

CONFLICT IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Social Policy Resolution

CA91.06.33



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

Adopted by the 1991 Churchwide Assembly.

Whereas

Whereas, recognizing that the armed conflict in the Persian Gulf has resulted in the mass destruction of basic human services and the widespread devastation of communities, the death of many thousands of soldiers and civilians, and hundreds of thousands of wounded, homeless, sick, and hungry; and

Whereas, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America has been deeply involved in the Middle East through the ministries of mission personnel, the Lutheran World Federation, and in partnership with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Middle East Council of Churches, and has frequently spoken up for issues of justice, freedom, and peace when acts of aggression and injustice have adversely affected all people living in the area; and

Whereas, the settlement of new Jewish immigrants in the Occupied Territories is viewed by Palestinians, Arabs, many Jews, and others as counterproductive to the peace process in the Middle East, and U.S. housing loan guarantees for Israel are being used to settle these new immigrants; and

Whereas, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, through its bishop, has asked its members to make peace in the Middle East a priority concern through prayer and fasting; therefore, be it

Resolved

RESOLVED, that the 1991 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America:

1. Express its gratitude to God that the fighting that forced and end to the occupation of Kuwait has ceased;
2. Express its grave concern about human suffering that continues among civilian populations in Iraq and Kuwait;
3. Urge congregations to be places of thoughtful reflection, healing, and reintegration for those who have been affected most acutely by war and express our support and gratitude to returning service people and veterans of earlier wars, their friends and families, health and human service workers, and all those who have witnessed for peace;
4. Encourage individuals and congregations to reach out to people in the Muslim and Jewish communities in North America, in order to foster inter-religious dialogue and mutual understanding so that we may build trust relationships;

5. Encourage individuals and congregations to give sacrificially to the ELCA World Hunger Appeal to assist the overwhelming numbers of victims of war and of natural disasters in the Middle East and elsewhere,
6. Request that the bishop of this church write the President of the U.S.A. and encourage members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to write to the President, their senators, and their members of Congress, asking them:
 - to reaffirm a continuing role for the United Nations in peacekeeping and in peacekeeping in the Persian Gulf and the Middle East;
 - to affirm initiatives with Israelis, Palestinians, and the Arab states to seek mutually satisfactory and just solutions to regional disputes;
 - to pursue diligently and persistently nonviolent resolutions to conflicts in the Middle East;
 - to relate U.S. foreign assistance to the willingness of those nations to negotiate with one another in good faith and to adhere to international law and human rights conventions; and
 - to oppose further housing loan guarantees to Israel unless and until the construction and expansion of settlements in the occupied territories is stopped.