

RESOLUTION ON JERUSALEM

CHURCH COUNCIL ACTION

CC.96.04.12



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

Passed by the 1996 Church Council.

Resolved

RESOLVED, that the Church Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America:

1. Acknowledges the actions of the ELCA 1993 Churchwide Assembly encouraging prayer and concern for a peace settlement in the Near East that guarantees Israel's right to exist and the establishment of a Palestinian state;
2. Deplores the lack of access for Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza to Jerusalem and urges that free access to Jerusalem be guaranteed for all peoples at all times; and
3. Calls upon the international community to respect and protect the unique historic stature of Jerusalem as being sacred to Jews, Christians, and Muslims.
4. Welcomes the "Memorandum of Their Beatitudes, the Patriarchs, and of the Heads of Christian Communities in Jerusalem," November 14, 1994, on "The Significance of Jerusalem for Christians" and endorses:
 - their affirmation that "the experience of history teaches us that in order for Jerusalem to be a city of peace, no longer lusted after from the outside, and thus a bone of contention between warring sides, it cannot belong exclusively to one people or to only one religion. Jerusalem should be open to all, shared by all";
 - their invitation to all parties concerned "to go beyond all exclusivist visions or actions, and without discrimination, to consider the religious and national aspirations of others, in order to give back to Jerusalem its true universal character and to make of the city a holy place of reconciliation for humankind";
 - their call for a "special judicial and political statute for Jerusalem that reflects the universal importance and significance of the city:
 - a. in order to satisfy the national aspirations of all its inhabitants, and, in order that Jews, Christians, and Muslims can be "at home" in Jerusalem and at peace with one another, representatives from the three monotheistic religions, in addition to local political powers, ought to be associated in the elaboration and application of such a special statute; and

- b. because of the universal significance of Jerusalem, the international community ought to be engaged in the stability and permanence of this statute. Jerusalem is too precious to be dependent solely on municipal or national political authorities, whoever they may be. Experience shows that an international guarantee is necessary";
- 5. Advocates the strengthening of joint efforts with the Lutheran World Federation, the World Council of Churches, the Vatican, and other Christian bodies to promote discussion on the future of Jerusalem and, thus, enable concerted Christian action on Jerusalem;
- 6. Calls upon the government of Israel and the Palestinian authority to protect and preserve internationally recognized human rights; and
- 7. Calls upon all members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to pray for the peace of Jerusalem, remembering the suffering and the hope of both Palestinians and Israelis and the challenges their leaders face as they work to move the peace process forward.