I thoroughly enjoy my time spent with folks from ICPJ!
- ◆ This group is my style.
- ◆ I believe in ICPJ
- ◆ I believe in the program and the goals of the organization. I also am a strong proponent of nonviolent approaches to resolving conflicts.
- ◆ I really like what ICPJ is about.

Spiritual Focus (14)

- ◆ This is the main organization that I do my work for social justice - I want to work in with a faith-based organization
- ◆ My faith calls me to work for justice. ICPJ is the best local venue to do this.
- ◆ Longterm interest in ICPJ. Belief that congregational/interfaith work can be important part of progressive politics.
- ◆ Spiritually-based, soul-based thirst and passion for justice, as well as the TREMENDOUS need for healing and peace in our world. ICPJ holds a space for moving in that direction.
- ◆ Religious communities can be a powerful force for good (or bad) and I like the interfaith idea. Also want a group with whom to pursue peace and justice work.
- ◆ The work of working with the religious community to express its concern for peace and justice is very important. It's also important for us to address when and where the religious community is supporting violence and injustice.

Middle East (12)

- ◆ Interested in Middle East work & ICPJ organizational clarity and reform, as warranted. Wanted to link with other religious organizational members working also in Middle East work, particularly Israel-Palestine, an area of great concern to me.
- ◆ Desire Just Peace in the Middle East
- ◆ Concern on how the Israel-Palestine issue affects world peace. After a visit to Palestine, I have worked for justice for Palestinians.
- ◆ The urgent need for Middle East Peace.
- ◆ Trying to stop the Iraq war.

Latin America (5)

- ◆ I had heard of the soa and want it shut down So I wanted to do my part
- ◆ Interest in SOA actions

Crop Walk (3)

- ◆ On-going commitment to the CROP walk.

Welfare simulation (2)

- ◆ Involved with welfare simulations. Counteract prevailing greed and stupidity of the currently prevailing system!

Other (16)

- ◆ The nature of the event
- ◆ You have conducted challenge classes at our church
- ◆ Get together with other community people so as to feel less hopeless
- ◆ I attended the "Another World is Possible" program.
- ◆ To know more about topics of interest and how my faith perspective can be of benefit.
- ◆ Learning more about issues. Being able to connect issues to see the bigger picture. Hope that it will help our brothers and sisters around the world and that it will raise our consciousness more where we live.

I Am Not Involved (11)

- ◆ Long commute / work hours
- ◆ Work, burnout
- ◆ I can only help financially
- ◆ Lurker on e-mail. Announced some events at church.

3. How, if at all, could we increase your level of involvement with ICPJ?

You can't/I am already as involved as I can be (21)

- ◆ I don't think you can. It's just a matter of cranky age.
- ◆ I feel overcommitted to other church and non-profit activities, but I value ICPJ so at some point in the future, I will likely be open to serving more significantly. However, if commitments are for a fixed period rather than open ended, that would help.
- ◆ I participate where time and money permit, and that's not a great deal. It's very important to me to receive your newsletter so that I am in touch with what you are doing.
- ◆ Since I am already very involved with other things, I feel good about what I am able to attend for ICPJ. I enjoy the newsletter updates, (although sometimes long), they keep me informed.
- ◆ I enjoy the ICPJ events. I do not have energy to go to meetings. I enjoy the weekly e-mails from ICPJ. I wish I had more money to give to ICPJ but I don't.

Invite People/Specific Calls for Volunteers (11)

- ◆ I respond well to a personal phone call. I usually just forget about the emails even though I read them and find them informative. I may even put things on my calendar, but when it comes down to doing much, I find I forget because I am so busy.
- ◆ Calls for volunteers for specific finite tasks meets my availability at this time.
- ◆ I like being asked or invited to contribute my services.
- ◆ I am likely to be more involved if asked to be so in a specific role or capacity, or task force. I have some commitment hesitance because I feel that I'm likely to be out of town a fair amount, and want that flexibility at this time.
- ◆ give me something specific to work on

Different Issues (10)

- ◆ MORE DOMESTIC ISSUES!!!
- ◆ Get a more international community involved.
- ◆ Maybe invigorate the task forces by "seeding" them with outside experts and religious visitors who point out the faith perspective. Fair trade is very good because it is virtually non-contentious.
- ◆ I am really interested in Latin American issues. I would try to come to films, discussions, etc. I you have more of them. But at this time, I have a lot of volunteer work to do. When I retire, I will do more volunteering
- ◆ Providing gatherings where people can hear about alternatives and solutions, as in the "Another World" programs, is great. More specific information and suggested actions (e.g. who to call and contact info, suggested talking points, for example) sent over the email list would also be welcome.
- ◆ With substantial reservations about my ability to contribute, I would be willing to join with others to see if an independent initiative can be encouraged along the lines I suggested in item 9 above regarding peace in Israel/Palestine.

Different Location (5)

- ◆ I live a few miles north of Jackson, so I am not located in the Ann Arbor area, but I do plan to attend some events in the coming year, regardless of the drive. My involvement might be increased by informing me of any local church involvement in the Jackson area.
- ◆ Get out to the outlying areas of the county. Concentrate on items that people can understand and relate to (i.e. money that could be used for health care and education is being sent to Iraq).

Different Types of Programs (3)

- ◆ Short, frequent programs are easier to schedule than infrequent big deal programs.
- ◆ Continue to offer events at a variety of times and locations. - lunch meetings?

Make more Aware of Events (2)

- ◆ Make me aware of events

Other (13)

- ◆ Public transit, Ypsi / AA, City/County
- ◆ People respond to those activities being modeled for them in the lives of organization members. In other words, we join organizations because we are drawn to the PEOPLE who are members of them. Some additional highlighting of the members of ICPJ and their individual as well as corporate activities on behalf of peace and justice, along with an ability to articulate their personal positions on issues would be helpful.
- ◆ This is a problem for me now. With the takeover of METF by confrontationalists, I had to find other outlets for my work on Middle East issues. I am now over committed in other groups.
- ◆ Reinstate METF and let the arbitration be carried out.
- ◆ By more clearly explaining what ICPJ's goals are and what impact you think an individual who chooses to get more involved would have on reaching those goals.
- ◆ Childcare, childcare, childcare...and I would be there (added from focus group)

4. How important is the religious/interfaith/spiritual part of ICPJ's work to you?

Very important to me	Somewhat important to me	Not important to me
56% (66)	32% (38)	13% (15)

Comments:

Faith is central (50)

- ◆ Religious congregations are important grassroots organizations. ICPJ is historical an organization of congregations working together.
- ◆ I'm losing faith in the secular left's ability to keep its sanity and relevance. It's important that the faith-based peace movement is in touch with people who are in touch with the mainstream of our society who we need to build a progressive majority.
- ◆ ...many people without a faith base (not all, by any means) seem to work from a basis of anger and condemnation, and, while they're working for a good cause, their attitude does not contribute to the cultural uplift we so desperately need.
- ◆ Interfaith is the part that's important to me, because I find it so very painful when there are divisions between faith communities, such as on the question of Palestine. ICPJ has a UNIQUE role in this issue and I am hoping it can be a safe place for some dialogue to occur.
- ◆ That is what sets ICPJ apart from other groups. I think that dimension calls ICPJ to adhere to a higher standard in how it goes about promoting peace and justice.
- ◆ I consider myself very spiritual, and the group functions well to provide an outlet for this spirituality.
- ◆ I am motivated to take the political actions I take, and to work for justice as I do because of my faith. I would not be involved in ICPJ if it was not a religious organization.
- ◆ One can be liberal anywhere. Thru ICPJ I know I am joining with other people of faith.
- ◆ I believe that faith-based communities bring an oft-needed dimension to peace and justice work.

Ambivalence (11)

- ◆ It's tough but critical. It may mean a more narrow range of peace and justice work. Even though I would like us to work more on LGBT issues.
- ◆ I find the level of spiritual motivation to be decidedly low, outside of pro forma prayers.
- ◆ Hard to say. I like the spiritual aspect but am wary of it at the same time.
- ◆ Actually, I'm not sure I should be a member of ICPJ. I rarely attend programs as I feel I would be uncomfortable with the extent of assumed religiousness on the part of the participants.
- ◆ I notice a double standard that people who want to work for justice for Palestinians are expected to all be attached to a faith community, but people who work to silence that issue, such as [name deleted], get elevated to top positions in ICPJ.

Need for broader participation (10)

- ◆ I would like ICPJ to reach our more to more conservative Christians.
- ◆ I do not think that the faiths in the community are well represented on the Steering Committee.
- ◆ I hope that ICPJ continues to reach out to a broader community. Too often "interfaith" groups reflect the broader society and lack representation from outside the Christian and Jewish faith traditions.
- ◆ I wish we drew from more faith traditions other than Christian, and that we had greater minority representation in all task forces.

Not personally significant (3)

- ◆ I'm not a religious person, so this is not a factor for me.

Role of secular (3)

- ◆ ... non-faith folks, can support what we do, of course, and participate. And I don't mean that we have to wear our faith out on our sleeves, or pray at every meeting!

Need for alternative religious perspective (2)

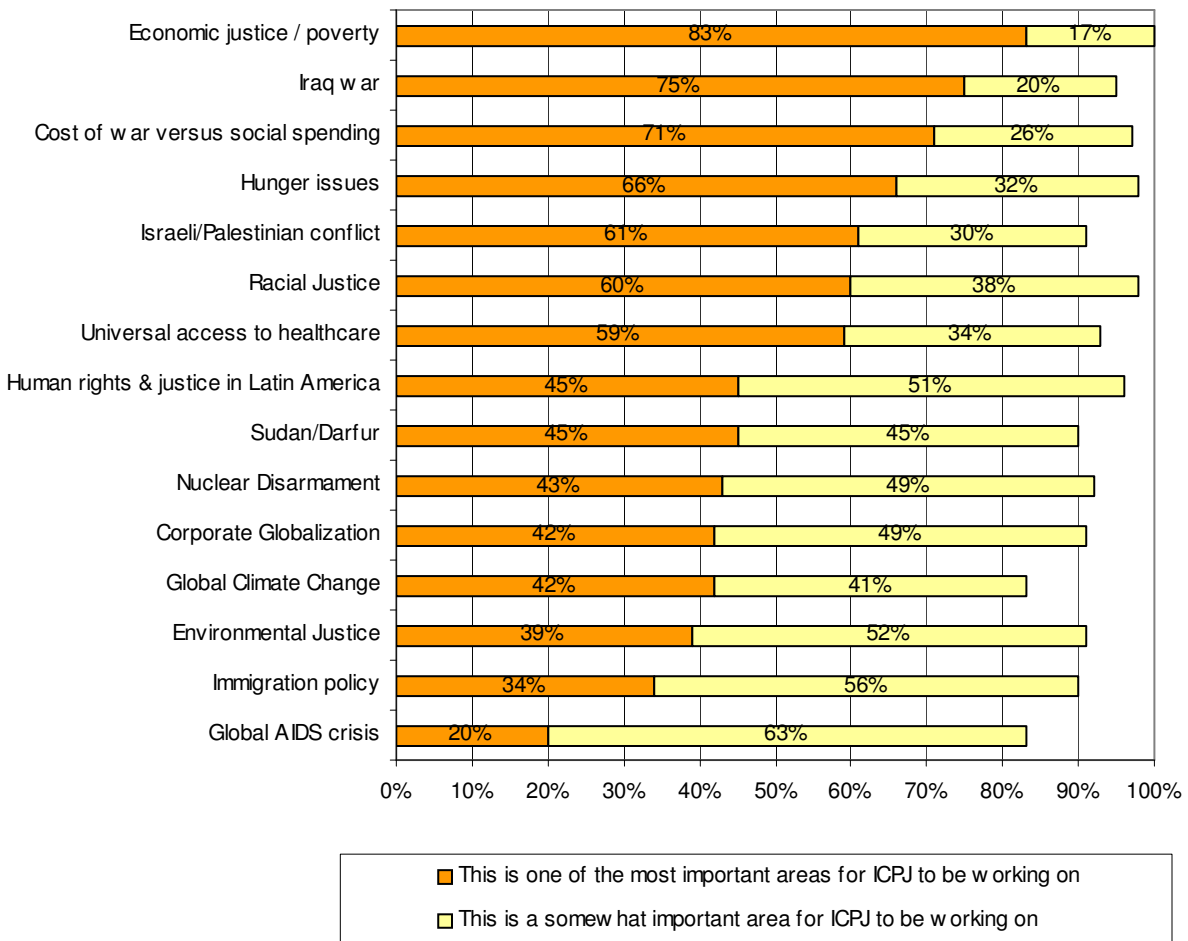
- ◆ Fundamentalist Christian thinking has dominated politics. This hurts many people.

Other (13)

- ◆ We have a reliable audience in churches and should not dilute our efforts by trying to expand to far
- ◆ It is important to have a forum or voice for issues of social justice in this affluent community. I have hoped that ICPJ would continue to be that force.
- ◆ ICPJ is one of the few independent, non-sectarian, non-partisan and non-commercial voice that bridge national and international issues of human rights, ethics, responsible living and community. It is important to keeps these voices vital and open.

5. As ICPJ continues to evolve, we want to have more information from our members about the issues that you believe ICPJ should be most focused on over the next two years, as well as the issues in which you *personally* would be interested in working on with ICPJ.

Areas ICPJ Should Focus on Over Next Two Years
(100-111 Respondents per Question)



	This is one of the <u>most</u> important areas for ICPJ to be working on	This is a somewhat important area for ICPJ to be working on	ICPJ should not be working on this issue	I <u>personally</u> would be interested in working on this issue
Corporate Globalization (trade agreements, global debt, alternatives to globalization, etc.)	42% (46)	49% (54)	9% (10)	15
Cost of war versus social spending	71% (79)	26% (29)	3% (3)	22
Economic justice / poverty	83% (94)	17% (19)	0% (0)	30
Environmental Justice	39% (42)	52% (57)	9% (10)	14
Global AIDS crisis	20% (21)	63% (66)	17% (18)	5
Global Climate Change	42% (46)	41% (45)	17% (19)	13
Human rights & justice in Latin America (Plan Colombia, School of the Americas, etc.)	45% (49)	51% (55)	4% (4)	18
Hunger issues	66% (72)	32% (35)	2% (2)	24
Immigration policy	34% (37)	56% (62)	10% (11)	10
Iraq war	75% (80)	20% (21)	6% (6)	22
Israeli/Palestinian conflict	61% (70)	30% (34)	9% (10)	34
Nuclear Disarmament	43% (48)	49% (55)	8% (9)	12
Racial Justice	60% (65)	38% (41)	3% (3)	24
Sudan/Darfur	45% (48)	45% (48)	10% (11)	8
Universal access to healthcare	59% (64)	34% (37)	6% (7)	27

6. Other issues we've missed that you personally would be interested in working on:

Healthy Democracy issues (5)

- ◆ Corruption of the legal and institutional structures in national and international society lays the foundations for abuse, war and breakdown in the rule of law.
- ◆ electoral reforms
- ◆ loss of democratic participation in society, decline of civil rights

LGBTQ issues (4)

- ◆ Civil rights for LGBTIQ persons.
- ◆ Rights of Homosexuals, Transsexuals

Need to focus (3)

- ◆ I tagged four that have historically belonged to ICPJ and that are not being addressed by multiple other groups, as the is the case with many of the issues that I did not tag
- ◆ ... all the issues named are important and worth paying attention to, while ICPJ has to prioritize.

Human Rights (3)

Religious extremism/conflict/equal rights (2)

- ◆ Threat of all out war between Christians and Muslims (such as promoted by Conservative Christians)
- ◆ Indigenous and alternative spiritual equality and recognition. Interfaith education and awareness programs.

Culture of peace (2)

- ◆ World peace, the war system, building a peace culture

Women's Rights (2)

Civil Liberties (2)

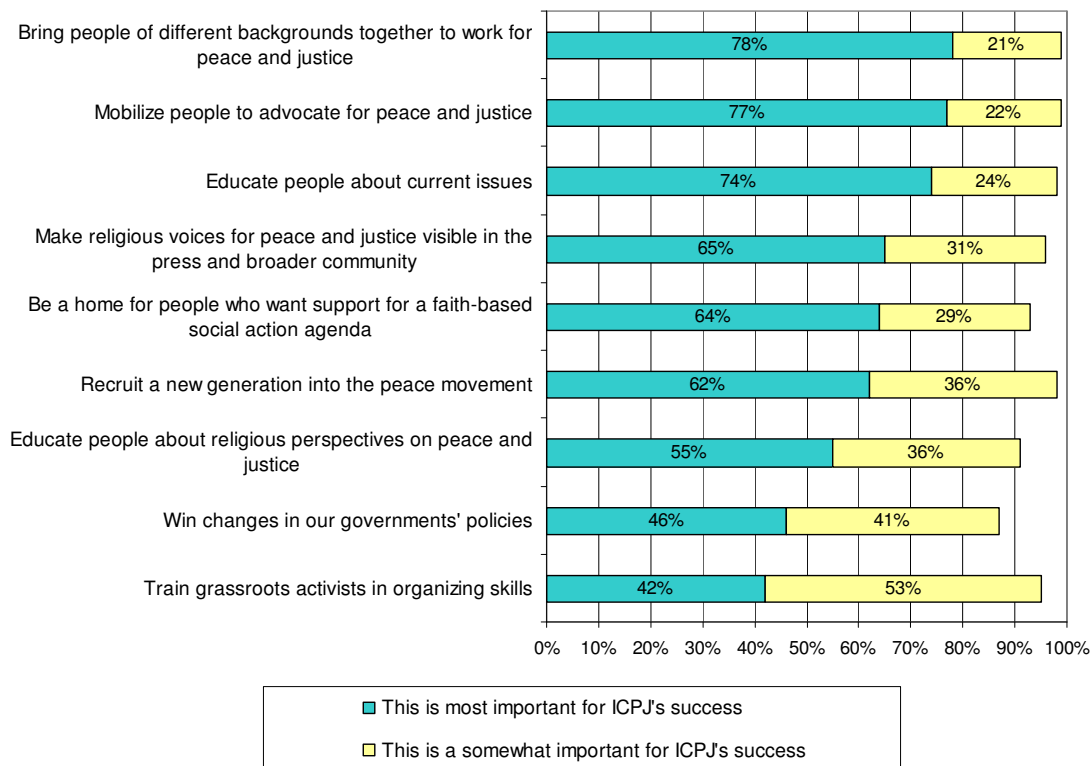
Transportation (1, also came up in focus group)

- ◆ Transportation justice -- ensuring everyone has access to transportation that gets them to the places they want/need to go.

7. What are the most important things that ICPJ should accomplish to be a successful interfaith peace and justice organization?

	This is one of the <u>most</u> important for ICPJ's success	This is a somewhat important for ICPJ's success	This is not important for ICPJ's success
Win changes in our governments' policies	46% (46)	41% (41)	14% (14)
Bring people of different backgrounds together to work for peace and justice	78% (87)	21% (23)	1% (1)
Educate people about current issues	74% (78)	24% (25)	3% (3)
Educate people about religious perspectives on peace and justice	55% (59)	36% (39)	8% (9)
Recruit a new generation into the peace movement	62% (65)	36% (37)	2% (2)
Be a home for people who want support for a faith-based social action agenda	64% (65)	29% (30)	7% (7)
Train grassroots activists in organizing skills	42% (42)	53% (53)	5% (5)
Mobilize people to advocate for peace and justice	77% (80)	22% (23)	1% (1)
Make religious voices for peace and justice visible in the press and broader community	65% (71)	31% (34)	4% (4)

Most important things ICPJ should accomplish to be a successful interfaith peace and justice organization
(100-111 Respondents per Question)



8. Is there anything we've missed that ICPJ should accomplish to be a successful interfaith peace and justice organization?

Diversity (4)

- ◆ I think it is an error to say that liberal churches have all the truth. Would prefer some type of outreach that establishes a respectful dialogue with Christians and other faiths ...
- ◆ ...first and foremost be sure to reach out and include the Muslim community....
- ◆ ICPJ could be more aware of the spectrum of religious feeling/belief among its participants. Believing/not believing is a spectrum, not a dichotomy, and assuming an equal level of religious belief in all members is shortsighted.

Regarding policy changes (3)

- ◆ I think that working for change in our government's policies is one of the most important things for ICPJ to be doing, but I don't think that ICPJ's success can be measured by that because we are a very small part of a much much larger process.
- ◆ I think it makes more sense to focus on local governments or state (when we can join a coalition of groups with collective clout) than national govt.

Collaboration (3)

- ◆ Strengthen ties with the non-liberal religious organizations when possible...

Community Building (2)

- ◆ Building of a community that share more what they have and have more social time together.

Focus (2)

- ◆ Stay focused on a few things, and do them well, rather than on many things, and do them in mediocre fashion. ...
- ◆ Probably, but the plate is very full already. We can try to do fewer things very well or everything not quite so well.

Modeling a just society (2)

- ◆ Develop non-partisan models for responsible living and responsible leadership...
- ◆ model open communication and a style that draws people in

Fundraising (2)

- ◆ Be able to raise sufficient funds to sustain all this.

Other (12)

- ◆ Consider having some/all meetings open for conference calls.
- ◆Success can be measured in many ways. Feel good even with small gains in just some of the above areas.
- ◆ I think the organization needs a better way of connecting with its more cynical members who question the impact that ICPJ's various projects have. It often seems that we're in such a polarized environment that you are likely to just end up preaching to the choir...
- ◆ More concentration on getting voices heard in the mainstream media
- ◆ I think community organizing at the grassroots is key. International issues are important, but there IS injustice here in the US too, and often activists forget that. It's also important to take a strong anti-racist stance and to note how racism is perpetuated within activist movements.

9. Is it more important to you that ICPJ reach out to people and communities not currently involved in peace and justice work or that they mobilize people in the community who are already engaged in these issues?

Much more important to reach out to new people and communities	Somewhat more important to reach out to new people and communities	Both are equally important	Somewhat more important to mobilize people and communities already engaged	Much more important to mobilize people and communities already engaged
19% (21)	12% (14)	51% (58)	15% (17)	3 (3%)

10. The issue of the Palestinian/Israeli conflict has been a contentious one in our community and within ICPJ. As an interfaith peace and justice organization, what approach do you believe we CAN take to working on this conflict?

Note: Many answers to this question fit in multiple categories, but they have only been placed into one.

Find common ground (13)

- ◆ The approach of common ground - music, love of family
- ◆ Facilitate dialogue based on what each side feels would make it feel safer and able to live a normal life.
- ◆ Start with the victims and move both Jews and Moslems and Christians on issues that bring them together. Have panels that inform people in different communities.
- ◆ Keeping the themes of "peace", "justice" and "interfaith" at the forefront of our efforts will help ensure that we don't get caught up in the politics of the situation, and rather focus on what's really important. There is fault on both sides, of course, and 'choosing sides' should not be our goal; rather, we should approach the issue from the perspective of - what is the means to a peaceful end to this conflict? what is the means to a just end to this conflict? what kinds of efforts (by gvmts, ngo's, groups like ours) encourage peaceful coexistence of the three major faiths in the region (judaism, islam, christianity) - and what actions work against this goal?
- ◆ Think it is a perfect example of where ICPJ is most needed in terms of how we learn to work with our differences while making a difference. We are never going to everyone to see things from the same perspective. Instead, we need to work with our difference perspectives (which include how our different faith traditions/histories lead us to see/experience things differently). We need to create a space in which people can speak and be heard about all different aspects of this conflict. I also think we could find some common ground around everyone's growing concern with how religious nationalism is feeding this conflict. This would be a place where our different traditions need to confront how they're being exploited for violence and oppression.
- ◆ I do believe that there are elements of the occupation of the West Bank that ICPJ can take a strong stand on, recruiting some members of Jewish congregations as participants. Examples would be confronting the Wall, the expansion of settlements, the plight of Palestinians who are deprived of food, water, ability to move freely in their land, etc. I wonder if persons throughout town might join in support of the Jimmy Carter agenda --discussion and debate and broader information about the West Bank situation and how it harms Israel and prevents the possibility of peace for Israel and inflames the broader Middle East. However, direct sanctions against the State of Israel cannot be part of the ICPJ agenda. Support for Palestinian olive oil and crafts might be a focus that would help educate. Targeting arms companies that supply cluster bombs might be helpful, too.

Bring People of Different Faiths Together To Work on This Issue (11)

- ◆ This key issue in any peace and justice progress in the Middle East, and ideologically, the world. In Ann Arbor, it is a delicate concern, because of the division in the Jewish community. I think ICPJ's best effort would be directed at fact-gathering and encouraging discussion among the different religious and cultural groups.
- ◆ Continue to work with all denominations and all churches locally (Christian, Jewish, Islamic). invite all churches to events.
- ◆ An essential area. in view of the current stalemate in the METF, it is likely that further efforts sponsored by ICPJ will be fruitless. Instead, as an alternative strategy, I suggest that ICPJ leaders invite the several involved religious/faith communities to initiate among themselves, independently of the ICPJ structure, a separate joint program to mount mutually respectful dialogue on these issues among

their members. Unaffiliated members of the public would be invited as observers, but not as participants. The motivation would come explicitly from the religious or spiritual or prophetic traditions of the cooperating organizations.

- ◆ I believe ICPJ needs to be a voice that brings various religious voices together on this issue. On those aspects of the issue that are most contentious (right of return, divestment for example, the role of fundamentalism/extremism) ICPJ may have to be satisfied with providing a forum for legitimating the discussion. But I don't think ICPJ can walk away from the issue precisely because it has so many religious issues at its core.
- ◆ I think we can work with a variety of faith groups, including the progressive voices within the Jewish community to advocate for change in US policy, for justice for Palestinians (acknowledging that Israel has most of the power), and for a nonviolent solution that respects the needs and rights of Palestinians and Israelis. I think we can choose key issues within this that have a reasonably broad appeal and then educate people on the issues that may not have as broad appeal.

Educate public (11)

- ◆ Keep on trying to be informed - through speakers, reading, workshops, etc. as to history & culture of those engaged in the conflict. If all ICPJ accomplished was to learn more about it and the background and pass that info on to others through newsletters, meetings, and other means of communication, that would be a lot. Nothing good can come (has come) from fighting among ourselves. It's not our war.
- ◆ The program re Palestine organized by Temple Beth Emmeth was excellent. We need to encourage and support open and honest dialogues esp. within the Jewish/Muslim/Christian faith communities.
- ◆ Concentrate on the facts: Wholesale stolen property, daily murder of Palestinians. Worst racial discrimination on the face of the earth.
- ◆ I believe ICPJ can continue to educate people on this issue. ICPJ can be a home for those who want to broaden that knowledge into the larger community and take part in lobbying, networking, and direct aid opportunities to assist those harmed in the conflict. ICPJ can also be a place for people with different views to gather, share and pray together for peace. We should not discount the power of that type of activity.
- ◆ I saw President Carter on Jim Lehrer Newshour talking about his new book on Arab-Israeli dialogue and peace effort. He was amazingly non-judgmental but consistently referred to the facts on the ground and the need to change perceptions in the American public. So without being destructive of relationships, the message does need to get out that incredible injustices are occurring to Palestinians that ultimately are going to drive negative results throughout the Mid-East. So first perceptions by the American public need to change and then policy can become more enlightened, as politicians seek to respond proactively.

Advocate for Palestinian Rights (10)

- ◆ Advocate for the Palestinians
- ◆ Recognize that regarding territory Israel is WRONG and Palestine is RIGHT. Recognize that regarding violence both are WRONG.
- ◆ I think that the right thing to do is recognize that Israel is occupying and oppressing the Palestinians, without needing to criticize the Jewish religion or say that Israel shouldn't exist. A movement for peaceful coexistence WITH justice is possible. Getting radical anti-Zionist Jews involved is key.
- ◆ Take a principled stand on the issue. Call a spade a spade: what Israel is doing in Palestine is silent ethnic cleansing. Don't be afraid of take on the pro-Israel partisans. Have some spine if you claim to be a "peace and justice" organization.
- ◆ It is VERY simple. ICPJ can ONLY support justice for Palestinians against Israeli occupation and oppression. ONLY when Israel gets its boot off the throat of the Palestinians will peace and justice be possible. That is the REALITY of the situation, and it must be faced despite whatever PERCEPTIONS of the struggle this or that advocacy group may attempt to present. If ICPJ doesn't have the courage to face the facts, it will completely fail on this issue (and its future decisions will be made more difficult).

We Shouldn't be Involved In This Area (9)

- ◆ Don't get stuck to that "tar-baby"!!!! Let others disappear in that quick sand

- ◆ Put the issue into focus as part of a whole picture. Do not let this topic "hijack" the work of ICPJ.
- ◆ Stay out of it - this is a LOSE/LOSE proposition on many levels
- ◆ Agree to disagree and move on. Focus efforts in other, equally important areas. There are many other agendas that need attention too.
- ◆ I feel like as a local peace organization, that this should not be a priority. It's not that I don't feel this issue is important, but I think there are other less divisive issues to come together on that would have more impact locally.

Open Dialogue (8)

- ◆ Emphasizing open learning and communication about the difficulties from both perspectives.
- ◆ Trying to bring different perspectives together for dialogue; education
- ◆ ICPJ has a real opportunity to lead in dialogue here. It will be a difficult dialogue, and some people will try to destroy it while others will shy away. Even so, I believe that ICPJ can find people of courage and fortitude to make a place for listening and the seeking of common ground. This cannot be a single program, but should include: special sessions to deal with the angry anti-Zionist people to listen to them and pull them away from disruptive action; general informational sessions for the public that do not have a public forum element.
- ◆ Encourage people with different opinions to come together in small groups on an ongoing basis to get to know each other, listen to different opinions, without any intent to convert each other. Goal is to arrive at an understanding of all sides of the issues.

Fair and Balanced Approach (7)

- ◆ This issue is so divisive that it can literally tear apart the peace/justice community since there is no clear consensus on the resolution of this issue. I believe it is important to continue to educate the ICPJ community as well as the community at large by using a balanced approach, not taking one side over the other. It is important to present both sides, so if you show a movie about how people are living in Gaza, be sure to show (or talk about) how people are living in places in Israel.
- ◆ Attention to which party is right or which party is wrong or how much guilt should be assigned to each party is a diversion from what is important. The important issues are: that Israelis and Palestinians are being maimed and killed; that very many Israeli and Palestinian children are malnourished; that the Israeli and Palestinian educational systems are decaying; that the Israelis and Palestinians can no longer support their institutions for the care of the aged, and that by pursuing the conflict they are destroying their economies and environment.
- ◆ Be an open-minded source of info/ed - admit to all faults on both sides !!!!!!!!! Practice pacifism & 'real reconciliation'

Work on Public Policy (7)

- ◆ I believe it is imperative that we provide a place where the concerns of all of the people involved are honored and shared in a manner in which they can be heard by people. I think that advocacy of non-violence is imperative in the whole region and non-interference by the US in the form of providing weapons and encouragement for military and other violent action in the region.
- ◆ Encourage our President and Congress to be more even handed in working with Palestinians and Israelis in moving from retaliation to reconciliation. Have our administration be mature enough to talk with people of all sides in the conflict, including Hamas and Hezbollah.
- ◆ There is blatant ignorance in the United States about this conflict. We need to have more dialogue and informed discussions and engage our congressmen.

Not sure, but it is important (7)

- ◆ Talk about how difficult it is to talk about! We must find a way - we can't avoid educating people for fear of picketers. If we can't talk about it in a peaceful model, who can?
- ◆ A sounding board? This issue is painful because there is right and wrong on both sides. It is fraught with emotion like the abortion issue. Hammer out issues that both sides want, like their own land and safety/security. How to get to reconciliation. How to really listen to each other through the pain, not who is right and who is wrong.

- ◆ Keep at it. Avoid zealots, (flame throwers) from taking over the action.

Take a Strong Stand Even if ICPJ Loses Supporters (3)

- ◆ ICPJ must take a strong stand on this issue, even if this means losing some supporters. ICPJ should focus especially on 2 aspects, 1. Why is this conflict a concern to US citizens and what can we do about it (sanctions and divestment, hold Israel and Palestine accountable to UN resolutions etc) and 2. the racism that is inherent in this conflict and in the US policy in the Middle East.

Other (17)

- ◆ Make sure that the methods utilized to achieve peace and justice are peaceful and just themselves.
- ◆ Reinstate METF. Encourage all members of ICPJ to attend films, discussions, etc. to understand the issues in the Middle East & the US role in those issues. Work harder to include the Muslim community. I believe that the METF, despite its frictions, was an umbrella for a wide variety of support.
- ◆ Probably a very limited one--it seems like it's important, but maybe it's important to first engage the Jewish and Muslim communities on some other campaigns, i.e. hunger, immigration, and come to I/P later. OR--work on very clearly defined campaigns, not on the amorphous I/P issue. And not things that drive people away. Most importantly, whatever we do should mirror other areas. So, if we're concerned about hunger in Gaza, that is consistent with a concern about hunger everywhere; if we are concerned about the war in Lebanon, that is consistent with a message of peace.
- ◆ The METF needs to be accountable to the organization and needs to be essentially faith-based in orientation rather than merely a group of progressives dealing with an issue that happens to involve faiths but not w/ a faith-based orientation. The METF's positions have been good and proper, but its narrow agenda, non-faith-based sectarian agenda, tactics and lack of a strategy in tune w/ the mission of ICPJ made it problematic.
- ◆ Correcting the path to war envisioned currently by the Jewish Community of Ann Arbor
- ◆ Reform METF and remove individuals that are incompatible with ICPJ goals and values
- ◆ We can continue to ask "what does peace/justice look like in this area," and listen. This issue is central to the *idea* of an interfaith peace and justice organization. Do more education programs if action is difficult for the community. (added from focus group)

11. Do you have any other comments about ICPJ and our future direction?

Praise (21)

- ◆ I have always been enormously inspired by those who work for ICPJ
- ◆ I think the staff is already doing really great work and is always very approachable.
- ◆ Despite some concerns, I am still hopeful about the future of ICPJ, and thankful it continues to work for peace.
- ◆ I have always admired the commitment and courage of each of your members.
- ◆ Impressed with the organizational structure and inter-related activities that involve multiple groups of people and interests under the umbrella organization. Kudos!
- ◆ Thanks very much for all the past good work. Stick to your principles. The world needs a lot more people working on this.
- ◆ I think you're doing a remarkably thoughtful, sane job, with open minds as to future possibilities.

Outreach (7)

- ◆ If the state of the nation offers an opportunity to bring the young in, seize the day.
- ◆ I do think it's most fruitful to go where the action is if you want to get results. That creates momentum that draws others in. However, outreach via educational events and workshops and structured presentations on specific topics are also crucial.
- ◆ Outreach to EMU would be great! There's an excellent School of Social work... leadership program in the College of Ed. Can we have a youth wing? Reach out to Republicans now while the Democrats seem to be in the upswing.

Concerns (6+2 from focus group)

- ◆ Sometimes I feel like you do the same programs year after year.
- ◆ Would love to see more people involved in REJ Taskforce - I need to know that there are others taking on tasks
- ◆ Be more assertive about raising funds and creating or deepening relationships through presentations at area faith communities... The 40 More Years fundraiser has been beautifully executed, and at the same time much has been learned in doing it!
- ◆ I think there is a structural problem at ICPJ. ...There is not enough SC involvement in the work of the task forces...all the reporting is done by the staff... I think the retreats should be held after the new members are elected so everyone moves into the new year having heard the input firsthand. I think the meetings should be held at night so there is a broader representation from the community...I think there is too much discussion and decision-making done in the Executive Committee and the SC serves as a token stamp of approval. I am concerned that there is no ... liability insurance coverage.
- ◆ Less knee-jerk liberal/activist and more engaged in dialogue and actual problem solving.

Tactics (3)

- ◆ Role-modeling is an effective method of teaching so concentrate on what you already have to work with and make it visible to those not yet involved.
- ◆ Yes - Encourage dialogue, steer away from intentional "education" because this has a somewhat righteous feel and tends to make outreach go around in circles.

Other (6)

- ◆ I appreciate the meetings you have on topics related to the causes you support.
- ◆ Your mission is crucial to a less than disastrous 21st Century.
- ◆ To be bold, imaginative, creative -- and work to build unity.

Key themes from Focus Groups, December 2006 to January 2007

This is a synthesis of key themes across focus groups, with a representative sample of responses for each category shown. To view all answers, see the full survey at www.icpj.net/listeningproject

Outreach

"As new to ICPJ, my initial reaction was 'why didn't I know about this a long time ago?' I don't consider myself oblivious, didn't know about ICPJ. We've lived here for ten years."

- Value of Outreach
 - o There is never enough outreach done.
 - o one of our weaknesses is we stop trying to find more people
 - o When the volunteers dry up, the org will be not be effective
- Who to outreach to
 - o We should mobilize the folks we already have in an effective way, and that will become its own selling point (success sells further success)
 - o Ideally I'd like to see Manchester and stuff involved, but the reality of coming to an evening meeting...
 - o Racial balance is not reflected in our membership
 - o It strikes me that ICPJ is a very white and Judeo-Christian group.
 - o Youth
 - we need more young people!
 - We do need to reach out to students. That is a pool of enthusiasm, youth, and energy with more enthusiasm than they are given credit for
 - Lots of valuable resources in University through students, student groups, departments, staff.
 - o Congregations
 - We could tap into congregations as bridge for issues so that people can find a home to work on an issue but where they don't find a base.
 - We should reach out to congregations County wide. You can't forget about congregations that have been involved but you want new congregations.
 - Could ICPJ work to bring more of the groups that aren't participating?
 - I was amazed when I met some fundamentalist Baptist but very liberal on a number of issues that I had sort of written off.
 - [we may have] more success with individuals rather than "black church" which is more conservative
 - I liked when we had a list of different speakers available to speak to congregation on various issues
- Interfaith and Secular
 - o The degree to which you make it clear that you welcome non-religious people needs to be addressed at the highest level. Many people who see an announcement in the Observer would say "I'm not religious, that's not for me." You're cutting out a lot of people if you don't make it clear that secular people are welcome.
 - o I don't see connecting with secular groups as changing our approach. ICPJ has a particular approach; we shouldn't water that down or change it.
 - o This group operates like a secular group within the framework that we're part of an interfaith organization. Interfaith is key for me. We don't need to make this more faith-based, but we need to know that were interfaith & faith-based.
 - o The name of the organization is Interfaith. If we're just a peace and justice group, then let's throw out the pretense of faith.

Engagement

- Providing structure & direction for involvement
 - o People might be more willing to do things and volunteer if they are asked to do specific things for specific amounts of time
 - o We are missing the middle tier of people who like to be told what to do
 - o Maybe good to give people who can't come to meetings opportunities like letter writing campaigns where people aren't super involved to plug in.
 - o You need to make sure you have a product for everyone involved to gather people
 - o It was strongest when there was someone in the congregation was always putting ICPJ agenda before us.
 - o I did one job for years once because somebody asked. I often respond well to being asked.
- Community & Fellowship
 - o There is a benefit to having a community, meeting friends, sharing with others... this is another component of success
 - o The peace community is often times too one-dimensional, but our goal should be to think about how we get to our own humanness and feel connectedness in this world – and we do it through small groups with many different interests
 - o [Part of success is creating] safe space where people are regarded respectfully.
 - o I think it boils down to personal contact. If people become really involved, they become ambassadors.
 - o Bring people of different backgrounds together to work for peace and justice. It's in the word "interfaith;" different religions. Also different races
 - o Providing a home for activists... This is the place to go to be with people who have a social action agenda. You don't always find that in your home church.
 - o I think the things that have motivated me have been an opportunity to do something about issues that I care deeply about, meet people I don't know and learn from them, especially people of different backgrounds... to do that I think you have to survey people you want to outreach to.
- Connection to larger movement
 - o At a UM football game, the announcers say that they are a part of a larger crowd and there is a response... how can ICPJ share their membership as a part of a larger community?
 - o It is important to let people know that ICPJ is a part of a much larger community
 - o (note: the larger community comments also referred to the sense of hope that comes from knowing you're part of community beyond your local group).
- Clear, immediate results
 - o A key step is to find an activity or program that seems immediately meaningful (ie. CROP Walk) to get [new people] engaged. ... the trick is to find something gratifying and meaningful
 - o One of the successes in the housing advocacy arena was asking people to support something concrete (building a building), not something that is "pie in the sky"
 - o We should focus on long term successes in addition to activity with instant gratification... we cannot forget the long term goals that HAVE been achieved and get those messages out in order to attract members (look at what we have already done)
- Other
 - o I have a young child at home, activities that are family-friendly or have childcare.

Issue breadth

- Issues based on mission
 - o Less about specific issues than keeping true to the mission
 - o Whatever issues you choose, make sure it is true through the lens of the mission and use that to set goals and measure your success
- Focus

- the prescription for being marginalized is by having four things going on at once
- at any given point in time one issue can be addressed and responded to, but it can get diluted by keeping too many balls in the air
- if people show up at small task force meeting and there's only 2-3 people there, they might get turned away from whole thing. We can attract more people if we have more people.
- There needs to be set of priorities. What events and activities are priorities?
- Would be effective to bring task forces together on targeted campaigns. To centralize a lot of stuff could be good. Whole would be more than sum of parts.
- I know how easy it is for orgs with a limited amount of energy to get energy sapped by going into too many different directions in a good hearted way. Focus is important in any org. Finding ways in each time period to focus and set goals.
- This may be the year we close the SOA. That's the way I see taking on more issues. If we succeed in some of these, then we can move on to others.
- Opening space for new issues
 - [I want to see] a variety of different task forces on different issues
 - If someone had burning issue, would like to see ICPJ as place where they could say, "I want to lead a task force on this issue." Focus on as many areas as we have leadership
 - Unleashing people's creativity and issues to work on whatever issue as long as it's in line with the mission of ICPJ. If there's an issue I'm passionate about, I don't have to pigeonhole in existing task forces. If it's vetted by membership, then let it go
- Issue selection & support
 - If few people come, then let those people decide what to do with it
 - If there are not people for an event or an issue, then let it die.
 - One of the strengths of the taskforces is that people do what they want to do (is reflective of a vote) – and there is a risk to deciding other topics without the “votes” through the taskforces
 - I think the group would be more effective working on local, regional, and statewide issues.
 - I see ICPJ as in a unique position to provide leadership... people will climb on.
 - I think ICPJ should focus on not just education but also mobilizing activity on where it can be effective.

Task Force

- volunteer leadership
 - Taskforces need to put themselves behind where their mouth is
 - If task force doesn't lead it, it shouldn't happen. With 1.5 FTE, you can't be a staff-driven organization.
 - If the task force wants to do it, we need to get it done.
 - We'll dream ideas and staff will carry it out.
- Opportunities for increased task force engagement
 - Take turns facilitating. Other people can send out notice
 - Task force should be setting agenda
 - recruiting new people
 - Managing online group
 - provide a report for the board
- Need for staff support
 - Needs to be staff support. Not let staff do everything, but assist people
 - I have feeling that there is an absolute requirement that staff help organize—there's not enough volunteers to dedicate time to get things going.
 - I remember meeting because staff helps keep going
- Staff roles
 - Coordinate phone calls, meetings, place where info flows into and out of.

- Data management: addresses, statistical information
- Nurture leaders, one of the hardest things, but one of the most important
- Share skills with task force. Staff are a source of information.
- Role of core organization
 - org provides support, paper, office staff ideas
 - [ICPJ is] central clearinghouse, we wouldn't have a way to communicate if it weren't for this central information.
 - ICPJ has good rep
 - attracting more volunteers.
- Capacity building
 - Nurture leaders, one of the hardest things, but one of the most important
 - [Staff could] share skills with task force. Staff are a source of information.
 - It's nice to have [staff] leadership and organization. I don't necessarily have skills to organize or lobby. It's good to have somebody who can. Would be interested in learning some of those things.
 - Training activists and providing resources. How to take action
- Other
 - Expect on-going presence from staff, but group find work that is not power-based
 - I would add to that it's not up to ICPJ to change the mission of the groups. The groups pick issues they're interested in.
 - "should we be required to provide board member." Would we fill it? Could we fill it? Would it be equivalent to saying "fold your tent."
 - There needs to have trust and communication for staff to say "no, I'm too busy."

Alternative Structures

- Looking at other models: Unstaffed
 - Weakness of unstaffed projects is that energy gets really dispersed.
 - gets where the passion is, however ... holding on to core values is unlikely
 - envision a group like METF infiltrating those models
- Looking at other models: pyramid
 - Pyramid would require clearer communication. When is something staff led and volunteer led?
 - envision a group like METF infiltrating those models
- Looking at other models: staff-driven
 - make for a stronger organization, but get away from hearts of the people
 - by design, we don't want to be a staff-driven organization.

ICPJ in the community

- Both do more programs collaboratively and let people know who to go to (like a clearing house)
- ICPJ has a wonderful reputation in the community and one of the things ICPJ can do is to be a clearing house but also to get groups to talking to one another that do not normally want to talk to one another; there is no other org that has the respect and ability to do that type of work and outreach
- We need to stay more connected to other peace groups (like peaceworks)
- It may be worthwhile to step back and ... do an inventory.... figure out what's being done and where are there gaps. Where are there unmet services, education, advocacy.

Measuring Success

- Have "X" number of educational events and measure success by our educational events.
- Raise awareness & gauge it several different ways: Community forums, letters to editor, increasing visibility on local issue

- Don't worry about seeing success and your issues through the "world lens", but rather through your mission lens
- Dialogue among diverse religious groups [is a key measure of success]
- Responses from congregations on issues are a measure of success
- Providing a home for activists. My church isn't very active. This is the place to go to be with people who have a social action agenda. You don't always find that in your home church.
- I believe that ICPJ needs to be an action-oriented group. I think we've fallen apart
- The things that I've found meaningful have been the occasional conferences on big issues. Getting information on issues. Mobilizing energy on areas of concern.

New Ideas

- Maybe we should be doing viewpoints for congregational newsletters.
- Website could be useful to have input from other people for what they're reading. What are people reading? Online book group?
- Can you get somebody for 1 day a week to work on a certain type of outreach. Maybe hire somebody from Mosque to do some outreach on issues that interest that community.

Notes from other sources

Educational programs to better understand socio-economic issues from the perspective of various religious traditions

Overall ICPJ mission and vision statements that build off of core (foundational) perspectives on socio-economic teaching common to the major faith traditions

Collaboration with ... local and regional interfaith organizations on issues of common concern
Formalize efforts to gain more involvement and support from a broader range of religious traditions in the work of ICPJ

“Person to Person” and “Family to Family” interfaith outreach/support efforts to build interfaith understanding

Public policy involvement in areas where there are identified gaps at the local, regional and/or State level and where there is widespread interfaith support for such initiatives

Pursue ICPJ membership package that includes discount offers through “Ten Thousand Villages” (\$100 membership gives you a 10% one-time purchase discount, etc.) and/or other retail/catalog companies with similar mission statements/values.

Offer workshops on inner peace, tranquility, stress reduction, anger management and other “personal peace” issues incorporating various faith perspectives, as pre-requisites for larger societal peace.

Draw on the educational resources available at UM/EMU in developing “peace and justice” policy positions, advocacy strategies, outreach efforts and awareness building.

[regarding I/P issue] ICPJ has tried to be all things to all people. But it is unfortunately true that this cannot work with people who are absolutely committed to their positions and refuse to contemplate alternatives under any circumstances...I would suggest that ICPJ adopt a general two-state position. Similarly, there should be clear guidelines for conduct of meetings. I think that if ICPJ is going to address the Israel-Palestine conflict, it will need to make a decision of this kind and I suspect a great many members of AA’s peace communities would welcome it.

It is the Board's job to prioritize the issues in such a way that available resources are used wisely. That means some issues will be given high priority, and others will be passed over.

I want to see collaboration between ICPJ and other organizations, unleashing the power of coalition.

I want to see participatory events that make the issues real. I love the pictures of the crater from the 1960s, and I participated in the Shadow Project.

I want to hear truth, not spin.