



Pressebüro Deutscher Medienpreis  
- Mr. Aust and Mr. Kögel  
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February 20, 2012

Dear Mr. Aust,  
Dear Mr. Kögel,

We greet you in our capacities as leaders of several major North American Protestant Christian denominations whose combined membership is more than fifteen million people. Our churches have engaged in international relationships with Christian churches and global partners throughout the world for as long as two centuries. We have been involved with, and relate to churches and institutions in the Middle East since the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, and those relationships are strong and very meaningful to us. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land is among those relationships, including support for the work of the Christmas Lutheran Church and its associated Diyar Consortium, under the leadership of the Rev. Dr. Mitri Raheb.

We were very proud and pleased to learn that Rev. Raheb was named to receive the prestigious “Deutscher Medienpries” which is to be presented this week. We know Rev. Raheb to be an authentic, thoughtful, and clear voice among the Palestinian Christian community. He communicates the reality of life in the West Bank, particularly Bethlehem, under Israeli occupation with integrity and profundity. He is a trusted colleague in our churches and one for whom we know is deserving of this award.

Sadly, it has come to our attention that a campaign to discredit Rev. Raheb and to dishonor him by revoking the “Deutscher Medienpries” from him this year is underway—a campaign that has been pursued with some vigor. We write to offer you our support for him, and for you, in conferring this award, and for the courage it takes to speak out and stand firm, even in the face of personal and institutional attacks.

We wish you continuing success in the work you do to bring to the world’s attention those who have taken risks to speak prophetically.

With our best greetings,

Rev. Dr. Sharon Watkins, General Minister and President, Christian Churches (Disciples of Christ)  
Bishop Mark Hanson, Presiding Bishop, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
Rev. Gradye Parsons, Stated Clerk, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)  
Rev. Dr. Tom De Vries, General Secretary, Reformed Church in America  
Rev. Geoffrey Black, General Minister and President, United Church of Christ  
Jim Winkler, General Secretary, General Board of Church and Society, United Methodist Church