

# SEPERATION WALL IN THE OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES

Social Policy Resolution  
CC04.04.42



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
God's work. Our hands.

## Adopted by the 2004 Church Council.

### Whereas

Whereas, the 2003 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America reaffirmed "the ELCA's commitment to accompany the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and Palestine (ELCJ) and its ecumenical and interfaith partners, to carry out public policy and human rights advocacy on their behalf and to offer humanitarian relief and development assistance"; and

Whereas, the ELCA social statement "For Peace in God's World" states that "The Church is a disturbing presence when it refuses to be silent and instead speaks the truth in times when people shout out, 'Peace, peace' when there is no peace" (Jeremiah 6:14) and calls on ELCA members to diligently pursue peace initiatives; and

Whereas, Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson joined with 30 other prominent national Jewish, Christian, and Muslim leaders on December 2, 2003, calling for, among other things, a halt to "the construction of the security 'fence' or 'wall' beyond the Green Line"; and

Whereas, synod bishops Murray Finck and Dean Nelson accompanied U.S. Representative Lois Capps on an intensive, fact-finding visit to Israel and Palestine in January 2004, sponsored by the Division for Church in Society of the ELCA and hosted by the ELCJ; and

Whereas, Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson, Bishop Munib Younan of the ELCJ, and Representative Lois Capps recently discussed with members of Congress and staff the situation in Israel-Palestine and the humanitarian impact of the wall on the Palestinian people and the negative repercussions of the wall for the Palestinian-Israeli peace process; and

Whereas, Dr. Tawfiq Nasser, chief executive officer of Lutheran World Federation's Augusta Victoria Hospital, has pleaded with Lutherans throughout the world to remember that the hospital's work cuts across religious and cultural barriers and to understand how the wall has compounded the difficulties in providing health services—in particular, in chronic care (e.g., dialysis, cancer treatment) for Palestinians; and

Whereas, the executive committees of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and the World Council of Churches (WCC) have recently issued statements expressing

concern about the construction of the separation wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territories;

Whereas, a number of Jewish organizations in Israel and abroad have been involved in acts of solidarity with Palestinians; and

Whereas, Bishop Munib Younan has called on the ELCA to advocate under the theme "No More Walls," [identifying] "walls of hatred, racism, conflict among cultures, violence, and war as well as the separation wall the state of Israel is currently building" (February 27, 2004, letter to Bishop Mark Hanson); therefore, be it

### **Resolved**

Resolved, that the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America:

1. affirm the recent statement of the Lutheran World Federation, "Break Down the Walls" and request the Secretary of the ELCA to convey this statement to all synods, along with Bishop Munib Younan's and Dr. Tawfiq Nasser's letters (referenced above);
2. join with the Lutheran World Federation and the World Council of Churches in calling for an end to the wall's construction;
3. urge synods, in addition to highlighting these concerns at their synod assemblies, to find ways through prayer, through learning opportunities, through action, and through giving to support people in crisis in Palestine<sup>41</sup> and respond to Bishop Younan's request for advocacy ("No More Walls"), making use of resources available through the divisions for Global Mission and Church in Society;
4. encourage, as a model, joint visits of synod bishops with their members of Congress to the region to enable them to experience firsthand the perspective of our partners regarding the opportunities and obstacles to peace and the ministries of ELCJ, the LWF, and their partners;
5. urge ELCA members to learn about the situation in Israel-Palestine and listen to the voices of Palestinians and Israelis through visits to the region in coordination with [the ELCA's] local partners;
6. encourage relevant ELCA units to continue their collaboration with Jewish organizations that work in solidarity with the Palestinian people;
7. reaffirm earlier ELCA actions (e.g., CA89.8.114 and CC02.04.02), which urged both Palestinian and Israeli commitments to self-determination and security and saw hope for peace in the acceptance of the provisions of U.N. Security Council resolutions that call for Israeli withdrawal from territories occupied as a result of the 1967 war; respect for and acknowledgment of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of every state in the area; and their right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries, free from threats or acts of force;
8. encourage the development of an ELCA strategic plan for engagement in the Middle East; and
9. request that the Division for Church in Society communicate this resolution to the President of the United States, the Secretary of State, the government of

Israel and the Palestinian Authority and that DCS encourage ELCA members to communicate this resolution to their senators and members of Congress.