



# THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

## Dakotas-Minnesota Area

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TO: US Campaign for Palestinian Rights

Grace and Peace to you from God the Creator and our Lord Jesus Christ.

As bishop of the Dakotas-Minnesota Area of The United Methodist Church, I welcome all of you to the Land of 10,000 Lakes. I am sorry that because of previous commitments, I am not able to be with you in person, but I extend special greetings to you who are a part of the US Campaign for Palestinian Rights, including the many clergy colleagues and laity in attendance who are representing their religious communities. I trust your visit to Minnesota will be a pleasant one.

Over the years, largely through our on-site mission staff, our denomination has been educated about the conflict in Israel/Palestine and likewise about nonviolent means for overcoming injustice. This has resulted in statements by our presiding body - the United Methodist General Conference - as well as statements by the Council of Bishops, which eventually led to the managers of our pension funds deciding to divest from the private prison G4S as well as five Israeli banks that fund illegal settlements in the West Bank. As a denomination, we have also approved boycotts of products from these settlements. Our regional bodies, or annual conferences, have taken various actions as well. The Minnesota Annual Conference, where I preside, divested General Electric stocks back in 2013 because of its association with the occupation. Last year it voted overwhelmingly to defend the right to boycott from any governmental attempts to restrict such activities, and this past June voted to uphold the human rights of children suffering unjust detention and imprisonment.

The Palestinian church has called on all Christians to work with them for a just peace for Jews, Muslims and Christians in the Holy Land. Like other Christian denominations, we have labored to find the best ways to respond, and we are still trying to discern how we can effectively serve this honorable cause. Those most involved in this effort have been part of United Methodists for Kairos Response, members of which are in attendance with you here in the Twin Cities. I commend them, and all of you, for your work. I, likewise, am pleased that the United Methodist Church has been supportive of the US Campaign since its inception. Please know you are in my prayers for a successful conference.

Sincerely,

Bishop Bruce R. Ough