

***That Which Makes for Peace:
Calling Christians to be Peace Makers***

Adopted by the delegates of the 59th Annual Assembly of the Kentucky Council of Churches in Bardstown, KY on October 20, 2006

As Christians, we are called to act in accordance with our commitment to the way of Jesus Christ and to God, whose love extends to all. We do this by offering ourselves through deeds of service and words of witness, working with God to create a world without fear and without want, where "nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more, but they shall all sit under their own vines and fig trees, and no one shall make them afraid" (Micah 4:3b-4a).

Acting in response to scripture and to the heightened state of national and international unrest in our current time, the Executive Board in prayer felt it important to reiterate our Christian commitment to making peace. Because the Annual Assembly was too near to have a second review, the board requested board member Kent Gilbert to draft a resolution to be submitted from the floor on behalf of the Executive Board and officers. We are indebted to the Massachusetts Conference of the United Church of Christ, the Presbyterian General Assembly, The Church of the Brethren 2003 Assembly, and many other faithful Christian bodies for providing text, documents, and resources for this resolution.

That Which Makes for Peace

WHEREAS, Jesus breaks down the dividing wall of hostility (Ephesians 2:14) and weeps that we do not know "the things that make for peace" (Luke 19:41-42) and we confess that we are often complacent or uninformed about injustice, violence, and exclusion of others, both in our communities and in the world; and

WHEREAS, the church has a prophetic mission to live out Christ's way of peace (Luke 1:79), and to express God's steadfast love in all our relationships (Psalm 85:10-13) and we confess that we struggle in our own congregations and church structures with racism, domestic violence, destructive communication, and many forms of sin and violence; and

WHEREAS the 58th Annual Assembly of the Kentucky Conference of Churches takes note of the large number of current and impending violent conflicts throughout God's world, and

WHEREAS, as disciples of the Prince of Peace and as Christians who have been called to live out a vocation of reconciliation, we acknowledge with humility our duty to pray for, seek out, advocate and work for those things which make for peace, and

WHEREAS we are called by Jesus to "love our enemies" and by St. Paul to "contend with the powers and principalities" "wearing the whole armor of God" and wielding the tools of the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 6.12f), and

WHEREAS we affirm Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s assertion that "The past is prophetic in that it asserts loudly that wars are poor chisels for carving out peaceful tomorrows. One day we must come to see that peace is not a merely distant goal that we seek, but a means by which we arrive at that goal", and

WHEREAS Isaiah prophesized "and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore." (Isaiah 2:4)

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the 58th Annual Assembly of the Kentucky Council of Churches

1. Recommits to pray individually and together for transformation and courage as we struggle to extend our love for our neighbor to include our enemies, and seek to learn the ways of peace;
2. Recommits as a body of Christ to work, pray, and advocate for the peaceful resolution of all violent conflicts, in our own nation and worldwide as followers of "the Prince of Peace";
3. Urges that all peaceful possibilities and options for resolution of conflicts should be exhausted before resorting to war or other violent means;
4. Passionately and faithfully affirms the personal and corporate Christian vocation to be or become peacekeepers, peacemakers, and reconcilers in the name of Christ that we might shine God's light into the darkness and bring Christ's healing into the brokenness of this world; and
5. Believes that our nation should vigorously and diligently pursue diplomatic, financial, educational and intelligence strategies that are non-violent, protective of human rights, and that work in concert with other countries and international bodies as appropriate in the face of global conflict and international dangers to peace and security.
6. Urges member bodies, churches and individuals to undertake and continue thoughtful study of the Scriptures to discover afresh "the things that make for peace" and discern through honest and prayerful discussion how to put this knowledge into action; and
7. Urges member bodies, churches, and individuals to develop, use, or support educational and action programs appropriate to their setting concerning Christian peacemaking, non-violent conflict resolution, and the strong Biblical foundations of Christian peace efforts and vocations.

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the 59th Annual Assembly of the Kentucky Council of Churches requests that the Executive Board of the KCC send copies of this resolution to appropriate church, world, national, and local leaders.