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If one is to assume that the United Church of Canada's General Council was motivated by good intentions on the Middle East conflict in debating a boycott of Israel, and wasn't simply on an ideological ego trip of the type exhibited by Ontario CUPE president Sid Ryan, then the church could benefit from some self-reflection about its naive approach to extreme elements within its membership. Rather than simply focusing upon ecclesiastical issues of the ministry such as gays in the clergy or the divinity of Christ, it seems prepared to engage in the same selective outrage as the radical left, although [it backed off](#) in the end.

During the church's recent conference, there apparently was no discussion of China's repression of Tibet, not to mention the Muslim Uighurs and the Falun Gong. Delegates exhibited no concern about the murder of hundreds of thousands of Muslims in Darfur countenanced by Sudan, which even the International Criminal Court has now addressed. One could go on with references to the suppression of democratic protests in Iran, the slaughter of Tamils in Sri Lanka, the widespread rapes and murders in the Congo, the police state tactics in Myanmar, Zimbabwe and North Korea, among countless other abominations occurring around the world.

Rather, they chose to focus solely on the outrages of Israel, which is combatting a Hamas regime dedicated to destroying their nation, and committed to a strategy of terrorism against civilians in achieving that goal. Sanctimonious hypocrisy is hardly unique to the United Church, but more troubling is the counterproductive impact the selective morality has on the people these do-gooders are ostensibly trying to help. The Arab world has been pursuing economic boycotts of Israel for some sixty years, during which period Israel has flourished while the living conditions of Palestinians have declined dramatically. If United Church activists truly wish to support the Hamas agenda of destroying Israel, they might want to consider its negative implications for Palestinians, as well as their own church.

As it happens of course, the United Church has a rather checkered history in its claim moral authority. On the most significant moral questions of the last century the church did little, (along with other Canadian churches.) It did not support the plight of Jews seeking to escape Nazi Germany in the 1930s, nor did it protest the relocation of Japanese Canadians during World War II. Canadians have also been made depressingly familiar with the outrages of residential schools the church administered. In reality the church is in serious demographic decline, having fallen from close to 25% of the Canadian population fifty

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