

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

To the Venerable, the 134th General Assembly:

“THE THINGS THAT MAKE FOR PEACE” (Luke 19:41)

I have seen their ways, but I will heal them;
I will lead them and repay them with comfort,
creating for their mourners the fruit of their lips.
Peace, peace, to the far and the near, says the Lord;
and I will heal them. (Isaiah 57:18-19)

In its report to the 133rd General Assembly, the International Affairs Committee completed a three-year series entitled ‘Building the Common Good’. The first report was presented to the 131st General Assembly and explored water as a sacred gift. The report to the 132nd General Assembly considered the theological and ethical dimensions of global public health, while the report to the 133rd General Assembly invited the church to reflect on migrants in today’s global economy. Once the International Affairs Committee has adequately responded to Overture No. 6, 2007 referred to it by the 133rd General Assembly, the committee will turn its attention over a three-year period to the theme of “Caring for Creation”. Climate change will be included in this theme.

This report has three sections. The first section is an interim response to Overture No. 6, 2007 submitted by the Presbytery of Ottawa requesting the committee to study the connection we have as Christians and Canadians with the peoples of Israel/Palestine, and the role of economic advocacy measures as strategies in promoting the search for a just peace between Israelis and Palestinians.

The second section concerns a document from the Canadian Council of Churches entitled *Canadian Churches and the Responsibility to Protect* (R2P). This document was submitted to the 133rd General Assembly with the request that the courts of the church be invited to review it and submit their comments to the committee by December 31, 2007. This section reports on the responses from the church as well as issues raised by the International Affairs Committee.

The third section commends to the church participation in KAIROS’ three-year program *Re-Energize ... Time for a Carbon Sabbath* that began in the fall of 2007. This program is described in Justice Ministries’ report, see p. 324-25.

Each of these issues affects the neighbour we know and the neighbour in a distant land that we do not know. The church as the Body of Christ is called to witness to our common humanity, to offer an alternative vision of how the human family might live together and to walk with those who are marginalized and vulnerable. Glory be to God.

OVERTURE NO. 6, 2007 (A&P 2007, p. 520, 19)

Re: Economic advocacy and peace in Israel and Palestine

Introduction

Overture No. 6, 2007 asked for a statement on the connection we have as Christians and Canadians with the peoples of Israel/Palestine, and the role of economic advocacy measures as strategies in promoting the search for a just peace in Israel/Palestine to be prepared.

God’s new creation

As we consider issues of peace and conflict, justice and injustice throughout the world and, in this report particularly, the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians, we hold before us the vision proclaimed by the prophet Isaiah of the new heavens and new earth that God is creating (Isaiah 65:17-25). God promises that:

- no more will there be weeping or distress in Jerusalem, for God is about to create it as a joy, and its people as a delight;
- no more will children die in their infancy, for someone who lives to be a hundred will be thought of as young;
- no more shall homes be built for some invading people to inhabit or crops planted for them to eat, for those who build the homes shall live in them and those who plant will enjoy the produce;
- no more shall people labour in vain or bear children for calamity, for their offspring will be blessed by God – and their descendents as well.¹

It is a vision of hope and peace. Sadly, humankind too often rejects the vision and fails to live up to the promise.

God calls us to banish fear and live in peace

As [Jesus] came near and saw the city, he wept over it, saying, “If you, even you, had only recognized on this day the things that make for peace!” (Luke 19:41)

Christ, the Prince of Peace, calls his followers to seek peace in the world. (Living Faith, 8.5.3)

Among the things that prevent peace is fear. Trappist monk Thomas Merton said, “The root of war is fear.”² Fear builds walls of hostility. Fear excludes, hoards, destroys. Fear leads to prejudice, injustice and oppression. Fear obscures the humanity of others.

What then can break down the walls of fear? What are the things that make for 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 any more, when all peoples shall sit under their own vines and fig trees and “no one shall make them afraid” (Micah 4:3-4). When everyone is free and has enough to live, there is no need for fear, no need for war.

God calls us to work for justice for all peoples, especially the vulnerable

God wills that all people would live without fear, and with the security of being able to enjoy the fruit of their labour and the provision of their land. Security of land and labour are central to the prophetic call to justice (Isaiah 65:17-25). God responds to the needs of the most vulnerable. God lays on the people the responsibility to minister to the needs of hungry, homeless, naked and oppressed people (Isaiah 58:6-12). Jesus claims this mission for himself as he begins his ministry (Luke 4:18-19), and invites people to new life shaped by compassionate love, which casts out fear (I John 4:18).

God calls us to love our neighbours and to extend hospitality to strangers

Pope Paul VI said, "If you want peace, work for justice."³ This committee's report to the 118th General Assembly (1992) states that: "... peace can never be achieved without first achieving justice. If there is justice for the underprivileged, the poor, the oppressed, the dispossessed and the forgotten of God's people, then there will be peace. Otherwise, strife and wars will continue" (A&P 1992, p. 328). God calls us to do justice, not just for ourselves and those close to us, but for the stranger and for all nations (Micah 6:8). God claims the world and its people as creations of the divine hand (Psalm 24:1), and declares an unconditional and redemptive love for the entire world (John 3:16). God's servant bears witness to the order of compassionate justice established at the heart of creation (Isaiah 42:1-5). God's people fulfill God's purpose when they hunger and thirst for justice and when they make peace (Matthew 5:6, 9). The call to justice, found throughout the Hebrew Scriptures (Amos 5:24, Micah 6:8), is expressed in the commands to love our neighbours and to extend hospitality to strangers (Leviticus 19:18; Mark 12:31). The love of neighbour is deliberately extended even to foreigners (Luke 10:25-37) and the New Testament scriptures present hospitality to strangers as a particular virtue (Luke 14:7-14, Hebrews 13:1). "Justice [is standing] with our neighbours." (Living Faith 8.4.6).

The Psalmist invites God's people to pray for the peace of Jerusalem and to seek its good (Psalm 122:6 and 9). As we grieve the division and conflict, the fear and hostility between Israelis and Palestinians, we indeed pray for peace and seek the good of all the inhabitants of this holy land. "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). 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).

The Current Situation

In 1948, the then-newly-formed United Nations established the State of Israel. In 2008 Israel celebrates sixty years of statehood. By contrast, Palestinians mark sixty years since the *nakba* (catastrophe). *Nakba* is an Arabic term used by Palestinians in reference to the 1948 war. 2007 was the fortieth anniversary of the Six Days War in 1967 and the beginning of the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza.

If US President George W. Bush is successful in achieving his proclaimed goal of bringing an end to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict by the end of his presidency, 2008 will also be a landmark year. At the time of writing this report, however, there are few indications that his initiative will yield the results that many hope for: peace between Israelis and Palestinians, a secure Israel and a viable Palestinian state.

This conflict had its origin before most people alive today were born. It began in an era when Western powers were able to re-draw boundaries, create nations and set conditions for the lives of millions of people in the global South. The conflict gained new significance as a focus of the Cold War, with the Soviet Union supporting the Arab nations, and the United States supporting Israel, which was viewed by both sides as an outpost of the West in the heart of the Arab world. In the new century Israel is at the core of the resentment and anger felt by radical Islamic fundamentalists towards the West. Despite some apparent breakthroughs over the decades, such as the peace agreement between Israel and Egypt, initiatives like the Madrid talks and the Oslo Accord have been unsuccessful in resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

In 1967 the United Nations Security Council, "expressing its continuing concern with the grave situation in the Middle East [and] emphasizing the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war and the need to work for a just and lasting peace in which every State in the area can live in security," outlined basic principles on which a viable and just peace agreement might be based.⁴ These principles are outlined in UN Security Council Resolution 242 and were approved by the Security Council following the end of the 1967 conflict. Key elements of the resolution include:

1. 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.
2. The right of all states, including Israel and its Arab neighbours to live in peace with secure and recognized borders.
3. The right of the Palestinians to self-determination, including their right to establish their own sovereign state.⁵

Resolution 338 was passed by the Security Council during the 1973 conflict and called for an immediate ceasefire, the implementation of Security Council Resolution 242 and the commencement of negotiations to bring about a just and sustainable peace in the Middle East.

Withdrawing from the occupied territories means an end to Israeli settlements in the West Bank, which must be disposed of or dealt with within a negotiated settlement. An agreement must be found so that Jerusalem can be shared by the two peoples and three faiths for whom it is a holy city. The situation of the 1.5 million Palestinian refugees must be addressed in a way that fairly addresses the concerns of both parties.

Despite the fact that the outlines of a peace settlement are known, progress has been negligible. Israel has withdrawn from Gaza, but has maintained complete control over its borders and economic activities. Parts of the West Bank are under nominal Palestinian control, but the impact of the Israeli occupation is harsher now than at any time in the past few decades.

During the last few years of his term in office, US President Bill Clinton attempted to mediate a peace agreement. Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat rejected a settlement proposal. He knew (despite the world's press claiming that it was the best offer the Israelis were ever likely to make) that it was far too little to win acceptance from the Palestinians. Subsequently, Arafat was isolated by Israel and the United States. In the judgement of Israel, and the United States government, there was no Palestinian partner for peace.

Repeated attacks by Palestinian militants against Israel, including those by suicide bombers, resulted in a decision by Israel to construct a security wall. The wall has significantly reduced the number of attacks inside Israel. However, it has also attracted international criticism because in many places it is built on Palestinian territory, thereby annexing land. The wall also incorporates into Israel many Israeli settlements that are in occupied Palestinian territory.

The current wall is 360 kilometres long. It is made up of different sections either of concrete and/or of barbed wire. The concrete wall is 8 metres high (25 feet). There is a buffer zone between 30 and 100 metres the length of the wall. This buffer zone could include electric fences, trenches, sensors, cameras, security posts. If the wall is expanded it could extend for 700 kilometres.

Settlements continue to expand and access roads (for Israelis only) criss-cross the West Bank, carving it into ever-smaller enclaves. Checkpoints make Palestinian travel in the West Bank a nightmare of delays, frustration and resentment. This process of dismemberment has gone so far that US President George Bush has cautioned Israel that the territories for a future Palestinian state must be contiguous. Prospects for a two state solution grow ever-more distant.

Both sides have a small ideological minority whose vision of the future excludes the other. At the same time, however, the chief hope of most people on both sides is for a secure and peaceful life for themselves and their children. After six decades, the world hopes that this desire for a peaceful life could provide the basis for a settlement.

Sadly, the internal politics of both sides bedevil the search for a solution. Israel's coalition governments are dependent on small religious parties adamantly opposed to withdrawing from the area occupied in 1967. On the Palestinian side, the long-dominant Fatah party has been challenged by the Islamist Hamas movement, which has earned support among Palestinians because it has provided social services and has a reputation for honesty.

In 2006, Hamas won a narrow victory in an election acknowledged by Western observers as free and fair.⁶ Nevertheless, the United States and Israel, followed by Canada⁷ and the European Union, rejected the results, and said that they would not deal with Hamas until it recognized the state of Israel. Hamas does not recognize Israel's right to exist.

After months of difficult talks, Fatah and Hamas formed a unity government in the spring of 2007. This unity government collapsed when Hamas seized control of Gaza later that year.

Since then, Israel has blockaded Gaza, stifled economic activity and allowed the entry of only the bare minimum of food, medicine and fuel. By the end of 2007, 80% of the population of Gaza was subsisting on international food aid. In defiant response to Israeli pressure, militants in Gaza continue to fire Quassam rockets into nearby Israeli towns. These attacks are met with military reprisals by the Israelis. At the end of January 2008, Israel cut off all fuel deliveries to Gaza as collective punishment. Both the military attacks directed at civilians by Hamas and other militant groups in Gaza and Israel's blockade, which punishes innocent civilians, are arguably in contravention of the Geneva Convention.

Israel hopes to destroy support for Hamas by demonstrating to Palestinians that their lives are better if they support "moderates". To date, this pressure by Israel does not seem to be working. Uri Avery, with the Israeli peace movement, Gush Shalom, says "The brutal blockade is a war crime. And worse, it is a stupid blunder".⁸

Many urge that including Hamas in any peace negotiations is the only practical way forward. This is, however, at variance with the views of the Government of Israel, the US Administration and other governments, including the Canadian Government. In its view, Hamas is a terrorist organization linked with many other militant groups by their fundamentalist Islamic beliefs and their rejection of the role played by western governments, notably the United States government in the region. Hamas' refusal to recognize Israel and the responsibility it must bear for the attacks on Israel from Gaza do little to inspire trust by Israel.

US President Bush launched a peace conference on November 26, 2007 in Annapolis. Unfortunately this initiative is unlikely to succeed under the present circumstances. Palestinian President Abbas cannot deliver on security assurances given to Israel because he does not control Gaza. This being the case, Israel has little incentive to take the process seriously. Within a few weeks of the Annapolis meeting in November 2007, the Israeli cabinet approved further expansion of settlements, a decision that will not inspire trust by the Palestinians.

A new approach to peace with justice is desperately needed.

The Presbyterian Church in Canada on Peace between Israel and Palestine

For many years, The Presbyterian Church in Canada, in partnership with other Canadian churches and ecumenical organizations, has been working to promote a just peace between Israelis and Palestinians. Previous General Assemblies have commented on the conflict between Israel and Palestine.

The 109th General Assembly stated (A&P 1983, p. 374):

Believing that the beginning of the path to peace lies in a process of mutual recognition whereby the government of Israel recognizes that the long bereft Palestinian people have rights to territory and freedom,

while at the same time the Palestinians accept the legitimacy of the state of Israel and forswear violence and the threats of violence against it," the Assembly declares "its support for renewed and strengthened efforts to find peace in the Middle East and urge the Government of Canada to continue ... furthering the legitimate rights of the principal parties in this too long sustained conflict, that is to say, Israel's right to security and recognized boundaries, and full acceptance by its neighbours, and the Palestinians' right to a homeland within a clearly defined territory, the West Bank and Gaza.

The 116th General Assembly affirmed its support for the United Nations Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338. (A&P 1990, p. 395-400, 62-63) These resolutions are outlined earlier in this report (p. 275). More recently, the committee's report to the 128th General Assembly identified the following as critical components for a just resolution of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict (A&P 2002, p. 279-81, 16-17):

- Israelis must be convinced that the Palestinians and their Arab neighbours recognize the rights of Israel to exist within secure borders.
- Palestinians must be convinced that Israel accepts the establishment of a viable Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza. This means that Israel must end its occupation of these territories. No new settlements can be built, and existing settlements must be dismantled or otherwise disposed of according to the terms of a negotiated settlement.
- An international peacekeeping force, agreed to by both Israel and the Palestinian authority must oversee the Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories and provide security for both sides until a peace agreement can be fully implemented.
- An agreement must be negotiated so that Jerusalem can be shared by the two peoples and the three faiths for whom it is a holy city.
- Israel must commit itself to address the issue of the right of return for Palestinian refugees. In addition, the Palestinians, the Arab countries and the world community must demonstrate flexibility and willingness to address the needs of a refugee population which has been in limbo for three generations.

Partnerships between The Presbyterian Church in Canada and Organizations in Israel and Palestine

The Presbyterian Church in Canada supports partners in Israel and Palestine through Presbyterian World Service and Development (PWS&D) and International Ministries.

PWS&D supports four Middle East partner organizations: 1) Jerusalem Centre for Women, a Palestinian women's non-governmental organization, 2) Bat Shalom, an Israeli women's peace organization, 3) Sabeel, Ecumenical Liberation Theology Centre, and 4) Middle East Council of Churches – Department of Service for Palestinian Refugees (DSPR).

In 2007 International Ministries supported the Sabeel 2007 International Young Adults Conference and the Near East School of Theology. International Ministries works in collaboration with PWS&D, and ecumenically, in sending volunteers to participate in the World Council of Churches' Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme to Palestine and Israel (EAPPI).

In recent years, Presbyterians have visited the region to deepen their understanding of the conflict and to continue to encourage peace. In 2006 PWS&D's Africa and Middle East Program Co-ordinator, Bella Lam, visited Presbyterian partners in Israel, Gaza and the West Bank. The Rev. Mark Lewis, Moderator of the 128th General Assembly visited Israel and the Occupied Territories with The Rev. Dr. Richard Fee (then Director of PWS&D) in 2002.

Mr. Douglas Lackie, a member of Claude Church, Presbytery of Brampton, participated in the Ecumenical Accompaniment Program in Palestine (EAPPI), February to March, 2007. The mission of the EAPPI is to accompany Palestinians and Israelis in their non-violent actions and to carry out concerted advocacy efforts to end the occupation. Participants in the program monitor and report violations of human rights and international humanitarian law, support acts of non-violent resistance alongside local Christian and Muslim Palestinians and Israeli peace activists, offer protection through non-violent presence, engage in public policy advocacy and, in general, stand in solidarity with the churches and all those peacefully struggling against the occupation.

Recommendation No. 1 (adopted, p. 18)

That the Moderator of the 134th General Assembly extend greetings to our International Ministries and PWS&D partners in Israel and Palestine and assure them of our continuing prayers and concern.

Recommendation No. 2 (adopted, p. 18)

That the work of the Ecumenical Accompaniment Program in Palestine be re-affirmed and that presbyteries and congregations highlight this program as an opportunity for individuals wishing to deepen their understanding of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict.

KAIROS: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives

"Economic Advocacy Measures" – A Summary

The creation of KAIROS: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives in 2001 brought together ten national ecumenical coalitions. As part of its ongoing program, KAIROS maintains longstanding partnerships with Israeli and Palestinian organizations and carries out education in Canada and advocacy with the Canadian government about the issues causing the conflict.

The Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Centre, a KAIROS and PWS&D partner, issued a call in early 2005 for churches and other partners to consider a new non-violent strategy that would challenge the economic underpinnings of the conflict and occupation. Their website is www.sabeel.org.

Calling it “Morally Responsible Investment” (MRI), Sabeel stated that “a system of international support for the occupation exists as multinational corporations build franchises in the occupied territories, supply military goods, and provide material for the construction of the settlements and the separation wall.” Sabeel challenged churches to consider the moral implications of their investments relating to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and offered a number of options to consider.

KAIROS and its members are attempting to respond to this challenge. In November 2007, KAIROS’ Board of Directors approved a document entitled, *Economic Advocacy Measures: Options for KAIROS Members for the Promotion of Peace in Palestine and Israel*, which offers a range of options to enable the members of KAIROS to contribute, each out of their own faith tradition, to the common quest for a just peace in Israel and Palestine. The document includes recommendations for KAIROS actions that would support member initiatives. The document clearly and unequivocally states that KAIROS does not support sanctions against Israel or a boycott of products from Israel. This document can be accessed on KAIROS’ web site – www.kairoscanada.org.

The International Affairs Committee has considered this document. Several options outlined in the document as well as several developed by the committee are included in this report.

Past General Assemblies have adopted several reports on peace-making. The 1994 International Affairs Committee report on peace-making commends non-violent actions as a means of promoting peace (A&P 1994, p. 363). Economic advocacy is a non-violent action that may contribute to peaceful change. The following recommendations are consistent with policies and statements adopted by previous General Assemblies.

Promoting Peace through Informed Choices

KAIROS suggests several strategies: 1) provide learning opportunities for presbyterians about the Israeli/Palestinian issues; 2) promote fair trade products from the Occupied Palestinian Territories; and 3) identify Canadian companies doing business in Israel or the Occupied Palestinian Territories that are contributing directly or indirectly to violence, occupation or other human rights abuses.

Provide Learning Opportunities

Members of the denomination are invited to learn about the underlying issues that contribute to conflict and that do not make for peace. The committee can provide a reading list of resources to assist those wishing to learn more.

Recommendation No. 3 (defeated, p. 18)

That visits to the Holy Land sponsored by the Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Centre in Jerusalem be highlighted as an opportunity for reflection and study and to visit with partners in Israel and Palestine.

Promotion of Palestinian Fair Trade Products

The Presbyterian Church in Canada, KAIROS, and other KAIROS members have long promoted fair trade products such as coffee which encourage a just distribution of resources and provide an opportunity to learn about fair trade. Promoting Palestinian fair trade products is a means of showing economic solidarity with Palestinians and providing an opportunity to learn about the conflict and about the efforts to seek peace. The International Affairs Committee in consultation with other committees in the church will provide a list of fair trade products and some outlets where these products can be purchased.

Recommendation No. 4 (adopted, p. 18)

That presbyteries and congregations be encouraged to promote the purchase and distribution of products and services from the Occupied Palestinian Territories through organizations such as the Zatoun organization, Holy Land Handicraft Co-operative Society, 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 the occupied territories.

Economic Relationships with Settlements in Occupied Palestinian Territories

The denomination has consistently affirmed the right of Israel to exist within its 1967 borders and the right of the Palestinian people to establish an independent state on the territories of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank (including East Jerusalem). The church has called for Israel to reverse its settlement policy and freeze all settlement activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Under international law, an occupying state has specific responsibilities to the citizens of the occupied state, and limitations on the activities it can conduct in occupied territories.⁹

International Economic Policy Measures

Canada and Israel signed a free trade agreement that came into effect January 1, 1997. Israeli settlement enterprises in the West Bank and Gaza can export goods labelled “made/grown in Israel” to the Canadian market, thereby benefiting from the free trade agreement between Israel and Canada. Under international law, an occupying power is prohibited from engaging in economic activities in occupied territories.¹⁰

In February 2005, the European Union introduced an amendment to its European Union/Israel Association Agreement that compels Israel to identify goods coming from Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territories and instructed its member states to regard these products as invalid under the terms of the Agreement.

Palestinian producers have great difficulty in selling their products to any market. As part of its trade agreement with Israel, the European Union (EU) ensures that Palestinian producers have access to the EU market. In any new negotiations with Israel, Canada could similarly ensure that Palestinians also have access to Canadian markets.

Institutional Investor Measures

Institutional shareholders in religious and secular organizations are considering measures that contribute to a just peace in Israel and Palestine. Some of these measures include: 1) support to small scale Palestinian economic development projects, 2) assessing the impact of companies involved in providing military equipment that heightens the conflict and harms civilians, and 3) supporting measures which strengthen human rights. The committee is considering these issues and may bring recommendations to a future General Assembly.

Recommendation No. 5 (reworded and adopted, p. 18)

That the policy approved by the Board of Directors of KAIROS opposing a general boycott of Israeli products and of sanctions against Israel be affirmed.

Recommendation No. 6 (reworded and adopted, p. 18)

That the Government of Canada be encouraged to play a more active role in promoting peace between Israelis and Palestinians.

Conclusion

God calls us to pursue the things that make for peace. To experience peace, to feel secure and safe – these are yearnings common to all people.

Israelis and Palestinians yearn to say this is my land, this is my country. This report has attempted to outline some means by which we as Canadian Christians and Presbyterians may help this yearning become reality.

Many Presbyterians count as neighbours, friends and colleagues Jews and Palestinians, Christian and Muslim. They feel deeply connected to events in Israel and Palestine. There are Israeli and Palestinian organizations offering an alternative vision of how Palestinians and Israelis might live side by side as neighbours. These organizations are on the margins struggling to bring about change by peaceful measures. These are voices that need to be heard and supported.

Pray for the peace of Jerusalem:
“May those who love you prosper.
May there be peace inside your walls
and safety in your palaces.”
For the sake of my relatives and friends
I say to Jerusalem, “Peace be with you!”
For the sake of the house of the Lord our God
I pray for your prosperity.

(Psalm 122:6-9)

Recommendation No. 7 (adopted, p. 18)

That the above report be an interim response to Overture No. 6, 2007.

Endnotes

1. Paraphrase of passages from Isaiah 65:17-25 from the opening worship of the International Affairs Committee meeting, January 17-18, 2008.
2. Wallis, Jim, “Hearts and Minds: The things that make for peace”, *Sojourners Magazine*, July-August 2003.
3. Ibid.
4. United Nations Security Council Resolution 242 (1967).
5. All United Nations Security Council Resolutions, including Resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), can be accessed online at www.un.org/documents/scres.htm.
6. “In January 2006, the Carter Center deployed an 86-person election-monitoring delegation to the Palestinian territories to observe the Palestinian parliamentary elections, in partnership with the National Democratic Institute. The delegation of observers in the West Bank, Gaza, and Jerusalem was led by former US President Jimmy Carter, former Albanian President Rexhep Meidani, former Swedish Prime Minister Carl Bildt, and former Spanish Foreign Minister Ana Palacio. The delegation found the elections to be peaceful, competitive, and genuinely democratic. Islamist group Hamas captured 74 of 132 parliamentary seats, much better than had been predicted by most analysts.” The Carter Centre, “Israel and The Palestinian Territories – public reporting”, www.cartercenter.org, accessed February 26, 2008.
7. Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada, Press Release No. 30, March 29, 2006, “Joint Statement by Minister Mackay and Minister Verner on New Palestinian Government and Assistance to the Palestinian People”, www.international.gc.ca, accessed February 26, 2008.
8. “Worse Than a Crime”, *Occupation Magazine*, Gush-Shalom, January 26, 2008, www.gush-shalom.org.
9. United Nations Security Council Resolution 465 (1980), www.un.org/documents/scres.htm.
10. 4th Geneva Convention, The Hague Regulations, United Nations Security Council Resolution 465.

Bibliography

This is a brief list of suggested resources and it is by no means an exhaustive list.

Amnesty International: www.amnesty.org.

Bet Shalom: www.betshalom.org.

Economic Advocacy Measures: Options for KAIROS Members for the Promotion of Peace in Palestine Israel, KAIROS: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives, Toronto, January 7, 2008, www.kairoscanada.org.

Human Rights Watch: www.hrw.org.

International Committee of the Red Cross – Geneva Conventions: www.icrc.org.

Sabeel: Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center: (www.sabeel.org).

“Hearts and Minds: the things that make for peace” by Jim Wallis, *Sojourners Magazine*, July-August, 2003.

World Council of Churches: www.oikoumene.org.

THE RESPONSIBILITY TO PROTECT - CANADIAN CHURCHES AND THE RESPONSIBILITY TO PROTECT (A&P 2007, p. 284-89)

In 2007 The International Affairs Committee considered the Canadian Council of Churches’ document, *Canadian Churches and the Responsibility to Protect* (R2P), and the 133rd General Assembly (2007) approved the following recommendation:

“That presbyteries, sessions and synods be requested to discuss the document, *The Canadian Churches and the Responsibility to Protect* and submit their comments to the International Affairs Committee by December 31, 2007.” (A&P 2007, p. 289)

The International Affairs Committee takes this opportunity to thank courts of the church that discussed the document and submitted comments. Seven presbyteries, eighteen sessions and two individuals commented on the document. Overall there was a positive response to the document but also some concerns. The concerns raised by some respondents resonated with concerns of the International Affairs Committee.

Canadian Churches and the Responsibility to Protect is a document for members of the Canadian Council of Churches to consider. It is based on a World Council of Churches document approved by the World Council of Churches at its Assembly in Porto Alegre in 2006.

The church witnesses in many ways as it seeks to bring the good news. As disciples of Jesus Christ, the people of God are called to speak on issues that touch those on the margins and those who are vulnerable. Prayer, a public statement and concerted public action from the church can provide great comfort to those who face oppression, persecution or, at its most extreme, genocide.

The principles of R2P represent a humanitarian response to protect vulnerable citizens in extreme situations because the state either cannot or will not protect its citizens. One notable example of an extreme situation was the genocide in Rwanda in 1994. Tragically, the international community’s intervention was very limited – the valiant group of United Nations troops led by General (Ret.) Romeo Dallaire protected as many people as they could and they did so with little support from the United Nations.

The R2P is an emerging international norm, but as yet, has no standing in international law, though world leaders at the UN Summit in 2005 approved R2P in principle.

There are three components to R2P: 1) prevent; 2) protect; 3) rebuild. *Canadian Churches and the Responsibility to Protect* is consistent with the doctrine of R2P in emphasizing prevention and outlining ways this can be accomplished. When prevention is not effective in protecting vulnerable citizens, there are peaceful intervention options to turn to, including economic, trade and diplomatic measures or police action. Some of these peaceful options are readily available now to the international community. The International Affairs Committee, along with those who responded to the document, affirms the importance of prevention and rebuilding in the responsibility to protect, as well as the peaceful intervention options for protection. If these peaceful measures (which are preferable) fail, then the last resort is military intervention, a more complex and controversial option.

R2P doctrine outlines several principles that must be considered before the resort to military intervention. These principles include: right intention, last resort, proportional means, and reasonable prospects of success.

A question raised by some of the respondents, and with which members of the International Affairs Committee also struggled, is which institution decides if the last resort is warranted to protect vulnerable citizens in an extreme situation? The International Affairs Committee, in agreement with some of the respondents to the document, is uncomfortable with the Security Council of the United Nations being the final arbiter about resorting to military intervention. On the other hand, there are legitimate concerns about such a decision being made by the United Nations’ General Assembly.

If the decision is made by the Security Council, there is the risk that intervention could be misused, misapplied or abused. R2P should not become a tool of powerful states to dominate weaker states. On the other hand, if the decision to intervene is to rest with the United Nations’ General Assembly, does this body have the capacity to make rapid decisions that would be necessary if intervention is warranted.

Member denominations of the Canadian Council of Churches may not be of one mind when discerning whether military intervention, as a last resort, is justified ever or in specific cases. The Presbyterian Church in Canada would not be bound by a decision on intervention made by other members of the Canadian Council of Churches. The Presbyterian Church in Canada retains its own judgement and the right to support, oppose or withhold comment on a situation where military intervention is used.

The resort to military intervention is problematic and represents at some level, a failure of the international community; but if all peaceful measures have been attempted and have failed to protect vulnerable citizens in an extreme situation, then it is an option that may be warranted.

Recommendation No. 8 (adopted, p. 25)

That the document, *Canadian Churches and the Responsibility to Protect*, be endorsed while recognizing the questions addressed in the above report concerning the use of last resort (military intervention) and the potential for abuse of the R2P doctrine.

Bibliography

Fensham, Charles J., "The Responsibility to Protect: some ethical questions for the churches to consider. A Canadian Presbyterian Perspective", presented to roundtable hosted by Project Ploughshares, October 28, 2004, Ottawa.

Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect, www.globalcenter2p.org.

International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty, "The Responsibility to Protect: report of the international commission on intervention and state sovereignty", International Development Research Centre, Ottawa, December 2001, www.iciss.ca.

ADDITIONAL POINTS OF COMMUNICATION

The Future Focus of Committee Study

In 2007 the committee completed a three-year report series under the theme "Building the Common Good": 1) explored water as a sacred gift; 2) looked at global public health; and 3) international migration. The committee would like to report that once it has satisfactorily addressed Overture No. 6, 2007, its next three year thematic focus will be on "Caring for Creation". The committee intends to look at climate change as a part of this focus.

The committee would like to commend to the church, KAIROS' three-year campaign, *Re-energize...Time for a Carbon Sabbath*. This campaign began in the fall of 2007. It looks at the effects the fossil fuel industry has on people and the environment. Its objectives include encouraging the Government of Canada to: fulfill its obligations under the Kyoto Protocol; examine how domestic and international policies supporting the fossil fuel industry (such as subsidies and diplomatic interventions) contribute to ecological destruction, human rights abuses, and conflict and encourages the Government to create binding legislation holding Canadian energy companies operating overseas accountable for human rights and environmental abuses.

APPRECIATION

The members of the International Affairs Committee wish to express their gratitude for the time, energy and work of Mr. Ian McDonald and The Rev. Wendy Paterson who have completed their terms.

E.M. Iona MacLean
Convener

Stephen Allen
Secretary