

The Presbyterian War on Israel

Analysis of the 2012 Arab boycott of Israel / BDS
Agenda of the Presbyterian Church (USA)

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Chapter 1: The 2012 General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA)

At each of the biennial General Assembly meetings of the Presbyterian Church (USA) delegates consider several Overtures, a.k.a. proposals, all stemming from various committees Synods, a.k.a. church regions, which formulate their positions on issues facing the church in the intervening years. Each committee focuses on a single topic, such as Church policy, civil unions, health and other issues, later presenting their final proposals for a vote to the plenary at the end of their General Assembly.

Over the past several years, the Presbyterian Church (USA) has been considering and passing divest-from-Israel overtures that have upset many people in the Jewish community. These overtures are certainly not the first time Presbyterians and Jews have been in conflict. For more than thirty years, the Presbyterian Church (USA) has been actively working to establish “messianic Jewish” congregations which at the core are proselytization efforts to convert Jews into followers of Jesus, thus Christians. From a Christian perspective it may fulfill a mission of spreading the gospel, but from a Jewish perspective it signals disrespect for Judaism as it aims to change Jews into people of others faiths – If a person truly respects the religious beliefs of others, they will not seek to change them.

A letter titled “Presbyterians Against Israel - Liberal Protestants are engaging in historical revisionism concerning Jews and the Holy Land” was published in the December 3, 2010 online edition of the Wall Street Journal. In it, the Rabbi Marvin Hier and Rabbi Abraham Cooper of the Simon Wiesenthal Center discussed Replacement Theology which they called “the medieval view that the Church has replaced Israel in God's plan and that all biblical references to Israel refer to the “new Israel”—that is, to Christians. For centuries, that view was the theological basis for denying rights to Jews in Church-dominated Europe.”

The Presbyterian Church (USA) formally rejected Replacement Theology in 1987, yet works with their ecumenical partners such as Sabeel, which is Arabic for “the way.” The Arabic name is not an accident since its core teachings are based on the Koran, not the Bible. Sabeel was formed by Muslims to recruit Christians to their anti-Israel campaign, and teaches Liberation Theology as liberation from Israel’s social injustice to Palestinian Arabs. Sabeel adds the false apartheid claim against Israel to their teachings. The letter by the two rabbis continues, in part:

“In 2009, on the first day of Chanukah (which Jews again celebrate this week), a group of Christian Palestinians issued the Kairos Palestine Document, which was immediately published on the World Council of Churches website. The document calls for a general boycott of Israel and argues that Christians' faith requires them

to side with the "oppressed," meaning the Palestinians. It speaks of the evils of the Israeli "occupation," yet is silent on any evils committed by Palestinians, including the Hamas terrorists who now govern the Gaza Strip.

“The Kairos document also describes the Jewish connection to Israel only in terms of the Holocaust, denying 3,000 years of Jewish domicile. "Our presence in this land, as Christian and Muslim Palestinians, is not accidental but rather deeply rooted in the history and geography of this land," it states. "The West sought to make amends for what Jews had endured in the countries of Europe, but it made amends on our account and in our land."

“Most importantly, these Palestinian church leaders declared that there must not be a Jewish state because any religious state is inherently racist. They mentioned in this regard only Israel, of course, ignoring all Muslim states and others with an official state religion.”

The Presbyterian Church (USA) not only uses the Kairos document to justify their boycott against Israel, but as a steppingstone to adopting replacement theology via liberation theology. Instead of saying Presbyterians replace Jews in the Bible covenant, Presbyterians use Liberation Theology and the Kairos document to erase the Jewish claim to Israel via ecumenical partner proxy.

Religious partnership means an inherent fundamental belief. The Presbyterian Church (USA) has embraced Sabeel and its vision of Israel being an illegitimate state and has never even criticized it.

Of the twenty one committees at the 2012 General Assembly, two committees focused on Israel's foreign affairs, a nation thousands of miles away from the United States. These committees only referred to the foreign affairs of other nations, including the United States, as related to Israel.

For example, the Peacekeeping and International Issues committee issued and voted unanimously to adopt report 14-03 “For Human Rights and Civic Freedom: Movements for Democratic Change in the Arab World—From the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy” which states:

“The presence of U.S. forces itself increases tensions with nationalists and Muslim fundamentalists; the worsening situation of the Palestinians increases religious as well as political polarization. Religious extremists take out some of their hostilities on Christian minorities associated with the United States, which is inevitably linked to the policies of Israel's government.”

In other words, this Presbyterian Church (USA) committee has essentially taken the position that everything that goes wrong in the Middle-East is Israel's fault.

The same report refers to the blog entries, with high esteem, of Stephen Walt who co-authored a book with John Mearsheimer titled “The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy.” The book has been called anti-Semitic by no less than Harvard law professor Alan Dershowitz and Abe Foxman, the national director of the Anti-Defamation League.

Further, report 14-3 states:

“Although they are not “Western,” Christians in the Arab World are sometimes perceived as proxies of the West and targeted for retaliation for Western foreign policy, particularly U.S. support for Israel’s occupation of Palestine.”

After blaming Israel for all problems in the Middle-East, this statement by the Peacekeeping and International Issues committee indicates the Presbyterian Church (USA) has already made up its mind that Israel occupies Palestine. As such, the Presbyterian Church (USA) has adopted the position of the Palestinian Authority as opposed to a generic “disputed territories” stance which would neither take the side of Israel nor the Palestinian Authority. Adopting a one-sided stance is inconsistent with being a fair broker for peace, thus self-disqualifying itself as a “Peacekeeping” committee.

Perhaps the most disturbing statement in report 14-3 is “Since World War II, U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East has been chiefly driven by dependence on oil and concern for our ally, Israel.” These are precisely the claims conspiracy theorists who like to claim Jews control the banks, media and the US government. It is the claim of the authors of “The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy” that Jews exert an overwhelming and disproportional force to coerce the US government to act on Israel’s behalf.

These are but a few of the statements by the Peacekeeping and International Issues committee, which is not even the focus of this report. It does, however, illustrate the inherent bias against Israel in the Presbyterian Church (USA). It also exemplifies the need to examine the Israel related overtures in detail.

Chapter 2: Introduction to the Arab boycott of Israel

In March, 2002, I created Boycott Watch, an organization that monitors and reports about all boycotts, including the Arab boycott of Israel. In several articles and in my book *Boycotting Peace*, published by Balfour Books in 2011, I proved how the divest-from-Israel campaign, which was later renamed to the Boycott Divestment Sanctions (BDS) campaign, was created by the Palestinian Authority to export the Arab boycott of Israel, reviving the Arab boycott of Israel campaign which was almost forgotten about by the public after the creation of US antiboycott laws in 1977.

These laws were implemented to clearly establish Congress and the Executive branch have the exclusive power to establish all foreign policy, thus blocking anyone in the US or its territories from establishing de' facto foreign policy. The Arab boycott of Israel was designed to do just that – to work-around the U.S. Congress and all governments to establish and enforce an international boycott to destroy Israel economically, and to punish Jews in general.

The official Arab boycott list submitted to Congress in the hearings establishing the Office of Antiboycott Compliance under the Department of Commerce included New York City Jewish book stores and a Jewish-owned distillery in Canada, despite the fact that Arabs are generally not buying a Menorah or a beer for that matter - drinking alcohol is against Islamic law. The reasons for these boycotts are simple – the Arab world wants to intimidate people from conducting business with Jews in general, not just Israel. The US Antiboycott laws, therefore, are specifically aimed at secondary and tertiary boycotts, the kind the Arab League imposed to boycott Jewish businesses, not just Israeli businesses.

Today, the Office of Antiboycott Compliance enforces US Law, Part 760 which forbids all U.S. persons, meaning anyone in the U.S. and its territories, from enjoining into a foreign sanctioned boycott of nations friendly to the U.S. In practice, the law forbids secondary and tertiary boycotts of Israel, which are meant to intimidate people from conducting business with Israel. This is exactly what BDS is all about – the boycotting of investing in businesses which conduct business with Israel. As we will see in the overture analysis, tertiary boycotts, action would be defined as refusing to do business with companies that are not complying with their secondary boycott, have in fact been proposed by the Presbyterian Church (USA).

This is explained in more depth, including the requirements to complete IRS form 5713, the International Boycott Report, which includes a requirement for individual filing, in my book *Boycotting Peace*. That book also details the history of the Arab boycott of Israel and how it is used to perpetuate the Arab-Israel conflict by preventing peace. As I

begin the book, you cannot have peace with someone who will not sit down with you for a cup of coffee. Boycotting, therefore, divides people, thus is a barrier to peace.

The following is the open letter I sent to the Presbyterian Church (USA) regarding the anti-peace and illegal nature of their Boycott-Israel proposal to be presented at your 220th General Assembly, June 30 through July 7, 2012, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. I only learned the full extent of their boycott Israel overtures after posting the following letter:

Presbyterian Church (USA)
On the occasion of the GA 220

Dear Presbyterian Church members,

My name is Fred Taub, I am the President of Boycott Watch and author of the book *Boycotting Peace* (<http://www.BoycottingPeace.com>). As an expert in boycotts, I regularly appear in the media, from Fox News to Al-Jazeera, to the Wall Street Journal, LA Times, USA Today and several other television, radio, print and online publications. In addition to speaking to groups including Scholars for Peace in the Middle-East, my work has also been cited in two cases before the U.S. Supreme Court.

I am writing today to address the divest-from-Israel proposal before you, as submitted by the Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) on its engagement with corporations doing business in Israel-Palestine.

Divestment is another word for boycott, a topic I address in detail in my recently released book, *Boycotting Peace*, published by Balfour Books. As I state in my book and lectures, you cannot have peace with someone who will not sit down with you for a cup of coffee. Boycotts separate people, not bring people together – it is a logical fallacy to assume you can separate people into brotherhood. Peace can only be obtained and sustained when people work together.

History proves economic cooperation is essential to building peace. The U.S. and Canada, for example, were once warring nations but now share the world's strongest peace because these two nations share the world's largest trade. A similar situation exists between the U.S. and England, but the opposite exists between the U.S. and Cuba which have neither peace nor trade. A recent example of trade maintaining peace occurred when the U.S. had foreign policy differences with France regarding Iraq. While the relationship between the U.S. and France has been strained, friendship remained in tact because trade makes war between nations too expensive.

Perhaps the best great example of trade growing peace nations can be seen with the U.S. and China, two nations which went from cold-war nuclear adversaries to

partners in seeking peace with North Korea. Trade makes war between nations too costly to fathom.

Boycotts divide people, so rather than considering a proposal to separate people, I suggest following the only Middle-East peace model that works, the Israel-Jordan model, where the peace continues to grow based on growing trade. In fact, the DGP Per Capita growth rate in Jordan has been exceeding the U.S. growth rate for several years. Jordan's economy is booming thanks to trade with Israel. It stands to reason, therefore, that increased trade, not boycott or divestment, is the best model for peace, and not just in the Middle-East.

If, however, you still chose to follow the anti-peace path of divestment, you need to be aware you will be violating several provisions of U.S. law. For starters, the Import Export Amendments Law of 1977 created the Office of Antiboycott Compliance within the U.S. Department of Commerce. The law states that no U.S. persons may participate in foreign sanctioned boycotts of nations friendly to the United States. Being that the divest-from-Israel campaign was created on behalf of the Palestinian Authority by its legal council, and since the PA is signatory to the Arab boycott of Israel which is coordinated by the Arab league, it qualifies for illegal boycott status under U.S. law.

U.S. law, Part 760.1 (a) states: "For purposes of this part, the term "*person*" means any individual, or any association or organization, public or private, which is organized, permanently established, resident, or registered to do business, in the United States or any foreign country. This definition of "*person*" includes both the singular and plural and, in addition, includes..."

In accordance with the law, not only could the Presbyterian Church (USA) be held in violation of federal law, but so can the members advocating your BDS proposal, as well as all the individual members of the MRTI Committee if you approve engaging in this illegal foreign sanctioned boycott. It is advisable not to blatantly and knowingly engage in a direct violation of federal law. Since you have already been asked to violate the law, you may still be required to file a notice to the Office of Antiboycott Compliance under the Bureau of Industry and Security within the U.S. Department of Commerce as defined within the law, as Part 760 includes a requirement for *all persons* to report *requests* to engage in foreign sanctioned boycotts, a requirement already triggered by the previous actions of the MRTI and other Presbyterian Church (USA) committees.

I strongly suggest, therefore, consulting with or hiring a tax attorney who specializes in Part 760 as boycotting Israel requires businesses, churches and individuals to file IRS form 5713, the International Boycott Report form, available on the IRS.gov website. Question 11 of the form asks: "Were you requested to participate in or cooperate with an international boycott?" Since you have been requested to participate in the boycott, you are required to answer yes to this question, which also affirms your filing requirement to the U.S. Department of Commerce.

Question 12 of the form asks: "Did you participate in or cooperate with an international boycott?" By acting upon any boycott of Israel request, including the MRTI divestment requests, you will be required to answer *yes* to this question. In

doing so, you will be required to, as the form again states, to “attach a copy (in English) of any and all boycott clauses agreed to...” This includes, therefore, submitting with you tax returns to the IRS all documents submitted to you in support of boycotting and divesting from Israel, including all documentation submitted in this review by pro-BDS advocates, such as Sabeel.

I trust all members of this committee have maintained complete and accurate records of these proceedings, because the IRS form then states: “If the answer to either question 11 or 12 is “Yes,” you must complete the rest of Form 5713. If you answered “Yes” to question 12, you must complete Schedules A and C or B and C (Form 5713).” If you have already engaged in the illegal boycott, you may also be required to file amended tax returns for all prior years in which you may have participated in the illegal foreign boycott.

The law is very clear. It does not take an attorney to realize the first check box of IRS tax form 5713 states “individual,” nor does it take an attorney to realize U.S. Law Part 760 applies to individuals, as that is specified in the opening paragraph of the law. I must suggest, therefore, that you neither engage in anti-peace activities; nor illegal boycott activities; nor ignore U.S. Department of Commerce rules; nor ignore U.S. Internal Revenue Service rules; nor engage in activities that will require extra IRS form filings and probably trigger an automatic audit. In this case, it is all one in the same.

Signed, Fred Taub
President, Boycott Watch
Author, Boycotting Peace

Chapter 3: Overtures of the Presbyterian Church (USA) and Arab League foreign policy

The Presbyterian Church (USA) received criticism for its Committee 15, Middle East and Peacemaking Issues overtures. While pointing out the flaws, one of the PCUSA Elders told me that I need to understand their “system.” I asked what system allows hate to be proposed? The fact is the Presbyterian Church (USA), as evidenced by the language in the Peacekeeping and International Issues committee overtures, is clearly biased against Israel, yet hides that hate in the name of “peacemaking.”

The overtures presented are extensive. Responding to every line would require volumes. The following, therefore, is a sample of each overture by Committee 15, Middle East and Peacemaking Issues, with commentary. Readers should note that all overtures from this committee has been analyzed so nobody can claim this document skipped any overtures that may contrast the conclusions of this analysis.

Overture 15-1: On Recognizing that Israel’s Law and Practices Constitute Apartheid Against Palestinian People—From the Presbytery of Muskingum Valley.

This 18 page overture begins with the following statement of purpose: “This overture is pursued with the hope it will lead to a peaceful reconciliation for the people of Israel and Palestine similar to that which occurred in South Africa when apartheid was internationally acknowledged.”

As such, it begins with the assumption an apartheid situation exists in Israel. While I devote a chapter to this topic in my book *Boycotting Peace*, I pose two points here which clearly indicate where the real apartheid exists:

- 1) Arabs work in Israel but Jews cannot work or even visit Palestinian areas
- 2) Palestinian President Abbas stated: "Jews will not be allowed to live anywhere in Palestine."

This alone clearly indicates where the real apartheid exists. In fact, Arab nations have passport restriction rules forbidding Jews or anyone with an Israel stamp in their passport to enter. In Israel, the religious practices of all faiths are protected. Christians and Muslims can visit Jewish holy sites, but Jews and Christians are forbidden from entering mosques. In fact, non-Muslims are forbidden from entering Mecca and Medina, the Islamic holy cities, clearly indicating an Islamic bias against non-Muslims.

This begs the questions “why?” The apartheid claim is created by the Boycott Divestment Sanctions advocates to shift the criticism for actual Arab apartheid practices and shift the

claim Israel. It is simply a public relations campaign tactic along the lines of the classic and non-winnable ‘do you still beat your wife’ tactic. The title of this overture is meant to distract people from the facts on the ground. Additionally, using the false apartheid claim sets the tone for all other overtures.

While this overture is based on the false apartheid claim created by the BDS movement and therefore has been refuted, more detail can be found in the book *Boycotting Peace*. There is, however, one additional point which needs to be addressed. 15-1 also states: “Between 1967 and 2009, vast areas of West Bank land have been expropriated to allow more than 121 settlements and 100 outposts for Jewish residents. Nearly half a million settlers now live in the occupied West Bank, including 190,000 in East Jerusalem.”

This statement is troubling because it leaves out the following key points:

- 1) No land has been “expropriated” because Jordan abandoned its claim to the land.
- 2) The Oslo Accords, agreed to by both Israel and the Palestinian Authority, clearly established which land belongs to Israel and which and belongs to the Palestinian Authority.
- 3) The Palestinian Authority has autonomy, and there is no such thing as Autonomous Occupation.

It should be noted that Israel only allows Jewish construction on land which has clear and definitive land titles. Large tracts of land were purchased by the Jewish National Fund, and that is the land Jewish homes are built on. Land disputes can be settled in court, which are accessible to everyone in Israel.

Overture 15-2: On Boycotting Ahava Dead Sea Laboratories and Hadiklaim (an Israeli Date Growers Cooperative)—From the Presbytery of San Francisco.

While the Presbyterian Church (USA) likes to claim its divestment policies are separate from the official Arab League boycott of Israel, Ahava is and has been a prime focus of the BDS movement, which was, as proven in *Boycotting Peace*, a direct subsidiary of the Arab boycott. Ahava is a highly successful company which exports hand cream and other beauty products globally, thus making it an easy target for BDS. I always like to ask people, does the Arab League have a fear of hand cream?

This overture states:

“Call upon all nations to prohibit the import of products made by enterprises in Israeli settlements on Palestinian land.”

Once again, per the Oslo Accords, the Palestinian Authority has agreed to which land belongs to whom. In this case, per international agreement signed by the Palestinian Authority, Ahava is located on land that has been designated to be under Israeli control.

The Palestinian Authority is, therefore, using the BDS movement to claim control over land they agreed to not control.

The PCUSA did, however, prove one of my points when they asked:

“Does boycotting the Israeli occupation harm Palestinians? Yes, it can have an economic impact. Any kind of economic pressure is bound to harm first and foremost the Palestinians...”

This is another point I make in my book *Boycotting Peace*. Many Palestinian Arabs rely on work from Israeli individuals and businesses to feed their families. While Palestinian Arabs leave PA designated areas to work all throughout Israel, including land designated as Israeli per the Oslo Accords, Jews continue to be restricted from entering Palestinian Authority areas.

In contrast to Arabs working in Israeli areas, when two Israeli Army Reservists made a wrong turn into the Palestinian Police Compound in Ramallah on October 20, 2000, they were brutally murdered just because they are Jews. One would think a police station would offer the best refuge, but instead the murderers proudly paraded their blood-wrenched hands outside a second-floor window, the image of which was captured in the media for the world to see. This once again questions the authenticity of the apartheid claims made in Overture 15-1.

Overture 15-3: On Divestment from Caterpillar—From the Presbytery of San Francisco.

This is another example of a Presbyterian Church (USA) divestment issue which they claimed was not part of the official Arab League BDS campaign, but it is. In fact, Caterpillar Corporation was the subject of a numerous failed attempts to have the board boycott sales to Israel. The reason is because the Palestinian Authority added the company to their target list because Caterpillar equipment was used by Israel for its policy to demolish the homes of terrorists so they don't become places people would celebrate martyrdom. Yes, that's right; Caterpillar is a specific BDS boycott target because it denied the Palestinian Authority monuments to praise the murderers of Jews.

This overture contains the following wording:

“Affirm that the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), along with its responsibility to all peoples affected by this conflict, has a special obligation and witness to Christian communions in Jerusalem and the West Bank and, as a result, must stand up with its Christian brothers and sisters as their communities of faith face extinction as a result of military oppression.”

With this comment, the Presbyterian Church (USA) declared the oppression of Christians in Palestinian Authority controlled areas is the result of Israel, and has nothing to do with the fact that Islamic Dhimi laws place severe restrictions and taxes on non-Muslims. It also inherently placed the blame for the Islamic desecration of the Church of the nativity, located in Palestinian Authority controlled territory, on Israel.

Despite the fact that religious worship by people of all faiths being protected in Israel and those rights being strictly enforced by law, the Presbyterian Church (USA) has essentially refused to recognize this fact. Instead, it blatantly blames Israel for actions outside its control, namely the results of the Palestinian Authority rule.

By boycotting a business that conducts business with Israel, such as they are doing with Caterpillar, the Presbyterian Church (USA) has engaged in illegal secondary boycott of a nation friendly to the United States, as defined in US law, Part 760. The following statement in the same overture, to “strongly encourage” others to divest is by definition a tertiary boycott. The text reads as follows: “Direct the Stated Clerk to communicate this action to all other PC(USA) councils and entities, and invite and strongly encourage those groups and organizations that hold assets in Caterpillar, Inc., to divest as well.”

This is a tertiary boycott effort because they are putting pressure on others to conform to their secondary boycott. US Antiboycott laws clearly enforce secondary and tertiary boycotts. The U.S. Department of Commerce may, therefore, find this overture particularly interesting.

Overture 15-4: On Supporting a Peaceful, Diplomatic Solution to the U.S.-Iran Issues—From the Presbytery of Greater Atlanta.

One would imagine the Presbyterian Church (USA) would be able to keep Israel out of this overture, by nature of the title, or at least keep mentions of Israel to a minimum. Unfortunately, that is not the case. The Presbyterian Church (USA) managed to include the word ‘Israel’ twenty-four times in this overture.

This overture starts by equating Israel and Iran as related to nuclear proliferation, meaning the U.S. needs to demand Israel give up nuclear weapons before asking Iran to. There is a distinct difference between the two nations. Israel has nuclear weapons to deter other nations, such as Iran, from attempting to use such weapons against Israel; while Iran has sworn to destroy Israel and is willing to use nuclear weapons to accomplish it. If Israel gives up nuclear weapons, it would be inviting Iran to destroy the Jewish state.

Let’s put that in the context of another comment about Israel on page one of the same overture: “United States or Israeli military action against Iran would likely cause increased terrorism throughout the world, including here in the United States.” The Presbyterian Church (USA) states stopping Iran from making a nuclear bomb would be result in terrorism and it would be the U.S. and Israel’s fault.

This same overture highlights a report on Al Jazeera, the Islamic news service, which stated Israeli Cabinet Minister Dan Meridor “admits that the claim that Ahmadinejad wanted Israel “wiped off the map” was mistranslated, however frequently repeated.” Yes, that is the case, but what this overture conveniently missed was the actual words of Ahmadinejad who continually says “Israel will be wiped off the map.” The only difference is Ahmadinejad did not say the word ‘wanted.’

The Presbyterian Church (USA) echoed a misleading game of semantics by Al Jazeera in what is clearly a game to soften the position of the enemies of Israel and to falsely justify their own position as more mainstream. Hiding the true intentions of the enemies of Israel is hardly a position in favor of actual peace for Israel.

Overture 15-5: On Ethical Investment and Divestment—From the Presbytery of New Covenant.

This overture by the New Covenant Presbytery located in Houston, Texas, is encouraging because it states: “Identifying Israel as a focus of phased selective divestment has damaged relationships between Presbyterians and Jews.” This is a clear and obvious statement, and it is sad it had to be written.

This overture demands dialog and proof of conditions that would justify divest-from-Israel overtures with the following statement:

“Encourage future General Assemblies to thoroughly document, discuss, and debate the rationale for phased selective divestment of specific companies before initiating the process of phased selective divestment.”

Unfortunately, the Presbyterian Church (USA) could not help but take the opportunity to criticize this overture. The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (Advice and Council) stated:

“These items would specifically forbid the church to engage in divestment in pursuit of justice for Palestine and restrict the church’s peacemaking efforts to a set of actions focused largely on dialogue with the U.S. Jewish community and the Israeli government.”

In this statement, the Presbyterian Church (USA) rejected discussing and debating the topic internally and just impose divestment of Israel at will. This is further addressed in chapter four: Analysis of the final committee report, plenary vote and the Church override.

The General Assembly Mission Council had a different criticism of this overture, stating the demands of this overture have already been met:

“Interpretative materials and General Assembly policies on socially responsible investing and the PC(USA) are available in printed form on the MRTI web site and Facebook page. Stories of MRTI’s work have appeared in the Presbyterian News Service, Presbyterians Today, and other publications.”

The only problem is, the PCUSA dialog has been one sided, which is nothing new considering the content of the overtures.

Overture 15-6: On Responding to the Call from Palestinian Christians for Economic Solidarity—From the Presbytery of Scioto Valley.

This overture first asks Presbyterians to:

“consider how to respond to the call of the Palestinian Christian Kairos document to engage in boycott and divestment as tools of nonviolence for justice, peace, and security for all.”

The Kairos document was discussed in chapter one, and since this overture speaks directly to *boycott, divestment and nonviolence*, it should be noted that the first official book of the BDS campaign is Peace Under Fire. Page 20 of that book states: “We recognize the Palestinian right to resist Israeli violence and occupation via legitimate armed struggle.” Armed struggle is the euphemism Yassir Arafat used to justify terrorism, so one must question what the real motives are, therefore, especially considering the fact that the divest-from-Israel campaign is a subsidiary of the Arab boycott of Israel, which was created in 1910 as a ‘general boycott of Jewish interests’ in the Middle-East, and as we see not that geographic boundary has long since evaporated.

This overture also includes:

“to engage in divestment and in an economic and commercial boycott of everything produced by the occupation.”

While the Presbyterian Church (USA) may not be aware of the violent calls of the BDS movement, this call is for a full boycott of everything from Israel since the logo of the Palestinian Authority, the organization which sponsors the BDS campaign contains all of Israel. After all, the map in the Palestinian Authority logo clearly indicates the Palestinians consider all of Israel to be “occupied Palestine.”

The rational section of this overture states:

“The shrinking numbers in the Palestinian Christian population through emigration because of occupation and oppression in Palestine must be a matter of great concern for all Christians everywhere.”

This statement speaks of the flight of Christians from Palestinian Authority controlled areas and gives the readers the impression Christians are running away from the Jews since Israel is the source of occupation as defined by the Presbyterian Church (USA). Most Christians, however, have moved away from cities like Bethlehem in fear of their own lives because of violence in the Palestinian Authority controlled land. After implementation of the Oslo Accords, kiosks in Bethlehem selling Christian religious items which were once ran by Christians are now predominately operated by Muslims because Christians have fled Palestinian Authority rule for the safety of Israeli areas.

Perhaps the most disturbing words in this overture are in the rationale section which states: “As we work with Muslims regarding Israel and Palestine, we attempt to understand the implications of the Nakba for the Palestinian people, and to appreciate the impact of the unrelenting devastation that event and the ensuing occupation has meant for Muslims in Israel and Palestine and around the world.” This statement recognizes the “Nakba” in which the Arabs call the creation of the State of Israel “The disaster.” Recognizing the Nakba claim as legitimate is an inherent claim of the Arab League that Israel has no right to exist. Usage of that word clearly indicates the bias of the Presbyterian Church (USA) not only against Israel, but against the very existence of Israel itself.

Overture 15-7: On Rejecting the Use of Boycott, Divestment, and Sanction Policies in Peacemaking Efforts Between Israelis and Palestinians—From the Presbytery of National Capital.

This overture by the National Capital Presbytery based in Rockville, Maryland begins with the following text:

The Presbytery of National Capital overtures the 220th General Assembly (2012) to do the following:

1. Reject the MRTI recommendation to divest from Caterpillar, Motorola, and Hewlett-Packard.
2. Reject any use of boycott, divestment, and sanction policies in peacemaking efforts between Palestinians and Israelis.
3. Commit itself to remaining an advocate for peace in the Middle East, with special attention to
 - a. the region’s changing dynamics in reaction to the “Arab Spring” movements,
 - b. the widespread pattern of attacks on Christians in the region,
 - c. affirming the PC(USA)’s historical position in favor of a two-state solution to the Israel/Palestine conflict,

- d. the need for Israel to stop all settlement construction,
- e. a return by all parties to the negotiating table.

RATIONALE

There is a long and ugly history of Christians using economic boycotts and sanctions against Jews and, given that history, the economic divestment issue has placed enormous strains on Jewish-PC(USA) relations since 2004. The American Jewish community was quite open to PC(USA) statements critical of Israel's policies prior to 2004 but highly critical of PC(USA) actions related to possible divestment decisions aimed at Israel since 2004.

The American Jewish community has been open even to strident advocacy against Palestinian suffering in the statements and actions of other Protestant denominations that have taken the particular tool of divestment off the table. The passage of the Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI) recommendations to divest from Caterpillar, Motorola, and Hewlett-Packard for reasons related to their business activity in Israel threatens to end Jewish-PC(USA) dialogues and collaboration on social justice concerns in many parts of the country.

There are many ways other than economic boycotts, divestments, and sanctions to express PC(USA) opinions and values regarding peacemaking in the Middle East and for the PC(USA) to play an active role in promoting justice and peace.

The response to this overture is disturbing. The Presbyterian Church USA Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns responded to this overture with the following:

“The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns strongly opposes this overture because it is replete with misleading oversimplifications and does not address the fundamental problem on the ground, which is a military occupation. The rationale equates criticism of Israel with anti-Semitism, and conflates non-violent economic pressure with Jewish persecution.”

This overture speaks the plain truth. The divest-from-Israel policies and overtures by the Presbyterian Church (USA) has in fact strained relations the Presbyterians Church, USA and Jews.

Clearly, the Presbyterian Church (USA) as already decided to boycott Israel, and is not open to other overtures, even when those overtures recognize and uphold other official positions, including “the need for Israel to stop all settlement construction.” This rejection proves the Presbyterian Church (USA) has already taken a position beyond U.S. foreign policy, adopting the official foreign policy of the Palestinian Authority and the Arab League. This overture would have allowed the Presbyterian Church (USA) to adopt

a more centrist position that would open the doors of dialog between Jews and Presbyterians, but instead they chose to slam the door in the face of Jews and Israel.

The response continues:

“This is confirmed by our Middle Eastern church partners who reject the claim that Christians are leaving the holy land because of persecution by Muslims.”

This statement is a blatant insult to Jews and Israel. Israeli law protects the free worship of people of all faiths. The places Christians are leaving are from the Palestinian Authority controlled areas. Film maker Pierre Rehov has produced and released several documentaries, including “The silent exodus” showing how Christians are afraid to live in Palestinian Authority areas, and “Holy Land: Christians In Peril” which addresses why is Bethlehem no longer a Christian town. The Presbyterian Church (USA) clearly wishes to blame Israel for exodus of Christians from Muslim-controlled cities.

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (Advice and Council) began their response with:

“These items would specifically forbid the church to engage in divestment in pursuit of justice for Palestine and restrict the church’s peacemaking efforts to a set of actions focused largely on dialogue with the U.S. Jewish community and the Israeli government.”

Their statement is bizarre. This committee first states they expects Jews to have a dialog with the people who boycott them, and then in the same sentence they make the claim that not boycotting Jews will hurt their effort to have a dialog with Jews. It is as if they are saying Jews must be punished for not following the dictates of the Presbyterian Church (USA); and that Jews and Israel must accept a punishment for the right to speak to the church which will impose a “set of actions.”

If one were to modify the text, replacing the word ‘Jews’ with ‘dogs,’ the text would read as follows: “These items would specifically forbid the church to engage in **denying food to dogs** (divestment) in pursuit of (justice for Palestine and restrict the church’s peacemaking efforts to) a set of actions focused largely on dialogue with **dogs** (the U.S. Jewish community and the Israeli government).” Had that been the case, the ASPCA and PeTA would have been screaming, yet the Presbyterian Church (USA) somehow feels Jews and Israel need to embrace their terms without question. This is, of course, after the Presbyterian Church (USA) has denied having any strained relations with Jews.

General Assembly Mission Council commented:

“This overture seeks to end corporate engagement of some corporations doing business in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories ... including divestment, that can be utilized to assess corporate practices, and ... the use of divestment as ... a process of “selective, phased divestment” ... with identified

corporations. ...if corporate engagement has not succeeded, and is unlikely to succeed in the future in changing corporate practices.”

In this, they General Assembly Mission Council is saying they have the right to bully businesses into complying with their demands they have places on Israel, which Israel refuses to comply with.

This overture was extremely concerned with the “enormous strains on Jewish-PC(USA) relations” and handily rejected with wording that treats Jews and Israel like second class citizens who must obey the dictates of the Presbyterian Church (USA) without question or reservation. Perhaps the ‘dog’ analogy has more credence than just the simple interpretation.

Overture 15-08: On Approving the GAMC’s Recommendations on Selective Divestment Made by MRTI—From the Presbytery of the Palisades.

This overture begins with:

“The Presbytery of the Palisades overtures the 220th General Assembly (2012) to approve the recommendations on selective divestment made by the Mission Responsibility Through Investment Committee (MRTI), and to proceed to approval and timely implementation of all of the recommendations that were passed by the General Assembly Mission Council at its appointed meeting on February 17, 2012. (See Item 15-11)”

This is a motion to move the vote to the plenary floor for a vote by the delegates. Once again, however, the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (Advice and Council) interjected confrontational language when it stated:

“The failure of the second Camp David process in 2000, though blamed largely on Yasser Arafat by Israeli and U.S. sources, reflected a substantial Palestinian willingness to concede land colonized by the major settlement cities, but an unwillingness to give up on a coherent Palestinian state with some shared sovereignty in Jerusalem.”

In that statement, the ACWSP failed to take in account the fact that in the meetings with President Clinton, Prime Minister Barak and Chairman Arafat, the Palestinians were offered a state by Israel consisting of 73% of the West Bank and 100% of the Gaza Strip. Yasser Arafat had not “reflected a substantial Palestinian willingness to concede land colonized by the major settlement cities,” he rejected two distinct offers by Israel to establish an independent Palestinian state. Then, instead expressing further desire to negotiate further for a Palestinian state, Arafat chose to continue strife and boycott. Further details Arafat’s rejection of a state is detailed in my book *Boycotting Peace*.

Overture 15-09: On Human Rights and Religious Freedom of Arab Christians and Other Palestinian Citizens—From the Presbytery of San Jose.

While this overture deals with the important issues of human rights and religious freedom, some of the wording demonstrates how the Presbyterian Church (USA) demands Israel enforce those right in areas it does not and cannot control per international agreement, and then the Presbyterian Church (USA) blames Israel for inaction out of its control.

For example, a main point of this overture is to “Urge the Israeli government to enforce its own legal obligation to protect Christian holy sites throughout Israel, the West Bank, and Gaza.” The Presbyterian Church is saying the mistreatment of Christians by Muslims in Gaza is Israel’s fault, despite the fact that Israel has no presence in the autonomous Gaza strip.

Another bullet point of this overture states: “Commend the U. S. State Department for reporting on the failure of Israel to protect Christian Holy sites throughout Israel, the West Bank, and Gaza.” Once again, the Presbyterian Church (USA) is blaming Israel for something completely outside its control, namely for desecration of Christian sites in Muslim controlled areas under the direct autonomous control of the Palestinian Authority.

Israel has strict laws protecting the religious practices of all religions, but that is not the case in the Palestinian Authority. As mentioned in the analysis of 15-7, film maker Pierre Rehov has documented how Christians are afraid to live in Palestinian Authority areas, and his “Holy Land: Christians In Peril” documentary addresses why Bethlehem is no longer a Christian town. That has not stopped the Presbyterian Church (USA) from blaming Israel for the mistreatment of Christians by Muslims in Palestinian controlled areas.

The final bullet point of this overture directs the Stated Clerk of the Presbyterian Church (USA) to “contact President Obama and the Israeli ambassador to the U. S. asking them to assist in ending all religious discriminatory practices and to protect religious groups' holy sites in Israel, the West Bank, and Gaza.” This is a trap. On one hand the Presbyterians criticize Israel for being in the West bank and Gaza, and here they demand Israel take specific action in the same locations.

Overall, this overture is troublesome. It blames Israel for the actions of others outside its control, and then demands Israel take actions, undoubtedly so they can criticize Israel more, irrespective of Israel taking action or not.

15-10: On Pursuing a Creative Course of Action Regarding the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict—From the Presbytery of Philadelphia.

In this overture, the Presbytery of Philadelphia asks the General Assembly to:

1. reject a strategy of economic coercion that singles out Israel as the source of the conflict and the ongoing obstacle to peace;
2. reject a policy that goes beyond a constructive critique and condemns Israel as an apartheid state;
3. reject the use of threats and intimidation (such as the withholding of economic aid); this tactic is inconsistent with the demands of the gospel and has failed to produce positive changes in Israeli policies in the past;
4. reject the targeting of companies who are used as a proxy for Israel, and who would be required to implement policies that are illegal under American law.

As should be expected considering their previous statements, the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns committee made the following statement:

“The Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns strongly opposes this item because the committee believes it fails to recognize that a military occupation, **not lack of investment**, is the cause of hardship, misery, and collective punishment for all innocent Palestinians.” (Emphasis mine)

This is yet another case of the Presbyterian Church (USA) claiming everything bad that happens with the Palestinians is inherently Israel’s fault. Notice the key words: “not lack of investment.” The fact is there is no lack of investment in the Palestinian areas. For example, while BDS activists were planning the flotilla to Gaza because, as they claimed, people were impoverished and starving in Gaza, I posted the Flotilla Cruise Line website at www.FlotillaCruiseLine.com which highlights the shopping malls, fine dining and five-star hotels the Palestinians themselves advertise in Gaza.

That is why the “not lack of investment” wording is key. It indicates the Presbyterian Church (USA) is aware that money is not their issue. This overture also contains the words “They do not ask for us to “invest” in Palestine.” That is because the Palestinians and the greater Arab League are more interested in boycotting Israel, which is their economic plan to destroy Israel, and the Presbyterian Church (USA) is a willing partner in that plan.

That is not presumptive. They further state:

“It is presumptuous of American Christians to define what we believe Palestinians need, i.e. “positive investment,” when Palestinians themselves have been calling for divestment from the occupation since 2005.”

As we see, the Presbyterian Church (USA) completely acknowledges the Palestinian plan.

The Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (Advice and Council) also weighed in, saying “capital is not the chief Palestinian need.” This confirms the statements by the Advocacy Committee for Racial Ethnic Concerns committee, but more importantly, it demonstrates that the Palestinians and the Presbyterian Church (USA) are focused on the economic destruction of Israel while falsely projecting an image of poverty among Palestinian Arabs. Please note the economic points for chapter four of this report.

Overture 15-11: MRTI Report on Engagements with Corporations Involved in Israel, Gaza, East Jerusalem, and the West Bank.

In overture 15-7, this report discusses how the General Assembly Mission Council has bullying businesses into complying with their demands. That is demonstrated in this overture which states:

“The MRTI began the process of contacting and meeting with the five companies (meetings were held with Citigroup on February 2, 2006, ITT Industries on February 3, 2006, and Motorola on November 10, 2005), communication with the presbyteries where the companies are headquartered, and continued interpretation of the process to the church and the general public.”

As we see, the Presbyterian Church (USA) has clearly been actively intimidating businesses to boycott Israel prior to their own resolutions to boycott Israel, and all in sync with the Boycott Divestment Sanctions campaign of the Palestinian Authority.

One complaint in this overture against Caterpillar Corporation, which is a prime BDS target thus also divestment target by the Presbyterian Church (USA) is:

“Caterpillar did not provide information on whether its dealership was selling equipment to major construction companies building the illegal settlements, the separation barrier, or the Jewish Israeli-only roads in the occupied territories as requested.”

The fact is, in this case the Presbyterian Church (USA) was asking Caterpillar to disclose information in furtherance of the illegal foreign boycott as defined in US antiboycott laws, Part 760. Caterpillar followed the law by not disclosing information and the Presbyterian Church (USA) is clearly upset about that. According to the US Antiboycott laws, Caterpillar may be obligated to report that boycott information request to the Office of Antiboycott Compliance which is under the Bureau of Industry and security of the U.S. Department of Commerce.

In this overture, the Presbyterian Church (USA) noted that “Caterpillar announced that it was instructing its European dealerships not to sell any Caterpillar products that might then be transshipped to Iran. This violated Caterpillar’s previous statements to religious shareholders that the company did not have the authority to tell its dealers where and to whom they could sell Caterpillar products.”

The second part of the Iran statement is false. The Presbyterian Church (USA) appears to be upset that Caterpillar will not sell to Iran, a nation under embargo by the U.S. government. Caterpillar is obligated by U.S. law to prevent transshipments of their products to Iran, which is developing weapons of mass destruction to destroy Israel. Meanwhile, the Presbyterian Church (USA) wants Israel to be denied bulldozers which can clear ambush sites created by the Hamas and Hezbollah terrorist groups.

Overture 15-12: Commissioners’ Resolution. On Prayer and Action for Syria.

One would think this final Middle-East overture which is focused on prayer for Syria would not mention Israel, but as you can imagine, the Presbyterian Church (USA) managed to include Israel twice.

The first mention is to somehow blame Israel for Syrian refugees where they state “including the presence of refugees going back to the creation of Israel.” The second mention is “The strategic position of Syria and its links to Iran differentiate it from Libya and increase the geopolitical stakes for the United States and Israel, Europe and Turkey, and Russia and China, to group the major outside players.”

These are both simply gratuitous mentions of Israel. There really is no legitimate reason for the mention of Israel here except that the Presbyterian Church (USA) is so obsessed with blaming Israel for everything that goes wrong in the world that it could not resist mentioning Israel in all twelve of the Middle East overtures at their 2012 General Assembly.

Chapter 4: Analysis of the final committee report, plenary vote and the Church override

Prior to and all during the Presbyterian Church, (USA)'s 220th General Assembly, I was actively explaining the shortcomings of the overtures. This included a Twitter campaign aimed at the delegates, explaining the origin of the overtures was in fact the Arab boycott of Israel and its subsidiary BDS / divest-from-Israel campaign. While Presbyterian elders were disassociating their campaign from BDS, the parallels were clear. Every company they were targeting for boycott was in fact part of the official Arab League boycott campaign.

At one point an elder denied divestment is boycott, to which I explained it is a boycott of investment. Coupling that with the pressure and bullying efforts by the Presbyterian Church (USA) to get businesses to boycott Israel, it is clear that divesting from those companies is directly related to the active Arab boycott of Israel / BDS campaign that the Presbyterian Church (USA) has engaged in.

In addition to informing delegates that boycotts separate people thus prevent mutual cooperation resulting in peace, I focused on two issues: 1) US Antiboycott laws which forbid all US persons from engaging in a foreign sanctioned boycott, in this case the Arab League boycott of Israel, a nation friendly to the United States, and 2) the Internal Revenue Service of the United States which require filing of form 5713, the International Boycott Report. The filing requirements are extensive, including IRS requirements for detailed documentation of boycott requests to individuals.

Meanwhile, the final report of the committee was submitted to the plenum with calls to boycott Israeli goods and to divest from Israel. The resolution was narrowly defeated by a vote of 333-331 with two abstentions.

A Minority Report was included in the final report which reads as follows:

Minority report for the assembly committee action on Item 15-11:
In response to Item 15-11, that the 220th General Assembly (2012) approve the following alternative resolution:

“Our denomination is clearly divided on the issue of divestment. We will not make a decision when we are not ready to make a decision. As we have struggled and failed to come to a common mind on the issue, we have created a great deal of confusion among some of our most trusted partners as we work for peace and justice in the world.

“Many will attempt to interpret our action on divestment to their own ends. There is nothing we can do about such interpretations. But we want to be crystal clear about our commitments:

“• To the Palestinian people, Christians, Muslims, and others, we affirm your desire for and right to statehood, economic prosperity, and security. We remain in solidarity with you in your struggle to be free and will work with you in tangible ways to attain justice, peace, self-determination, and statehood.

“• To the people of Israel, we affirm your right to a secure future and self-determination.

“• To our Palestinian Christian partners we celebrate our oneness in the body of Christ and we affirm that when one member of the body suffers all the members suffer with it. We pledge to join with you in solidarity and action to bring that suffering to an end and attain a new life of religious, political, and economic freedom.

“• To our partners in the United States, Muslims, Jew, and Christians, we affirm our commitment to each and all of you to work with you as we help God build the peaceable and just realm in the world.

“With these commitments at the center of our efforts, we will continue to work for the day when the two states of Palestine and Israel live side-by-side peacefully.”

Blake Brinegar, Presbytery of New Covenant
Walter Neely, Presbytery of Charlotte
Rex Espiritu, Presbytery of Whitewater Valley
Sarah Butler, Presbytery of Minnesota Valleys
Mack Dagenhart, Presbytery of Salem
Edward Hanawalt, Presbytery of Eastern Virginia
General Assembly Committee Moderator’s statement:

In accordance with Standing Rule E.7.h.(1), I affirm that the position expressed as recommendation for action by the assembly in this minority report was presented to the whole committee during its consideration of the matter.

This minority report is encouraging. It contains the shared policy of both the United States and Israel for the creation of an independent Palestinian state with peace and security. It is, however flawed in one major aspect.

All throughout the overture process, corrections were made to the overtures, including a considerable number of grammatical changes. One however slipped through because, I

believe, it was so common to the Presbyterian Church (USA) that nobody noticed. The following wording in the minority report is disturbing:

“• To our partners in the United States, Muslims, Jew, and Christians, we affirm our commitment to each and all of you to work with you as we help God build the peaceable and just realm in the world.”

A common thread among anti-Semites is to refer to Jews as a whole in the singular. Examples of this include the website “Jew Watch” and neo-Nazi phrases such as “attention white people. The Jew is using the black as muscle against you.” As such, the phrase “Muslims, Jew, and Christians” in the above statement may have been a typographical error, but the usage of anti-Semitic phrases leads me to the conclusion that the anti-Semitic wording such as “the Jew” is so common among members of the Presbyterian Church (USA) that nobody took notice or cared to correct it.

Unfortunately, commissioners of the General Assembly were apparently unhappy with the defeat of the committee report and the wording of the minority report which promoted actual reconciliation and peace. As a result, the commissioners added the following to the minority report:

“The 220th General Assembly instructs the GAMC (General Assembly Mission Council) to create a process to raise funds to invest in the West Bank, and the program will be inaugurated no later than the meeting of the 221st General Assembly.”

This may appear to be a step forward, but students of the working methodology of the Arab boycott of Israel will notice a problem. According to US Antiboycott laws, one may not ask for a declaration that the goods shipped to Arab countries is not made in Israel. To get around that ‘negative declaration’ as it is known, Arabs now demand what is termed a ‘positive declaration,’ or one that states the goods are made in the U.S.A. thus establishing the information they need to satisfy their own boycott of Israel requirements without specifically asking about Israel.

That is exactly what we see in the added text. Rather than boycotting, which was rejected in the minority report, the Presbyterian Church (USA) added a positive economic aim dedicated at the Palestinian Authority only, as they consider the West Bank to be Arab only, thus boycotting investing in Israel in the same initiative. Considering that the Presbyterian Church (USA) has recognized the Palestinian Authority statement that investing in their economy is not a priority, it is very clear this was a political move to get around the boycott issue without informing the delegates they are engaging in the furtherance of Arab League policy.

On July 6, 2012, the Presbyterian Church (USA) released the following press release:

GA220 Communication Center

Shane Whisler

Pittsburgh

After two hours of debate and presentations Thursday night (July 5), the 220th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) said no to divestment as part of its position on peace in the Middle East.

The path to the final vote came through the Assembly's adoption of a minority report presented by members of the Committee on Middle East and Peacemaking Issues.

"The action today doesn't subtract or diminish in any way PC(USA)'s involvement in the Middle East," said GA Moderator Neal D. Presa at the press conference following the Assembly's vote. Presa had closed the evening by commending commissioners for the level of civility in the very difficult debate.

Committee moderator, the Rev. Jack Baca, said that the resolution, which passed by a vote of 369-290-8, "recognized the tragedy of the situation in Israel and calls for engagement at all levels of society for a solution (to the Israel-Palestine conflict)."

The committee's plan for a "both/and" solution of proposing divestment and positive engagement was derailed when the minority report replaced the main motion by only two votes, 333-331-2. The original motion to be considered was to support the recommendation of the Mission Responsibility Through Investment Committee (MRTI) to divest the holdings in Caterpillar, Motorola Solutions and Hewlett-Packard because eight years of engagement with those companies ceased to be productive, according to the Rev. Brian Ellison, chair of MRTI.

Emotional speeches on the floor of the Assembly echoed the words from members of the Middle East and Peacemaking Issues Committee throughout more than two days of deliberation. They heard 26 overture advocates and nearly 90 speakers during open hearings on their business, according to Baca.

On the divestment issue, comments on the floor ranged from a lifelong Caterpillar employee who choked up while defending his company, to another commissioner decrying the thought of "positive investments" as a feasible step in helping Palestinians.

"How can you write a check when a family may wake up to find an eviction notice on their door saying a [bulldozer] will come to tear it down later in the day?" asked Time Simpson (St. Augustine Presbytery).

Before affirming the text of Item 15-10 as the main motion, commissioners added the following to the document: “The 220th General Assembly instructs the GAMC (General Assembly Mission Council) to create a process to raise funds to invest in the West Bank, and the program will be inaugurated no later than the meeting of the 221st General Assembly.”

Linda Valentine, executive director of the General Assembly Mission Council, said there would be some cost to create such a process and that “there are some funds available for investment.”

With a vote of 572-127, the Assembly approved a recommendation on the peaceful engagement of Iran regarding the potential of nuclear weapons.

The Assembly’s work continues on Middle East issues on Friday. The committee’s recommendations to boycott all products that are made in occupied Palestinian territory and sold by Israeli companies and to not use the word “apartheid” to describe the Israeli-Palestinian conflict are two of the items that will be considered.

At this point, it should be noted that in all overtures, Israel was criticized for its treatment of Palestinians, yet at no time was there any condemnation of the Hamas, Hezbollah, Al-Qaeda, Fateh or any other terrorist group, nor for that matter state sponsored terrorism. The overtures had a decidedly single mind. Every overture with a neutral stance was met with harsh criticism, the leadership of the Presbyterian Church (USA) found itself unable to allow a fair minority report stand as is.

Interjecting wording that was acceptable to the plenum was insufficient for the Presbyterian Church (USA) leadership. Despite the rejection of the divest-from-Israel campaign by its delegates, the commissioners overrode the desire of the plenum and their votes and issued the following press release on July 7, 2012

GA220 Communication Center

Shane Whisler

Pittsburgh

After three failed attempts to bring divestment back to the table, commissioners to the 220th General Assembly voted with a 71% majority to boycott “all Israeli products coming from the occupied Palestinian Territories.”

An earlier motion to reconsider the previous night's decision about divestment lost, 252-415-1.

At the conclusion of the report from the Committee on Middle East Peacemaking Issues, the Rev. Jack Baca, chair, noted that this committee's and the Assembly's work had "drawn interest from around the world."

"We have disagreed on strategy and tactics," Baca said. "We have not disagreed on our goal... of Middle East peace."

The previous night, commissioners ruled out an opportunity to vote directly on the divestment issue by replacing it with the minority report that called only for positive engagement in the Israel-Palestine peacemaking efforts of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

Commissioners also dispatched five other items because they were answered by the action of replacing the divestment issues with the positive engagement recommendation.

One of the motions considered by the Assembly was the use of the word "apartheid" to describe the condition of Palestinians at the hands of Israelis.

Lina Moukheiber of Lebanon and the ecumenical advisory delegate from the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate to Antioch, said that she was willing to speak for 15 million Arab Christians who view the conditions in which Palestinians live as "apartheid."

Other commissioners said that Palestinians and Israelis do not constitute two separate "races," therefore the definition of apartheid" does not apply. The Assembly agreed and voted with a 72% majority to reject the motion.

Commissioners also approved an amended commissioner's resolution on prayer and action for Syria. The resolution called on the PC(USA) to "stand with the Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon, our partner church," learn more about the situation in Syria and to refrain from military intervention but support United Nations peacekeeping forces to protect citizens from the ruling regime.

The only conclusion that can be drawn from the above press release is that the Presbyterian Church (USA) is corrupt. It adopted a far stricter stance than was rejected by its own General Assembly.

Instead of boycotting certain companies such as Ahava, the override now calls for the boycott of all Israeli made products in the West Bank.

The commissioners rejected calls to say the word 'apartheid' does not apply to Israel because Palestinians and Israelis are one people, thus accepting the blatantly false

apartheid claim on Israel. The apartheid charge was refused in this analysis and in detail my book *Boycotting Peace*.

The Presbyterian Church (USA) also manages to sneak the divest-from-Israel policy in by virtue of their previous stances that it must divest from apartheid states. As such, the Presbyterian Church (USA) has adopted all policies rejected by the plenum at their own General Assembly, and then some.

Be it planned or by accident, the news coverage about the Presbyterian Church (USA), as related to the divest-from-Israel overtures, focused on the July 6th press release rejecting all aspects of the divestment activity. News reports of the July 7th press release were not reported for two reasons: 1) reports about the Presbyterian Church (USA) accepting divestment would appear blatantly wrong considering the news a day prior and therefore would be dismissed by the media, and 2) the wording about apartheid was awkward, which I believe was not an accident but deliberate to soften the change of policy.

In addition to having a corrupt leadership, the preponderance of the overtures, the committee responses thereof and the actions of the commissioners after a narrow rejection of the decidedly one-sided anti-Israel proposals indicates a very strong anti-Israel bias within the Presbyterian Church (USA).

Overtures routinely quote anti-Semitic sources and even used word manipulation to make an Israeli government official appear to have said the Iranian threat against Israel is false. They blame Israel for Muslim attacks on Christians in Palestinian Authority controlled areas and then demand Israel protect those Christians fully knowing it would later condemn Israel for military actions in the same Palestinian Authority controlled areas. Moderate proposals were quickly struck down and every mention of companies to divest from and boycott were completely consistent with the lists put forth by the official Boycott Divestment Sanctions (BDS) campaign which was created by the Palestinian Authority and is an official policy of the Arab League.

In my book *Boycotting Peace*, I quote an article titled “The Socialism of Fools: The Left, the Jews and Israel,” Dr. Seymour Martin Lipset (March 18, 1922 – December 31, 2006) where he wrote:

“Shortly before he was assassinated, Martin Luther King, Jr., was in Boston on a fund-raising mission, and I had the good fortune to attend a dinner which was given for him in Cambridge...One of the young men present happened to make some remark against the Zionists. Dr. King snapped at him and said, “Don’t talk like that! When people criticize Zionists, they mean Jews. You’re talking anti-Semitism!”

It is clear that Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. would have called the leadership of the Presbyterian Church (USA) anti-Semites. This is not to say the entire membership is, as they rejected the anti-Israel overtures as a whole. However, it is clear that church leadership has overwhelmingly gone out of their way to enact the anti-Semitic policy of

the Arab League and their boycott which has the specific goal of the complete destruction of Israel via destroying its economic, thus not having to use military force.

Prior and during the General Assembly, I worked diligently to inform the Presbyterian Church (USA) membership the intent of the Arab boycott of Israel, its subsidiary BDS / divest-from-Israel movement and the plan to which they were being asked to adopt. I offered to speak at their General Assembly for free, and in response I was not only criticized, but also offered veiled threats of being sued for attempting to inform Presbyterian Church (USA) members about US Law Part 760 and IRS form 5713.

A thorough review of the overtures and final report reveals a clear bias. Coupling that with the July 7, 2012 press release, it should be clear to readers that the leadership of the Presbyterian Church (USA) did not want its members to hear any information contrary its own policies. And being that the commissioners adopted a more far reaching anti-Semitic policy than the committees considered, it is abundantly clear the leadership had decided a course of action prior to the plenary votes, and later saw to the implementation of their pre-determined policy.

The Presbyterian Church (USA) has 2.3 Million members, which amounts to 0.7% of the U.S. population. Meanwhile, the U.S. Jewish population is approximately 6.6 million, or 2.1% of the US population. That makes the Presbyterians boycott effort statistically irrelevant, but it does not negate the fact that Presbyterians are inherently boycotting Jews, and not just Israel, as the Arab boycott they adopted is focused on Jews world-wide. Jewish-owned businesses have come under fire from the BDS movement strictly because Jews own them. This list includes Este Lauder cosmetics which is owned by Ron Lauder who lives in New York; New York City based Leviev Jewelers which have has been heavily protested; Starbucks which has come under considerable attack because the CEO is Jewish and a host of other companies.

After BDS is adopted, the next step of the greater Arab boycott plan is to instill an academic boycott of Israel. We have seen this globally. BDS is pushed over the Internet labeling Jewish owned businesses as boycott targets in an electronic version of spray painting stores with the word "Jew" to keep people away from purchasing at those stores. It should be no surprise, therefore, for people to learn that the Internet-based BDS campaign by Arabs is called the "Electronic Intifada."

The academic boycott is the electronic version of Kristallnacht, where the Nazi's burned Jewish books to deny the world the ideas of Jews. If you think this is an exaggeration, it should be noted that the Arab boycott of Jews started in 1910, and in 1921 the Arab Congress was formed to coordinate all efforts to boycott Jews. The fact is, the Nazi's got their idea of boycotting Jews, the first stage of the Holocaust, from the Arab Congress.

Currently, the work of Jewish academics is banned in many universities in Europe where the Arab boycott of Israel / BDS has been in full swing. BDS has resulted in Muslims desecrating Jewish cemeteries in France, much of which can be seen on Youtube®. Also in France, where BDS flourishes, Rabbis have had to forbid Jews from wearing any

religious outerwear, such as the Kippah / Yarmulke, all in fear of Jews being assaulted by the people who share the same BDS plan as their co-religionists in Gaza and Bethlehem.

Jews therefore have every right to be upset and weary of all boycott calls against them and Israel in particular. This is not to call the Presbyterian Church (USA) 'Nazis.' It should, however, serve as a wake-up call to the Presbyterian Church (USA) membership that their church leadership has placed them into a leading role in advancing the Arab economic war on Israel, presumably against their own consent.

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- 4) IRS form 5713 is available at the IRS website at www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/f5713.pdf
- 5) Federal Law part 760 and the US Antiboycott laws are available online at the U.S. Department of Commerce website at <http://www.bis.doc.gov/complianceand enforcement/antiboycottcompliance.htm>
- 6) The article Presbyterians ‘Against Israel, Liberal Protestants are engaging in historical revisionism concerning Jews and the Holy Land’ was published in the Wall Street Journal Online under ‘Houses of Worship’ dated December 3, 2010. It is credited to Marvin Hier and Abraham Cooper and is available online at <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748703572404575634813393141110.html#>
- 7) Quotes Abe Foxman and Alan Dershowitz about "The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy" by John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt stem from NY Times book review, Books of The Times, “A Prosecutorial Brief Against Israel and Its Supporters” is available online at <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/09/06/books/06grim.html>
- 8) Presbyterian Church (USA) Press release July 6, 2012
220th General Assembly opts for ‘positive investment’ over divestment
From Office of the General Assembly—220th General Assembly (2012)
<http://www.pcusa.org/news/2012/7/6/220th-general-assembly-opts-positiveinvestment-ov>
- 9) Presbyterian Church (USA) Press release July 7, 2012
Boycott added to Presbyterian tools for Middle East peace
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