World Student Christian Federation (WSCF)

UNIVERSAL DAY OF PRAYER FOR STUDENTS 2019

"Young people building peace and overcoming violence"
Table of Content

1. Introduction
2. About WSCF the Peace-Building Program
3. Order of Liturgy
4. Annexes (Materials for group reflections)
   - WSCF Video on Peace building in the Middle East
   - WSCF Policy Paper on Palestine and Colombia
   - Prayer Points
   - Songs
Introduction

Every year individuals, churches and communities around the world unite to lift up students in prayer on Student Sunday, also known as the Universal Day of Prayer for Students (UDPS).

Student Sunday is coordinated by the World Student Christian Federation (WSCF), and has been celebrated since 1898, making it one of the oldest ecumenical days of prayer. It serves as one of the tangible signs of our common life and connection between students and alumni of WSCF all around the world.

The UDPS was first celebrated on Sunday 13th February 1898 at the second meeting of what was then known as the General Committee of the World Student Christian Federation. The participants of the Federation’s then ten member movements believed that intercessory prayer should be a vital ingredient in the life of a worldwide body of Christian students. As a result, the early leaders of the federation called on Christian students around the world to join together in February each year for observance of the Universal Day of Prayer for Students.

During the world wars when it was impossible to hold WSCF meetings, the major bond of unity between those separated from one another by the ravages of war was the annual observance of the Day of Prayer for Students.

For more than a century students and friends of WSCF have observed this Day of Prayer as a way to express their common commitment as witnesses of our faith in God and in each other, to the world both inside and outside our academic communities.

The WSCF publishes ecumenical services of worship on a theme that relates to the Federation’s theme of study for the year or responds to current events and issues of concern to the world’s students.

On 17th February 2019 to March, people are coming together from different denominations to bring words of encouragement and support around the theme ‘Young people building peace and overcoming violence.’ This year’s theme invites movements to pray and reflect on how to overcome violence among different societies more especially young people from different faith communities globally.
WSCF works on issues to overcoming violence and peace building

WSCF support new peace building programs more especially in the Middle East, training more students and young people to lead initiatives that tackle the root causes of war and conflict. Let us all pray today and forever to give more students a chance to take part in developmental initiatives and programs for peace. This will help students and young people from different faiths coming together to witness, learn about and tackle the root causes of violence and conflict in the Middle East and in their national and local communities.

In the midst of war and violence in the Middle East, it is the people particularly youth and children who suffer the most. Civilians are caught up in fighting, being displaced from their homes and forced to flee, often risking terrible danger to find safety in a foreign land.

WSCF is committed to supporting our movements in the Middle East to continue being a witness for peace in the region. Our peace-building and dialogue programs brings young people together, often from different faiths, to share and learn about the root causes of conflict and find new ways to build peace.

Overcoming Violence and Peacemaking is one of WSCF’s focal program areas in the Strategic Plan. Its goal is to mobilize the Federation on issues pertaining to Overcoming Violence and Peacemaking, with a focus on, but not exclusive to the situation in the Middle East, Colombia and Mexico. GA resolutions include Palestine (GA policy paper), Sudan, Iraq, Syria, Colombia and Mexico.

Suggested preparation to celebrate the UDPS 2019:

- Appoint a small committee of interested persons to organize the service and to assign parts to leaders and readers. Try to involve a diverse group of people to prepare for the liturgy.
- Feel free to adapt the service for your region and/or context.

- Try to organize a good choir to lead the singing. The choir may vary/change the sung parts and select different hymns or songs if desired. Parts to be sung may be spoken if preferred. You can also replace the suggested songs in this liturgy to adapt to your local language and customs.
- Brainstorm creative and symbolic acts in the service that would serve to highlight the theme.
- Give adequate time for the preacher (student, Senior Friend, or clergy) to prepare a short sermon (recommended 7-12 minutes). He or she may select other Bible readings for the service as the spirit leads.
- If you wish to add a service of Eucharist together with this prayer service, please do so according to your tradition.
- Organize the collection. This year, devote your collection to the All In One Boat Campaign to help support the work of the Federation.
- Inform churches in different parts of the country and invite them to organize this service in their local congregations or fellowship.

We believe a transformation can happen. A world acting more justly, a people speaking up for the poor, and a church bringing healing to broken communities. By joining us this Student Sunday to pray for the global body of students, you are helping to realize this vision.

We invite all our members and friends to unite in prayer for the world, the church, students, and WSCF itself to pray for peace and work for justice in this world.

Peace be with us all,

NECTA MONTES, General Secretary
CHRISTOPHER CHIMANGENI, Director for Bible and Theology Program
WELCOME

As people arrive they are welcomed at the door with a light candle, and invited to light it and place it on a table at the front or centre of the room. Six representing six WSCF regions/continents. The candles shall be lit as a sign of hope and blessings for the regions in the different conflicts they face.

OPENING SONG

How lovely on the mountain
How lovely on the mountains are the feet of Him
Who brings good news, good news
Announcing peace, proclaiming news of happiness
Our God reigns, our God reigns
Our God reigns, our God reigns
Our God reigns, our God reigns
He had no stately form
He had no majesty
That we should be drawn to Him
He was despised and we took no account of Him
Yet now he reigns with the Most High
CONFESSION

Leader: Let us pray

Almighty God, in the Name of Your Son Jesus Christ, our peace, enable us by your grace to come before you in humbleness of heart as we seek forgiveness for our sins committed against You, our brothers and our sisters.

God, we have not been faithful custodians of your peace. Our attitudes have not been pleasing before you.

Our feet have not been the herald that announces good news on the mountain especially to our brothers and sisters fleeing war in their countries, those persecuted for their faith, those suffering for economic reasons.

We have waged wars and engaged in violence, we have taught contempt for our brothers and sisters and thus deeply offended You.

Give us grace God to recommit ourselves to beautiful feet that announce good news that you reign in the midst of war, that announce Your salvation and do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with you. Micah 6:8

Through Christ our Lord we pray.

All: Amen
Leader: We keep this silence to remember the times we have acted without reflection, the times we have spoken without love, and the times we have turned away without recognition. We keep this silence together.

SILENCE

Leader: Let us love one another, encourage and forgive each other
All: As God in Christ loves, encourages and forgives us. Amen.

GREETINGS AND WELCOME

Everyone stands up and says ‘peace’ in their language and welcomes another.

Leader: God calls us to peace
All: in God’s justice is our peace.
Leader: Christ calls us to be God’s people
All: in Christ is our peace.
The leader invites everyone to share a sign of peace.

OPENING PRAYER OF INVOCATION

May the Lord give you peace.

Leader:  Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called children of God. May the Lord give you peace

All:  Lord God Almighty let the peace of your son Jesus Christ rule in our hearts, over our personal struggles, our worries and fears that we may live at peace within ourselves.

Leader:  May the Lord give you peace. May love, joy, peace forbearance, kindness, goodness and faithfulness be borne in you.

All:  Lord give us peace that your love may be shared in our hearts, that we may make every effort to live in peace with everyone and to be holy so that we may please you. Give us peace that we may turn from evil and do good, seek peace and pursue it.

Leader:  May the Lord give you peace that nobody pays back wrong for wrong but always strive to do what is good for each other and for everyone else.

All:  God give us peace that we may have beautiful feet that announce good tidings on the mountain to our brothers and sisters. Good tidings that you reign, that you are our salvation our peace. Give us peace through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ that our hands will sow in peace that you may take pleasure in our way and cause our enemies to make peace with us.

Leader:  May the Lord give you peace. May the Lord strengthen his people and give you peace.

All:  Amen

PRAYER OF NAHMAN OF BRESLAV

Everyone stands up to say the prayer.

Leader:  Let us pray
  
  “Lord of peace Divine Ruler, to whom peace belongs Maker of peace, Creator of all things. May it be your will to put an end to war and bloodshed in the world and to spread a great and wonderful peace over the world, So that nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore.

  Help us and save us all Let us merit to cling tightly to the virtue of peace. Let there be a truly great peace between every person and his fellow, and between husband and wife and let there be no division among people not even in the heart.
Let every person love peace and pursue peace. Always in truth and integrity. Let us never cling to division not even when it comes to those who do not agree with us. Let us never shame any person on earth, great or small and may we merit to truly keep the commandment to “love your neighbor as yourself,” with an entire heart, body, soul and possessions.

And let what is written be fulfilled in us:

“I will grant peace in the land, and shall make you afraid. I will remove dangerous animals from the land, and no sword shall go through the land.

God who is peace, bless us with peace.

Amen.

The Reconciliation Song

Oh let us be a generation of reconciliation and peace
And let us be a holy nation
Where pride and prejudice shall cease

Let us speak the truth in love
To the lost and least of these
And let serve the Lord in unity so others will believe
Let us be a generation of reconciliation and peace

Oh let us be a generation of reconciliation and peace
And let us build on one foundation
Till He comes and the wars of men shall cease

Let us share the Love of Jesus without hypocrisy
Let mercy and forgiveness begin with you and me
Let us be a generation of reconciliation and peace

Have we not one Father?
Have we not one faith?
Have we not one calling to become one Holy race?
Let us be a generation of reconciliation and peace

And let us pray for restoration
And seek the Lord together on our knees
Let us keep our hearts from evil
And cling to what is good
Let us honor one another and love the brotherhood
Let us be a generation of reconciliation and peace
SCRIPTURE READING

Isaiah 52:7 - Beautiful feet

How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who publishes peace, who brings good news of good, who publishes salvation, who says to Zion, “your God reigns!”

Observation:

Theologically and figuratively, the word Zion applied to Israel as the people of God (Isaiah 60:14)

Interpretation:

Isaiah 52:7 (NKJV) how beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who proclaims peace, who brings glad tidings of good things, who proclaims salvation, who say to Zion, your God reigns!

Points to ponder:

The defeat of Babylon by King Cyrus was good news for the Jews. The Lord allowed hostile Babylonia to enslave Israel because of their sin against him. Although Cyrus was a non-believer, the Jews found favor under his reign. He assisted the Jews in rebuilding the Jerusalem temple. In addition, he permitted temple worship, which was dormant for seventy years.

The message was a message of peace, happiness and salvation. Nothing was left hanging, undone, unresolved. It was a message of freedom from bondage caused by sins against Yahweh (the true God).

The messenger has brought good news “from Babylon to Jerusalem.” He might be the messenger whom God commissioned earlier with these words:

“Comfort, comfort my people,” says your God.
“Speak comfortably to Jerusalem;
And call out to her that her warfare is accomplished,
That her iniquity is pardoned,
That she has received of Yahweh’s hand double for all her sins” (40:1-2).

The good news is that Yahweh (working through the agency of Cyrus of Persia) has defeated Babylon. Israel will soon be free. We will soon be free.

The message is described in three ways: it is good news — and it is an announcement of salvation—and it is the assurance that Yahweh reigns. However, this assurance requires our feet, our beautiful feet to be able to announce good tidings. To announce peace in our personal struggles,
worries and fears. To announce peace in warring countries that God reigns and peace will come. This assurance requires that the institutions that be take their feet to the gloomiest places and announce peace.

There is an ironic quality to this verse. When we speak of physical beauty, we seldom if ever mention feet. We think of feet as one of our more modest parts. However, for a person in trouble, the instrument of salvation will appear as a thing of beauty regardless of its intrinsic appearance. To a drowning person, an old barge approaching with a rope would be as beautiful as anything could be. To a person dying of thirst, a cup of water would be beautiful even if the cup were chipped or soiled. So it is here. To exiles who have lost hope that they might ever be free again, the one who announces peace and good news and salvation is beautiful—right down to his feet. To many immigrants fleeing war in Israel, Palestine, in DR Congo, to Christians being persecuted in Nigeria, India, people suffering due to economic oppression and harsh political decisions, a person who announces peace is beautiful. The world is desperate for such beautiful feet today. The Middle East is in desperate need for such beautiful feet today, students are desperate for an announcement of such good tidings. We are gathered to pray that many such beautiful feet may arise to announce peace on the mountain.

    May the Lord give you peace.
    Amen.

Other suggested readings for reflections and sharing:

Isaiah 2:4
Psalms 34:14
John 14:27

The Lord’s Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven
Hallowed be thy Name,
Thy kingdom come,
Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven
Give us this day our daily bread
And forgive us our trespasses,
As we forgive those who trespass against us,
And lead us not into temptation,
But deliver us from evil,
For yours is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory,
For ever and ever
Amen.
CLOSING SONG

Let There Be Peace On Earth

Let there be peace on earth
And let it begin with me.
Let there be peace on earth
The peace that was meant to be.
With God as our creator
family all are we.
Let me walk with each other
In perfect harmony.

Let peace begin with me
Let this be the moment now.
With every step I take
Let this be my solemn vow.
To take each moment
And live each moment
With peace eternally.

Let there be peace on earth,
And let it begin with me.
Let there be peace on earth
And let it begin with me.
Let there be peace on earth
The peace that was meant to be.
With God as our creator
family all are we.
Let me walk with each other
In perfect harmony.

Let peace begin with me
Let this be the moment now.
With every step I take
Let this be my solemn vow.
To take each moment
And live each moment
In peace eternally.
Let there be peace on earth
And let it begin with me.

(by Jill Jackson-Miller and Sy Miller in 1955)
PRAYER OF COMMITMENT AND LORD’S PRAYER

Leader: Lift up our hearts
To give thanks and praise
To respond to your call
To live out the good news
And to be salt and light in the world

All: So that together, we can say;
Hallowed be your name

Leader: Give us the courage
To pursue peace
To act for justice
To work for freedom
And to prepare the way of God

All: So that together, we can say;
Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as in heaven

Leader: Challenge and inspire us
To live simply
To share what we have
To offer hospitality
And to welcome strangers
Lead us not into temptation
But deliver us from evil.
Leader: May we know the love of God
Grow in the likeness of Christ
And be open to the Spirit

All: For yours is the Kingdom, the power and the glory
Now and forever more.

Amen

BENEDICTION

Let us go with Jesus, the light who guides us on our way.
May our hope be that the Sun of Justice will rise one morning
on all humankind.

May the God of Peace, our constant companion,
lead us along paths of solidarity and hope,
and give us the joy of being united in God’s love.
Amen.

(from Glory to God and Peace on Earth, published by the International
Ecumenical Peace Convocation, 2011.)
WSCF MATERIALS FOR GROUP REFLECTION ON PEACE BUILDING

1. Before your reflection or bible study, you might want to show a short video of the voices of young people from WSCF in the Middle East. The video can be seen and downloaded from this link:

2. You can also use as reference for your reflection and discussion the WSCF Resolutions on Peace building and overcoming violence in the Middle East and Colombia below.

   In the 35th WSCF General Assembly in 2015, WSCF approved two important resolutions as our concrete expression of its work for justice and peace in the world, specifically in the Middle East and Colombia. Please find below the resolution which you can read and share to your members for reflection.

A POLICY PAPER ON PALESTINE

(Approved on March 5, 2015 by the delegates and participants of the WSCF 35th General Assembly held at ACJ/YMCA Bogota Auditorium, Bogota, Colombia.)

For over a century, the World Student Christian Federation has been aspiring to attain social justice and change. The World Student Christian Federation’s work manifests throughout the world through their hope for a justice centered future in which human rights are universal.

Overall Position:

The basis of The World Student Christian Federation’s view on the Israeli/Palestinian conflict is based on International Law; Human Rights Law International Humanitarian Law, International Conventions and the call from the Palestinian Kairos Document. Therefore, we seek to restore justice and work for a just and lasting peace in the Holy land.

And thus, we formulate the following positions:

1. We call to end the illegal Israeli occupation of Palestinian land and all forms of discrimination; as this occupation is a crime against God and humanity.

2. Jerusalem must be an open and shared city for the two peoples and the three Abrahamic religions.
3. The Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territories – including East Jerusalem – are illegal under International Law and must be dismantled.

4. We call to revisit theological positions that support certain unjust political options with regard to the Palestinians; theologies that legitimize the Israeli Occupation of the Palestinian land.

5. The Wall constructed by Israel in the Occupied Palestinian territories is a breach of international law and must be dismantled.

6. Palestinians’ right of self-determination must be respected, as should be the right of return.

7. Maintaining just peace and a sustainable solution to the conflict is only achieved through peaceful means. Violence cannot be justified whether perpetrated by Israelis or Palestinians.

8. We call for Boycott, Divestment and Sanction of the occupation, as a non-violent tool for justice, peace and security.

9. We call churches and ecumenical organizations worldwide to visit the occupied Palestinian territory in accordance with Kairos Palestine call under “Come and See”

10. We call upon the Regional and National WSCF and SCMs to educate their members on the conflict and be engaged in solidarity activities with the Palestinian people and with justice-building initiatives

Background Information

In 1948, the State of Israel was announced; on a day that is still commemorated today in Palestinian history as the Nakba (Catastrophe) Day. The process of the creation of a Jewish nation started in the late 1800s. As European societies were becoming more and more anti-Semitic, the First Zionist Congress took place, which resulted in the creation of the Zionist Organization in 1897 and the birth of the idea of a Jewish State. The Zionists realized from their early beginnings that an imperial power’s support would be of vital importance. And thus, they reached for the British, who in turn viewed political Zionism favorably. Britain’s main role became clear in the Balfour Declaration of 1917, in which Britain announced that “His Majesty’s government view with favor the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavors to facilitate the achievement of this object.” At that time, Jews made up less than 10% of Palestine’s population.

The Jewish immigration rate to Palestine increased rapidly, and by the end of the Second World War there were over half a million Jewish Immigrants living in Palestine. This triggered an uprising of the Arab population, who greatly opposed the immigration of Jews to their lands. By the time Britain had decided to get out of Palestine, the Jews, who already had very effective lobbying groups, particularly in the United States, had 33 nations voting in favor of a Partition of Palestine; a land with a population that was more than two thirds Arab, and of which the Jewish population possessed just over 6%. The Partition Plan handed over 55.5% of Palestine to the proposed Jewish state. Since the Palestinian Arab population would make up more than half the population of the new Jewish state, by the time of the unilateral declaration of Israeli statehood in May 1948, most Zionist leaders were prepared for the forced “transfer” of the Arab population.
Late 1947 and throughout 1948 until early 1949, Palestinian society was dismantled, Palestinian villages and towns were destroyed, more than half of the Palestinian population (an estimated 1.3 million) were displaced by the Zionist militia and the state of Israel. An estimated four in every five Palestinian towns and villages inside Israel were either destroyed or immediately settled by Jews. By May 1948, the State of Israel was proclaimed on 78% of the Palestinian land.

During the “Six Day War” in June 1967, Israel occupied the West Bank, East Jerusalem and Gaza. The UN Security Council passed resolution 242 of 1967, which called for Israel to withdraw from the territories occupied and acquired by war in that year, and sovereignty and security of all states in the region, but this was not implemented.

Facts on the ground:

More than six decades since the Nakba, the Palestinian refugees still lack access to and are denied any durable solution or reparation as per International Law and UN resolutions, including the right of return to their homes of origin. This right is enshrined in UN resolutions, however these resolutions have not been enforced. (Badil, 2010A) By the end of 2008, approximately 67% of the entire Palestinian population worldwide were forcibly displaced persons, including 6.6 million Palestinian refugees and 455,000 internally displaced persons. (Badil, 2008) A third of all Palestinian refugees still live in 58 refugee camps across the Middle East. (UNRWA) The Palestinian refugees are the largest and longest-lasting refugee population in the world. In fact, two out of every five refugees in the world are Palestinian. (Badil, 2010B)

Settlement is illegal under international humanitarian law. IHL states that that an occupying power is not allowed to make permanent changes to the territory it occupies, and according to the 4th Geneva convention, article 49, “The Occupying Power shall not deport or transfer parts of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies”. Despite this, Israeli settlements continue to be built and expanded on land confiscated from Palestinians in the West Bank. According to the UNHCR (2013), approximately 250 settlements have been established since 1967 in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, with a population of approximately 520’000. The settlement outposts, numbering at approximately 100 in 2012 (B’tselem, 2014), do not have official government recognition, although many of them were established with governmental assistance. The government of Israel fails to evacuate these outposts, most built on private Palestinian land, and instead often provide them with financial support. In a number of cases, these illegal outposts are retroactively legalized (Al Haq, 2013). These settlements are connected by bypass roads. Since 1967, Israel has cleared and paved hundreds of kilometers of bypass roads, which are for the sole use of Israelis. These roads isolate and separate communities. (Peace Now, 2005) Settlers often harass and attack Palestinians and their property. The Israeli settlers’ attacks on Palestinians and their property are disregarded by the IOF; in fact many attacks are carried out with their protection. These attacks include attacks on land and trees, assault of people, attacks on cars and houses, attacks on religious and historic sites, and settlement expansion. (Arij, 2013)

The Israeli Government decided to construct a wall in 2002, with the declared aim of preventing terrorist attacks by Palestinian militants. (OCHA) However, 85% is located within the West Bank, to the east of the internationally-recognized Green Line (Richard Falk, 2014), demonstrating that the Wall is a part of the system of physical and administrative
barriers aimed at restricting Palestinian movement and access to services and resources throughout the West Bank (OCHA OPT). In some areas, the Apartheid Wall consists of a concrete mass, ranging to a height of between 8 and 12 meters, with armed sniper towers, electrified fences, 30-100 meter buffer zones, razor wire, military patrols and military roads. Where the buffer zones exist, the road is paved for large-scale demolitions and expulsion of local Palestinian residents. (Stop the Wall, 2011) When the Apartheid Wall is completed, it is expected to run for 708km, effectively cutting off and isolating 9.4% of the West Bank territory. (Richard Falk, 2014) In 2004, the International Court of Justice ruled that the Apartheid Wall is illegal under International law, and Israel is obliged to stop the Wall’s construction and dismantle what has been built already. (ICJ, 2004)

There are a multitude of Israeli checkpoints across the West Bank, along with roadblocks and gates on the separation barrier, all of which restrict the free movement of the Palestinians. In February 2014 there were 99 fixed checkpoints in the West Bank: 59 are internal checkpoints, located well within the West Bank. (B’tselem, 2014) At the close of 2012, OCHA counted approximately 532 road blocks a month. These checkpoints may be closed at any time without prior notice, which prevents Palestinians from reaching workplaces, health facilities, schools, and so on. (B’tselem, 2007)

Over a fifth of the Palestinian population live in poverty. Poverty in Gaza is twice as high as in the West Bank, at a rate of 33.7% in 2009. (World Bank, 2011). Not only does Israel control the crossings between Gaza Strip and the West Bank, but also it fully controls Gaza’s air space and territorial waters. Movement in and out of Gaza, whether of people or goods, to the west bank or internationally, is virtually impossible. There are also restrictions on international trade. All of this contributes to the distortion of the economy of the occupied Palestinian territories, giving rise to high levels of poverty and unemployment, deep recession and decreased standard of living. (World Bank, 2011). Unemployment in Gaza was as high as 38% in 2010, with Youth unemployment higher, at 53.3%. (World Bank, 2011) Gaza’s economy is also affected by numerous military operations that target civilians and their property. Israel launched Operation Cast Lead in 2008. 1,400 Palestinians were killed, including 300 children, and thousands were left homeless. (Amnesty International) Israel extensively targeted the infrastructure and residences. The economy, which was already in recession, was decimated (Amnesty International). On the 14th of November, 2012 Israel launched Operation Pillar of Defense, in which 167 Palestinian were killed, 31 of whom were children. (Amnesty International, 2013)

Palestinians can be held by the Israeli military under administrative detention: a term used to justify keeping a Palestinian prisoner indefinitely, without charging them, giving them a fair trial, or even informing them of the suspicions against them. (Addameer, 2011A) While it is prohibited by International Law, the policy of administrative detention is used extensively, becoming more frequent after the second intifada. (Addameer, 2011B) Since 1967, over 750,000 Palestinians have been detained by Israel, which is roughly 20% of the Palestinian population (Richard Falk, 2013) Some 7,500 Palestinian children have been detained by Israeli occupation forces since the year 2000, according to DCI. Israel is the only country in the world that systematically prosecutes children in military courts. (DCI, 2013) Torture is being used, on children and adults, in jails and during interrogations. That includes: physical violence, verbal abuse, sleep deprivation, solitary confinement, threat to harm family members and tying in painful positions. (Addameer, 2011C)
Although several attempts were made to revive the Peace Process, which began in the early 1990’s, none have succeeded to bring peace with justice to the region. This is caused by an unwillingness compromise on certain key issues, such as the status of Jerusalem, refugees, and settlements. In the case of the final status negotiations between 31/07/13 and 29/5/14, a freeze of settlement activity was agreed for the negotiations to transpire. However, these activities continued, for example, Israel approved the building of an estimated 17,388 units in 37 Israeli settlements in the West Bank in this period. (Poica, 2014)

*Kairos Palestine:*

Witnessing the transformation of the Word of God into dead letters; used to deprive the Palestinians of their own land and rights, also witnessing the calls for violence and holy wars against them in the name of God, the Palestinian Christians raised their voice from within the sufferings: A cry of faith, hope and love. In the Palestinian Kairos document, the Palestinians address all the churches and Christians across the world requesting them to stand against apartheid and injustice, calling them to turn away from the theologies that justify the Israeli Occupation of the Palestinian land. Furthermore, the document calls on political leaders and decision makers and all peoples to take legal measures against Israel until it complies with international law: ends its occupation of the Palestinian land and ends all forms of discrimination, oppression and apartheid. It also emphasizes the vital role of nonviolent resistance of the occupation, a creative resistance with love as its logic; not resisting with death but with the ultimate respect of life, a resistance that is not a tool of revenge, but a means that ends the existing evil; liberating not only the victims of injustice but also the perpetrators as well.

**Terminology**

Occupied Palestinian Territory: The term used by the United Nations and the International Court of Justice to refer to the West Bank, Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem: the territories conquered by Israel in 1967.

i. **East Jerusalem**: Israel has unilaterally expanded the municipal boundaries of the city and illegally annexed East Jerusalem, in 1967.

ii. **Gaza Strip**: A territory of 360 square kilometers that is home for around 1.5 million Palestinians, considered part of the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

iii. **Green Line**: it marks the division between the territories militarily occupied by Israel since 1967 and the territories recognized as Israel proper. It was set out by the Armistice Agreements, 1949, between Israel and the neighboring countries.

iv. **Nakba**: The Arabic word for Catastrophe. It refers to the ethnic cleansing and dispossession of the Palestinians by Israel in 1948.

v. **The Peace Process**: initially referred to the official negotiations between Israeli and Palestinian political leaders since the early 1990s. Now, it expands to describe the ongoing international diplomatic efforts to resolve the conflict.
We, the participants of the 35th General Assembly of the World Student Christian Federation held in Bogota, Colombia from the 27th of February to the 5th of March 2015, listened to and shared the testimony of the diverse sectors of the Colombian people, including the victims of the conflicts, showing us the humanitarian and human rights crisis and the lack of justice that has produced more than five decades of armed, social and political violence in Colombia.

Despite the pain the Colombian people have lived, we were received by the leadership and youth of the churches, as well as by people from different ecumenical and social organizations of Colombia. They welcomed us with joy, and conveyed to us their wishes and hope for peace before the dialogue between President Juan Manuel Santos and the insurgent groups to find a negotiated solution to bring the armed conflict to an end.

Motivated by the testimonies we listened to, and the theme of the General Assembly, “We Are Many, We Are One, Called to build God’s peace,” we want to share this message with the Colombian people and the international community.

As a global fellowship of Christian students, we commit ourselves to pray and accompany the Colombian people in its hope and wishes for peace, which we have seen in the youth, students and leaders of churches and social organizations.

We appeal to the Colombian Government and the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC) not to leave the negotiations until an agreement is reached in order to put an end to the armed violence that has affected the Colombian people. We also ask the Colombian Government to initiate soon a public dialog with the National Liberation Army or ELN.

We ask the Global Ecumenical Movement to accompany and support the social organizations, communities and churches in Colombia in their endeavors for peace, based in the respect for human rights and the search for justice and democracy to allow a true reconciliation.

We call upon the international community, country governments and multilateral organizations, to maintain their presence in Colombia to make a contribution to the compensation of the victims, and a peace that’s a fruit of justice and reconciliation in Colombia.

We leave the General Assembly in Bogota, but we will stay united with the Colombian people in its desire of peace. We will give testimony of the many peace initiatives being built by the communities, and we will advocate for our Student Christian Movements (SCMs), churches and ecumenical movement to stay with you until an agreement is reached to build peace and reconciliation among all citizens.
**PRAYER POINTS**

*We pray for all* whose lives have been touched by tragedy, whether by accident or deliberate act. For those who mourn, immerse them in your love and lead them through this darkness in your arms and light. For those who comfort, be in both the word they use and that’s left unspoken; fill each heart with love. We ask this through Jesus Christ whose own suffering brought us life here and for eternity. Amen.

- **Aubrey C. Majawa-SCM Malawi**

*“Many struggles to see God* when faced with natural disasters, the cruelty of fellow human beings. But God is always in the hands of those who offer help and sustenance whether offered by those of faith or no faith, for all love has its source in Him”

- **Shalon Moola-SCM Zambia**

*Oh Jesus Christ have mercy on us* your Children. Oh God intervene in Zimbabwe situation in Jesus name and deliver our brethren from captivity in Jesus name all shall be well.

- **Peter-SCM Nigeria**

*As we pray for Kenya, Lesotho, DRC, let us also pray for SCM Zimbabwe where two of their senior friends have been abducted and their offices barricaded due to tenacious riots and also Sudan which has a history of longest conflicts in the continent and deserves to have peace in the land.*

- **Dan Thokoane-RSA**

*We are molded, each one of us in the image of God and within our souls there is a fingerprint none can erase. We pray for those who have no regard for anyone but self, who put no value on human life. For nations and individuals who abuse and kill. We are not called to be judge or jury, but we are called to be agents of change, and if the butterfly that flaps its wings should be our attitude to others then so be it, Lord, and may the hurricane this generates somewhere within the world reach into the hearts and souls of those for whom we pray, and reveal to them how precious are those for whom they have no love, and how precious are they who now bring tears to the eyes of God.*

- **Elizabeth Magombo-SCM Malawi**

---

**SOURCE**

- Prayer by Nahman of Braslav, source: https://saltandlighttv.org
- Our father, source: Holy Bible (NKJV)
- Part of the 2019 UDPS introduction, source: www.wscf.ch
- Scripture reading, observation, interpretation and point to ponder, source: Shalon Moola and SCM Zambia
How Lovely on the Mountains
Our God Reigns

1 How lovely on the mountains are the feet of him
2 He had no state-ly form, he had no maj-es-ty,
3 It was our sin and guilt that bruised and wound-ed him;
4 Out of the tomb he came with grace and maj-es-ty;

who brings good news, that we should be
it was our sin that brought him down.
he is a-live, he is a-live.

an-nounce-ing peace, pro-claim-ing news of hap-pi-ness:
He was de-spi-ed and we took no ac-count of him,
When we like sheep had gone a-stray, our Shep-herd came,
God loves us so; see Je-sus’ hands, his feet, his side.
Let There Be Peace On Earth

By: Miller and Jackson

I

C Am Dm G7
Let there be peace on earth
C F Em C Dm G7
And let it begin with me,
C Am B7
Let there be peace on earth,
Em B7 Em G7
The peace that was meant to be,
C Am Em
With God as our Father
Dm G7 Em C
Brothers all are we.
Am7 D7 G Em
Let me walk with my brother
Am D7 G7
In perfect harmony.

II

C Am Dm G7
Let peace begin with me,
C F EmC Dm G7
Let this be the moment now.
C Am B7
With ev’ry step I take.
Em B7 Em G7
Let this be my solemn vow.
C C
To take each moment and live
F D Fm
Each moment in peace eternally.
C E7 Am F C
Let there be peace on earth.
Dm Am G7 C
And let it begin with me.