

I am Rev. Richard Edens, Co-Senior Pastor of United Church of Chapel Hill with my wife, the Rev. Dr. Jill Edens since 1979, and a member of the Southern Conference. I am the chairperson of Resolution Committee #3, "A Call for the United Church of Christ to Take Actions Toward a Just Peace in the Israeli- Palestinian Conflict."

We began with two resolutions (#4 and #15) similarly named. Number 4 came to us from Central Atlantic Conference and 9 other conferences. Number 15 came to us from the New Hampshire Conference. Because the two resolutions were essentially the same, the committee agreed to a few amendments to resolution 4 that essentially aligned the two as one. The changes that you see currently in Packet 2, pages 1-2, are to resolution 4 which now encompasses material from resolution 15.

Lines 2006-2008 have been replaced by lines 2010-2014 to deepen the call to study the issues surrounding the violence of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The next paragraph beginning with line 2016 was amended to be more dynamic by linking calls for divestment from companies profiting from and complicit in human rights violations arising from occupation of the Palestinian Territories by the state of Israel until such time as these companies no longer profit from or are complicit in said human rights violations.

The paragraph beginning with line 2028 continues the dynamism of the previous paragraph by urging a mechanism which solicits input from stakeholders to develop and publish standards. It became an urging instead of a calling because the committee was informed that the United Church of Christ Board was currently discerning investment policies and an advisory committee for itself.

The paragraph beginning with line 2034 calls upon entities and members of the United Church of Christ to boycott goods produced in or using the facilities of illegal settlements located in the occupied Palestinian territories. Like the divestment paragraph particular companies are named but amended to be more dynamic by indicating that boycotts cease when said operations cease.

The remaining amendments are edits.

Resolution Committee 3 worked by consensus. As chairperson I am filled with gratitude for the earnestness, seriousness and grace committee members brought to challenge of taking actions toward a just peace in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. It should also be noted that while we approached this resolution and topic with trepidation, we knew that other dimensions of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict had been discussed in other General Synod resolutions. Since 1967 there have been 17 General Synod resolutions and 2 Executive Council resolutions on Israel/Palestine making this resolution the 20th resolution. In the past, for example, we have affirmed the sovereignty of Israel and a Palestinian state, Jerusalem as a City of Life, and the use of economic leverage. Additionally these two resolutions represented the work of 11 conferences before they came to us at General Synod. So we were not alone or unsupported. We worked through each paragraph by consensus and while we did not reach unanimity on each paragraph by the time we asked the committee to vote on the whole BE NOW RESOLVED section every hand was raised in support of recommending this resolution with amendments for approval to the 30th General Synod of the United Church of Christ. We marveled at the working of the Holy Spirit and gave thanks.

Mister Moderator, on behalf of Committee #3, I move that the 30th General Synod adopts the Resolution on A Call for the United Church of Christ to Take Actions Toward a Just Peace in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict and recommend approval as amended by committee.

We are among the faithful who for millenniums have approached Jerusalem singing as in Psalm 122: *I was glad when they said to me, 'Let us go to the house of the Lord!' Our feet are standing within your gates, O Jerusalem.*

It is with our feet inside the gates of Jerusalem, in solidarity with all who are oppressed with the violence of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the suffering arising from the occupation that this resolution is offered to Synod. We do not offer this resolution as outsiders but as insiders, among the faithful with feet inside the gates.

With feet inside the gates, we can no longer continue to profit ourselves from the violence that is consuming the land we call Holy thus we are calling and urging all UCC related entities to stop bringing wood to the fire of this conflict and the violation of human rights. All UCC related entities are called upon to divest from any direct or substantive indirect holdings in companies that profit from or are complicit in human rights violations arising from the occupation of the Palestinian Territories.

With feet inside the gates, we can no longer eat while another has no bread or dwell in peace while another has no peace thus we are calling and urging all UCC entities to boycott goods identified as produced in or using the facilities of illegal settlements located in the occupied Palestinian territories.

With feet inside the gates, we can go to the house of the living God with brothers and sisters of the shared faiths of Judaism, Christianity and Islam for the deeper narrative of our respective faiths is about one God not conflict, about one future with hope not despair, about one people of God not enemies. Thus it is also a call for deeper study and relationships with our Jewish brothers and sisters, our Palestinian partners and our Islamic neighbors.

With feet inside the gates, we call upon the Officers of the United Church of Christ and church members to persist in requests to the U.S. Congress to ensure that U.S. aid does not violate its own policies. Likewise the United Church of Christ Board is called upon to monitor the implementation of this resolution throughout the UCC related entities.

This song of ascents concludes with *"Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: 'May they prosper who love you. Peace be within your walls, and security within your towers.' For the sake of my relatives and friends I will say, 'Peace be with you.' For the sake of the house of the Lord our God, I will seek your good."* This resolution is also offered by those – us – who pray for the peace of Jerusalem and who for the sake of relatives and friends seek the good of the house of the Lord our God.

On behalf of resolution committee 3, I urge your support of this resolution. Thank you.