

Note: The following resolution, approved by General Synod 25 in Atlanta, should not be considered “final” until the minutes of the General Synod have been reviewed and approved by the Executive Council in October.

**RESOLUTION CONCERNING USE OF ECONOMIC LEVERAGE
IN PROMOTING PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST**

SUMMARY

This resolution calls on the United Church of Christ to exercise multiple strategies to promote peace among all of God’s people in the Middle East.

BIBLICAL, THEOLOGICAL, AND ETHICAL RATIONALE

God’s activity in human history has moved peoples from conflict to concord, God’s desire for peace, broadly understood: the absence of war (Lev. 26:6); reliance on the abundance that God provides (Ex. 15, Ex. 17); harmony among peoples (Ps 133); new relationships among those who have been separated by animosity (Lk 10:27-37). Moreover, God’s prophets have demonstrated God’s will for the faithful to invest their lives and their property, even when such investment seems foolhardy (Jer 32). God’s covenant with Israel remains unbroken (Rom. 9-11).

BACKGROUND

The world has witnessed unresolved conflict between the peoples whose social, economic and religious lives are rooted in the lands of the Middle East. The United Church of Christ has affirmed the right of Israel to exist and has deplored the violence directed against its people. At the same time the United Church of Christ has enduring relationships with Palestinians, including Palestinian Christians, who suffer greatly under the occupation of their land.

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS the General Synod of the United Church of Christ has affirmed its commitment to Israel’s safe and secure existence within internationally-recognized borders, neighboring an independent Palestinian state; and

WHEREAS the General Synod of the United Church of Christ has continued to advocate on behalf of justice toward a resolution of the Arab-Israeli-Palestinian conflict, advocacy and action which includes but is not limited to education about the realities on the ground and urging the US to play the role of honest broker; and

WHEREAS the Twenty-Third General Synod of the United Church of Christ affirmed its participation in and commitment to the World Council of Churches’ Decade to Overcome Violence (2001), condemning all forms of violence including but not limited to the violence perpetuated in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict including acts of suicide bombings by Palestinians; and the use of force by Israelis in perpetuating occupation of Palestinian lands; and

WHEREAS General Synods of the United Church of Christ have been particularly mindful of its relationship in Christ with Palestinian Christians, and notably the mission relationships mutually developed over decades of engagement and presence; and

WHEREAS the General Synod of the United Church of Christ has affirmed its relationship to the Jewish community, condemning anti-Semitism in all its forms, and affirming that God’s covenant with the Jewish community remains inviolate (1987); and

WHEREAS the General Synod of the United Church of Christ has called for the use of economic leverage on behalf of oppressed people in a variety of circumstances;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the 25th General Synod call upon the Covenanted Ministries, Pension Boards, United Church Foundation, Conferences, local churches and members to use economic leverage, including, but not limited to: advocating the reallocation of US foreign aid so that the militarization of the Middle East is constrained; making positive contributions to groups and partners committed to the non-violent resolution of the conflict; challenging the practices of corporations that gain from the

continuation of the conflict; and divesting from those companies that refuse to change their practices of gain from the perpetuation of violence, including the Occupation; and BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that all settings of the United Church of Christ are urged to remain committed to interreligious dialogue and to participation with Jewish, Christian and Muslim partners to work for peace in Israel-Palestine; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the 25th General Synod requests the appropriate national bodies to provide materials that may be used by all settings of the church to discern how economic leverage can be used to support the development of Palestine and Israel as two independent, secure, economically viable states; and

FINALLY BE IT RESOLVED that the 25th General Synod calls upon these settings to create for and disseminate to the local churches study resources on the range of issues contributing to violence and oppression in the Middle East and ways to be involved in promoting peace.

The funding for the implementation of this Resolution will be made in accordance with the overall mandate of the affected agencies and the funds available.

Adopted July 5, 2005