

**Title:** Ethical Investment for Peace in Palestine and Israel  
**Origin:** General Secretary, General Council  
Permanent Committee Programs for Mission and Ministry  
Justice, Global and Ecumenical Relations Unit-Wide Committee

The 39th General Council 2006 is called to prayerfully discern the ministry of The United Church of Canada into the future. This relates to ethical investment and the call from partners as we are reminded of our missiology - affirmed by previous General Councils - of heeding the call of partners, and walking with them in solidarity and accompaniment in God's mission of justice. We are also reminded that when one part of the Body suffers, we all suffer.

The issue of ethical investment in Palestine and Israel comes to the Justice, Global and Ecumenical Relations Unit of The United Church of Canada through its mandate, which states that the Unit seeks to:

*Work mutually with global partners sharing people and resources in God's mission, including acting and advocating in solidarity in response to partners' identified priorities.*

At its April 2005 meeting, the Justice, Global and Ecumenical Relations Unit Committee approved a motion recommending ethical investment for peace in Palestine and Israel. This was forwarded to the Permanent Committee on Programs for Mission and Ministry in September 2005 for review, and brought before the Executive of the General Council in October 2005. The Executive approved the following motion, requesting the General Secretary to forward the attached proposal on ethical investment for peace in Palestine and Israel to the 39th General Council 2006 Thunder Bay:

The Executive of the General Council:

- Requests the General Secretary to forward to the 39th General Council 2006 for consideration, the proposal on an "ethical investment policy in Israel and Palestine" with increased emphasis on reinvestment;
- Encourages the General Secretary to strengthen the research necessary to support such a policy, and to continue to seek ecumenical and interfaith collaboration on ethical investment initiatives.

With this directive, the Justice, Global and Ecumenical Relations Unit has undertaken research, in collaboration with Kairos: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives, on two aspects of pro-active ethical investment in Palestine and Israel.

### **Theological Rationale for Ethical Investment**

*To Seek Justice & Resist Evil: Towards a Global Economy for All God's People*, adopted by the 37th General Council 2000, stated that "the Church's faith, rooted in Scripture and nourished by countless examples of human community, looks to the new society, God's *shalom*, which Jesus and the prophets proclaimed. *Shalom* is the biblical word which points to the fulfilment of God's purpose for humankind: people living together in community, in just relations with one another,

in harmony with creation and in fellowship with God. We see the economic aspect of *shalom* in this passage from Isaiah 65:21-23:

They shall build houses and inhabit them;  
they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit.  
They shall not build and another inhabit;  
they shall not plant and another eat...  
They shall not labour in vain,  
or bear children for calamity;  
for they shall be the offspring of the blessed of the Lord.”

The 37th General Council 2000 therefore called on members of The United Church of Canada “to join in reflection and action toward economic justice for all God’s people as a matter of faith, challenging economic policies, institutions, systems and relationships that destroy human well-being and the integrity of creation.” From this call arise the theological convictions woven throughout this proposal.

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## BACKGROUND

The United Church of Canada has consistently striven for peace with justice in the Middle East, working ecumenically and in concert with global partners in the region. The United Church has affirmed support for the State of Israel and its right to peace and security. Colleagues within Jewish/Christian dialogue networks have encouraged the Church to continue to affirm this strongly and directly in the context of any statement on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The United Church has and continues to condemn acts of terrorism and violence by Palestinian extremists, as well as state terror, and continues in its conviction that, among other things, a just peace will require the dismantling of Israeli settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem and an end to the occupation. These positions also reflect the stance of the United Nations.

In August 2003, the 38th General Council 2003 voted on Resolution 83 in two parts. It adopted Part 1 as follows:

The 38th General Council 2003 recorded its conviction that a just peace in the Middle East will require:

- the recognition by the Israeli Government of a fully sovereign State of Palestine with secure borders, and territorial contiguity encompassing the West Bank and Gaza Strip;
- the recognition by the emergent State of Palestine and other neighbouring Arab States of Israel’s right to exist as a Jewish state within safe and secure borders;
- the dismantling of Israeli settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip;
- the ending of suicide bombings as well as other forms of violent attacks directed towards civilians on the part of Palestinians;
- the withdrawal of Israeli military forces to pre-1967 borders and the ending of all forms of collective punishment and violence by the Israeli Government on the Palestinian people;

- the recognition by the Israeli Government and the emergent State of Palestine of equal citizenship rights, protections, privileges and responsibilities for all their citizens regardless of religious or national origins.

A vote of the 38th General Council 2003 defeated Part 2 of Resolution 83 which called on:

The membership, congregations and organizations of The United Church of Canada:

- to resist any support to the expansion and maintenance of Israeli settlements in the West Bank and Gaza including divestment from any Canadian and international companies involved in construction, servicing or marketing of goods related to the settlements; and to direct the Executive of the General Council to direct the appropriate Permanent Committee to provide research and direction to the Church on divestment and other strategies of peaceful resistance.

However, since 2003 the situation in the region has become significantly worse. The Executive was asked to adopt the attached proposal on Ethical Investment for Peace in Palestine and Israel in light of the urgent call from partners in the region. The Executive referred the proposal to the 39th General Council 2006 Thunder Bay.

## CONTEXT

### Partners' voices

Partners in the Middle East, specifically the Middle East Council of Churches (MECC)<sup>1</sup>, and Sabeel<sup>2</sup> have urgently renewed their call to the global ecumenical family of Christians to stand in solidarity with the suffering and oppressed in the conflict, and to act in accordance with our Christian faith that calls us to seek justice and resist evil.

*We in the Middle East Council of Churches see [ethical investment] as putting our faith into practice and affirming the insistence of Christian teachings that we do not aid directly or indirectly unjust systems nor promote unequal relations based on sheer power and control. (Dr. Guirguis Saleh, General Secretary, MECC, February 23, 2005 – Appendix A)*

*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. (Sabeel: "A Call for Morally Responsible Investment", Palm Sunday, 2005 – Appendix B).*

There exists a heightened sense of urgency for the global ecumenical family and the international community to act *now*, as the crisis escalates and the situation on the ground rapidly deteriorates.

<sup>1</sup> The Middle East Council of Churches (MECC) is a fellowship of the Eastern Orthodox, Oriental Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant church families in the Middle East. MECC has been a UCC ecumenical partner through the former Inter-Church Action and now KAIROS since its inception in 1974.

<sup>2</sup> Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Centre is a grassroots ecumenical theological movement that seeks to make the Gospel contextually relevant for Palestinians, and to develop a spirituality based on justice, peace, non-violence, liberation and reconciliation for the different national and faith communities. Sabeel (an Arabic word meaning 'the way' or 'channel') has been a UCC partner since it was formed in 1992.

Recent reports from regional partners, The United Church of Canada personnel serving in the region, and members of the global ecumenical family have confirmed that conditions have so deteriorated that Palestinians are driven to the edge of despair and hopelessness.

While the world was looking at the Israeli withdrawal from Gaza, the possibility of a two-state solution with a viable, contiguous, independent Palestinian State with East Jerusalem as its capital, and living as neighbours with a secure Israel, remains far from being assured. The current situation is also having a negative impact on Israeli society, which suffers from a growing gap between the rich and poor: child poverty and hunger is growing<sup>3</sup>, as is the percentage of the elderly who live in poverty and don't have enough to eat; teenage suicide rates are soaring; and the vision of the future is blurry for the youth as the focus on security through force is a dominant aspect of Israeli life. An ethical investment plan is intended to support peace and justice for both Israelis and Palestinians in line with the wishes of both Israeli and Palestinian partners.

Partners have told us that the dismantling of Israeli settlements in Gaza could be positive but recent statements by the Israeli Prime Minister make it clear that it is a part of a strategy to re-draw borders and seize Jerusalem and much of the best land on the West Bank without negotiation. On August 21, 2005, the General Secretary of the Middle East Council of Churches, Dr. Guirguis Saleh, stated that while the Gaza withdrawal is a welcome first step, he urged *“that this be a first step towards the withdrawal from all Palestinian territories occupied in 1967 so that the Palestinian people can enjoy a happy and stable life that opens possibilities for development and advancement in an atmosphere of peace and justice among the peoples of the region. The MECC prays also that Jerusalem returns to a city of brotherhood and peace.”*

The World Council of Churches' Commission of the Churches on International Affairs (CCIA) has provided a very useful lens through which member churches can evaluate the Gaza pullout, based on seven signs of peace (Appendix C).

The United Church of Canada partner Bat Shalom<sup>4</sup> has shared that despite the emphasis on the pain associated with the Gaza withdrawal, the exercise clearly demonstrated to Israelis that it can be done: the settlements are not inviolable and can be dismantled. The United Nations, partners and previous General Councils call for the dismantling of all settlements in East Jerusalem and the West Bank as well.

The settlement project is seeking to transform the illegal annexation of Palestinian land in East Jerusalem and the West Bank into a permanent, political fact on the ground and trump international law. Israeli peace groups report that the Sub-committee of the Local Committee for Planning and Construction in Jerusalem has confirmed a plan to erect a Jewish neighbourhood in the Palestinian Quarter of the Old City of Jerusalem. The Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions (ICAHD) reports that, according to the plan, 30 housing units will be built to

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<sup>3</sup> Poverty Report, Latet – Israeli Humanitarian Aid, 2004

Annual Survey Report 2002-2003, National Research Institute – Administration and Research Planning (Jerusalem: April 2004).

<sup>4</sup> Bat Shalom is an Israeli national grassroots organization of women working together for a genuine peace grounded in a just resolution of the Israel-Palestine conflict, respect for human rights, and an equal voice for Jewish and Arab women within Israeli society. Together with the Jerusalem Centre for Women (a Palestinian women's organization) they comprise "The Jerusalem Link". Both are ecumenical partners of UCC through KAIROS.

accommodate some 150 people. The Palestinians in East Jerusalem live in socio-economic suffering; therefore a permanent settlement in such a vicinity, with better living conditions than those of the Palestinian residents, would lead to provocation and a serious political and social crisis. ICAHD states that:

“...the proposed plan is also a continuation of a consistent Israeli policy whose purpose is a violation of the balance between Palestinians and Israelis in Jerusalem, creating by this policy a Jewish majority in East Jerusalem. Increasing Israeli control over Palestinian land in East Jerusalem is intended unilaterally to create facts on the ground. With such policy Israel is violating international law, which does not recognize Israeli annexation of East Jerusalem, occupied in June 1967. Resolution 478 of the UN Security Council declares the annexation of East Jerusalem to be illegal under international law, and according to article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention it is illegal for an occupying power to deport or transfer parts of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies.”<sup>5</sup>

A report on October 31, 2005 also issued by the ICAHD says that ultranationalist Jewish organizations have taken over buildings in Jerusalem's walled Old City and nearby environs in an attempt to thwart any future peace deal with the Palestinians. These actions to change facts on the ground emphasize the real urgency of the situation, as they have serious implications for the possibility of a just and peaceful resolution of the conflict.

The route and placement of the separation wall, construction of which has been condemned in July 2004 by the International Court of Justice and Israeli human rights groups such as B'Tselem<sup>6</sup>, are annexing land and water sources in the West Bank. The Israeli government has declared its intention to determine unilaterally its final borders, which will include the major West Bank settlements and claim greater Jerusalem – without negotiations. The continuous extension of the separation barrier around West Bank towns and East Jerusalem is accelerating. The separation wall epitomizes the dispossession of Palestinians. Its construction has forcefully and violently cut off Palestinians from their land, families, schools, hospitals and work, and could destroy any possibility of a viable, contiguous, independent Palestinian state with connectivity to Gaza. The argument that it provides security is inconsistent with its current route, proving instead that the Israeli Government is changing facts on the ground in a manner that prejudices the outcome of possible future negotiations with the Palestinian Authority. A September 2005 joint report by B'Tselem and Bimkom<sup>7</sup> provides in-depth analysis of the expansion plans of four settlements in the West Bank<sup>8</sup>. Construction has only just begun in the case of some settlements – a clear violation of UN resolutions and the Fourth Geneva Convention<sup>9</sup>. This also contradicts Israeli government and legal official statements that the barrier is to protect against existing security threats. The report ends by stating that the primary

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<sup>5</sup> Ha'aretz, August 31, 2005

<sup>6</sup> B'Tselem – The Israeli Information Centre for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories acts primarily to change Israeli policy in the Occupied Territories and ensure that the Israeli government respects the rights of residents there and complies with international law.

<sup>7</sup> Bimkom - Planners for Planning Rights was established in May 1999 by planners and architects with the goal of strengthening the connection between human rights and spatial planning in Israel.

<sup>8</sup> B'Tselem and Bimkom, “Under the Guise of Security: Routing the Separation Barrier to Enable Israeli Settlement Expansion on the West Bank”, September 2005

<sup>9</sup> The Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, Article 47, which proscribes the annexation of occupied territory, in whole or in part, by the occupying power.

goal of setting the barrier's route - expanding the settlements and protecting the economic interests of Israeli real-estate developers – is itself illegal.

### **Ecumenical Voices**

Momentum is growing among Christian churches to act as the gospel calls us to. In July 2004, the Presbyterian Church in the USA (PCUSA) took the step of initiating “a phased, selective divestment of church funds from those companies whose business in Israel is found to be directly or indirectly causing harm to innocent people, Palestinian or Israeli”.

In February 2005, at a meeting of its Central Committee, the World Council of Churches, of which The United Church of Canada is a member, called on its 347 member churches to consider economic measures it described as “equitable, transparent and non-violent” to protest illegal activities in the occupied territories, including possible divestment from or boycott of companies operating in the occupied territories.

In June 2005, the Anglican Consultative Council voted unanimously in favour of a resolution urging its member churches to “examine their investments to make sure companies in which they have holdings don't support either the occupation or Palestinian violence against innocent Israelis.”

In July 2005, at its General Synod meeting in Atlanta, the United Church of Christ in the USA voted in favour of a resolution calling on its membership to use economic leverage to promote peace in the Middle East.

At its August 31 - September 6, 2005 meeting held in Jerusalem and Bethlehem, the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Council adopted a statement saying its members had encountered "the [Israeli] separation wall and found shocking its impact on the daily lives of Palestinians". Representatives of LWF member churches stated that their stay had “opened the eyes of many of us to the daily sufferings of the Palestinian people, often not shown to us by the media, and in which context our member church [the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land] speaks boldly a message of hope and reconciliation.”

In October 2005, the Executive of the Episcopal Church USA directed its Social Responsibility in Investments Committee, to use the church's investments to encourage positive change in the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians.

Within The United Church of Canada, Toronto Conference is engaged in discussion and decision-making around the implementation of its motion for ethical investment in support of a just peace in the Middle East, approved at the 79th Annual Meeting of Toronto Conference in 2003.

The United Church of Canada is strengthening partnership and ecumenical co-operation in the region. Chris and Susan Ferguson (Toronto Conference) are currently serving as overseas personnel in Palestine and Israel in ecumenical initiatives of the Heads of Churches of Jerusalem, the MECC and the WCC. Larry Harder (2006, Hamilton Conference), David LeGrand (2006, Manitou Conference), Desmond Parsons (2005, Newfoundland and Labrador Conference), Laura

Sundberg (2004, Saskatchewan Conference) and Tad Mitsui (2003, Alberta and Northwest Conference) have served as ecumenical accompaniers with the WCC initiative of the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI), witnessing in solidarity and accompaniment to the violence, despair and desperation that call us to move beyond statements to action.

### **Interfaith Voices**

The United Church of Canada continues on the journey of renewing faithful witness to our relationship with Judaism through thoughtful and prayerful study of the document *Bearing Faithful Witness: United Church-Jewish Relations Today*, and dialogue with the Jewish community, principally through the Canadian Christian Jewish Consultation (CCJC), of which the Canadian Jewish Congress is a member.

The issue of ethical investment has been an item of discussion in the Canadian Christian Jewish Consultation (CCJC) for some time, notably at the time of the United Church motion discussed at the 38th General Council 2003. In September 2004, the issue was again raised, in response to the actions of the Presbyterian Church-USA, the WCC, and the Anglican Peace and Justice Network. Discussions continued at meetings in February, April, June and September, 2005. The CCJC has been informed of Toronto Conference discussions around implementation of their 2003 motion, and that The United Church of Canada has been working on a proposal. Our commitment is to be transparent about our intentions, and to that end the decision to move forward with this proposal to the 39th General Council 2006 Thunder Bay, and a copy of the proposal, have been circulated to CCJC members.

It is clear in discussions at CCJC that agreement to this proposal will be viewed negatively and become a source of tension and pain in our relationship with Jewish members of the Consultation. We will be accused of antisemitism by those who see ethical investment strategies as fuelling anti-Jewish sentiments. Indeed, there are some who suggest that most recent critique of Israeli policy expresses hostility to Israel and is, therefore, antisemitic. However, our conviction is that we take these actions in response to destructive Israeli government policies, consistent with a long tradition of critiquing the policies of the Canadian government and those of other governments around the world, when those policies have failed to uphold the rights and dignity of all citizens. The ethical investment strategies being recommended are consistent with actions we have previously taken in response to injustice in Guatemala, Myanmar (Burma), Nigeria, Philippines, South Africa and Sudan; and with our commitment to global economic justice affirmed in *To Seek Justice and Resist Evil: Toward a Global Economy for All God's People*.

We will continue to dialogue. In the United States, Christian and Jewish leaders participated in a joint delegation to the Middle East in September 2005, pledging to continue to work together for peace despite disagreements over ethical investment policies. Possibilities for working together in Canada include a proposed CCJC trip to the Middle East.

Thus The United Church of Canada is called to discern the path of justice while seeking to maintain a stance of care and respect for our Jewish sisters and brothers. In so doing, we bear in mind the policy statement on United Church-Jewish relations adopted by the 38th General

Council 2003, arising from the study “*Bearing Faithful Witness.*” We have stated that: “We believe that our faith calls us to repent when the church has been unfaithful in its witness by not loving Jews as neighbours” and have acknowledged “a history of anti-Judaism and antisemitism within Christianity as a whole, including The United Church of Canada.” We have affirmed “the significance of Judaism as at once a religion, a people, and a covenant community;” “that the State of Israel has the right to exist in peace and security;” and “our common calling with Jews and others to align ourselves with God's world-mending work.”

It is also important to note the work towards a statement on the relationship of The United Church of Canada and Islam taking place in the study “*That We May Know Each Other.*” The proposed statement would affirm a journey towards reconciliation, understanding and cooperation with our Muslim neighbours and encourage all people of The United Church of Canada to seek out opportunities to work together with Muslims to seek justice and resist evil for the sake of the world we all inhabit.

As with all our work for justice and right-relationship, we place these actions in the framework of “whole world ecumenism,” developed in “*Mending the World,*” which calls The United Church of Canada to be engaged in “God's work of healing, sharing the good news of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and making common cause with all people of good will, whether they be of faith or not, for the creation of a world that is just, participatory and sustainable.”

Partners living in the region are badly in need of encouragement. They welcome every small sign. As Jean Zaru, a Quaker from Ramallah, says, “We live for Hope and we live by Hope. Now it is all we have”.

### **Why an ethical investment strategy for peace in Palestine and Israel?**

In doing so, The United Church of Canada will be acting in concert with the wider global ecumenical family on the words of the gospel which calls for us to work for peace and seek justice. In acting for justice and peace, we will be challenging our own complicity in the systems of violence and economic oppression that destroy homes and take away livelihoods (Isaiah 3:13-15; Psalm 52:6-8; Psalm 58:1-2).

We will be also be acting in accordance with our mandate, goals and stated positions in key documents such as *Mending the World* and *To Seek Justice and Resist Evil*.

Our principle of listening to and heeding the call of partners for solidarity, accompaniment and advocacy will be upheld through direct action.

The General Council will be working in synchronicity with Toronto Conference.

The introduction of an ethical investment strategy would build on the United Church's long standing commitment to peace in the Middle East, and our history of using investment funds in a socially responsible way. For example, the 23rd General Council 1968 established a Committee on Investing Church Funds for Social Purposes. The committee focussed its attention on how churches can use their investment funds proactively to meet the housing needs of people with low incomes. Today, the United Church has hundreds of thousands of dollars invested in the

Canadian Alternative Investment Co-operative that still benefits housing initiatives in Canada, and in Oikocredit<sup>10</sup> in solidarity with global partners. Congregations are encouraged to consider their own investment strategies as outlined in *Mission and Investing: A Guide for The United Church of Canada Congregations and Organizations* published in 2002.

In tandem with investment strategies, the United Church has a long and strong practice of divestment strategies both with Canada and multinational corporations. Specifically, we would be fulfilling the call of the 37th General Council 2000 to:

Respond to the ethical issues related to the impact of investment on the lives of people ... by examining further aspects of ethical investment (beyond alcohol, military, and tobacco prohibitions) in relation to church investments and investment policy... ensure there is an instrument for ethical evaluation of investments available to all United Church members, congregations, and related organizations.

*To Seek Justice and Resist Evil*, 2000 Record of Proceedings, page 849

## **PRO-ACTIVE INVESTMENT STRATEGY**

The ethical investment strategy is not new to the church. It is based on an existing mechanism of good stewardship of resources, given the history of The United Church of Canada with Alternative Investments and its policy as set out in the November 1987 motion of the Executive of General Council on *A Request for the Authority to make Alternative Investments from the General Funds of the Church*. In this particular proposal, appropriate General Council bodies would be requested to provide materials that may be used by all settings of the church to discern the kinds of economic leverage that they can use to contribute to the development of communities in Palestine and Israel as part of two independent, secure, and economically viable states. The missiological framework we engage in is first: listening to partners on the ground about their experience and then, in response, discerning an ethical use of the gift of resources in our stewardship to act in support of justice.

## **INVESTMENT**

The Justice, Global and Ecumenical Relations Unit has consulted with partners and several development, relief and humanitarian agencies and groups in the region, including the Palestinian Fair Trade Association, the Lutheran World Federation Offices in Jerusalem, Jerusalem Center for Women, the Near East Council of Churches Committee for Refugee Works, the International Christian Committee, the Center for Jewish-Arab Economic Development, the Alternative Tourism Group and others. As directed by the October 2005 Executive resolution, we are excited by the possibility of ecumenical cooperation on ethical investment with a group of churches based in the US who are also considering pro-active investment strategies. We are also exploring opportunities to work with interfaith partners.

The Palestinian Fair Trade Association (PFTA)

The Palestinian Fair Trade Association provides the best option, based on the criterion of investment rather than grants. The Palestinian Fair Trade Association is a national Palestinian

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<sup>10</sup> Oikocredit is a worldwide cooperative society which promotes global justice by challenging individuals, churches and others to share their resources through socially responsible investments and by empowering disadvantaged people with credit.

union of farming and producing cooperatives, traders and processors that promotes and supports fair and equitable trading principles, developed locally by the PFTA, and compatible with international fair trade principles. Fair trade ensures that farmers, workers and producers are paid a fair price for their goods produced under healthy, safe and equitable working conditions for all those involved. The philosophy of fair trade not only entails higher returns to producers and farmers but also includes supporting producing communities' capacities for sustainable development.

#### **What individuals in The United Church of Canada can do**

*Assisting farmers in obtaining organic certification* at approximately \$250 per farm could be taken on by individual congregations who could donate the money to a revolving fund which would assist participant farmers by funding the initial certification expenses. The returns of the certification will be substantial enough to help farmers pay for their own certification in subsequent years. This project will empower farmers by adding value to their product that increases their income, provides a market for their products and increases social capital through participation in the co-operative and collective work.

Individuals can also support this initiative through *purchasing of Palestinian Fair Trade products* such as the Zatoun Olive Oil.

#### **What congregations in The United Church of Canada can do**

Congregations could support a number of micro-credit projects through the Palestinian Fair Trade Association. Examples of these include:

*Support of Sun-dried Couscous Cooperatives* which currently consist of two co-operatives of five members each. The PFTA will extend a loan of CAD \$600 for each member. Funds may be used for the purchase of the couscous ingredients and necessary kitchenware. Training and specification for production will be provided, and the produced couscous purchased from members on a regular basis. This project will empower ten women members by providing them with the capacity to produce and earn income, as well as a market for their products.

There are similar micro-credit projects of differing amounts for the production of sun-dried tomatoes, olive oil soap, wild flower seed and pickled green olives.

#### **What the General Council Office can do**

*The financing of an olive oil press and storage facility, estimated at US \$260,000.* The United Church of Canada, together with ecumenical partners, could invest in a low-interest loan with an equitable repayment strategy to enable the establishment of such a facility, providing hundreds of olive farmers in the destabilized northern West Bank a reason for hope. Olive oil is required to be stored in large airtight containers in a cool, dark place. A substantial amount of farmers are unable to maintain the quality of the oil during the hot summer months. The Palestinian Fair Trade Association proposes to build a 350 square meter underground olive oil storage facility, which would be designed to store up to 150 tonnes of olive oil in premium storage conditions where quality would be maintained year round. More storage capacity would be added as the need arises.

We are currently exploring possibilities for supporting joint Jewish-Arab initiatives through conversations with The Centre for Jewish-Arab Economic Development (CJAED) - Building Business Bridges (BBB) Program. The "Building Business Bridges" (BBB) Unit aims to create and train a young business leadership comprised of Israeli Arabs, Jews and Palestinian leaders who will build economic cooperation and initiate Arab-Jewish business ventures. The Program serves as a multi-cultural meeting point enabling participants to learn, understand and respect the different backgrounds from which their colleagues arrive. By lifting psychological and historical barriers through the personal knowledge acquired during the program, the BBB MBA facilitates social relationships and business opportunities for all involved. The goal is that, in turn, the relationships forged will facilitate the building of business and peace bridges between all three populations involved that will enable knowledge-sharing which can transform spontaneous business ideas into on-the-ground reality.

It is important to recognise that there are strengths and limitations to the option of *investment*. In using "investment" as a tool for peace-building, we affirm our understanding that when people are able to earn a fair wage and provide for their families, they reclaim their right to dignity and stability, and nurture hope for the future. It is our hope and our belief that by investing in peace in Palestine and Israel, we will be helping to promote dignity and stability, and provide hope without requiring the kinds of acquiescence to structures that neither promote nor support a just solution to the conflict.

However, we must also ask ourselves if investment is *sufficient* response to the injustice of the occupation. Investment may enable Palestinians to live "comfortably" under occupation, and Israelis to continue living with a false sense of security behind a concrete barrier. It does not adequately address the fundamental injustice of the occupation and its effects on both Palestinians and Israelis, nor does it challenge the systems of social and economic oppression which profit from the occupation.

### **Divestment**

The purpose of divesting is to say 'no' to the injustice that ignores the suffering of Palestinians and Israelis, and pockets the profits from occupation. It is a resounding 'yes' to justice and peace through a principled decision to invest in hope for Palestinians and Israelis. Such engagement with the corporate sector is intended to support prayerful stewardship of resources, and to facilitate education within our churches and communities regarding this aspect of corporate social responsibility.

In direct response to the request of partners in Palestine and Israel, we have also been working with Kairos to research and assess, within the Canadian context, companies that could potentially be named for divestment. The Presbyterian Church of the USA's list of companies includes: Caterpillar, Citigroup, Motorola, ITT Industries and United Technologies. The Toronto Conference of The United Church of Canada lists Caterpillar, Boeing, General Electric, Lockheed Martin and Canadian Aviation Electronics.

### **TORONTO CONFERENCE**

At its 79th Annual Meeting in 2003, Toronto Conference approved the following motion:

*“Toronto Conference calls on the presbyteries, churches, mission units and associated bodies (such as the Toronto United Church Council) within its bounds, as well as its 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-recognised homeland and state;*
- *Recognize that the path of peace is dependent on the ending of the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, including the withdrawal of Israeli settlements there;*
- *Commit itself to:*
  1. *Join the World Council of Churches international boycott of goods produced in the illegal Israeli settlements in the occupied territories;*
  2. *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;*
  3. *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;*
  4. *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.”*

A Task Group on Ethical Investment was struck reporting to the World Affairs Committee, and much research done. The current campaign initiated in Toronto Conference seeks to educate congregations through an annual Holy Land Awareness Week, a letter-writing campaign to urge Canadian politicians to adhere to our contractual obligations under international law (to require Israel to abide by the Fourth Geneva Convention to which Canada and Israel are both signatories), and a petition to the Government of Canada to modify the *Canada-Israel Free Trade Agreement* to disallow products from the illegal settlements. The campaign also calls for divestment from companies that profit from the illegal occupation by production and sale of military hardware. The campaign also includes a boycott of products of the two companies that sell products to average Canadian consumers: Caterpillar and General Electric.

### **General Council Offices and Divestment**

The United Church of Canada investments are managed through the General Council Offices by an investment company, and funds in the portfolio are sometimes shifted to different companies at different times. While potential investment options for the pension and investment funds administered by the national office are carefully screened, the situation with regard to congregational and individual investments and their compliance with recommendations about ethical screens is unknown at present. Accordingly, it is difficult to say, at any one time, what we as an institutional body or as individual members of the United Church own shares in and what we do not.

The General Council's current screening practices already filter out companies engaged in practices that might endanger peace, justice or the integrity of creation. As a result, this already includes corporations that other faith communities have identified as impeding peace in the Middle East. The specific implications of approving the proposed resolution would be to enable

the General Council offices to research opportunities to invest pro-actively for peace, confirm identification of companies that are engaged in practices that are a barrier to peace, initiate dialogue with these same companies, and, where dialogue fails, to publicly call for divestment from those companies that refuse to change their practices of gain from the perpetuation of violence, including the occupation and terrorism. Where possible, the United Church would pursue its ethical investment options both ecumenically and interfaith.

### **What individuals, congregations, presbyteries, Conferences and the General Council Office can do**

In assessing which companies to engage for possible divestment as strategy of last resort, the church as we understand it is not only the corporate institution but thousands of investors and mutual fund owners, seeking wisdom and direction in their efforts to live out Jesus' proclamation that "*where your treasure is, there is your heart also (Luke 12:34)*".

In its document "*A Call for Morally Responsible Investment: A Nonviolent Response to the Occupation*", Sabeel has developed a set of criteria which can guide both The United Church of Canada and individuals in determining the kinds of corporate practices by which companies may be profiting from the ongoing occupation. The United Church of Canada could call on congregations and individuals 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 on occupied land or settlement infrastructure<sup>11</sup>.

Using this as a lens, the United Church and its members can choose also to participate in campaigns with ecumenical, interfaith and secular partners. Whenever possible, the United Church seeks to act ecumenically.

The strategy outlined above is also in keeping with the *Corporate Responsibility Guidelines* issued by the Investment Committee in July 1984. Those guidelines speak of selling of shares "*as a last resort*". This is similar to the Sabeel approach to this question. Partners stress that, after nearly 40 years of occupation, that time has come.

As responsible owners and investors, the ethical investment options the United Church would pursue as a result of the ethical investment proposal regarding Israel and Palestine would include:

- continuing to invest in companies that promote peace and justice by supporting or contributing to the economic viability of communities in Israel and Palestine;

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<sup>11</sup> Sabeel, *A Call for Morally Responsible Investment: A Non-Violent Response to the Occupation*, 15-16.

- divestment from companies whose activities or products support and maintain the occupation structure in post-1967 occupied territories not recognised by international law, including the separation barrier along its current route, the maintenance of settlements in the occupied territories, or violent acts of terrorism that harm innocent Israelis and Palestinians, which would follow a four-part strategy with actual divestment as the course of last resort:
  - avoidance strategy: avoiding investment in a company that was complicit;
  - engagement strategy: discussions with companies and corporations to exercise pressure to encourage them to operate in an ethical and just manner;
  - reinvestment strategy: moving funds on ethical grounds from companies complicit in wrongdoing to those that engage in ethical business or reinvest in a company after positive change;
  - divestment: withdrawing funds from companies that support or contribute to the occupation and violence that harms innocent Israelis and Palestinians.

It is important to remember that the above initiative would only be one aspect of the United Church's multiple areas of advocacy in pursuit of peace and justice for the people of both Israel and Palestine. Additional work continues with our long standing partners such as the Middle East Council of Churches and its Department of Service to Palestinian Refugees, the Jerusalem Ecumenical Office, the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel of the World Council of Churches, and in Canada through the Canadian Christian–Jewish Consultation as well as numerous local initiatives where United Church members are actively committed to participation with Jewish, Christian and Muslim neighbours to work for peace in both Israel and the Palestinian Territories.

## Appendix A



From: Guirguis I Saleh, General Secretary  
 Sent: Wednesday, February 23, 2005 11:09 PM  
 To: Gichuru, Wendy  
 Area secretary, East and Central Africa and the Middle East  
 The United Church of Canada

Greetings and Peace from the Middle East Council of Churches (MECC).

I share with you and with UCC the deep concern for the Israeli – Palestinian problem from a perspective of partnership that would struggle for a just and lasting peace.

As to the issues of divestment, boycott and sanctions with regard to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the unjust occupation to the Palestinian lands, I would like to inform you that MECC together with the DSPR (Department of Service to Palestinian refugees) had discussed these issues in a Round Table with partners in October 2004 in which two representatives from KAIROS Canada were present.

Divestment, as presented and contextualized by PCUSA, is not seen as a punishment measure. Rather it serves as a constructive one to expedite the process of ending occupation and promoting eventual peace and reconciliation. It was made clear in the Round Table meeting mentioned above that divestment is not across the board but rather focused on those enterprises that touch on the military or contribute to the infraction of the basic human rights of the Palestinian population. While the idea of divestment and boycott of Israel would naturally be strongly opposed by pressure groups in North America, particularly among Jewish groups and communities, they need also to see that without a fair and lasting solution to the predicament of the Palestinian people, the unjustness of the situation would eventually hurt the chances of all peoples in the Middle East for an acceptable solution to the thorny problems of Arab-Israeli relations.

From this perspective and in this context, we in the MECC consider divestment policy as a clear and sound message to the Israeli government of the need to end its occupation of Palestinian lands and to stop all measures that would infract on the basic rights of the Palestinian population. Accordingly, we lend the policy of divestment our unconditional support hoping that it will help expedite the process of bringing peace and reconciliation closer to the troubled holy land and its peoples.

While I realize that the divestment question is liable to raise many sensitivities particularly in your part of the world, we in the MECC see it as putting our faith into practice and affirming the insistence of Christian teachings that we do not aid directly or indirectly unjust systems nor promote unequal relations based on sheer power and control.

I take this opportunity to wish you and UCC my best as you embark on this debate and as you proceed to formulate a position.

Be assured of our prayers and sincere partnership and availability whenever needed.

Sincerely,

Guirguis Saleh  
General Secretary  
Middle East Council of Churches

**Appendix B**

From: Sabeel, Canadian Friends  
Sent: Monday, March 28, 2005 10:01 PM  
To: Middle East Working Group (MEWG)

Palm Sunday 2005

A NONVIOLENT RESPONSE TO THE OCCUPATION:  
A Call for Morally Responsible Investment

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 scepticism, 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.

### **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 honoured, 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.

Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center  
PO Box 49084  
91491 Jerusalem  
Sabeel@sabeel.org

## Appendix C



### World Council of Churches Conseil œcuménique des Eglises Consejo Mundial de Iglesias Ökumenischer Rat der Kirchen

Geneva, 22 August 2005

#### **CCIA Background Information On International Affairs**

#### **To evaluate the Gaza pullout look for Seven Signs of Peace**

This brief provides information to help churches discern what is happening in Israel and Palestine now and in the months ahead. It is also an invitation for member churches and ecumenical partners to watch, pray and act for peace guided by the deep commitment within the WCC fellowship to the legitimate rights and wellbeing of both Israelis and Palestinians.

Our purpose in writing is to assist with evaluation of the pullout of settlers and soldiers from Gaza, an event that cannot be understood in isolation. Below are seven signs to watch for—in Gaza and other conflict zones—that will indicate in the months ahead whether the withdrawal enhances prospects for peace.

**Sign One: Life for the residents of Gaza improves, including human rights.** After the pullout, some 1,400,000 people in one of the most densely populated places on earth are to receive a small increase in physical, psychological, political and economic space. About 8,000 more privileged people, the settlers, are being moved. Thankfully, it was done in a manner that respects their dignity. To monitor this sign, watch Gaza to see if:

- *Vacated land is used for the benefit of needy Gazans.*
- *Land, sea and air links open to the outside world, especially to the West Bank, with international oversight to ensure proper functioning as well as fair and effective security measures.*

**Sign Two: The people evacuated from Gaza are resettled within Israel's pre-1967 borders.**

Where the settlers from Gaza are relocated will be one of the clearest indicators of overall prospects for peace. Their new locations will be physical evidence of future intentions toward other occupied land, the issue at the heart of the conflict. What to watch for:

- *How many Gaza settlers will resettle within Israel's pre-1967 borders? (Reports indicate that about half the evacuees will be moved from Gaza to other still-occupied territory.)*

**Sign Three: From now on, decisions affecting both sides are negotiated equitably between the two sides.** Equitable negotiations would be an undeniable sign for peace. They would send a vital signal that the use of violence by either side will no longer determine the course of events.

Equitable negotiations would also lend much-needed credibility to Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, a leader taking political risks for peace with little to show for it so far. Equitable negotiations on core issues are long overdue, including:

- *The route of the Israel's barrier versus Palestinian land and water rights.*
- *The final status of Jerusalem.*

**Sign Four: Both sides treat Jerusalem as a shared and open city.** This sign would show whether Jerusalem is to be home for both its peoples. Palestinian residents of greater East Jerusalem would again be able to live there, work there, travel in their own communities, reach their holy sites, receive visitors from the West Bank and visit the West Bank in return. The sealing-off of greater Jerusalem, an old plan, is now nearing completion and with it these everyday options have all but disappeared for most of East Jerusalem's Palestinian citizens. Churches of Jerusalem are suffering along with their neighbours. As an indicator for peace, any good that comes out of the Gaza withdrawal will pale in the long term unless current trends in and around Jerusalem are reversed. Positive evidence for this sign would include:

- *Palestinians have free access to their communities in East Jerusalem while Israel assures the security of its citizens in accordance with international law.*
- *Construction stops on the barrier wall, Israeli settlements and Jewish neighbourhoods in greater East Jerusalem and their future is negotiated.*

**Sign Five: Palestinians in the West Bank are able to travel between their communities and to Gaza.** Freedom of movement is necessary for a viable society and economy, and is a basic human right. It also spurs hope. If occupation controls of movement are lifted and people can again reach jobs, schools and hospitals, conditions of everyday life would improve, daily humiliations would disappear, extremism would lose its power, and moderates could slowly regain their footing and influence. What evidence to watch for here?

- *The hundreds of checkpoints and barriers within the occupied territories are removed.*

**Sign Six: The international community meets its obligations to bring peace.** The world's leading nations bear central responsibility to enforce international law and have the essential third-party role of ensuring progress toward peace. When the US, for example, has spoken specifically and forcefully against unilateral actions that violate the Geneva Conventions, it has been effective. Others, including churches, also have considerable capacity for promoting international law as the basis for peace. One positive indicator to watch for here:

- *The US administration uses its authority to focus Israeli and Palestinian leaders on issues such as sharing Jerusalem, trading land for peace, and adhering to international law as the basis for peace.*

**Sign Seven: Israelis become more secure.** Good faith and concrete measures like those above may well be the only sustainable security policy for Israel. If abuses related to the occupation are corrected, injustices that fuel conflict would decrease and popular confidence in a negotiated peace could be regained. After years on the margins, people on both sides committed to non-violent, law-based solutions could again be in a position to take the political initiative.

- *Cease-fires hold; they are repaired whenever they break down.*
- *Both sides handle violent acts as criminal acts, under the law.*

It is important to note what these seven future signs of peace have to do with the pullout from Gaza now.

First, they all address serious threats to peace that have intensified while international attention has focused on Gaza. If the occupation ends in one place but is being strengthened in many other places, the overall situation has actually become worse. Second, the policy of encouraging people to settle on occupied territory has caught people up in a policy of control and conquest that will not bring peace. The Gaza withdrawal—affecting less than two percent of the settlers—dramatically demonstrated the high personal costs for those involved in this political strategy. The signs above turn attention now to the other 98 percent of the people involved.

Finally, the essential legal framework for resolving the conflict is the same in Gaza and the other places mentioned. It is the body of international law that deals with foreign occupations, especially the Geneva Conventions and relevant United Nations resolutions.

In such a long and bitter conflict we must not turn our back on any initiative that could help bring peace, like the Gaza pullout, but nor can we turn a blind eye to actions that perpetuate injustice in the name of peace and security. We believe that unilateral actions conceived to promote the interests of one group over another will never bring peace. The biblical prophets warn us of those who cry ‘Peace, peace, where there is no peace’. We are convinced that, by replacing unilateral actions with negotiations under international supervision and the rule of law, a just peace agreement can be concluded. Then all who live in Gaza, Jerusalem, the West Bank and Israel, and all of us, will see real signs of peace.

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## PROPOSAL GS 2

<b>Title:</b>	Ethical Investment for Peace in Palestine and Israel
<b>Origin:</b>	General Secretary, General Council
<b>Financial Implications:</b>	To be determined by the Executive of the General Council
<b>Staffing Implications:</b>	To be determined by the General Secretary
<b>Source of Funding:</b>	To be determined by the Executive of the General Council

Whereas the current situation of escalating instability and hatred in the Middle East requires the concerted and immediate action of all people to find a path to a just and peaceful resolution of the conflict;

Whereas the New Creed of The United Church of Canada states our belief that “We are called...to love and serve others; to seek justice and resist evil”;

Whereas The United Church of Canada has consistently striven for peace with justice in the Middle East, working ecumenically and in concert with global partners in the region such as: the Middle East Council of Churches (MECC), Sabeel and the Jerusalem Women’s Centre, ecumenical networks such as the Middle East Working Group of KAIROS, and the World Council of Churches (WCC) and Israeli partners and organizations such as Bat Shalom, B’Tselem and Israelis Against House Demolitions (ICAHN), all of whom have affirmed the understanding that the ending of the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories is a necessary step towards a lasting and just peace in the region;

Whereas the United Church recognises and affirms Israel’s legitimate security concerns;

Whereas the United Church acknowledges a history of anti-Judaism and antisemitism within Christianity as a whole, including The United Church of Canada;

Whereas in the 38th General Council 2003 recorded its conviction that a just peace in the Middle East will require:

- the recognition by the Israeli Government of a fully sovereign State of Palestine with secure borders, and territorial contiguity encompassing the West Bank and Gaza Strip;
- the recognition by the emergent State of Palestine and other neighbouring Arab States of Israel’s right to exist as a Jewish state within safe and secure borders;
- the dismantling of Israeli settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem;
- the ending of suicide bombings as well as other forms of violent attacks directed towards civilians on the part of Palestinians;
- the withdrawal of Israeli military forces to pre-1967 borders and the ending of all forms of collective punishment and violence by the Israeli Government on the Palestinian people;
- the recognition by the Israeli Government and the emergent State of Palestine of equal citizenship rights, protections, privileges and responsibilities for all their citizens regardless of religious or national origins.

Whereas the Executive of the General Council has:

- reaffirmed the commitment of The United Church of Canada to support and encourage the continued existence of the State of Israel as a secure and safe homeland for all peoples residing there, recognizing its uniquely Jewish character;
- Lamented the failure to move forward in the creation of a Palestinian state (fully sovereign, with secure borders and territorial contiguity encompassing the West Bank and Gaza), and therefore denounces:
  - the policies and actions of the Israeli government in the continued expansion of illegal settlements and in particular the transfer of Gaza settlers to settlements in the West Bank, and the continued construction of the Separation Wall within Palestinian territory restricting the development of a Palestinian State and significantly disrupting Palestinian life;
- Condemned statements calling for the destruction of Israel, all actions or policies that seek to deny the rightful and secure existence of the State of Israel, and in particular acts of violence aimed at Israeli citizens; and
- affirmed its conviction that “a necessary step towards true peace in the region will be through the implementation of the relevant UN Security Council resolutions specifically 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and UN General Assembly Resolution 194 (1948) and that these resolutions require ... the withdrawal of Israel from the West Bank including settlements”;

Whereas the World Council of Churches and global partners such as the Middle East Council of Churches, Bat Shalom, Jerusalem Centre for Women and Sabeel have stated their clear understanding that an end to the illegal occupation of Palestine is a necessary and required step for a lasting and just peace in the Middle East, and have urgently renewed their call for churches, the global ecumenical family and the international community to seriously consider economic pressure as a means of action;

Whereas The United Church of Canada has in the past also called for divestment, sanctions and other economic measures on companies and governments supporting illegal activity, oppression and injustice in several countries, such as Guatemala, Myanmar (Burma), Nigeria, the Philippines, South Africa and Sudan;

Whereas The United Church of Canada affirms that any divestment economic measures adopted will end when the related illegal economic behaviour ceases;

Whereas there is great hope for a non-violent answer, believing in security for Israel within just borders and sovereignty for Palestine, with the coming together of Israeli and Palestinian partners who make this call (Sabeel, Middle East Council of Churches, Jerusalem Centre for Women, Bat Shalom, Jewish Voices for Peace, Bereaved Parents Circle, Israeli Coalition Against House Demolitions and others);

Therefore be it resolved

That the 39th General Council 2006

1. Receive for information the report on “Ethical Investment for Peace in Palestine and Israel.
2. Direct that the report inform the purpose statement(s) to be developed by this General Council.
3. Invite the membership, congregations and organizations of The United Church of Canada to contribute to the realisation of a just peace in Palestine and Israel through:
  - continuing to work with the Jewish and Arab communities to promote peace and understanding and the end of hostilities in the Middle East;
  - continuing to denounce acts of violence perpetrated against civilians on both sides of the conflict;
  - adopting an pro- investment strategy with companies which engage in ethically responsible business, and contribute to peace and a secure and economically viable Palestinian state alongside a secure and economically viable State of Israel;
  - engaging in a process of selective, phased divestment with Canadian and international companies and corporations that :
    - provide products, services or technology that sustain, support or maintain the occupation;
    - have established facilities or operations on occupied land;
    - provide products, services, or financial support for the establishment, expansion, and/or maintenance of settlements on occupied land or settlement-related infrastructure;
    - provide products, services or financial support to groups that engage in violence against innocent civilians; or
    - provide finances or assist in the construction and/or maintenance of the separation barrier within occupied territories;
  - advocacy with the Canadian government and corporations to take leadership in international efforts toward a just and peaceful resolution of the conflict.