

## **“Seeking Peace in Israel and Palestine” Resolution Endorsements**

I am impressed with the breadth, depth and compassion of this well-written resolution that speaks clearly against both occupation and antisemitism within a restorative justice framework. Of particular importance is the emphasis on confession. The confession of fault by one party is often the turning point in resolving a conflict. This resolution helps us to take that step and then to help others to see where they may be failing to act justly.  
—**Palmer Becker**, *author of What is an Anabaptist Christian?*

By using a restorative justice lens to view the complex Israel-Palestine issue, this resolution seeks to begin by acknowledging our own contributions to the harms done to both Jews and Palestinians and, accordingly, to take steps that will promote healing justice.  
—**Daryl Byler**, *executive director of Eastern Mennonite University's Center for Justice and Peacebuilding and a member of the "Seeking Peace in Israel and Palestine" Resolution Reference Group*

I am grateful for the way that this resolution has confessed to playing a role in setting groups of suffering people against the other. It is an important first step to acknowledging the ways that we--as Mennonites, as peace-seekers and peacemakers--have harmed Palestinians and Israelis, groups who have historically been ignored by the international community. The call for peace and justice in this region is urgent. My hope is that this resolution is our commitment to listen to the cries of our Muslim, Jewish and Christian sisters and brothers in the region; to see the interconnectedness of violence abroad and on our own soil; and to no longer remain complicit to acts of violence that we as Westerners have played a role in.  
--**Dominique Chew**, *member of advisory council of the Peace and Justice Support Network*

We can either remain on our polarized sidelines separated by politics, bipartisan news and a Biblical framework absent of restoration or we can become a church that globally embrace the "ministry of reconciliation" (2 Cor 5:17). The "Seeking the Peace in Israel-Palestine" resolution is our clarion call within the Mennonite Church to embrace a restorative justice approach on behalf of our Palestinian and Jewish brothers and sisters.  
—**Leonard Dow**, *pastor, Oxford Circle Mennonite Church, Philadelphia, PA*

This resolution embraces an Anabaptist restorative justice structure, identifying ways and taking concrete steps that will lead both parties to broker peace in the region. . . . It speak[s] clearly against any injustice and violence and also extend[s] a hand of understanding and relationship to all parties. I therefore endorse it.  
—**Femi Fatunmbi**, *senior pastor of Royal Dominion International Church in Los Angeles, CA and outgoing Moderator of Pacific Southwest Mennonite Conference and of the representative of African, Belizean & Caribbean Mennonite Mission Association on Racial/Ethnic Council of Mennonite Church USA*

This resolution offers a vital first step in Mennonites' journey toward addressing our responsibility for injustice and violence in Israel and Palestine. We are already deeply implicated, as demonstrated by new research on Mennonite participation in the Holocaust. Thank you, Mennonite Church USA, for recognizing this complicity. Now as followers of Christ, we are called to begin restitution for our congregations' past and ongoing contributions to anti-Semitism, settler colonialism, and regimes of occupation.

--**Ben Goossen**, *Harvard University, author of Chosen Nation: Mennonites and Germany in a Global Era*

While the resolution unequivocally names the injustice of the 50-year-old Israeli occupation, it does not allow us solely to criticize others. The resolution also turns the spotlight back on ourselves, challenging our complicity in antisemitism and its role in harming and sowing fear among Jews, in Israel and elsewhere.

—**Dave Hockman-Wert**, *member of advisory council of the Peace and Justice Support Network, member of Corvallis Mennonite Church*

“This resolution represents broad listening, hard prayerful work and takes into account our relatedness as well as the prophetic and repentant work that’s ahead of us. I’m grateful for the writers and to have worked along with other respondents to attempt to construct a document that is honest, hopeful and leans toward the invitation to extend Christ’s peace.”

— **Steve Kriss**, *Franconia Conference executive minister, member of “Seeking Peace in Israel and Palestine” Resolution Reference Group*

This resolution represents a rigorous and thoughtful conversation within and beyond the Mennonite Church, held within the framework of restorative justice. Most importantly, it represents vital commitments we are making to Palestinians, Jews, and all affected by this story, including ourselves.

—**Joel Miller**, *pastor, Columbus Mennonite Church, Columbus, OH*

I wholeheartedly endorse the “Seeking Peace in Israel and Palestine” resolution. I was blessed to have an opportunity to walk the streets of Jerusalem, sail the Sea of Galilee, even encounter armed guards on the streets of Hebron. In all those spaces it felt like Jesus was weeping. I wept most days because I was daily reminded of the racism, sexism and classism right here in the United States. I felt the hatred and bigotry of the West had also taken over God’s Holy Land. This resolution is one way for us to show our love for God’s children in this precious land. We don’t have all the answers, but simply standing on the side of peace and non-violence is enough for God to continue God’s work. This is a good resolution, let us, children of peace stand together for the world to see.

—**Cyneatha Millsaps**, *pastor of Community Mennonite Church, Markham, IL, program director, MCC Great Lakes, member of “Seeking Peace in Israel and Palestine” Resolution Reference Group*

Jesus calls us to be light in the world, spreading love and reconciliation. This resolution takes a unique Anabaptist approach at addressing injustice, both in the past and the present, against both Israelis and Palestinians. It calls for confession, forgiveness, and advocacy for those who are suffering. The resolution sets a tone of love for all, while speaking out against violence, oppression and injustice, and supporting the peace efforts of both Palestinians and Israelis. I strongly endorse the Resolution.

—**Kathi Oswald**, *Moderator, Pacific Southwest Mennonite Conference*

Everence respects and supports the thoughtful intentionality with which the “Seeking Peace in Israel and Palestine” resolution has been crafted. It effectively embodies our faith community’s desire for a just peace, concern for all peoples in the region, and awareness of our own complicity in the violence that has been done to both Jews and Palestinians. It also highlights the range of opportunities we have to be active participants in efforts to bring healing to this holy and troubled land.

—**Mark Regier**, *Director of Stewardship Investing for Praxis Mutual Funds and Everence Financial*

*Kairos* refers to a holy moment, a fullness of time. This is a full moment for the Mennonite Church in relation to Israel and Palestine. After 65 years of sending people to the Land of the Holy One and learning about the historical and contemporary situation there, we have built strong relationships with peacemakers. They have asked us to take bold action; a *kairos* moment urges us to respond to those who are enduring daily violence in which many of us in the USA are implicated in perpetuating. Furthering the good work we are known for on the ground in Israel-Palestine, we lean into this moment with a commitment to apply the lessons we have learned there to our own situation here. This resolution is a great first step in recognizing this *kairos* moment, at home and abroad.

--**Sarah Thompson**, *executive director of Christian Peacemaker Teams*

We are writing to express our support for the resolution, "Seeking Peace in Israel-Palestine" being considered at the upcoming Mennonite Church USA assembly in Orlando. We participated in April 2016 on a Come and See tour to Israel/Palestine, sponsored by Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Central Committee. This was an opportunity to gain deeper understanding of the historical, political, economic and religious dynamics of conflict in the region. We were moved by the witness of people who are most deeply impacted by the systemic injustices and violence of that conflict. Based on these experiences and perspectives, we believe the resolution is a faithful response to God's will for peace and justice in Israel/Palestine. Thank you to all who have worked diligently to prepare the resolution.

--**Heidi Regier Kreider**, *Conference Minister*

--**Anita Kehr**, *Moderator*

*Western District Conference (Mennonite Church USA)*

### **Congregational Endorsements**

- Ambler Mennonite Church, Ambler PA (Franconia Mennonite Conference)
- Akron Mennonite Church, Akron PA (Atlantic Coast Conference)
- Albuquerque Mennonite Church, Albuquerque NM (Mountain States Mennonite Conference)
- Austin Mennonite Church, Austin TX (Western District Conference)
- Benton Mennonite Church, Goshen IN (Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference)
- Blossom Hill Mennonite Church, Lancaster PA (Atlantic Coast Conference)
- Columbus Mennonite Church, Columbus OH (Central District Conference)
- East Chestnut Mennonite Church, Lancaster PA (Atlantic Coast Conference)
- Emmanuel Mennonite Church, Gainesville FL (Southeast Mennonite Conference)
- Emmaus Road Mennonite Fellowship Berne IN (Central District Conference)
- Eugene Mennonite Church, Eugene OR (Pacific Northwest Mennonite Conference)
- First Mennonite Church of Champaign-Urbana, Urbana IL (Illinois Mennonite Conference)
- First Mennonite Church, Lincoln NE (Central Plains Mennonite Conference)
- Hyattsville Mennonite Church, Hyattsville MD (Allegheny Mennonite Conference)
- Lima Mennonite Church, Lima OH (Central District Conference and Ohio Mennonite Conference)
- Lombard Mennonite Church, Lombard IL (Illinois Conference)
- Lorraine Avenue Mennonite Church, Wichita KS (Western District Conference)
- Peace Mennonite Church, Claremont CA (Pacific Southwest Conference)
- Salford Mennonite Church, Harleysville PA (Franconia Mennonite Conference)
- Seattle Mennonite Church, Seattle WA (Pacific Northwest Conference)