

Welcome

The 1979 General Convention adopted the 1978 Lambeth resolution on war and violence and funded a joint commission on Peace for the Church. The Convention commended to the Church the use of non-violent means to achieve peace and justice. In 1988 the Convention summarized this position to which previous resolutions had been moving, affirming 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." It also declared that persons making either decision under conscience have "the respect, the support and the ministry of the Church." In addition to the official acts of legislative assemblies summarized above, the House of Bishops has issued many pastoral letters confirming these actions and elaborating on their scriptural and theological basis.

Today, the Episcopal Church continues to maintain that all decisions regarding participation or non-participation in war or the preparation for war be the fruit of mature and prayerful discernment informed by scripture, theology, and relevant knowledge of history and contemporary conditions. The Church, while affirming the discernment of those who choose military service or other participation, expresses unambiguous preference for non-violent approaches to conflict, condemning the aggressive use of war in national policy as contrary to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Cover Letter

To: Persons Inquiring about CO Registration

From: The Revd G. Douglas Fenton
Registrar for Conscientious Objectors

Re: Registration Procedures

In response to your inquiry, we are sending you this packet which includes the following items:

1. *The Episcopal Church and Conscientious Objection to War*
2. *Military Service and the Young Episcopalian*
3. *Biblical Basis of a Peace Witness*
4. *What Do I Believe About War?*
5. *Advice to Youth Facing Draft Registration*
6. *A selected bibliography of books on non-violence theology and conscientious objection*
7. *Letters of Support for Conscientious Objector Claims*
8. *Worksheet on War Objection*
9. *Registration Form with instructions*

Items 1-4 should help you to decide whether you are a conscientious objector. Items 5-8 will be of assistance to you should you decide to register as a conscientious objector.

Please be assured that any and all correspondence or questions with my office will be handled as confidentially as possible.

I want to be very clear about one point. Your registration as a Conscientious Objector (CO) **does not** exempt you from the selective service procedures, nor does it guarantee that you will be exempt from conscription or military service, or some other form of non-combatant service in the event that future legislation is enacted restoring the draft.

It has been our previous experience that many CO claims were denied because the registrant did not identify himself at the beginning. Between 1970 and 1972 only 20% of those who applied to the Selective Service Board for CO status were classified as COs. One of the reasons for this is that a claim for CO status was often filed late in the process leading to induction into military service. If you have made a decision, it is important to have your statement on file as early as possible.

If you think that you might want to register as a CO or if you have decided to officially register as a CO, please read through items 1 through 7 before making any final decisions.

Then:

1. Complete three (3) copies of the registration form. An online version of this form is available on this web site.
2. Do not sign any of the copies.
3. Take the unsigned copies to your minister.
4. With the minister, sign all three (3) copies.
5. Send the original to my office:

The Revd G. Douglas Fenton
Registrar for Conscientious Objectors
The Episcopal Church Center
815 Second Avenue
New York, NY 10017-4503

6. Keep one (1) copy for your own records.
7. Hold the third copy for the Selective Service Board in the event that a draft is reinstated.
8. Note that you will also need to give the place and date of your baptism and confirmation.

This should complete the process. However, if you have any questions at all, please don't hesitate to contact my office: 800/334-7626 x6323 or dfenton@episcopalchurch.org

Youth in Military Service

A wide range of positions concerning military service is found within the Christian fellowship in general and within the Episcopal Church. The Church stands with its members as they make decisions in this area of their lives, providing pastoral support to CONSCIENTIOUS PARTICIPANTS, CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTORS AND CONSCIENTIOUS RESISTERS. The decision to participate or not to participate in the armed forces has consequences for the rest of a person's life. This pamphlet is addressed to young Episcopalians in the conviction that they wish to think responsibly about this decision and to consider carefully their loyalties to God and country.

Conscientious Participation

Many young Americans go into the armed forces without particularly considering why they should. Christian citizens, however, should be ready to give themselves and others a reason for their faith and action. Most Christians participate for reasons of conscience in the armed forces because they believe that:

1. The Christian gives allegiance to the nation under God. All citizens are dependent on the common life for security, liberty and opportunity. The state protects these rights. Duty to one's country has been understood as including the obligation to bear arms, and this duty can be overridden only by strong reasons of conscience.
2. Many Christians recognize the problem that each nation determines for itself what is right. Thus Christians have often fought one another because they believe this to be their duty. One must soberly face the fact that we do not yet have a world order that can keep peace. The Christian serves in the armed forces and, if necessary, goes into combat because he or she believes that the responsibility for maintaining world order must be shared in this way.
3. Christian theologians have maintained that war is justified when the following conditions are fulfilled:
 - a. The war must be waged by legitimate authority. In the case of the United States, that is the President and Congress.
 - b. The object must be to vindicate justice. A defensive war, or one to protect rights that have been infringed, is generally held to qualify.
 - c. The intention must be peace with justice.
 - d. The war must be waged without hatred and with love and reconciliation as the ultimate aim.
 - e. The conduct of the war must be just. The opponent has human rights that must be respected. Noncombatants must be protected and not made the object of direct attack. Discrimination must be observed in the targets selected and the weapons used.
 - f. The damages inflicted must not be out of proportion to the injuries suffered or threatened, and there must be a reasonable prospect of success.
 - g. The war must be a last resort only after every possibility of peaceful settlement has been exhausted.

In modern warfare as in earlier times, it is difficult to insure that all these conditions are met. Nevertheless, Christians have participated in war because it seemed that the alternative of non-participation might bring evils worse than the war, and that the leaders of the nation acted as responsibly as possible within this framework.

Enlistment

Local recruiting offices of the various branches of the armed forces can provide specific information on programs and opportunities. The experience of military life sometimes provides an opportunity for clarification of personal values and objectives, but everyone should be clear

that the primary purpose of the armed forces is to support national defense policy as determined by the President and Congress.

Conscientious Objection

Both the nation and the Church make provision for the person who believes that he or she cannot participate in war. The wording of the Military Selective Service Act of 1967, amended in 1971, concerning conscientious objection reads as follows:

Section 6 (j). Nothing contained in this title shall be construed to require any person to be subject to combatant training and service in the armed forces of the United States who, by reason of religious training and belief, is conscientiously opposed to participation in war in any form. As used in this subsection, the term "religious training and belief" does not include essentially political, sociological, or philosophical views, or a merely personal moral code.

The Episcopal Church and other communions have recognized the conscientious objector position. Since the 1934 General Convention, the Episcopal Church has recognized "the duty of Christians to put the Cross above the flag and in any conflict of loyalties unhesitatingly to follow the Christ."

In 1940 a Registrar for Conscientious Objectors was appointed and a confidential Register established at the Executive Council of the Episcopal Church for conscientious objectors who are baptized or confirmed members of the Episcopal Church.

In 1962 the House of Bishops said: "We must not hesitate to offer a full ministry [to military personnel], 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-- in some cases, even greater -- poignancy, we recognize the validity of the calling of the conscientious objector and the pacifist and the duty of the Church to see that we live in a society in which the dictates of conscience are respected."

In 1979 the General Convention again encouraged "young Episcopalians who consider themselves to be conscientious objectors to war to register that belief with the Executive Council of the Episcopal Church in the Register maintained for this purpose since 1940."

Those who decide for conscientious objection today usually do so because of the following convictions:

1. To take human life, or to participate in a process which may lead to the taking of human life, is immoral and unchristian. A Christian is called to witness to God's love by refusing to participate in war through any form of military service.
2. Under the conditions of modern warfare, it is impossible to wage a justified war as defined by Christian tradition.
3. While some Christians believe limited war both justifiable and possible, many others object to any war on the basis that the present state of military art makes it impossible to have a "limited war" within the framework of Christian moral obligations. The danger of nuclear war, which may lead to the destruction of all human life, is so great that no considerations are strong enough to justify war of any kind.
4. Although it might be a Christian's duty in particular circumstances to support military action in the service of justice, there may be other occasions when some Christians may reject a specific military action as unjustified. (This is "selective conscientious objection" and is not recognized under current national law.)

Options for the Objector

Two options for the conscientious objector are allowed under the Military Selective Service Act.

1 . The term "noncombatant training" refers to any training unrelated to the study, use or handling of arms or weapons. "Noncombatant service" is performed in a unit of the armed forces, usually in the medical corps or in some other assignment not requiring the bearing of arms.

2. Instead of actual enlistment into the armed forces, work may be assigned by the Federal, state or local government or by a non-profit organization working for the "maintenance of the national health, safety or interest," including related educational and scientific activities. In the past, such work has included the Peace Corps, VISTA, the teaching trades, and work in social service agencies or community development projects. Many Church-sponsored programs have qualified. Such assignments may be available if the draft is activated.

The law does not protect the "selective objector" or the noncooperating resister to draft registration or induction.

Conscientious Resistance

Some Christians believe that war as a method of settling international disputes is incompatible with the teaching and example of Our Lord Jesus Christ. This leads them to conclude that any form of cooperation with the Selective Service system or the military is contrary to the will of God as they understand that. This belief is most often acted out in one of two ways:

- a. by refusing to register for the draft at all;
- b. by registering for the draft but then refusing induction if and when the draft is reinstated.

It must be emphasized that such actions will almost certainly result in legal consequences, including a substantial fine and a prison term. Anyone considering such action is strongly urged to discuss in detail the proposed course of action with a qualified draft counselor. Both the National Interreligious Service Board for Conscientious Objectors and the Central Committee for Conscientious Objectors provide this service (see back page for addresses).

The House of Bishops has established guidelines for those who engage in acts of civil disobedience (House of Bishops Position Paper III on Christian Obedience, 1964). See page 25 of *Cross Before Flag*.

The Church's Concern

Your Church is concerned for the welfare of all its young members. The conscientious objector, the conscientious participant and the conscientious resister must accept the consequences of their decision.

All are the concern of the Church's pastoral ministry. If you are in the armed forces, make worship a regular part of your life. Get to know your unit chaplain or the priest in the area where you are stationed, and keep in touch with your priest at home. For those in the armed forces, the Episcopal Church maintains a program under the direction of the Bishop Suffragan for Chaplaincies at the Episcopal Church Center, 815 Second Avenue, New York, NY 10017. Telephone: (800) 334-7626 x 6202. Bp George Packard (212) 716-6202 or gpackard@episcopalchurch.org

If you are a conscientious objector, you should register this decision as soon as you can in the confidential Register at the Episcopal Church Center. The Registrar for Conscientious Objectors at the Center will supply you with registration forms and information on the Church's position on request. There are several national organizations listed below which can counsel and support you as you make your decision and afterwards provide fellowship, printed materials and other resources which may help you to clarify your position.

Registrar for Conscientious Objectors

Registrar for Conscientious Objectors
The Revd G. Douglas Fenton
Episcopal Church Center
815 Second Avenue
New York, NY 10017
(212) 716-6000 or
(800) 334-7626

Center on Conscience & War (CCW)
1830 Connecticut Avenue N W
Washington, DC 20009-5732
(202) 483-2220
Website: www.centeronconscience.org

Central Committee for Conscientious Objectors

1515 Cherry Street
Philadelphia, PA 19102
(215) 241-7196
email: ccco@igc.apc.org

655 Sutter Street, #514
San Francisco, CA 94102
(415) 474-3002
email: cccowr@igc.apc.org

In whatever position you find yourself, as a conscientious objector, a conscientious participant or a conscientious resister, try to maintain your attitude as a Christian. Act in such a way that you can respect and live with yourself. Respect the rights and consciences of others. Join with others in penitence for the evils that still make conflict possible. Finally, work as a Christian citizen for justice, mercy and love.

The Cross Before the Flag

Cross Before Flag, first published by the Episcopal Peace Fellowship in 1966, is issued in this revised edition, Lent 2001.

Original resolution language has been retained.

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 purpose of this booklet is to let you know what your church, the Episcopal Church, and the worldwide Anglican Communion, of which the Episcopal Church is a part, have said over the years about peace and war.

The statements in this pamphlet are the Church's effort to address the concerns of war and peace in the twentieth century, to declare God's Word in a world that still sanctions war and killing. 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 conference's resolutions are advisory.

The opening sentence of a 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."

Lambeth Conference Statements

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 pacific 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 ("War and Violence")

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 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 26), and reaffirmed that commitment in 1982 (see pages 28-29).

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 endeavour.

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 organisations, 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 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.

Episcopal Church Statements

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 endeavours 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 endeavours 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 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.

*House of Bishops, 1931
Pastoral Letter (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 conservator 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: The Revd G. Douglas Fenton, Registrar for Conscientious Objectors, Episcopal Church Center, 815 Second Avenue, New York, New York 10017, phone 1-800-334-7626 x 6323

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 religion, 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 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 Goodwill 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 increases 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 recognize 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

(Note: This statement was used as the foundation of the call for the establishment of a Joint Commission on Peace by the 1979 General Convention; see pages 26-27.)

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 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, co-operating 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 available 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

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

General Convention Resolutions 1979-1988

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 \$24,000 be appropriated for the work of the Joint Commission on Peace from the Expense portion of the Budget for the General Convention of this Church for the next triennium; 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.

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."

Copies of the reports of the Joint Commissions issued in 1982 and 1985 under the title To Make Peace are available without cost from the Episcopal Peace Fellowship.

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 engaged, 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

A Coordinator of Peace Issues

Resolved, That this General Convention direct the Executive Council to enhance and extend the capacities of the Office of Public Issues to include a coordinator of Peace issues so that "the new resolve of leadership in peace-making" called for in the House of Bishops' 1981 Pastoral Letter may be implemented by

- a. a nurturing of a peace concerns network in the various dioceses; and
- b. participating in ecumenical efforts with other religious groups, secular peacemaking groups and professional organizations; and
- c. maintaining liaison with international organizations concerned with peace and justice; and
- d. providing theological, pastoral and practical resources to further these concerns.

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 peace-making 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 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; and
3. Direct the Secretary of this Convention to communicate this Resolution to the President of the United States, to the members of Congress, and to the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

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 peacemaking;
- 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; and be it further

Resolved, That the Secretary of General Convention be directed to forward a copy of this resolution to the President and to Congress, and to the Soviet and Iraqi Embassies.

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 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

General Convention Resolutions 1991-2003

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 triennium 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 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; and be it further

Resolved, That this resolution be transmitted to the President, Members of Congress, Secretary of State, Secretary General of the United Nations, the Ambassadors to the United Nations of all member nations, other Anglican Churches, and the appropriate body of other Christian Churches.

General Convention, 1991

Violence in every sector of society

Resolved, That the 70th General Convention call upon the Church at every level to renew a commitment to address violence in every sector of society, especially that of domestic violence aimed toward spouses, children and older adults; violence of hate directed towards persons of differing ethnic, religious or political persuasions; violence stemming from homophobia and other irrational fears; and be it further

Resolved, That parishes and dioceses be urged to develop educational programs and resources through preaching, through liturgy, through pastoral care for both the victims and the perpetrators of all kinds of violence and through advocacy with the public sector for programs of education, social service and public policy that will address the problems of violence.

General Convention, 1991

Racism is sin

Resolved, That the 70th General Convention declares that the practice of racism is sin and is plainly contrary to the norms of Holy Scripture, and violates the express words of the Baptismal Covenant; and be it further

Resolved, That the 70th General Convention calls upon all baptized members of the Church to work to remove racism from the life of the Nation, for we can make no peace with oppression.

General Convention, 1991

Gratuitous violence in films and videos

Resolved, That this General Convention of the Episcopal Church go on record that:

1. Episcopalians be encouraged to choose entertainment options for themselves and for their families which do not promote, depict or exploit gratuitous violence or bloodletting, and
2. The Education for Mission and Ministry Unit of the Episcopal Church be requested to evaluate and promote materials for diocesan and parish level education programs regarding the negative effects of gratuitous violence and bloodletting in films and videos on viewers; and
3. Episcopalians be encouraged to patronize entertainment that represents non-violent themes.

General Convention, 1991

Oppose violence in our common life

Resolved, That the 71st General Convention of the Episcopal Church call upon the Church at every level to oppose violence and the means by which violence is perpetrated in all areas of our common life; and be it further

Resolved, That the individual members of the 71st General Convention undertake the responsibility to promote and monitor all possible appropriate action in their several dioceses, parishes, households, and communities to the end that the Church is and is perceived to be actively building just and nonviolent relationships among ourselves and in the world, keeping the insistent Gospel call to nonviolence before us.

General Convention, 1994

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; and be it further

Resolved, That the Secretary of the 1994 General Convention be requested to send a copy of this resolution to the President, the Secretaries of State, Defense, and Commerce, and to the Secretary General of the United Nations and to Members of Congress, and that the Washington Office of the Episcopal Church be directed to report to the Standing Commission on Peace with Justice on this subject.

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, 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
(Resource packet available from the EPF)*

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 antipersonnel 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; and be it further

Resolved, That the Executive Officer of the Convention send copies of this resolution to the President of the United States, the Secretary of State, the United States Ambassador to the United Nations, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, and the Land Mines Campaign of the Vietnam Veterans of America Foundation.

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

Concern Expressed about US Military Presence in Okinawa and Elsewhere

Resolved, That the 72nd General Convention send its love, greetings, assurances of prayers and concern for the Diocese of Okinawa, Nippon Sei Ko Kai (NSKK); and be it further

Resolved, That the Convention assures the people of the Diocese of Okinawa that the Episcopal Church hears their concern over the impact of US military bases on their daily life and, in response to a resolution of NSKK, pledges to work jointly with NSKK towards concrete actions to address this concern, including advocating this concern to the US government; and be it further

Resolved, That this Convention asks the US government to develop socially responsible criteria that address the concerns of local residents wherever the US has military operations, recognizing that such presence must be balanced against the impact on the dignity of human beings and the environment.

General Convention, 1997

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; and be it further

Resolved, That this resolution be transmitted by the Secretary of General Convention to the President of the United States, the Secretaries of State, Defense and Energy, the appropriate Members of Congress, the Secretary General of the United Nations, the United States Ambassador to the United Nations, the Anglican Observer at the United Nations, and the Primates of the Anglican Communion.

General Convention, 1997

Recognize Shared Jerusalem and Rights of Palestinians

Resolved, That this 72nd General Convention recognizes Jerusalem as the seat of the Abrahamic peoples, acknowledges the historic presence of Jews, Palestinian Christians and Muslims and affirms:

1. that Jerusalem should serve as the capital for two sovereign and independent states, Israel and Palestine;
2. the government of Israel should remove forthwith all roadblocks and obstacles preventing free access to Jerusalem for Palestinians;
3. the government of Israel should change its planning policies so that Palestinians have equal rights to build housing in Jerusalem and develop their institutions which have been restricted since 1967;
4. East Jerusalem, as an integral part of the occupied territories, should be included in all political arrangements relating to those territories, including self-determination, release of prisoners, right of return, and eventual sovereignty; and be it further

Resolved, That this Convention urge the government of the United States to use its diplomatic and economic influence in support of the above and to demonstrate a firm commitment to justice for Palestinians as it does for the security of the State of Israel; and be it further

Resolved, That copies of this resolution be sent to the President of the United States, the Prime Minister of Israel, the President of the Palestinian Authority and appropriate members of the Congress of the United States

Support the Right of Return for Palestinians

Resolved, That the 73rd General Convention of The Episcopal Church affirms, in the light of the final status negotiations now underway, the right of Palestinians and Israelis to self-determination, independence, and sovereignty based in justice, peace, and security for the two peoples; and be it further

Resolved, That the 73rd General Convention of The Episcopal Church affirms the principle of the right of return for every Palestinian, as well as restitution/compensation for their loss as called for by the United Nations; and be it further

Resolved, That this General Convention through the Office of Peace and Justice Ministries (especially through the office of Government Relations) (a) urge the officials and members of The Episcopal Church to pray and work for this position, and (b) communicate this resolution to The President of the United States, The Secretary of State, the appropriate members of the Congress of the United States, The President of the Palestinian Authority, The Prime Minister of Israel, and The Secretary-General of the United Nations.

General Convention, 2000

Support Okinawan People and Consult on Security Concerns in Asia Pacific Region

Resolved, That the 73rd General Convention urges members of the Episcopal Church and the wider Anglican Communion to support the vast majority of the Okinawan people in their unceasing efforts to achieve the removal of U.S. military bases and U.S. military personnel from Okinawa and to return these lands for peaceful, people-oriented development; and be it further

Resolved, That the General Convention urges the Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church, with the assistance of Peace and Justice Ministries, wherever possible in concert with the Anglican Church in Japan (Nippon Sei Ko Kai) and with other religious bodies in the United States, to seek to implement this resolution by communicating with the President of the United States, the U.S. Congress, and the U.S. Secretary of Defense; and be it further

Resolved, That Episcopal Church leadership, in support of the Bishop and Diocese of Okinawa and in consultation with the Nippon Sei Ko Kai and other Anglican partners, pursue consideration of security concerns within the East Asia Pacific Region.

General Convention, 2000

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

Support Decade for a Culture of Nonviolence

Resolved, That the Episcopal Church promotes a culture of nonviolence which values love, compassion, and justice, and rejects violence as a means of solving problems, and joins with other faith communities in observing the United Nations' Decade for a Culture of Peace and Nonviolence for the World (2001-2010) by prayer, action, and study of "the things that make for peace" (Luke 19:42); and be it further

Resolved, That the Episcopal Church at national, provincial, diocesan and congregational levels, with the assistance of Church staff and peace, justice and education networks, provide worship, study and action resources and opportunities throughout the Decade which promote the development of a culture of peace and nonviolence at all levels of society, with special attention to the unique gifts for peace and justice of the faith community in its history, theology and practice; and be it further

Resolved, That the Secretary of General Convention send this resolution with letters of encouragement in their work for peace and justice to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the General Secretary of the World Council of Churches, the President of the United States and Episcopal Members of Congress.

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:

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 74th 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 Church Center, and the website, www.episcopalchurch.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

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.

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
1-800-228-0515 or 202-547-7300, eppn@episcopalchurch.org

For more peace and justice resources or to join EPF contact:

EPF: 637 S. Dearborn St.
Chicago, IL 60605
312-922-8628 and fax 312-922-8637
epfnational@ameritech.net
www.epfnational.org

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.

Biblical Peace Witness

The search for a biblical basis of a peace witness leads directly into an examination of the means and connotations of the Hebrew word *shalom* and the Greek word *eirene*, which are the words in the Bible usually translated peace in the English versions. Both *shalom* and *eirene* connote a range of meanings much wider than that usually found in the English word peace, which often conveys simply the absence of armed conflict or of conditions that disturb national or personal life.

Shalom

Shalom is primarily a state of wholeness and well-being which may be entered into and experienced by persons in their inner lives and interpersonal relationships, and also by groups, such as the family, the clan, or national and political entities.

An examination of representative scripture passages (noted below) in which the word *shalom* or its variations occur reveals that the concept of *shalom* held by those who used the word included the idea of prosperity enjoyed either by the individual or by the group.

Exodus 4: 18
2 Chronicles 34: 28
Psalms 37: 11; 72: 1-7; 128: 5-6
Isaiah 38: 17; 54: 13; 66: 12
Haggai 2: 9
Zechariah 8: 12

Shalom was often practically equated with physical security and freedom from anxiety.

Judges 6: 23; 18: 6; 19: 20
1 Samuel 1: 17
2 Chronicles 19: 1
Psalms 4: 8; 37: 37; 55: 18
Isaiah 32: 18

Peace was associated with righteousness.

Psalm 85: 10 (compare with Psalm 120:6; Isaiah 48:22; 59:8)

Peace, with its wide connotations, was regarded as a goal to be sought.

Psalm 34: 14
Zechariah 8: 16, 19

In the thinking of religious leaders in Israel, a state of shalom for the nation involved faithfulness in a covenant relationship with God.

Isaiah 54: 10
Ezekiel 34: 25; 37:26
Malachi 2:5-6

This is in harmony with the belief that the Lord was the source of peace.

Numbers 6:26
1 Kings 2:33
Psalms 29: 11; 122:6-9; 147: 14
Isaiah 9:6-7; 45:7; 48: 18; 57: 19
Jeremiah 33:6

The concept of shalom, as applied to the nation, did, of course, imply a state of national security and the absence or cessation of warfare. Peace between nations was a goal to be achieved.

Leviticus 26:6
Deuteronomy 2:26; 20:10-12
Joshua 9:15; 11:19
Judges 21:13
1 Samuel 7:14
2 Samuel 10:19
1 Kings 4:24
2 Kings 20:19
1 Chronicles 22:9
Psalm 120: 7
Jeremiah 6:14; 14:13, 19
Ezekiel 7:24-25; 13:10, 16

Eirene

Eirene in the New Testament is the counterpart of the Old Testament word shalom. In classical Greek, eirene meant the cessation or absence of hostilities between rival groups, much as we use the word peace today. But because in the Greek version of the Old Testament the word eirene was used to translate the word shalom, the Greek word -- while retaining its classical meaning -- came to have a breadth of content comparable to that of the Hebrew word. Accordingly, in the New Testament, we find that eirene means something much deeper and more positive than simply the absence of armed conflict.

The concept of peace which is illuminated by the New Testament usage of the word eirene emphasizes the personal aspects of peace. Three main elements of peace are stressed.

1. Reconciliation of persons with God, the restoration of right relations with God.

Romans 5:1, 10
2 Corinthians 5:19
Colossians 1:20-23

2. Harmonious relationships established between persons and between groups of persons. This includes the idea of international peace.

Luke 14:32
Acts 12:20
Romans 12:18; 14:19
2 Corinthians 13:11
Ephesians 2:14-17; 4:1-3
Hebrews 12:14
1 Peter 3:8-11

3. Peace of mind, dispelling worry and fear.

John 14:27
Romans 8:6; 14:17; 15:13
Galatians 5:22
Philippians 4:7
Colossians 3:15

God's Intention for Persons

The whole tenor of the biblical message is that God desires all persons to enter into the enjoyment of peace, in the fullest sense of this term. The very purpose of the Bible may be described by saying that it is to make clear what God's intentions are for all human beings and what he has done to make possible their attainment of that state of wholeness and felicity implied in the word shalom. What God purposes is implicit, for example, in all the scriptural declarations of the goodness of God, in Abraham's intercession for Sodom (Genesis 18:22-32), in the commandments (including "Thou shalt not kill"), in the messages of the prophets, who called for righteous living as a prerequisite of shalom, in Jesus' healing of the sick, in many of the parables (for instance, the three parables of Luke 15), in the New Testament teaching on the kingdom of God, in the preaching of the apostles concerning salvation through faith in Christ, in the prayers for peace found at the beginning of many of the New Testament epistles.

The purpose of God in respect to peace becomes explicit in such statements as God's promise to Abraham (Genesis 12:3, "...in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed") in the emotionally charged exclamation in Deuteronomy 5:29, in the assertion in 1 Timothy 2:3-4 and in John 3:16.

A valid peace witness must take due account of this purpose of God.

Peace Witness and Peacemaking

A Christian's peace witness will be most effective if made not only by the spoken or written word, but also through action for peace. The peacemakers whom Jesus commended (Matt. 5:9) were not merely those who spoke for peace, but who exemplified peace in their manner of life. The two components of a peace witness, words and action, are complementary and

inseparable. Our time calls for new and bold action in the effort to put an end to war, certainly, but also in working to bring about a condition of shalom for all people.

The Christian's peace witness in both word and action must harmonize with the basic concepts of peace found in the Bible and with the revealed will of God for humanity. The goal for such a witness must be much more positive and far-reaching than simply the avoidance of participation in military action. If one's efforts to counteract an overt war situation are to be measurably effective in the long run, one must deal with the basic causes of conflict. Ultimately, these are to be found within persons themselves (James 4:1-2).

Action for peace will focus on whatever is opposed to humanity's experiencing the personal and corporate wholeness which God intends. This means involvement with current social, economic, political, racial, religious, and international problems, with the awareness that such problems of mankind are symptomatic of broken relationships between the person and God. The problems have arisen in consequence of unjust acts and long standing conditions of inequity, both in individual and in group relationships.

Because God is also a God of justice, without which there cannot be shalom in the fullest sense, it is clear that the restoration of right relationships with God involves also the establishment of justice. Much of the peace effort will therefore be directed toward bringing about reconciliation with God, the restoration of a relationship with God which is prerequisite to enduring right relationships among persons. The Christian as peacemaker is under obligation to set forth the conditions on which such relationships are possible.

The Church of the Brethren has opposed war -- all war -- since its beginnings in 1708. But the church dare not merely rest its stance on an historic position. It must ever examine afresh the concepts of peace rooted in the Bible and from this standpoint live out its witness.

As the New Testament makes clear, the peace witness includes the giving of a message of reconciliation based on what God has done through Christ. Furthermore, the peacemaker will examine participation in the life of society to discover whether his or her own relationships with others favor the cause of peace or add to social disharmony and perpetuate injustice. The peacemaker will then search for and engage in forms of action for peace in harmony with the biblical base of a peace witness.

Other Resources

Annual Conference Statement of the Church of the Brethren on War

Publisher: The Brethren Press

Location: Elgin, Illinois

Brethren and Pacifism

Publisher: The Brethren Press

Author: Dale W. Brown

Christian Attitudes Toward War and Peace

Publisher: Abingdon Press

Author: Roland H. Bainton

Location: Nashville Tennessee

The Christian and War

Publisher: Historic Peace Churches and the International Fellowship of Reconciliation available from The Brethren Press

The New Testament Basis of Pacifism

Publisher: Fellowship Publications

Author: G. H. C. MacGregor

Location: Nyack, New York

The Biblical Roots of Peacemaking

The Scriptures move us toward a new community. This community is defined by a different social reality (more inclusive, less compelled to respect established boundaries between people as individuals and groups) and a new spiritual reality (as we find meaning in places other than material accumulation and domination over others and the natural world).

The movement is from:

*... Clan/race/family # **Inclusivity***

Deuteronomy 10:17-19-orphan, widows, stranger
Matthew 20:1-16-laborers in vineyard
Ephesians 2:11-21-"Christ is our peace"
Luke 10:25-37- Good Samaritan;
Luke 15:11-32-two lost sons

Matthew 15:21-28-Canaanite woman
Luke 8:19-21-my mother and brothers

...Reliance on self/power #

Reliance on God

Deuteronomy 8:11-20- don't forget the Lord
Judges 6-Gideon and too many soldiers

Luke 4-temptation of Jesus
Matthew 16:24-26 - save life/lose it

*...Individualism # **Individual within community***

Genesis 4:17- Cain and Abel
Luke 15:11-32-two lost sons

Corinthians 12-many gifts, one body

...Religious/social/economic/military violence #

Compassion

I Kings 21-Naboth's vineyard
Micah 4:1-4- swords to plowshares
Matthew 19:13-15-let the children come
Romans 12:9-21 -live peaceably with all
Matthew 5:38-48-love your enemies;

Jeremiah 7:1-7-"peace, peace"
John 4-woman at the well
Luke 9:51-56-don't nuke 'em

Matthew 13:24-30-parable of the weeds
John 8:1-11-the woman caught in adultery
Luke 10:38-42-Mary/Martha

*...Materialism # **Trust in God***

Amos 5:12-14-hate evil, love good, establish justice

Matthew 6:25-34-lilies of the field
Luke 12:13-21-bigger

Luke 6:20-25-blessed are the good	barns
... <i>Environment as resource</i> #	Leviticus 25: 1-7-Sabbath
Environment as relationship	rest for the land
Genesis 2: 7, 2: 18ff-creation story	
Hosea 4: 1-3-creation suffers	
... <i>Religion</i> # Living Faith	Matthew 15: 1-9-
Jeremiah 7: 1-11-temple sermon	tradition/justice
John 9-man born blind	Micah 6: 6-8-love
Amos 5: 18-21-those who look for	tenderly
the day of the Lord, let justice roll	
down	

According to the Bible, there are four relationships in need of reconciliation: Our relationship with God, with ourselves, with others, and with the environment. We cannot experience the fullness of God's peace until we find peace in these basic relationships.

The scriptures noted above are by way of example and are not meant to be an exhaustive list.

Office of Brethren Witness
Church of the Brethren General

About War

War Objections Worksheet

Question 1: Describe the beliefs which are the basis for your claim as a conscientious objector. If appropriate, state whether those beliefs would permit you to serve in a noncombatant position in the armed forces or pay taxes for war.

(Form 22, the Selective Service System Documentation Form for Conscientious Objectors, says: "Describe your beliefs which are the reasons for your claiming conscientious objection to combatant military training and service or to all military training and service.")

This question asks you to describe, in some detail and as honestly as possible, the basic principles by which you guide your life. You should describe those values which are of utmost importance to you, such as God, love, truth, etc., and why these beliefs are in conflict with participation in war or paying for war or preparations for war. This question asks you to formulate your own statement of conscientious opposition to war. You should begin by saying that you are conscientiously opposed to war, and

conscience.

Although at this time federal law does not provide exemption for selective objectors, nuclear pacifists or conscientious war tax objectors, this should not stop you from filing such statements of belief or making claims for exemption on these grounds. In the event your beliefs develop or the law changes, your statement could prove very important.

If your convictions lead you to be a noncooperator, you may wish to use your answer to this question to record your beliefs.

Question 2: *Form 22 says: "Describe how and when you acquired these beliefs."*

In answering this question, you should include anything of significance which helped to form your beliefs. Mention any religious training you have had if you feel such training has helped you arrive at your position. If you feel you arrived at your beliefs with no formal training, there is, of course, no need to mention any. The influence of clergy, teachers, family members, books, television, movies, membership in organizations and experiences in your life should be listed. Be specific. You need to show that strong influences in your life have stimulated you to think clearly and seriously about participation in war.

Specific incidents can be mentioned, such as seminars, or assemblies you have attended, courses taken, trips taken, contact with refugees, demonstrations you were in, to show that your beliefs had substantial formation beyond a merely "academic interest." Obviously, if you have experienced war, be sure to reflect on it. Take care not to give the impression that your belief is primarily a matter of political considerations, expediency, or merely an arbitrary, personal moral code unrelated to higher values. Unconventional beliefs do qualify, but they will require careful statement.

Question 3: Describe how your beliefs affect the way you live and the type of work you do or plan to do.

(Form 22 says: "Explain what most clearly shows that your beliefs are deeply held. You may wish to include a description of how your beliefs affect the way you live.")

This may be a difficult question for objectors who have not had many experiences which can show sincere beliefs. Select the best illustrations of your convictions. You can discuss how your future plans are strongly affected by a commitment to those beliefs. Describe kinds of employment you have had or plan to have which reflect your commitment. Discuss any public expression, written or oral, you have given your beliefs. Describe your lifestyle, mention your life's goals as you have set them, and show how they are an outgrowth of your beliefs. This question allows you to demonstrate the sincerity with which you hold your beliefs.

What Do I Believe About...

War?

The world still faces difficult questions about war and peace. Each of us probably asks at some time in our life, "What do I believe about war?" The purpose of this questionnaire is to encourage people who have strong concerns about participating in war and who might be conscientious objectors to answer that question and make a record of it. The answers could prove useful especially for those who might deal with

the Selective Service System or the military in the future. The answers could also help those who are struggling with questions concerning paying taxes for war and working in war-related jobs.

What is conscientious objection?

Generally, conscientious objection is a sincere conviction, motivated by conscience, that forbids someone from taking part in organized killing. This objection may apply to all forms or to particular aspects of war.

What types of conscientious objectors are recognized by federal law?

The Military Selective Service Act and government regulations recognize two types of conscientious objectors:

1. **CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTORS:** These are persons who, by reason of religious, ethical, or moral belief, are "conscientiously opposed to participation in war in any form." These people may be discharged from military service. They are exempt from military service, in the event of a draft. If called up, they may perform alternative service as civilians.
2. **NONCOMBATANT CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTORS:** These are persons who, by reason of religious, ethical or moral belief, are conscientiously opposed to killing in war in any form but who do not object to performing noncombatant duties (such as being a medic) in the armed forces. These people are reassigned to non-combatant duties in the Armed Forces or, in the event of a draft, are trained without weapons and assigned to non-combatant service.

What other types of conscientious objectors are there?

3. **CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTORS TO PAYING FOR WAR:** These are people whose consciences forbid them to pay the military portion, of their taxes because of ethical, moral and religious beliefs. Many impoverish themselves by living below taxable levels, others suffer garnishment, court appearances, property loss, and in some cases, imprisonment. If provision for conscientious objectors to paying war taxes is enacted, most of them will be able to pay all their taxes without this agonizing moral dilemma. For more information about this issue, visit the National Campaign for a Peace Tax Fund or contact them at 1-888-PEACETAX (1-888-732-2382)
4. **SELECTIVE OBJECTORS:** These are persons whose consciences would not permit them to participate in what they believe to be an "unjust" war but do permit them to participate in what they believe to be a "just" war. For example, some people who were conscientiously opposed to the Vietnam War because they believed it was unjust said that they would have fought in World War II. Selective objectors may also object to certain weaponry or to particular targeting and therefore request reassignment.
5. **NUCLEAR PACIFISTS:** These are persons whose consciences would not permit them to participate in a nuclear war, or what they believe would likely become a nuclear war. Some nuclear pacifists are opposed to all war because of their belief that any war fought today could lead to the use of nuclear weapons.

At this time federal law does not recognize war tax objectors, selective objectors, and nuclear pacifists as conscientious objectors. Unless the law changes, these persons would not be granted conscientious objector exemptions from military service in a draft situation or from taxes for war. These people might enter CO claims in the hope of expanding the law, asserting their beliefs, or mitigating the penalties for violating the law.

6. **NONCOOPERATORS WITH THE DRAFT:** These are persons whose consciences forbid them to cooperate with draft law requirements. Many of these conscientious objectors refuse to register for the draft. Nonregistration is currently illegal. Current law stipulates that young men who fail to register within 30 days of their 18th

birthday are subject to possible criminal penalties of up to 5 years in prison and a fine of up to \$250,000. They also forego Federal financial aid for higher education and job training as well as employment in the Federal government. Some states have similar penalties, even prohibiting obtaining driver's license.

Am I a conscientious objector?

This question is not as simple to answer as it may seem, so it is important to give it serious thought. You may want to consult your relatives, friends, teachers or religious advisors. It may take some time to come to a conclusion. The important thing is to start thinking about this now. What do you believe about war? Why is it so important to think about this now?

If a war were declared today, the draft could begin immediately. Or a peacetime draft or compulsory national service might be enacted. A plan to register and conscript health care professionals has been prepared and probably would be implemented in a war emergency before other conscription measures are implemented. Under current regulations, conscientious objectors have a very limited time following an induction order to document their claim for an exemption from military service. Since time would be short, as little as nine days, conscientious objectors should think through the basis of their claim now. In peacetime or war, early documentation of beliefs is one's evidence of their sincerity.

Few reservists or active duty personnel ever consider conscientious objection prior to enlistment or commissioning. (They cannot enter the military as conscientious objectors.) When military personnel begin to question their tasks, responsibilities, and mission, they should take a careful look at their beliefs about war. The questions on the worksheet will prepare them for making a claim according to the procedures in each of the armed forces. Military procedure adds questions about when CO beliefs crystallized in the military person's life and the limits the service man or woman would put on the use of force.

About half of Federal income taxes go for military purposes. Many taxpayers object to paying others to go to war or for preparations for war. If provision is made in law for conscientious objection to paying for war (the U.S. Peace Tax Fund bill), they will have to establish that they are conscientious objectors in order to have the military portion of their Federal income tax redirected for peaceful purposes. They, too, should begin to document their beliefs.

Why is it so important to think about this now?

If a war were declared today, the draft or compulsory national service might be enacted. A plan to register and conscript health care professionals has been prepared and probably would be implemented in a war emergency before other conscription measures are implemented. Under current regulations, conscientious objectors have a very limited time following an induction order to document their claim for an exemption from military service. Since time would be short, as little as nine days, conscientious objectors should think through the basis of their claim now. In peacetime or war, early documentation of beliefs is one evidence of their sincerity. More information is available in CCW's publication, "Conscientious Objectors and the Draft."

Few reservists or active duty personnel ever consider conscientious objection prior to enlistment or commissioning. (They cannot enter the military as conscientious objectors.) When military personnel begin to question their tasks, responsibilities, and mission, they should take a careful look at their beliefs about war. The questions on the worksheet will prepare them for making a claim according to the procedures in each of the armed forces. Military procedure adds questions about when CO beliefs crystallized in the military person's life and the limits the service man or woman would put on the use of force.

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conscientious objectors to paying for war (the U.S. Peace Tax Fund bill), they will have to establish that they are conscientious objectors in order to have the military portion of their Federal income tax redirected for peaceful purposes. They, too, should begin to document their beliefs.

What about women?

Despite the fact that women are not yet required to register for the draft, Congress has the power to include women in a draft and they do pay taxes. Plans for a draft of health care professionals include women, and women already make up ten percent of the U.S. military. It is, therefore, important then women, as well as men, consider what they believe about war.

What obligations would I have as a conscientious objector?

As a result of being classified a conscientious objector, you would be required to give two years of alternative service in some civilian agency or non-combatant service in the Army, if you are drafted. Taxpayers would still have to pay the full amount of taxes due.

What should I do if I am a conscientious objector?

Prepare now. More information is available in CCW's publication, "Basic Draft and Registration Information."

If you think you are a conscientious objector, answer the questions on the attached worksheet as clearly and completely as possible. Make a separate copy and mail it to the Center on Conscience & War (CCW) and/or your own religious body or counseling agency. CCW will be happy to receive your statement whether or not your objection is based on traditional religious grounds. Keep a copy for your own records.

If you send a copy of your statement to CCW, a counselor will review it and send any recommendations that might help in the presentation of a future conscientious objector claim.

We also recommend that you gather letters of support.

What are letters of support?

Letters of support are letters written by people who know you well and will attest to the sincerity of your conscientious objector claim. These letters can be very important. It is not necessary that the writers agree with your beliefs. The best letters are often written by persons who disagree with the conscientious objector but believe in his or her sincerity. Two or three good letters are advisable. The letters, as well as your statement, can be revised if and when you have to apply for CO status. (You will be allowed witnesses at your draft hearing, and the writers might appear on your behalf.) See more about letters of support in "Basic Draft and Registration Information."

What happens next?

If the draft begins, or provisions are made in the tax laws, or you decide to apply from within the military, you will have all of the answers to the questions on your worksheet plus letters of support on file with CCW and/or your religious body or counseling agency. You will also have your own copy. (These records will be invaluable in documenting your conscientious objector claim.)

The worksheet that follows incorporates questions from Form 22, the Selective Service documentation form for COs facing the draft. Form 22 will have to be revised to reflect court decisions. While no one can predict what will be on future IRS forms, in the event the tax laws change, these questions will probably be reflected in those forms. For further information, consult NISBCO publications "*Who is a Conscientious*

*Objector," "Conscientious Objectors and the Draft," and "Some People Don't Register for the Draft. Should I?," and obtain literature from the **Peace Tax Foundation**, 2121 Decatur Place, Washington, DC 20008, (202) 483-3751, or contact your religious body, counseling agency, and/or **National Interreligious Service Board for Conscientious Objectors (NISBCO)**, 1830 Connecticut Ave NW, Washington, DC 20009-5732; Phone: (202) 483-2220; fax: (202) 483-1246; www.centeronconscience.org*

About Draft Registration

Before you register:

- Read the information below.
- Seek out a qualified draft counselor, attorney, or draft counseling agency.
- Consider your options.

If you decide to register:

- Find a post office for your registration that has an accessible photocopier.
- Print in legible black ink across the middle of the registration form: I AM A CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTOR TO WAR IN ANY FORM. This is not a classification, but it may help you later to document your position as a CO.
- Make a photocopy of your registration form for your own records before you submit it to the postal worker for date stamp and initials.
- Bearing in mind that no actual draft is at all likely, it is up to you whether to put a complete statement of your conscientious objector beliefs on file with your religious body, CCW, or any other counseling agency. Such a statement would be helpful in qualifying for the U.S. Peace Tax Fund should it become law.

Conscientious Objectors and the Draft

All men residing in the United States who were born on or after January 1, 1963 are required to register for the draft within 30 days of their 18th birthday, unless they are aliens who are in the U.S. on temporary visas. The penalty for failing to register can be up to five years in jail and/or a fine of up to \$250,000. Women might be required to register in the future.

Under the emergency mobilization system, only registration takes place until a national defense emergency is declared and Congress restores the President's induction authority. Classifications such as hardship and conscientious objection are not assigned until after the registrant receives an induction notice. Once the mobilization draft begins, unless the inductee claims a classification other than 1-A, Available for Military Service, within 10 days of the induction notice, the registrant must report to the designated Military Entrance Processing Station for testing and induction. The Department of Defense will delay inductions for six months.

When a conscientious objector registers, he (male only, so far) should note somewhere on the registration form that by reason of his training and belief, he is conscientiously opposed to participation in war in any form, and he should make a photocopy of the card before surrendering it to the postal worker. THIS DOES NOT MEAN THAT SELECTIVE SERVICE WILL TAKE NOTE OF HIS BELIEFS NOW.

Selective Service destroys the original registration cards after they are microfilmed, and conscientious objectors who have placed any such notice on the registration card will still have to request the CO classification if they receive induction notices. The initial claim is made on Form 9, and the claim is documented on Form 22.

In the unlikely event of a draft, COs should have prepared in advance a file which documents their beliefs. Include in this file, at least, the photocopy of the registration card, a comprehensive statement of beliefs, and letters of support for this statement. Such evidence can be presented to the local board who will hear the claim for a CO classification. Compiling this file should be done with supervision from a qualified draft counselor or agency such as CCW.

Hundreds of thousands of men have refused to register, despite the threat of possible prosecution. Twenty, a very small percentage, have been prosecuted. (There have been no more prosecutions since 1985.) Many churches have supported nonregistration as a valid conscientious response to the registration requirement. Non-registrants should be prepared to be prosecuted, and if indicted should quickly find an attorney who is familiar with draft law. Even without prosecution, nonregistrants will automatically forego certain government student aid, training and employment possibilities. Several states bar non-registrants from attending state colleges and universities.

After registration, Selective Service will send a "registration acknowledgement" letter, which repeats the information the registrant gave on the form and supplies a Selective Service Number. If any of the information is incorrect, the registrant may return the accompanying Form 3B to correct any mistakes. This letter, Form 3A, can be retained by the registrant as proof of his registration.

Please contact the Center on Conscience & War with any questions regarding registration and conscientious objection that have not been answered on this website.

Center on Conscience & War (NISBCO)
1830 Connecticut Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20009 Tel: (202) 483-2220
Fax: (202) 483-1246 Website: www.centeronconscience.org

Letters of Support

The Selective Service System will not accept letters of support or any material from persons attempting to establish conscientious objector claims until draft registration is resumed. Potential CO claimants will need to make arrangements for their own file of materials to be submitted when the time comes.

Statements of conscientious objection should be filed with your religious body or counseling agency if such a service is available. If this service is not available, CCW will keep your CO statement on file and will offer suggestions where

appropriate to strengthen the statement.

Should draft classification be resumed, letters of support for a claim to be classified as a conscientious objector will be vital. They can be as important as the answers one gives to the questions in the CO claim. In fact, good letters of support could be a deciding factor when a CO claim is considered. It would be much more difficult for a draft board to maintain that a person is insincere if there are several supporting letters from respected individuals stating otherwise. The writers of these letters may be people you choose later to be witnesses at the hearing of your claim before the draft board.

Choose references carefully. They should be people who know you well, are familiar with the position you are taking, and believe in your sincerity. Try to get a good cross-section of people who know you -- teachers, relatives, classmates, friends. It is not necessary that a person writing a letter agree with your beliefs. The best letters are often written by persons who disagree with the CO position but believe in your sincerity. Try to obtain letters from people who have known you for various lengths of time. Some people, such as recent friends, can attest to the strength of your present beliefs. Others, such as parents, ministers or teachers, can attest to the length of time you have held your beliefs, even if you have less contact with these people now. Any statements your references can make verifying the sincerity or strength of your beliefs would be significant.

A member of your family, a religious leader whose guidance has meant much to you, a roommate, a teacher, an employer - anyone who knows you and can speak to the following points would make a good reference. They can help you most by answering in their letters the following questions:

1. What is your relationship with the applicant, and how long have you known him/her?
2. Do you believe that the applicant is sincere in his/her claim as a conscientious objector?
3. To the best of your knowledge, has the applicant's conduct since arriving at this belief been consistent with the claim being made?
4. Do you believe the applicant's claim is based on deeply-held moral, ethical or religious beliefs, however broadly defined? If possible, give examples of influences or training in the life of the applicant which you think might have led to the development of his or her beliefs.

Each reference should be given a brief statement of your position, in which you try to answer any questions the person may have about your position or the CO position in general and why you are filing a CO claim during a time of a standby draft. You may want to include one of the many brochures available from CCW which answer questions and dispels some of the misconceptions people have about conscientious objector beliefs as recognized by law. Fully explain the four points you have asked the reference to address. The more specific a letter of support can be, the more attention it will receive. A personal letter which includes details that demonstrate the claimant's convictions is usually more convincing than a general, impersonal one.

You, of course, are responsible to see that references listed on your claim are contacted and that the letters of support are filed with your claim. It would be best if letters could be collected and filed with your claim, but additional letters and other helpful materials, like term papers or speeches in which you include

your CO beliefs, can be added at any time.

Try to obtain three or four good letters now and a similar number if and when individual Selective Service classification resumes. These letters should be approximately one page in length, typed or clearly written, and addressed, "To Whom it May Concern." The person writing a letter of support should include your name, address, and Selective Service number. Request that all letters be sent to you rather than the local board. If you receive a letter that is vague, inaccurate or doesn't speak to the four points listed earlier, do not include it in your file. It might prove detrimental.

Above all, keep copies of everything you put in your file. When you send materials through the mail, you may want to use Certified Mail, Return Receipt Requested (be sure to keep the receipt), so you will know the materials were received.

For help in filing your conscientious objector statement with your religious body, counseling agency or CCW, ask for CCW's worksheet . For further details about the processing of CO claims, ask for Conscientious Objectors and the Draft. For this and other information, contact the Center on Conscience & War.

Center on Conscience & War (NISBCO)
1830 Connecticut Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20009 Tel: (202) 483-2220
Fax: (202) 483-1246 Website: www.centeronconscience.org

Conscientious Objector Registration

How to complete your conscientious objection registration:

- Fill out the Selective Service System registration form 1M (UPO) on the following page or go to your local post office to obtain the form. Although it is also possible to register online or at your local high school, in order to document your status as a conscientious objector as soon as possible, you need to fill in the form by hand and mail it in yourself.

- Print in legible black ink across the middle of the Selective Service registration form:
 - I AM A CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTOR TO WAR IN ANY FORM.** (See example on following page.) This is not a classification, but it may help you later to document your position as a conscientious objector.
- Make two (2) copies of your registration form. Date each copy, fold them, and seal them in two envelopes. The postmark on the envelope once it is mailed will confirm the date in case you need to prove when you decided to become a conscientious objector.
- Mail the original to:
 - Selective Service System
 - PO Box 94638
 - Palatine, IL 60094-4638
- Mail one copy to:
 - The Rev. G. Douglas Fenton
 - Registrar for Conscientious Objectors
 - SSS FORM 1M(UPO): DO NOT OPEN
 - Episcopal Church Center
 - 815 Second Avenue
 - New York, New York 10017-4503
- Mail one copy to yourself. When it arrives, keep it on file, unopened.
- Next, fill out the attached Conscientious Objector Registration Form.
- Make two (2) copies.
- Both you and your priest need to sign all three copies together.
- Send the original to:
 - Selective Service System
 - PO Box 94739
 - Palatine, IL 60094-4638
- Send one copy to:
 - The Rev. G. Douglas Fenton
 - Registrar for Conscientious Objectors
 - Episcopal Church Center
 - 815 Second Avenue
 - New York, New York 10017-4503
- Keep the remaining copy for your records.

Be assured that any and all contact or correspondence with the Registrar for Conscientious Objectors at the Episcopal Church Center handled confidentially.

Also, please note that your registration as a conscientious objector (CO) does not exempt you from the selective service procedures, nor does it guarantee that you will be exempt from conscription or military service, or some other form of non-combatant service in the event that future legislation is enacted restoring the draft.

It has been our previous experience that many CO claims were denied because the registrant did not identify himself at the beginning. Between 1970 and 1972 only 20% of those who applied to the Selective Service Board for CO status were classified as COs. One of the reasons for this is that a claim for CO status was often filed late in the process, leading to induction into military service. If you have made a decision, **it is important to have your statement on file as early as possible.**

Conscientious Objector Registration Form

For Members of the Episcopal Church Who Are Conscientious Objectors to Military Service

Full name:

Mailing address:

Diocese:

Date of birth: ____/____/____

Social Security Number: ____-____-____

Place of birth:

Present occupation:

Marital status: _____

Spouse's name (if applicable):

Name of church:

Address of church:

Date and Place of Baptism or Confirmation (indicate which):

Approximate date of becoming a conscientious objector: ____/____/____

Peace organization(s) of which you are a member:

Write a brief statement of your reasons for conscientious objection and of the types of service in which you are willing to participate:

Signature of Conscientious Objector

I hereby certify that _____ is a baptized member of my congregation, and that the above statements, to the best of my knowledge, are true.

Signature of Priest

Date

Mail copy to: The Rev. G. Douglas Fenton, Episcopal Church Center, 815 Second Avenue, New York, New York 10017-4503
Mail copy to: Selective Service System, PO Box 94638, Palatine, IL 60094-4638

Episcopal Church's View

In 1917, just as the United States was entering World War I, Bishop Paul Jones was forced to resign his episcopal office because of his support for Christian pacifism and the conscientious objection to war. Since that time the Episcopal Church has moved gradually towards its current position of affirming the integrity of conscience both of members who chose to participate in the armed forces in either combatant or non-combatant roles and of members who choose not to participate for reasons of conscience.

Indeed, in 1998, the acceptance of conscientious objection as a form of Christian witness among Episcopalians had become wide enough that Bishop Jones was, by act of General Convention, included in the official list of commemorations in the Book of Common Prayer. Acceptance of conscientious objection as a Christian option has also proceeded similarly at the level of the worldwide Anglican Communion acting through its Lambeth Conference of Bishops which meets once every ten years.

The legislative basis for these developments in the worldwide Anglican Communion was established by a resolution of the 1930 Lambeth Conference, which set forth the principle that "war as a method of settling international disputes is incompatible with the teachings of our lord Jesus Christ." The resolution containing this statement was reaffirmed by the Lambeth conference of 1948, 1958, 1978, and 1988, and adopted by the triennial General Convention of the Episcopal Church in 1931 with several reaffirmations since.

As early as 1922, General Convention had anticipated this stance in a resolution, which, while expressing appreciation for those who had sacrificed by serving in the military during World War I, declared that the "high aims and purposes of Jesus Christ, made evident in Christian civilization, can only be ultimately attained in a warless world in which the second great commandment is revered and obeyed."

The 1928 General convention declared even more forthrightly: "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." This statement was affirmed in the 1928 General Convention.

The General Convention of 1934 took steps to facilitate these sentiments by forming a commission to petition the congress to permit conscientious objectors to claim noncombatant status in the armed forces and to initiate a register of persons wishing to claim such status if legislation permitting it were forthcoming.

The 1943 General Convention, even in the midst of World War II, took further steps by creating a commission "to assure the members of this Church, who 'by reason of religious training and belief are conscientiously opposed to the participation in war' of the continuing fellowship of the Church with them and care for them" and to "maintain, through the committee on Conscientious Objectors, an official relationship under provisions set up by the Selective Service Act."

A comprehensive resolution regarding conscience and war was issued by General Convention in 1957. Its provisions included actions to urge congress to extend conscientious objector status beyond the religiously-based conscience to "those who would take the stand for other ethical and moral considerations, not necessarily associated with traditional religious commitment," and urged that the Church provide counseling and legal advice to those conscientious objectors among its members.

The 1979 General Convention adopted the 1978 Lambeth resolution on war and violence and funded a joint commission on Peace for the Church. The Convention commended to the Church the use of non-violent means to achieve peace and justice. In 1988 the Convention summarized this position to which previous resolutions had been moving, affirming 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." It also declared that persons making either decision under conscience have "the respect, the support and the ministry of the Church." In addition to the official acts of legislative assemblies summarized above, the House of Bishops has issued many pastoral letters confirming these actions and elaborating on their scriptural and theological basis.

Today, the Episcopal Church continues to maintain that all decisions regarding participation or non-participation in war or the preparation for war be the fruit of mature and prayerful discernment informed by scripture, theology, and relevant knowledge of history and contemporary conditions. The Church, while affirming the discernment of those who choose military service or other participation, expresses unambiguous preference for non-violent approaches to conflict, condemning the aggressive use of war in national policy as contrary to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

*Note: Information for this summary was drawn from **CROSS BEFORE FLAG**: Episcopal STATEMENTS ON WAR AND PEACE, published by the Episcopal Peace Fellowship, and available for order through its national office at www.epfnational.org. This publication contains the full text versions of the resolutions mentioned, together with texts of other peace and justice related legislation, pastorals from the House of Bishops and similar documents.)*

Bibliography

When War is Unjust: Being Honest in Just War Thinking

Publisher: Orbis Books

Author: Yoder, John Howard

Location: Maryknoll

Year: 1996

What Would You Do? A Serious Answer to a Standard Question

Publisher: Herald Press

Author: Yoder, John Howard

Location: Scottsdale, PA

Year: 1983

Description: Expanded edition. In the first half of this clear and lucid book, Yoder himself examines the question frequently asked of applicants for conscientious objector status, "What would you do if a violent person threatened harm to a loved one?" Yoder discusses the relevance and irrelevance of this question to the problem of modern warfare and provides perspectives from an Historic Anabaptist-Mennonite tradition. In the second part of the book, a number of famous people give their responses to the same problems.

Nevertheless: Varieties of Religious Pacifism

Publisher: Herald Press

Author: Yoder, John Howard

Location: Scottsdale, PA

Year: 1971

Ain't Gonna Study War No More: Biblical Ambiguity and the Abolition of War

Publisher: Westminster / John Knox Press

Author: Winn, Albert Curry

Location: Louisville

Year: 1993

Peace is the Way: Writings on Nonviolence from the Fellowship of Reconciliation

Publisher: Orbis Books

Author: Wink, Walter, ed.

Location: Maryknoll
Year: 2000

A Just Peace Church: The Peace Theology Development Team

Publisher: United Church Press

Author: Thistlewaite, Susan, ed.

Location: NY

Year: 1986

Just Peacemaking: Ten Practices for Abolishing War

Publisher: Pilgrim Press

Author: Stassen, Glenn, ed.

Location: Cleveland

Year: 1998

Of Love and War

Publisher: Orbis Press

Author: Soelle, Dorothee

Location: Maryknoll

Year: 1983

Pacifism, Church and State

Publisher: Anglican Pacifist Fellowship

Author: Savage, D.S.

Location: Milton Keynes, England

Year: 1998

On War and Morality

Publisher: Princeton University Press

Author: Holmes, Robert L.

Location: Princeton

Year: 1989

Why I Am a Conscientious Objector

Publisher: Herald Press

Author: Drescher, John M.

Location: Scottsdale, PA

Year: 1982

The God of Peace: Toward a Theology of Nonviolence

Publisher: Orbis Press

Author: Dear, John

Location: Maryknoll

Year: 1994

Peace

Publisher: Chalice Press

Author: Brueggemann, Walter

Location: St. Louis

Year: 2001

Living Toward a Vision: Biblical Reflections of Shalom

Publisher: United Church Press

Author: Brueggeman, Walter

Location: NY

Year: 1976

Bibliography by Dr. David A. Mycoff for the Episcopal Peace Fellowship.

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