

Palmer VP Chairs UN Conference

Editorial Staff

Palmer College's Don Betz, PhD presided over the United Nations' International Conference on the Question of Palestine in Geneva, Switzerland, Aug. 27-Sept. 2.

The conference is one of several UN meetings around the world each year to aid non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in assisting with peace issues. NGOs include such organizations as Amnesty International, the World Council of Churches, the Red Cross, and the World YWCA and YMCA. Representatives of 115 NGOs and 25 government officials attended the conference.

Through his work as secretary of the first UN International Conference on the Question of Palestine in 1983, Dr. Betz has helped to build a network of NGOs active in striving for peace in the Middle East. In 1985 he was elected chairman of an International Coordinating Committee for NGOs on the Question of Palestine. This committee helped the UN develop the conference agenda.

Dr. Betz spoke at the conference's opening session and as part of a panel discussion on relations between the UN and NGOs. He also assisted in drafting the final statement and plan of action of the conferees. This proposal centered on the NGOs working with governments and organizations to strengthen Palestine's infrastructure with funds and grants for new hospitals, schools and other projects that would supply needed services and jobs. Dr. Betz emphasized the importance of NGOs to this end, and noted a Norwegian NGO with contacts in Israel and Palestine that has been particularly helpful.

Dr. Betz finds chiropractic's philosophy compatible with the work he's doing through the UN: "It (chiropractic) takes a benign view of human interaction rather than the competitive, exploitative, even warlike attitude in so many other businesses or other endeavors."

NOVEMBER 1994