

For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. Matthew 6:21

A Proposal from the Episcopal Peace Fellowship Palestine Israel Network to Apply the Episcopal Church's Global Human Rights Screen to Diocesan Investments

The national Episcopal Church has a rich history of scrutinizing its endowment investments such that they are consistent with the Church's teachings, core beliefs, and policy. This ongoing evaluation may take the form of a negative screen, in which shares of companies whose practices are or become incompatible with the Church's values are sold and/or placed on a "No Buy" list. Similarly, in efforts to encourage practices that the Church deems consistent with Christian social teachings, an affirmative screen may be created, whereby shares of companies engaged in these practices are purchased. For example, at the 78th General Convention in 2015, resolution C045 called upon the Church to sell its shares in the fossil fuel industry (negative screen) and invest in companies engaged in renewable, alternative energy (affirmative screen). Other examples of investment screens in the recent history of the national Episcopal Church include divestment from oil companies doing business in the Sudan (2000), from companies profiting from apartheid in South Africa (1985), and from companies whose profits are derived from tobacco products, military contracting, and private prisons.

At the national level, the entity responsible for guiding the Church's shareholder advocacy efforts is the Committee on Corporate Social Responsibility (CCSR). Created in the 1970s by the Church's Executive Council, the CCSR has nearly 50 years' experience.



Most recently, Resolution B016, adopted at the 2018 79th General Convention, called upon the CCSR to create a human rights screen for Israel / Palestine and to apply this screen to the investments of the Episcopal Church. The result of this screen was the historic sale in October 2019 of shares in three companies – Caterpillar, Inc, Motorola Solutions, and the Israel Discount Bank – all found to be complicit in the illegal Israeli Occupation of Palestinian Territories of the West Bank. Beyond these outright sales, Facebook, Trip Advisor, and Booking.com were identified as companies with whom active engagement would be continued in order to assess their willingness to end documented complicity with the Occupation. This ongoing work of the CCSR and its expansion to include other areas of conflict and occupation was supported and funded at the Executive Council's October 2019 meeting. Thus, it is clear that human rights considerations will continue to guide the investment decisions of the Episcopal Church.

The efforts of the national Church in the area of responsible endowment management have been replicated at the Diocesan level inconsistently and without a clear mandate. We respectfully suggest that extension of the Church's Global Human Rights Screen to the endowment portfolio of the Diocese of XXXXXX will bring our practice into alignment with that of the national Church. Further, the review of our diocesan investment portfolio will contribute to a deeper understanding and appreciation of our Church's established policy on a wide range of justice issues.

