

**SELECTIVE DIVESTMENT FROM COMPANIES INVOLVED WITH ISRAEL'S
OCCUPATION OF THE WEST BANK AND GAZA, THE BUILDING OF THE
"SECURITY FENCE," AND THE ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS WITHIN PALESTINIAN
TERRITORY**

(Prudential Resolution: Requires majority vote for passage)

Submitted by: Board of Directors, Penn West Conference

1 *Many nations will come and say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house*
2 *of the God of Jacob. He will teach us his ways, so that we may walk in his paths." The law will*
3 *go out from Zion, the world of the Lord form Jerusalem. He will judge between many peoples*
4 *and will settle disputes for the strong nations far and wide. They will beat their swords into*
5 *plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation,*
6 *nor will they train for war anymore. Every man will sit under his own vine and under his own fig*
7 *tree, and no one will make them afraid, for the Lord Almighty has spoken. All the nations may*
8 *walk in the name of their gods; we will walk in the name of the Lord our God for ever and ever.*
9 Micah 4:2-4

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11 **Summary**

12 This resolution calls the church and the U.S. government to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian
13 conflict in a just manner and requires the United Church of Christ's Corporate Social
14 Responsibility Ministry to begin the process of divestment from companies involved with
15 Israel's illegal (by UN Security Council resolutions 242 and 338) occupations of the West Bank
16 and Gaza, the building of the "security fence," and the Israeli settlements within Palestinian
17 Territory.

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19 **Theological Rationale:** We believe that God in love seeks blessing and not destruction for all
20 peoples, and lays the same pursuit upon Jews, Christians and Muslims (Genesis 12:1-3, 17:15-
21 20, 21:14-19; Joshua 5:13-15; Isaiah 42:5-7, 49:6; Jonah; Micah 4:2-4; Matthew 5:14-16, 5:23-
22 24; Mark 3:35; Luke 6:27-36, 9:51-55, 10:25-37; John 3:16-17, 21:15-17; Revelation 22:1-2)

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24 **Background**

25 Over the past decades, the United Church of Christ, through General Synod and through other
26 UCC instrumentalities have used formal resolutions and statements to urge a just settlement to
27 the Israel-Palestinian conflict. These words have not succeeded in solving the conflict. During
28 the era of apartheid in South Africa, the United Church of Christ, along with other
29 denominations and organizations, successfully used divestment as a tool to bring justice to South
30 Africa. Mindful that divestment has been a successful tool in the past, we urge the use of
31 selective divestment in bringing justice to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

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33 The obvious initial candidate for selective divestment would be the Illinois-based Caterpillar
34 Corporation. Their purpose-built machines have enabled, and are still enabling, the Israeli
35 Defense Force to destroy increasingly more Palestinian homes and olive orchards. One of these
36 machines was instrumental in the deliberate crushing to death of the young American peace
37 volunteer (International Solidarity Movement) Rachel Corrie in Gaza on March 16, 2003. Rachel
38 was the first non-Palestinian peace activist to be killed in the Occupied Territories by the IDF.

39 She shared the fate of some 2300 Palestinians (the vast majority of them civilians) who were
 40 killed by Israeli troops or settlers during the Intifada from September 2000 to March 2003.

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42 **Resolution**

43 **REMEMBERING** all previous resolutions and statements regarding the Middle East expressed
 44 by the United Church of Christ and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) separately and
 45 collectively through the Common Global Ministries Board and the affirmation the denominations
 46 have made of the World Council of Churches' Decade to Overcome Violence, and

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48 **WHEREAS** the United Church of Christ, along with other denominations and organizations,
 49 successfully used divestment as a tool to bring justice in South Africa, and

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51 **WHEREAS** the United Church of Christ has repeatedly affirmed that the State of Israel has a
 52 right to exist, and that the Palestinian people also have a right to their own state, whether it is
 53 through a one-state or two-state solution, and

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55 **WHEREAS** the United Church of Christ has called for an end to anti-Semitism in the United
 56 States and around the world, and has passed a resolution to this effect as recently as GS 2002,
 57 and

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59 **WHEREAS** both the ancient Jewish people and the Palestinian people are known as Semitic and
 60 therefore charges of anti-Semitism are completely unfounded when people call for a just and
 61 equitable peace settlement in Israel/Palestine; that this resolution is based on *both* a pro-Israeli
 62 and a pro-Palestinian *peoples* perspective; that it is not anti-Semitic to criticize the Palestinian
 63 policy of Israeli governments; and

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65 **WHEREAS**, we condemn the violence on both sides of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, but also
 66 believe that the roots of terrorism begin in the unjust and inequitable situation in Israel/Palestine,
 67 and

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69 **WHEREAS** many corporations based in or doing business in the United States are directly
 70 supporting the illegal occupations of the West Bank and Gaza, the building of the "security
 71 fence," the ongoing demolishing of Palestinian homes and olive orchards, and the continuation
 72 of (and ongoing construction of new) Israeli settlements within Palestinian territories illegally
 73 occupied by Israel since 1967,

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75 **THEREFORE LET IT BE RESOLVED** that the Twenty-fifth General Synod of the United
 76 Church of Christ:

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- 78 1. Calls on the Corporate Social Responsibility Ministry (CSR) to begin the process of
 79 helping the Pension Board and the United Church Foundation selectively divest from
 80 companies involved with Israel's illegal occupations of the West Bank and Gaza, the
 81 construction of the "security fence," and the continuation of (and ongoing construction of
 82 new) Israeli settlements within Palestinian territories illegally occupied by Israel.

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- 84 2. Calls on CSR, once criteria for selective divestment have been developed, to provide
85 educational material to other instrumentalities within the UCC, including the regional
86 conferences and local churches, so that they may also consider selective divestment.
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- 88 3. Calls on CSR, also, to develop an exit strategy that defines the end of the selective
89 divestment policy-- such as when Israel is out of the occupied territories and negotiating
90 in good faith to develop a viable Palestinian state along guidelines similar to the
91 unofficial Geneva Accord reached in the Fall of 2003 between Israeli and Palestinian
92 peace representatives.
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95 Funding for the implementation of this resolution will be made in accordance with the overall
96 mandates of the affected agencies and the funds available.
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98 *The Executive Council recommends that the resolution entitled “ Selective Divestment from*
99 *Companies Involved with Israel’s Occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, the Building of the*
100 *“Security Fence,” and the Israeli Settlements within Palestinian Territory” be referred to a*
101 *General Synod Committee.*
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