



Northminster Presbyterian Church

August 11, 2005

Dear Members and Friends of Northminster:

An issue has come before our denomination that you should know about. The 216th General Assembly met in Richmond last summer. They approved several measures opposing the Israeli occupation of Palestine. One of those measures was selective divestment of corporations doing business in Israel/Palestine. The thinking is that we should “protest” companies who further the violence in that part of the world by selling our investments in those companies. An agency of the denomination, Mission Responsibility Through Investment Committee (MRTI), would study the matter and make recommendations to the General Assembly Council (GAC).

On August 5th, MRTI made a recommendation to General Assembly Council that five companies be targeted for “progressive engagement.” One of those companies was Caterpillar. At issue is the use of CAT bulldozers to destroy Palestinian homes. Those pursuing this matter want CAT to stop selling bulldozers to Israel for this reason. CAT has responded that they obey all national and international laws and are not responsible for what end users do with the equipment.

This is political posturing from a small, but vocal, group within our denomination. The decision has not been made to divest yet. It will be decided at our next General Assembly in June 2006.

We want you to know we find this course of action deplorable and embarrassing. We believe targeting CAT in this way is unjust, biased, and completely ridiculous. We also believe it will have no effect whatsoever on Caterpillar or the situation in Palestine.

Therefore, we will fight this ill-advised decision. Churches in Peoria are already meeting to plan our course of action. We will do everything in our power to stop divestment at our next General Assembly and we will seek an apology from our denomination.

In the meantime, if you would like to know more please, check out www.presbyweb.com, which has an index to many articles and stories related to this matter. You can also go to our church’s website for a couple of links to local pieces including a Peoria Journal Star story and a radio interview with Pastor Hucke.

Sincerely,

Rev. Doug Hucke, Senior Pastor

Rev. Mike Shirey, Associate Pastor

Rev. Stacia Thetard, Associate Pastor