

Holy War?

Just War?

Just Peace?

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- Four Possible Positions for Community of Christ

A Toolbox of Options and Criteria with which to Evaluate

INDIVIDUAL AND CLASS STUDY MATERIAL

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Introduction

What should be the position of Community of Christ on war and peace? Holy War against evil? Just War? Just Peace? Or Holy Peace (non-violent action for peace and justice)?

Resolution G1 Nonviolence has been submitted by the Western European Mission Center and the British Isles Mission Centre for consideration by the World Conference in April 2019 (see page 26). This resolution is a good opportunity for the church around the world to have a very important conversation. What is our position on violence in the cause of peace?

Our sacred story begins with the peace (*shalom*) of Eden, with all humans made in the image of God, and with no violence. A world without violence is the beginning and end purpose of God for Creation. After the Fall, and the entry of sin into the human family, Cain murdered his brother Abel, and violence came into the world. Holy War was the response of the Israelites as they entered the Promised Land. However, Jesus taught, 'Love your enemies,' and, at his arrest, rebuked the disciple that attacked with a sword in his defence. The early Christians were non-violent, despite being persecuted, for the first three hundred years of their existence. However, this changed in the 4th century. Beginning with Constantine, a closer relationship began to develop between Christianity and the Roman Empire, and it became the official state religion in 380. In response to Christianity's new favoured position, Augustine (350-430) introduced the concept of Just War into the Christian tradition, influenced partly by Roman writers such as Cicero. Augustine argued that war is sometimes necessary, and nine centuries later, Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) developed a set of guidelines to try to restrain war ethically. The Just War tradition was also adopted by most Protestants after the Reformation, but Anabaptists (Hutterites, Mennonites, the Amish, and the Church of the Brethren), along with Quakers, rejected the sword and embraced the non-violence of Jesus. In 1985, the United Church of Christ pioneered the Just Peace tradition. This position has now been embraced by the World Council of Churches.

What should be the position of Community of Christ? This booklet is to help you decide. It is a toolbox to help you understand options and ways of evaluating each option. Each position is summarised. The statement on Just War is from work done by an earlier Peace and Justice Team that was discussed at the International Leaders' Meeting at the 2007 World Conference. However, at this point this position has no official status. The Just Peace statement is a summary of the book *Just Peace Companion*, Second Edition, 2012, published by the World Council of Churches. The descriptions of Holy War and Nonviolent Action were written by a member of the current Peace and Justice Team and then edited by team members.

So four positions are outlined and you are asked to evaluate each position using the Mission Statement, the Enduring Principles and the Mission Initiatives. Which position is God calling us

to embrace? May your prayerful reflections be blessed, and may your discussions with others be fruitful and enlightening as we seek to listen to each other and to the Holy Spirit.

How are We to Read Scripture?

Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by the Son... (Hebrews 1:1-2 NRSV)

And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. (John 1:14 NRSV)

Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and his brother John and led them up a high mountain, by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became dazzling white. Suddenly there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him. Then Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if you wish, I will make three dwellings here, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." While he was still speaking, suddenly a bright cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud a voice said, "This is my Son, the Beloved; with him I am well pleased; listen to him!" ⁶When the disciples heard this, they fell to the ground and were overcome by fear. ⁷But Jesus came and touched them, saying, "Get up and do not be afraid." And when they looked up, they saw no one except Jesus himself alone. (Matthew 17:1-8 NRSV)

"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven ...Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect. (Matthew 5:43-45, 48 NRSV)

For our time we shall seek to live and interpret the witness of scripture by the Spirit, with the community, for the sake of mission, in the name of the Prince of Peace. (Scripture in Community of Christ, Affirmation 9)

Is the Bible flat? Is all scripture of equal value? Are the words of Moses, Elijah or Paul equal to the words of Jesus?

Or do we use the stories of Jesus in the Gospels as our 'lens' for reading correctly all other scripture? If two scriptures disagree, let Jesus be the referee! If Jesus and Moses disagree, we go with Jesus. If Jesus and Paul disagree, we go with Jesus.

Scripture contains Spirit-inspired *words* of God, but Jesus is the Word of God. Jesus is the ultimate revelation of God to humans. When Jesus hugs a child in blessing, God is like that. When Jesus heals the sick, God is like that. When Jesus cries out in agony on the cross, God is also suffering. Scripture points to Jesus, as John the Baptist did. It is Jesus whom we must hear, for Jesus is greater than scripture.

How do We Evaluate each Position?

We need common, agreed criteria for evaluating each position on justice, peace, violence and war.

Against whom or what do we test each position?

- 1) Jesus Christ. Our mission statement says, 'We proclaim Jesus Christ.' So we start with the stories and example of Jesus in the Gospels.
- 2) The second part of our mission statement says that we 'promote communities of joy, hope, love and peace.' How well does a particular position foster, enable and promote communities of joy, hope, love and peace?
- 3) The nine Enduring Principles are the church's agreed core values:
 - Grace and Generosity
 - Sacredness of Creation
 - Continuing Revelation
 - Worth of All Persons
 - All Are Called
 - Responsible Choices
 - Pursuit of Peace (*shalom*)
 - Unity in Diversity
 - Blessings of Community

All of these are relevant. How does a particular position embody these core values or enduring principles?

- 4) The final set of criteria are the church's goals, the five Mission Initiatives:
 - Invite people to Christ
 - Develop Disciples to Serve
 - Abolish Poverty, End Suffering
 - Pursue Peace on Earth
 - Experience Congregations in Mission

How does a particular position assist the church in fulfilling these goals or mission initiatives?

The Original Vision of Jesus: 'Love Your Enemies'

Choose a group of 3-4 people (1 min)

Read Matthew 5:38-48 as a whole group out loud with different readers in different languages whilst simultaneous translation is happening. (2 min)

Concerning Retaliation

³⁸“You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’ ³⁹But I say to you, Do not resist an evildoer. But if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also; ⁴⁰and if anyone wants to sue you and take your coat, give your cloak as well; ⁴¹and if anyone forces you to go one mile, go also the second mile. ⁴²Give to everyone who begs from you, and do not refuse anyone who wants to borrow from you.

Love for Enemies

⁴³“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ ⁴⁴But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, ⁴⁵so that you may be children of your Father in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous. ⁴⁶For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? ⁴⁷And if you greet only your brothers and sisters,^[a] what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? ⁴⁸Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

(Matthew 5:38-48 NRSV)

Footnote: ^a Matthew 5:47 Gk *your brothers*

Brief background on context of this passage eg Roman Empire, its violence, a colonized people. Jesus demonstrating Love your enemies in the crucifixion. (5 min)

Theatre for the oppressed (20 min):

- a) Turn the other cheek. No retaliation but firm resistance
- b) Give your cloak as well. Court, sued for debt and coat taken to pay.
- c) Walk the second mile. Roman soldier and Jewish peasant in colonized Judea.
- d) Love you enemy (tell the story of Dirk Willems)

In groups of 3-4 consider the following Discussion Questions on Matthew 5:38-48: (10 min)

- 1) What do you learn from this passage?
- 2) Is the resolution G1 seeking to be faithful to this teaching of Jesus? In what ways?
- 3) What questions or other comments do you have?

Whole group Discussion (10 minutes)

In the New Testament there are many more passages than the Sermon on the Mount on non-retaliation.

Non-Retaliatioin in the New Testament

“Gordon Zerbe cites over thirty texts that witness to some form of non-retaliation, including not cursing, not litigating, forbearing, enduring, and being at peace.” (Swartley p. 409). They are listed as follows:

Passive Responses

- (1) “not repaying evil for evil” (1 Thess. 5:15a; Rom. 12:17a);
- (2) “not taking vengeance for oneself” (Rom. 12:19a);
- (3) “not cursing” (Rom. 12:14);
- (4) “forbearance” (Phil. 4:5; 1 Thess. 5:14; 1 Cor. 13:4; Gal. 5:22; 2 Cor. 6:6);
- (5) “endurance” (1 Cor. 4:12; 2 Cor. 11:20; cf. Col. 3:13; 2 Thess. 1:4; Rom. 12:12; 2 Cor. 6:4; 1 Cor. 13:7; cf. Rom. 5:3-4; 2 Cor. 1:6);
- (6) not litigating (1 Cor. 6:1-8);
- (7) “not reckoning evil” (1 Cor. 13:6).

Active responses include:

- (8) responding with good/kind deeds (1 Thess. 5:15b; Rom. 12:17b, 20-21);
- (9) “blessing” (Rom. 12:1.4; 1 Cor. 4:12);
- (10) “Conciliating” (1 Cor. 4:13);
- (11) “being at peace” (1 Thess. 5:13; Rom. 12:18; cf. Gal. 5:20, 22);
- (12) “forgiving” (2 Cor. 2:7-10; Col. 3:13);
- (13) “loving” (1 Cor. 13:4-7; cf. 2 Cor. 6:6; Rom. 12:9; 1 Thess. 3:12).⁶⁷ (Swartley p. 214)

Romans Chapter 12

“Do not curse” (12:14)

“Repay no one evil for evil” (12:17)

“Never avenge yourselves” (12:19)

“Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good” (12:21)

“Leave it to the wrath of God” (12:19)

“Vengeance is mine” (12:19)

“If your enemy is hungry, feed him, . . .for by so doing you will heap burning coals upon his head” (12:20)

“All of these admonitions are *peacemaking means to peaceable ends*. As Richard Hays succinctly puts it commenting on Romans 12, “There is not a syllable in the Pauline letters that can be cited in support of Christians employing violence.” (Swartley p. 238)

“The consistency of the New Testament’s ethical stance of non retaliation to evil is striking, for it presents the gospel’s solution to the [dominance] of ... violence in human culture. Nowhere does the New Testament condone the use of violence by Christ’s followers, even as a means to defeat evil.” (Swartley p.428)

(From Willard M. Swartley, *Covenant of Peace – The Missing Peace* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006))

Holy War

But as for the towns of these peoples that the Lord your God is giving you as an inheritance, you must not let anything that breathes remain alive. You shall annihilate them—the Hittites and the Amorites, the Canaanites and the Perizzites, the Hivites and the Jebusites—just as the Lord your God has commanded, so that they may not teach you to do all the abhorrent things that they do for their gods, and you thus sin against the Lord your God. (Deuteronomy 20:16-18 NRSV)

The crusading idea requires that the cause shall be holy (and no cause is more holy than religion), that the war shall be fought under God and with his help, that the crusaders shall be godly and their enemies ungodly, and the war shall be prosecuted unsparingly. (Roland Bainton)¹

The crusades ... place violence (and especially killing) at the heart, not the periphery of faithful discipleship. (Lisa Sowle Cahill)²

Holy War teaches that God commands the destruction of evil through the destruction of evil people. In totalitarian forms of Christendom, this was by crusade, or by inquisition. Sometimes, it is argued that this is the wisdom of God. The only way to overcome evil in this world is for the unrighteous, and their families, to be destroyed without mercy – old and young, men, women and children. Only then is the earth and society cleansed and granted the possibility of a new beginning, just as the people of Israel were when they entered the promised land, or as the Christian crusaders destroyed all the inhabitants of Jerusalem. The Puritans also believed in Holy War and Oliver Cromwell's wars in Catholic Ireland (1649-50) are an example of this.

Terrorism can also be a form of Holy War, carried out by groups or by nation states. The Islamic concept of *jihad*, however, means 'struggle' or 'striving,' first against evil in oneself. In terms of war, it is a form of Just War (see pp. 10-14), with clear criteria of ethical restraint. Muslim fundamentalists or *jihadists* who practice terrorism are sometimes called deviants by other Muslims.

Fundamentalist and totalitarian ideologies can also be vehicles for Holy War. The terrible Nazi genocide of Jews in World War II was a form of Holy War. A war that is legitimized by Just War criteria to begin with can become a Holy War, such as a war to make the world safe for democracy. The use of nuclear weapons can also be instruments of Holy War – weapons that result in the destruction of all life. There is no discrimination between civilians and military, soldiers and women, children or the old, human life or other creatures. All life is destroyed without mercy.

Position held by: Pope Urban II and Bernard of Clairvaux in the 11th and 12th centuries. Puritans in England and the American Colonies in the seventeenth century. Certain fundamentalist and totalitarian ideologies like Fascism and Communism in the 20th century. Al-Qaeda and far right extremist groups in the 21st century.

¹ Roland Bainton, *Christian Attitudes Toward War and Peace: A Historical Survey and Critical Re-evaluation* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1960) 148

² Lisa Sowle Cahill, *Love Your Enemies – Discipleship, Pacifism and Just War Theory* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994) 125

Evaluation of Holy War

In your own words, summarize the Holy War position:

Mission Statement	Your Comments
Does Holy War harmonise with the mission statement?	
We proclaim Jesus Christ (The Jesus of the Gospels)	
We promote communities of Joy, Hope, Love and Peace (Zion, the Kingdom of God on Earth)	

Enduring Principles	Your Comments
Does Holy War harmonise with the following Enduring Principles?	
Grace and Generosity	
Sacredness of Creation	
Continuing Revelation	
Worth of All Persons	
All Are Called	
Responsible Choices	
Pursuit of Peace (Shalom)	
Unity in Diversity	
Blessings of Community	

Mission Initiatives	Your Comments
Does Holy War help further these initiatives?	
• Invite people to Christ	
• Develop Disciples to Serve	
• Abolish Poverty, End Suffering	
• Pursue Peace on Earth	
• Experience Congregations in Mission	

What are the strengths and weaknesses of this position and your overall conclusions?

Just War

Since violence and coercion can have terrible consequences, using them to enforce human rights, defend one's country or resist oppression must be contained and guided by a limiting ethical framework. This report provides a synopsis of one such framework - the Just War tradition - as mandated by item G9 of the 2004 World Conference.

The **Just War** tradition has a history of around 1,600 years in Christianity. The framework outlined below is the first comprehensive statement of the Just War tradition by members of the Community of Christ. The Community of Christ Peace and Justice Committee have done this work. Although the committee represented diverse views, the discussion was conducted with a spirit of grace and heartfelt give-and-take in an atmosphere of respect. In their discussions and drafting they have used a variety of sources including scholarly work on the Just War tradition from Augustine onwards, the tradition of the worth of persons in the Community of Christ, the International Committee of the Red Cross, US Army Rules of Engagement and other relevant literature.

The Just War Framework outlined here is only one position represented by members of Community of Christ. It is thus not necessarily intended that this statement become the official church position on the ethics of war. Those members that hold other positions (such as pacifism or Christian realism) are encouraged to speak from their ethical positions in any debate on the ethics of war within the church or wider society.

This statement is intended to help those who want to take the Just War tradition seriously and to apply it rigorously. It is hoped that this will enable members to contribute their voices in an informed way on particular wars as citizens and voters. It is also hoped that it will provide helpful ethical guidance for those who serve in the military or who would consider military service in times of war. One possible consequence for those who apply Just War rules seriously in a violent conflict is that they may need to be selective conscientious objectors. That is, if the war is just, they will be willing to fight or support, but if it is not, they may refuse to fight or support and may be willing, out of conscience, to protest and resist such a war.

Finally, the committee also humbly recognizes that there are other statements on the criteria for Just War that members of the church might draw upon in their evaluations and decision-making.

The Community of Christ version of Just War stated in the following pages consists of three parts:

1. Jus ad Bellum: Just Initiation of War
2. Jus in Bello: Just Conduct in War
3. Jus post Bellum: Just Termination of War

This is then followed by a glossary of terms and further reading.

Peace and Justice Committee, December 2006

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1. Jus ad Bellum: Just Initiation of War

Clear justification for military action is required in the Just War tradition before military action can be entered into. All the following rules have to be observed in order that war can justly be declared. Otherwise the war is unjust and should be opposed.

1. **Just Cause.** Military action or violent force can only be carried out for self-defense, to repel aggression, or protect human rights such as those outlined in the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the UN Genocide Convention.
2. **Right Intention.** The intent of the war must be for self-defense, to stop aggression, or protect human rights. It must not be a pretense for national self-interest, economic gain, hatred or revenge.
3. **Legitimate Authority.** No decision to initiate military action should occur without reference to a democratic process. Any such decision should ideally involve a multilateral commitment initiated by or with the explicit support of the United Nations Security Council.
4. **Last Resort.** All reasonable non-violent, and preferably non-coercive, methods must be exhausted before a state resorts to military intervention.
5. **Probability of Success.** Military action should only occur if there is a reasonable chance of success based on credible evidence. If defeat is unavoidable it is unjust and meaningless to waste human life and economic and environmental resources.
6. **Proportionality.** The scale, duration and intensity of military action must be the minimum necessary to achieve the intended goal. It must not outweigh the potential costs - human, material and environmental.
7. **Prior Declaration.** A formal declaration of war and prior warning of intent to use violence must be made before taking military action so that the opponent has an opportunity to stop their unjust actions and thus prevent war.

2. Jus in Bello: Just Conduct in War

Just conduct of war is about valuing the worth of persons during military action. Even in conflict, respect for the dignity of all human beings is required. Violence still has to be restrained and limited by ethical considerations. All the following rules should be observed for the war to be carried out justly. Otherwise the war is unjust and its continuation should be opposed or protested.

1. **Discrimination.** Those carrying out military action must only attack human and material targets that are engaged in combat or abusing human rights. Civilians, relief and medical workers, combatants who surrender, the sick and wounded and prisoners of war are to be protected.
2. **Proportionality.** Methods should be selected in proportion to the threat. Tactics, use of weapons and targeting must avoid causing disproportionate suffering—especially for the civilian population. Targeting health facilities, schools and historical cultural sites must be avoided where not absolutely necessary for self-defense.
3. **No Means ‘Evil in Themselves’ (Mala In Se).** Tactics which are ‘inherently evil’ (not just inappropriate in terms of proportionality) are forbidden, such as: genocide, ethnic cleansing, torture or rape. Weapons of mass destruction (WMD) like nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons are prohibited. Weapons whose effects cannot be adequately controlled, such as antipersonnel land mines and cluster munitions should not be used.

3. Jus post Bellum: Just Termination of War

Just termination of war is about restoring right relationships, accountability, repairing harm, restoring order and building the political structure of good governance and a just peace. Again, all the following rules have to be observed in order that war can justly be concluded. Otherwise the war's conclusion is unjust and is likely to sow the seeds of future conflict. In such event it is a responsibility to protest and oppose such action.

1. **Just Cause for Termination.** Military action must only be terminated once the security of a people's human rights has been assured and a reasonable chance for peace and stability exists or continued combat does more harm than good. Early or delayed exits for political expediency are irresponsible.
2. **Right Intention.** The post-conflict process must be undertaken with the intention of bringing lasting peace and restoring right relationships between the antagonists; it must not be done with the intention to exact vengeance or to exploit the situation. Any party that allegedly violates this principle should be referred to the International Court of Justice (states) or the International Criminal Court (individuals) as appropriate.
3. **Legitimate Authority.** No post-conflict settlements should be negotiated without reference to the representations of all relevant parties.
4. **Discrimination.** Those who have acted as aggressors or who have abused basic human rights (such as defined by various United Nations instruments) must be held accountable. Those who have allegedly committed such acts should be referred to appropriate institutions of justice, such as courts martial, tribunals, truth commission or the International Criminal Court. Punitive measures must not be placed upon a population as a whole.
5. **Proportionality.** Punitive measures against perpetrators should be relative to the scale of abuses committed. Victims should receive reparations that justly consider their suffering. Reparations should be made in a timely manner.

Glossary of Terms

The following glossary gives the definitions of terms understood by the committee in their discussions:

Aggression – An unprovoked attack by one country or armed group against another.

Antipersonnel mines – According to the Antipersonnel Mine Ban Convention, it is a “munition designed to be placed under, on or near the ground or other surface area and to be exploded by the presence, proximity or contact of a person” and that “will incapacitate, injure or kill one or more persons.”

Biological weapons – Weapons that use bacterial, viral or other disease-bearing organisms. These are one of the three types of weapons of mass destruction.

Chemical weapons – Any weapons which uses manufactured toxic substances such as gases or poisons. These are one of the three types of weapons of mass destruction.

Cluster bombs – A weapon which contains many sub-munitions – ‘bomblets’ – which are scattered over a wide area.

Ethnic cleansing – Mass forcible removal of a population, through intimidation and killing. Genocide – Acts “committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group,” according to the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.

Human rights – These are basic standard of treatment that cannot be bought or sold, given or taken away from any human. These rights exist from birth simply because one is a human being. As an example, see the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Inherently evil – Something that is morally wrong no matter how it is used, or for whatever ends it is used to achieve.

International Committee of the Red Cross – According to their website, they are “an independent, neutral organization ensuring humanitarian protection and assistance for victims of war and armed violence.” Based in Geneva, they are the body mandated to monitor compliance with the international laws of war, such as the Geneva Conventions.

Just War – A Christian ethical theory that argues that the use of violence can be justified in certain specific circumstances, when action is constrained by moral principles.

Multilateral – Actions or organizations involving three or more countries. Often used to describe intergovernmental organizations such as the United Nations, European Union, African Union, North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) or the Organization of American States. Compare this with “Unilateral” – action taken by one nation.

Nuclear weapons – Weapons whose power comes from a nuclear fission or fusion reaction. These are one of the three types of weapons of mass destruction.

Reparations – Payment or other form of symbolic compensation (e.g. memorials, grants, in-kind contributions) to redress wrongs committed or damage caused.

Restorative justice – A philosophy of criminal justice that is victim and community centered. It focuses more on the processes of atonement, reconciliation and forgiveness than on punitive measures (though these also may be involved).

Torture – Within the context of war it is physical or mental cruelty inflicted on someone by someone in authority, with the intent to yield information, obtain a confession, inflict punishment or demoralize the person. In keeping with the Community of Christ Statement on Torture (<http://www.cofchrist.org/peacejustice/pj-torture.asp>), we view torture as a form of human degradation that is ungodly, undermines life before God, destroys the worth of persons, and devastates hope for a just and peaceful world

United Nations Security Council – The UN body responsible for managing threats to international peace and security. Decisions made by the five permanent member countries (which have vetoes) and the 10 rotating members are legally binding on all UN member states.

Revision November 27, 2006 (Further reading deleted to save space)

Evaluation of Just War

In your own words, summarize the Just War position:

Mission Statement Does Just War harmonise with the mission statement?	Your Comments
We proclaim Jesus Christ (The Jesus of the Gospels)	
We promote communities of Joy, Hope, Love and Peace (Zion, the Kingdom of God on earth)	

Enduring Principles Does Just War harmonise with the following Enduring Principles?	Your Comments
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Sacredness of Creation	
Continuing Revelation	
Worth of All Persons	
All Are Called	
Responsible Choices	
Pursuit of Peace (Shalom)	
Unity in Diversity	
Blessings of Community	

Mission Initiatives Does Just War help further these initiatives?	Your Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invite people to Christ 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop Disciples to Serve 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abolish Poverty, End Suffering 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pursue Peace on Earth 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience Congregations in Mission 	

What are the strengths and weaknesses of this position and your overall conclusions?

Just Peace

Seek *shalom* and pursue it.

Justice, and only justice, you shall pursue.³

Just Peace is a new way of doing peace. It is a new position, beyond Christian traditions of crusade, Just War, and pacifism. Just Peace was pioneered by the United Church of Christ. Other denominations like Presbyterian and United Methodist have followed.⁴ Recently it has been embraced wholeheartedly by the World Council of Churches. It is seen as a new, creative way for Christians to work together for peace, whether from pacifist or Just War traditions. It is important for members and friends of Community of Christ to also understand this new peace way to facilitate helpful conversations and peace work with other Christians. It can also help unity in the Community of Christ.

What is Just Peace?

“The real sin of the church is not that she allows war, but that she tolerates the state of things that leads to war.”

(Frederic Lewis Donaldson, Leicester, November 1914)⁵

First, think about holistic peace, the greater peace – that is, peace with justice, or *shalom*.

“*Shalom*...points to the interdependent relationship between justice and peace. *Shalom* is usually translated as ‘completeness, soundness, welfare, peace,’ but *shalom* also links peace with all the following concepts: justice (*mishpat*), rightness (*tsedeq*) or righteousness (*tsedeqah*), compassion (*hesed*) and truthfulness (*emet*). There is no peace without justice (*mishpat*) ...”⁶

In many passages of scripture justice is the companion of peace (Psalm 85:10, Isaiah 32:17, James 3:18).

Just Peace can be described as *shalom* on earth today, adapted for modern conditions.⁷

Just Peace connotes wholeness. It is not merely an absence of conflict and war, but a state of well-being and harmony in which all relationships are rightly ordered between God, humankind and creation. Just Peace is associated with the reign of God for which we plea when we pray, “Let your kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven...”⁸

In the academic discipline of Peace Studies the distinction is made between the Greater and Lesser Peace or Positive and Negative Peace. The Greater or Positive peace is the presence of justice, just systems, the end of racism, no economic oppression etc. The Lesser or Negative Peace is simply no overt violence or war at this time. However, questions of injustice are present. Just Peace is working for the Greater or Positive Peace.

What we historically called Zion, the Kingdom of God on earth, can also be called Just Peace:

And the Lord called his people Zion, because they were of one heart and one mind, and dwelt in righteousness; and there was no poor among them; and Enoch continued his preaching in righteousness unto the children of God. (*Doctrine and Covenants* 36:2h-i, June 1830)

³ Psalm 34:14. Deuteronomy 16:20, NRSV.

⁴ UCC, *Just Peace Church Handbook*, 2015, 3-4 (<http://www.uccfiles.com/pdf/just-peace-handbook-06-2015.pdf>)

⁵ *Leicester Mercury*, 27.11.1914

⁶ World Council of Churches, *Just Peace Companion* Second Edition, 2012, 20. Most of this paper draws on the very helpful document.

⁷ WCC, 19

⁸ WCC, 23

Shalom is the condition of Zion. It is a community of reconciled and reconciling people who live justly together, and who have abolished poverty. Community of Christ has thus always been a Just Peace tradition. Today, the vision of peace promoted by Community of Christ is that of a Just Peace.

How is Just Peace different from Just War?

Just War focuses on several criteria that are claimed to permit the justified use of violence in war, for example: just cause, civilian immunity, minimum harm to achieve ends etc. A draft version of Just War for Community of Christ was produced, by the Peace and Justice Committee in December 2006 and was discussed at the International Leaders’ Meeting at the 2007 World Conference. It is a well thought out and researched document, but at the present time it has no official standing. It can be found on pp.8-12.

Just War is now thought to be obsolete by many Christians. In practice, no war is or has been just. The Just War tradition is easily manipulated by governments through nationalist propaganda and self-interest. The truth of a war is often hidden until sometime after a war. Although the Just War tradition would completely reject weapons of mass destruction, like nuclear weapons, states continue to develop and threaten to use them. Just War has nothing to say about racism, sexism, economic justice and so on. The focus of Just War is very narrow. In comparison, Just Peace is about justice in all areas of life.

Just Peace is fundamentally different to Just War.⁹ Its focus is on justice, not war. Just Peace seeks justice and peace in every sphere of life, including the following four contexts:¹⁰

<p>FOR PEACE IN THE COMMUNITY so that all may live free from fear (Micah 4:4)</p> <p>Overcoming the violence of poverty, racism, caste, sexism and bigotry. Love your neighbor as yourself.</p>	<p>FOR PEACE WITH THE EARTH so that life is sustained</p> <p>End greed and violence against the earth. Live in simple dignity, become stewards personally, and together overcome climate change for the sake of our children and grandchildren...</p>
<p>FOR PEACE IN THE MARKETPLACE so that all may live with dignity</p> <p>Justice in the market place, overcoming the huge gap between rich and poor. Enable all people to live full lives with dignity, regardless of class, gender, religion, race or ethnicity. Over-consumption and deprivation are forms of violence. Cut military expenditures and end arms trade – stop profit from weapons of death and destruction.</p>	<p>FOR PEACE AMONG THE PEOPLES so that all human lives are protected</p> <p>Confess that the spirit and logic of violence is sin. Human security first, not national security. Nations embrace truth, turn swords into ploughshares, and not learn war anymore. Nuclear weapons threaten mass destruction, and climate change is the proliferation of lifestyles of mass extinction.</p>

Community of Christ’s mission initiatives, enduring principles, world conference resolutions, recent and older sections of the Doctrine and Covenants all support these four areas of peace and justice making. The worth of all persons and the sacredness of creation are basic. Just Peace is another way of affirming our long tradition of Zion, and at the same time providing a framework for our recent work on mission, values and beliefs. Just Peace gives us an ecumenical language and framework to build bridges and to partner with other Christians.

⁹ WCC, 7, 4

¹⁰ WCC, 9-13, 53-75, UCC, 5

Just Peace is about Reconciliation

“Just Peace is based in a spiritual grounding rooted in the Bible” and the life, ministry, teachings, death and resurrection of Jesus.¹¹ Jesus told us to love our enemies, pray for our persecutors,¹² and not to use deadly weapons.¹³ His peace is expressed by the spirit of the Beatitudes.¹⁴ The church that lives the peace it proclaims is what Jesus called a city set on a hill for all to see.¹⁵ Believers exercising the ministry of reconciliation ... point beyond the churches to what God is doing in the world.¹⁶

Just Peace is Critical of Violence and the Christendom Heritage

The crucifixion of Jesus is “God’s way to unmask the logic of violence and its sacrificial legitimization and thus break the cycle of violence and death. The violence which was meant to destroy and eliminate Jesus has lost its mythical sacred power through his very death and resurrection. Thus, the link between religion and violence, the possibility of religious legitimization of violence, is abolished.”¹⁷

“While the early Christian community followed the example of the alternative praxis initiated by Jesus and the apostles and saw in the nonviolent witness of the martyrs the seedbed of the church, things changed when Christianity became the dominant religion of the Roman Empire.” This led to persecution of Jews, missionary work that used the sword to persuade northern Europeans to be baptized, the crusades, the inquisition, the wars of religion during and after the Protestant Reformation, and colonization by both Catholic and Protestant European empires.¹⁸ The recent “war on terrorism” used crusading language that justified torture.

“The way of Just Peace takes its direction from the renunciation of violence which Jesus teaches in the Sermon on the Mount and aims at challenging and breaking the cycle of violence by transforming conflict and accepting the adversary or enemy as partner in the effort to re-establishing right relationships in community.”¹⁹

“The end of the Christendom era brings profound possibilities for the churches to reclaim their calling as the body of Christ. But the churches and their pastors, elders, theologians, sociologists, missiologists and other thinkers and dreamers will need to rethink almost every aspect of church life through a post-Christendom lens – including Christian understandings of war. This is a task of vital importance and pressing urgency.”²⁰

In Community of Christ, we have historically been critical of the changes inaugurated by the Roman Emperor Constantine (ruled 306-337) that led to the ‘Christendom’ model of Christianity. “Restoration” was a longing and an attempt to return to the ‘Old Jerusalem Gospel,’ the pattern and power of the early Christian church. Our understanding of ‘the apostasy’ was perhaps simplistic and naïve, but it contained

¹¹ UCC, 5

¹² Matthew 5:43-48

¹³ Matthew 26:52-53

¹⁴ WCC, 2; Matthew 5:3-11

¹⁵ Matthew 5:14

¹⁶ 2 Corinthians 5:18

¹⁷ WCC, 36

¹⁸ WCC, 38-37

¹⁹ WCC, 41-42

²⁰ WCC, 96. See also Stuart Murray, *Post-Christendom – Church and Mission in a Strange New World*, second edition (Cascade Books: Eugene, Oregon, 2018)

in principle an important suspicion of Christendom. Unfortunately, we bought into the violence of Christendom. We need to repent of that violence and return to the non-violence of Jesus.

Responsibility to Protect (R2P)

What, though, of vulnerable populations in great peril? Is there not a responsibility for the United Nations to use force to prevent genocide, a “responsibility to protect”?²¹ Some distinguish between military action by a nation and “just policing,” which takes place under the mandate of the United Nations and is rigorously bound and restrained by international law. “Just policing has been put forward as a proposal to overcome the tension between the positions of Just War and of Christian pacifism.” European Mennonites have accepted this position, but not all members of peace churches agree. Therefore, this discussion continues.²² Many peace churches argue that “protection becomes necessary when prevention has failed. Hence, the churches emphasize the necessity to concentrate on prevention.”²³ Violence is always ambiguous in its fruit, even when rigorously accountable and controlled. Choosing the option of violence ends the search for creative, non-violent solutions to a conflict. However, there remains the duty to protect peoples in great peril from genocide.

Beyond Just War vs. Pacifism

“Just Peace Christians and their communities have been struggling to resolve the tension between the two major Christian peace traditions that has shaped much of the ecumenical discussion for the last more than 60 years, i.e. the position of those in the historic majority churches that follow the theory of the Just War and those in the historic peace churches who advocate a position of nonviolence and Christian pacifism. The approach developed here with regard to the issues of war and peace, violence and nonviolence builds on the conviction that the Christian community as the body of Christ is to live as a prophetic sign of peace in a violent world. By its calling and vocation, the Christian church is to be a peace church. This conviction is itself the fruit of a long process on critical self-assessment in the Christian community that has taken place in and through the ecumenical movement. It indicates a fundamental paradigm shift in theology and Christian ethics that has gradually taken the discussion beyond the old debate between the Just War theory and pacifism towards the vision of Just Peace and the commitment to just peacemaking... Even though the former opposition between the positions of the Just War theory and Christian pacifism has given way to the recognition of a gradual convergence, the two positions still remain distinct and find themselves engaged in a pilgrimage where the pilgrims are at different places along several routes.”²⁴

Just Peace Practices

For the World Council of Churches, there are four Just Peace practices: 1) Peace Education, 2) Inter-church and Interreligious Peace Work, 3) Gender, Peace and Security and 4) Indigenous Matters.²⁵

Conclusion

Just Peace focuses on justice, on holistic *shalom*, and on being a living expression of the Kingdom of God today. Community of Christ’s tradition of Zion, from its very beginning, is a form of Just Peace. The work the church has done in the last 20 years on mission initiatives, basic beliefs, enduring principles and so on

²¹ WCC, 97, 99

²² WCC, 96, 97

²³ WCC, 101

²⁴ WCC, 86-87

²⁵ WCC, 113-156. In comparison there are 10 Just Peace practices in Susan Brooks Thistlethwaite (Editor), *Interfaith Just Peacemaking: Jewish, Christian, and Muslim Perspectives on the New Paradigm of Peace and War* (New York, Palgrave MacMillan, 2012)

is in harmony with, and supportive of, the Just Peace paradigm. Just Peace affirms our Zion tradition and is a helpful framework for our contemporary clarification of values and mission.

Just Peace can help those who hold to the Just War theory, and those who hold to Christian pacifism, to converge and work productively together without compromising their senses of integrity. Just Policing can perhaps help us address the responsibility to protect (R2P) vulnerable populations in grave peril.

The Just Peace paradigm can further reconciliation in Community of Christ between those holding different positions and help to maintain the unity of the body.

Just Peace helps us to look critically at the Constantinian Shift (see p.20) and at the forms of both Catholic and Protestant Christendom where the church legitimates the violence of Empire and nation. This is a betrayal of the work and ministry of Jesus, who was crucified by Empire. In Just Peace, there is always a preference for the non-violence of Jesus.

Understanding Just Peace gives us a language with which to talk ecumenically about peace and justice.

The Just Peace framework helps all of us as disciples of Jesus fulfil our call to be a church of peace and justice.

Position held by: United Church of Christ, United Methodist Church, World Council of Churches.

Evaluation of Just Peace

In your own words, summarize the Just Peace position:

Mission Statement	Your Comments
Does Just Peace harmonise with the mission statement?	
We proclaim Jesus Christ (The Jesus of the Gospels)	
We promote communities of Joy, Hope, Love and Peace (Zion, the Kingdom of God on Earth)	

Enduring Principles	Your Comments
Does Just Peace harmonise with the following Enduring Principles?	
Grace and Generosity	
Sacredness of Creation	
Continuing Revelation	
Worth of All Persons	
All Are Called	
Responsible Choices	
Pursuit of Peace (Shalom)	
Unity in Diversity	
Blessings of Community	

Mission Initiatives	Your Comments
Does Just Peace help further these initiatives?	
• Invite people to Christ	
• Develop Disciples to Serve	
• Abolish Poverty, End Suffering	
• Pursue Peace on Earth	
• Experience Congregations in Mission	

What are the strengths and weaknesses of this position and your overall conclusions?

Holy Peacemaking

- *The use of peaceful means to bring about societal change and reconciliation between oppressor and oppressed.*

“You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’ But I say to you, Do not resist an evildoer. But if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also; and if anyone wants to sue you and take your coat, give your cloak as well; and if anyone forces you to go one mile, go also the second mile...

“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good.... Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.” (From Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount - Matthew 5:38-48 NRSV)

“Then they came to Jerusalem. And [Jesus] entered the temple and began to drive out those who were selling and those who were buying in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves;¹⁶ and he would not allow anyone to carry anything through the temple.¹⁷ He was teaching and saying, “Is it not written,

‘My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations’?
But you have made it a den of robbers.”

And when the chief priests and the scribes heard it, they kept looking for a way to kill him; for they were afraid of him, because the whole crowd was spellbound by his teaching.” (Mark 11:15-18 NRSV)

Then they came and laid hands on Jesus and arrested him. Suddenly, one of those with Jesus put his hand on his sword, drew it, and struck the slave of the high priest, cutting off his ear. Then Jesus said to him, “Put your sword back into its place; for all who take the sword will perish by the sword. Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels?... Jesus said to the crowds, “Have you come out with swords and clubs to arrest me as though I were a bandit? Day after day I sat in the temple teaching, and you did not arrest me. (Matthew 26:50-55 NRSV)

For even if soldiers came to John and received advice on how to act, and even a centurion became a believer, the Lord in subsequently disarming Peter disarmed every soldier.

(Tertullian, Carthage, N. Africa, c155-c240 CE)²⁶

For we no longer take up “sword against nation.” Nor do we “learn war any more,” having become children of peace, for the sake of Jesus, who is our leader.

(Origen, Alexandria, Egypt, c184-c253 CE)²⁷

Between 100 and 313 no Christian writers ... approved of Christian participation in warfare. In fact, all those who wrote on the subject disapproved of the practice. (John Driver)²⁸

My fellow countrymen are making great sacrifices for their king and country, and I want to be willing to give my life, if need be, for my King, the King of kings, and for the establishment of his kingdom – to be a patriot in the great sense.

(F. Henry Edwards, British Community of Christ Conscientious Objector in WWI)²⁹

²⁶ John Driver, *How Christians Made Peace With War – Early Christian Understandings of War* (Scottsdale, Penn: Herald Press, 1988), 41

²⁷ John Driver, 26

²⁸ John Driver, 14

²⁹ Francis Henry Edwards, Letter to the Editor, Birmingham, England, February 13, 1915, *The Saint’s Herald*, (May 12, 1915): 40.

In the Bible, there is a tradition against Empire. The Exodus of slaves from Pharaoh's exploitative oppression is the first story. Jesus also stands in the Exodus tradition against Empire when he reads Isaiah 61:1-2b at the beginning of his public ministry in his home synagogue in Nazareth.³⁰ In Mark's Gospel we read:

Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news."³¹

John is arrested! All the first hearers and readers of Mark's Gospel knew that King Herod and the Roman Empire were at work. In response to the evil of Empire, Jesus proclaims the good news of God and the good news of God's kingdom. Jesus is executed, crucified by the rich and powerful with the complicity of the Roman Empire. When the first Christians called Jesus Lord, they were saying that Caesar was not. Consequently, they were brutally persecuted for the first 300 years of their existence by the Roman Empire. But against Empire they were not violent.

The non-violent tradition of early Christianity changed when the Roman Emperor Constantine came to power and issued the Edict of Milan in 313, legitimizing Christianity. Constantine was decisive in changing Christianity but the change was also bigger than Constantine and continued after him. It was during the reign of Emperor Theodosius I in 380 that Christianity became the state church of the Roman Empire, under the Edict of Thessalonica. It is helpful to talk about this process of change as the Constantinian shift.³² James Carroll, a former Roman Catholic priest, sums up the impact of Constantine for the church as follows:

When the power of the Empire became joined to the ideology of the Church, the Empire was immediately recast and reenergized, and the Church became an entity so different from what had preceded it as to be almost unrecognizable. It goes without saying that the conversion of Constantine, for Church and Empire, both, led to consequences better and worse – although not for Jews, for whom, from this, nothing good would come.³³

Not only Jews suffered. Christian European empires, Catholic and Protestant, invaded and crushed indigenous people in the Americas, Africa and Asia. In World War I and II, Catholics slaughtered Catholics and Protestants killed Protestants. Christianity became discredited for many Europeans.

Holy Peace is a commitment by Christian groups and individuals to reclaim the non-violence of early Christianity, and to live lives that resist injustice nonviolently. The early Christians, the monastic movement, and the historic peace churches, (including Hutterites, Mennonites, Church of the Brethren and Quakers) have all promoted nonviolent action for justice. Members of these movements have often suffered greatly for their faith and for their stands against war.

³⁰ Luke 4:18-19

³¹ Mark 1:14-15

³² John Howard Yoder for instance talks about the Constantinian shift. See John H. Yoder *Christian; Attitudes to War, Peace, and Revolution – A Companion to Bainton* (Goshen Biblical Seminary, 1983) chapter 3 The Meaning of the Constantinian Shift, p. 37-54.

³³ James Carroll, *Constantine's Sword - The Church and the Jews: A History* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 2001) 171

No Hutterite has ever committed a murder in their 490 years of history. Their communal life together abolishes poverty completely. They model together in their communities how a just, non-violent world is possible for everyone. The Mennonite Central Committee began in 1920 to help starving Mennonites in the Ukraine. They expanded their work to serve all humans. Today, the total annual budget of MCC USA and MCC Canada is around \$60 million, supporting relief, development and peace making. Dan West, a farmer and member of the Church of the Brethren, was serving refugee children in 1938, during the Spanish Civil War, when he conceived of the idea that became Heifer International. Now, it is a development charity working in many countries. Its revenue in 2017 was \$146 million. Mennonites have been in the forefront of the development of the Restorative Justice movement.

Quakers, birthed in 1652 out of the terrible violence of the English Civil War, have also been in the forefront of speaking truth to power and of honoring 'that of God in everyone' for over 350 years. They have been in the forefront of prison reform, ending slavery, and in the 20th century alone, helping found over 120 non-governmental organizations, for example Oxfam, Amnesty International, Greenpeace etc.³⁴ In 1947, Quakers received the Nobel Peace Prize for their work in war-torn Europe after World War II. They worked alongside Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in the American Civil Rights movement in the 1950s and 1960s.

In the twentieth century, perhaps the most famous and innovative practitioners of non-violence were Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr. Gandhi, who successfully led the Indian independence movement, was influenced by his own Hindu religion, Jesus' Sermon on the Mount (Matthew chapters 5-7), the American Henry Thoreau's *Civil Disobedience*, the Russian writer Tolstoy and the English art critic John Ruskin's book, *Unto this Last*, which argues for the equal worth of all honest work. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. led the American civil rights movement, which ended segregation and eventually enabled the election of a black president. At his Nobel Peace talk in 1964, King said, "Nonviolence is a powerful and just weapon. Indeed, it is a weapon unique in history, which cuts without wounding and ennobles the [person] who wields it."

This position argues that the pursuit of justice must always be non-violent. It is better to be crucified than to inflict crucifixion on others. Redemptive suffering can create change. Non-cooperation with evil is as important as cooperation with the good. Petitions, boycotts, strikes, mass protests and civil disobedience are examples of non-violent action for justice. Gene Sharp lists 198 non-violent methods of working for justice.³⁵ Commitment to non-violent change can bring about many creative solutions to conflicts.

Position held by: Christians until the fourth century, monasteries from the fourth century, Anabaptists (eg. Hutterites, Mennonites and the Church of the Brethren) and Quakers from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Tolstoy, the Bruderhof, Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker movement, and Martin Luther King, Jr.. Gandhi, a Hindu, is an enormously influential proponent of this position. Non-violent movements also caused regime changes in the Philippines and Chile, and ended Communist governments in Eastern Europe in 1989.

³⁴ Sally Rickerman, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting "Twentieth Century Organizations Founded by Individual Quakers, or Groups of Quakers or Quakers in Other Organizations" (*Advancement and Outreach – R6*) Rickerman lists over 120 organisations that Quakers had a hand in starting.

³⁵ Gene Sharp, *The Politics of Nonviolent Action Part Three: The Dynamics of Nonviolent Action* (Boston, Ma: Extending Horizons Books, Porter Sargent Publishers, 1973) chapters 3-8

Evaluation of Holy Peacemaking

In your own words, summarize the Holy Peace (Nonviolent Action) position:

Mission Statement Does Holy Peace (Nonviolent Action) harmonise with the mission statement?	Your Comments
We proclaim Jesus Christ (The Jesus of the Gospels)	
Promote communities of Joy, Hope, Love and Peace (Zion, the Kingdom of God on Earth)	

Enduring Principles Does Holy Peace (Nonviolent Action) harmonise with the following Enduring Principles?	Your Comments
Grace and Generosity	
Sacredness of Creation	
Continuing Revelation	
Worth of All Persons	
All Are Called	
Responsible Choices	
Pursuit of Peace (Shalom)	
Unity in Diversity	
Blessings of Community	

Mission Initiatives Does Holy Peace (Nonviolent Action) help further these initiatives?	Your Comments
• Invite people to Christ	
• Develop Disciples to Serve	
• Abolish Poverty, End Suffering	
• Pursue Peace on Earth	
• Experience Congregations in Mission	

What are the strengths and weaknesses of this position and your overall conclusions?

What Are Your Final Conclusions?

1. What are the strengths and weaknesses of each position?

Position	Strengths	Weaknesses
Holy War		
Just War		
Just Peace		
Holy Peace (Nonviolent Action)		

2. Rank the positions in order from least liked to most liked?

- 1) _____ (least liked)
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____ (most liked)

Give your reasons for choosing your most liked position.

3. What position should the church embrace at this time?

Appendix

G-1 Nonviolence

Submitted by the British Isles Mission Centre and the Western Europe Mission Center

Summary: World Conference Resolution 1273 identifies Community of Christ as a peace church and encourages us to seek ways to achieve healing and restorative justice. Members in these mission centers recall the Christian Crusades, the colonial history of mother nations, and the nationalisms that led to world wars from 1914–1918 and 1939–1945. In addition, in 2018 the world commemorated the end of World War I. This resolution calls for Community of Christ to reject all forms of violence, including acts of terrorism, war, and the financing of wars. It also calls the church to confront and resist injustice while rejecting the notion that violence on Earth and violence against Earth can be addressed separately. Further it urges Community of Christ to continue supporting peace education and inviting members to embody Christ’s nonviolence through local, global, ecumenical, and interfaith actions.

Resolution

Whereas Jesus taught in Matthew 5:44 “love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you”; and

Whereas, No known Christian writings between 100 CE and 313 CE approve of Christian participation in warfare; and

Whereas, The founding vision of Community of Christ was of the peaceable kingdom of God on Earth, a nonviolent Zion with economic justice for all; and

Whereas, Community of Christ has been admonished from its earliest days to hear the words of the Living Christ and to listen again to the voice that calls us to the great and marvelous work of building the peaceable kingdom of God on Earth; and

Whereas, Community of Christ has a logo, inspired by Isaiah 11:1–10, that shows how nonviolence is central to the way we conceive of peace; and

Whereas, Community of Christ, today is called to become a prophetic people that embodies in the lives of its members the ministries of the Temple through the pursuit of peace, reconciliation, and healing of the spirit; and

Whereas, Community of Christ’s Enduring Principles and Mission Initiatives call us as a people to share Christ’s peace throughout all of creation and embody God’s love for all creatures; and

Whereas, Previous World Church Resolutions such as WCR 1177, WCR 1216, and WCR 1227 have supported nonviolent methods in establishing peace; and

Whereas, Biblical scholarship continues to highlight the potential for nonviolent peacebuilding inherent in the New Testament's witness to Jesus; therefore be it

Resolved, That Community of Christ reject all forms of violence, including acts of terrorism, war, and financing wars, and act upon Christ's invitation to practise nonviolence and (confront and resist) injustice; and be it further

Resolved, That Community of Christ reject the notion that violence on Earth and violence against Earth can be addressed separately and affirm the importance of addressing the environmental causes of conflict; and be it further

Resolved, That, through its Enduring Principle of Worth of All Persons, Community of Christ opposes all ideologies of violence and injustice, including those expressed in diverse forms of nationalism, populism, racism, and bigotry; and be it further

Resolved, That Community of Christ continue its support of peace education and invite its members to embody Christ's nonviolence through local, global, ecumenical, and interfaith actions toward justice and peace for all.

G-1 Nonviolence Background Statement

World Conference Resolution 1273 [2000], identifies Community of Christ as a peace church and encourages us to seek ways to achieve healing and restorative justice. On this note, in the Christian world today, churches are striving to revive the role nonviolence plays in our shared faith. Community of Christ was urged in Doctrine and Covenants 165 to "remember that the way of suffering love that leads to the cross also leads to resurrection and everlasting life in Christ's eternal community of oneness and peace."

In March 2017, a field peace team for Europe was created to consider holistic peace— personal, relational, economic, political, social, and environmental—as integral to the Enduring Principle of Pursuit of Peace (Shalom). When the idea of this resolution emerged, we asked questions like: "What role should nonviolence play, as an integral part of the gospel of Jesus Christ and of our understanding that in the pursuit of peace, peace is the way? What does it mean to become a people of the Temple, and to be a church pursuing peace on and for the Earth? What does the way of suffering love mean? How can we practice this in the world today?"

Members in the British Isles and Western Europe mission centres in Community of Christ recall the Christian crusades, the colonial history of mother-nations, and the nationalisms that led to world wars from 1914–1918 and 1939–1945. In addition, in 2018, the world commemorated the end of World War I. We believe previous World Church resolutions paved the way for this consideration. Among them are WCR 1177 [1982] (... "We, as a church, promote peace" and "We,

as a church, oppose all forms of destructive violence, such as national and international conflict, war, withholding of food, terrorism, and mental and physical abuse ... ”); WCR1216 [1990] (...“to include in the ministries of the Temple creative initiatives for peace and justice on behalf of the poor and oppressed peoples of the world, including initiatives designed to facilitate nonviolent efforts on the part of peace-loving people to reconcile oppressors and oppressed”); and WCR 1227 [1992] (...“intensify our efforts to heal the causes of violence, war, prejudice, discrimination, greed, hunger, and oppression”... “That we pledge.... [to] be actively engaged in the pursuit of peace, all as taught to us by Jesus Christ”).

For those reasons, and because the 2019 World Conference will celebrate the 25 years since the Temple in Independence, Missouri, USA, was dedicated to the pursuit of peace, reconciliation, and healing of the spirit, a resolution on nonviolence is timely and right.

Comparing Just Peace and Non-violent Action

Just Peace	Non Violent Action
<p>Just war is obsolete in modern warfare. Nuclear weapons can never be justified against just war criteria.</p> <p>Violence only justified when there is not other way to protect people in great peril, ie in danger of genocide. Responsibility to Protect (R2P).</p> <p>Two kinds of peace:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Positive peace or the greater peace, shalom peace or Zion , the presence of justice and fairness for all. b) Negative peace – end of war or violence. <p>Just Peace is for both kinds of peace. Addresses explicitly oppressive conditions that lead to violence like systemic injustice: poverty, racism, sexism, suppression of free speech or crushing non-violent protest as well as ending war.</p>	<p>Just war is wrong. Non-violence is faithful to the way of Jesus.</p> <p>Violence is never justified. However, some pacifists would see lawful police action with minimum of violence sometimes legitimate.</p> <p>Two kinds of peace:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Positive peace or the greater peace, shalom peace or Zion , the presence of justice and fairness for all. b) Negative peace – end of war or violence. <p>Non – violent action is narrower. Can just focus on Negative peace. However, used by Gandhi, Martin Luther King and Caesar Chavez to create the just or greater peace but Just Peace articulates this more clearly.</p>

Evaluation

Four Positions on Violence - Florida Winter Reunion 2019

What did you like? What went well? What was helpful?

What could be improved about the material or delivery if this class were taught again?

Other Comments?