

Minute for Mission: A Call to Boycott for a Just Peace

If you stay near tourist sites, a visit to the Holy Land might feel like an escape from the problems in our world. Christian pilgrims from all over the world come together and worship God in the land where Jesus walked. However, these pilgrims often notice their brothers and sisters struggling for a just peace in the Holy Land, and an end to the occupation of Palestine.

The Palestinian Territories are separate from the state of Israel, according to international agreements made at the United Nations. However, Israeli citizens continue to build settlements and live on Palestinian land. This practice of occupying Palestine has resulted in over 500,000 Israeli citizens living illegally inside Palestine, and using Palestinian land and water for their homes and businesses. These settlements are not recognized as legal by the United Nations or most nations. They divide up Palestine and deprive its poorest people of space to live. And yet, we support these settlements whenever we buy products produced there.

There are many Israeli businesses that have built their factories on Palestinian land. By buying products built in these factories, we tacitly encourage the occupation of Palestine through our financial support. As Christians we are called to be good stewards of our resources, and that includes how we spend our money.

In 2012, the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) approved a boycott of all Israeli products produced illegally in the Palestinian Territories. This is not a cultural or academic boycott, or a boycott against any product made in Israel. Instead, it is a call to recognize that factories in illegal settlements prevent a just peace between Israel and Palestine. The Holy Land is where our Christian values were formed and where millions of people live in need of peace. With our boycott, we can use our stewardship to support justice and encourage Israeli businesses to have ethical business practices.

In Matthew 25:40 Jesus tells us that "Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me." Let us show support for the least among us by boycotting settlement factories and their products.