



Faith, war and government

A Mennonite Church USA study
resource for congregations in
response to delegate discussion and
action at the Charlotte (NC) 2005
Delegate Assembly about relationship
to government and the war in Iraq

December 2005

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Many additional resources, including some in Spanish, as well as additional copies of this booklet for sale or download, are available at OneSource, www.MennoniteUSA.org/resources; see "Faith, war and government." If you prefer, call the Peace Advocate Office, 330-683-6844, for copies of web materials.

Introduction

Mennonite Church USA delegates met July 4-8, 2005, in Charlotte, N.C., to do the work of the church. This booklet is meant to help congregations follow up on two Assembly topics—the relationship of Mennonite Church USA to government and our response to the war in Iraq.

Delegate Assembly resolutions can help:

- educate by providing information about issues from a variety of perspectives that can assist congregations in their ministries.
- build consensus by trying to build common understanding and language. When we are not united in our viewpoints, resolutions can name our areas of both agreement and disagreement to help foster better understanding and ongoing discernment.
- provide a churchwide understanding to members of our congregations as well as those beyond Mennonite Church USA.
- provide a foundation for responding to government by serving as a resource for our congregations and members as they interact with government at all levels.

The resources in this booklet are designed to help your congregation in all four of these areas. Many of the articles here are directly related to the Delegate Assembly “Statement on the War in Iraq,” which is also included in this resource. The Assembly discussion between J. Daryl Byler and John D. Roth on relationship to government has been reprinted in *The Mennonite* (August 9, 2005) and can also be found at <http://www.charlotte2005.org/conventions/delegates/Speakinggovernment0705.pdf>.

When you use this booklet for Sunday school or small group study:

1. Check out the additional resources available on *OneSource*, (www.MennoniteUSA.org/resources; see “Faith, war and government”). This booklet is also available in Spanish on the website.
2. Read over “Faith and politics: agreeing and disagreeing in love in the congregation” for suggestions on leading discussion in your congregation.
3. In smaller groups or in a sermon series, begin with the Bible study, then move to the article on the “Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective” and our Anabaptist heritage. These two sections are especially written for congregational study.
4. Choose other articles to continue your study as you wish.

In her article “Who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?” Judy Zimmerman Herr refers to the question from our brothers and sisters in Colombia. This question continues to trouble my soul and define my work. Perhaps another way of saying this is “Why has God placed Mennonite Church USA in the United States at this time?”

May God bless you and your congregation as you courageously seek to know God’s answer at this time, in this place.



Susan Mark Landis
Peace Advocate for Mennonite Church USA

Statement on the War in Iraq

*Mennonite Church USA Delegate Assembly
Charlotte, North Carolina, adopted July 9, 2005*

Preamble

In response to requests from our area conferences, congregations and members for Mennonite Church USA to state our belief in God's call to peace and to invite peacemaking actions as individuals and congregations, the Executive Board offers the statement below. It follows a letter to President George W. Bush, in September 2002, signed by 17,000 members that outlined alternatives to going to war in Iraq, and a similar letter from the Constituency Leaders Council in March 2003. In June 2004 the Executive Board sent a pastoral letter to our congregations during this time of global turmoil.

This is our faith:

We believe that peace is the will of God. God created the world in peace, and God's peace is most fully revealed in Jesus Christ, who is our peace and the peace of the whole world. Led by the Holy Spirit, we follow Christ in the way of peace, doing justice, bringing reconciliation, and practicing nonresistance, even in the face of violence and warfare (Article 22, "Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective," 1995).

We believe that the church is God's holy nation, called to give full allegiance to Christ its head and to witness to every nation, government and society about God's saving love (Article 23).

This is our hope:

The biblical vision is of a day when nations will no longer learn war (Isaiah 2:4, Hosea 2:18, Micah 4:3), a day when God will wipe away all tears and when death, mourning, crying and pain will be no more (Revelation 21:4).

It is this glorious vision and the example of Jesus Christ that moves us, even now, to live as peacemakers in our world.

This is how we, as God strengthens us, choose to express our love:

- We will repent for ways we have contributed to this war;
- We will pray for peace, justice and reconciliation;
- We will renew our commitment to teach peace to every generation and to provide youth with meaningful alternatives to military service;
- We will support Mennonite Central Committee's work in Iraq, including relief, development and peace projects;
- We will encourage those called from our congregations to serve on Christian Peacemaker Team delegations to Iraq;
- We will offer our support to local military personnel and their families as they deal with the trauma of this war;
- We will reach out in friendship to local Muslims;
- We will join our voices with many other people of faith who are calling for our national leaders to end the U.S. military presence in Iraq, recognizing that such visibility is fueling a growing insurgency movement and adding to the daily suffering of ordinary Iraqis.

In all this, we seek to be "that 'city on a hill' which demonstrates the way of Christ" and to faithfully call "the nations (and all persons and institutions) to move toward justice, peace and compassion for all people" (Article 23, "Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective," 1995).

A Bible Study Outline

By Kenneth Thompson

bible study

Our Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective reads, “The Bible is the essential book of the church. Through the Bible, the Holy Spirit nurtures the obedience of faith to Jesus Christ and guides the church in shaping its teaching, witnessing and worship” (Article 4. Scripture). Although the relationship between Mennonites and the democratic government of the United States is vastly different than any relationship between God’s people and their government through the sweep of history in the Bible, we find principles which serve us well today.

1. What does the ‘Lordship of Christ’ mean?

I: ‘Lordship’—a definition

Having supremacy in authority, the right of control; an inherent right to exercise dominion; absolute right of rule.

II: ‘Lordship’—its connotation

Jesus is ‘the express image’ (one exact in nature, ability, temperament, being) of our Heavenly Father (Hebrews 1:3). He has a unique consciousness (“I and the Father are one,” John 10:30). His relationship to God (Hebrews 1:1, 2) coupled with the impeccable quality of his life gives Jesus the unparalleled right, authority, ownership and privilege to decree and determine the direction of another entity, rightfully expecting the allegiance of the same to his desired will.

III: ‘Lordship’—its application

As Christians:

1. We are to recognize Jesus’ Divine Right. Jesus’ historical teachings and his crucifixion and resurrection give him authority to determine the course of our lives in relation to others. We honor his word.
2. We are to respect Jesus’ Divine Role. By virtue of his exalted position and dominion, Jesus is motivated by care and concern for people. He asks us to follow his example of life and service in relation to ourselves. We honor his ways.
3. We are required to show reverence for Jesus’ Divine Rule. Because God honored Jesus, we are responsible to obey him in a personal commitment that grows and deepens as we live, giving full allegiance to Jesus’ person, presence and purpose in relation to God. We honor his will.

2. How did God’s people relate to government in the Bible?

Many Christians are quick to cite Acts 4:19 as their mandate to resist the governing authorities. Whereas there are occasions where our allegiance must be clearly declared when the laws of God are violated, there are many more scriptural exhortations that urge us to live in such a way that the conduct of our lives and the content of our character will make the gospel commendable to unbelievers. God’s people were commanded to:

- Pray to the Lord for the “peace and prosperity of the land” they lived in (Jeremiah 29:7).
- Pray for the health and safety of the municipal leaders and their families (Ezra 6:10).
- Pray for the “just and the unjust” as a practical expression of God’s love (Matt. 5:44-45).
- Submit to the properly constituted civil authorities for the public good in observance of God’s divine providence (Romans 13:1; 1 Peter 2:13-17).
- Make a good public witness as citizens in reverence of God as we do in our corporate worship in the church (1 Timothy 2:1-4).
- Recognize that all authority instituted among humankind indirectly depends on God for its existence (1 Peter 2:13).

3. For what purpose did God give government?

That we may live peaceful, quiet lives (1 Timothy 2:2); that all in society may benefit in general from protection from lawlessness; for good public order; for delivery or provision of necessary goods and services to the many (Romans 13:1-4).

Questions for reflection and discussion

1. What might it look like for Christians today to live under the “Lordship of Christ”?
2. Outline similarities and differences between the governments during biblical times and our government in the United States. Using this list, discuss how U.S. Christians might live under the Lordship of Christ in a democracy.
3. What responsibilities do we have to society? Which of these are the responsibility of the church and which are the responsibility of government?
4. How can one tell when a government is acting against the will of God? What then must Christians do? ✎

Kenneth Thompson is pastor of Friendship Community Church in Bronx, N.Y., and led worship at Charlotte 2005.

Remembering who we are in times of crisis and war

By Jim S. Amstutz

remembering

When dramatic events like Sept. 11, 2001 or the war in Iraq impact our lives, it is necessary and appropriate to re-examine our core values and beliefs as Christians in the Anabaptist-Mennonite tradition.

Start with Jesus

What we believe about Jesus (our Christology) is central to how Anabaptist-Mennonites respond to government on many issues, but especially war and peace. The Anabaptist Hans Denck is known for his quote about following Christ in life, but often only part of the quote is given. Here is the full text:

But the medium is Christ whom no one can truly know unless he follow him in life, and no one may follow him unless he has first known him.

If our model for peace is Christ (Article 22, “Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective,” 1995) and our primary allegiance as citizens of any country is to Christ (Article 23) then we see a direct correlation to the following statement found in Article 2: “As king who chose the way of the cross, he [Jesus] has revealed the servant character of divine power.” Knowing and following Christ are inseparable. If this is our starting point, then what we say and do in times of national crisis and war will be less confusing.

Confessing our convictions

A Polish philosopher suggests that we read history, not to find out what happened, but to remember who we are. When dramatic events like Sept. 11, 2001 or the war in Iraq impact our lives, it is necessary and appropriate to re-examine our core values and beliefs as Christians in the Anabaptist-Mennonite tradition. One helpful tool is the “Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective.” Three questions for reflection and discussion:

1. How does your congregation use the Confession of Faith? Can you think of a time when it was especially helpful in

- working through a particular situation or conversation? How have you personally benefited from the Confession?
2. Articles 22 and 23 speak to our peace convictions and how we relate to government. Notice the biblical references (you may want to have someone print them out) and how they are rooted in the first three articles on God, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit.
3. Try writing your own peace statement as a class or small group. Compose it in such a way that your local newspaper readers could understand it. You might want to shape it around three paragraphs, “This is who we are,” “This is what we believe,” and “These are our convictions.”

A word on church and state

One of the non-negotiables of the radical reformation in the 16th century was the Anabaptist conviction that church and state should be separate. Starting with the Roman emperor Constantine, the collaboration between church and state resulted in coercion for the sake of both protecting and expanding the church. Read aloud Article 9, “The Church of Jesus Christ,” and list the statements you find about the church in relation to the state. How do these statements help clarify our role and witness as the body of Christ living within a particular culture and nation?

Option: View the video/DVD *The Radicals*, which highlights the deeply held convictions of the early Anabaptist movement. Listen for similarities in the confession of faith that emerged at Schleitheim and the current “Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective.” ✂

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Faith and politics: **agreeing** and **disagreeing** in love in the congregation

By André Gingerich Stoner

During the 2004 elections, we discovered that the great divide of Republican and Democrat runs through our congregations. Read how one congregation built a bridge between members that attracted people from outside the congregation.

“You can’t do that! That will divide the church.” This was how one member responded when he learned that we were embarking on a three-month series of conversations on faith and politics. Three months later, we concluded that we can do that—and though the differences between us are perhaps clearer than ever, there is also greater understanding, more respect and more sense of belonging together in the body of Christ. I share the story of one congregation in the hope that it will encourage others.

Kern Road Mennonite Church is the only Mennonite church in St. Joseph County, Ind. Further, more than a third of those who attend come from other-than-Mennonite backgrounds. And so people gather to worship here with political views that cover almost the entire spectrum.

After the national election of 2004, one member of the congregation noted that there had been virtually no conversation at Kern Road about how our faith affects our political decisions. In an article in our congregational newsletter, he suggested that if our faith affects every area of our lives and if we are a community that gives and receives counsel, then we should find ways to talk with each other about politics. This stimulated conversations in two venues: a Sunday morning

adult education class and a mid-week series of conversations after a simple soup and bread supper.

The purpose of the class, called “Faith and politics: agreeing and disagreeing in love,” was “to create a safe place for open, honest, respectful conversation; to reflect on how faith shapes our political decisions; and to practice agreeing and disagreeing in love as we seek together to be faithful to Jesus.”

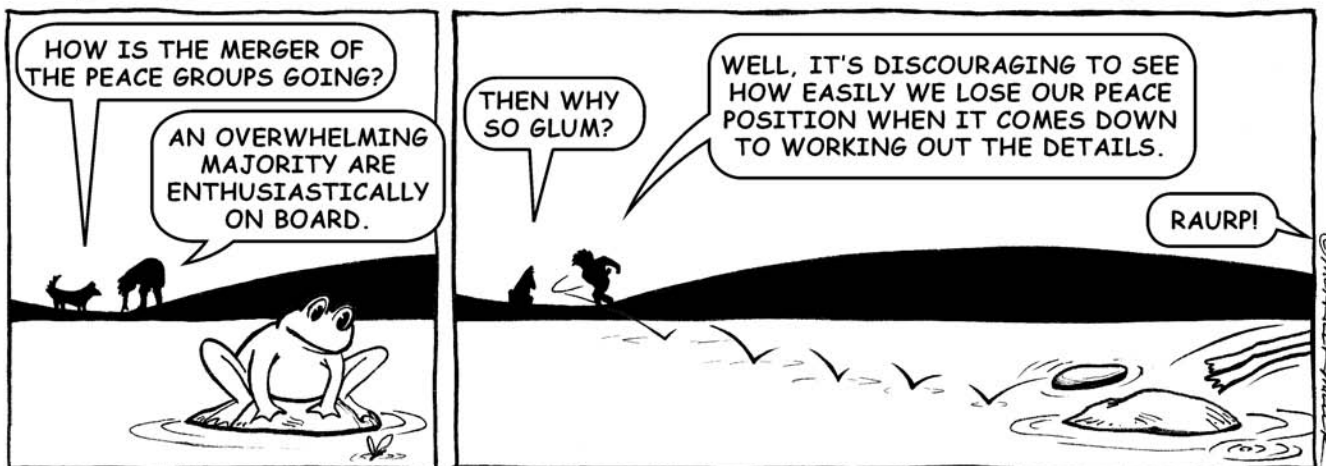
We started by writing our hopes and fears for the class on the front and back of index cards with no names attached. The cards were collected and then read out loud. We discovered how many of us shared the same hopes and fears: fear of being misunderstood or judged, of not being able to adequately articulate a position, of losing control of one’s emotions; hope of being listened to, of learning something new, of finding common ground.

We also spent time talking about how we would like to be listened to. Together we developed some guidelines for our conversation. Some of the suggestions were very simple: no interruptions, no rolling of eyes! But others were more challenging. We all want people to listen without putting us in a box, recognizing “This is where I am now, but this isn’t necessarily where I’ve always been and may not be where I will be in the future.” We want people to listen to us seeking to understand us, not to find weaknesses in order to tear our position to bits. We discussed the difference between dialogue and debate. We posted these guidelines in our classroom.

And then the fun began! We devoted several weeks simply to sharing stories. We invited four or five people from across

Otterville

Merrill R. Miller



the political spectrum to share with the group the story of how they came to their political perspective. We asked them to reflect on questions like: What were the political convictions of your parents? Do you vote and if so, when did you first vote? How did you vote in the last election? How has your faith shaped your political convictions? What has shaped your political views? What are your sources of information? Have your political perspectives changed and if so how and why?

It required some courage for these individuals to speak to the group in this fashion. But with the groundwork we had laid, the class listened with interest, openness and respect. The stories were riveting. These were people who sat on church committees together, who had known each other for years, who worshipped together every Sunday, but we had not heard these stories before. After several people shared with the whole class, we paired up and each participant shared his or her story with one other person. This experience of sharing and hearing our stories deepened our understanding and respect for each other. It alone made the class worthwhile.

We continued with several structured exercises. In a listening exercise, for example, each person was asked to speak about the single most important issue for them in deciding how to vote in the 2004 presidential election. Before the next person could speak, he or she had to summarize to the first person's satisfaction what they had just said. This exercise helped us listen carefully to each other, but it also made it painfully clear how different our perspectives were.

We also spent a Sunday discussing an article by Ron Sider from *Leader* magazine that talked about four steps in moving from biblical faith to public policy. This helped us think more clearly about where we disagree. Do we disagree about who we think God is and what God wants? Do we disagree about the needs and challenges of the world? Do we disagree about what policy is most effective?

During the series, we spent several sessions discussing specific issues, such as abortion, foreign policy, economic policies and social service cuts. In several discussions, we discovered that there is more common ground than one would think from the public debates. We often also came to the conclusion together that none of the leading politicians, whether Republican or Democrat, consistently represent positions we would embrace. Trust and hope in a party or politician is misplaced. Sometimes ideas surfaced for church initiatives that crossed the red/blue divide. We repeatedly discovered that we have much to learn from each other.

Two members of the congregation's Listening and Conciliation Team facilitated the class. This team was formed nearly 10 years

ago in the face of anticipated conflicts around a building project. The conflicts didn't happen, but the team continued to help the congregation learn healthy habits for dealing with conflict.

Over the course of a year, the team introduced the congregation to the Mennonite Church statement "Agreeing and Disagreeing in Love." During a worship series on peacemaking, members of the congregation were invited to sign the statement that now hangs framed in the church conference room. Since it was formed, the team has led several adult Sunday school classes that draw heavily on material from Mennonite Conciliation Services. The first classes taught concrete communication and conflict management skills. A class on "Agreeing and disagreeing in love on difficult issues in the church" focused on worship styles and homosexuality. We used many of the same exercises in the faith and politics class.

Working together in this way has been attractive to some outside the congregation. After the class on faith and politics, we received several inquiries when one participant presented a short commentary about the class on the local public radio station. One new attendee stood up during worship and shared that part of what had helped her decide to stay was seeing how members of the church were talking with each other about their differences.

Our experience has been that you can talk about faith and politics in the congregation and that far from tearing us apart, it can bring us together. We are learning again that conflict is a normal, God-given part of life and if we work well with it, it is an opportunity to learn more about ourselves, each other and God. After all, Jesus was talking about situations of conflict when he promised that where two or three are gathered in his name, he will be with us.

Questions for reflection and discussion

1. Tell about a time when you listened to someone with beliefs different than yours. How did you create a safe place? How were you changed or challenged?
2. How has your congregation learned to listen to each other about difficult topics? Which of the exercises Kern Road used would you commit to trying?
3. Describe how your congregation applies faith to politics. What steps would you like to take before the next election? ✎

André Gingerich Stoner is pastor of missions at Kern Road Mennonite Church in South Bend, Ind., part of that congregation's Listening and Conciliation Team and director of interchurch relations for Mennonite Church USA Executive Leadership.

Anabaptist advocacy

By J. Daryl Byler

advocacy

The “Statement on the War in Iraq” suggests we talk to our government officials, which some call their public witness. Additional articles, with other viewpoints, are available on *OneSource* at www.MennoniteUSA.org/resources; see “Faith, war and government.”

For a variety of reasons, some Mennonites choose not to vote or to engage in the political process. Others believe this is an important part of our faith witness. This essay assumes that some form of witness to governing authorities is appropriate and seeks to articulate what a distinctive Anabaptist Christian witness might look like.

Based on more than a decade of public policy advocacy in MCC’s Washington Office, I suggest four criteria to guide the public witness of Mennonite Church USA. Specifically, we do well for our Anabaptist witness to be:

1. Rooted in our faith practice.

Our primary witness is simply to be the church—a visible alternative community that receives God’s grace and follows the teachings of Jesus. The “Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective” states: “The church is the spiritual, social and political body that gives its allegiance to God alone” and is “made up of people from every tribe and nation” (Article 23). We love enemies, seek justice and care for those who are vulnerable.

Our witness to governing authorities has the greatest credibility and power when it grows out of our daily lived experiences. If the church fails to first model a Christ-like way of being and acting in a broken world, its witness to governing authorities will seem hypocritical—tepid at best. How can we expect governing authorities to act justly, sacrificially and courageously if the church is not willing to do so?

On the other hand, when we put our lives on the line to build peace in places like Iraq, we have moral integrity to call upon governing authorities to pursue diplomatic means rather than war.

The United States severed diplomatic ties with Iran in 1979. For the past seven years, MCC has had a student exchange program in conjunction with an educational institution in Iran. As a result, trust and mutual respect have grown between American and Iranian participants. MCC has pointed to this model in urging U.S. government officials to consider the benefits of restoring diplomatic relationships with Iran.

2. Offered in a spirit of humility.

We do well to avoid the harsh rhetoric and strident positions often associated with the political process. Our Confession of Faith states: “As Christians, we are to respect those in authority and to pray for all people, including those in government...” (Article 23).

Our advocacy must grow out of personal concern for public officials and a proper understanding of the legitimate role of government. Policymakers work with complex issues and must make hard choices. Governments will never fully live up to the teachings of Jesus. But even the church falls short of this high ideal. So there is ample room for humility in addressing the shortcomings of governing authorities. Self-righteous judgments are never helpful.

3. Principled, not partisan.

Our Confession of Faith says we witness to governing authorities by being ambassadors for Christ, calling them to “move toward justice, peace and compassion for all people” (Article 23).

In developing principled positions, we do well to draw the best ideas from both conservative and progressive values rather than taking a straight party line. Jesus, not the Democratic or Republican party, is our standard bearer.

Some years ago, one U.S. Senator introduced a bill that required Congress to analyze every new piece of new legislation by asking, “How will this bill impact children?” In a similar vein, what principles should guide Anabaptist witness to government? As Christians, our confession of Jesus as Lord means that his life and teachings are the standard by which we judge what is good, right and true. In his Sermon on the Mount, as in his life, Jesus emphasized those behaviors and attitudes that help create shalom: justice (Matthew 5:20), reconciliation (5:21-26), fidelity (5:27-32), truthfulness (5:33-37), generosity (5:38-42), love for enemies (5:43-48), humility (6:1-6, 16-18), forgiveness (6:12-14) and trust in God alone (6:19-34).

Of course God’s reign will not be legislated into being. Still, we need not apologize for calling governments to create laws and policies that undergird life, especially for those who are most vulnerable.

4. Relational.

Anabaptist faith is best expressed in the context of relationships rather than in distant declarations.

Whenever possible, we should build relationships with elected officials. Given their busy schedules, this is not always possible. But when it happens, these pastoral-prophetic contacts can be powerful conduits for public witness.

It is more likely that one can develop a relationship with a legislator's staff member. When I've taken time to form a friendship, staff members will sometimes take the initiative to ask my opinion about an issue their office is considering. Some years ago, at a time when Congress was planning to add \$13 billion to the U.S. military budget, one congressional aide called to ask how MCC would spend \$13 billion to make the world more secure.

While personal visits with congressional offices are the most effective form of communication, phone calls, faxes and e-mails are also valuable ways of expressing your opinion. (In a post-anthrax environment, first class letters are no longer a preferred form of communication, given the sometimes long delays in processing congressional mail.)

Whatever the means of contact, state your views clearly, respectfully and succinctly. Focus on one issue about which you have some personal experience or knowledge. Ask questions. And don't forget to listen to your legislator's concerns.

What issues should we speak to as Anabaptist Christians? For decades, Mennonites have regularly spoken to government about issues of conscription and alternative service. In more recent years, Mennonite Church USA has offered a strong witness calling for alternatives to U.S. military aid to Colombia and the U.S.-led war in Iraq.

The church has been less clear about a distinct advocacy message about abortion or health care. (See case studies at *OneSource* at www.MennoniteUSA.org/resources.)

The conversations that take place within our congregations can undergird our public witness. Many congregations seem paralyzed by differences, so they simply don't talk about political issues. But rather than mute our witness, why not explore our differences and see where we share values? Sunday school classes and small groups are ideal places for doing so. MCC offers resources for safe space dialogue at www.mcc.org/us/washington; click on "Safe Space."

Engaging government is not our primary form of witness as Christians. But the church can have a faithful and effective witness when it is rooted in our faith practice, offered in a spirit of humility, principled (not partisan) and relational.

Questions for reflection and discussion

1. How are your private and public witness to the call of justice related to each other? Does your congregation practice both types of witness?
2. Share your experiences with advocacy.
3. Might you be ready to begin a relationship with a legislator? ✎

J. Daryl Byler is director of the Washington Office of Mennonite Central Committee and a member of the Mennonite Church USA Executive Board.

A Christian Pledge of Allegiance

I pledge allegiance to **Jesus Christ**, and to God's kingdom for which he died—
one Spirit-led people the world over,
indivisible, with **love and justice** for all.

©2004. June Alliman Yoder and J. Nelson Kraybill, Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Ind. <http://www.ams.edu>.

Business card copies available at OneSource, www.MennoniteUSA.org/resources; see "pledge."

Prayer for peacemakers

By Marlene Kropf

prayer

The “Statement on the War in Iraq” affirms that we will pray for “peace, justice and reconciliation.”

*Prayer is not a substitute for action;
prayer is an action
for which there is no substitute.*
—Jane Edwards

A vital element of both individual and communal peacemaking is prayer. Without an ongoing relationship with a just and loving God, our efforts to make peace in the world shrivel and fail. Yet by opening ourselves to God in prayer, together and alone, our faith is continually renewed and we are formed more and more into the image of Christ, who is our peace. We become peacemakers from the inside out, the first and most important step in the church’s response to violence in the world.

Several kinds of prayer are especially important for peacemakers. Though we often think quickly of petitionary or intercessory prayer in connection with peacemaking (and these are certainly important ways to pray), a wider range of prayer modes is needed if the church is to fulfill its mission. The following paragraphs describe several of these forms of prayer that are essential for peacemaking.

1. Centering prayer—“Be still and know that I am God” (Psalm 46:10)

Rooted in the prayer tradition of the Psalms where we are reminded, “Be still and know that I am God,” centering prayer is a simple, wordless way of praying that makes space for being with God and becoming more deeply aware of God’s presence. It is practiced not only for the intimacy with God it nourishes but also for the fruits of love, joy and peace it produces.

Centering prayer can be a space for silent prayer in the midst of worship or it can be an individual daily quiet time of 15-20 minutes or more.

2. Consciousness examen—“O Lord, you have searched me and known me” (Psalm 139:1)

In the consciousness examen, we review our ordinary day-to-day experiences, looking for the ways God has been present to us, offering thanks and praise for God’s gifts, confessing our brokenness and sin, and receiving cleansing and forgiveness. As we become aware of our own inclinations to violence, we open ourselves to the Spirit’s transforming work within and among us.

During a time of confession in public worship, leaders

can guide worshippers to remember the events and relationships of the week past and open themselves to the Spirit’s call for repentance and transformation. Practiced individually, the consciousness examen is especially suitable for evening prayer.

3. Praying scripture—“Your word is...a light to my path” (Psalm 119:105)

If we devote ourselves to meditation on God’s Word for a few minutes a day, we will gradually be changed. As we let the Word “read” us, instead of focusing only on study or mastery of information, we will begin to see into the heart of God, who longs for wholeness and peace in all the world.

Lectio Divina, or praying scripture, is a pattern of prayer with four movements that works well for both groups and individuals.

4. Lament—“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” (Psalm 22:1)

As we work for peace and long for God’s justice and healing in the world, we are often troubled by lack of wisdom among leaders. We grieve for the pain and suffering of innocent people. It seems that as soon as one disagreement or clash is quieted, another breaks out. The path to peace and justice sometimes looks hopeless.

At such times, the prayer of lament is crucially important. When we lament, we cry out to God in our helplessness; we plead for God’s deliverance; then, as we remember God’s goodness and faithfulness, our hope is restored in God’s purposes of salvation and peace. In corporate worship, scriptures such as Psalm 6 or 13 or Jeremiah 12 can shape our laments—songs such as John L. Bell’s “If the war goes on” or the much-loved hymn, “Come, ye disconsolate” can become our cries for help. Ann B. Weems’ book, *Psalms of Lament* (Westminster John Knox, 1995), is a poignant collection of individual laments. For more information about these types of prayer, please see *OneSource* at www.MennoniteUSA.org/resources; see “Faith, war and government.”

5. Confession—“Have mercy upon us, O Lord” (Psalm 123:3)

Confession is truth-telling. Requiring courage and clarity of vision, we name what needs healing in our lives individually and corporately. The Psalms offer fine models of prayers of confession—both the spirit required and the content or focus of such prayers (see, for example, Psalm 32 or 51). Perhaps one of the most explicit corporate prayers of confession for national sin is found in Daniel 9 (#832 in *Hymnal: A Worship Book*).

6. Petition and intercession—“Incline your ear, O Lord, and answer me” (Psalm 86:1)

God, whose love encompasses the world, invites our prayers for the world. As Christians gather in worship from week to week, we are called to pray fervently for God’s reign of justice and righteousness to flourish. Just as important as praying in our worship services, however, is taking our prayers of intercession to the street. Whether we gather in front of a local courthouse to pray, on a street corner where violence has taken place or in solidarity with other Christians who are praying for an end to war, we speak our prayers publicly, committing ourselves to work for peace even as we plead with God to bring peace in our world.

Questions for reflection and discussion

1. Which of these types of prayer is familiar and comfortable to you? Which are new?
2. What relationship do you see between prayer and peace-making?
3. Using the additional materials available on the website, set aside special time to practice prayer. ✎

Marlene Kropf, Elkhart, Ind., is assistant director of Congregational and Ministerial Leadership for Mennonite Church USA.

“Who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?”

By Judy Zimmerman Herr

who knows

Why has God placed Mennonites in the United States, the most powerful country in the world?

Mennonites in Colombia use this quotation from the biblical story of Esther (Esther 4:14) to call Mennonites in the United States to action on their behalf. They experience a war between multiple armed groups, in which Colombians find that the actions of the Colombian government prolong conflict, displacement of people and destruction of livelihoods. The U.S. government supports this activity with millions of dollars of military aid. For our brothers and sisters in Colombia, our presence in the midst of the source of this military aid places on us a responsibility that comes from God. Perhaps we are here for a reason—to witness on their behalf to the powers in our government.

As our brothers and sisters around the world look at the forces that shape their lives, they often point to the United States as one source of conflict. This is natural—our country holds overwhelming wealth and power and sometimes uses it in ways that disregard the interests and safety of people in other countries. When they see the power of the United States contributing to problems in their country, they call on us, their Christian brothers and sisters, to speak on their behalf.

Staff at the MCC offices in Washington and at the United Nations often receive requests to speak on issues that are important to MCC’s partners elsewhere in the world. Less frequent are messages addressed to us as a church directly from a church elsewhere in the world. But in either case, we want to

make sure that those we speak to in government know we are speaking on behalf of those in other places.

After the events of Sept. 11, 2001, Mennonites and Brethren in Christ received a letter from the leaders of Mennonite World Conference, who were then traveling in Congo. The letter included a message from Congolese Mennonites:

“These same sisters and brothers also ask if you are keeping your eyes fixed on Jesus Christ. From their own life situation, they know that you now face heavy pressure and high obstacles as you seek to follow and bear witness to the Savior who loves enemies. They believe that a warlike response...will harm many people and impede Christian witness around the world...They encourage you...to reinforce your proclamation of the Gospel of Peace.”

Brothers and sisters around the world look to us to speak words of peace to those in power, in solidarity and support for their struggles. They expect us to bear witness based on our conviction that God wills peace for the world.

Questions for reflection and discussion

1. Why has God placed Mennonites in the United States, the most powerful country in the world?
2. What responsibility do we bear to our Christian sisters and brothers around the world because we live in the United States? Do we have responsibilities to those who are not Christian? ✎

Judy Zimmerman Herr serves as co-director of the Mennonite Central Committee International Peace Office.

African-American Anabaptists and the right to vote

By Lee Roy Berry, Jr., and Beth Berry

Originally, African Americans were denied the right to vote. Has voting changed their position in society?

For some Christians, choosing not to vote is a pure and straightforward choice: God is in charge of the world and one can rest secure in God's peace. Let the government do its thing. Christians are to focus on the coming of the Kingdom. The truest test of the authenticity of this point of view is if one does not vote even if she or he knows the result will cause or increase one's own suffering. This is exemplary Christian behavior.

However, it is all too easy to espouse the above position when one is, in fact, not suffering, and when one does not look different from those in power. As such, white people experience the "upside" of their dominance of others. African Americans, on the other hand, do not have the white Mennonite option of being part of the dominant group and of quietly reaping the tangible and intangible benefits thereof.

African-American sisters and brothers living in a racist society are much more likely to experience oppression firsthand and in fact are daily suffering in ways that are not even on the radar screen of whites. Voting is a way to register one's opinions for improving the conditions of life in the here and now and one's hopes that positive changes might occur, even though politics carry a certain degree of ambiguity.

Suppose you are part of a group whose individual members, according to the original U.S. constitution, equaled only 3/5 of a person and who were brutalized and dehumanized for many decades. Is it not reasonable and even practical to try to mitigate the effects of such damaging actions through voting? Or are we confident that simply setting an example by upholding Christian principles in our personal and professional lives is enough to combat the lingering consequences of slavery and discrimination?

To be Black in the United States means to share a history of unmerited, involuntary suffering, which does not seem within the will of God. While all Mennonites appreciate the record of their *Martyrs' Mirror*, African-American Mennonites have an additional set of martyrs who also suffered simply because of their physical appearance. Many of them trusted that they were God's children, too, and their stories could comprise volumes of martyrs' mirrors.

In April 1873, in the town of Colfax, La., a small band of African Americans who wanted the same opportunities for themselves and their children that whites enjoyed as a matter of course stood up for their newly acquired right to vote. A white mob killed them for doing so. Their story provides a lesson to African

Americans: We should vote, in part, as an expression of appreciation and deference to these men and thousands of others like them who sacrificed their lives so that we, their posterity, might live free. The African-American part of others of us compels us to treasure the right because it was paid for with the blood of many martyrs.

We also vote because we think it can be consistent with the will of God. Governments, though fallen, can at times express acts of genuine altruism that are consistent with the biblical mandate to care for those in physical need. To the extent that governments have a propensity to act in such a manner, voting can serve to encourage that behavior. Accordingly, we can vote to express to those in power our understanding of God's hopes for humankind.

Naturally, one must ask, "Has voting made a difference?" African Americans are now recognized as whole persons with the right to self-determination, rather than as 3/5 of a person with no rights. Those who govern must now take the opinions and needs of African Americans into careful consideration. Ultimately, politics is about human values and voting can be a declaration of one's beliefs to those in power. Sending such a message has historically been done by white Mennonites when the stakes were deemed high enough to merit action. Examples include speaking against conscription during the U.S. Civil War and the two World Wars.

As Sir Thomas More once prayed, "The things, good Lord, that we pray for, give us the grace to labor for."* Is not exercising the vote part of that labor?

* from *366 Ways to Peace*, compiled by Melodie M. Davis (Herald Press, 1999), sourced to *Earth Prayers from Around the World*, edited by Elizabeth Roberts (HarperCollins Publishers, 1991), page 367.

Questions for reflection and discussion

1. What reasons compel you to vote or not to vote?
2. Would you agree that achieving the vote has been crucial for African Americans in the United States? Why or why not?
3. Do you think you might have a responsibility to vote for the rights and welfare of others, even if you do not care about your own well-being vis-a-vis the government?
4. If one really sorts things out, have there been any martyrs who have been killed solely for their faith without any connection to the political circumstances surrounding their lives and deaths? ✎

Lee Roy Berry, Jr., is an attorney and a professor of political science and history. Beth Berry is a librarian and teacher. They live in Goshen, Ind.

Quenching their **thirst**

thirst

By Glen A. Guyton

The “Statement on the War in Iraq” says “we will offer our support to local military personnel and their families as they deal with the trauma of this war.”

As men and women of peace, how do we deal with military personnel and their families? Undoubtedly, as we seek to do justice and show mercy, our paths intersect with those whose lifestyle may directly conflict with our beliefs. Not only will we have questions for them, but they may have questions about how we have chosen to express our Christian faith.

When Jesus met the Samaritan woman at the well, his first inclination was to share a drink of water before he outlined her sins and how her actions conflicted with Jewish tradition and God’s Word. Jesus said to her, “If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, ‘Give Me a drink,’ you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water” (John 4:10 NKJV).

Our first obligation when relating to military families and personnel is to demonstrate love. Christ commands us first to love. Our Jewish savior went against tradition to share the gospel with a Samaritan woman.

Learn about the issues and challenges military families and personnel may be facing. Genuinely try to understand why they have chosen the lifestyle they are living. The answers may surprise you. Most people serving in the military, if asked, would say that they are personally opposed to killing and war. We Mennonites pray to God for peace and so do the soldiers who worship in base chapels and community churches.

God’s church is open to all and we should be a welcoming church. In order to fulfill the Great Commission of Matthew and Mark (“Go into all the world and preach the gospel”), we have to meet people where they are—and sometimes they are in the military.

I remember sitting across from my friend Titus Peachey for the first time. I was in my dress blue Air Force uniform and he in what I would describe as “straight off the farm” attire. Many thoughts ran through my head that day. “Why in the

world would anyone want to be a pacifist?” I thought. Surely he thought, “Why would this young man want to be in the military?”

No stones were thrown that day—not that Titus would, nor would I have been willing to risk a court martial on some long-haired hippie with “flawed” theology. No, what happened that day was that I met a man who was willing to sit and teach me about his beliefs. Titus met me with kindness and began to share from his heart about the “Jesus way of peace” and Anabaptist theology. That day began my journey to becoming a true Anabaptist who was eventually rebaptized and who separated from the military as a conscientious objector.

The opportunity will come for us to share the Mennonite faith in a way that those who are still on their journey can appreciate and understand, even if they have not reached our same destination. After we have dined with them and after we have quenched their natural thirst, we then can offer them the living water that we as Mennonites believe must be expressed through mercy, justice and humility.

Questions for reflection and discussion

1. As Christians, how do we interact with those who have values different from our own? As we seek to fulfill the Great Commission, does opening the doors of the church to “sinners” lead to assimilation of negative values or to transformation to Christian values?
2. Role-play a similar scene. One person believes that peace is the center of Christ’s gospel; the other believes that peace can be brought through military strength. What phrases are helpful to the discussion? ✂

Glen A. Guyton is church administrator and youth pastor at Calvary Community Church in Hampton, Va. After earning the rank of captain, Glen (a graduate of the United States Air Force Academy) separated from the military as a conscientious objector. He is now an ordained Mennonite pastor who has served in both the Warwick District and Virginia Mennonite Conference to promote alternatives to military service and peace theology among young people.

Relationships between Muslims and Mennonites in the United States

By Jason Shenk

The “Statement on the War in Iraq” encourages us to “reach out in friendship to local Muslims.” Here are ideas about how to relate.

When we reflect on the declaration, “We will reach out in friendship to local Muslims” from the 2005 “Delegate Assembly Statement on the War in Iraq,” remembering our shared beliefs can help us recall the faith from which this intention arises.

“Led by the Holy Spirit, we follow Christ in the way of peace, doing justice, bringing reconciliation, and practicing nonresistance even in the face of violence and warfare” (Article 22, “Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective”). As we consider how to live out this confession in relation to Muslims in the United States, we can learn much from the experience of faithful discipleship by Mennonites in the United States and around the world.

Since the beginning of the Iraq War, Northern Virginia Mennonite Church in Fairfax, Va., has strengthened relationships with the local Muslim society. One notable example has been members of the congregation working with Quaker and Church of the Brethren congregations to send 325 humanitarian aid kits to Iraq through Mennonite Central Committee. NVMC member Hoyt Maulden says that the Anabaptist-Mennonite tradition’s call for healing relationships, particularly with people suffering injustice, makes relationships with Muslims essential.

Bertha Beachy, Goshen, Ind., former mission worker in Somalia and Kenya, has helped to make connections between local Muslims and a number of congregations in northern Indiana, including through a jointly planned seminar on Islam involving a peace concerns group at College Mennonite Church in Goshen.

Bertha clarifies the mindset necessary for cross-faith relationships: “If you are able to listen and willing to learn, you may also have the opportunity to share. Our lives need to be so invitational as Christians that it creates curiosity and questions. The ability to develop relationships of mutual respect is key to sharing. Prayer and a sense of God’s guidance open the way.”

Soon after Sept. 11, 2001, Community Mennonite Church in Stouffville, Ont., initiated contact with the nearby Islamic society. This has led to interreligious dialogue and interaction including: exchanges of gifts; books and videos; sharing meals; speaker exchanges with question-and-answer; and storytelling from the each tradition.

Community Mennonite’s pastor, Gord Alton, notes that bridges for relationship-building include the fact that Islam sees the Christian Bible as a sacred text, a shared desire to learn

about the other in light of the stereotypes being promoted by both Western and Islamic media, and Muslim interest in how Mennonites deal with the faith/culture dynamic (how to be “in the world but not of it”).

The examples above illustrate several useful components that are often involved when Mennonites build relationships with Muslims: education, mutual respect, dialogue and cooperative service projects. Other fruitful activities have included worship exchanges, vigils, watching movies with discussion afterward, even joint fishing outings. Furthermore, many valuable relationships develop at the level of day-to-day friendships between individuals or families.

The desire to build friendships can be complicated by concerns about the new relationship. For example, Mennonites, as many Christians, are unclear about rules regarding Muslim dietary guidelines, which can make food-centered hospitality more daunting. When Rochester (Minn.) Mennonite Church helped plan an interfaith event in October 2005, organizers dealt with this issue by asking the Jewish and Muslim participants to bring dishes that were kosher and halal (in accordance with their respective dietary laws) and people of other faiths to bring breads, fresh vegetables and fruit.

Uncertainty often exists on both sides. Mennonites may be confused about issues such as gender roles and the political aspects of Islam. Muslim reservations often stem from concern about recurrence of the linked history of Christian proselytizing and Western imperialism. Historically, Christians have imposed themselves on other cultures, including those of the Muslim world. Immense damage has been done to the Christian faith by “Christian armies” that wantonly killed Muslim civilians, often in the name of God, from the Crusades to Afghanistan and Iraq.

Ways to address these concerns are varied, but methods that have been successful for Mennonites have included: learning to understand relationships with Muslims in terms of culture and history, both Muslims’ and their own; supporting individuals—often people with overseas connections—who are led to take leadership in their congregation to bring people together; exploring opportunities for interaction among women; and beginning faith conversations by discussing commonalities. Approaches such as these contribute to making the sometimes challenging process worth the effort as people build trust and strong, complementary relationships.

Muslims and Mennonites often find that relationships with the other strengthen their own faith—as in rediscovering Islamic traditions of peace and recalling Anabaptist understandings

of committed prayer. Many of our highest values are shared values—from pursuing justice and living ethical daily lives to the importance of community and a relationship with a powerful, compassionate God. In the midst of pervasive conflict, such common ground has great potential to nourish life-giving friendships that grow from the full expression of our faiths.

Questions for reflection and discussion

1. How might you apply Micah 6:8 and Jesus' command to love our neighbors as ourselves to relationships with people of the Muslim faith?
 2. What questions do you have about the Muslim faith? How might you find answers to your questions and how might that influence your relationships with Muslims? Why is it important for Mennonites to understand Muslims in this place and at this time?
 3. What stereotypes do we hold about Muslims? What stereotypes might Muslims hold about Christians? How do we
4. Long-time Mennonite mission worker David W. Shenk writes that “regardless of if you are committed to ‘witness’ or to a more pluralistic approach, dialogue is only about respectful learning from one another about the journey we are mutually on.” How would you describe respectful learning between faiths?
 5. What gifts in your congregation could help build or support friendships with Muslims in your area?

For additional resources and more-specific tips on building friendships with Muslims, visit *OneSource* at www.MennoniteUSA.org/resources; see “Faith, war and government.” ✎

Jason Shenk is a student at Earlham College in Richmond, Ind., majoring in peace and global studies, and has done an internship with the Islamic Society of North America.

What Iraqis wish Mennonites knew

By Peter Dula

wish

To love our enemies, we must know what their lives are like. What's it really like in Iraq?

When Bakr came to Amman, Jordan, for a week-long series of meetings at his company's headquarters, they asked him to stay a few days longer to help them out with other things. He would have loved to spend a few more days in Amman, away from Baghdad's heat and violence, but he refused, saying, “I have to go home and buy my wife groceries.” Before he left, he had stocked the refrigerator and cupboards and he knew they would be starting to empty. His wife was afraid to go outside to buy groceries or to send the children to the store.

Dr. Mahmoud carries his laptop to work in an old plastic bag because he is afraid to be seen with a briefcase. It is not good to look too professional in Baghdad. Like thousands of doctors, businessmen and professors over the last couple years, you might become a target of kidnapping or assassination.

Officials have declared a new traffic law in Baghdad: Cars with even-numbered license plates may be driven every other day and cars with odd-numbered license plates may be driven on the alternate days. Baghdad roads weren't ready for the massive influx of cars after the fall of Saddam. But the new law

is mostly because so many roads have been closed in recent years. Companies, churches, mosques, schools and government buildings have razor wire and drums filled with concrete across the roads leading to them. Trying to drive in Baghdad can feel like navigating a maze. You turn down the street you always take and find it closed. Turn around and try again. One day, it took four different tries just to get out of one neighborhood. The roads are closed because people are afraid of car bombs. Iraq now averages 120 car bombs a month. On one July day alone in Baghdad, there were 12.

One evening, a man was killed in a drive-by shooting outside my friend Khalid's home. They didn't know who he was or why he was killed. People immediately called the emergency numbers that are on billboards all over Baghdad and advertised daily on Al Jazeera and Al Arabiya, the CNNs of the Arab world. They waited for 14 hours, guarding the body from the dogs through the night, before the police showed up. It wasn't clear to them whether the police were overwhelmed with calls or just couldn't be bothered with something as “minor” as a drive-by shooting.

I was in Canada and the United States for two weeks in October. The most common question I heard went something like: “What's it really like over there? All the media shows is the car bombs and battles.”

The question means different things for different people. For the security guard at the airport in Toronto, to whom I was sent for a brief interrogation when the Iraq visas were spotted in my passport, it meant: “The liberal media won’t admit that we are bringing democracy to Iraq.” For others, like the many Mennonite Central Committee workers I spent time with, it meant: “Even in the darkest places, where the fear is as thick as the dust and heat, people praise God, raise kids, plant crops, play soccer, make love, drink coffee, watch sunsets and all those things are part of telling the whole story.”

In early July, I met with the high school students from an after-school program sponsored by MCC in Baghdad. It was the last day of the program so the room was filled with a mushy last-day-of-summer-camp feel. Hassan, one of the teachers, had the students go around the room telling me what they appreciated about the year.

They all mentioned something about what they learned, but the overwhelming theme was friendship. They had obviously become a tight-knit group. A bunch of them liked to come by the offices of the NGO that runs the program even when they don’t have class. They would just hang out and drink tea and try to catch the ear of one of the teachers. Very different from when I first met them—then, they were shy and nervous with me.

Just a little bored with the friendship refrain, I switched subjects and said, “OK, now I want to hear about Iraq, not about the after-school program. What is it like to be 16 and live in Baghdad?” I thought I knew what I would hear—car bombs, kidnappings, water and electricity shortages. I just wanted to hear it from kids.

I did hear a lot of that. But one girl told me something new, though it should have been just as obvious. She was tiny—she looked more like 13 than 16. She had that brightness to her that only children have. Her father had been kidnapped last year. Her name was Ibtisam (which means “smile”). She said, “My friends and I, we can’t hang out.” I confess, with more than a little shame, that at first I thought, “What a silly, air-headed, 16-year-old girl thing to say.” And a moment later I was fighting back tears at the reminder of all the little things that war destroys. Why shouldn’t teenagers be able to go for ice cream in giggling bunches? Why shouldn’t they be able to stroll the Karrada window-shopping?

She said, with the bizarre cheerful exuberance only a 16-year-old could muster, “Every morning I wake up and say, ‘It won’t always be like this. There is hope. There is hope.’” I didn’t ask her the basis of that hope, I guess because I was afraid there was no answer. Unless the following counts as an answer: “Because I am 16 and healthy and beautiful with lots of friends and my father was released a few months ago and it just can’t always be like this.”

Questions for reflection and discussion

1. What images do you have of life in Iraq?
2. How does mass media compare with news releases from MCC or Christian Peacemaker Teams? ✂

Peter Dula is MCC Iraq Program Manager.

Our workers in Iraq

workers

The “Statement on the War in Iraq” declares we will support the work of Mennonite Central Committee and Christian Peacemaker Teams, two groups closely related to Mennonite Church USA. Here is information about these groups and their work in Iraq as of mid-December 2005.

Mennonite Central Committee

Mennonite Church USA is a founding member of Mennonite Central Committee, supported by several Mennonite, Amish, and Brethren in Christ churches. Mennonite Church USA appoints representatives to all of MCC’s boards of directors.

Why and how does MCC speak to government?

(From Faith, Power and Politics: Questions and Answers, Mennonite Central Committee)

Our first allegiance must always be to God. But our actions and choices have economic and political effects in the world, whether or not we vote or speak on public policy issues. Taking positions on public policy issues can be an important way to “love your neighbor as yourself” (Luke 10:27), as can making choices to live simply or to live and work with people who are poor in our communities.

In the Lord’s Prayer, Jesus called for God’s will to be done on earth as it is in heaven. God wills that people have food, clothing, shelter and safety—and sometimes public policy must change before this can happen.... Jesus also challenged those who ruled Palestine... to stop oppressing their own people and genuinely care for them instead.

In our own time, North American Mennonites have spoken to government leaders about issues that affect us, from military conscription to school issues, land use and taxes. In the same way, MCC workers have felt compelled to speak out on issues that affect the people with whom they live and serve around the world, especially when they ask them to do so.

MCC’s work against the Iraq war

- In Iraq, MCC sponsors management and conflict resolution workshops for staff members of Iraqi humanitarian organizations.
- MCC supports distributions of basic food, medicine and

supplies for people displaced by violence. In Baghdad, MCC provides grants for public health education and care.

- MCC opposed the sanctions before the war, as well as the U.S.-led war against Iraq.
- MCC also worked through UN auspices to urge diplomacy and restraint rather than war: see www.mcc.org/respub/un/2002/07_dec/iraq.html.
- MCC Washington Office Director Daryl Byler embarked on a 40-day fast which included prayer and daily reflections on the lectionary readings that were sent to President George W. Bush. These short, but moving reflections can be found at: www.mcc.org/peace/fast/index.html.

How to participate in MCC

You may also take part in relief efforts by making school and hygiene kits. MCC distributes school kits to children in low-income neighborhoods of Baghdad and hygiene kits to internally displaced Iraqi families. See www.mcc.org or call MCC at (717) 859-3889.

Christian Peacemaker Teams

Philosophy

Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) arose from a call in 1984 for Christians to devote the same discipline and self-sacrifice to nonviolent peacemaking that armies devote to war. Initiated by Mennonites, Brethren and Quakers with broad ecumenical participation, today CPT places violence-reduction teams in crisis situations and militarized areas around the world in partnership with local peace and human rights workers. CPT embraces the vision of unarmed intervention waged by committed peacemakers ready to risk injury and death in bold attempts to transform lethal conflict through the nonviolent power of God's truth and love.

Mennonite Church USA appoints members to CPT's Steering Committee and many Mennonites serve on the Support Team and as Corps and Reserve Corps members.

CPT's work against the Iraq war

- Beginning in October 2002, CPT responded to the drum-beat of war by encouraging alternatives to invasion.
- In 2003, during the "shock and awe" bombing of Baghdad, the team stood alongside Iraqis and provided an alternative voice to the reporters "embedded" with coalition forces.
- In the aftermath, CPTers drew attention to the huge and under-reported problem of unexploded ordnance.
- As the occupation developed in 2003 and 2004, CPTers documented and publicized the abuse of detainees, assisted Iraqis in gaining access to loved ones in detention and launched the Adopt-a-Detainee Campaign asking churches to advocate on behalf of Iraqi detainees.
- In 2005, amidst kidnappings of foreign aid workers, CPTers further developed ties to Iraqi human rights groups—relationships that evolved into the formation of a Muslim Peacemaker Team.
- CPT confirmed on Nov. 29, 2005 that the four human rights workers missing in Baghdad on Nov. 26 are associated with CPT. (At the time of printing, the four workers were still being held.)

How to participate

- **Delegations**—Join short (5–14 days) trips to crisis settings to protect human rights, engage in public peace witness and report to home churches.
- **Peacemaker Corps**—Join CPT's personnel by committing to full-time service for three years or serving as a part-time reservist for 2–12 weeks each year.
- **Regional groups**—Connect with one of CPT's region based groups.
- **Action alerts, campaigns and news**—Sign up for CPT's news service CPTNET, respond to Urgent Action alerts or join a campaign.
- **Donate**—Almost all CPT funds come from individual and church donations.
- **Contact CPT**—Phone (773) 277-0253, e-mail peacemakers@cpt.org or visit www.CPT.org. ✎





Toll-free 1-866-866-2872 www.MennoniteChurchUSA.org