



INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

## TIME FOR JUSTICE!

### The Things that Make for Peace

*I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and delight in my people; no more shall the sound of weeping be heard in it, or the cry of distress. (Isaiah 65:19)*

Isaiah's vision of the new heaven and the new earth (Isaiah 65:17-25), is held up before us as a vision of hope and peace. The prophet Micah imagines a day when swords will be beaten into ploughshares, when resources will be used for life-giving activities, when nations shall not learn war anymore (Micah 4:3-4). Sadly, humankind too often rejects these visions.

The report of the International Affairs Committee to the 134th General Assembly (2008) reflects on issues of peace and conflict, justice and injustice, and particularly the conflict between the Israeli and Palestinian people.

Among the things that prevent peace, is fear. Fear builds walls of hostility. Fear excludes, hoards, destroys. God wills that all people live without fear, and with the security of being able to enjoy the fruit of their labour and the provision of their land. God calls us to banish fear and live in peace. (Living Faith 8.5.3).

As God's people, we yearn and work toward the day when God's shalom will embrace all people and "no one shall make them afraid" (Micah 4:4).

**Time for Justice!** is based on the report of the International Affairs Committee to the 134th General Assembly, June 2008. The full report is found in Acts & Proceedings 2008. **Time for Justice!** may be read as a Minute for Mission, or printed as a bulletin insert or newsletter article to inform members of the international concerns of The Presbyterian Church in Canada and ask for their prayerful consideration of these matters.

WRITER: J. Hilliard PRODUCTION: K. Masterton PRAYER: B. McAndless-Davis



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### Prayer for the Things that Make for Peace

**Leader:** O God, throughout the ages you have given us visions of peace.

**All:** YET WE CLING TO OUR FEARS AND MAKE WAR.

**Leader:** You alone can banish all fear.

**All:** GIVE COURAGE TO THOSE WHO HAVE SUFFERED GREAT LOSS.

**Leader:** Restore the faith of those who have lost it and help them to trust even when trusting seems difficult.

**All:** STIR WITHIN US THE YEARNING FOR PEACE.  
BANISH OUR FEARS. HELP US ALL TO WORK FOR  
PEACE AND RENEWED HOPE. WE PRAY IN JESUS'  
NAME, AMEN.

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### Searching for a Just Peace in Israel and Palestine

Since the state of Israel was established in 1948 there has been much conflict. Following the 1967 war the United Nations Security Council outlined in Resolution 242 basic principles on which a viable and just peace might be reached. They include:

- The withdrawal of Israel from the territory occupied in 1967 and the recognition by all states in the region of Israel's right to exist.
- The right of all states, including Israel and its Arab neighbours to live in peace with secure and recognized borders.
- The right of the Palestinians to self-determination, including the right to establish their own sovereign state.

Although the Security Council called for cessation of conflict and the implementation of this resolution again in 1973 (Resolution 338), progress has been limited.

Attacks by Palestinian militants against Israel led to Israel's decision to build a security wall. The wall has reduced the number of attacks on Israel, but has attracted international criticism because in many places it is built on Palestinian territory. The wall incorporates into Israel many settlements that are on occupied Palestinian territory.

Both sides have a small ideological minority whose vision for the future excludes the other. However, people on both sides hope for a secure and peaceful life for themselves and their children. The psalmist invites God's people to pray for the peace of Jerusalem and to seek its good (Psalm 122:6&9).

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### Prayer for a Just Peace in Israel and Palestine

**Leader:** O God, we pray for the peace of Jerusalem, and for all your children on both sides of the wall.

**All:** OUR HEARTS WAIL IN ANGUISH OVER THE LIVES DESTROYED BY THE CONFLICT WHICH HAS RAGED FOR GENERATIONS IN ISRAEL, THE WEST BANK AND GAZA.

**Leader:** We weep over the smashed homes, the lost employment and the families and friends that have been divided.

**All:** BREAK DOWN THE WALLS THAT DESTROY LIFE, WE PRAY— WALLS BOTH SEEN AND UNSEEN.

**Leader:** Replace them with healthy boundaries that build respect and good will.

**All:** WE PRAY IN CHRIST'S NAME, AMEN.

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### Supporting Peace Initiatives

*We affirm that God is at work when people are ashamed of the inhumanity of war and work for peace with justice (Living Faith 8.5.3).*

There are Israeli and Palestinian organizations offering an alternative vision of how Israelis and Palestinians may live side by side as neighbours. These voices need to be heard and supported. The Presbyterian Church in Canada (The PCC), in partnership with other Canadian churches and ecumenical organizations, works to promote a just peace between Israeli and Palestinian people.

Congregations and individuals can:

- Pray for a just peace between the Israeli and Palestinian people.
- Support Presbyterian World Service and Development and International Ministries' partners in Israel and in the Palestinian Territories.
- Investigate The World Council of Churches' Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI) as an opportunity to deepen one's understanding of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (A&P 2008, p.18).
- Promote the purchase and distribution of products and services from the Occupied Palestinian Territories through organizations such as the Zatoun organization, Holy Land Handicraft Cooperative Society (web?), Holy Land Artisans, and the Alternative Tourism Group from Ramallah, both to assist the Palestinian people, and as a means of promoting awareness of the situation of Palestinians living in Gaza, the West Bank and East Jerusalem (A&P 2008, p. 18).

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### Prayer for Supporting Peace Initiatives

**Leader:** God of compassion, we pray for a just peace between the Israeli and Palestinian peoples.

**All:** BLESS OUR PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS IN ISRAEL AND PALESTINE.

**Leader:** Overcome in us, the paralysis of despair and help us to learn more about the courageous work through which you are bringing life and hope to many.

**All:** HELP US TO FIND PRACTICAL WAYS TO SUPPORT JUSTICE AND PEACE.

**Leader:** Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as in heaven, in Jerusalem. Amen.

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