

Iraq, and to work diligently to mend broken fences with countries of the region and the world in order to reduce feelings of animosity and distrust; and

6. Calls on the U.S. government to direct its attention to and actively commit to work fairly and creatively for peace and justice for Palestinians and Israelis and most urgently to end the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories, a good-faith step required by international law that would go a long way toward establishing trust, stability, and an end to violence between Palestinians and Israelis and in the Middle East as a region.
7. Calls upon the churches of the United Church of Christ to appreciate the connections we have with Christians in the Middle East through partnerships and mission relationships, and strengthen those connections through engagement in healing the brokenness and distrust created by war and national isolationism, and by contributing to relief and reconstruction appeals through One Great Hour of Sharing, and further to engage in activities that promote bridge-building between churches in the United States and churches in the Middle East and people of Middle Eastern heritage here in this country.
8. Communicate these concerns and positions to the fifteen members of the United Nations Security Council and the leaders of the United States government.

Funding for this action will be made in accordance with the overall mandates of the affected agencies and the funds available.

19. AN ALTERNATIVE VOICE TO CHRISTIAN ZIONISM

Rev. Hyde introduced the next resolution “An Alternative Voice to Christian Zionism” and moved its adoption.

03-GS-23 VOTED: The Twenty-fourth General Synod adopts the resolution “An Alternative Voice to Christian Zionism.”

AN ALTERNATIVE VOICE TO CHRISTIAN ZIONISM

WHEREAS, the United Church of Christ has affirmed its support for a secure state of Israel in a previous Synod resolution [“The Israeli-Palestine Conflict” (1987)], and the existence of Israel as a Jewish state is important; and

WHEREAS, the United Church of Christ has also condemned anti-Jewish positions in previous resolutions [“Anti-Semitism” (2001), and “Relationship between UCC and the Jewish Community” (1987)]; and

WHEREAS, the United Church of Christ has affirmed its concern about the ongoing conflict in Israel and Palestine, and the importance of justice for both Israelis and Palestinians in the resolutions: “Bringing Justice and Peace to the Middle East” (1999); “Jerusalem City of Life” (1997) and “Palestine/Israel” (1997); and

WHEREAS, as a result of Israeli settlements, access roads, and military control areas, Palestinians have been constrained in smaller and smaller densely populated, non-contiguous areas; and

WHEREAS, many innocent Israeli and Palestinian civilians have been killed in the struggle for this land; and

WHEREAS, Israel has a very large peace movement that opposes the occupation of Palestine; and

WHEREAS, in polling data, a majority of Israelis express a desire for negotiations with Palestinians, a two-state solution, and evacuation of settlements in the context of a peace accord; and

WHEREAS, Israeli government and the Palestinian Authority have accepted provisions of the Road Map to Peace; and

WHEREAS, Christian Zionism, aligned with the minority Jewish settler group, takes positions on the Israeli/Palestinian conflict that are contrary to the position of the Israeli government and of the most Israelis, opposing a two-state solution and supporting transfer of all Arabs out of Palestine; and

WHEREAS, influential members of the current U.S. government endorse Christian Zionist positions as a basis for U. S. foreign policy; and

WHEREAS, the Just Peace Pronouncement that was adopted by the General Synod in 1985, as well as updates and similar proclamations of other denominations and like-minded groups, has received insufficient publicity within our denomination, in the mass media, and among U.S. government officials.

THEREFORE LET IT BE RESOLVED, that the Twenty-fourth General Synod of the United Church of Christ recognizes the diversity of biblical perspectives on the question of a Jewish homeland, but affirms that all such perspectives should be grounded in the message of justice and peace taught by Jesus and the biblical prophets; and

LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED, that the General Minister and President of the United Church of Christ will write a letter to the President of the United States, other leaders in our government, and the leaders of the state of Israel and the Palestinian Authority, informing them that this General Synod asks all parties to agree unconditionally to abide by the Geneva Conventions and to accept the Road Map to Peace as originally proposed; and

LET IT BE FINALLY RESOLVED, that the General Minister and President of the United Church of Christ will, in consultation with the appropriate ministries, develop a plan to communicate the theological and political ramifications of Christian Zionism. Elements of this plan should include:

1. Issuing to all churches in the United Church of Christ a pastoral letter on Christian Zionism and the ongoing

conflict in Israel and Palestine and that this letter be available on the United Church of Christ website.

2. Informing current government officials of Christian alternatives to Christian Zionism.
3. Continuing to develop the United Church of Christ educational program about the ongoing conflict in Israel and Palestine and include material that enables Christians to respond with a biblical basis to the tenets of Christian Zionism. The objective of this educational program should be that members of the United Church of Christ will be encouraged to become more active on this issue.
4. Cooperating with other denominations and like-minded groups to promote alternatives to Christian Zionism in the mass media.

Considering the human suffering and the political urgency of the on-going conflict, we would hope the first elements of this plan could be implemented by fall 2003.

Funding for the implementation of this resolution will be made in accordance with the overall mandates of the affected agencies and the funds available.

20. IN HONOR OF SENATOR PAUL WELLSTONE

Moderator Lewis introduced Ms. Karli Purscell (NE) who introduced the resolution "In Honor of Senator Paul Wellstone" and moved its adoption as amended by the Committee.

Rev. David Greenhaw (MOMS), President of Eden Seminary, questioned the theological implication of honoring Senator Wellstone, rather we should honor Jesus Christ.

An amendment was proposed, but ruled out of order as it was made after the vote was called on the resolution.