

1 *Note: The following resolution, approved by General Synod 25 in Atlanta, should not be*  
2 *considered “final” until the minutes of the General Synod have been reviewed and approved by*  
3 *the Executive Council in October.*

4  
5 **APPROVED**

6  
7 **Tear Down the Wall**

8  
9 **THEOLOGICAL RATIONALE**

10  
11 For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the  
12 dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us. (Ephesians 2:14)

13  
14 A central tenet of our Christian faith is the possibility for reconciliation among peoples. This  
15 human reconciliation through God’s love was demonstrated by Jesus Christ, and reported to the  
16 people of Ephesus by Paul. We are called to be people of reconciliation and called to engage in  
17 the act of reconciliation. Barriers to reconciliation exist in many forms and in many places.  
18 When barriers are constructed, hostility that exists becomes exacerbated. Differences between  
19 peoples can only be addressed through bringing them together, not by adding further divisions.  
20 By breaking down walls that separate, we actively seek peace and reconciliation in the world in  
21 an attempt to follow Jesus’ example. In doing so, we seek a death to hostility.

22  
23 **BACKGROUND**

24  
25 In June 2002, the State of Israel began an ambitious construction. Construction of a separation  
26 barrier—also known as the “security fence” and as the “Wall”—commenced and continues to  
27 this day.

28  
29 According to Israeli plans, the barrier will be over 400 miles (650 kilometers) in length, at a cost  
30 not less than \$1.6 million per mile (\$1 million per km), and will exceed \$1 billion for the entire  
31 project. The main barrier takes on many forms, including 8-meter high cement walls, 3-meter  
32 high electric and barbed-wire fences, and a combination of the two. The infrastructure of the  
33 barrier that also includes a buffer zone on both sides, surveillance cameras, trenches, and  
34 observation posts compounds what Israeli human rights activist Jeff Halper calls the “matrix of  
35 control” of settlements, by-pass roads and checkpoints.

36  
37 The barrier violates multiple international conventions, agreements, and resolutions, including  
38 article 2.4 of the United Nations Charter (prohibiting the use of force to violate territorial  
39 integrity), the Fourth Geneva Convention (prohibiting the destruction of land or property and the  
40 practice of collective punishment), and both the International Covenant on Civil and Political  
41 Rights and the International Covenant on Economical, Social, and Cultural Rights (defining  
42 rights of movement, property, health, education, work, and food). The barrier also is contrary to  
43 UN Security Council resolution 242 which calls for the “Withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from  
44 territories occupied in the recent [1967] conflict.”

46 The barrier encroaches into the occupied Palestinian territories from along the entire perimeter of  
47 the West Bank, frequently abutting or intersecting Palestinian villages, while leaving agricultural  
48 fields, shops, and family members on the opposite, Israeli-claimed side of the border. In places  
49 like Qalqilya, the barrier loops prominently into the West Bank, enveloping entire Palestinian  
50 villages and creating ghettos with a single, narrow checkpoint guarding the entrances to these  
51 villages. It will result in Israel's effective annexation of roughly half of the West Bank,  
52 displacing and disconnecting Palestinians from their homes, families, neighbors, and fields. It is  
53 this encroachment and the resultant humanitarian crises that the Israeli Supreme Court addressed  
54 in its June 30, 2004 ruling, even as it found the motivation for the barrier, based on security  
55 concerns, justified.

56  
57 In a more broad-reaching ruling on the barrier, the International Court of Justice ruled on the  
58 barrier's legality in a July 9, 2004 verdict. In sum, the decision rendered the construction of the  
59 barrier contrary to international law, recommended that the State of Israel end its construction  
60 and dismantle existing segments and that Israel make reparations to those who have suffered loss  
61 as a result of the construction, and instructed the United Nations to pursue necessary means to  
62 address the illegality of the barrier. Both Israel and the U.S. disregarded this ruling and thereby  
63 dismissed the relevance of international law. The U.S. continues to provide more aid to Israel  
64 than to any other country in the world.

65  
66 The impact of the visually, physically, psychologically and spiritually offensive barrier on the  
67 Palestinian people has been more devastating than abstract facts can convey. Homes have been  
68 demolished, water supplies have been cut off, fields have been razed, villages divided, and  
69 access to the other side has been cut off. Farmers have lost their fields or lost access to them.  
70 Faith communities—including Palestinian Christians—have been denied access to houses of  
71 worship. Families have been split. According to UN estimates, 680,000 Palestinians (30% of  
72 the West Bank population) are directly affected. The Sabeel Liberation Theology Center in  
73 Jerusalem reports that "Palestinians have been separated from their places of employment, their  
74 farmlands, hospitals, schools, places of worship and their families. In the first phase of the wall  
75 alone, 100,000 trees have been uprooted; 35,000 meters of irrigation networks have been  
76 destroyed; and 75% of teachers and students living in the construction areas have had difficulty  
77 arriving at school." These effects further deteriorate the quality of life of the Palestinian  
78 population in the occupied territories.

## 81 **RESOLUTION**

82  
83 **WHEREAS** the ongoing violence has created fear, whittled away trust; and both Israel and  
84 Palestine have been deeply wounded politically, economically, physically, spiritually, socially,  
85 and psychologically; and

86  
87 **WHEREAS** the Israeli government, as part of its *de facto* policy of settlement and colonization,  
88 continues to construct the separation barrier, also known as the security fence and the wall, and  
89 plans to extend it to approximately 400 miles (650 kilometers) at a cost not less than \$1.6 million  
90 per mile (\$1 million per km), thereby rendering the internationally-endorsed Road Map for peace  
91 and other proposals for a negotiated two-state solution unachievable; and

92  
93 **WHEREAS** the wall unilaterally changes an international border without direct negotiations  
94 between partners, effectively annexes nearly 50% of Palestinian West Bank land, and destroys  
95 the contiguity of Palestinian life and land, rendering a Palestinian state unviable; and  
96  
97 **WHEREAS** the barrier succeeds in confiscating Palestinian agricultural fields, water, and other  
98 natural resources, contributes to unemployment, and cuts populations off from such essentials of  
99 life as employment, education, health care, worship and family; and  
100  
101 **WHEREAS** the Israeli Supreme Court has questioned the legality of the path of the separation  
102 barrier on humanitarian bases and the International Court of Justice has ruled that the barrier is,  
103 *ipso facto*, illegal; and  
104  
105 **WHEREAS** the barrier has had devastating effects on the lives and livelihoods of Palestinians  
106 living in the occupied territories by destroying homes, fields, and mobility, severely obstructing  
107 health care, education, and even worship opportunities for Palestinians; and  
108  
109 **WHEREAS** history demonstrates that walls build barriers and limit the opportunity for people in  
110 conflict to be in contact with each other and reconcile their differing points of view, and the U.S.  
111 has previously demanded that walls of separation be torn down;  
112  
113 **THEREFORE LET IT BE RESOLVED** that the Twenty-fifth General Synod of the United  
114 Church of Christ, mindful of all previous General Synod resolutions and all previous board  
115 resolutions and statements relating to the Arab-Israeli-Palestinian conflict, specifically affirms  
116 the two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, fully supporting the right of Israel to  
117 exist in peace with its neighbors and protect itself within secure and internationally recognized  
118 borders and at the same time asserting the same right to national sovereignty in a secure,  
119 recognized and viable state for Palestinians, who would control their borders; and  
120  
121 **LET IT BE RESOLVED** that the Twenty-fifth General Synod of the United Church of Christ  
122 calls upon the Israeli government to cease the project to construct the barrier, tear down the  
123 segments that have already been constructed, and make reparations to those who have lost  
124 homes, fields, property, and/or lives and health due to the barrier and its effects as security for  
125 both peoples can best be achieved through an end to the occupation and efforts to encourage  
126 access and contact, rather than restricting and denying it; and  
127  
128 **LET IT BE RESOLVED** that the Twenty-fifth General Synod of the United Church of Christ  
129 urges the U.S. government to persuade the Israeli government to abide by international law and  
130 agreements and withdraw from the occupied Palestinian territories; and  
131  
132 **LET IT BE RESOLVED** that the Twenty-fifth General Synod of the United Church of Christ  
133 calls upon the U.S. government to engage actively, fully and fairly in a peace process that will  
134 lead to the peaceful coexistence of two states: Israel and a future Palestine; and  
135  
136 **LET IT BE RESOLVED** that the Twenty-fifth General Synod of the United Church of Christ  
137 encourages its members at all settings of the United Church of Christ to engage in prayer, study,

138 and dialogue about the barrier and to raise diligently with their governmental officials these  
139 concerns.

140

141 Funding for this action will be made in accordance with the overall mandates of the affected  
142 agencies and the funds available. Wider Church Ministries is responsible for developing the  
143 strategy and program designed to implement this resolution.

144

145

146