



World Week for Peace in Palestine and Israel – 2015

“God has broken down the dividing Walls”

(Ephesians 2:14)

#WallWillFall”

WWPPI 2015 e-resource on ‘The wall’

(Prepared by UK WWPPI Working Group UK)

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But we must be very clear that the people of Palestine have every right to struggle for their dignity and freedom. It is a struggle that has the support of many around the world.

No human-made problems are intractable when humans put their heads together with the earnest desire to overcome them. No peace is impossible when people are determined to achieve it.

Peace requires the people of Israel and Palestine to recognize the human being in themselves and each other; to understand their interdependence.

Missiles, bombs and crude invective are not part of the solution. There is no military solution.

(Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu)

About the World Week for Peace 2015

The Palestine Israel Ecumenical Forum (PIEF) of the World Council of Churches invites member churches, faith-based communities, and civil society organizations around the world to join together in 2015 for a week of advocacy and action in support of an end to the illegal occupation of Palestine and a just peace for all in Palestine and Israel. Congregations and individuals around the globe who share the hope of justice shall unite during the week to take peaceful actions, together, to create a common international public witness.

The theme of the week in 2015, to be observed during 20-26 September, is: “***God has broken down the dividing Walls***”. The hashtag for our campaigns is simply: **#WallWillFall**

This annual observance of a week of prayer, education, and advocacy calls participants to work for an end to the illegal occupation of Palestine, so that Palestinians and Israelis can finally live in peace. This year we focus our attention on the Separation Wall. It is now just over a decade since the International Court of Justice ruled that the construction of the wall is contrary to international law as it was constructed inside the green line/armistice line. As it is not on the Internationally-agreed green line in places it separates Palestinian from Palestinian.

When completed, the Wall and its associated regime will de facto annex some 46% of the West Bank, isolating communities into Bantustans, ghettos and “military zones”. 1.5 million Refugees will be encircled on only 12% of mandate Palestine. 12% of Palestinians in the West Bank will be living in the closed military zone of the Jordan Valley or surrounded on three or four sides by the Wall or isolated between it and the green line. They will face harsh living conditions - the loss of land, markets, movement and livelihoods, even possible expulsion. As people of faith, we must call on God, Creator of a universe without walls, Reconciler of every human division; to be present among us today and to send the Spirit among us as a mighty wind, powerful enough to blow down every dividing wall.

How to get involved

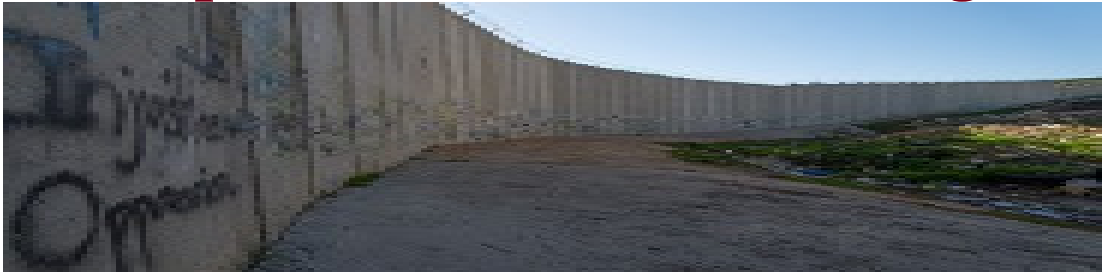
As participants in World Week for Peace in Palestine Israel, from 20 to 26 September 2015, churches around the world shall send a clear signal to policy-makers, community groups, and their own parishes about the urgent need for a peace settlement that ends the illegal occupation and secures the legitimate rights and future of both peoples.

During WWPI 2015 participants will organize events/activities around three main principles:

1. Praying with churches living under occupation, using a special prayer from Jerusalem and other worship resources prepared for the week.
2. Educating about actions that make for peace and about facts on the ground that do not create peace, especially issues related to prisoners.
3. Advocating with political leaders using ecumenical policies that promote peace with justice.

The action week's message is that now it's time for Palestinians and Israelis to share a just peace; it's time for freedom from occupation; it's time for equal rights; and it's time for the healing of wounded souls.

The Separation Wall- Facts and figures



Over ten years ago, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) issued an advisory opinion holding that the Separation Barrier, that runs inside the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, violates Israel's obligations under international law. While the ICJ has ordered that Israel cease construction of the Wall and dismantles the sections already built, the Israeli government has continued construction with impunity.

Below are some facts and figures on the Wall (Barrier) from the [United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs](#).

- The Barrier consists of concrete walls, fences, ditches, razor wire, groomed sand paths, an electronic monitoring system, patrol roads, and a buffer zone.
- The Barrier's total length (constructed and projected) is approximately 708 km, more than twice the length of the 1949 Armistice ('Green') Line, which separates Israel from the occupied West Bank.
- Approximately 62.1% of the Barrier is complete, a further 8% is under construction and 29.9% is planned but not yet constructed. (As of 2013)
- When completed, some 85%, of the route will run inside the West Bank, rather than along the Green Line, isolating some 9.4% of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem.
- 71 of the 150 Israeli settlements in the West Bank and over 85% of the total settler population are located on the 'Israeli' side of the Barrier's route.
- Palestinians with West Bank ID cards who are granted special permits can only enter East Jerusalem through four of the 14 Barrier checkpoints around the city.
- Around 7,500 Palestinians who reside in areas between the Green Line and the Barrier (Seam Zone), excluding East Jerusalem, require special permits to continue living in their own homes; another 23,000 will be isolated if the Barrier is completed as planned.
- There are about 150 Palestinian communities which have part of their land isolated by the Barrier and must obtain 'visitors' permits or perform 'prior coordination' to access this area.
- Access to agricultural land through the Barrier is channelled through 80 gates. The majority of these gates only open during the six weeks olive harvest season and usually only for a limited period during the day.
- During the 2011 olive harvest, about 42% of applications submitted for permits to access areas behind the Barrier were rejected citing 'security reasons' or lack of 'connection to the land.'
- Despite the presence of the Barrier, Israeli sources estimate that some 15,000 Palestinians without the required permits smuggle themselves from the West Bank to look for employment in Israel every day in 2011 (Israeli Government Special Committee).

- The UN Register of Damage (UNRoD) has to date collected over 26,000 claims for material damage caused by the construction of the Barrier in the northern West Bank.

According to [“Stop the Wall”](#), a grassroots movement uniting the struggle of the popular committees in the villages, the cost of the Wall is now estimated at \$2.1 billion. Each km costs approximately \$2 million. In addition, the Occupation has spent NIS 2 billion to construct alternative roads and tunnels.

The Wall has destroyed a large amount of Palestinian farmland and usurped water supplies, including the biggest aquifer in the West Bank. 780 Palestinian villages and communities with a total population of 266,442 will be isolated as follows:

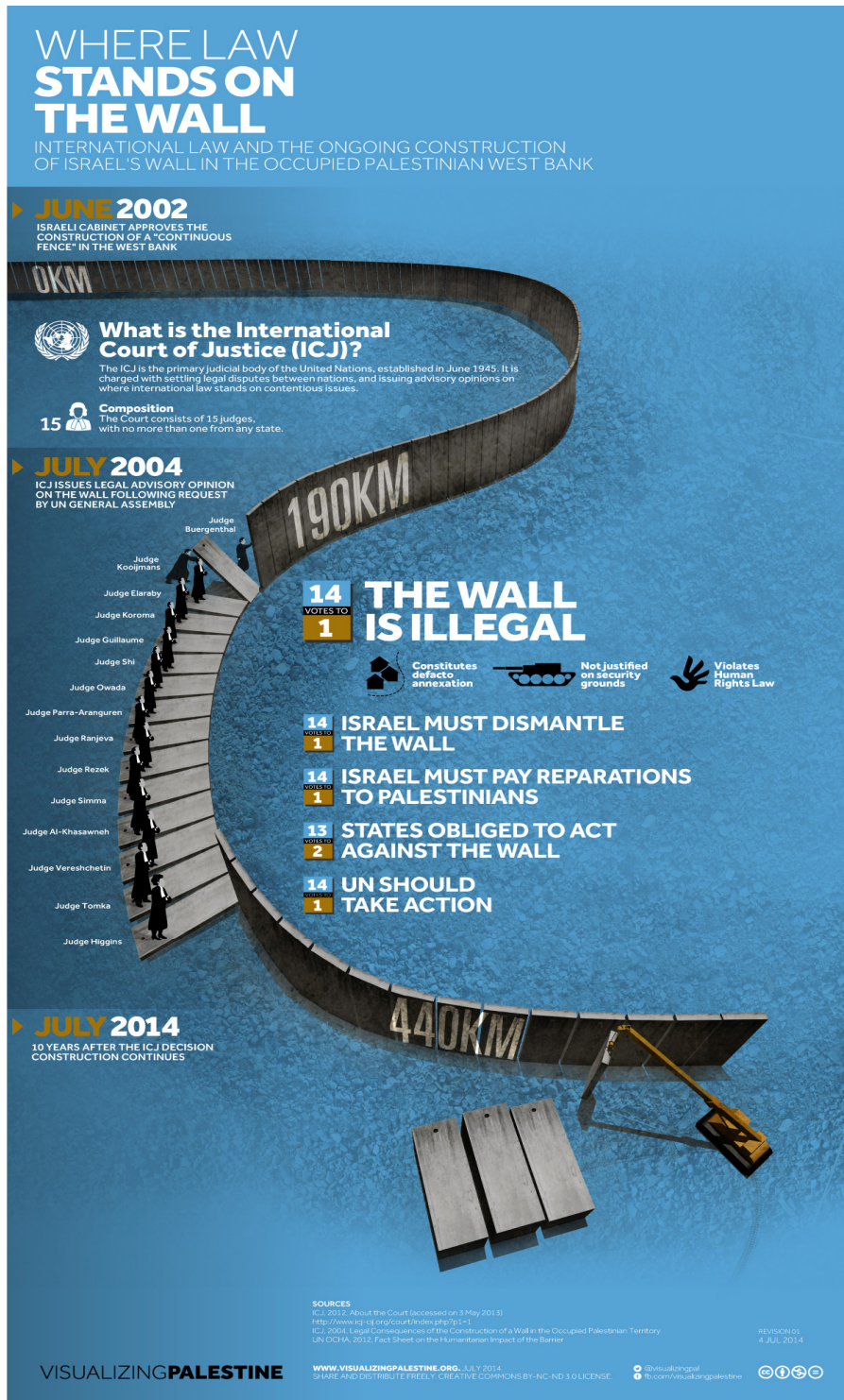
- Villages surrounded by Wall, settlements and settler roads - 257,265 Palestinians.
- Villages isolated between Wall and Green Line - 8,557 Palestinians
- Villages isolated and residents threatened with expulsion - 6,314 Palestinians.

Checkpoints and the Wall

- There are hundreds of checkpoints and other military obstructions such as roadblocks, trenches, and gates that restrict Palestinian movement. Additionally, there are 1,661 km (1,032 miles) of settler-only roads that connect settlements and settlement blocs. B'tselem points out that Israel has used many systems to restrict movement since the 1990s, such as “checkpoints and obstructions, the Separation Barrier, forbidden roads or roads with restrictions in Palestinian use, and the movement-permit regime.”
- The system of checkpoints, permits and barriers restricts the Palestinians’ freedom of movement within the occupied area, greatly impacting their access to employment, school, medical care, and other vital social services.
- The checkpoints and movement barriers violate Article 13 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states, “Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state.”
- B'Tselem, an Israeli human rights organization, [refers also](#) to checkpoints as a form of collective punishment, violating the rights of an entire population under the assumption that all Palestinians are a security threat.

This form of collective punishment is detrimental to the economy as a whole, severely limiting the flow of goods, including humanitarian aid. Movement and access restrictions such as the Separation Wall and checkpoints impact the Palestinian economy by creating greater unemployment, crippling private sector activity, causing a rapid decline in GDP, decreasing wages, and increasing poverty.

Where law stands on the wall



Source: <http://visualizingpalestine.org/visuals/icj-separation-wall-legality>

Resources/Education

Good news story: Cremisan Monastery wins in Israeli High Court: Court orders change of route

A Bethlehem-area monastery that was slated to be split in half by the barrier has won its appeal in the Israeli High Court, after a nine year struggle that involved multiple court cases and nonviolent direct action to save the monastery.



Cremisan monastery (image from cremisan.org)

For more sources see:

[Bethlehem: Israeli High Court halts building of Cremisan separation wall](#)

[Society of St. Yves \(Catholic Centre for Human Rights\)](#)

[Israeli Court rejects Cremisan Valley West Bank barrier](#)

[Israel's top court blocks extension of Separation Wall through Cremisan Valley \(The Guardian\)](#)

[Supreme Court nixes West Bank barrier route outside Jerusalem](#)

<http://www.saintyves.org/?MenuId=3&Lang=1&TemplateId=news&catId=1&full=1&id=66>

An Israeli rationale for the barrier:

<http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2012/al-monitor/israeli-security-fence-architect.html#>

Impact on Palestinians and Israelis:

<http://blog.eappi.org/tag/separation-barrier/>

Story of Bethlehem unwrapped - St James, Piccadilly event on the barrier:

<https://vimeo.com/100120040>

Pax Christi wall education resource:

<http://paxchristi.org.uk/peace-education/resources/workshop-resources/the-wall/>

Al-Walaja: the story of a shrinking village (animation made by EAs Julia Land and Ali Morgan, 2014)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zpb9xFjUNIM>

"The Wall has been broken down" - brochure and discussion guide about the conflict by Kairos Netherlands and Friends of Sabeel Netherlands

http://www.henriveldhuis.nl/LocalFiles/Israel_Palestijnen/Muur_afgebroken/Muur_afgebroken.htm
<http://www.sabeel.org/news.php?eventid=278>

Terrestrial Jerusalem – Jerusalem Atlas: this is an interactive map: on the right side of the map you can click on “Route of the Barrier” and then on the Legend you click on a layer to show its

content on the map. This organization is only focused on Jerusalem.

<http://t-j.org.il/JerusalemAtlas.aspx>

Btselem—has a lot of resources including videos. http://www.btselem.org/topic/separation_barrier

UNOCHA Fact Sheet – “The Humanitarian Impact of the Barrier July 2013”

http://www.ochaopt.org/documents/ocha_opt_barrier_factsheet_july_2013_english.pdf

UMOCHA Barrier Maps

<http://www.ochaopt.org/mapstopic.aspx?id=108&page=1>

West Bank Access Restrictions Map – Sept 2014

http://www.ochaopt.org/documents/westbank_2014_final.pdf

Description of the Wall Museum and photos of the posters

http://www.aeicenter.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=152:wall-museum&catid=42:front-page&Itemid=209

The Wall Museum – a book

http://www.aeicenter.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=122&Itemid=168

Christmas DVD with songs, prayers, and story posters from the wall

http://www.aeicenter.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=123&Itemid=169

Film about the wall from the "Christ at the Checkpoint" Conference in 2012

<http://vimeo.com/36911218>

A picture and text features about the separation wall 10 years after its beginning

<http://972mag.com/the-wall-project/>

Picture series: 10 years since the wall declared illegal (by a former MCC staff)

<http://alternativenews.org/archive/index.php/politics/palestinian-society/8310-photos-10-years-since-wall-declared-illegal>

Picture series: Christmas Prayer service against the wall (by a former MCC staff)

<http://www.faithstreet.com/onfaith/2014/12/11/photos-activists-hold-mass-at-the-border-blocking-bethlehem/35384>

Infographic about the wall from "Visualizing Palestine"

<http://visualizingpalestine.org/visuals/icj-separation-wall-legality>

Also Al Haq _ interesting interactive maps

(<http://alhaq.mits.ps/index.php/interactive-map/interactive-map-annexation-wall>)

AL Haq articles

(<http://www.alhaq.org/advocacy/topics/wall-and-jerusalem>)

Some poems

Walls

I will weep and you will weep
But will you weep with me?
Will you stand with those oppressed
Who share our humanity?
Do you look with unseeing eyes
At what man has done to man
Or will you stop and stand and stare
And watch and not condemn?

I will talk and you will talk
But will you talk with me?
Will you listen to those oppressed
Who share our humanity?
Do you listen with hearing ears
To mans' grief and pain?
Or do you just talk of peace and love
And that God should reign?

I will pray and you will pray
But will you pray with me
For the end of occupation
That all people may be free?
That those who live in dread and fear
And share our humanity
Might live and love and laugh, like us
And share our liberty

Rachel Nassif

30th January 2009

(Written on seeing the Separation Barrier at Bethlehem for the first time)

Two Bags

Either side we stand
You and I
I with my bag
You with yours
I wonder who you are
What you think

And what you do
What makes you laugh
What makes you cry
Do you have hopes and dreams
The same as I

Has life been kind to you?
Do you have rows with your husband

Just like me?
Do your sons fight
Your daughters challenge
Are your parents old like mine,
Infirm like mine,
Need help like mine....?

I think about you sometimes
Across the wall
What you do?
Who you are?
Where you go?

I know our lives don't meet
Don't touch,
Don't connect

Yet, I am curious about you...
What you are like
I want to know you...
And
Wonder
If you want to
Know me....

I pause....

Why are we separated?
Are you a danger to me?
To my children?
Is this wall enough
To separate us, to hide behind?
Can you break through?
Climb over, find a way to find me?
is that what you want?
Or do you just want me out of sight...?

I don't know any more
The reality of this wall
When it began and why...
Perhaps you are safe
Perhaps I am safe
I have no reference
No starting point
There is no alpha, no omega
In this complexity of division
That lies between us...

And so I stand
With my bag
And continue my way
And you with yours...

Rev. Sister Phaedra Pamphilon-Green CA

Just breathing

Dark and cold before dawn, where men
who rose much earlier, are waiting to go to work,
packed into long narrow pens that run
the length of the ramp, along that concrete wall,
scrawled with scorn and defiance: though in the dark
no-one can see the writing on the wall;
nor can you see the faces of these men
huddled together, leaning on the wire fence
which bulges with the weight of humanity
barely contained; all you can see is – here
a hand grasping a bar – there
breath puffed out in the chill air;
or spidering forms against the sky, trying to climb
into a cage already crammed, through razor wire;
weary with standing still for more than an hour,
a score of men are sitting down on the ground
by common consent, shoulder to shoulder,
their upturned faces catching what light there is;
here someone coughs... over there
a man lights a cigarette and passes it round;
no-one is talking – what is there to say?
Yet, filling the dark, a shapeless sound like grieving:
seven hundred men waiting for someone to open a gate,
hoping for a way out, and just breathing.

*Jan Sutch Pickard (From **Walking through Advent** – (Wild Goose Publications)*

See www.ionabooks.com for more such poems and prayers

Two prayers

1. God-with-us, you sit down in our midst.
Nothing can separate us from your love – not towering concrete walls
or the deep darkness between searchlights;
not distance from friends or despair in our hearts
that the world's wrongs cannot be changed.
You are with our brothers crowded at the checkpoint,
with our sisters witnessing for peace: you sit down in our midst.
Born into poverty to displaced people living under occupation,
you shared our human lives, and we know
that your love can never be contained by the walls of separation.
You sit down in our midst, God-with-us. Amen

Jan Sutch Pickard

-
2. God of justice and compassion
while history and high walls, prejudice and fear,
barbed wire and locked doors,
divide those who live in the land that we call Holy,
we pray that we may not divide them in our hearts,
for we are all your children.

Jan Sutch Pickard: Prayer from service for Week for Peace for Palestine and Israel

Jerusalem Prayer

*“We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair.”
(2 Corinthians 4.8)*

We pray to our Heavenly Father in the name of Jesus Christ, our Redeemer and Rescuer.

You, in your mighty works, O God, have sanctified this land and have made it holy. Through the, death and resurrection of Jesus, this land has been set apart with a special calling. The continuing political conflict that scars this land and harms all its peoples is a scandal against Your will.

We lament the many forms of violence afflicting people in this land. We grieve that the barrier of separation has split Palestinian communities from one another and sharpened the divide between Palestinian and Israeli societies. This barrier has contributed nothing to justice, and less to peace.

We pray for comfort, for the strength to not lose heart. We pray that the wall and all similar walls will fall.. We believe that the Wall is a “momentary affliction ... for what can be seen is temporary, but what cannot be seen is eternal” (2 Corinthians 4.16–18). We pray for reconciliation and for peace, as we commit to working for justice for all persons who live in this Holy Land.

As we observe this week with our sisters and brothers around the world, we ask for the strong comfort of the Holy Spirit for all who seek justice in this land. Inspire us to not be content with mere words, but to engage in acts of costly solidarity. Inspire us to be instruments of your peace, the workers of your will.

“For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us” (Ephesians 2.14)

Amen

Liturgy

Sunday 20 September 2015



Theme: "God has broken down the dividing walls"

Ephesians 2.14

#WallWillFall

Foreword

The liturgy of this year for the World Week of Peace in Palestine and Israel is meant to be simple and short. It aims to be flexible, for use in different contexts, whether a Sunday morning communion service or a special World Week of Peace event. Feel free to adapt this framework for your particular community.

The theme for this Week (20 – 27 September of 2015) is the scandalous separation wall that Israel has built across occupied Palestinian territories. The Separation wall is the longest and highest wall in the world. It divides people, families, and communities, humiliates the Palestinians, and builds a culture of fear and separation.

You are invited to reflect on the meaning of this wall. You are also invited to reflect on the walls in your neighborhoods and communities. Our hope is that this liturgy would inspire us to break down walls of prejudice, fear and violence in our own communities, and would activate communities across the world to speak out against the scandalous wall separating Israel and Palestine. “For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us.” (Ephesians 2:14)

- Liturgy Team: Felipe Buttelli, Nora Carmi, Carrie Smith -

Welcome

L: We gather as people of God in this place to celebrate life, to thank God for God's company in our daily life, and to pray for God's people. We turn our minds and hearts to all the walls that separate people, break communion, and tear apart lives and communities. Some walls are made of stone. Some are constructed of anti-immigration laws, prejudice, economic injustice, or fear. We reflect especially today on the scandalous wall separating the Palestinian people from family, friends, farmland, and neighbors. Let us open our minds and hearts to hear God's call to be peacemakers, advocates, and ministers of reconciliation. Let us express our hope and faith in the God of justice who promises to overcome all the iniquity and injustice. Let us express our hope and commitment to the fall of the Israeli Wall of iniquity and injustice.

Opening Prayer

C: Holy God, Creator of a universe without walls, Reconciler of every human division, we invite your presence among us today. Send your Spirit among us as a mighty wind, powerful enough to blow down every dividing wall. Amen.

Song (To be chosen by the congregation)

Prayer of Confession

(You may sing "Brazilian Kyrie" after the prayer of confession, or you may use a spoken or sung response of your choice.)

L: Let us confess our brokenness and division in the presence of God and of one another.

Silence for reflection.

C: God of mercy, we, your people, have divided your one world. We do not speak out when we see new walls constructed. We seek safety behind walls of egoism, fear, and prejudice. In the name of security, we have sacrificed day-to-day life together and have lost the opportunity to see you in the face of the other. In our complacency, we have allowed walls to stand which threaten our survival as one, living community. We call upon your mercy and your forgiving love. Lead us in a way that we may construct bridges! Change our hearts and minds so that we come closer to each other as different peoples, different faiths, different cultures, different nationalities, but as one family, one humanity. We confess that the Israeli Wall still stands because we are failing in struggling for justice. We pray for your forgiveness and mercy, so that we can be transformed entirely and become resilient in this struggle to break down the Israeli Wall and all other walls that we face and do not challenge. Amen.

Kyrie Eleison (Brazilian Kyrie)

L: We do not ask only for ourselves. We know that you are the God of the whole creation so we pray for your mercy also for the whole creation, singing

C: "For the Trouble and the Suffering of this world":

For the troubles and the sufferings of the world

Composer: Rudolfo Neto, Brazil

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=llGhNbCe0dM>

God we call upon your mercy
The whole creation is laboring in pain
Lend an ear to the rising cry for help
From oppressed and hopeless people
Come hasten your salvation, healing love
We pray for peace,

The blessed peace that comes from making justice
To cover and embrace us, have mercy, Lord!
We pray for power

The power that will sustain your people's witness
Until your kingdom come, Kyrie Eleison!

WORD

L: The Word of God is wisdom for our struggles to transform instruments of death into instruments of life. Let us read the words of the prophet Isaiah who denounced the iniquity of the people and the judgment of God.

A reading from Isaiah 2. 1-4

First reader:

² The word that Isaiah son of Amos saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.

² In days to come

the mountain of the LORD's house
shall be established as the highest of the mountains,
and shall be raised above the hills;
all the nations shall stream to it.

³ Many peoples shall come and say,
"Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD,
to the house of the God of Jacob;
that he may teach us his ways
and that we may walk in his paths."

For out of Zion shall go forth instruction,
and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

⁴ He shall judge between the nations,
and shall arbitrate for many peoples;
they shall beat their swords into plowshares,
and their spears into pruning hooks;
nation shall not lift up sword against nation,
neither shall they learn war any more.

L: Let us sing and praise to the God of the victory who listens to our hearts and fulfill all God's promises:

L: The apostle Paul reminds us that our God is a God of peace and reconciliation. It is impossible to live in peace and to be reconciled with brothers and sisters when there is a monumental Wall between us. For this reason, to have peace and reconciliation all the walls have to fall. Let us read the word of Paul, reminding that Christ breaks down the dividing Walls.

A reading from Ephesians 2. 14-22

Second reader:

¹⁴For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us. ¹⁵He has abolished the law with its commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new humanity in place of the two, thus making peace, ¹⁶and might reconcile both groups to God in one body through the cross, thus putting to death that hostility through it. ¹⁷So he came and proclaimed peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near; ¹⁸for through him both of us have access in one Spirit to the Father. ¹⁹So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God, ²⁰built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone. ²¹In him the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; ²²in whom you also are built together spiritually into a dwelling place for God.

“The Wall”

(A prayer by Patriarch Emeritus Michel Sabbah - inspired by Ephesians 2: 14-18)

O Lord, you came to us to demolish barriers between people,
To establish peace and to unite hearts
And to create a new “human being” who does not know enmity but only love
Look at us all, we who live on this land that you, yourself, sanctified
You made it a land of encounter and reconciliation with all human beings.

Look at us in your sacred land,
We still live separated by walls
Though we believe that you love us all, with the same love for all

Have mercy upon us, O Lord, and hear our prayers (Ps. 4:1)

O God , the walls still exist and they are high
Not for protection but for isolation and separation, ignorance, discrimination and killing
The walls are silent but they create strife and drive love away
O lord, your children are fighting
Change their hearts,
Change the expenses of building walls and make these expenses for building fraternity and love among your children

Have mercy upon us, O Lord, and hear our prayers

They say: they are afraid
They say: They are satisfied and content
They say: They do not want to know anything about what lies on the other side of the wall
And we say: we are besieged and our life is in a big prison
There is anxiety in our hearts and confusion in our speech
We are all your children born to love and be loved

Have mercy on us, O Lord, and hear our prayers

We believe that your hour, the time for peace and justice will come
And we are patient
But fill our patience with your love and grant us the strength to do what you want us to

O Lord, fill our hearts with your divine security, and your power
So that fear will disappear and souls will meet in you
And walls will fall down and become bridges that join your children together

Have mercy on us, O Lord, and hear our prayers

O God, you have provided us with everything to love
The human being created in your image is capable of love
As you yourself are love

The human being is capable of peace and justice
As you, yourself, are peace and justice
But the human being refuses to be human, capable of love, peace and justice.
This obstinate refusal, you alone can change.

As you have triumphed over non-existence and death; you created the human beings and on
the Cross you recreated him/her
O Lord, re-instill his/her love again.

Have mercy on us, O Lord, and hear our prayers

Heal us of our paralysis, our inability for love, peace and justice
You are our Creator and Father, you are the “lover of all human beings” (Byzantine hymn)
despite all their sins
O God, on this land there is a major sin: One people is oppressing another people

Your children are oppressing your children.
Grant us that we may all see you
So that each one of us may see himself/herself as you created us
And see the other you created in your image able to love like you love us,
And see that both are your same image, your same love as you are love
And see ourselves as builders of justice and peace with the power of your love

Until when, O Lord,
Look down from the highest and see
Have mercy, O Lord, have mercy.

Amen

Song (To be chosen by the congregation)

Listening: Testimonies from the Wall

L: The God that we call to stay among us is a God who showed Godself in history. Since the creation of the world God has been present in the world, showing His/Her face in different places and times. In Jesus Christ we saw plenty of what God wants to show us. We have encountered a God who speaks through weakness, through the poor, and through vulnerabilities. “For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.” (1 Cor 1:18) We have learned that God comes closer to us through the suffering people of the world. For this reason we listen today to the people of God experiencing daily suffering because of the Israeli Separation Wall. We listen to understand the suffering of our sisters and brothers. We listen to hear God’s voice. Now, let us open our hearts and minds as the people of Palestine speak to us today:

Testimony 1

(Different readers may be chosen for each testimony)

“After the Wall around Rachel’s Tomb was build, I felt terrible. Nobody was walking here, only the cats and dogs. The Wall creates a feeling... the feeling that it surrounds you; that you are not permitted to move. Every time, every day you see the Wall. When I look outside through the window to see the sunrise or the sunset the Wall is in front of me. When I go to the Wall I feel that something closes in on my heart, as if the Wall is on my heart... When I see the Wall I also feel ashamed of myself, because it is created by human beings.”

Melvina, Bethlehem

Silence for reflection

Let us pray:

God of compassion, we are at fault for building walls of injustice. We cannot hide behind excuses such as security reasons or other assumptions that justify acts of violation and separation. We recognize the suffering that we cause to other people when we build up Walls. The Israeli Wall creates pain and suffering to a people, to women, to children, to men and to the youth. We ask you for your courage and your inspiration. Blow your Spirit upon us so that we can take part in the struggle against the wall and that the Israeli Wall might fall! Amen.

Testimony 2:

“All my life was in Jerusalem! I was there daily: I worked there at a school as a volunteer and all my friends live there. I used to belong to the Anglican Church in Jerusalem and was volunteer there. I arranged the flowers and was active with the other women. I rented a flat but I was not allowed to stay because I do not have a Jerusalem ID card. Now I cannot go to Jerusalem; the Wall separates me from my church, from my life. We are imprisoned here in Bethlehem. All my relationships with Jerusalem are dead. I am a dying woman.”

Antoinette, Bethlehem.

Silence for reflection

Let us pray:

God of compassion, we pray for the Palestinian people who are cut off from friends, family, and community because of the wall. We pray for those who cannot attend family celebrations, access medical care, or visit holy sites. We pray for those, like Antoinette, who feel hopeless living in the shadow of the wall. Awaken us from sleep and stir up our hearts, that we would no longer accept such living conditions for our sisters and brothers in Palestine. Strengthen our voices to challenge this “wall of security” which has become a prison wall. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Song (To be chosen by the congregation)**Testimony 3**

“The wall affected our economic situation in a terrible manner. As we say in Arabic, ‘We lost below zero’. My brother and his wife had a drugstore and a store in Bethlehem for different kinds of products. They had 23 people working for them; 23 families lived from their business. But because the stores are close to the Wall, and people do not like to come there, there are no employees anymore.”

Melvina, Bethlehem.

Silence for reflection**Let us pray:**

God of compassion, we pray for the shopkeepers whose businesses suffer because of the wall. We pray for the families who struggle to pay rent and school fees and face an uncertain future. You call us from all the corners of the world to hear your word, to celebrate your memory, and to be transformed. Transform us to be ministers of reconciliation. Teach us to construct bridges instead of walls. Remind us also that we may only be reconciled and live in peace when the Wall falls. Lead us to struggle with hope for a better future for all your people and creation with no walls and no divisions. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Testimony 4

“I am a town councilor: I work hard inside my house: cooking, doing my daily tasks at home, taking care of my husband and children while at the same time working to earn a living. I also try to volunteer and participate in public activities. My friends and family strengthen my sumud (steadfastness) and encourage me, as a woman, to work in the fields of peace building, Christian-Muslim living together, and inter-religious and intercultural communication skills.”

Fayza, From Doha, South of Bethlehem.

Silence for reflection**Let us pray:**

God of compassion, we pray for those who use art and music to bring hope and life in the shadow of the wall. We pray for teachers, musicians, artists, and students. Open our hearts to hear the voices of our sisters and brothers in Palestine, whose songs of hope and resistance will not be silenced by the wall. Help us imagine a future for Israel and Palestine in which all voices are heard. Inspire us to join in singing a song of peace, justice, and liberation for all people. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Testimony 5

“The Wall next to my house divides people. Music brings people together. I am a music teacher, and I know that music is a language which all people can enjoy. Music gives my pupils joy and life. Among my pupils have been my niece and nephew. My nephew has become an excellent pianist. Once I made music for a national song when I taught at a school in Beit Sahour. The occupation forbade the song.... Imagine!”

Rana, Beit Jala

Silence for reflection

Let us pray:

God of compassion, we give thanks for the strength of the Palestinian people. We pray for the women and men who have sustained their families and communities with steadfastness and courage. We pray for those who are bravely doing interfaith, intercultural, and peace-building work to break down the wall. Lead us and guide us along the same path, trusting not in bulldozers, guns, or tanks, but only in your steadfast love for all people. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Testimony 6

“The Wall is like a sign to say: ‘Go away from here’. It is intimidating. If you go from the checkpoint toward Gilo you can see all the land that was taken for its construction, and the land what we can no longer access. Some of the land had belonged to my grandparents. Despite everything, we must continue to resist. To continue with our daily life is a form of resistance. One example of resistance is coming every day to the Sumud Story House. The Israelis want to stop our lives by pushing us out. We can resist with any sign of life, and any activity helps, because activities make people want to stay here. You can organize a concert or another cultural activity. These are ways that we can reach the world and the world can reach us.”

Ghada, Bethlehem.

Silence for reflection

Let us pray:

Reconciling God, you call us to resist everything which draws us from you. You call us to resist the powers and principalities which attempt to occupy our lives and our world. We pray for the Palestinian people who resist the wall, a symbol of death, with lives of courage, creativity, and compassion. Lord, open our eyes to what we, the international community, can do to resist and challenge the scandal of the wall. Lord, make us instruments of your peace. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Song (To be chosen by the congregation)

ACTION

L: The Walls that surround us are constructed by humanity. There are many reasons given for building these walls: for privacy, for security, for convenience, for defining what is “mine” and what is “theirs.” The Israeli Wall was constructed allegedly as a mean of “self-defense”. But in practical terms what it did was destroy Palestinian lives and communities. It was built in Palestinian territory, stealing land and natural resources from farmers. It divided people from family and friends, excluding people from the possibility of visiting other parts of the country they used to live in. It imposes heavy constraints on daily life and humiliates Palestinians who must cross it for work, school, or medical assistance. This is not a Palestinian problem or an Israeli problem—this is a world problem. What have we done, O God? We, the international community, are responsible for our silence and lack of action when we saw the result of this Wall for the Palestinian people. Lord, have mercy on us.

Action

You are invited to create a wall in your worship space (i.e. a paper banner, a wall of cardboard bricks, or another artistic interpretation). Worshippers can be given paper in which to write their messages of peace, hope, and freedom for the Palestinian people. These can take the form of prayers, of poetry, of art, or of a personal letter. After the worship service (or after the World Week for Peace) these messages can be mailed to sisters and brothers in Palestine. See the end of this liturgy for addresses and suggestions.

Special music can be played/performed during this portion of the liturgy.

SENDING

Closing Prayer

Reconciling God, we have heard the voices of your people in Palestine. We have listened to your voice from behind the wall. Now that we have heard, strengthen us to act boldly in solidarity with the Palestinian people in the struggle to bring down the wall. Help us to bear a united testimony to the world. Transform us from silent witnesses into bold proclaimers of peace, justice, equality, and human rights. We pray in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ, who through the cross and resurrection reconciled all of creation with you, and who by the power of the Holy Spirit unites us as one beloved community. And as one people of God we unite hands, hearts and voices praying the Lord’s Prayer:

“Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
¹⁰ your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
¹¹ Give us today our daily bread.
¹² And forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.

¹³ And lead us not into temptation,^[a]
but deliver us from the evil one.^[b]
["For thine is the kingdom, and the power,
and the glory, for ever and ever.]

Amen"

Mt. 6. 9b-13

Benediction

(Whoever is prepared to do so may choose to stand and receive God's blessing)

Blessed are you, who trust
In the Lord and put your hope in
God.

You are like a tree planted
by the water, that extends its roots
to the river.

When heat comes, you do not fear,
your leaves remain green.

You do not grieve the year of
drought nor cease to bear fruit.

Blessed / as you are.

Go and struggle with the power of the Spirit

To break down all the walls!

Go in the peace of the Lord.

In the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit,

Amen.

(Adapted from Jr 17.7-8)

Closing song (To be chosen by the congregation)

Resources

Wall Testimonies:

http://www.aeicenter.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=193

(The liturgy team encourages users to also search for alternative testimonies if they so wish. Most of the testimonies in this liturgy were chosen from the Bethlehem area. However, the wall extends far beyond Bethlehem and affects a much larger section of families, and communities)

Action

The Palestine Israel Ecumenical Forum (PIEF) of the World Council of Churches invites member churches, faith-based communities, human rights groups, social movements, unions, and other civil society organizations around the world to join together in 2015 for a week of advocacy and action in support of an end to the illegal occupation of Palestine and a just peace for all in Palestine and Israel. Congregations and individuals around the globe who share the hope of justice shall unite during the week to take peaceful actions, together, to create a common international public witness.

The theme of the week in 2014, to be observed during 21-27 September, is: **“God has broken down the dividing walls”**

How to get involved

As participants in World Week for Peace in Palestine Israel, from 20 to 26th September 2015, churches around the world shall send a clear signal to policy-makers, community groups, and their own parishes about the urgent need for a peace settlement that ends the illegal occupation and secures the legitimate rights and future of both peoples.

Globally, within regions, and in many countries around the world, planning has begun for World Week for Peace 2015, during which participants will organize and join in events and activities around the following three principles:

1. **Praying with churches** living under occupation, using a special prayer from Jerusalem and other worship resources prepared for the week.
2. **Educating about actions** that make for peace and about facts on the ground that do not create peace, especially issues related to prisoners.
3. **Advocating with political leaders** using ecumenical policies that promote peace with justice.

Why?

This annual observance of a week of prayer, education, and advocacy calls participants to work for an end to the illegal occupation of Palestine, so that Palestinians and Israelis can finally live in peace. It has been 66 years since the creation of the State of Israel. This has not led to the creation of an independent Palestinian state but has only deepened the tragedy of the Palestinian people. It is now 47 years since the occupation of East Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza overwhelmed the peaceful vision of one land, two peoples.

The action week's message is that now:

- It's time for Palestinians and Israelis to share a just peace.
- It's time for freedom from occupation.
- It's time for equal rights.
- It's time for the healing of wounded souls.

Creative options

There are many creative options that can be used in the observance of the Week. Each group responds in ways most suited to their situation. The Palestine Israel Ecumenical Forum will provide updates

prior to the Week of events that are being planned in different locations. This will, hopefully, serve as a reference point for all who observe the week. The important thing to bear in mind is that the three components of prayer, education, and advocacy are somehow included.

Downloadable campaign postcard from the UK

A good example of how we could use creative methods to mobilize people in large numbers comes to us from the **UK Working Group** which has plans to make available an **A6 size JPG downloadable postcard** on which one can write a message of reconciliation and call for justice. This may then be sent to your elected representative. The picture is a blank portion of the wall (see picture below) on which the message can be written. The UK Working Group will make this available to us in a few weeks from now and it will be uploaded on the WWPPI website. <https://pief.oikoumene.org/en/world-week-for-peace>



Social networking

In the next two weeks, the WWPPI website will also offer ideas on how we can join social networking sites to enlarge and strengthen campaigns wherever there is a group that want to observe the week. Watch out for announcements and new ideas.

You are also encouraged to capture and share a picture or video, then post to **Instagram**. It's easy but a powerful medium. You can even share to Facebook, Twitter, and more. It not only spreads the message far and wide; it's free.

PIEF POST

PIEF will send out periodic updates in the run-up to the World Week for Peace in Palestine Israel through PIEF POST. If you are not already on the mailing list, please write to Ranjan.solomon@wcc-coe.org

