

14 March 2012
Bethlehem, Palestine

Dear friends of “United Methodist Kairos Response,”

On behalf of Kairos Palestine, I send warm greetings from Bethlehem. I am very much looking forward to attending the United Methodist General Conference in Tampa. In anticipation of this event, however, I want to extend my sincerest thanks to you for your efforts, your solidarity, and your courage with respect to the divestment resolution you are submitting for approval.

As we all know, divestment is a tool easily (and often) misunderstood. Many people think of it as a form of punishment; moreover, in the case of the Israeli occupation, many people think of it as antagonistic or outright anti-Semitic. These misunderstandings are frustrating and painful to receive – not because they are merely reductive and inaccurate, but even more so because they run completely contrary to the spirit and intentionality what we are trying to do.

Indeed, Kairos Palestine believes that divestment is not a goal unto itself. It is, rather, a means to an end; an instrument towards the crafting of justice; an expression of democratic rights and responsibilities; a way to practice the very kinds of non-violence and equality that we seek to achieve through the end of an illegal occupation. Divestment, then, is not only one of the most direct illustrations of solidarity with the Palestinian people, but also a universal call for peace and justice for all human beings – Palestinian, Israeli, and otherwise. This kind of economic action is not punitive, and it is not prejudicial: it is, in fact, borne of love for all peoples and the task we share, which is to live responsibly and compassionately together.

I admire your efforts towards the passing of the divestment resolution at the United Methodist General Conference. Which is to say, I admire the solidarity you have shown with Kairos Palestine and with Palestinians, and I also admire the solidarity you have shown with each other: a group encompassing various religions, nationalities, and backgrounds, united in your fundamentally human understanding of what is right and your courageous assertion of the need to act in its honor.

Kairos Palestine thanks you for your energy, your commitment, your conviction, and your hope. It is certainly my wish that the General Conference will listen to your call, and we deeply appreciate that you have raised your voices.

In solidarity,



Rifat Kassis
General Coordinator, Kairos Palestine