

Statement by United Methodist Missionaries April 2016

We are United Methodist missionaries who have dedicated our lives to representing the United Methodist Church worldwide. We have all served among the people of the Holy Land. We have all seen injustices that many in our denomination cannot imagine, and we all know these injustices will continue as long as the Israeli occupation of land beyond its internationally recognized borders continues.

The occupation is devastating for Christians and Muslims, and it is also detrimental to the Jews in the region. It denies essential human rights to Palestinians and diverts resources that could be used for peaceful pursuits.

We know that our denomination has long opposed the occupation, but for the most part, this opposition is on the pages of resolution books in pastors' studies. We hope this will be the year when the United Methodist Church agrees to uphold these longstanding resolutions by not condoning investments that undermine the goal of ending the occupation. This will send a strong message that we are willing to back our statements with action, and will place us among the many other denominations that have already taken similar steps.

The divestment and screening measures that will be considered at General Conference do not target Israel. They ask only for our church to avoid investment in illegal settlements and companies that have long been asked to change their participation in the occupation.

We represent many theological perspectives and points of view. Even so, all of us affirm the non-violent measures of boycott and divestment requested by our own faith community in the Holy Land. We urge the United Methodist Church to remove from its portfolios companies that profit from the occupation. Such decisions will ultimately contribute to a just and lasting peace for all the people of the region.

Rev. and Mrs. Alex and Brenda Awad, Rev. Kristen L. Brown, Mary Davies, Rev. and Mrs. Bob and Peggy Hannum, Janet Lahr Lewis, Bob May, Rev. Peter Miano, Rev. Sandy Olewine, Rev. Romeo Del Rosario and Tina Whitehead

March 2017: the above list of names has been updated due to an inadvertent omission.