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YOU WERE FAITHFUL IN LITTLE THINGS...

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“Whoever is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much”

The Parable of the Dishonest Manager
Luke 16:1-13

by Naim Ateek

The parable of the Dishonest Manager given by Jesus offers us certain principles that can guide Christians' discussion regarding the question of Morally Responsible Investment. In order to get the full benefit of the following points, one needs to read the text carefully.

1. The manager in the parable can be analogous to the companies and corporations that manage and invest the churches' money. The churches represent the investors and have the ownership responsibility to investigate the improper. The information was passed on to the owner (vs.1). The owner cannot claim ignorance anymore. He has ownership responsibility to act. Similarly, now that the churches have been informed about the probability of their investments being used to exacerbate oppressive Palestinian conditions under occupation, they have the responsibility to act.

2. The first thing the owner did in the parable was to confront his manager openly

“Then Jesus said to the disciples, ‘There was a rich man who had a manager, and charges were brought to him that this man was squandering his property.’² So he summoned him and said to him, ‘What is this that I hear about you? Give me an accounting of your management, because you cannot be my manager any longer.’³ Then the manager said to himself, ‘What will I do, now that my master is taking the position away from me? I am not strong enough to dig, and I am ashamed to beg.’⁴ I have decided what to do so that, when I am dismissed as manager, people may welcome me into their homes.’⁵ So, summoning his master’s debtors one by one, he asked the first, ‘How much do you owe my master?’⁶ He answered, ‘A hundred jugs of olive oil.’ He said to him, ‘Take your bill, sit down quickly, and make it fifty.’⁷ Then he asked another, ‘And how much do you owe?’ He replied, ‘A hundred containers of wheat.’ He said to him, ‘Take your bill and make it eighty.’⁸ And his master commended the dishonest manager because

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EDITORIAL

This issue of Cornerstone is dedicated to the whole question of morally responsible investment. As it is known, Sabeel has already produced its document on the subject early in March of this year and circulated it widely through e-mail. We realize, however, that many of our friends do not have access to e-mail or Internet and we wanted them to be aware of our position. Moreover, we wanted to make available in greater detail some of the relevant documents.

A growing number of Jewish organizations are calling on people everywhere to exert pressure on Israel to stop its oppression of Palestinians through exercising various forms of boycott, sanctions, and divestment. Also, a growing number of Churches are seriously considering forms of selective divestment against Israel in order to bring it to its senses and turn it towards the doing of justice.

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A Call for Morally Responsible Investment

A NONVIOLENT RESPONSE TO THE OCCUPATION

INTRODUCTION

The movement towards a resolution of the Israel-Palestine conflict through nonviolent means is now accelerating. There is a window of opportunity to reach a just settlement. In spite of past setbacks and much skepticism, many people on both sides of the conflict cling to the hope for peace. As people of faith, the God we believe in is the God of hope and peace. We must not give in to despair.

Regardless of whether this new opportunity bears fruit in the political arena, we believe that serious ethical and moral issues pertaining to the occupation still need to be addressed by people of faith. Hence the challenge is for churches to consider seriously the issue of morally responsible investment.

POLITICAL BACKGROUND

The State of Israel was established in 1948 on 78% of historic Palestine leading to the displacement of most of its Palestinian inhabitants, who became refugees. Since 1967, Israel has occupied the Palestinian territories - the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip. This area constitutes approximately 22% of historic Palestine and has a population of almost four million people. During this period, Israel has consistently refused to implement United Nations Resolutions and International Law. Israel stands in violation of over 60 UN resolutions and has been protected by a United States veto over 30 times.

For many years the Palestinians rejected the establishment of the state of Israel because it was founded on the denial and violation of Palestinians' rights. In 1988, and for the sake of peace, the Palestinian National Council accepted UN Resolution 242, thus clearly expressing its willingness to recognize the state of Israel provided it withdraw from all the occupied territories. Similarly, in 2002 the Beirut Arab League Summit officially extended full recognition to Israel on condition that it withdraw from all occupied Arab land. Israel rejected

the offer without even considering it officially.

We believe that peace is not only possible but within reach. The peace we are talking about guarantees the security and territorial integrity of the state of Israel within its 1967 borders and allows the Palestinians to establish their own independent and sovereign state on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Jerusalem will have to be shared and all other issues can find appropriate solutions based on international law.

MORAL REASONS FOR RESPONSIBLE INVESTMENT

Sabeel is a Christian organization. As such, it emphasizes the importance of faithfulness to God - the God of love, justice, mercy, and peace. All people are created in God's image and are loved equally and unconditionally. We also believe that the creator God has sanctified humanity through the Incarnation of Jesus Christ. The dignity of every human being is precious in the eyes of God.

Furthermore, God in Christ has given us life. "...in him was life, and the life was the light of all people" (John 1:4). God's

will for all people is, therefore, to have life and to have it "more abundantly." Jesus said, "I have come in order that you might have life - life in all its fullness" (John 10:10). For people to enjoy life in its fullness, they must live in peace and justice, in dignity and harmony with each other. Their God-given human worth must be respected. We must do everything we can to remove any obstacles that prevent human beings from achieving life in its fullness. God must be sovereign over all aspects of our lives including our politics, work, and investments.

From this faith perspective, we call attention to the ethical and moral imperatives that must guard and guide all people and institutions including governments. As people of faith, we see them expressed in biblical injunctions such as "Love your neighbor as yourself" (Mark 12:31) and "In everything do to others as you would have them do to you" (Matthew 7:12). We also believe that the best embodiments of such principles as they apply in the international arena are enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law, which includes the Fourth Geneva Convention, as well as other universally accepted principles of international law protecting human rights and human dignity.

There are multiple examples of violations of human rights in the Israel-Palestine conflict. International Humanitarian Law specifies that people living under occupation (like the Palestinians on the West Bank, Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem) must be protected until the occupation comes to an end. It is illegal to build on or confiscate their land. It is illegal to kill or harm innocent civilians (whether

Palestinian or Israeli). It is forbidden to employ collective punishment, degrading treatment and torture. It is illegal to transfer parts of an occupying powers' civilian population into occupied territories. International Law also forbids the acquisition of territory through war.

From the standpoint of faith, we believe that we must recognize and name the evils that are facing the peoples of Israel-Palestine on both sides of the conflict. We must act responsibly under God. God calls us to value all people and stand up for all who are suffering and oppressed regardless of their nationality. Such a stand leads us to responsible stewardship in the investments we make as individuals, churches, institutions and corporations. As Christians we object to all those who carry out violent, unethical, immoral, and illegal actions. We have a God-given responsibility to act. At a minimum, we cannot ourselves participate even indirectly in supporting and enabling unjust policies.

In this context, therefore, we need to consider the following:

1. *Earning money through investment in companies whose products and services are used in such a way as to violate International Law and human rights is equivalent to profiting from unlawful acts and from the oppression of others.*
2. *Investment in such companies can be seen as condoning the harm of innocent civilians under occupation and the illegal Israeli settlement policies that lead to human rights violations.*
3. *Investment in such companies enables the*

government of Israel to sustain the ongoing violation of human rights of innocent civilians.

4. *Continuing such investments, once the facts are brought to our attention, constitutes deliberate condoning of the evil practices.*

THE LEGAL CALL FOR MORALLY RESPONSIBLE INVESTMENT

Harm against all innocent civilians is unjustified and a serious violation of human rights. According to International Law countries are not allowed to cause harm to populations under their control. The de-development, impoverishment, and hardships inflicted on the Palestinians as an occupied people cannot be ignored. Our goal is to insist on Israel's compliance with international and humanitarian law. Morally responsible investment is a means of enacting our obligation to prevent any assistance or participation in the violations of these basic human rights. All those who believe in a just resolution to the conflict also have an ethical duty to prevent unlawful harm to civilians.

- It is clearly demonstrated that Israel, in its continued occupation and the practices associated with the occupation, is in open violation of International Law and specifically the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention. Violations of these articles, specifically the grave breaches (Art. 147), have been defined as war crimes.

Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 (to

which Israel is a signatory) states:

Article 1: The High Contracting Parties undertake to respect and to ensure respect for the present Convention in all circumstances.

Article 27: Protected persons are entitled, in all circumstances, to respect for their persons, their honour, their family rights, their religious convictions and practices, and their manners and customs. They shall at all times be humanely treated, and shall be protected especially against all acts of violence or threats thereof and against insults and public curiosity.

Article 47: Protected persons who are in occupied territory shall not be deprived, in any case or in any manner whatsoever, of the benefits of the present Convention by any change introduced, as the result of the occupation of a territory, into the institutions or government of the said territory, nor by any agreement concluded between the authorities of the occupied territories and the Occupying Power, nor by any annexation by the latter of the whole or part of the occupied territory.

Article 147: Grave breaches to which the preceding Article relates shall be those involving any of the following acts, if committed against persons or property protected by the present Convention: willful killing, torture or inhuman treatment, including biological experiments, willfully causing great suffering or serious injury to body or health, unlawful deportation or transfer or unlawful confinement of a protected person, compelling a protected person to serve in the forces of a hostile Power, or willfully depriving a protected person of the rights of fair and regular trial prescribed in the present Convention, taking of hostages and extensive destruction and appropriation of property, not justified by military necessity and carried out unlawfully and wantonly.

- Out of this follows the concept of Ownership Responsibility. Within the

[God] judges the nations with justice.
The Lord is a refuge for the oppressed
a place of safety in times of trouble...
God remembers those who suffer;
He does not forget their cry,
and he punishes those who wrong them...
The needy will not always be neglected;
the hope of the poor will not be crushed forever”

(Psalm 9:8-9, 12, 18).

structure of corporations, shareholders are theoretically the true owners of a corporation and are ultimately responsible, legally, politically and morally, for the actions of the corporation, which are done on their behalf, for their benefit and in their name.

No shareholders can avoid legal or moral responsibility once the issue has been brought to their attention. If they cannot direct the management of a company to change its actions, they are still responsible for such actions as long as they own shares. When the church controls through its pension funds and investments large numbers of shares, its impact can be significant.

When the company is involved in violations of International Law - child labor, pornography, apartheid practices, or settlement building - the owners (shareholders) are morally responsible. To the extent they cannot prevail on the other shareholders and the management to end their evil practices, they must divest and seek other investments that are more in line with their beliefs. Even if such action is numerically insignificant, it is morally essential in terms of the witness of the church itself.

- In 2004, the International Court of Justice reaffirmed these requirements of humanitarian law and stated again that the building of the Wall violates International Law, and has called on the international community to refrain from assisting these violations in any way.

Until the international community takes up its legal responsibility and its obligations to put an end to these violations, organizations and individuals are required, at a minimum, to refrain from giving any material or political support. Therefore the duty to withdraw any existing support becomes a legal obligation under the provisions of the law.

The International Court of Justice Ruling on the Wall (July 9, 2004) states:

Construction of the wall within the Occupied Territories severely impedes the Palestinian people's right to self-determination and is therefore a breach of Israel's obligation to respect that right.

The International Court of Justice announced that all states are under an obligation:

- not to recognize the illegal situation resulting from the Wall and not to render aid or assistance in maintaining the situation created by such construction. (Passed by a vote of 13 to 2)
- to ensure compliance by Israel with international humanitarian law as embodied in the Convention. (Passed by a vote of 13 to 2)
- to bring to an end the illegal situation resulting from the construction of the Wall and the associated régime, taking due account of the present Advisory Opinion. (Passed by a vote of 14 to 1)

We are concerned about the delegitimization of International Law that Israel models when it ignores the International Court of Justice, the Geneva Conventions and United Nations resolutions. The potential for these institutions and laws to resolve conflicts is weakened globally when one party chooses to selectively ignore its rulings.

We recognize that regardless of our position on the political resolution, we should not permit ourselves to have any involvement to facilitate or provide resources that would be used to inflict unlawful harm on people. This is a general principle that we stand for universally.

BRINGING AN END TO ISRAEL'S ILLEGAL AND IMMORAL BEHAVIOR

African National Congress President Oliver Tambo said in 1987 at the height of the system of apartheid: "trade and foreign investment have bolstered the apartheid economy and added to the resources which apartheid State has recklessly wasted in the pursuit of inhuman schemes.... Furthermore this trade and investment has enabled the apartheid

economy to fund ever increasing expenditure on the State's coercive machinery which is aimed at internal repression and external aggression; and the flow of technology from outside helps to refine that apartheid machinery and make it more efficient.... These international connections have helped sustain, and continue to sustain the apartheid system."

Currently a system of international economic support for the occupation exists as multinational corporations build franchises in the occupied territories, supply military goods, and provide material for the construction of the settlements and Separation Wall. Although numerous U.N. resolutions have been passed and many countries have pleaded with Israel to change its policies, the "facts on the ground" of occupation grow worse year by year. The goal to end the occupation has never seemed farther away.

At this point in time, having assessed the international community's failure to persuade Israel to comply with the United Nations and the International Court of Justice, we must look at other options. Around the world people are beginning to speak of selective divestment from Israel as a method of creating the change that is needed.

One Israeli human rights lawyer, Shamai Leibovitz, put it succinctly: "As an Israeli thoroughly familiar with Israeli politics, I believe that selective economic pressure is the most effective way to end the brutal occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, and bring peace and security to Israelis and Palestinians. If the Jewish people are ever to become 'a light of all nations' (Isaiah 42:6) and return to their core values of justice and human dignity, Israelis and Jews of conscience must call now for effective measures to end the occupation of millions of Palestinians."

Sabeel believes that the divestment issue opens up a larger conversation about the immorality of occupation that has not been emphasized enough in the past. In

its statement, the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions (ICAHD) calls for sanctions: "The moral dimension led to a delegitimization of the very apartheid system that left no room for 'reform.' Carried over to Israel's Occupation, the moral element in a larger political condemnation of Israel's policies could delegitimize the Occupation to the point where only its complete end is acceptable. A campaign of sanctions which highlights the moral unacceptability of Israel's Occupation could have a great impact, eventually impelling governments to impose economic sanctions while creating a climate difficult for businesses (beginning with Caterpillar) to continue to function." (www.icahd.org)

As responsible owners and investors, the churches have multiple economic options. The dictionary defines divestment as "to free of," "to sell off," "to dispossess". Today, there are many methods of investment and divestment including these five strategies:

1. Avoidance strategy, i.e. avoiding investment in companies on moral grounds.
2. Involvement strategy, i.e. exercising influence and pressure on companies and corporations in shareholder meetings to actively promote moral and social responsibility and accountability.
3. Alternative strategy or selective investment, i.e. establishing alternative investment funds that promote justice and peace.
4. Withdrawal strategy, i.e. simply pulling investments on moral grounds.
5. Reinvestment strategy, i.e. moving the money on moral grounds from investments in corporations complicit of wrongdoing to organizations that engage in morally responsible business, or to reinvest in the organization or company after positive change occurs.

WHAT METHODS DOES SABELL RECOMMEND?

As the next logical step, we encourage morally responsible investment along the lines of the above mentioned points, which basically translates into selective divestment - the model that has been advocated or is being considered by the World Council of Churches, the Presbyterian Church USA, the Episcopal Church (USA), as well as other organizations working for a just peace in the region. As the U.S. based organization, Jewish Voice for Peace, states: "At JVP, we fully support selective divestment from companies that profit from Israel's occupation of the West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem. This includes American companies like Caterpillar who profit from the wholesale destruction of Palestinian homes and orchards. It also includes Israeli companies who depend on settlements for materials or labor or who produce military equipment used to violate Palestinian human rights." (www.jewishvoiceforpeace.org)

1. Therefore, Sabeel calls on churches to exert pressure on companies and corporations to discontinue business activities that:
 - a. provide products, services or technology that sustain, support or maintain the occupation;
 - b. have established facilities or operations on occupied land
 - c. provide products, services, or financial support for the establishment, expansion, or maintenance of settlements on occupied land or settlement related infrastructure;
 - d. provide products, services or financial backing to groups that commit violence against innocent civilians; or
 - e. provide finances or assist in the construction of Israel's separation wall or settlement infrastructure.
 (adapted from the criteria set by the Presbyterian Church USA)
2. When such pressures fail to yield positive results, Sabeel calls on churches to divest/disinvest from companies and

corporations that do not respond and comply with morally responsible investment and business practices.

"We do not believe that such investment plans are, by their very nature either anti-Semitic or anti-Israeli. On the contrary, the Occupation is destroying Israeli society by increasing poverty, violence, and insecurity. Therefore actions that oppose the Occupation are, in fact, pro-Israeli. Furthermore, we believe that such actions are in keeping with our vision of a Judaism that is based on the principle of justice."

Not in My Name Statement of Support for Selective Divestment (<http://www.nimn.org>)

OBSTACLES AND CHALLENGES FACING THE CHURCHES

Blessed are you when people revile you and speak all manner of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad for great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way were the prophets persecuted before you (Matthew 5:11-12).

There are obstacles that make it difficult for some churches to carry out divestment even when it is particular to companies operating in, benefiting from or financing the occupation, companies that are aiding and abetting activities prohibited by the Geneva Conventions.

Supporters of Israel's illegal practices will offer several challenges to the churches to which Sabeel offers the following responses:

1. **Some will argue that historical, psychological, biblical, theological, and even social reasons make it difficult for many western Christians to confront the unjust policies of the government of Israel. The evil of anti-Semitism, which has marred Christian-Jewish relations, still looms strong and the tragedy of the Holocaust remains a source of guilt for many Christians.**

Sabeel's response:

We are promoting the same values as those who struggle against anti-Semitism. No group of people, simply due to their ethnicity or nationality, should be excluded from the protections of International Law. Morally responsible investment is a Christian imperative and a nonviolent method aimed at ending the illegal occupation. We are calling for divestment from targeted companies that benefit from the violation of human rights and refuse to alter their behavior once confronted. This pressure must continue until the occupation ends.

We must advocate for upholding International Law specifically because these laws were designed to protect all civilians. It is precisely because we care about the legacy of the Holocaust and other international violations of human rights that we strongly believe that when we see indiscriminate violations of International Law, we must take a moral stand.

2. Some will ask church officials who are critical of Israel's violations of International Law to enter with them into dialogue that drags on and on. All kinds of justifications, excuses, and rationales are presented which can create fear and reluctance within Christians and result in undermining their initial commitment.

Sabeel's response:

Sabeel takes this stand for morally responsible investment in an effort to create a real dialogue about peace with justice. We ask churches to have "clean hands" and to stop supporting proven violations of International Law that have been well-documented by both Israeli and Palestinian human rights organizations in the last 38 years. (www.btselem.org; www.hamoked.org.il; www.alhaq.org; www.pchrgaza.org)

Learning the facts is important. Engaging in dialogue is useful - but the best dialogue is done from an informed perspective with

a goal of bringing the suffering to an end. Sabeel provides opportunities to visit and learn first-hand about the impact of the occupation on the daily life of the Palestinians. (www.sabeel.org)

3. Some will bring up the question of Palestinian violence. They claim that if the Palestinians would stop their "terrorism" there could be peace and security.

Sabeel's response:

The use of violence against civilians represents the problematic proliferation of contempt for the basic tenets of International Law in the area. Putting an end to violence against civilians requires addressing both the state and individual violence in the region and all responsible parties.

Sabeel decries all violent acts against civilians and has made that clear in previous statements that are available on line (www.sabeel.org). At the same time both Palestinian and Israeli civilians have the same human rights to security as all people and Sabeel stands by and for their inherent rights. Our call for morally responsible investment includes divesting from any organization or corporation that supports or promotes in any way violence against civilians.

The government of Israel has shown no intention or effort to date of complying with International Law. The international community and the leading powers, for their own political reasons, have been unwilling to enforce International Humanitarian Law. Therefore, it is left for us as faith communities to do what our political representatives are not doing on our behalf. Violations of human rights can never be justified.

4. In all probability some will use the Christian Zionist voice against the mainline churches in an attempt to discredit them and to show that millions of Christians accept and approve of

Israel's actions which violate International Law.

Sabeel's response:

Standing alone for justice is not new for Christians. We may be a voice in the wilderness but when we act out of the conviction of our faith then mountains can be moved.

Sabeel understands that within every denomination comes a wide variety of perspectives on the conflict. A decision like this can and will cause denominational disagreement. Yet, we encourage churches to use this process of discussing morally responsible investment to better understand both the history of the Israel-Palestine conflict and our obligation to live by ethical standards with our resources. The Presbyterian Church USA (PCUSA) has prepared an informational DVD that can be used as a congregational resource (see www.pcusa.org).

5. It is likely, due to the various types of pressure that will be placed on a church that takes this step, that most churches may be tempted to back down or dilute their divestment strategy to an extent that would make it ineffective.

Sabeel's response:

As Christians we have to ask ourselves if statements are all that we can give as help to resolve this conflict. It is time to take a clear stand for human rights and dignity. If the rules of International Law were adopted by Israel, there would be an automatic resolution to the conflict and a just settlement would emerge. While we understand the political dimension, our clear stand as Christians comes from our belief in the dignity and well-being of all people. Too many precious children of God, Palestinians and Israelis, have been lost due to our unwillingness to forthrightly address the moral issues.

6. Many will ask, "Why target divestment of firms actively engaged in violations of International Law in Israel rather than

of firms actively engaged in violations of International Law in China or Saudi Arabia?”

Sabeel's response:

If, for example, a firm is complicit in violation of child or prison labor, U.S. and E.U. law boycotts those firms. If a firm violates standards for trade, they are subject to countermeasures by governments. When the U.S. or the E.U. is not diligent, then movements of conscience step in and press for such action, while carrying out their own citizen actions - boycotting or targeting firms that are especially complicit. To some degree, these other countries are being acknowledged and pressured for their human rights violations by the U.S. and the international community already.

Unlike Israel, they are not being protected or insulated from the application of International Law. The Security Council has been prevented, again and again through the U.S. veto, from taking action against the acknowledged violations by Israel of International Law.

We at Sabeel encourage churches to put pressure on and/or divest from any and all companies and corporations that are involved in practices that violate human rights. It is important to note that our call for morally responsible investment is specifically focused on companies directly involved in illegal practices in the Occupied Territories and not in Israel itself.

Sabeel believes that any divestment must be done from moral obligation - the same moral obligation that obliges us to struggle against and separate ourselves from anti-Semitism. The blessing that is promised in the Sermon on the Mount is for those who are falsely accused. We must be sure that we are acting solely as a result of moral constraints. (Churches need to check the companies and corporations in their investment portfolios regarding their investment activities in the Occupied Territories.)

A CALL TO THE CHURCHES

“In the center stands faith, on the periphery you have works; in the center the gospel, politics on the periphery; in the center salvation, on the periphery the well being of our neighbor. Between the center and the periphery our human life revolves, on the periphery is decided and revealed what has happened at the center.”

Helmut Gollwitzer

The mainline churches in the West have, by and large, maintained a very balanced position vis-à-vis the Palestine/Israel conflict. On the one hand, they have always affirmed Israel's right to exist. On the other hand, they have been clear that Israel must withdraw from all territories that it occupied in the 1967 war and allow the establishment of an independent Palestinian state.

The churches repeatedly and categorically have stood on the side of a just peace for

the Palestinians in accordance with UN resolutions and International Law. International, regional, and national councils of churches around the world have asserted this same position.

Through their statements and representations, the churches were encouraging their national governments to pressure Israel to implement International Law, all to no avail. Indeed, the international community has been helpless to prevail upon Israel to halt its oppression of the Palestinians.

As churches examine their own investment policies and show willingness to take moral and ethical investment decisions, they pick up where the political global community has failed to date. It is important to demonstrate by our own example that, just as we are prepared to bear burdens to maintain our own respect for International Law, so Israel must accept these same burdens.

“The end of apartheid stands as one of the crowning accomplishments of the past century, but we would not have succeeded without the help of international pressure - in particular the divestment movement of the 1980s. Divestment from apartheid South Africa was fought by ordinary people at the grassroots. Faith-based leaders informed their followers, union members pressured their companies' stockholders and consumers questioned their store owners. Students played an especially important role by compelling universities to change their portfolios. Eventually, institutions pulled the financial plug, and the South African government thought twice about its policies. Similar moral and financial pressures on Israel are being mustered one person at a time. If apartheid ended, so can this occupation, but the moral force and international pressure will have to be just as determined. The current divestment effort is the first, though certainly not the only, necessary move in that direction.”

Archbishop Desmond Tutu

Churches, by moving from statements to direct action and adopting appropriate financial policies that are in line with their moral and theological stance, create an example for the international community, even if it means incurring and absorbing some financial loss.

We applaud the decision of the World Council of Churches Central Committee, meeting in February 2005, which called on the churches to:

- encourage member churches to work for peace in new ways and to give serious consideration to economic measures that are equitable, transparent and non-violent;
- persuade member churches to keep in good contact with sister churches embarking on such initiatives with a view to support and counsel one another;
- urge the establishment of more and wider avenues of engagement between Christian, Muslim and Jewish communities pursuing peace;
- remind churches with investment funds that they have an opportunity to use those funds responsibly in support of peaceful solutions to conflict. Economic pressure, appropriately and openly applied, is one such means of action.

A CALL FROM PALESTINIAN CHRISTIANS

The Palestinian Christian community in Palestine is very small in number. We are less than 2% of the population. Although we are fully Palestinian and an integral part of the Palestinian people, we are distinctly Christian.

Since the inception of the conflict one hundred years ago, the Christian community has been playing a very active role in championing justice for all the people of the land. In fact, some of the main advocates for peace have been Palestinian Christians. We continue to

take a stand on behalf of our brothers and sisters in Palestine so that all of us can enjoy freedom.

Although we work for peace alongside our Muslim and Jewish brothers and sisters, we are blessed by our links and partnership with a “great cloud of witnesses” throughout the world that, like us, are members of the Body of Christ. Biblically and theologically we stand together:

- For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body (1Corinthians 12:12-13).
- If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it (1Corinthians 12:26).
- We are called by God to work for justice: He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God? (Micah 6:8).
- We are called by Christ to work for peace: Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God (Matthew 5:9).

We are, therefore, pleading with our brothers and sisters all over the world to invest their God-given material resources in morally responsible activities that would contribute to the achievement of a just peace in Israel-Palestine. Furthermore, we ask them to continue to pray for all the inhabitants of our land so that peace will be achieved and the way for reconciliation will be opened. We are reminded of the words of the Latin American theologian, Leonardo Boff: “If we want to serve the true God, we must break out of the circle of self-absorption and pay heed to the bloodied faces of our fellow human beings. If we do not share life with the oppressed, we do not share life with God.”

RESOURCES FOR FURTHER STUDY

For a complete list of products manufactured in illegal Israeli settlements:

www.gush-shalom.org

Christian Statements:

- World Council of Churches Central Committee minute: [www.oikoumene.org / GEN_PUB_5_Second_report_o.779.0.html#1573](http://www.oikoumene.org/GEN_PUB_5_Second_report_o.779.0.html#1573)
- Episcopal Church in the United States of America: www.episcopalchurch.org*
- Global Ministries [the Common Board of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and United Church of Christ] document “The Palestinians, Israel, and the Churches’ Economic Leverage”: <http://www.globalministries.org/>
- Presbyterian Church (USA) Statements on Ending the Occupation and Divestment: www.pcusa.org/israelandjewishrelations/divestment.htm
- HOPP Campaign for a Just Peace in the Middle East, End the Occupation of Palestine, Sweden. www.svenskakyrkan.se/HOPP. **
- The Network of Christian Organizations in Bethlehem district (NCOB) Statement (www.holylandtrust.org)
- The United Church of Canada’s position on the Middle East: www.united-church.ca (search Paths to Peace in Israel and Palestine)

Jewish Statements:

- Israel Coalition against House Demolition Call for Sanctions: www.icahd.org
- Not in My Name Statement in support of Selective Divestment: www.nimn.org
- Jewish Voice for Peace in support of divestment: www.jewishvoiceforpeace.org
- European Jews for a Just Peace statement on illegality of settlement products: www.ejpp.org
- New Profile: Movement for the Civilization of Israeli Society: www.newprofile.org ***
- “Israel: A Call for Divestment” by Shamai Leibowitz (www.thenation.com/doc.mhtml?i=20050328&cs=Leibowitz)

For additional information on the struggle against the occupation:

www.endtheoccupation.org

***Episcopal Church in the United States has stated the following:**

It is the intent of the Social Responsibility in Investments Committee to undertake the following:

- Over the next twelve months, SRI will investigate what corporate actions (including corporate dialogues and shareholder resolutions) might be appropriate with (1) companies that contribute to the infrastructure of Israel's ongoing occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and (2) companies that have connections to organizations responsible for violence against Israel. In doing this work, SRI will work in partnership with the Episcopal Church in Jerusalem and the Middle East and with the Anglican Peace and Justice Network, the latter of which is preparing a report for the Anglican Consultative Council in June 2005. It will also seek dioceses and congregations that may be interested in being partners in corporate actions designed to promote peace in the Middle East.
- In doing this work, SRI will also seek input from the wider church, from ecumenical and interfaith partners (including the American Jewish community), and from Jewish and Palestinian groups in the Middle East.
- SRI will present the Executive Council with recommendations on this work at its October 2005 meeting. The Social Responsibility in Investments Committee-which while monitoring what other church bodies like the Presbyterian Church (USA) are doing, understands that its primary responsibility is to implement existing Episcopal Church policies-will interact with as many groups as possible to better understand the underlying issues and how corporate actions in the Middle East may be impediments to peace. Further, the emphasis of this process is not likely to be divestment from companies whose actions are morally questionable, but rather engagement with them. In so doing, the

Episcopal Church is acting in ways consistent with its own policy statements on the Middle East, with our participation in the wider Anglican Communion, and its call to peacemaking in the world.

**Christian Council of Sweden has appealed to their member churches and their aid organisations to participate in the campaign, Support a Just Peace in the Middle East - End the Occupation of Palestine. Many churches and organizations support this campaign, among them Caritas, Diakonia, Evangelical Alliance, Swedish Organisation for Individual Relief (SOIR), YWCA-YMCA, The Swedish Fellowship of Reconciliation, Student Sweden Christian Movement, Church of Sweden, Church of Sweden Women, Mission Covenant Church of Sweden and Baptist union of Sweden. The Swedish campaign is a response from churches and Christian organisations in Sweden to the invitation from the World Council of Churches to work towards an end to the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories.

The campaign includes:

- Co-ordinated, focused work to raise opinion and lobbying
- Support for the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme, EAPPI.
- Exerting political pressure to make the EU suspend its free trade agreement with Israel.
- Specific action: Boycotting produce from the illegal settlements on occupied territory.

*** New Profile aims to transform Israel from a highly militaristic society to a civilian society dedicated to equality of gender and ethnicity and firmly based on universal human rights.

One of several characteristics of militarism is the use of force to obtain political objectives. New Profile deems Israel's occupation of the Palestinians to be a use of force to obtain the political objective of creating the 'greater Israel.'

New Profile opposes the Occupation on three counts:

1. Its destruction of Palestinian life, society, land, and property.
2. Its role in maintaining militarism in Israel.
3. Its erosion of Israel's socio-economic and moral fabric.

We therefore seek non-violent means of ending this catastrophic Occupation. One such means is using economic sanctions to pressure the government to change its policy. To this end New Profile welcomes and supports selective divestment aimed at divesting from companies that contribute to the continuation of the Occupation by supplying arms, other equipment, or staff.

We welcome all such endeavors, believing firmly that ending the occupation is not only to the benefit of the Palestinians but also necessary for the welfare of Israel, its youth, and future generations. Over 20,000 Israeli soldiers have died in its wars since 1948. Enough. It is time to beat our swords into ploughshares, to bring security to Israel by giving the Palestinians their freedom and recognizing their absolute right to exist, and to build a future for today's Israeli youth and generations to come by creating a civilian society whose underpinnings are equality of gender and ethnicity and universal human rights.

A PRAYER FOR GUIDANCE

Almighty God, who created us in your own image: Grant us grace fearlessly to contend against evil and to make no peace with oppression; and, that we may reverently use our freedom, help us to employ it in the maintenance of justice in our communities and among the nations, to the glory of your holy Name; Amen.

WHAT OTHERS ARE SAYING

Guidelines for the Implementation of Divestment related to Israel & Palestine

From the Presbyterian Church (USA)

The Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI) has adopted and supplies for information the following classification system and process to identify multinational corporations in Israel and Palestine and to implement the General Assembly policy of phased selective divestment.

The MRTI Committee will approach this task through engaging in constructive dialogue with the identified multinational corporations using deliberative processes. The deliberative process includes several steps outlined below:

First, the Committee develops a process of classification for addressing issues based on General Assembly policies and statements related to the issue including the 196th General Assembly (1984) policy on principles and criteria for considering divestment and the 216th General Assembly (2004) action on Supporting the Geneva Accord.

Then MRTI through its members and staff collects information and performs research to identify and select multinational corporations with which the Committee should begin a process of progressive engagement. The Committee reviews that list based on its classification process, and begins the process of progressive engagement with the selected multinational corporations.

The process includes meeting or offering to meet with the multinational corporations selected. Initial conversations are held with companies identifying the Church's concerns and encouraging open and honest dialogue about the company's involvement in the area of concern. The Committee attempts to resolve or come to agreement on these issues. This process of engagement can take months or years. The length of the process depends on the nature of the dialogue that ensues. If able to reach agreement that addresses the mutual concerns (both of the Committee and the corporation) then the Committee announces the positive results.

If unable to reach mutual agreement the Committee then considers its options including shareholder resolutions. Any shareholder resolution is discussed with corporate officers before filing the resolution in hope of resolving the issue. If a shareholder resolution is filed the Committee hopes for enough supporting votes to demonstrate that the concern is shared by additional shareholders.

The Committee may engage in a process with the shareholder resolutions over a period of several years to obtain that support or solution to the issue.

Only if no positive results consistent with the General Assembly criteria and the MRTI classification process were attained would the Committee consider recommending divestment to the General Assembly.

POLICY BACKGROUND

The General Assembly has repeatedly called for a just peace in the Middle East conflict between Israel and Palestine. This just peace would include a state of Israel with safe and secure borders based upon the Armistice Line of [1949] (its borders as recently as 1967). It would also include a state of Palestine with safe and secure borders based upon the Gaza Strip, the West Bank and East Jerusalem in a manner that permits geographical integrity and economic viability. The General Assembly has repeatedly condemned violent actions by both Israelis and Palestinians that have threatened a just peace, particularly as those actions have brought injury and death to innocent civilians.

The General Assembly has also identified the continued occupation of Palestinian land by Israel as the major impediment to the creation of a just peace. The occupation is a violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention, that Israel has signed and ratified, and the human rights of Palestinians. It also involves the establishment of Israeli settlements on Palestinian land so that roughly 8,000 Israelis live in Gaza and over 400,000 on the West Bank. The creation, expansion and maintenance of these settlements are characterized by the appropriation of Palestinian land, extensive use of scarce water resources, destruction of Palestinian agriculture lands and orchards, an



extensive network of roads for Israelis only, numerous military check-points limiting Palestinian travel, and other forms of harassment and humiliation.

The General Assembly has also echoed other religious bodies in expressing deep concern about the construction of a Separation Barrier on Palestinian land as it will increase the suffering of Palestinians, make their territory more unviable economically, and render the two-state solution much more difficult to achieve. Classification Rationale.

The following classification system is designed to assist MRTI in focusing its research and engagement on companies that are involved in actions contrary to General Assembly policy related to the Israeli and Palestinian conflict. The 216th General Assembly viewed the engagement on the Israel and Palestinian conflict to fall within MRTI's long-standing engagement with corporations on human rights concerns around the world. While the General Assembly resolution initiating the process of phased, selective divestment mentioned only multinational corporations operating in Israel, MRTI will also include the concern of violence against both Israelis and Palestinians since violence on both sides prevents a just and lasting peace.

CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

MRTI will compile a listing of multinational corporations operating in Israel and Palestine based on the following criteria:

1. Multinational corporations that provide products or services to or for use by the Israeli police or military to support and maintain the occupation.
2. Multinational corporations that provide products, services, or technology of particular strategic importance to the support and maintenance of the occupation.
3. Multinational corporations that have established facilities or operations on occupied land.
4. Multinational corporations that provide products or services, including financial services, for the establishment, expansion or maintenance of Israeli settlements.
5. Multinational corporations that provide products and services, including financial services, to Israeli or Palestinian organizations/ groups that support or facilitate violent acts against innocent civilians.
6. Multinational corporations that provide products or services, including financial services, that support or facilitate the construction of the Separation Barrier.



PROGRESSIVE ENGAGEMENT LIST

A list of multinational corporations identified for progressive engagement by MRTI will be prepared using the classification system, measured against the following factors:

1. History and nature of involvement in Israel and Palestine.
2. Magnitude and strategic importance of involvement.
3. Acts of corporate opposition to the occupation, direct contributions to the victims of the occupation, support of a viable economy for an independent Palestinian state, and non-discrimination against Israeli Arabs or Palestinians in employment practices.

PROCESS

1. MRTI will correspond with the leadership of those multinational corporations, expressing the concerns of the General Assembly and pursuing a process to identify desirable changes in the company's role in Israel and Palestine.
2. MRTI will notify appropriate PC(USA) governing bodies, soliciting their involvement in the process of engagement with corporate leaders.
3. In the course of the dialog with multinational corporations, MRTI may request the General Assembly Council to authorize the filing or co/filing of shareholder resolutions with subject multinational corporations using appropriate channels for the filing.
4. MRTI, in cooperation with ecumenical partners, will monitor regularly the progress made with subject multinational corporations.
5. When MRTI is persuaded that a particular multinational corporation, after extensive engagement, remains uncooperative or has refused to be in dialog with the churches, MRTI may prepare a recommendation to the General Assembly Council, asking the General Assembly to place the multinational corporation on the divestment/proscription list and urging the Foundation and the Board of Pensions to comply with the action of the General Assembly.

ADOPTED by MRTI on November 6, 2004

Jewish Voice for Peace Statement on Divestment

With some 10,000 members and supporters, and a board of advisors that includes high-profile American Jews and Israeli peace activists, Jewish Voice for Peace is one of the largest and oldest grassroots Jewish peace organizations in the United States.

For years, through its call to suspend military aid to Israel until it ends its occupation of Palestinian lands, Jewish Voice for Peace has been part of a large movement calling for material pressure on Israel. That movement is growing, with others joining in the effort to resist funding the occupation while maintaining a positive relationship with the Israeli people.



In July, 2004, the Presbyterian Church made a decision to investigate selective divestment from companies that profit from Israel's occupation. As a result, a number of mainline Jewish organizations have called on Christian organizations to oppose divestment. All

the while, the actual content of the Presbyterian Church's decision has been misreported as a decision to divest from Israel. In fact, the PCUSA merely decided to investigate divestment from companies, both American and Israeli, that profit from the occupation.

At JVP, we fully support selective divestment from companies that profit from Israel's occupation of the West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem. This includes American companies like Caterpillar who profit from the wholesale destruction of Palestinian homes and orchards. It also includes Israeli companies who depend on settlements for materials or labor or who produce military equipment used to violate Palestinian human rights.

We believe that general divestment from Israel is an unwise strategy at this time. We believe that economic measures targeted specifically at the occupation and the Israeli military complex that sustains it are much more likely to produce results.

However, we absolutely reject the accusation that general divestment or boycott campaigns are inherently anti-Semitic. The Israeli government is a government like any other, and condemning its abuse of state power, as many of its own citizens do quite vigorously, is in no way the same as attacking the Jewish people.

Further, it is crucial not only to criticize the immoral and illegal acts of the Israeli government, but to back up that criticism with action. Socially responsible investing, divestment, and boycott campaigns have proven to be effective tools for both individuals and institutions working to make governments accountable to international human rights standards. The mere fact that some groups have chosen different or more aggressive tactics from us does not necessarily make them anti-Semitic.

Each year, US corporations receive an alarming subsidy from US taxpayers, primarily in the form of US military aid to Israel. The total amount of US aid given to Israel since 1949 represents the largest transfer of funds from one

“ We believe that general divestment from Israel is an unwise strategy at this time. We believe that economic measures targeted specifically at the occupation and the Israeli military complex that sustains it are much more likely to produce results. ”



country to another in history. Seventy-five percent of US military aid to Israel must by law be spent in US corporations, making corporations, not Israel or Israelis, the primary recipients of US aid. This means that US corporations are primary beneficiaries of Israel's continued and brutal military occupation of Palestinian lands.

The lopsided American foreign policy may seem to be in Israel's interest, but it actually works to the detriment of the Israeli people. Continued militarization of Israeli society increases the exposure of Israeli women and children to violence in their daily lives, and has helped lead the country to economic crisis. At the same time, this unbalanced US foreign policy has devastated the Palestinians. Americans of conscience must work to balance that policy in favor of a peaceful solution. It is not discriminatory that Americans working for a just peace focus their attention on Israel's occupation and take concrete steps to end it, like divesting from companies profiting from Israel's occupation.

Neither the US nor Israel will change their policies in favor of peace through

their own goodwill. This is not the way of governments. Tangible pressure must be brought to bear if policies promoting a better future are to take root. The time has come for groups to bring that pressure to bear.

We salute the Presbyterian Church for their courage in taking on this critical human rights issue, and are grateful for the visionary leadership of the Sisters of Loretto and the Sisters of Mercy who insisted on holding the Caterpillar Corporation to account for their sale of weaponized bulldozers to Israel.

And we remind the many groups that are alarmed by the Presbyterian Church's actions that the best way to stop the growing divestment movement is to eliminate its root cause — Israel's illegal occupation of Palestinian land.

We call on all Americans of conscience to join the Presbyterian Church, the Sisters of Loretto, Sisters of Mercy, Jewish Voice for Peace and countless other groups in taking tangible steps to create a better future for Israelis and Palestinians together.

Jewish Voice for Peace |
info@jewishvoiceforpeace.org

“If apartheid ended, so can the occupation. But the moral force and international pressure will have to be just as determined. The current divestment effort is the first, though certainly not the only, necessary move in that direction.”-

Bishop Desmond Tutu

Seeking Peace Through Justice Ethical Investment in the Middle East

United Church of Canada Toronto Conference Divestment Boycott Implementation Plan Passed May 2003

The following is a POLICY MOTION that the Toronto Conference call on the presbyteries, churches, mission units and associated bodies such as the Toronto United Church Council within its bounds, as well as our membership, to:

- Reaffirm the United Church's commitment to the right of Israel to exist in peace and security within internationally-recognized borders and the right of Palestinians to exist in peace and freedom in an internationally recognized homeland and state;
- Recognize that the path of peace is dependent on the end of the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, including the withdrawal of Israeli settlements there;
- Commit itself to
 - Join the World Council of Churches international boycott of goods produced in the illegal Israeli settlements in the occupied territories;
 - Divest itself of investments in corporations whose activities in the Israeli settlements and/or the Palestinian Territories including East Jerusalem serve to encourage the continued existence of these illegal settlements;
 - Boycott the goods and services of corporations whose activities in the Israeli settlements and/or in the Palestinian Territories (including East Jerusalem) serve to encourage the continued existence of these settlements;
 - Direct the World Affairs Committee of Conference to provide resources to assist congregations to take action to divest and boycott goods and corporations related to Israeli settlements in the occupied territories.

Statement by the World Council of Churches Central Committee

Certain Economic Measures for Peace in Israel/Palestine

Geneva 21 February 2005

In the conflict in Israel and Palestine there is a renewal of hope although there is not yet a reduction of the threats that separate the parties to the conflict. Palestinians have now organized two elections with constructive effect, despite continuing occupation, and plan another at mid-year. The churches welcome that momentum is building for peace and for solutions which credibly engage those who must make peace, the powerful as well as the weak.

The churches note the growing witness and impact of church engagement that includes both Israelis and Palestinians. The WCC-

led Ecumenical Accompaniment Program (EAPPI) is present and supportive of both Palestinians and Israelis who suffer under current circumstances. There is also growing interest among churches in taking new actions that demonstrate commitment to and enhance prospects for a just, equitable and lasting peace in both Israel and Palestine.

Notable among these are initiatives within churches to become better stewards of justice in economic affairs which link them to on-going violations of international law in occupied territory. The Central Committee takes note of the current action

by the Presbyterian Church (USA) which has initiated a process of phased, selective divestment from multinational corporations involved in the occupation. This action is commendable in both method and manner, uses criteria rooted in faith, and calls members to do the "things that make for peace" (Luke 19:42).

The concern here is to abide by law as the foundation for a just peace. Multinational corporations have been involved in the demolition of Palestinian homes, and are involved in the construction of settlements and settlement infrastructure on occupied territory, in building a dividing wall which

is also largely inside occupied territory, and in other violations of international law being carried out beyond the internationally recognized borders of the State of Israel determined by the Armistice of 1949.

In this 38th year of occupation the desire for a just and equitable peace is growing. For churches of the WCC such hopes are guided by positions and programmes that reflect a search for truth amid much trouble.

The WCC has called, since 1969, for “effective international guarantees for the political independence and territorial integrity of all nations in the area, including Israel” and restated the concern at regular intervals, most recently in recognizing, in 2004, Israel’s “serious and legitimate security concerns”.

In 1992, the WCC Central Committee stated that “criticism of the policies of the Israeli government is not in itself anti-Jewish”. During the Oslo peace process of the 1990s churches supported civil society

projects of rapprochement between communities in conflict in the Holy Land.

In 1995, the Central Committee established criteria for economic actions in the service of justice, namely, that these must be part of a broader strategy of peacemaking, address flagrant and persistent violations, have a clear and limited purpose plus proportionality and adequate monitoring, and are carried out transparently.

In 2001, the WCC Executive Committee recommended an international boycott of goods produced in illegal settlements on occupied territory, and the WCC-related APRODEV agencies in Europe are now working to have Israeli settlement products fully and properly identified before shipment to the European Community in accordance with the terms of the EU’s Association Agreement with Israel.

Yet illegal activities in occupied territory continue as if a viable peace for both peoples is not a possibility. We are not blind to facts

and must not be complicit in them even unwittingly. The Central Committee, meeting in Geneva 15-22 February 2005 therefore:

encourages member churches to work for peace in new ways and to give serious consideration to economic measures that are equitable, transparent and non-violent;

persuades member churches to keep in good contact with sister churches embarking on such initiatives with a view to support and counsel one another;

urges the establishment of more and wider avenues of engagement between Christian, Muslim and Jewish communities pursuing peace;

reminds churches with investment funds that they have an opportunity to use those funds responsibly in support of peaceful solutions to conflict. Economic pressure, appropriately and openly applied, is one such means of action.

The full text of the WCC central committee statement is available at: www.oikoumene.org > Central Committee > Documents

BACKGROUND

* The World Council of Churches’ (WCC) Ecumenical Campaign to End the Occupation of Palestine: Support a Just Peace in the Middle East was developed in the context of the Decade to Overcome Violence: Churches Seeking Reconciliation and Peace (2001-2010). The campaign of accompaniment, advocacy and awareness building is grounded in the understanding that ending the Israeli occupation of Palestine will address the root causes of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict including human rights abuses

on all sides and will open the way for a two state solution with peace and security for both Israel and Palestine.

* The Israeli occupation includes the confiscation of Palestinian lands, destruction of Palestinian olive groves, demolition of Palestinian homes, attacks on Palestinian civilians and Palestinian leaders, building Jewish settlements on Palestinian land, building most of the Separation Barrier on Palestinian land, and mobility restrictions impacting economic and family life of Palestinians.

* The WCC central committee is

encouraging the Council’s member churches “to give serious consideration to economic measures” as a new way to work for peace, by looking at ways not to participate economically in illegal activities related to the Israeli occupation. (Feb. 21, 2005)

* In that same statement, the WCC notes that “in the conflict in Israel and Palestine there is a renewal of hope, although there is not yet a reduction of the threats that separate the parties.”

For additional information, go to www.wcc-coe.org, www.eappi.org, and www.united-church.ca.org.

SANCTIONS AGAINST THE ISRAELI OCCUPATION

IT'S TIME

Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions
Divestment Statement, January 2005

You can't have it both ways. You can't complain about violence on the part of the Palestinians and yet reject effective non-violent measures against the Occupation that support their right to self-determination, such as economic sanctions. You can't condemn the victims of Occupation for employing terrorism while, by opposing divestment, thereby sheltering the Occupying Power that employs State Terror. You can't end the isolation and suffering of people living under Occupation while permitting the Occupying Power to carry on its life among the nations unencumbered and normally, by withholding a boycott of its economic and cultural products.

THE CASE FOR SANCTIONS

Sanctions, divestment and boycotts are absolutely legitimate means at everyone's disposal for effectively opposing injustice. As penalties, protest, pressure and resistance to policies that violate fundamental human rights, international law and UN resolutions, they are directed at ending a situation of intolerable conflict, suffering and moral wrong-doing, not against a particular people or country. When the injustice ends, the sanctions end.

Sanctions, divestment and boycotts represent powerful international responses that arise not only from opposition to an

"If apartheid ended, so can the occupation. But the moral force and international pressure will have to be just as determined. The current divestment effort is the first, though certainly not the only, necessary move in that direction." — Bishop Desmond Tutu

intolerable situation, but also to the complicity of every person in the international civil society that does nothing to resolve it. Because they are rooted in human rights, international law and the will of the international community, and because they are supremely non-violent responses to injustice, sanctions carry a potent moral force....

Rather than punishment, a campaign of sanctions rests upon the notion of accountability. And it targets the strong parties. The very basis of a call for sanctions is that the targeted country has the ability to end the intolerable situation....

Campaigns of sanctions are in essence educative, and that is part of their power. Since the reasons for taking such drastic action must be explicit, weighty and compelling, it forces those calling for sanctions to make a strong case for them.

The very act of initiating such a campaign, then, raises awareness not only of the injustice itself, but of the principles it violates.

THE CASE FOR SANCTIONS AGAINST ISRAEL

In line with the principles just discussed, economic sanctions against Israel are not invoked against Israel per se, but against Israel until the Occupation ends. With this proviso it is Israel's policy of occupation that is targeted, its status as an Occupying Power, not Israel itself.

The divestment campaign currently directed against Caterpillar has gained considerable momentum among the international public, effectively educating people about Israel's policy of demolishing Palestinian homes. It has generated calls for other sanctions, such as the Presbyterian Church's initiative to divest from companies profiting from the Occupation. The European Parliament has also called for trade sanctions on Israel given Israel's violation of the "Association Agreements" that prohibit the sale of settlement products under the "Made in Israel" label. The American Congress should take similar steps, since Israel's use of American weapons against civilian populations violates the human rights provisions of the Arms Control Exports Act....

ICAHD'S POSITION ON SANCTIONS

In principle ICAHD supports the use of sanctions against countries engaged in egregious violations of human rights and international law, including the use of moral and economic pressures to end Israel's Occupation. An effective approach to sanctions operates on different levels, however, and requires a number of strategic considerations as to its scope and focus.

First, the generic term "sanctions" actually includes three main types of economic and moral pressure:

- (1) Sanctions, defined overall as "penalties, specified or in the form of moral pressure, applied against a country guilty of egregious violations of human rights, international law and UN resolutions, intended to bring that country back into compliance with international norms." Since they must be imposed by governments, regional associations or the UN, the power to actually apply sanctions falls outside of civil society. Nevertheless, governments can be prodded, constituting an important form of conscious-raising and moral pressure.

- (2) Divestment, the withdrawal of investments in companies doing business with the offending country or directly involved in violating human rights and international law;

- (3) Boycott, the voluntary refraining from purchasing the products of the offending country or allowing its companies, institutions, representatives or even professionals from participating in international intercourse.

Sanctions, divestment and boycott can be applied either totally or selectively, the decision involving a strategic mix of efficacy and moral stance..... It is the Occupation which is considered illegitimate, illegal and immoral, not Israel per se. Most advocates of a just peace ...support Israel's right as a recognized member state in the UN to rejoin the international community when the Occupation truly ends and a just peace is attained....

ICAHD, then, supports in principle a multi-tiered campaign of sanctions against Israel until the Occupation ends. We believe that a selective campaign is most effective and we would incorporate

We also note with satisfaction the many Jewish and Israeli organizations who support the idea of selective sanctions on Israel: European Jews for a Just Peace (a coalition of 16 Jewish groups from eight European countries); Not in My Name (US); Matzpun (Israel/International); Jews Against the Occupation (NYC Chapter); the petition of South African government minister Ronnie Kasrils and legislator Max Ozinsky, which has gathered more than 500 signatories from South African Jews; Jewish Voices Against the Occupation (US); Jewish Women for Justice in Israel and Palestine (US); Gush Shalom (Israel); Jews for Global Justice (US); and Visions of Peace With Justice (US), among others.

EDITORIAL *continued from page 1*

It seems that the issue of divestment is picking up momentum in the world and among many people as it did in the 1970's against the Apartheid regime of South Africa. There are more sites on the Internet and more debate about it. Equally and more forcefully and blatantly, Jewish pressure from certain circles has been increasing. Jewish groups and individuals have been pressuring clergy and laity to oppose any moves taken by their churches for divestment against Israel. Some articles have been written in church magazines defending Israeli actions and warning their church leadership from, what they called, "anti-semitic" tendencies if the divestment policies are adopted. In one church denomination, every regional minister was contacted to impress on him/her the importance of standing with Israel against any form of divestment. It is clear to many that so long as "anti-semitism" and the holocaust have a strong hold on the consciousness of western Christians, it will be difficult for many of them to take a courageous stand against the injustice perpetrated by the government of Israel against the Palestinians. Yet standing for truth brings joy and freedom.

Apparently, the question of morally responsible investment has touched a very sensitive nerve in Israel and its friends. We still insist that we are not promoting this in order to punish Israel. We must do it for the sake of the oppressed. We must do it so that we have clean hands. We do it because it is the morally responsible action before a just and merciful God who calls us to use our gifts for the betterment of people's lives rather than for their suppression and humiliation. Even if we fail, we must do it for faithfulness' sake.

campaigns... already launched. At this stage, ICAHD supports:

- Sanctions: Sales or transfer of arms to Israel conditional upon their use in ways that do not perpetuate the Occupation or violate human rights and international humanitarian law, violations that would end if governments enforced existing laws and regulations regarding the use of weapons in contravention of human rights [as well as a] ban on purchasing Israeli weapons....
- Divestment in companies that profit from involvement in the Occupation. Here ICAHD supports the initiative of

the Presbyterian Church of the US to divest in “multinational corporations that provide products or services to...the Israeli police or military to support and maintain the occupation,...that have established facilities or operations on occupied land,...that provide services or products for the establishment, expansion or maintenance of Israeli settlements,...that provide products or services to Israeli or Palestinian organizations/groups that support or facilitate violent acts against innocent civilians,...that provide products or services that support or facilitate the construction of the Separation Barrier.”

- Boycott of settlement products and of

companies that provide housing to the settlements or which play a major role in perpetuating the Occupation, a campaign initiated several years ago by Gush Shalom.

Since sanctions are a powerful non-violent means of resisting the Occupation, ICAHD ...calls on the international community - civil society as well as governments - to do all that is possible to bring a swift end to Israel's terrible Occupation so that all the peoples of the region, and especially Israelis and Palestinians, can enjoy the benefits of a just and lasting peace for the generations to come.

Full text is available at www.icahd.org

WHOEVER IS FAITHFUL *continued from page 1*

and squarely. The manager was held accountable. He was asked to show the details of his master's investments (vs. 2). This is what the churches must do because they have the “ownership responsibility.” The companies must be held accountable. Where is the churches' money invested? According to international law, any investment that sustains, maintains, or supports the occupation is illegal. Any investment that contributes to the oppression of others is immoral.

3. It is possible, as the parable shows that unethical and corrupt collaboration can exist between management and clients (vs. 3-5). Companies can manipulate facts, “fix” the books, and falsify documents in order to justify and rationalize their investment policies. Recently in a discussion about Caterpillar Company, a responsible American churchperson was told that Israel does not buy the Caterpillar machines. Caterpillar sells them to the US Government and the US donates them to Israel. In fact, it is well-known that Israel is one of the primary recipients of U.S. military aid. The Caterpillar machines are sold/given to Israel not as construction equipment but as weapons through the US Military Sales Program.

The manager in the parable was a master manipulator.

4. The owner in the parable commended the shrewdness of the manager, “for the children of this age are more shrewd in dealing with their own generation than are the children of light” vs. 8. Because it is possible to be confronted with lies and deception, the churches must be extra vigilant and shrewd that their investments are contributing to the well-being of people rather than to their misery. Moral and ethical investment policy must characterize all those who are “the children of light” (vs. 8).

Luke 16:1-13 *continued from page 1*

he had acted shrewdly; for the children of this age are more shrewd in dealing with their own generation than are the children of light. ⁹And I tell you, make friends for yourselves by means of dishonest wealth so that when it is gone, they may welcome you into the eternal homes. ¹⁰Whoever is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much; and whoever is dishonest in a very little is dishonest also in much. ¹¹If then you have not been faithful with the dishonest wealth, who will entrust to you the true riches? ¹²And if you have not been faithful with what belongs to another, who will give you what is your own? ¹³No slave can serve two masters; for a slave will either hate the one and love the other, or be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.’” NRSV

5. All investment must be subject to the judgment of God. In other words, there is a spiritual dimension to all investment. It goes beyond and transcends the simple cash dividends. For Christians, it must contribute to the well being and the enhancement of the quality of life of people. It has to comply with the standard of the love and service of God and our fellow human being (vs. 10-13).

6. Ultimately, it is about faithful stewardship (vs.10). We must be faithful no matter how little or how much we have. It is required of us to have clean hands. We might not be successful in the struggle before us, but we must be faithful to God and to our humanity. Anything that dehumanizes people and strips them of their God-given human dignity is evil and must be resisted. What the occupation and its ramifications are doing to the Palestinians is evil. It must stop.

The Rev Dr. Naim Ateek is director of Sabeel-Jerusalem

ISRAEL: A CALL FOR DIVESTMENT

COMMENT | The Nation, posted March 15, 2005

Shamai Leibowitz

The assassination of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri has led to an explosion of “people power” in the streets of Beirut, in which hundreds of thousands of Lebanese citizens have called for an end to Syria’s occupation of their land. These calls have been celebrated and echoed in other capitals, and nowhere more so than in Washington. However, there is another area in the Middle East where a struggle to end foreign occupation has brought the natives only death and destruction. For decades, Israel has crushed the 3.5 million Palestinians living under military domination, beating them into submission while taking away their civil rights and their land....

As many Israelis realize today, when Israeli governments talked about the peace process during the Oslo period, they were pulling the wool over the world’s eyes. Israel continued colonizing the West Bank and Gaza with its Jewish-only settlements and, at the same time, entrenching a cruel military regime over Palestinians. The same is true today with Ariel Sharon’s “disengagement” plan, which is being marketed by Israeli propaganda as a “painful concession” toward peace. Many of us who live in Israel and visit or serve in the occupied territories recognize the truth: Israel is continuously intensifying its military rule in the West Bank while stealing more Palestinian land and building more illegal Jewish-only settlements.

For years, American taxpayer money has funded the occupation—the torture chambers, the military apparatus, the bulldozers used in house demolitions, the building of settlements and now the



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construction of the West Bank wall, declared illegal by the International Court of Justice (ICJ). Americans should be held accountable for where their money is going.

After years of failed political efforts by the Israeli and international human rights community aimed at ending the occupation, it is clear that new approaches must be implemented. It is time for American civic institutions to support a multi-tiered campaign of strategic, selective sanctions against Israel until the occupation ends. Since the Israeli government is flagrantly disobeying the ICJ decision, international law mandates the use of sanctions to force Israel to

comply with UN resolutions and human rights treaties.

The first step for American institutions is to engage in selective divestment—withdrawal of their investments from companies that are, directly or indirectly, funding the occupation. First and foremost, states, cities, universities, churches, unions, banks and pension funds should divest from Israel Bonds, which finance the occupation, and from any company that sells arms, ammunition or other military equipment to Israel. This should include companies like Caterpillar, which manufactures and sells the bulldozers that have flattened thousands

“The East Jerusalem YMCA and YWCA of Palestine applaud the United Church of Christ for considering two resolutions related to socially responsible investment, as well as a resolution to “tear Down the Wall”, at the 2005 General Synod. As partners in service, we are encouraged by your efforts to search for peace with justice in this region. Regardless of the decisions taken at this summer’s General Synod, we enthusiastically support your courage in raising the issue and pushing the debate on effective ways to put faith into practice.”

*Abla Nasir, General Secretary,
YWCA of Palestine*

*Judeh N. Majaj, General
Secretary, East Jerusalem
YMCA*

of Palestinian homes, and General Dynamics, General Electric, Lockheed Martin, Northrop-Grumman, Raytheon and other corporations, because these companies play an active role in enabling Israeli forces to engage in practices that violate international humanitarian law.

Second, the West should hold Israeli military personnel and political leaders personally accountable for human rights violations, including trial before international courts and bans on travel to other countries. This strategy has been implemented in other conflicts (Rwanda, Bosnia, Kosovo and South Africa, for example), proving its deterrent value and effectiveness.

Prohibiting the sale of arms and military equipment to Israel is, in fact, called for by existing US law. According to the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (22 USC §2304), “No security assistance may be provided to any country the government of which engages in a consistent pattern of gross violations of internationally recognized human rights.”

The current hypocritical American Administration is not enforcing this law with regard to Israel. It is, therefore, up to American civil society to uphold the law and prevent the sale of any military equipment to Israel by pressuring the government, filing complaints against companies that violate this law and withdrawing all investments from such

companies.

The Presbyterian Church took a positive step in this direction when in July 2004 its General Assembly passed a resolution calling for selective divestment from companies that profit from the occupation. This past February the World Council of Churches, which brings together more than 340 churches worldwide, issued a similar resolution. While criticizing the severe human rights abuses inherent in the occupation and the construction of the illegal West Bank wall, these resolutions also affirm the right of the State of Israel to exist securely and peacefully, and they categorically reject the tragic cycle of indiscriminate violence perpetrated by both sides against innocent civilian populations.

Sanctions are a powerful and nonviolent means to insure that the Israeli government abides by international law and ends its appalling human rights violations in the occupied territories. Divestment resolutions are long overdue. We have witnessed the power of worldwide economic pressure in the collapse of the South African apartheid regime. If American civic institutions follow the same strategy, we could see the end of the Israeli occupation in our lifetime. Americans should stand up for human rights and justice, follow their own law and take the most productive step toward peace and security in the Middle East.

Shamai Leibowitz is a human rights lawyer from Tel Aviv.

For the entire text, see <http://www.thenation.com/docprint.mhtml?i+2005328&s=leibowitz>

MORALLY RESPONSIBLE INVESTMENT CONFERENCE

27-29 October 2005 Toronto, Canada

Canadian Friends of Sabeel is hosting an international conference to bring together church representatives, church related organizations, and non-governmental organizations to explore non-violent economic strategies, as a means to bring justice and peace in Israel-Palestine.

For more information contact: sabeel@rogers.com

From the United Church of Christ

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

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

Micah 4:2-4

SUMMARY 11

This resolution calls the church and the U.S. government to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in a just manner and requires the United Church of Christ's Corporate Social Responsibility Ministry

to begin the process of divestment from companies involved with Israel's illegal (by UN Security Council resolutions 242 and 338) occupations of the West Bank and Gaza, the building of the "security fence," and the Israeli settlements within Palestinian Territory.

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

BACKGROUND 24

Over the past decades, the United Church of Christ, through General Synod and through other UCC instrumentalities have used formal resolutions and statements to urge a just settlement to the Israel-Palestinian conflict. These words have not succeeded in solving the conflict. During the era of

apartheid in South Africa, the United Church of Christ, along with other denominations and organizations, successfully used divestment as a tool to bring justice to South Africa. Mindful that divestment has been a successful tool in the past, we urge the use of selective divestment in bringing justice to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The obvious initial candidate for selective divestment would be the Illinois-based Caterpillar Corporation. Their purpose-built machines have enabled, and are still enabling, the Israeli Defense Force to destroy increasingly more Palestinian homes and olive orchards. One of these machines was instrumental in the deliberate crushing to death of the young American peace volunteer (International Solidarity Movement) Rachel Corrie in Gaza on March 16, 2003. Rachel was the first non-Palestinian peace activist to be killed in the Occupied Territories by the IDF. She shared the fate of some 2300 Palestinians (the vast majority of them civilians) who were killed by Israeli troops or settlers during the Intifada from September 2000 to March 2003.

RESOLUTION 42

REMEMBERING all previous resolutions and statements regarding the Middle East expressed by the United Church of Christ and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) separately and collectively through the Common Global Ministries Board and the affirmation the denominations have made of the World Council of Churches' Decade to Overcome Violence, and WHEREAS the United Church of Christ, along with other denominations and organizations, successfully used divestment as a tool to bring justice in South Africa, and WHEREAS the United Church of Christ has repeatedly affirmed that the State of Israel has a right to exist, and that the Palestinian people also have a right to their own state, whether it is through a one-state or two-state solution, and WHEREAS the United Church of Christ has called for an end to anti-Semitism in the United States and around the world, and has passed a resolution to this effect as recently as GS 2002, and WHEREAS both the ancient Jewish people and the Palestinian people are known as Semitic and therefore charges of anti-Semitism are completely unfounded when people call for a just and equitable peace settlement in Israel/Palestine; that this resolution is based on both a pro-Israeli and a pro-Palestinian peoples perspective; that it is not anti-Semitic to criticize the Palestinian policy of Israeli governments; and WHEREAS, we condemn the violence on both sides of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, but also believe that the roots of terrorism begin in the unjust and inequitable situation in Israel/Palestine, and WHEREAS many corporations based in or doing business in the United States are directly supporting the illegal occupations of the West Bank and Gaza, the building of the "security fence," the ongoing



demolishing of Palestinian homes and olive orchards, and the continuation of (and ongoing construction of new) Israeli settlements within Palestinian territories illegally occupied by Israel since 1967,

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

1. Calls on the Corporate Social Responsibility Ministry (CSR) to begin the process of helping the Pension Board and the United Church Foundation selectively divest from companies involved with Israel's illegal occupations of the West Bank and Gaza, the construction of the "security fence," and the continuation of (and ongoing construction of new) Israeli settlements within Palestinian territories illegally occupied by Israel.
2. Calls on CSR, once criteria for selective divestment have been developed, to provide educational material to other instrumentalities within the UCC, including the regional conferences and local

churches, so that they may also consider selective divestment.

3. Calls on CSR, also, to develop an exit strategy that defines the end of the selective divestment policy-such as when Israel is out of the occupied territories and negotiating in good faith to develop a viable Palestinian state along guidelines similar to the unofficial Geneva Accord reached in the Fall of 2003 between Israeli and Palestinian peace representatives. Funding for the implementation of this resolution will be made in accordance with the overall mandates of the affected agencies and the funds available.

The Executive Council recommends that the resolution entitled "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" be referred to a General Synod Committee.

2005

SABEEL INTERNATIONAL WITNESS FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE VISIT

“Be not afraid,
speak out and
do not keep silent:
I am with you.”

Acts 18:9

Visit begins with lunch on Friday, October 28 and concludes with closing worship and dinner on Friday, November 4.

Witness Visit will include:

- Exposure trips to see the political “facts on the ground” in the West Bank
- Advocacy workshops
- Lectures by Palestinian and Israeli experts
- Visits to holy sites in Jerusalem and the Galilee
- Jerusalem’s Old City

For more information

visit our website: www.sabeel.org • e-mail: world@sabeel.org

Mark Your Calendars...

Sabeel’s 6th International Conference

THE FORGOTTEN FAITHFUL

The Challenges and Witness of Palestinian Christians

Oct 27 - Nov 3 (dates to be confirmed)

First International Young Adults Conference

Jerusalem

For more
information contact
Youth@sabeel.org

July 28- August 5, 2006 | For ages 18-26

Conference will include:

- Visits to Towns and Villages
- Cultural evenings
- Sharing experiences and ideas
- Volunteer experience
- Workshops and group discussions

Focus on:

- Christian community
- The political situation
- Challenges confronting Christian young adults worldwide

Purpose Statement *of* Sabeel

Sabeel is an ecumenical grassroots liberation theology movement among Palestinian Christians. Inspired by the life and teaching of Jesus Christ, this liberation theology seeks to deepen the faith of Palestinian Christians, promote unity among them, and lead them to act for justice and love. *Sabeel* strives to develop a spirituality based on justice, peace, non-violence, liberation, and reconciliation for the different national and faith communities. The word 'Sabeel' is Arabic for 'the way' and also a 'channel' or 'spring' of life-giving water.

Sabeel also works to promote a more accurate international awareness regarding the identity, presence, and witness of Palestinian Christians as well as their contemporary concerns. It encourages individuals and groups from around the world to work for a just, comprehensive, and enduring peace informed by truth and empowered by prayer and action.

For more information on *Friends of Sabeel* groups in your area please contact our International representatives or the Sabeel Center in Jerusalem.



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