include W Church Ministries
Additions Collegium - delegates (Cunnamel)

PROPOSED SUBSTITUTE RESOLUTION CONCERNING USE OF ECONOMIC LEVERAGE IN PROMOTING PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST

SUMMARY

This resolution calls on the United Church of Christ to exercise multiple strategies to promote peace among all of God's people in the Middle East.

BIBLICAL, THEOLOGICAL, AND ETHICAL RATIONALE

God's activity in human history has moved peoples from conflict to concord, God's desire for peace, broadly understood: the absence of war (Lev. 26:6); reliance on the abundance that God provides (Ex. 15, Ex. 17); harmony among peoples (Ps. 133); new relationships among those who have been separated by animosity (Lk 10:27-37). Moreover, God's prophets have demonstrated God's will for the faithful to invest their lives and their property, even when such investment seems foolhardy (Jer. 32). God's covenant with Israel remains unbroken (Rom. 9-11).

BACKGROUND

The world has witnessed unresolved conflict between the peoples whose social, economic and religious lives are rooted in the lands of the Middle East. The United Church of Christ has affirmed the right of Israel to exist and has deplored the violence directed against its people. At the same time the United Church of Christ has enduring relationships with Palestinians, including Palestinian Christians who suffer greatly under the occupation of their land.

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS the General Synod of the United Church of Christ has affirmed its commitment to Israel's safe and secure existence within internationally-recognized borders, neighboring an independent Palestinian state; and

WHEREAS the General Synod of the United Church of Christ has continued to advocate on behalf of justice toward a resolution of the Arab-Israeli-Palestinian conflict, advocacy and action which includes but is not limited to education about the realities on the ground and urging the US to play the role of honest broker; and

WHEREAS the Twenty-Third General Synod of the United Church of Christ affirmed its participation in and commitment to the World Council of Churches' Decade to Overcome Violence (2001), condemning all forms of violence including but not limited to the violence perpetuated in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict including acts of suicide bombings by Palestinians; and the use of force by Israelis in perpetuating occupation of Palestinian lands; and

WHEREAS General Synods of the United Church of Christ has been particularly mindful of its relationship in Christ with Palestinian Christians, and notably the mission relationships mutually developed over decades of engagement and presence; and

WHEREAS the General Synod of the United Church of Christ has affirmed its relationship to the Jewish community, condemning anti-Semitism in all its forms, and affirming that God's covenant with the Jewish community remains inviolate (1987); and

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48 WHEREAS the General Synod of the United Church of Christ has called for the use of economic
49 leverage on behalf of oppressed people in a variety of circumstances;
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51 THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the 25th General Synod calls upon the Covenanted
52 Ministries, Pension Boards, United Church Foundation, Conferences, local churches and
53 members to use economic leverage, including, but not limited to: advocating the reallocation of
54 U.S. foreign aid so that the militarization of the Middle East is constrained; making positive
55 contributions to groups and partners committed to the non-violent resolution of the conflict;
56 challenging the practices of corporations that gain from the continuation of the conflict; and
57 divesting from those companies that refuse to change their practices of gain from the
58 perpetuation of violence, including the Occupation; and
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60 FINALLY BE IT RESOLVED that all settings of the United Church of Christ are urged to
61 remain committed to interreligious dialogue and to participation with Jewish, Christian and
62 Muslim partners to work for peace in Israel-Palestine.
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64 The funding for the implementation of this Resolution will be made in accordance with the
65 overall mandate of the affected agencies and the funds available.

WHEREAS both the government of Israel and opposing extremist factions continue to perpetrate acts of violence most notably through the Israeli occupation of Palestinian land and through suicide bombings targeting Israeli civilians; and

WHEREAS there exists within peoples outside of Israel and Palestine a lamentable tendency to depict the Israeli-Palestinian conflict simplistically, assigning principal blame to one side or the other, in seeming ignorance of the extraordinarily complicated relationships among the peoples, histories, governments, religions, and the land of the Middle East; and

WHEREAS we are called by the example of Jesus Christ and by the United Church of Christ Statement of Faith to bear the cost of discipleship and to place ourselves alongside and among those who suffer; and

WHEREAS the Still-Speaking God compels us to value life over death and work to bring an end to violence;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the 25th General Synod of the United Church of Christ encourages the entire United Church of Christ in its many settings to use tools of economic leverage to promote and support peace in the Middle East; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the 25th General Synod affirms the socially responsible investment objectives of the Pension Boards and UCC Foundation and further calls on the Corporate Social Responsibility Ministry (CSR) to consider using economic leverage by the Pension Board and the United Church Foundation with companies involved with Israel's 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. At this critical time, we urge them to identify companies whose business practices continue to perpetuate violence and oppression, and companies whose business practices promote peace and justice in the Middle East. We also affirm the policies and practices of Wider Church Ministries and Common Global Ministries which seek ways to promote justice and peace in the Middle East; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the 25th General Synod urges the Covenanted Ministries, Conferences, Churches, and members of the United Church of Christ to invest their advocacy, volunteer work, and financial resources in those institutions and projects in the Middle East that have publicly condemned violence and demonstrated their refusal to engage in violence or to directly or indirectly support human rights violations, the occupation of land, or the denial by one people of the right of the other to exist; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the 25th General Synod directs these aforementioned settings of the church to provide materials that may be used by all settings of the church to discern how economic leverage can be used to support the development of Palestine and Israel as two independent, secure, economically viable states; and

91 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the 25th General Synod calls upon these settings to
92 create for and disseminate to the local churches study materials on the range of issues
93 contributing to violence and oppression in the Middle East and ways to be involved in
94 promoting peace; and
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96 FINALLY BE IT RESOLVED that the 25th General Synod encourages the Covenanted
97 Ministries, Conferences, Churches, and members of the United Church of Christ to
98 engage with the elected leaders of the United States of America in advocating for foreign
99 policies and allocation of foreign aid that do not favor one state or one people over
100 another, and that consistently condemn any acts of violence regardless of their
101 motivation, including physical violence, economic violence, and the dispossession of
102 land.
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104 The funding for the implementation of this Resolution will be made in accordance with
105 the overall mandate of the affected agencies and the funds available.