

A Statement Concerning Divestiture and Boycott
Adopted by the Session of the First Presbyterian Church of Atlanta
April 15, 2014

Whereas:

1. We affirm that Jesus Christ taught us to “Love your neighbor as yourself” (Leviticus 19:18; Mark 12:31 RSV) and both Israelis and Palestinians are our neighbors,
but we confess it is difficult to know how to demonstrate this love with neighbors whose longstanding disputes are cultural, geographic and religious.

2. We remember that Jesus lamented and wept over Jerusalem saying, “If you, even you, had only recognized on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes” (Luke 19:41-42); and we acknowledge that the present conflict is, to a large degree, a consequence of decisions by world powers in the 20th century,
and we lament the inability of both Palestinians and Israelis to reach a peaceful solution to their conflict.

3. We disapprove the actions of Israelis in building settlements and destroying Palestinian homes in areas occupied for centuries by Palestinians,
and we also disapprove the actions of Palestinians in firing rockets into Israeli neighborhoods and in violent attacks on Israeli citizens.

4. We long for a sustainable solution that recognizes and honors each person in the Holy Land as an equal child of God,
and we promote this in ways that reflect the love of Jesus Christ.

5. We do not think that acts of divestiture and boycott are the leverage points that will lead to a more just outcome,
and we are concerned that such acts will serve only to alienate Jew from Christian, Presbyterian from Presbyterian, and employees and owners of targeted corporations and their communities from the PC(USA).

6. We affirm that we are not trying to maintain an unjust *status quo*, but to preserve the ability of the PC(USA) to be an active peacemaker and not to become marginalized as a one-sided advocacy group.

Therefore, we, the members of the Session of First Presbyterian Church of Atlanta:

- A. Will seek to provide leadership by discouraging the use of divestiture and boycott;
- B. Will strive diligently to seek, encourage, and support positive investment, rather than divestment, in programs serving to build bridges between Palestinians and Israelis and among Christians, Jews, and Muslims;
- C. Call upon all members of First Presbyterian Church of Atlanta to foster mutual understanding by seeking to develop and strengthen friendships with our Jewish and Muslim neighbors and by supporting interfaith dialogue; and
- D. Call upon all members of Sessions, Presbyteries and the General Assembly and all special interest groups to seek prayerfully and earnestly to discern the will of God in resolving this conflict without the use of violence.

The Lord has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you than to do justice, to love kindness and to walk humbly with God. (Micah 6:8)