

1 Protecting the Right of Americans to Peacefully Address Injustice 2 through Boycotts, Divestment and Sanctions

3 4 BACKGROUND INFORMATION: 5

6 United Methodists and other religious communities have long used the
7 nonviolent tactics of boycotts, divestment and sanctions in our efforts to
8 stand in solidarity with oppressed people and work for justice. These
9 advocacy measures have proven to be useful tools in helping to bring
10 about a wide range of constructive social change, including everything from
11 strengthening labor rights for farm workers in this country to ending
12 apartheid in South Africa.
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14 After studying the success of these efforts, a broad coalition of
15 Palestinian civil society issued a call for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions
16 (BDS) in 2005 to advance the long-denied Palestinians' right to self-
17 determination, freedom, justice, and equality.
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19 In 2009, Palestinian Christians echoed the call for boycott and
20 divestment in their landmark document, [*Kairos Palestine: A Moment of*](#)
21 [*Truth*](#). This contemporary, ecumenical confession of faith (often compared
22 to the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s *Letter from a Birmingham Jail*, and
23 other Christian manifestos written in times of crisis) was commended to our
24 local congregations for use as a resource for instruction and advocacy by
25 the 2010 Session of the California Nevada Annual Conference Session.
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27 In 2012, the United Methodist General Conference approved the
28 resolution "[Opposition to Israeli Settlements in Palestinian Land](#)," calling for
29 a boycott of all products produced in Israel's illegal settlements.
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31 In January 2016, the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits of
32 the United Methodist Church announced that five [Israeli banks](#) would be
33 excluded from their investment portfolios because of their involvement in
34 settlement construction in the occupied Palestinian territories.
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36 Boycotts, divestment and sanctions are a constitutionally protected form
37 of free speech and protest that has long been used by people of
38 conscience to effect positive social and political change. However, a recent
39 rash of anti-BDS legislation has been proposed by legislatures and public

40 institutions across the country that threatens to criminalize or penalize the
41 use of these time-honored nonviolent tactics.

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43 **RESOLUTION:**

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45 **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the 2016 California Nevada Annual
46 Conference of the United Methodist Church opposes any legislation that
47 seeks to restrict the right to address injustice through boycotts, divestment
48 and sanctions, and joins the Jewish Voice for Peace Rabbinical Council in
49 calling on our elected officials “to resist efforts to stifle the movement
50 toward justice for Palestinians through the current wave of ‘anti-BDS’
51 legislation.”

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53 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Conference Secretary write a letter
54 to the President of the United States, the governors of California and
55 Nevada, all U.S. senators and Congressional representatives within the
56 California Nevada Annual Conference boundaries, and the majority and
57 minority leaders of both houses of the legislature in California and Nevada
58 informing them of our action.

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60 **BE IT ALSO RESOLVED** that the California-Nevada Annual Conference
61 urge all congregations and individual members to contact their
62 congressional representatives to communicate this message.

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64 Adopted June 2016