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Anti-Israeli Bigotry & the Methodists

by Michael Sean Winters

Distinctly Catholic

My colleague, Claire Schaeffer-Duffy, reports on the decision by more Methodist groups to divest themselves from companies that in some way support the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories, or as the report says, "the West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem." It has been a long time since Israel occupied Gaza and most of the West Bank. And East Jerusalem, well, as I have noted before, united Jerusalem is going to stay united and anyone who is serious about achieving peace in the Holy Land should recognize that as long as the Palestinians demand half of Jerusalem, their hold on Nablus will always be tentative.

What is most insidious in the Methodists' decision is the comparison with divestment in South Africa. The circumstances of the two countries could scarcely be more different. The moral opprobrium heaped on the apartheid regime was uncomplicated, while moral concerns about the actions of the Israeli government in its handling of the Palestinian issue are inherently complicated. I invite my Methodist friends to go live in Gaza, under the loving rule of Hamas for a bit, and then report back. They should especially bring some of their gay and lesbian pastors and see how they enjoy the experience. Moral equivalence is a dangerous business.

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