

Bradley Hills Presbyterian Church



Bethesda Jewish Congregation

March 14, 2005

We are writing on behalf of the Session of Bradley Hills Presbyterian Church and the Board of Bethesda Jewish Congregation to share with you a positive and hopeful suggestion to encourage peace in the Middle East. For 40 years, our two congregations have been partners in interfaith relationship, understanding ourselves to be "spiritual siblings sharing sacred space." Given current tensions between the Presbyterian Church (USA) and the American Jewish community, we believe that we have a responsibility and a unique voice to address the divestment controversy.

Through a rigorous six month process, we as interfaith partners, have studied, debated, and engaged in deep dialogue about the actions taken last summer at the 216th General Assembly, that affect Israel and the Jewish people. Though there is not agreement within our congregations or between our congregations as to the wisdom of the divestment possibility, we have created a strong consensus around a positive investment strategy. We believe our statement can transform the current divisive argument into a concrete vision for peace and prosperity—for both the Israeli and the Palestinian people.

The enclosed statement outlines specific recommendations to inform the work of the Mission Responsibility Through Investment Committee as they continue their important deliberations. It suggests guidelines to be used in creating a positive redirection of Presbyterian resources if any change is made in the PC(USA) investment portfolio. And it suggests clear criteria in identifying companies or corporations for reinvestment opportunities. It also suggests a broader mandate of engaging international ecumenical and interfaith partners in Europe and the United States, urging them to assure that any budgetary support of Middle East entities be applied in peace promoting ways.

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We ask that you make this statement available to the General Assembly Council and to the Stated Clerk as a positive possibility for resolving conflicts between the PC (USA) and the American Jewish community. We also ask that you encourage the GAC Executive Committee to refer this resolution to the MRTI Committee for their serious consideration, and in addition, request that the Stated Clerk send this resolution to the World Council of Churches and other interfaith and ecumenical partners struggling with the divestment issue.

A banner hangs in our sanctuary whenever we engage in interfaith worship. It proclaims the hope and vision of our generous God: "How very good it is when kindred live together in unity!" (Psalm 133:1)

May it be so.

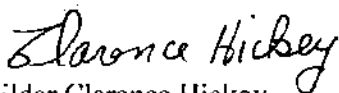
Yours in the Spirit of a Living God.




The Rev. Susan R. Andrews
Pastor
Bradley Hills Presbyterian Church



Hazzan Sunny Schmitzer
Spiritual Leader
Bethesda Jewish Congregation



Elder Clarence Hickey
Clerk of Session
Bradley Hills Presbyterian Church



Ms. Harti Kramer
Chairperson
Bethesda Jewish Congregation