

Declaration for a Just Peace Between Palestine and Israel - UCC General Synod Resolution (2021) -

Study Group in 3 Sessions
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Learning objectives

By the end of this workshop, participants will be able to:

- ✚ State the function of Resolutions in the UCC. Cite how Resolutions come about.
- ✚ Recognize that the “Declaration for a Just Peace” resolution is but the latest of many UCC resolutions calling for a just peace in the Middle East.
- ✚ Recognize that the “Declaration for a Just Peace” resolution identifies JUSTICE via adherence to the message of the Hebrew prophets and the teachings of Jesus, as well as adherence to applicable international laws, as fundamental principles which must guide a peaceful future for Israel and Palestine.
- ✚ Recognize that the promise of God regarding land in Genesis was ultimately not about possession of land by one people to the exclusion of others, but rather a blessing extending to “all the families of the earth.” (Genesis 12:3)
- ✚ Cite three forms of oppression of the Palestinian people which the “Declaration for a Just Peace” resolution highlights and seeks to address.
- ✚ List three ways that Israel’s system of laws and legal procedures resembles the laws and procedures of apartheid South Africa.
- ✚ Cite three specific actions the “Declaration for a Just Peace” asks us to take.

Workshop Outline

Session 1

Introduction

- The function of resolutions in the UCC
- “Declaration for a Just Peace” resolution is but the most recent UCC resolution focused on peace in the Middle East
- (BRIEF) review of course objectives. Ground rules for our time together
- Questions that participants want answered (record for reference)

Biblical, Historical and Theological Grounding for the Resolution

- Use the Resolution text as a guide:
 - Establishes the principles for a just and peaceful relationship between Palestine and Israel — Hebrew prophets; life and teaching of Jesus; international law.
 - Pronounces continued oppression of the Palestinian people a sin.
 - Calls churches, conferences, associations to adopt this resolution as a plumb line to guide our advocacy.
 - Guiding our actions by General Synod resolutions, General Ministry actions and mission partners, ecumenical partners, and “Kairos Palestine” documents (2009 and 2020).
 - We are commissioned, authorized and held accountable by UCC Statement of Faith, which calls us to costly solidarity and accompaniment.
 - Luke 4:18-19 Isaiah 5:8 Genesis 12:1-3

Discussion

Session 2

Text of the Motion — the “Whereas” clauses

- Highlight selected elements of the Whereas clauses:
 - Shrinking American Indian lands. Shrinking Palestinian lands.
 - UNHCR, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees vs. UNWRA, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency
 - Israel’s Nation State Law of 2018
 - The central role of international law
 - Newly enacted laws equating criticism of the State of Israel with anti-Semitism

Text of the Motion — the “Be It Resolved” clauses

- Highlight selected elements of the Be It Resolved clauses:
 - Hearing the voices of Palestinians. “Kairos Palestine (2009).”
 - Rejecting any theology that privileges one nation, race, culture or religion
 - Adherence to applicable international laws
 - Examining critically our use and interpretation of Scriptures & Hymns so we don’t promote modern day Israel settler colonialism

Discussion

Session 3

Israeli apartheid

- Nelson Mandela, Desmond Tutu and modern human rights groups have labeled Israel an apartheid state
- The accepted international definition of Apartheid, and what this says about Israel
- Four ways that modern Israel’s policies and practices resemble apartheid South Africa’s practices and policies
 - Overturning South African apartheid — can the same methods overturn Israeli apartheid?
 - **Discussion and possible next steps**