

Statement of Global Ministries Support for: “Aligning United Methodist Church Investments with Resolutions on Israel/Palestine.”

For decades, GBGM has served as the primary contact with our ecumenical and grassroots partners in Israel/Palestine working for a just and lasting peace on behalf of the whole church. Global Ministries has 4 mission personnel and a mission intern currently serving there. Global Ministries supports various partners with Advance funds and have special donor designated funds specifically for support of partners working with women, youth and children in the Middle East. Since 2002, GBGM mission personnel, conference secretaries, and directors, with support from staff, have organized six peace & justice delegations, and participated in corporate accountability and advocacy work for nonviolent actions like divestment.

At the launch of the Kairos Palestine document , “A Moment of truth: a word of faith, hope and love from the heart of Palestinian Suffering,” in Bethlehem, December 11, 2009, GBGM had 3 mission personnel and 1 staff present. In the document, Palestinian Christians call on sisters and brothers throughout the ecumenical community to take nonviolent, loving actions to end Israel’s military occupation and to end corporate complicity in sustaining the occupation and the building of illegal settlements on Palestinian lands. United Methodist representatives have been confronted with the reality that we hold investments in a number of companies that support the infrastructure of the occupation, contradicting officially stated moral positions of our church.

In October 2010, United Methodists gathered from more than 10 annual conferences across the US to form the United Methodist Kairos Response (UMKR) group in solidarity with the authors of the Kairos Palestine document. Out of these efforts came a resolution, “Aligning UMC Investments with Resolutions on Israel/Palestine” (see attached). In reviewing UMC investments, a number of companies were identified as supporting the military occupation and construction of illegal settlements. The resolution identifies Caterpillar, Motorola Solutions, and Hewlett Packard as three specific companies that have been non-responsive for several years to calls by religious shareholders to end such involvement. Accordingly, the resolution calls for divestment of UMC holdings in these companies until the companies end their support for occupation and settlements.

GBGM directors, staff, and constituents have played a significant role in research, preparation, and drafting of the resolution. The resolution was adopted by the General Board of Church and Society at their February 2011 board meeting for submission to General Conference. It was also shared with GBGM Nominations & Legislation committee and also the Investment committee directors at their Feb. 2011 meetings as an example of corporate accountability work done by GBGM staff. In June 2011, seven Annual Conferences voted to support the resolution.

As the agency with primary responsibility for relations with ecumenical partners in Palestine/Israel, many look to GBGM as a leading religious voice in the US and global contexts. GBGM joins with GBCS in one voice to endorse the “Aligning” resolution as we respond to the cries of our sisters and brothers in Israel/Palestine-- and as we seek to be faithful disciples of Jesus Christ.

Recommendation: That GBGM directors approve this statement of support for the “Aligning” resolution.