

Resolution 4 – 2016 Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly

Resolution on Justice for the Holy Land through Responsible Investment

Submitted by Hephatha Lutheran Church, Milwaukee; Co-Sponsored by All People's Lutheran Church, Milwaukee, and Ascension Lutheran Church, Milwaukee

WHEREAS the Israeli-Palestinian conflicts and tensions over the past 65 years have deeply impacted the lives of millions of people, including Jews, Muslims, and Christians in the Mideast and throughout the world, and

WHEREAS the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, since its inception in 1988, has taken public stands and passed various resolutions in churchwide assemblies and in Church Council meetings, in an effort to work for justice and peace in Palestine-Israel relationships, and

WHEREAS the 2005 Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America adopted "Peace Not Walls: Stand for Justice in the Holy Land," as our church's strategy of engagement in the Holy Land, a strategy that advocates for equal human dignity and rights for all people in the Holy Land, an end to Israeli settlement building and the occupation of Palestinian land, and a two-state solution, with two viable, secure states living side-by-side; and

WHEREAS Palestinian Christians, in the 2009 Statement "Kairos Palestine," written and supported by leaders and heads of thirteen churches in the Holy Land, including Catholic, Orthodox and Lutheran – Bishop Munib Younan and Pastor Mitri Raheb of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land both helped author the statement – called on churches of the world to "stand alongside the oppressed" and work to end "the sin of occupation imposed upon us;" and

WHEREAS, the continued occupation of the Palestinian Territories by the State of Israel, the ongoing building of Israeli settlements in the Palestinian Territories, and other activities associated with this occupation and settlement, including but not limited to: expulsion of Palestinians from their legally held lands; demolition of their homes; prolonged detention with torture and without due process; arrest, mistreatment and detention of children; separate and unequal systems of law for Israeli settlers and Palestinians; severe restrictions on movement and travel through arbitrary permit systems, checkpoints and the separation wall; and segregated roads and buses; deny the fundamental human rights of Palestinians, hamper efforts to create a just and lasting peace, and violate international law as set forth in the United Nations Charter, the Fourth Geneva Convention and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR); and

WHEREAS, several multinational corporations, including Caterpillar, HP Inc., Hewlett Packard Enterprise, Motorola Solutions, and G4S are complicit in the occupation and its associated human rights abuses: Caterpillar provides specialized bulldozers, including unmanned bulldozers, to demolish Palestinian civilian homes and property; HP Inc. and Hewlett Packard Enterprise provide IT services and systems so that the State of Israel can collect finger print and facial recognition data on every Palestinian over the age of 16 to track and control their movements; Motorola Solutions provides invisible radar fences, surveillance, and

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communication equipment used in the occupied territories; G4S provides security systems for Israel's prisons and detention centers, West Bank settlements, and military checkpoints; and

WHEREAS congregations in various synods of the ELCA are sending resolutions to the 2016 ELCA Assembly, asking the ELCA to divest ELCA Board of Pension funds from these four companies,

WHEREAS three of the ELCA's full communion partners - the Presbyterian Church USA, the United Church of Christ, and the United Methodist Church - have each voted within the past two years to similarly divest funds from these and other companies and banks that profit from or are complicit in human rights violations arising from the occupation; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly request that the Domestic Mission Unit of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America direct the Corporate Social Responsibility Team to develop guidelines that will screen out investments in companies profiting from, or complicit in, human rights violations arising from the occupation, including Caterpillar, HP Inc., Hewlett Packard Enterprise, Motorola Solutions, and G4S, and to provide a report with possible recommendations to the November 2016 meeting of the ELCA Church Council, and to forward the guidelines to the separately incorporated ministries, agencies, including the ELCA Board of Pension and other institutions of this church for implementation of divestment as appropriate; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Greater Milwaukee Synod urge every congregation to provide opportunities for their members to engage in interfaith dialog with Palestinians—Muslim and Christian—and with American Jews and Israelis, to gain an understanding of the complex issues that plague the people of Palestine and Israel; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly direct the Synod Council to divest of direct or substantive indirect holdings in companies profiting from, or complicit in, human rights violations arising from the occupation, including Caterpillar, HP Inc., Hewlett Packard Enterprise, Motorola Solutions, and G4S, until such time as those companies no longer profit from the occupation or cease operations in the illegal settlements; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly encourage its members and congregations to divest of direct or substantive indirect holdings in companies profiting from, or complicit in, human rights violations arising from the occupation, including Caterpillar, HP Inc., Hewlett Packard Enterprise, Motorola Solutions, and G4S, until such time as those companies no longer profit from the occupation or cease operations in the illegal settlements; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Greater Milwaukee Synod Assembly encourage its members and congregations to pray and work for a just peace in Palestine and Israel.