

Mainline Protestants and Divestment as International Economic Activism

Maia Hallward

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Abstract and Keywords

Mainline Protestant denominations in the United States have a history of using divestment as an economic form of nonviolent moral activism. While such activism can have a domestic focus, at times church divestment efforts have emphasized foreign policy issues as an extension of church activism in the areas of social justice and moral reform. Churches have used economic activism such as divestment from apartheid South Africa and investment screens to prevent church pension and other funds from being used for products and services—such as alcohol, tobacco and munitions—deemed “immoral” by church bodies. The case of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict illustrates the broader themes and tensions involved in church divestment debates, given the media coverage that has been generated by the topic due to the special relationship between Christians and the holy land and the troubled history of Christianity and anti-Semitism. Some Protestant denominations, particularly those with a history of engagement in Israel/Palestine, have responded to the Palestinians’ call for boycott, divestment, and sanctions (BDS) to advance their freedom and human rights. However, such responses have not been immune from debate and controversy. Some mainline Protestant denominations, including the Presbyterian Church USA (PCUSA), the United Methodist Church, and the Episcopal Church have debated resolutions dealing with church divestment from companies profiting from Israel’s occupation of Palestinian territories. Such resolutions have resulted in pushback from some parties, including efforts to criminalize boycott of Israel.

Keywords: boycott, divestment, and sanctions (BDS), Presbyterian Church USA (PCUSA), United Methodist Church (UMC), South Africa, anti-apartheid movement, Israel/Palestine, Kairos Palestine, economic activism, shareholder resolutions, Episcopal Church, faith-based activism, socially responsible investment, social justice, Protestants, politics and religion

Mainline Protestant Denominations and Economic Activism to Affect Foreign Policy

Protestants, Roman Catholics, and Orthodox comprise three long-standing traditions of Christianity in the United States. Within the Protestant category there are a further 150

to 200 denominations as well as nondenominational congregations (Rock, 2011, p. 4). Mainline Protestants—including American (Northern) Baptists, Methodists, Lutherans, Presbyterians, Episcopalians, and Congregationalists—make up 14.7% of the U.S. population according to the 2014 Pew Religious Landscape Study (Pew Research Center, 2015, p. 3). While there is some debate over what constitutes a “mainline” Protestant denomination, commonalities tend to be “theological beliefs such as ecumenism, activism, liberalism, and modernism” although, of course, variance occurs within and between these denominations (Davis, 2017, p. 28). Evangelical Protestants—including Assemblies of God, Southern Baptist Convention, and Church of the Nazarene—make up 25.4% of the U.S. population (Pew, 2015; Rock, 2011, p. 6). While the views of evangelical Protestants on divestment as a means of taking moral action on foreign policy concerns will be discussed by way of comparison in certain areas, this article focuses on the mainline Protestant denominations and the debates surrounding their consideration of divestment from companies profiting from practices deemed inconsistent with faith-based moral principles. While this article will emphasize the debates surrounding divestment from corporations profiting from human rights violations related to Israel’s occupation of Palestinian territories (West Bank and Gaza Strip), mainline Protestants have also divested from corporations involved in supporting South African apartheid (Braverman, 2014) and those profiting from fossil fuels (Harmon, 2017), alcohol, munitions, tobacco, and pornography, among others, as a means of weighing in on critical moral issues related to foreign and domestic policy (IPAA, 2016). Divestment is one of several nonviolent tools used by civil society actors for engaging with states and economic entities, and is often linked with boycott and sanctions (together the three are often referred to as BDS). Whereas boycotts can be undertaken by the individual consumer and sanctions are undertaken by state actors, divestment is often undertaken by institutions with investment portfolios.

Mainline Protestant denominations in the United States have a strong history of domestic activism, with increasing foreign policy activism in more recent decades. In the 1980s the National Council of Churches (NCC), a group consisting of 32 Protestant and Eastern Orthodox denominations, passed resolutions critical of the Reagan Administration’s policies in Latin America and the nuclear arms race, among other issues (Isaac, 1982). Mainline Protestant leaders and communities also used religious arguments to contest President George W. Bush’s invasion of Iraq in 2003. In the lead-up to the war, the NCC sent delegations of religious leaders to meet with European leaders including Tony Blair (United Kingdom), Gerhard Schroeder (Germany), and Pope John Paul II (Tipton, 2007). Not all mainline Protestants supported the same foreign policy objectives, however, and the Institute for Religion and Democracy (IRD) opposed Mainline Protestant church leaders whom they saw as too left-leaning, and sought to rally religious support for the foreign policy objectives of the Reagan and George H. W. Bush administrations (Tipton, 2007). The gap between Mainline Protestant leadership and the majority of members of their congregations was one reason why organizations like the NCC were unable to deter President George W. Bush and Vice President Dick Cheney from war, both members of the United Methodist Church (UMC); the strong support for evangelical Protestants for the war was another reason (Rock, 2011).

Civil society actors—in this case churches—can at times work to affect foreign policy behavior of their own state or that of other states through a variety of methods, some that are more explicitly political (e.g., lobbying, writing to elected officials), and some, like the economic tools of boycott and divestment, that seek “to bring about a policy change in a foreign nation when they have few direct channels to apply political pressure” (Kaempfer et al., 1987, p. 458). Divestment is one particular modality of religious activism, part of the broader movement of socially responsible investment, in which church bodies seek to ensure their investments are in line with their religious teachings and moral beliefs; as such, it can have both domestic and foreign policy ramifications. In the words of one church leader, “morally responsible investing, divestment, boycotts and sanctions are nonviolent, moral, economic measures that seek to change the bad behavior of corporations and of governments for moral reasons” (Wildman, 2006). As early as the 19th century some churches avoided investment in tobacco- or alcohol-producing companies. In 1952 the UMC reviewed its investment principles to ensure they were in line with Christian principles, and in the socially active 1960s clergy and lay members became increasingly concerned with church investments, particularly in regards to the civil rights movement, Vietnam War, environmental pollution, and apartheid South Africa (Robinson, 2002). The first shareholder resolution filed by a religious organization was in 1971 when the Episcopal Church called on General Motors to withdraw from South Africa (Smith, 2015). Mainline Protestant denominations are, however, diverse and divided in their approach to many issues, in part due to a legacy of individualism that celebrates “a wide range of differences in doctrinal beliefs, moral views, and social and political attitudes” (Roof & McKinney, 1987, p. 52). A study of clergy across the six primary mainline denominations regarding the 2000 election revealed that despite a history of clergy tied to the social justice and moral reform agendas, “fully one-fifth of mainline clergy report[ed] no political activity whatsoever in 2000” (Smidt et al., 2003, p. 529). Divestment provides church members a means of raising the visibility of foreign policy issues of concern even when there is little political will by the church or by the nation’s political leaders to take action. Further, because some transnational corporations have greater political and economic power than the countries in which they operate, civil society pressure on corporations through questioning the morality of their practices, including church resolutions to disinvest, or sell off their shares in the offending corporation, can have foreign policy impact.¹

Churches as institutions often tend toward more conservatism in their approach than individual clergy or segments of the membership, and representative bodies have at times opted for corporate engagement over divestment as a way of having a voice on corporate policies. The Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI) committee of the Presbyterian Church USA (PCUSA), for example, spent almost a decade engaging with Caterpillar, Hewlett Packard, and Motorola Solutions before recommending divestment in 2012 (Hallward, 2013). Various segments of denominational leadership and membership also worry over the economic cost of divestment, particularly when members are employed in the corporations being targeted. Both corporate engagement through shareholder resolutions and other related strategies and divestment, however, spur public debate, put attention on companies and their practices, and contribute to pressure on corporations for

change (Smith, 2015). In the past decade, denominational divestment resolutions related to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict have generated extensive controversy but have also brought media attention to Israeli violations of international law and the human rights abuses perpetuated against Palestinians enabled by billions of dollars of U.S. military and economic aid. The strength of such nonviolent actions causes opposition precisely because of their impact, and fear of such measures has contributed to bills in the Israeli Knesset and the U.S. Congress targeting BDS activists. The remainder of this article focuses on this case as illustrative of the debates surrounding church divestment.

The Call for BDS Against the Israeli Occupation

Mainline Protestant denominations have a long and uneven history with the “holy land,” a loosely defined area where Israel and the Palestinian Territories are currently located.² Christianity began in this region, and the stories of the Bible are rooted in metaphors, such as the rocky soil and the olive tree, familiar to the environment as well as in cities, notably Jerusalem, Bethlehem, and Nazareth, that are central to the life and teachings of Jesus. Protestant denominations also have a history of missions in the region dating back to the Ottoman Empire, for schools and hospitals, and connections with local churches, as well as for purposes of conversion, given that some Christians believe Jewish conversion is needed for the Second Coming of the Messiah (Kark, 2008; Wagner, 2014). Mission activity continued during the British Mandate prior to the declaration of Israel in 1948, and religious institutions continue to own large segments of territory in the region, particularly in the Bethlehem-Jerusalem corridor. Christian missionary activity served as both an agent of colonialism and the spread of Western culture but, through liberation theology, also provided an avenue for grassroots popular resistance to foreign powers (Sturm & Frantzman, 2015, p. 438). Churches—both local and foreign—continue to run programs, operate schools and hospitals, and engage in support for the generations of Palestinian refugees who remain stateless absent a political resolution to the war of Israeli independence called the *Nakba* (Catastrophe) by Palestinians since it destroyed the fabric of Palestinian society and generated 700,000 to 800,000 refugees.

Church divestment from companies “whose business in Israel is found to be directly or indirectly causing harm or suffering to innocent people, Palestinian or Israeli” emerges from this history of Protestant presence in the holy land, as well as continued church activities and relationships with Palestinian Christians and Jews in Israel and the Diaspora (Clarke, 2005, p. 46). The timing of the first such divestment initiative, by the PCUSA in 2004, also relates to the political situation at the time. As the second *intifada* (uprising) was in full force, Israel’s construction of the separation barrier was confiscating church lands and causing extensive environmental, economic, and social damage to Palestinian communities, and international state actors were largely disengaged. Mainline Protestant denominations were already on record against the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories, and divestment from companies involved in providing military equipment and sur-

veillance technology used in the occupied territories seemed to some a next step in applying pressure for change (Clarke, 2005; Hallward, 2013).

Not only do Protestant churches have a history of divestment from apartheid South Africa and other areas targeted by social justice causes, but Palestinians have a history of economic activism, including a general strike against the British in 1929 and widespread boycotts of Israeli products during the first intifada in the late 1980s (Qumsiyeh, 2011). A number of Israeli activist groups, including Matzpen, Gush Shalom, the Israeli Committee against House Demolitions (ICAHD), and later Peace Now, have also called for boycotting products produced in Israeli settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip in contravention of the Geneva Conventions as a means of protest against a violation of international law and as a threat to the two-state solution (Giora, 2010). The World Council of Churches (WCC) Executive Committee recommended a boycott of settlement products in 2001, building on an earlier set of criteria for economic justice related to peacemaking issued by the body in 1995 (WCC, 2005). Additionally, most Mainline Protestant denominations had “vigorous, unified policy stances” related to Palestinian self-determination, respect for human rights, opposition to settlements, and the right of Israel to exist within secure and recognized borders as a common set of policy positions, although not all took substantial action on these points (Clarke & Flohr, 1992, pp. 67–68). Some denominations have a history of activism in this regard; the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and the Episcopal Church advocated economic pressure on Israel to stop Jewish settlements in the occupied territories as early as 1991 and were “denounced” by the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations for their efforts (Clarke & Flohr, 1992, p. 69). Although space here does not allow a full exploration of the issue, it is worth noting that the Episcopal Church and the ELCA have local Palestinian churches—the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL)—that belong to the same denominational structure.³ Thus, the history of these churches’ activism in this arena may be an example of Keck and Sikkink’s (1998) boomerang model in which civil society actors in one country are unable to engage in policy change in their own country and thus may advocate transnational networks focused on that issue in other states, which may then be able to exert pressure in their own states and/or on the original state through other channels of pressure at the global level. The closeness of the ties between these churches within the same denominational body may lead to increased motivation to take action.

In 2004, a group of Palestinian intellectuals issued a call for boycotting Israeli academic and cultural institutions due to their complicity in the violation of Palestinian rights, and in 2005 a group of over 170 Palestinian civil society groups issued a call for a global BDS movement for Palestinian rights modeled on the South African case. The call speaks directly to global civil society, asking concerned citizens to pursue nonviolent action to put pressure on Israel until it complies with international law regarding Palestinian freedom, justice, and equality. This call came on the anniversary of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) advisory opinion that “Israel’s building of a barrier in the occupied Palestinian territory is illegal” and that “Israel should make reparations for any damage caused” (UN News, 2004). The authors of the call asserted that the international community had done

nothing in response to the ICJ ruling in the intervening year, necessitating civil society to act. In contrast to boycotts, which depend on individual consumer choices, divestment—the act of getting rid of stock and other investments in offending companies—particularly when carried out by institutions with large membership or a significant financial stake in a company, is perceived to have greater economic (and symbolic) impact. The call has been endorsed by Israeli groups like Boycott from Within, and by Jewish groups including Jewish Voice for Peace and the International Jewish Anti-Zionist Network, which assert that this rights-based approach is not anti-Semitic, but rather seeks to hold Israel accountable to the democratic values it advocates.

In 2005, Sabeel, the Palestinian Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center, issued a call for Morally Responsible Investment, describing it as a “nonviolent response to the Occupation” and noting that God calls Christians to “stand up for all who are suffering and oppressed regardless of their nationality” and consequently to engage in “responsible stewardship in the investments we make as individuals, churches, institutions and corporations” (Sabeel, 2005).⁴ The WCC, which represents around half a billion Christians in over 120 countries, also issued a statement in 2005, commending PCUSA’s effort to selectively divest “from multinational corporations involved in the occupation” noting that it “uses criteria rooted in faith, and calls members to do the ‘things that make for peace’ (Luke 19:42)” (WCC, 2005). The minutes of the Central Committee session continue with recommendations, including one that “*encourages* member churches to work for peace in new ways and to give serious consideration to economic measures that are equitable, transparent and non-violent” (WCC, 2005). In 2009 all the Patriarchs and Heads of Churches in Jerusalem issued the Kairos Palestine document, which affirms that the “mission of the Church is prophetic, to speak the Word of God courageously, honestly and lovingly in the local context and in the midst of daily events.”⁵ If she does take sides, it is with the oppressed, just as Christ or Lord stood by the side of each poor person” (De Gruchy, 2016, p. 6). This document is one of a series of *Kairos* which means “moment of truth”) documents issued by church leaders around the world, modeled after the South African Kairos document in which church leaders took a stance against the complicity of the South African church in the apartheid regime, identifying a moral imperative to recognize and address the injustices of apartheid prior to calling for reconciliation (Braverman, 2014). The Kairos Palestine document spurred responses from churches around the world, identifying their own complicity in the oppression of Palestinian Christians. Kairos USA, for example, states that “As individuals and as church institutions, we have supported a system of control, inequality and oppression through misreading of our Holy Scriptures, flawed theology and distortions of history” (Kairos USA 2012, p. 8). Other groups, such as United Methodists for Kairos Response (UMKR), created by United Methodist clergy and laity in October 2010, have formed to encourage a denominational response to the Kairos Palestine document.⁶ The next section discusses the varying denominational responses to the Kairos Palestine document as well as the broader questions relating to divestment or corporate engagement related to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Contentious Conferences: Christian and Jewish Arguments for and Against Divestment

Mainline Protestant churches vary considerably within and across denominations regarding the extent of their social justice activism more broadly, and activism related to the Middle East in particular. Governing bodies of Lutherans and Methodists have historically tended toward more conservatism while Presbyterians, Episcopalians, Unitarian Universalists, and United Church of Christ (UCC) have tended to be more activist in orientation (Clarke & Flohr, 1992). Further, Christian activism in the Middle East, particularly where Israel is concerned, is often highly controversial given the Church's history of anti-Semitism. Due to different institutional structures, policies, investments, and constituencies, the debates over divestment have evolved differently in the major mainline denominations that have considered resolutions. This section summarizes the conversations and controversies surrounding divestment resolutions in the decision-making bodies of the Presbyterians, Methodists, and Episcopalians, as well as a few other denominations. It is worth emphasizing here that this section reviews diversity only within the Mainline Protestant denominations. Evangelical Christians, who tend to hold positions that reflect unconditional support for Israel's government for a range of theological reasons, are not a part of this entry, but are worthy of examination in their own right (Baumgart-Ochse, 2017).

While contention abounds at yearly, biannual, or triannual denominational conferences across faiths, few issues create as much division as those surrounding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This is due to a number of factors, including the history of anti-Semitism within Christianity (and church efforts to make amends), a rise in the religious right, "whose religious convictions necessitated strong support for right-wing Israeli policies and the development of a sympathetic and supportive pro-Israel foreign policy" (Carenen, 2012, p. 191), and the fact that Israel controls the land central to the life and teachings of Jesus and is therefore of utmost significance to many Christians. Changes in the religious landscape of the United States have impacted debates over the church's role in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, as liberal Christians have increasingly come to sympathize with the Palestinian national movement even as they have been losing social and political power to evangelicals (Mead, 2006). Within the United States, the relationship between Christians and Israel is further complicated by the strong ties between the U.S. government and Israel, including over \$3 billion in annual U.S. aid to Israel, most of which is military assistance (Sharp, 2016).

The organized Jewish community—including groups such as the American Jewish Committee, the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), the Simon Wiesenthal Center, and the Zionist Organization of America—has not only spoken out against divestment, but has also dedicated millions of dollars to counter BDS and mobilized members of the U.S. Congress to put pressure on church leaders to oppose divestment and, more recently, propose legislation criminalizing boycott. Jewish leaders call for "dialogue" and warn against "functional" anti-Semitism (Clarke, 2005; Cole & Shakir, 2017). Calls by opponents—within both

Mainline Protestants and Divestment as International Economic Activism

the Christian and Jewish communities—have tended to portray divestment as one-sided and as harmful to economic cooperation between Israelis and Palestinians, even though most church divestment resolutions do not target cooperative economic ventures (of which there are few that are genuinely of mutual benefit to both Israelis and Palestinians) and have explicitly targeted corporations profiting from the occupation, many of which have been multinational in origin, thereby affirming long-standing church policy against the Israeli military occupation of Palestinian territories even while supporting Israel's right to exist within internationally recognized borders. Within several denominations, networks have been created specifically to counter grassroots mobilization for divestment, and which advocate for “dialogue” or “positive investment” instead of divestment from violence and oppression and advocacy for and solidarity with the oppressed. Divestment opponents have also put together meetings with high-ranking Israeli leaders and free trips to the region as a way of persuading church members against divestment. For example, in the midst of the PCUSA debate in 2014, Rabbi Rick Jacobs, president of the Union of Reform Judaism, offered church leaders a private meeting with Israeli prime minister Netanyahu in exchange for a “no” vote. Finally, a common theme has been offering resolutions of their own in the relevant committees that mirror much of the language calling for peace and justice but that exclude divestment measures. Such procedural tactics have at times made the actual voting confusing for plenary delegates who have not in the end known what exactly they were voting for or against.

Presbyterian Church USA

The PCUSA is one of the most activist denominations in the United States regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. At its 2004 General Assembly, PCUSA authorized the Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI) committee to begin a process of corporate engagement with multinational corporations including Caterpillar, Hewlett Packard, and Motorola Solutions. In 2012, MRTI recommended divestment from these three corporations, reporting that after eight years of engagement, these corporations had still not addressed PCUSA's ethical concerns. Although the Middle East Peacemaking Committee voted by an overwhelming margin to accept MRTI's recommendation after days of considering arguments from multiple perspectives, divestment was defeated on the plenary floor by a 333-331-2 vote of all of delegates (called commissioners). As a general rule, commissioners tend to be older and have been involved in the church for a long period of time. A series of advisory delegates—Young Adults, Theological Students, Mission Advisors, and Ecumenical representatives—cast their votes on each issue to “advise” the commissioners, but their votes do not count toward decisions. In the case of divestment, as well as on other controversial issues, the differences between the advisory bodies—which tended to be younger and more racially and socially diverse—and the commissioners was stark (Hallward, 2013).

In 2014 the General Assembly voted by a margin of 310 to 303 to divest from Caterpillar, Motorola, and Hewlett Packard because they were “not in compliance with General Assembly policy on socially responsible investing” due to their provision of bulldozers used to demolish Palestinian homes and for clearing olive trees in preparation for the separa-

tion barrier, the sale of logistics and communications systems used at Israeli checkpoints for the blockade on the Gaza Strip, and by Israeli settlements, and for military surveillance used by Israeli settlements. (PCUSA, 2014, pp. 2–3). The divestment resolution was one of several recent resolutions on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict made by the General Assembly. In 2012 the General Assembly passed a resolution calling for a boycott of products produced in Israeli settlements, as well as a resolution calling for positive investments in Palestinian businesses. In 2010 the church reaffirmed its commitments to the region and emphasized in particular its desire to see an end to all violence, committed by Palestinians or Israelis, an end to settlement construction in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, recognition of Israel within secure borders, and the resumption of negotiations for a two-state solution (PCUSA, 2014, p. 3). Thus, divestment is only one prong of the PCUSA's activism in the region, and is point 3 of nine distinct recommendations made in the text of the 2014 “divestment” resolution. Notably, the first of the nine points “reaffirms Israel’s right to exist,” the fourth point “reaffirm(s) PC(USA)’s commitment to interfaith dialog and partnerships with the American Jewish, Muslim friends, and Palestinian Christians” and the eighth “affirm(s) the importance of economic measures and cooperation between Israelis and Palestinians that support and advance a negotiated two-state solution,” (PC-Biz, 2014).⁷ The final resolution also specifies that PCUSA is not aligned with nor endorsing the global BDS movement, a point to be discussed in more detail in a subsequent section (PC-Biz, 2014) (PCUSA, 2014, p. 5).

The PCUSA road to divestment, although seen as “trailblazing” by other denominations, was not without its obstacles or controversies. In fact, divestment was hotly contested both within the Middle East Peacemaking Committee and on the plenary floor. Rival factions within the denomination as well as opposing Jewish groups all descended on the committee and participated in the long list of speakers that provided testimony over the long days of committee sessions. The Israel Palestine Mission Network (IPMN), created by the 216th General Assembly in 2004 to speak to the church about the rights of Israelis and Palestinians, supported the divestment resolution and also actively works to educate Presbyterians about the situation on the ground, through first-hand travel to meet with Christians in the region and study guides. Another group, the Presbyterians for Middle East Peace (PFMEP), was created prior to the 2008 General Assembly specifically to oppose divestment and prefers measures that call for dialogue and an end to conflict rather than occupation (Hallward, 2013). Jewish groups are also varied in their response to the divestment resolution. Jewish Voice for Peace (JVP) praised the resolution and sent a contingent to advocate for divestment in 2012 as well as 2014, asserting that divestment was the best way to promote a just peace in the region (JVP, 2012). In contrast, Alan Dershowitz opined that PCUSA’s initial 2004 decision to pursue corporate engagement toward divestment was not only anti-Semitic but also a “moral sin” that threatened “the economic life and security of Israel” (Dershowitz, 2004). The divestment resolution also faced obstacles from Presbyterians who were lifetime employees of Caterpillar and could not condone reprimanding a company they saw as an exemplar of humanitarianism due to its response to natural disasters such as earthquakes and hurricanes (Hallward, 2013). Tensions and competing views such as these are part of the reason why even in the most

activist of the Protestant denominations it took a decade from the time the first resolution on corporate engagement was passed until divestment was actually approved.

United Methodist Church

The UMC has a history of socially responsible investment, which serves as the basis for the investment screens currently used by church bodies to ensure church monies are furthering causes in line with church values. In 1952 the UMC “reviewed existing investment policies to bring them into compliance with sound Christian and economic principles” (Robinson, 2002, p. 345). The UMC also has a history of seeking nonviolent means of settling disputes, and respect for peace and justice for all involved in conflict, whether it be dealings with mainland China (1964) or the Middle East. The 1968 Book of Resolutions, for example, affirms the need to recognize Israel and also the need to provide justice for Palestinian refugees, while also denouncing arms sales to the region. In contrast to the Presbyterians, the Methodists do not have churches in the Middle East and thus do not have the same direct connection to Palestinian churches and communities; however, they have worked ecumenically in the region through their membership in the NCC. The 1972 UMC General Conference passed an “Investment Ethics” resolution that called upon boards and general agencies of the church to review and analyze holdings in corporations with military contracts. Also in 1972 the General Conference passed a resolution called “The Middle East” that acknowledged Palestinian suffering under Israeli military rule, supported the right to self-determination for Israeli Jews and Palestinian Arabs, and urged UMC agencies to actively oppose the flow of arms to the Middle East. A 1980 General Conference Resolution titled “The United Methodist Church and Peace” asserts that economic justice action by the church as well as governments concurrent with upholding basic human rights is needed to prevent violence around the world. These resolutions, among others, demonstrate the UMC’s long-time stance on economic activism related to the pursuit of peace with justice and upholding human rights.⁸ With the onset of the first Palestinian intifada and the Israeli government’s “iron fist” policy, Methodist church bodies became “increasingly and pointedly outspoken on Palestinian issues” (Clarke & Flohr, 1992, p. 70).

The UMC General Conference meets every four years, with smaller regional annual conferences occurring annually. While General Conference resolutions provide the general policy framework for the UMC, corporate accountability work is conducted through general agencies, annual conferences, and United Methodists active in ecumenical and grassroots coalitions (Wildman, 2008). In October 2010 the United Methodists for Kairos Response (UMKR) was founded as a grassroots response to the 2009 Kairos Palestine appeal to the global church to take nonviolent action, including the options of boycott and divestment, to help end Israel’s occupation. Consistent with its policy position opposing “continued military occupation of the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem, the confiscation of Palestinian land and water resources, the destruction of Palestinian homes, the continued building of illegal Jewish settlements,” in a 2004 resolution the General Conference of the UMC called on nations to “prohibit (1) any financial support by individuals or organizations for the construction and maintenance of settlements; and (2) the import of

products made by companies in Israeli settlements on Palestinian land.” In this resolution, which was readopted in 2008, and then modified and readopted in 2012, the UMC emphasizes the boycott specifically targets settlement products, not those produced in Israel, thereby affirming long-standing policy defending Israel’s right to exist within internationally recognized borders. The resolution also calls on companies profiting from or supporting settlements to “examine” their activities but does not call for divestment from said companies (UMC, 2016A).

The UMC General Conference rejected resolutions for divesting from Caterpillar, Motorola, and Hewlett-Packard in 2008, 2012, and 2016, consistent with past policy, which has not targeted specific companies per se (with a few exceptions such as Royal Dutch/Shell for its complicity in apartheid and J.P. Stevens for mistreatment of workers). The 2008 resolution requesting divestment from Caterpillar was withdrawn in exchange for a process of corporate engagement, specifically ecumenical dialogue with Caterpillar to discuss human rights concerns. UMKR documented the various efforts taken by the United Methodist General Board of Pension and Health Benefits and other investing bodies of the UMC to engage as shareholders not only with Caterpillar, but also Hewlett-Packard and Motorola with very little cooperation from the corporations (UMKR, 2011). At the 2012 General Conference, UMKR called for divestment. Although no divestment resolution passed at the 2012 conference, the General Conference did pass a resolution calling for a boycott of settlement products and a cut in military aid to Israel. Further, the 2012 General Conference mandated reporting on corporate engagement efforts by all UMC general agencies and “prayerful consideration” of investments involved with the Israeli occupation (General Boards of Church & Society and Global Ministries of the United Methodist Church, 2013, p. 7).

In 2016 the General Conference passed resolution #6114, titled “A Pathway for Peace in Palestine and Israel,” which states “the General Conference fully supports commitments by the General Board of Pension and Health Benefits and United Methodist foundations to research and identify investment opportunities that support the Palestinian economy, as well as joint ventures between Israelis and Palestinians that can help to build trust and reconciliation” (UMC, 2016B). The language of this resolution mirrors that of alternative resolutions offered in debates at the PCUSA General Assembly and rejected by many Palestinians (and economists) who assert that absent an end to Israel’s occupation, all the investment in the world will not aid the Palestinian economy, and while the occupier-occupied relationship persists, “joint” ventures will always favor the more powerful party (Haase, 2013; Kaufmann, 2017).

In advance of the 2016 General Conference, eight regional conferences passed resolutions calling for divestment from companies with ties to Israeli settlements in occupied territory, adding to the 19 UMC annual conferences that had made similar statements in previous years (UMKR, 2015). In 2014 the UMC pension board sold its shares of stock in security firm G4S, which has contracts with Israel and many other countries due in part to the human rights concerns raised by UMKR. Reflecting debates heard in PCUSA and elsewhere, proponents and opponents of divestment differed in their interpretation of this

move, with opponents noting the UMC has a standing screen against investing in prisons, and proponents pointing to the role of G4S particularly in Israeli prisons in the occupied West Bank (Goodstein, 2014). In January 2016 Wespath, the UMC pension board, added five Israeli banks to its list of companies that do not meet its Human Rights Investment Policy guidelines, the first time a large U.S. church had taken such action (Gladstone, 2016).

In 2016 four resolutions dealing with divestment or investment screening were submitted to the General Conference by one or more annual UMC conferences, including a resolution for divestment from Caterpillar, Hewlett-Packard, and Motorola (UMKR, 2016). Ahead of the General Conference, Hillary Clinton, a lifelong Methodist, wrote a letter to the heads of major Jewish agencies opposing BDS and the resolutions that would be considered. All four of these resolutions were defeated, and the General Conference voted 478–318 to encourage Global Ministries to end its support for the U.S. Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation, an umbrella group that supports BDS, calling such support “one-sided.” A minority report countered that membership in the U.S. Campaign is pro-equal rights and neither pro-Palestinian nor pro-Israeli. Despite setbacks for divestment at the General Conference, seven UMC annual conferences approved resolutions defending the right to invest church funds in ways consistent with their own morals, and several regional bodies encouraged investment in the Equities Social Values Plus Fund that excludes companies such as Caterpillar, Hewlett-Packard, and Motorola (UMKR, 2017A).

Episcopal Church

The U.S. Episcopal Church has a history of policy stances supporting Palestinian Christians in the Palestinian Territories and Israel, and has partnerships with local churches and institutions in the region. Its General Convention has policies dating to 1979 (Resolution 1979-D089) that affirm the right of Israel to exist within secure borders while also supporting the creation of an independent Palestinian state and an open access Jerusalem (Episcopal Archives, 1980). Along with the ELCA, Episcopalians were denounced by the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations in 1991 for their call for U.S. economic pressure on Israel to end settlement expansion (Clarke & Flohr, 1992). In 2000 the General Convention affirmed the principal of the right of return for Palestinian refugees and in 2003 recognized the wall constructed by Israel was an impediment to peace (EPF, N.D.). In 2012, resolution A015 included a reaffirmation of Resolution 1991-A149, which calls for holding Israel accountable for the foreign aid it receives from the U.S. government and to ensure it is not used for the expansion and construction of Israeli settlements. Resolution 2012-B019 affirmed “positive investment” in the Palestinian economy, particularly in the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem, as well as encouraged interfaith dialogue (Episcopal Archives, 2012, pp. 221–222). Resolution 2012-C060, which called on the Presiding Bishop and Executive Council Committee on Corporate Social Responsibility to “develop and implement a strategy of advocacy and education in the Church during the next triennium to further a just resolution of the conflict,” including the possibility of public corporate engagement with companies that “contribute to the infrastructure of the

Occupation,” was rejected. A proposed amendment calling on Episcopalians study the 2009 Kairos Palestine document was also rejected (Episcopal Archives, 2012).

In July 2015, at the 78th General Convention, the House of Bishops rejected Resolution 2015-D016 (“On the Topic of Investment in Israeli-Occupied Palestine”), which stated the Episcopal Church “will work earnestly and with haste to avoid profiting from the illegal occupation of Gaza and the West Bank” and directed the Executive Council on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) to develop and maintain “a list of U.S. and foreign corporations that provide goods and services that support the infrastructure of Israel’s occupation” (Episcopal Archives, 2015A, pp. 357–359). At the same General Convention, the Episcopalians passed Resolution 2015-B013 (“Reaffirm a Policy of Reconciliation and Restorative Justice in the Middle East”), which urged the parties and the U.S. government to invest “substantial diplomatic capital” in the pursuit of a negotiated two-state agreement that resolves all final status issues involved in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, called for increased investment in the Palestinian economy, and allocated funds for “grassroots organizations jointly led by Israelis and Palestinians” (Episcopal Archives, 2015B, pp. 913–915). These alternate resolutions parallel the strategy of divestment opponents elsewhere, in calling for “positive investment” in the Palestinian economy (rather than socially responsible investment or divestment from corporations involved in the occupation) as well as shifting the emphasis to dialogue and joint ventures over what are alternatively called “one-sided” resolutions (according to divestment opponents) that “stand with the oppressed” (according to divestment supporters).

Other Denominations.

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), formerly the Lutheran Church in America (LCA), has a history of socially responsible investment dating back to 1972. The ELCA engaged in economic activism, such as the Nestle boycott and the anti-apartheid movement, and was involved in shareholder activism from its start as an independent body (Robinson, 2002, p. 347). The ELCA partners with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL). Both bodies belong to the Lutheran World Federation, which has run health, education, and humanitarian aid programs in the Palestinian territories since World War II. In 1951 the Lutheran World Federation Middle East Program was one of the largest employers in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, which then controlled the West Bank, due to its work with Palestinian refugees and the administration of the August Victoria Hospital complex (LWF, N.D.). The ELCA officially expressed support for Palestinian rights in 1989, in its social message on the “Israeli/Palestinian Conflict,” in which it not only acknowledged its “sinful complicity as Lutherans in the past” but also asserted that past failure should not excuse present silence (ELCA, N.D.-A).

At the 2005 ELCA Churchwide Assembly, the “Peace Not Walls” strategy document was adopted by a 668-269 vote. This strategy document included a section on “stewarding economic resources” calling for “expend[ing] God-given economic resources in ways that support the quest for a just peace in the Holy Land” (Clarke, 2005; ELCA, 2005, p. 53). In

Mainline Protestants and Divestment as International Economic Activism

2007 the Churchwide Assembly reaffirmed the 2005 Peace Not Walls campaign by a vote of 697–245, adding specific language to guide the economic initiatives that might arise. Notably, the 2007 action stated that while economic actions might include “exploration of the feasibility of refusing to buy products produced in Israeli settlements,” any “examination of investments would exclude the option of divestiture” (ELCA, N.D. –B). Assembly Action 09.06.36, approved by a vote of 690–125 reaffirmed earlier actions on the topic, but in so doing, emphasized eight points related to learning about “mutual fears, aspirations and hopes”, “refin[ing] its peacemaking efforts to demonstrate as fully as possible the ‘balanced . . . care for all parties’”; supporting funding “promot[ing] peace and cooperation”; and none on economic activism per se (ELCA, N.D.-B). In 2011, after a review of the Kairos Palestine document, the Churchwide Assembly voted 868–73 and took additional action on the Peace Not Walls campaign, which included “consider[ing] making positive economic investments in those Palestinian projects and businesses that peacefully strengthen the economic and social fabric of Palestinian society” and “commend[ing] the policy ‘ELCA Economic Social Criteria Investment Screens’ to the members, congregations, synods, and agencies of this church.” However, the action also explicitly “decline[d] to undertake a review of the investment of funds managed within the ECLA” (ELCA, N.D.-B). Such statements continue the ELCA’s policy of “constructive engagement” over “divestment.”

In August 2016 the Evangelical Lutheran Church voted in Assembly Action 16.06.27 “to direct the ELCA’s Corporate Social Responsibility review team to develop a human rights social criteria investment screen based on the social teachings of this church” as well as to encourage “positive investment in Palestine and other under-resourced areas where human rights abuses materially impact the well-being of all people” and to encourage ELCA members and associated bodies to “engage in shareholder advocacy in support of human rights.” The resolution was voted on by card rather than by electronic balloting, and so although no official tally is available, observers suggested it was around 90% in favor of the action (ELCA, N.D.-B). Documents accompanying the decision on the denominational website clarify that different church bodies have their own investment policies and procedures and also differentiate between investment screens and divestment. Thus, as occurred with debates in other churches, the framing of church action as “divestment” versus “positive investment” was important to church members and leaders in terms of public framing as well as perceived links to broader political movements. The church was clear to frame its actions in the context of social justice-oriented economic activism and not a “blacklist” of particular companies. Such publications also highlight the relative autonomy of pension funds and other church investment bodies from the decisions made in the churchwide assembly.

United Church of Christ

In 1985 at the 15th General Synod, the UCC committed itself to be a Just Peace church. Since 1987, the UCC has consistently affirmed Israel’s right to exist within secure borders, as well as supported the Palestinian right to enjoy an independent, viable state. The UCC has opposed Israeli occupation of Palestinian territory as well as the construction of

Israeli settlements on lands occupied in 1967 as sources of conflict and has also “confessed to the sin of anti-Semitism and proclaimed its renunciation” (UCC Palestine—Israel Network General Synod Resolutions, N.D.). In 1999 the General Synod passed a resolution, “Bringing Justice and Peace to the Middle East,” that called on the church “to use financial resources in non-violent ways that deter development of Israeli settlements in Palestinian areas.” In 2005 the General Synod passed a resolution called “Concerning the Use of Economic Leverage to Promote Peace in the Middle East,” which led to a process of corporate engagement with companies including Caterpillar, Hewlett-Packard, and Motorola and by investing in the Siraj Fund which supports Palestinian companies (UCCPIN Background, 2015). In June 2015, the 30th General Synod built on this history and passed, with an 80% supporting vote, a resolution for “divestment from companies that profit from the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories” while also calling for a boycott of goods produced in Israeli settlements, study of Kairos Palestine, political pressure on the U.S. Congress to ensure that U.S. aid to Israel is consistent with the U.S. Arms Export Control Act, and interreligious dialogue (UCC Palestine—Israel Network General Synod Resolutions, 2015). The four pieces of this resolution underscore the synergy between political and economic activism in regard to the foreign policy concerns of the church. While Palestinian Christians welcomed the statement as a “strong signal that they are not alone” and JVP also supported the resolution, groups like the American Jewish Committee strongly condemned the UCC resolution as one-sided (Markoe, 2015). Advocates of the resolution stated that although it was unlikely to have an economic effect on Israel, the 508–124 vote lent significant moral weight to the movement to address Israel’s occupation (Gladstone, 2015). In contrast, some opponents have tried to link UCC advocacy on this issue with decline in membership numbers.

In July 2017 the UCC General Synod passed a resolution advocating specifically for the rights of Palestinian children. Unlike divestment resolutions, this resolution called on the general minister and the president of the UCC to “petition the Prime Minister of Israel and the Israeli Ambassador, asking them to guarantee basic due process rights and exercise an absolute prohibition against torture and ill-treatment of children detained by Israeli authorities.” The UCC Palestine/Israel Network has also endorsed the HP-Free Churches Campaign, which asks congregations to pledge not to buy any Hewlett-Packard equipment or supplies until it ends its involvement in the occupation of Palestine.

Mennonites

As a historic peace church, the Mennonites have a history of economic activism in the pursuit of peace and justice, including the refusal to buy war bonds, as well as the long use of investment screens that prevent investment in companies profiting from human rights abuses, alcohol, or military production. Like the Lutherans, Mennonite involvement in Israel/Palestine dates back to World War II and the work of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) assisting Palestinian refugees in the wake of creation of the State of Israel. MCC works with Palestinians and Israelis pursuing nonviolent efforts to achieve peace and justice in the region, and Mennonites have been key players in the creation and operation of the Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) which have engaged in accompaniment

Mainline Protestants and Divestment as International Economic Activism

work and support for Palestinian-led nonviolent activism in Hebron since 1994. The Mennonite Palestine Israel Network (MennoPIN) was created in 2013 to support education, advocacy, and action aimed at promoting peace with justice in Palestine-Israel (Seidel & Stoner, N.D.). A resolution on Israel-Palestine brought to the Delegate Assembly in 2015, like the resolutions of other denominations, encouraged the study of the Kairos Palestine document, but also called U.S. citizens “complicit” in the “sinful” Israeli occupation of Palestine due to U.S. military support for Israel. Further, the resolution called on Mennonite agencies “to review . . . the investments of Mennonite Church USA for the purpose of withdrawing investments from corporations known to be profiting from the occupation and/or destruction of life and property in Israel-Palestine” (MCUSA, 2015). This resolution was tabled and asked to be rewritten and returned to the 2017 Delegate Assembly for consideration.

A similar resolution was passed in 2016 by the Mennonite Church Canada that affirmed Israeli and Palestinian nonviolent efforts for justice and peace in the region, and that asked the Mennonite Church Canada, associated bodies, and members “to avoid investing in or supporting companies that do business with Israeli settlements and the Israel Defense Forces, and companies that are profiting from the occupation of the Palestinian territories” and also to encourage government actions, including economic sanctions, to pressure Israel to end the occupation (MCCA, 2016). The 2017 Delegate Assembly of the Mennonite Church USA approved a revised resolution on Israel/Palestine that was the result of extensive consultation and feedback with Jews, Palestinians, and a range of concerned Mennonites in the intervening years. The resolution acknowledges the responsibility of U.S. citizens, Christians, and Mennonites in harm done to Jews and Palestinians and the need to “address both military occupation and antisemitism.” The approved resolution makes several commitments, including to partnering with Israeli and Palestinian peacemakers, advocating with the U.S. government to end military aid and settlement expansion, and “review[ing] investment practices for the purpose of withdrawing investments from companies that are profiting from the occupation” (MCUSA, 2017, p. 4). Thus, the resolution seeks to address the key concerns raised by opponents of divestment while also standing by church moral principles.

Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)

Like the Mennonites, the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), is a historic peace church with a long history of economic activism in pursuit of peace and justice. Quakers such as John Woolman and Elizabeth Heyrick actively engaged in economic activism to protest slavery, for example. Quakers also have a long history in Palestine, having established the Ramallah Friends School in 1887 and the Ramallah Friends Meeting in 1901 during the Ottoman Empire. Quakers also engaged in substantial work with Palestinian and Jewish refugees in the wake of World War II and the war of Israeli independence (Hallward, 2013). Quaker theology and organizational structure results in decentralized decision making, so Quakers do not have a large denominational decision-making body like the other denominations discussed here. However, a number of Quaker meetings and institutions have made statements supporting boycott and divestment. In 2011, for exam-

ple, the Illinois Yearly Meeting passed a minute calling for pressure on TIAA-CREF pension funds to divest from five corporations engaged in human rights violations against Palestinians. The Lake Erie Yearly Meeting made a similar statement in 2013, calling for divestment from “companies that support Israel’s military occupation and repression of the Palestinian People.”

The Friends Fiduciary Corporation (FFC), a Quaker nonprofit organization that provides socially responsible investment management services to Quaker institutions, has invested according to Quaker moral commitments since its founding in 1898. FFC’s standard investment screen includes companies that profit from alcohol, tobacco or firearms, coal, gambling, prisons, or that have poor environmental or employment practices. In 2012 FFC divested from Caterpillar due to its involvement in products and services used for violence in Israel/Palestine. American Friends Service Committee (AFSC), a humanitarian organization with Quaker roots, also has a history of economic activism linked to struggles for civil rights, farm worker movements, anti-militarism, and prison rights, among others. In 2008 the AFSC board approved an internal investment screen in response to a request from the organization’s Israeli and Palestinian staff that prohibits investment in any company that provides products or services contributing to violence aimed at Israeli or Palestinian civilians, or supports the maintenance and/or expansion of the Israeli occupation, Israeli settlements, or the Separation Wall. AFSC was also a partner in the “We Divest” campaign that called on TIAA-CREF, an investment company that works extensively with nonprofits, religious organizations, and educators, to stop investing in corporations from the occupation and engaged in human rights abuses against civilians; in response to pressure, TIAA-CREF dropped Caterpillar and Veolia from its Social Choice fund. In 2015 AFSC adopted a publicly available digital screen to apply to an entire investment portfolio to help identify companies complicit in the occupation. AFSC also has a digital screen for investment in prisons as well, demonstrating that church divestment is not unfairly aimed at Israel, but is part of a socially responsible investment strategy that incorporates a wide range of moral concerns.

Despite the history of support for BDS by AFSC and Quaker tradition of social justice activism, efforts to pass minutes on boycott and divestment have caused extensive debate within Quaker meetings for a number of reasons, including concerns over how effective such measures might be and a sizeable population of Quakers who also identify with Judaism. Some also question whether divestment equates with “taking sides” and is thus counterproductive to Quaker teachings of seeking God in everyone. Divestment supporters note that current U.S. policy is one-sided in favor of Israel, and that supporting the Palestinian call for divestment is consistent with Quaker testimonies on social justice and nonviolence. Given the Quaker process of seeking consensus and unity in decision-making rather than voting, a single individual with strong views can stand in the way of policy statements.

Current Issues and Challenges to Divestment

Proponents and opponents of divestment argue over how effective such measures are in achieving a just and lasting peace between Israelis and Palestinians. Although the particularities of these debates are specific to the Israeli-Palestinian context, the broader themes in the debates were evident in the struggle against South African apartheid as well as contemporary struggles around fossil fuel development. In the 1980s the arguments over constructive engagement versus disengagement from apartheid South Africa mirrored those of today, and scholars and activists then, as now, noted that the primary impact of divestment is actually in the symbolic and moral realm rather than the economic one (Beaty & Harari, 1987). In 2016, for example, the UMC General Conference did not add fossil fuels to their investment screen because of arguments that corporate engagement would have more influence than divestment (Hodges, 2016). Yet, the decisions taken by church pension boards, such as the Pension and Health Benefits Fund of the UMC's decision to divest from Israeli banks posing human rights risk in 2016, reflect that sustained grassroots pressure has an impact, even when big name opponents, including U.S. presidential hopeful and lifelong Methodist Hillary R. Clinton, condemn BDS.⁹ Further, when denominational decision-making bodies are unable to agree on divestment as overall church policy, pension funds and other related institutions, acting within their own mandates, have taken action in line with extant socially responsible investing policies. This is consistent with previous efforts to divest from apartheid South Africa as well.

The power of church divestment and related boycott initiatives is evident in efforts to criminalize such activity. The Israeli Knesset passed a law in March 2017 banning entry to foreigners who publicly call for boycotting Israel, including the settlements. In July 2017 interfaith leaders who have actively promoted divestment initiatives—including Rick Ufford-Chase, moderator of the 216th PCUSA General Assembly in 2004 and Rabbi Alyssa Wise of JVP—were prevented from boarding a plane bound for Israel. In the United States, 20 states have passed laws prohibiting states from contracting with or investing in companies that boycott Israel, some even blacklisting corporations that have withdrawn investments in Israel for their own financial interests. At the national level, S. 720 was introduced in the U.S. Senate in March 2017, which would make it a felony for U.S. citizens to engage in any boycott against Israel, punishable by a minimum \$250,000 fine and up to 20 years in prison; a later version removed the threat of jail time. As of December 2018 the measure has not been finalized.

Such legislation puts those engaged in divestment work under pressure; however, similar laws were passed in apartheid South Africa (Beaty & Harari, 1987) and leaders of nonviolent movements including Gandhi and King have often gone to prison for standing against unjust laws in pursuit of morals; this is the definition of civil disobedience.

Laws criminalizing boycotts initiated by foreign entities may be part of the reason why church bodies are keen to distance themselves from the broader BDS movement, as was done explicitly by both PCUSA in its resolution and by the resolution encouraging the Global Ministries of UMC to end its support for the U.S. campaign. By distancing them-

selves from the broader movement, however, churches are also signaling their historic and continued support for Israel and a just and lasting two-state solution that addresses the needs of Israelis and Palestinians alike, as well as a tradition of socially responsible investment consistent with church teachings and moral stances. Church statements calling for a just and lasting peace as well as investment screens preventing church investments in companies engaged in human rights abuses and military weapons predate such legislation, and provide a nonviolent means of applying pressure for Christians and others to promote a world consistent with their moral teachings.

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ELCA. Evangelical Lutheran Church of America resources on the Churchwide Strategy for Engagement in Israel and Palestine and related policy documents.

General Convention of the Episcopal Church. This site contains the agenda and decisions made in the 2015 Convention, and one can also search archives for decisions taken related to divestment and Israel/Palestine.

General Conference of the United Methodist Church. This source includes policy documents and decisions taken at General Conferences dating back to 1996.

Kairos Palestine Document. This is written by Palestinian Christian leaders calling for a response of solidarity and action from Christians around the world to help address Palestinian suffering under Israeli occupation.

Kairos South Africa Document. This document calls on Christians worldwide to engage in a prophetic response to end apartheid and stand up against oppression.

Palestine Portal This is a resource for churches engaged in social justice action related to Israel/Palestine. It includes summaries and links regarding church divestment as well as tools and document collections compiled by religious activists.

Presbyterian Church General Assembly. Presbyterian Church General Assembly business documents are available to search by committee, topic, or General Assembly year. Middle East Committee documents dealing with Israel/Palestine and divestment can be found here, as well as amendments made in committee and on the floor.

United Church of Christ Palestine/Israel Network. Resources including past resolutions and current policy documents.

United Methodists for Kairos Response. This is a grassroots advocacy body within the UMC calling for a Methodist response to the Palestine Kairos document. The site has extensive resources regarding the Methodist church actions related to divestment and boycott, including the text of resolutions passed and considered.

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Notes:

(1.) See, for example, Joe Myers, “How do the world’s biggest companies compare to the biggest economies?”, *World Economic Forum*, October 19, 2016.

(2.) Space does not allow a full discussion of the debates over the geography of this region or competing nomenclatures. For the purpose of this entry, the term “Israel/Palestine” will be used when speaking of the region between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River and “Israel” or “Palestine” when speaking of more specific geographic locales. Although Israel has no defined borders, this article uses the internationally recognized 1949 borders from the Rhodes Armistice Line, and the pre-1967 borders for Palestine (West Bank, Gaza Strip, East Jerusalem) in accordance with the diplomatic recognition granted the State of Palestine by 137 states and the UN General Assembly. For more on this topic see, for example, Biger (2008) and Sufian and Levine (2007).

(3.) Thank you to an anonymous reviewer for identifying this point of comparison.

(4.) See also Friends of Sabeel North America (FONSA). “Sabeel’s Call for Morally Responsible Investment,” 2016.

(5.) See “Primary Sources” section for link to document.

(6.) See, for example, United Methodists for Response, About.

(7.) Although it exceeds the focus of this article, the PCUSA also made a recommendation in 2014 to urge the U.S. Department of State and the U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations to support efforts for self-determination in the Western Sahara and for the MRTI to monitor international investments in Morocco in order to uphold corporate social responsibility measures relevant to this foreign policy issue. See Item B.109 for Action from the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board, February 5–7, 2014.

(8.) Excerpts from The United Methodist Church General Conference Resolutions on Palestine/Israel & on Ethical Investing, 1968–2004, compiled by David Wildman, Executive Secretary Human Rights & Racial Justice, General Board of Global Ministries, The United Methodist Church.

(9.) See Wespath Investment Management, Human Rights Guideline Implementation.

Maia Hallward

Department of Middle East Politics, Kennesaw State University