

Resolved, That the Council deplores the positions taken by President Bush to concede some West Bank settlements to Israel and negates the right of return of Palestinian refugees, and urges the President to support negotiations between Palestinians and Israelis to achieve a mutually acceptable resolution of these issues based on relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions.

National Executive Council, June 2000



CROSS BEFORE FLAG includes resolutions and other official statements which bear directly on war, peace and violence, and the development of conscience in relation to war and violence. It is not meant to be an exhaustive collection of resolutions on public issues.

First published by the Episcopal Peace Fellowship in 1966, it is issued in this revised version, Lent 2005. Original resolution language has been retained.

For a more inclusive summary of actions on public issues by General Convention and the Executive Council, the Office of Peace and Justice Ministries has published "Policy for Action." Single copies are available free from:

Public Policy Network Coordinator
Government Relations Office
The Episcopal Church
110 Maryland Avenue NE
Washington DC 20002
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The **Episcopal Peace Fellowship** publisher of *CROSS BEFORE FLAG*, is a body of Episcopalians dedicated to discovering and practicing the biblical concept of peace: shalom/salaam. This includes a commitment to renounce, so far as possible, participation in war and other forms of violence. The EPF recognizes that there can be no peace without a commitment to justice, and no justice without reconciliation. Thus, the Fellowship endeavors to develop within the Church a community of Christians pledged to peace, justice, reconciliation, and nonviolence.

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Cross Before Flag: Episcopal Statements on War and Peace



Cross Before Flag

As Christians and as Americans we know the importance of having the right to choose freely. As we grow in our Christian faith, we seek God's guidance in making responsible choices.

This booklet is about choice.

It is our understanding that we as Christians are called to serve God in everything that we do. *Everything*—with no exceptions, whether you are considering military service, working in a war-related industry, supporting the military through your federal taxes or simply defining your own stand on the issues of war and peace.

The statements in this pamphlet are the Church's effort to address the concerns of war, peace and violence in the 20th and 21st centuries, to declare God's Word in a world that still sanctions war and killing and violence. As you read these statements, listen for God's Word to you.

Then the choice is yours.

The Episcopal Peace Fellowship



The Lambeth Conference

The Lambeth Conference has met approximately every ten years since 1867 at the invitation of the Archbishop of Canterbury. It brings together Anglican bishops from throughout the world. The conferences' resolutions are advisory.

The opening sentence of the following resolution, first approved by the 1930 Lambeth Conference, has been reaffirmed by succeeding Conferences. In the United States it was adopted by the General Convention in 1931 and since then has been reaffirmed repeatedly by the Episcopal Church.

War Is Incompatible with the Teaching of Our Lord Jesus Christ

The Conference affirms that war as a method of settling international disputes is incompatible with the teaching and example of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Conference believes that peace will never be achieved till international relations are controlled by religious and ethical standards, and that the moral judgment of humanity needs to be enlisted on the side of peace. It therefore appeals to the religious leaders of all nations to give their support to the effort to promote those ideals of peace, brotherhood and justice....

When nations have solemnly bound themselves by Treaty, Covenant or Pact for the peaceful settlement of international disputes, the Conference holds that the Christian Church in every nation should refuse to countenance any

war in regard to which the government of its own country has not declared its willingness to submit the matter in dispute to arbitration or conciliation.

The Conference believes that the existence of armaments on the present scale amongst the nations of the world endangers the maintenance of peace, and appeals for a determined effort to secure further reduction by international agreement....

Lambeth Conference 1930

Abolition of War Itself Should Be the Goal

The Conference reaffirms that war as a method of settling international disputes is incompatible with the teaching and example of our Lord Jesus Christ, and declares that nothing less than the abolition of war itself should be the goal of the nations, their leaders, and all citizens. As an essential step towards achieving this goal the Conference calls upon Christians to press through their governments, as a matter of the utmost urgency, for the abolition by international agreement of nuclear bombs and other weapons of similar indiscriminate destructive power, the use of which is repugnant to the Christian conscience. To this end governments should accept such limitations of their own sovereignty as effective control demands.

The Conference further urges the governments of the leading nations of the world to devote their utmost efforts at once to framing a comprehensive international disarmament treaty, which shall also provide for the progressive reduction of armed forces and conventional armaments to the minimum necessary for the maintenance of internal security and the fulfillment of the obligations of States to maintain peace and security in accordance with the United Nations Charter.

Lambeth Conference 1958

The Right of Conscientious Objection

This Conference:

(a) reaffirms the words of the Conference of 1930 that “war as a method of settling international disputes is incompatible with the teaching and example of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

(b) states emphatically that it condemns the use of nuclear and bacteriological weapons.

(c) holds that it is the concern of the Church (i) to uphold and extend the right of conscientious objection.

(ii) to oppose persistently the claim that total war or the use of weapons however ruthless or indiscriminate can be justified by results.

(d) urges upon Christians the duty to support international action either through the United Nations or otherwise to settle disputes justly without recourse to war; to work towards the abolition of the competitive supply of armaments; and to develop adequate machinery for the keeping of a just and permanent peace.

Lambeth Conference 1968

Violence Has Many Faces

1. Affirming again the statement of the Lambeth Conferences of 1930 and 1968 (Resolution 8 [a]) that “war as a method of settling international disputes is incompatible with the teaching and example of our Lord Jesus Christ,” the Conference expresses its deep grief at the great suffering being endured in many parts of the world because of violence and oppression. We further declare that the use of modern technology of war is the most striking example of corporate sin and the prostitution of God’s gifts.

2. We recognize that violence has many faces. There are some countries where the prevailing social order is so brutal, exploiting the poor for the sake of the privileged and trampling on people’s human rights, that it must be termed “violent.” There are others where a social order

Church Center, and the website, www.episcopal-church.org/chaplain, as an important resource in the continuing study of just war.

General Convention 2003

Warfare: Response to New War Situations

Resolved, That the Theology Committee of the House of Bishops be urged to prepare a study on new warfare situations which may not be adequately addressed by the Just War Theory, such as non-declared wars, asymmetric warfare, pre-emptive strikes, invitations to intervene by legitimate foreign authorities, international terrorism without boundaries, and other forms of military intervention not imagined in past centuries.

General Convention 2003

Culture Of Nonviolence

Resolved, That The Episcopal Church develop specific plans at national, provincial, and diocesan levels in the next triennium for the church to live into a culture of nonviolence which values love, compassion, and justice, and which rejects violence as a means of solving problems; and be it further

Resolved, That curricula in nonviolence awareness and training be promoted for use in dioceses and congregations; and be it further

Resolved, That the results of these plans be compiled by the Office of Peace and Justice and presented to the General Convention 2006.

General Convention, 2003

Guantanamo Bay, Iraq and The Middle East

Resolved, That the Executive Council, meeting in Burlington, VT, June 11-14, 2004, calls upon the United States government to grant legal rights to all detainees at Guantanamo Bay Naval Base in Cuba in accordance with international law and the Geneva Conventions; and

urges the U.S. government to allow visitations to the detainees by neutral parties such as The International Red Cross, and by appropriate religious groups, and be it further

Resolved, That Council shares the deep concerns of many Americans and others over the spiral of violence in Iraq, the abhorrent torture and abuse of prisoners such as at Abu Graib, the flouting of legal rights and the dismissive use of the Geneva Conventions, and urges the U.S. government to conduct itself in all aspects of the conflict with the highest standards of human rights and regard for due process which are cherished values of our nation and when disregarded diminish credibility of the U.S. in the world, and be it further

Resolved, That Council urge that the U.S. move swiftly to transfer authority in Iraq to the new Iraqi government, and seek alternative military forces to replace the U.S. military apparatus so as to reduce tensions, minimize violence, and blunt growing insurgencies, and be it further

Resolved, That Council urges the U.S. to re-engage the peace process (in conjunction with the need for full consultation with the Palestinians, Israelis and others), in the Israeli/Palestinian conflict, recognizing that a just resolution of the conflict that assures Israel’s security and Palestinian sovereignty would be the single most significant contribution to improving relations with the peoples of the Arab world and winning the “war on terror”, and be it further

Resolved, That Council implores the U.S. to formulate a foreign policy aimed at human development, alleviation of poverty and respect for cultural and religious differences so that the current wave of anti-American sentiment in the Middle East and many parts of the world might be lessened and the nation’s commitment to justice and peace restored; and be it further

First, whether lethal force may be used is governed by the following criteria:

◆ **Just cause:** Force may be used only to correct a grave, public evil, i.e., aggression or massive violation of the basic rights of whole populations.

◆ **Comparative justice:** While there may be rights and wrongs on all sides of a conflict, to override the presumption against the use of force, the injustice suffered by one part must significantly outweigh that suffered by the other.

◆ **Legitimate authority:** Only duly constituted public authorities may use deadly force or wage war.

◆ **Right intention:** Force may be used only in a truly just cause and solely for that purpose.

◆ **Probability of success:** Arms may not be used in a futile cause or in a case where disproportionate measures are required to achieve success.

◆ **Proportionality:** The overall destruction expected from the use of force must be outweighed by the good to be achieved.

◆ **Last resort:** Force may be used only after all peaceful alternatives have been seriously tried and exhausted.

These criteria taken as a whole must be satisfied in order to override the strong presumption against the use of force. Second, the just war tradition seeks also to curb the violence of war through restraint on armed combat between the contending parties by imposing the following moral standards for the conduct of armed conflict:

◆ **Noncombatant immunity:** Civilians may not be the objects of direct attack, and military personnel must take due care to avoid and minimize indirect harm to civilians.

◆ **Proportionality:** In the conduct of hostilities, efforts must be made to attain military objectives with no more force than is militarily

necessary and to avoid disproportionate collateral damage to civilian life and property.

◆ **Right intention:** Even in the midst of conflict, the aim of political and military leaders must be peace with justice, so that acts of vengeance and indiscriminate violence, whether by individuals, military units or governments, are forbidden; and be it further

Resolved, That when legitimate civilian authority determines that war is justified, members of the Episcopal Church recall our Lord's teaching to love our enemies, counsel that participation in or refusal to participate in any war is a discernment process requiring deep reflection and prayer with humility, and acknowledge that one participates in war with great reluctance, always seeking God's mercy and forgiveness; and be it further

Resolved, That the 74th General Convention, recalling the longstanding Episcopal Church view, originally adopted by the 1930 Lambeth Conference and by the 1931 General Convention, that "war as a method of settling international disputes is incompatible with the teaching and example of our Lord Jesus Christ," urge dioceses and congregations to study and better understand Just War theory and pacifism as they apply to the situation of the United States in responding to contemporary international conflicts.

General Convention 2003

Warfare: Christian Responses to Warfare

Resolved, That the 94th General Convention urge dioceses and congregations to study and better understand just war theory and pacifism as they apply to the situation of the United States in responding to contemporary international conflicts; and be it further

Resolved, That we commend "Just Peace Readings" from the Office of the Bishop Suffragan for Chaplaincies of the Episcopal

that appears relatively benevolent nevertheless exacts a high price in human misery from some sections of the population. There is the use of armed force by governments, employed or held in threat against other nations or even against their own citizens. There is the worldwide misdirection of scarce resources to armaments rather than human need. There is the military action of victims of oppression who despair in achieving justice by any other means. There is the mindless violence that erupts in some countries with what seems to be increasing frequency, to say nothing of organized crime and terrorism, and the resorting to violence as a form of entertainment on films and television.

3. Jesus, through his death and resurrection, has already won the victory over all evil. He made evident that self-giving love, obedience to the way of the Cross, is the way to reconciliation in all relationships and conflicts. Therefore the use of violence is ultimately contradictory to the Gospel. Yet we acknowledge that Christians in the past have differed in their understanding of limits to the rightful use of force in human affairs, and that questions of national relationships and social justice are often complex ones. But in the face of the mounting incidence of violence today and its acceptance as a normal element in human affairs, we condemn the subjection, intimidation and manipulation of people by the use of violence and the threat of violence and call Christian people everywhere:

(a) to re-examine as a matter of urgency their own attitude towards, and their complicity with, violence in its many forms;

(b) to take with the utmost seriousness the questions which the teaching of Jesus places against violence in human relationships and the use of armed force by those who would follow him, and the example of redemptive love which the Cross holds before all people;

(c) to engage themselves in non-violent action for justice and peace and to support others so engaged, recognizing that such action will be controversial and may be personally very costly;

(d) to commit themselves to informed, disciplined prayer not only for all victims of violence, especially for those who suffer for their obedience to the Man of the Cross, but also for those who inflict violence on others;

(e) to protest in whatever way possible at the escalation of the sale of armaments of war by the producing nations to the developing and dependent nations, and to support with every effort all international proposals and conferences designed to place limitations on, or arrange reductions in, the armaments of war on the nations of the world.

Lambeth Conference 1978

The General Convention of the Episcopal Church adopted "as its own" in 1979 this resolution of the Lambeth Conference (see page 14), and reaffirmed that commitment in 1982 (see page 15).

There Is No True Peace without Justice

This Conference

1. (a) reaffirms the statement of the 1930 Lambeth Conference that war as a method of settling international disputes is incompatible with the teaching and example of Our Lord Jesus Christ;

(b) affirms also that there is no true peace without justice, and that the reformation and transformation of unjust systems is an essential element of our biblical hope;

2. supports those who choose the way of non-violence as being the way of Our Lord, including direct non-violent action, civil disobedience, and conscientious objection, and pays tribute to those who in recent years have kept before the world the growing threat of militarism;...

3. encourages Provinces and Dioceses to seek out those secular and religious agencies working for justice and reconciliation, and to make common cause with them, to ensure that the voice of the oppressed is heard and a response is made so that further violence is averted.

Lambeth Conference, 1988

Affirm UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights

On the fiftieth anniversary of its proclamation in December of 1948, this Conference

(a) resolves that its members urge compliance with the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the nations in which our various member Churches are located, and all others over whom we may exercise any influence; and

(b) urges extension of the provisions of the Declaration to refugees, uprooted and displaced persons who may be forced by the circumstances of their lives to live among them.

Lambeth Conference, 1998

Faithful Response to Aggression and War

This Conference:

(a) abhors the evil of war;

(b) repudiates and condemns the use of violence for settling religious, economic, cultural or political disputes;

(c) encourages the use of peacekeeping forces to prevent or forestall the escalation of conflicts, and to assist in their resolution;

(d) repudiates and condemns the use of terrorism;

(e) decries the production and proliferation of arms;

(f) commits its members to prayer, mediation, and any active, non-violent means we can employ to end current conflicts and wars and to prevent others; and

(g) urges the nations represented by our Churches and all those on whom we have any influence whatsoever to join us in this endeavor.

Lambeth Conference, 1998

Prohibit Nuclear Weapons and War

This Conference resolves to call upon our respective governments and through our governments, the United Nations and other instruments:

(a) to urge all nations to agree by treaty to stop the production, testing, stock-piling and usage of nuclear weapons; and

(b) to press for an international mandate for all member states to prohibit nuclear warfare.

Lambeth Conference, 1998

Ratify Landmines Treaty and Abolish Mines

This Conference - attended both by bishops from nations suffering acutely from the presence of landmines in their own countries (Mrs. Winifred Ochola wife of the Bishop of Kitgum in Uganda was killed by a landmine), and by bishops from countries that have profited from the manufacture of landmines:

(a) calls upon all signatory Governments to ratify the Ottawa Convention (without exceptions) at the earliest possible date;

(b) calls upon all non-signatory Governments to sign and ratify the Ottawa Convention at the earliest possible date;

(c) calls upon all Governments to provide extra funding for mine clearance programmes, and to encourage the development of appropriate technology for mine clearance initiatives; and

(d) calls upon international organizations, all governments, community level and local Government initiatives, NGOs, Churches and other people of good will, to engage in educational work on this issue, provide practical assistance

Support Total Nuclear Disarmament

Resolved, That the 72nd General Convention of the Episcopal Church support the goal of total nuclear disarmament; and note with appreciation and pleasure the progress that has been made toward this goal; but inasmuch as the production, testing and deployment of nuclear weapons continue, more must be done to achieve that nuclear disarmament; and be it further

Resolved, That this General Convention urge the Government of the United States to exercise leadership among the nations, especially the nuclear weapons states, by immediately initiating negotiations for an International Treaty on Comprehensive Nuclear Disarmament in all its aspects to include a deadline for the completion of nuclear disarmament; and be it further

Resolved, That this General Convention support the World Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons and encourage Episcopalians to sign the Campaign's Citizens Pledge on Nuclear Weapons Abolition; and be it further

Resolved, That this General Convention call upon the comparable bodies in our sister Churches in the Anglican Communion to speak out in a similar way to their civil authorities and governments so that the world-wide Anglican Communion works in concert for total nuclear disarmament

General Convention, 1997

Encourage "A Pledge of Nonviolence"

Resolved, That each congregation of the Episcopal Church become a model for peacemaking in our violent society by encouraging its members to commit themselves to non-violent and peaceable behavior in their relationships with others at home, at school, at work, at church, in the community, and wherever they find themselves; and be it further

Resolved, That every congregation also encourages its members to adopt *The Pledge of*

Nonviolence as it comes from the Institute for Peace and Justice, St. Louis, Missouri:

Making peace must start within ourselves. I commit myself to become, with God's help, a nonviolent and peaceable person.

To respect myself, to affirm others and to avoid un-caring criticism, hateful words, physical attacks and self-destructive behavior.

To share my feelings honestly, to look for safe ways to express my anger and to work at solving problems peacefully.

To listen carefully to one another, especially those who disagree with me, and to consider others' feelings and needs rather than insisting on having my own way.

To apologize and make amends when I have hurt another, to forgive others and to keep from holding grudges.

To treat the environment and all living things, including our pets, with respect and care.

To select entertainment and toys that support healthy values and to avoid entertainment that makes violence look exciting, funny or acceptable.

To challenge violence in all its forms whenever I encounter it, whether at home, at school, at work, at church or in the community and to stand with others who are treated unfairly.

This is my pledge. These are my goals. I will check myself on what I have pledged once a month for the next twelve months so that I can help myself and others become more peaceable people.

General Convention, 2000

Warfare: Just and Unjust Wars

Resolved, That the 74th General Convention call upon all members of The Episcopal Church, in discussions about war and especially the strategy of preemptive strikes, to seriously consider and utilize the Just War criteria developed over the centuries and generally expressed as follows:

projects, and other appropriate efforts, including initiation of discussions on ways to repair the human and natural destruction brought about by war-making; and be it further

Resolved, That the Episcopal Church join in appropriate ecumenical observances of the end of World War II and the founding of the United Nations, keeping in remembrance both the suffering and the imposition of suffering by all sides in any war, and asking God's forgiveness for our complicity as a people; and be it further

Resolved, That members of the Episcopal Church take special care in the course of 50th anniversary commemorations to work against any "Japan bashing" or other racist behavior; and be it further

Resolved, That the Episcopal Church recommit itself to work actively for the complete abolition of nuclear war; and be it further

Resolved, That the resources of the Episcopal Church Center, including the Washington Office of the Episcopal Church, in cooperation with other appropriate Church related bodies, including unofficial organizations, be used to identify curricula, study guides, worship and liturgical resources, bulletin inserts, and other resources for use by dioceses and by local congregations for study and action on issues of nuclearism.

General Convention, 1994

Ban Landmines

Resolved, That this 71st General Convention of the Episcopal Church join in the international call for:

An international ban on the use, production, stockpiling, and sale, transfer, or export of anti-personnel mines;

The establishment of an international fund, administered by the United Nations, to promote and finance landmine awareness, clearance, and eradication programs worldwide: and

Countries responsible for the production and dissemination of antipersonnel mines to contribute to the international fund; and be it further

Resolved, That the General Convention call on the President of the United States to join the call for such a ban

General Convention, 1994

Reaffirm Support for Human Rights

Resolved, That this 71st General Convention reaffirm its support for human rights throughout the world and states its conviction that civil rights and political freedom are the universal bedrock of any meaningful scheme of human rights; and be it further

Resolved, That this 71st General Convention commend ecumenical and interfaith support for human rights as a moral imperative for Christians, growing out of the biblical understandings that human beings are created in the image and likeness of God, that they are endowed by God with an inalienable dignity, and that they thereby possess a value that is prior to and not dependent upon, the acknowledgment of such rights by a political entity; and be it further

Resolved, That this 71st General Convention encourage the President and Secretary of State to take the initiative internationally in prompting the cause of human rights and in restoring the primary focus of human rights effort to the civil rights and political freedoms that are the building blocks of decent and humane societies; and be it further

Resolved, That this 71st General Convention commend continuing dialogue, both within the churches and between other faith communities and their governments, on issues of human rights, especially those issues relevant to their own jurisdictions.

General Convention, 1994

to alleviate the consequences of the massive level of previous landmine deployment, and engage in practical schemes to reintegrate landmine survivors and their families into their communities.

Lambeth Conference, 1998



The Episcopal Church

The General Convention (legislative body of the Episcopal Church) meets every three years to make policy and conduct the business of the Church. Actions in its name are approved by a majority in each of its two houses: the House of Bishops and the House of Deputies (clergy and lay persons elected by their respective dioceses).

Sometimes resolutions in the House of Deputies are voted on "by orders," which means that clergy and laity vote separately. The vote for each order is then tallied by Diocese. The net effect of this is to require approximately a two thirds majority by both lay and clergy deputies in order for a resolution to be approved.

The House of Bishops also meets annually and periodically issues Pastoral Letters and position papers addressed to the faithful. These deal with challenges facing the Church, the country, and the world.

The Brotherhood of Men ... As a Practical Conviction

Present conditions call for clear recognition of the Christian principles of the brotherhood of men; the practice of righteousness and goodwill between nations as between individuals; the substitution of judicial processes for war in the

settlement of international disputes; and the embodiment of these principles in national policies and laws, not merely as an abstract ideal, but as a practical conviction for whose development the Christian churches have special responsibility.

General Convention, 1916

That War May Be Abolished

Resolved, That this Church places itself on record as strongly in favor of conference and arbitration in the settlement of differences and disputes between nations;

Resolved, That this Church recognizes in the efforts recently made by this nation through the Washington Conference of nine sovereign powers called to effect plans for world peace and order, a great forward step to bring nearer the era of a better world understanding;

Resolved, That we solemnly commit ourselves as members of a Christian Church to use every consistent means to the end that war may be abolished, and that the Golden Rule may become the universal law of nations and people.

General Convention, 1922

War Will Destroy Civilization

Resolved, that this Convention register its conviction that unless civilization can destroy war, war will destroy civilization. We believe that a warless world is a possibility; that life based on the spirit and principles of the Prince of Peace, so far from being visionary, contains the only practical method of security for the future. We regard this work not only as a corporate responsibility of the whole Church, but as the individual duty of every Christian citizen....

We reaffirm the conviction stated by the General Convention of 1922 that the nations of the world must adopt a peace system. It is fundamental to such a system that it be built on the conviction that war is unchristian in principle and suicidal in practice.

We assert our solemn judgment that aggressive warfare is a crime on the part of a nation and so to be held by followers of Christ, who has commanded that we make disciples, not enemies, of the peoples of the world. We thank God and take courage as we see the nations through their authorized representatives in conventions, assemblies and conferences, agree on plans for disarmament, for guarantees of security and for creation of the machinery of courts by which arbitration shall take the place of force. We believe these are steps in the realization of the hopes of the people of the nations for a permanent peace, and pledge our best endeavors and constant prayers that God may touch the hearts of mankind with the spirit and understanding of brotherhood....

General Convention, 1925

Warfare as an Instrument of National Policy Is a Crime

Resolved, The General Convention, conscious of the heavy responsibility which rests upon the followers of Christ in furthering the cause of peace, and a law-governed world, reaffirms the substance of the resolutions adopted by the General Convention of 1925.

With that Convention, we reaffirm the conviction that the world must adopt a peace system. We assert our solemn judgment that warfare as an instrument of national policy or as a means of settling disputes between nations should be renounced. Such warfare, undertaken to further national policy and without recourse to judicial arbitration or other means of peaceful settlement, is a crime on the part of a nation, and so to be held by followers of Christ, who has commanded us to make disciples, not enemies, of the peoples of the world.

We thank God and take courage at the steady increase of effort to find and make universal peaceful methods dealing with international differences; we rejoice in the growing influence of

the International Court of Justice and League of Nations and heartily sympathize with the efforts looking to disarmament and security treaties. We commend with unqualified approval the effort of our own Government to achieve the outlawry of war and, noting the epoch-making significance of the proposals now awaiting ratification, pray God for its success. We believe these treaties to be steps in the realization of the hopes of the nations for a permanent peace and pledge our best endeavors and constant prayers to this end.

General Convention, 1928

If You Wish Peace, Prepare for Peace

“The Kingdom of God is peace.” As stated by the last Lambeth Conference: “War, as a method of settling international disputes, is incompatible with the teaching and example of Our Lord Jesus Christ.” We believe that as the Christian conscience has condemned infanticide and slavery and torture, it is now called to condemn war as an outrage on the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of all mankind.

... Pacts and pledges, however, are not enough. If we are to combat the war-spirit, we must try to attack it at its source. The real causes of any war lie further back than the particular dispute or incident that sets a spark to the inflammable material that has often been accumulating for years. Among these causes the following seem to us of special importance.

The first of these is a narrow and aggressive Nationalism which ignores the rights of other nations in the determination to assert its own. Nations exist by the Will of God, not for self-aggrandizement, but for service, and their true honor lies not in the extent to which they can impose their yoke on other nations, but on the value of their contribution to the moral and spiritual ideals of the world.

The second - and perhaps the most potent - cause of war is the fear that is the outcome of

available appropriate curricula in conflict management and resolution for use by dioceses and congregations.

5. Encourages all members of the Episcopal Church to make use of enlightened methods of negotiation and mediation as they work to resolve conflicts between the Episcopal Church and other Christian communions; and be it further

Resolved, That the Episcopal Church call upon the Government of the United States:

1. To resolve disputes affecting it and other nations by negotiation, mediation, non-binding arbitration, binding arbitration, and adjudication.

2. To recognize and respect the jurisdiction and judgments of the International Court of Justice.

3. To provide sufficient funding for the Institute for Peace in order to train individuals in the peaceful management and resolution of international conflicts; and be it further

Resolved, That the Episcopal Church call upon all nations:

1. To utilize the United Nations and to respect the authority of the Secretary General in the resolution of international conflicts.

2. To strengthen the role and authority of the Secretary General in the resolution of international conflicts.

3. To adhere to the rule of the law in dealing with their own citizens and those of other countries.

4. To utilize regional and private organizations in conflict resolution.

General Convention, 1991

Deplore Sale and Export of Arms

Resolved, That the 1994 General Convention of the Episcopal Church goes on record as deploring the sale and export of conventional arms of war; and be it further

Resolved, That the Congress of the United States be urged to enact legislation which prohibits such sale and export; and be it further

Resolved, That the United Nations be urged to adopt regulations prohibiting international arms sales by its members

General Convention, 1994

Support Comprehensive Test Ban

Resolved, That the 71st General Convention of the Episcopal Church, in accordance with our faith in Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, urge the President of the United States, and the U.S. negotiators at Geneva, to take immediate international leadership in signing and implementing a comprehensive Test Ban Treaty in the coming year, and to pursue diplomatic initiatives, for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons design, testing, and manufacture anywhere in the world.

General Convention, 1994

Commemorate End of World War II and Commit to the Abolition of Nuclear Weapons and of War

Resolved, That the 71st General Convention of the Episcopal Church notes that Sunday, August 6, 1995, which is the Feast of the Transfiguration of Our Lord Jesus Christ, coincides with the 50th anniversary of the nuclear bombing of the city of Hiroshima, Japan by the United States; and be it further

Resolved, That the Episcopal Church in the United States seek ways with appropriate liturgical commemorations, to observe jointly this anniversary with the Nippon Sei Ko Kai, and with human rights and peace organizations of both the United States and Japan, and that those dioceses and parishes in partner relationships with dioceses and parishes in Japan be especially encouraged to observe the anniversary jointly by exchange visits, conferences, pilgrimages,

working directly with the countries affected by acts of terror.

General Convention, 1988

Nuclear Free Pacific Movement

Resolved, That this 69th General Convention of the Episcopal Church, concerned with our sisters and brothers of the Anglican Communion throughout the Pacific Basin, commend to the attention of the members of this Church for their review and study the news from the Nuclear Free Pacific Movement.

General Convention, 1988

Control of Arms Sales and Distribution

Resolved, That the 70th General Convention of the Episcopal Church deplores the reintroduction of weapons of all kinds into the Middle East by any nation; and be it further

Resolved, That the Episcopal Church call upon the Government of the United States to take all appropriate action to develop means to restrict and control all international arms sales and distribution.

General Convention, 1991

Spread of Arms and Armaments

Resolved, That the 70th General Convention of the Episcopal Church express its deep concern over the actions of the United States and other arms-producing nations that have contributed to the sale and spread of arms and armaments to other nations throughout the world; and be it further

Resolved, That this General Convention direct the Standing Commission on Peace with Justice to study this issue of the sale of all types of armaments and report its findings to the 71st General Convention; and be it further

Resolved, That the study by the Standing Commission on Peace with Justice be conducted as a part of its routine work in the coming trien-

nium without the expenditure of any funds other than those allocated for the normal work of that commission.

General Convention, 1991

Urge Economic Conversion

Resolved, That the 1991 General Convention of the Episcopal Church strongly endorse the development of federal policies to shift economic resources from military to civilian uses and urge the parishes and dioceses of our Church to study and to discuss the application of economic conversion principles and to prepare for their implementation; and be it further

Resolved, That this Convention urges the parishes and dioceses to respond to the immediate pastoral and economic problems generated by the recently announced closing of numerous military installations throughout the United States during Fiscal Year 92 and following.

General Convention, 1991

Resolving Disputes Peacefully

Resolved, That the Episcopal Church encourages the settlement of disputes within the church by peaceful dispute resolution processes, and in furtherance thereof:

1. Calls upon all dioceses and other administrative units of the Church to develop and employ consensus building methods in the conduct of their decision making business and to initiate, continue and strengthen their training of persons in conflict management and resolution and to promote the use of such personnel in the Church.

2. Urges seminaries and other schools for ministry to include training in conflict management and resolution for all candidates for ordination.

3. Encourages all congregations to offer training in conflict management and resolution.

4. Commits itself through the appropriate agencies of the National Church staff to make

distrust. We must convince the peoples of the world that the risk involved in trusting one another is far less grave than the inevitable consequences of mutual distrust....

A third possible cause of war lies in economic competition and especially in the competition for control of the raw materials of industry. Commerce ought to be and often is a bond of union between nations, but unrestricted competition and excessive trade barriers may be causes of war. The chief corrective of this danger lies in the recognition of the economic interdependence of nations in the modern world.

A fourth cause, or at least occasion, of war is to be found in excessive armaments, which arouse fears and suspicions and can never insure safety.... Surely it is high time we tried some other way. Instead of proceeding on the illogical maxim "In time of peace prepare for war" we might better follow the principle... "If you wish peace, prepare for peace." Peace will never come without preparation, effort, risk and sacrifice.

Pastoral Letter, House of Bishops, 1931

Adopted as a statement of both Houses of General Convention

The Cross Is Above the Flag

Signs on the horizon give evidence of a growing suspicion among nations. Beneath the surface the world seethes with unrest.... It is our duty as disciples of the Prince of Peace to insist upon policies that are consistent with the maintenance of equity, fair dealing and the sanctity of pacts and agreements among races and peoples. We are bound by every solemn obligation to wage unremitting war against war. An excess of nationalism or an attitude of detached unconcern for the ills of other nations, together with the building up of an armed force beyond reasonable national needs, deprives us of any opportunity to be a conserver of the world's peace.

Love of country must be qualified by love of all mankind; patriotism is subordinate to religion. The Cross is above the flag. In any issue between country and God, the clear duty of the Christian is to put obedience to God above every other loyalty.

House of Bishops, 1933

Non-Combatant Service

Whereas, The House of Bishops in its Pastoral Letter issued from Davenport stated that it is the duty of Christians to put the Cross above the flag, and in any conflict of loyalties unhesitatingly to follow the Christ; and

Whereas, We desire that all Christian people who, though willing to risk their lives in non-combatant service are unwilling for conscience sake to take human life in war, and shall have signified their intention by placing themselves on record at the national headquarters of their respective churches, be accorded by the United States Government the status in fact accorded members of the Society of Friends as respects military service;

Be it Resolved, That a commission of six Bishops, six Presbyters and six Laymen be appointed by the Presiding Bishop and the President of the House of Deputies to discharge the following duties:

1. To petition the Congress of the United States for such legislation as may be necessary to secure the status in fact accorded members of the Society of Friends for all Christian men who, though prepared to risk their lives in non-combatant service, are prevented by their conscience from serving in the combatant forces of the United States;

2. In the event of such legislation, to make provision for an accurate register to be kept at the offices of the National Council of such members of the Protestant Episcopal Church as are

conscientiously unable to serve in the combatant forces of the United States.

General Convention, 1934

In February 1940 a resolution of the National (now Executive) Council of the Episcopal Church established a Register of Conscientious Objectors at the national church office. The Executive Secretary of the Department of Christian Social Relations was appointed Registrar. The current Registrar is in the Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministries. Information about the Register can be requested from: Registrar for Conscientious Objectors, Episcopal Church Center, 815 Second Avenue, New York, NY 10017, phone 1-800-334-7626

Withholding Sales of Munitions

Resolved, That the General Convention urges consideration by the Government of the United States of the adoption of the policy of withholding sales of munitions and loans of money to any belligerent government which has not exhausted all possibilities of peaceful settlement before having recourse to arms; with an exception in favor of any nation which is resisting a sudden invasion of its territory.

General Convention, 1934

The Man on the Cross and the Man on Horseback

Recent events have made evident the instability and insecurity of World Peace. International comity and the principles of the good neighbor policy have suffered grave impairment. Injustice, hatred, race discrimination and poverty continuously keep the nations precariously near armed conflict. We see the peoples of the world, including ourselves, engaged in a mad race for supremacy in armament, a competition that must inevitably issue in a conflict more terrible than the world has ever known. Such a conflict would unleash forces more devastating and destructive

than mankind has yet witnessed and bring upon the innocent and unoffending dire suffering and destruction. The skill and cunning of the inventor has made modern war diabolical and robbed it of the last vestiges of pity for the weak and the defenseless. Today war stands before the bar of world opinion undefended, save by those whose malevolence and lust for power make them insensitive to suffering in its more barbarous and violent forms.

The Christian Church stands unalterably committed to the ideals of the Prince of Peace. Its unarmed but potential forces must be challenged to action, as it sees the imminence of a conflict between the Man on the Cross and the man on horseback. Passive unconcern at such a time may prove fatal to the cause to which the Church is irrevocably committed. The persuasive voice of an awakened and alarmed Church must be heard and all its powers invoked, to stay the militaristic spirit that threatens the Christian ideals of our civilization.

There can be no security and no enduring peace where racial hatreds and national ambitions are unchecked, nor can there be where treaties ... are violated with impunity. What part America may play as a pacific and moral influence has yet to be disclosed. It may be that, as one of the greatest of world powers, her voice may prove potent and persuasive in determining the course of world events. Certainly she holds a place of incomparable advantage and if her designs are pure and selfless she may under God be a mighty factor in promoting World Peace. Isolation is both immoral and impossible. Nations as well as individuals must be united in a law-governed society. There can be no enduring peace except that which is grounded on the eternal justice of God.

We deplore the persistent persecution of helpless peoples, either because of race or reli-

assurance. From this resource of conquering love the ministry of peacemaking takes its rise, its courage, its dauntless hope, even though we cannot know the future.

House of Bishops, 1982

Opposition to Strategic Defense Initiative

Resolved, That this 68th General Convention:

- (1) Express its opposition to President Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative known popularly as "Star Wars;" and
- (2) Request members of Congress to withhold funds for study of the feasibility of this proposed "umbrella" that some contend could be built to remove the threat of nuclear war.

General Convention, 1985

For a Verifiable Bilateral Nuclear Freeze

Resolved, That the 68th General Convention request the National Church and individual Episcopalians to:

- (a) support and work for a verifiable bilateral nuclear freeze and the continuation of the SALT II accord;
- (b) review and revise budgetary plans to reflect peace and justice priorities;
- (c) designate the first Wednesday of each month as a day of action and reflection on peace-making;
- (d) continue an active program of education and dialogue about peace and justice issues both within the Anglican communion and with other groups;
- (e) influence government leaders and the producers of military technology and hardware to examine their moral and social responsibility; and
- (f) advocate economic conversion of our national resources, especially our labor, to the

production of materials and services needed to enhance life.

General Convention, 1985

Oppose the Production of Chemical Weapons

Resolved, That this 68th General Convention of the Episcopal Church oppose any resumption of the production of chemical ("nerve gas") weapons, and urge the Government of the United States to take a position of moral leadership, as it has done since 1969, in trying to decrease the manufacture of chemical ("nerve gas") weapons throughout the world

General Convention, 1985

Conscientious Objection Is a Faithful Response

Resolved, That this 69th General Convention of the Episcopal Church declare its belief that non-violent refusal to participate in or prepare for war is a faithful response of a member of this Church and that a decision to participate in or prepare for war should be made only after careful and prayerful consideration; and, be it further

Resolved, That a person making such a conscientious decision either not to participate or to participate has the respect, the support and the ministry of this Church.

General Convention, 1988

Condemnation of Acts of Terrorism

Resolved, That this 69th General Convention of the Episcopal Church reaffirm its condemnation of acts of terrorism everywhere they occur; and be it further

Resolved, That this Convention urge the Executive Council to determine and devise ways to provide needed assistance to those agencies

gaged, recognizing that such action will be controversial and may be personally very costly;” and be it further

Resolved, That this General Convention, in obedience to this call, urges all members of this Church to support by prayer and by such other means as they deem appropriate, those who engaged in such non-violent action, and particularly those who suffer for conscience’ sake as a result; and be it further

Resolved, That this General Convention calls upon all members of this Church seriously to consider the implications for their own lives of this call to resist war and work for peace for their own lives.

General Convention, 1982

No First Use of Nuclear Weapons

Resolved, That this 67th General Convention urges the governments of both the United States and the Soviet Union to adopt a policy of no first use of nuclear weapons; and directs the Secretary of this Convention to communicate this to the President of the United States, members of Congress, and to the President of the USSR.

General Convention, 1982

Identity, Pilgrimage and Peace

... We are pilgrims with first fealty to the crucified and risen Christ. Holding that identity clearly and firmly, Christians may still disagree on the means of peace. We need not disagree, however on our need for a dedicated military.... Still we assert that a morally serious people must consider three aspects of American foreign policy.

First, it is our understanding that the United States has never disavowed a policy of deterrence that intends the use of nuclear weapons in a massive first-strike against whole cities and land areas should it serve the national interest.... We ask, how can this policy be squared with a free nation’s commitment to justice when it intends

the calculated killing of millions of human beings who themselves are not on trial? We hold such an intention to be evil.

Second, the undiminished production and deployment of nuclear weapons... consume economic, technical and natural resources of astronomically rising proportions. The squandering of such resources constitutes an act of aggression against the thirty children who die every sixty seconds of starvation in the world. It is a callous act of indifference to the 500 million people of the world who are underfed. We declare this to be immoral and unjust.

Third, American fever to match the Soviet Union weapon for weapon appears to be damaging the personality structure of a whole generation. Current studies show that our children are growing up with a pervasive sense of fear, menace, cynicism, sadness and helplessness. The effect of these eroding inner sensations is to impair the ability to form stable values, a sense of continuity and purpose, and a readiness for responsibility.... The decadence that marks our culture may be of our own making. We believe it can only worsen without a tide of peacemaking witness, especially the steady protest of Christian people who claim their first allegiance, declare their true identity and recover the bravery of pilgrim people.

We believe it to be the responsibility of the United States to take the bold initiative in nuclear disarmament, and to keep on taking it....

We, your bishops, pledge ourselves and bid our people to the ministry of peacemaking. We pledge ourselves again to weekly fasting and daily prayer for peace. We pledge action in the peace movements that press the world’s leaders for swift nuclear disarmament.

We undertake this ministry not because disarmament will save the world. We do it because the world’s salvation has already been secured in Christ, and we dare not neglect so great an

gion, as contrary to the Christian doctrine that God hath made of one blood all nations of men to dwell on the face of the whole earth....

House of Bishops, 1940

Members of Our Church Who Are Conscientious Objectors

Resolved, That a Joint Commission be set up composed of six persons - two Bishops, to be appointed by the Presiding Bishop; two Presbyters; and two Laymen, to be appointed by the President of the House of Deputies, whose duties shall be

(a) to assure the members of this Church who “by reason of religious training and belief are conscientiously opposed to participation in war” of the continuing fellowship of the Church with them and care for them;

(b) To maintain through the Committee on Conscientious Objectors under the Department of International Justice and Good-will of the Federal Council of Churches an official relationship under the provisions set up by the Selective Service Act;

(c) To inform the Church from time to time of the situation in its several aspects and to receive and raise such funds on a purely voluntary basis as are needed for the support of active members of our Church who are conscientious objectors and whose personal funds are inadequate; in such manner and in such sums as the [Executive] Council [of the Episcopal Church] may approve - the necessary expenses of the Commission being met out of other funds.

General Convention, 1943

Absolute National Sovereignty Is an Anachronism

What are the signs of the times which God expects us to discern? One is surely the unprecedented search for unity, both in the divided world and in the divided Church. The world sets

about its task with the best means it has; and we pray God’s blessing on those means, imperfect as they are. It is right that nations seek stronger and more enduring unity, and find the way to put behind them old and now meaningless nationalisms. For all the blessings which national life has brought us, the conception of absolute sovereignty is an anachronism. In the words of a resolution of this Convention, “The only possible pathway to world peace lies through collective security.” Indeed, with all thoughtful citizens, we pledge our support to the United Nations organization, and hope for its future development into a world federation open to all peoples, and capable of maintaining the peace.

House of Bishops, 1952

Preventive War

Believers in a God of Justice and Love as revealed in Christ cannot concede that war is inevitable; and voices are occasionally raised suggesting that a preventive war would afford a short-cut through our present dilemma; and if this advice were accepted, the United States would be placed in an indefensible moral position before the world, as well as violate the fundamental teachings of Christ. Therefore ... we unalterably oppose the idea of so-called “preventive war.”

General Convention, 1952

Christians Are Called to Be Peace-Makers

Because of the nature of the Christian faith, Christians have an imperative obligation to pray and work for peace among men and nations. Questions of war and peace are not remote and peripheral concerns for the committed Christian; they grow out of basic understandings of man and his destiny which are inherent in the Christian revelation.

The Church through its official bodies must seek to define the obligations of the Christian as

peace-maker for every age, and to fit them to the situation of man at every juncture of history. In earlier periods of Christian history, the “just war” doctrine represented such an effort to define the conditions of Christian support for and participation in war.

Since the early decades of this century there has been much less clarity about what constitutes a “Christian” view of war and peace. Some in the Church have taken a pacifist position, and many of the resolutions of General Convention and other bodies have reflected this position; and with the emergence of “total war” concepts and technologies, there has been greater confusion about the Christian’s approach to the waging of war. The increase of nuclear weapons, missile systems, and new ideological, military and economic challenges have made the situation at once more difficult and more deeply critical for the Christian conscience.

The Church corporate, and individual Christians, must meet all the issues of war and peace, including the menace of nuclear weapons. At all levels of its life, the Church must charge its people with the insistent duty of working with all their strength for the prevention and elimination of war.

The Church’s ministry cannot dissociate itself from any of its people and in fact should have a pastoral longing to share their frustrations. We can recognize the work of those of our people in military and military-related activities. To the men in the missile bases, scientific centers, and diplomatic posts, as well as to the people as a whole united in their determination to remain free, we must not hesitate to offer a full ministry, realizing the political and military complexity of our national situation, and the fact that the situation for all of us, military and civilian alike, is not totally of our own making. With equal - and in some cases even greater - poignancy, we recog-

nize the validity of the calling of the conscientious objector and the pacifist and the duty of the Church fully to minister to him, and its obligation to see that we live in a society in which the dictates of his conscience are respected.

The church calls upon all people, especially the leaders of nations, to exercise the strongest discipline of conscience to prevent total war. Under modern conditions, such war cannot serve any moral or even useful purpose. Every possible moral force must be summoned to prevent its occurrence. It is becoming increasingly evident that all-out modern war cannot protect the world’s peoples, that an atomic holocaust cannot serve the purpose that war may once have served as an instrument of political or police action to secure justice and peace, that total war under modern conditions is self-defeating, and that it will utterly fail to secure peace with the enemy or even peace within the borders of the countries waging it.

Christians are called to be peace-makers. Such responsibility exists not solely in relation to the larger issues of our society. Indeed the Christian should be distinguished by the irenic quality of life which he brings to family, work and community life. The ministry of reconciliation is not a special calling, but an understanding of the Christian life as one which seeks to remove the barriers which separate the children of God from each other both at home and among nations.

House of Bishops, 1962

This statement was used as the foundation of the call for the establishment of a Joint Commission on Peace by the 1979 General Convention.

The Right to Obey God Rather than Man

Christian teaching holds that civil authority is given by God to provide order in human society, and that just human law is a reflection of

*In September 1985 the 68th General Convention adopted as “an official statement on the issues of war and peace” the report of the first Commission, **To Make Peace**, and voted to insert in the Canons a formal provision for a Standing Commission on Peace (“with Justice” added in 1991) with the duty of developing “recommendations and strategies which will be of concrete assistance to this Church in furthering the work on issues of peace with justice.”*

Apocalypse and Hope

Despite the spread of ... strident alarms, we witness to our hope. Ours is a resurrection faith.

Christians are called in that hope to confront the problems revealed by the intense light of any apocalyptic moment. Apocalypse is the term our tradition assigns to eras of special turbulence and change...when Christians are given things to say and things to do.

First, we are compelled to say that never before has it been so clear that reason forbids the use of violence, or the threat of it, as a means of securing one society against another. We know now that massive overkill poised for instant use represents deadly insecurity for the superpowers, and for the whole world. We know now that the real unit of security in the nuclear age is not the nation, since none can be secure by means of war. The real unit of security is the totality of the human family. The only security available to any nation is the security of all nations together.

...With violence so deeply rooted in human behavior it becomes an agony of growth to shift to another means of security. It remains far easier to rely on instruments of mutually assured destruction than to negotiate in patient non-violence for the means of mutually assured survival.

We are therefore prompted as religious leaders to impose upon ourselves the obligation for making this moral shift. We pray the Holy Spirit to change our hearts, moving us from violence

to non-violence. We call upon our people to join us in that prayer....

... The Christian tradition does not understand peace in the world to mean the absence of conflict. It means instead the abandonment of violence as a way of resolving even the most severe differences....

That our actions may reflect a new resolve of leadership in peace-making, we, your bishops, have committed ourselves to a weekly act of fasting and prayer for the peace of the world.... We call upon our clergy and people to join us in this act of devotion.

And we pledge repeated challenge to the leaders of the United States and other nations of the world that they repudiate reliance on military threats in favor of the more demanding discipline of military restraint and negotiation for arms control. We call upon our people to join us in this challenge to world leadership, urging them to press the issue with elected officials at all levels of government.

House of Bishops, 1981

Call to Resist War and Work for Peace

Whereas, The Lambeth Conferences of 1930, 1948, 1958, 1968 and 1978 have affirmed that “War as a method of settling international disputes is incompatible with the teaching and example of our Lord Jesus Christ;” and

Whereas, A modern nuclear war would kill enormous numbers of people, including children and other non-combatants, and is, by its very nature, murder on a colossal scale; therefore, be it

Resolved, That this 67th General Convention of the Episcopal Church reaffirms the statement made by the Anglican Bishops assembled at Lambeth in 1978 and adopted by the 66th General Convention of the Episcopal Church in 1979, calling “Christian people everywhere ... to engage themselves in non-violent action for justice and peace and to support others so en-

Opposition to Peacetime Conscription

Whereas, The Lambeth Conference of 1978 has reaffirmed that “War as a method of settling international disputes is incompatible with the teaching and example of our Lord Jesus Christ,” and

Whereas, The system of conscription is used to raise armies for the waging of war; therefore, be it

Resolved, That this 66th General Convention of the Episcopal Church asserts its opposition to peacetime conscription or any form of compulsory national service unless a national emergency is declared by the Congress.

General Convention, 1979

Adoption of Lambeth’s “War and Violence” Resolution

Whereas, The current world situation presents the ever increasing possibility of the proliferation of nuclear and other high technology weapons; be it therefore

Resolved, That this 66th General Convention of the Episcopal Church in the United States of America adopts as its own the following resolution concerning “WAR AND VIOLENCE” passed at the 1978 Lambeth Conference, and commends it to every member of this branch of the Anglican Communion:

General Convention, 1979

Establish a Joint Commission on Peace

Whereas, The House of Bishops stated the following in 1962: *Because of the nature of the Christian faith, Christians have an imperative obligation to pray and work for peace among men and nations. Questions of war and peace are not remote and peripheral concerns for the committed Christian; they grow out of basic understandings of man and his destiny which are inherent in the Christian revelation....*

The Church corporate, and individual Christians, must meet all the issues of war and peace, including the menace of nuclear weapons. At all levels of its life, the Church must charge its people with the insistent duty of working with all their strength for the prevention and elimination of war. and

Whereas, Little progress has been achieved on this “imperative obligation “of Episcopalians to work “with all their strength for the prevention and elimination of war” since 1962; therefore be it

Resolved, That this 66th General Convention does hereby establish a Joint Commission on Peace, consisting of 12 members (3 Bishops, 3 Presbyters or Deacons and 6 Lay persons), the Bishops to be appointed by the Presiding Bishop; the Presbyters, Deacons and Lay persons to be appointed by the President of the House of Deputies; and be it further

Resolved, That the Joint Commission on Peace is hereby authorized and mandated to present a comprehensive program for implementing the 1962 House of Bishops’ Pastoral letter as it pertains to peace and war to the 67th General Convention of this Church for consideration and further action.

General Convention, 1979

In September 1982 the 67th General Convention accepted the report of the Joint Commission on Peace which the 66th General Convention had established. Discharging the first Commission from its duties, General Convention authorized a second Joint Commission, directing it “in collaboration with other Commissions of the Convention and Committees of the Executive Council, the Dioceses, and the Seminaries of the Church, to develop a greater awareness of the centrality of peacemaking to their several missions and responsibilities” and to report to the next General Convention on the Church’s progress in peacemaking.

immutable divine law which man did not devise. Under all normal circumstances, therefore, Christians obey the civil law, seeing in it the will of God. Yet it must be recognized that laws exist which deny these eternal and immutable laws. In such circumstances, the Church and its members, faithful to Scripture, reserve the right to obey God rather than man.

Thus, the Church recognizes the right of any persons to urge the repeal of unjust laws by all lawful means, including participation in peaceful demonstrations. If and when the means of legal recourse have been exhausted, or are demonstrably inadequate, the Church recognizes the right of all persons, for reasons of informed conscience, to disobey such laws, so long as such persons

- (a) accept the legal penalty for their actions,
- (b) carry out their protest in a non-violent manner, and
- (c) exercise severe restraint in using this privilege of conscience, because of the danger of lawlessness attendant thereon.

Before Christians participate in such actions, they should seek the will of God in prayer and the counsel of their fellow Christians.

House of Bishops, 1964

Position Paper III on Christian Obedience

Counsel and Legal Advice to Members Who Are Conscientious Objectors

Whereas, The Bishops of the Anglican Communion affirmed at Lambeth in 1958, echoing similar words in 1930 and 1948, that “war as a method of settling international disputes is incompatible with the teaching and example of our Lord Jesus Christ;” and

Whereas, The House of Bishops of this Church, while recognizing a Christian’s basic obligation to the State and for obedience to law, has affirmed, on several occasions, that, in any

conflict of loyalties, he must still be guided by conscience, in obedience to God as revealed in Jesus Christ; and

Whereas, This Church by General Convention Resolution in 1934, petitioned the Congress of the United States to recognize non-combatant status for those, who by reason of conscience, refuse to serve in the military forces of the United States, and in 1940 established for such persons a Register of Conscientious Objectors; and

Whereas, A fresh statement of the position of this Church with regard to conscientious objection against war is now needed to guide our clergymen in their counseling task in light of the Selective Service Act of 1967, such statement to serve also as a guide for those who must interpret this Church’s position to inter-Church, inter-faith, and secular committees; therefore, be it

Resolved,

1. That this Convention hereby recognize the propriety both of non-combatant service with the military and of civilian alternative service as legitimate methods for discharging one’s obligation of service to our country as a conscientious objector against war.

2. That we urge the Congress to broaden the Selective Service law, which presently restricts conscientious objection to those who object for “reasons of religious training and belief,” by extending this status also to those who would take the stand for other ethical and moral considerations not necessarily associated with traditional religious commitment.

3. That we urge our Government to continue a review and revision of the present Selective Service system, so as to eliminate persisting inequities, which include, among others, a failure by many local draft-boards to reflect in their membership the racial and ethnic complexion of that local community.

4. That the special exemption from the draft now accorded seminarians (i.e., IV-D) be discontinued.

5. That the several Dioceses and the staff of the Executive Council be urged to provide counsel and legal advice to those members of our Church who have problems of conscience with regard to the prospect of the military draft, cooperating with, and assisting wherever possible, other community agencies engaged in this counseling service.

General Convention, 1967

The Right of Selective Conscientious Objection

Whereas, The Lambeth Conference [1968], by Resolution, held that “it is the concern of the Church to uphold and extend the right of conscientious objection,” and the Lambeth Report on the Renewal of the Church in Faith recognized “anew the vital contribution to the Christian Church by many of those who in conscience cannot participate in any war or in particular conflicts,” and

Whereas, The General Convention of 1967, by Resolution, called upon the Church to “provide counsel ... to those members of our Church who have problems of conscience with regard to the prospect of the military draft...;” and

Whereas, Other national and international Christian bodies have affirmed the right of selective conscientious objection; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That we, as Bishops, recognize the right of a man to object, on grounds of conscience, provided he has made every effort to know all of the relevant factors involved, to participation in a particular war, even though he may not embrace a position of pacifism in relation to all war, and urges our government to enshrine such a right in the laws pertaining to Selective Service.

House of Bishops, 1968

Executive Council to Support Peace Education

Whereas, The Lambeth Conference of 1958 declared that “nothing less than the abolition of war itself should be the goal of the nations, their leaders, and all citizens,” and

Whereas, The House of Bishops stated, in their paper on War and Peace (1962):

The Church corporate, and individual Christians, must meet all the issues of war and peace, including the menace of nuclear weapons. At all levels of its life, the Church must charge its people with the insistent duty of working with all their strength for the prevention and elimination of war; and

Whereas, This Church does not have, either at the diocesan or national level, programs of peace education; be it

Resolved, That this General Convention direct the Executive Council to support Peace Education programs initiated by Dioceses of this Church; and be it further

Resolved, That the Executive Council be asked to seek ways to fund a program of Peace Education on both a national and diocesan level.

General Convention, 1973

Continuing Educational Programs

Whereas, The teaching of Christian and moral positions on the waging of war and on church-state relationships has tended to be neglected in peacetime and emotionally disputed in wartime, and

Whereas, In an era of proliferating nuclear armament these topics are critically important to an effective Christian witness; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Executive Council be urged to develop continuing educational programs on these topics and to make them avail-

able to the congregations and seminaries of this Church.

General Convention, 1976

International Arms Trade Threatens World Peace

Whereas, Arms manufacturers in several countries, including our own, are actively marketing military weapons in the international arms market, this trade having greatly increased in the past decade; and

Whereas, Nations with desperate problems of poverty and hunger are spending their meager resources for these expensive weapons; and

Whereas, These instruments of modern warfare are being marketed to nations with repressive governments; and

Whereas, This arms trade multiplies the number of nations with modern weapons, thereby increasing the chances for the outbreak of wars; therefore, be it

Resolved, That the 65th General Convention affirms its conviction that the international arms trade threatens world peace; and be it further

Resolved, That this General Convention calls upon the Congress of the United States of America to adopt suitable legislation which will adequately restrict arms sales to other nations by U.S. corporations, and instructs the Secretary of the General Convention to forward this resolution to the President of the United States and to the Majority and Minority leaders of both Houses of Congress.

General Convention, 1976

To Check the Proliferation of Nuclear Arms

Whereas, Today all mankind lies under the threat of nuclear destruction; and

Whereas, The devastation possible through even limited use of nuclear weapons is incalculable; and

Whereas, The U.S. having led in the development of nuclear power should also lead in its effective utilization and control; therefore, be it

Resolved, That the General Convention of 1976 commend the efforts made at the SALT talks to limit the number of nuclear weapons and delivery systems in the arsenals of the major powers; and be it further

Resolved, That the General Convention support the efforts by the government of the U.S. and other governments to check the proliferation of nuclear arms; and be it further

Resolved, That the General Convention express its hope for a time when we may end our dependence on the use of nuclear weapons as a deterrent to war and may use nuclear power exclusively for peaceful purposes.

General Convention, 1976

An Ongoing Program of Draft Counseling

Resolved, That this 66th General Convention encourages young Episcopalians who consider themselves to be conscientious objectors to register that belief with the Executive Council of the Episcopal Church in the Register maintained for this purpose since 1940 and with the National Interreligious Service Board for Conscientious Objectors; and be it further

Resolved, That this 66th General Convention acknowledges this Church’s ministry to provide pastoral counseling for young persons if faced with a resumption of the draft or draft registration; and be it further

Resolved, That this 66th General Convention call upon the Executive Council to provide adequate resources to implement and maintain an ongoing program of draft counseling for young people if faced with a resumption of the draft.

General Convention, 1979