

UCC synod affirms Jesus as Lord, rejects Israel-linked divestment: Outcomes contrary to expectations of some

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Contrary to some expectations, the United Church of Christ convention over the Fourth of July weekend in Atlanta reaffirmed traditional Christian claims and rejected financial divestment tactics against Israel as a way to work for Mideast peace.

Delegates to the UCC General Synod approved a resolution that declared that Jesus Christ is Lord and head of the church, although a committee omitted what critics called a “litmus test” requirement; namely, that all churches and ministers “must adhere to this most basic of all Christian teachings.”

The synod-approved resolution was combined with another proposal that the UCC should continue to use its logo design of a cross, crown and orb to represent itself. The proposal arose in reaction to the UCC’s ongoing publicity campaign that uses a big comma with the slogan, “God is still speaking.”

Although the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and a recent gathering of Anglican world leaders have endorsed the tactic of divestment from companies that supply Israel with bulldozers and military equipment, a UCC committee decided instead to forward to delegates a wide-ranging resolution that called for an evenhanded allocation of foreign aid that favored neither Israelis nor Palestinians.

As finally adopted by delegates, the resolution reaffirmed the UCC’s commitment to Israel’s “safe and secure existence with internationally recognized borders” and to “an independent Palestinian state,” according to the UCC Web site.

Delegates also approved a resolution urging Israel to tear down nearly 400 miles of high walls, razor-wire fences and fortified roadways that Israelis say afford them protection from violence. The resolution also called for reparations to Palestinians

who have lost homes and fields as a result. The statement cited data indicating that the barriers have resulted in the annexation, without negotiations, of large portions of the West Bank, "rendering a Palestinian state unviable."