

IRD: United Church of Christ Votes to Divest From Israel

The General Synod of the United Church of Christ (UCC), which has just under 1 million members in 5,100 congregations, voted today 508-124 with 38 abstentions to divest from companies conducting business in "Israel-occupied Palestinian territories" and boycott products made in those territories. The church's pension board and investment fund combined control about \$4 billion; the economic effect on Israel will likely be negligible. The United Church of Christ supports a "sovereign, independent Palestinian state."

IRD President Mark Tooley commented:

"The fast-declining United Church of Christ's vote today to divest from and boycott businesses doing business with Israel is sad but fortunately mostly inconsequential. Having lost over 50 percent of its membership, and now below 1 million members, the once prestigious and influential denomination likely speaks for few of even its own few remaining members.

"Of course, the UCC has no major interest in persecuted Christians nor in Islamist terror groups and regimes that kill Christians, Jews and Muslims. It exclusively faults Jewish Israel for strife in the Middle East.

"This divestment action will contribute nothing to peace or reconciliation. To the extent it is heeded at all, it will encourage radical enemies of peace to believe that Israel's Christian friends will turn against Israel. They will be greatly mistaken.

"The UCC joins the also fast-declining Presbyterian Church (USA) in endorsing anti-Israel divestment. Perhaps dying denominations make opposition to the Jewish state their lodestar. More spiritually vibrant Christian churches will

have very different opinions on Israel.”