

## Overture on Israel Investment. Seattle Presbytery. 17 January 2006.

The Seattle Presbytery respectfully overtures the 217<sup>th</sup> General Assembly (2006) to approve the following resolution:

**The 217<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U. S. A.) resolves to:**

- 1) Pursue faithfully and consistently our historic vision of peace and security for all peoples of the Middle East region.**
- 2) *Suspend for 2 years* the “phased, selective divestment process” initiated by the 216<sup>th</sup> General Assembly in order to *build up relationships with* groups among Palestinians and Israelis who are actively working for peace.**
- 3) Encourage *congregations and* other entities of the PCUSA to initiate engagement with companies, not-for-profits, NGOs, and diplomatic efforts that promote a just and lasting peace in the region.**
- 4) Reaffirm the PCUSA support for a two-state solution to the present conflict, believing that Palestinians have a right to freedom, security, and self-governance within their own state and, further, that such a state must be established within safe and secure borders and be economically viable.**
- 5) Reaffirm the PCUSA’s commitment to the vitality and well-being of the state of Israel, in awareness that only a strong Israel can be a partner in lasting peace, and maintain Israel’s right to exist as a state and Israel’s right to defend itself against terrorism and acts of violence that threaten its security.**
- 6) Encourage and applaud efforts by individual Presbyterians, congregations, and judicatories of our church to communicate directly and regularly with Jewish, *Christian, and Muslim* communities, sponsor programs likely to improve relations *among Muslims, Christians and Jews*, and invest in the peace of the Middle East.**

### Rationale

A large majority of Israelis and Palestinians prefer peace with their neighbors, rather than violence and war, and are ready to make hard sacrifices to achieve it. We as Presbyterians who believe in and promote peace ought to offer them encouragement and support.

The Presbyterian Church (USA) has given longstanding support to a just and lasting peace in the Middle East, and we believe that our church can play a positive role in fostering Middle East peace. However, the action taken by the 216<sup>th</sup> General Assembly (2004) regarding a process of selective divestment in companies doing business with Israel caused considerable division and distrust, both within our church and within the Jewish community, both in the United States and in Israel.

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It is wrong to single out Israel by means of that policy, when other states and parties in the region are also guilty of serious human-rights violations that can and must be addressed. This decision distracts the PCUSA from its historic commitment to a two-state solution to the conflict.

This overture would correct the actions taken in 2004, which have caused so much disruption, moving instead in a positive and productive way toward a just, equitable, and lasting settlement of the problems in the Middle East.