

Resolution on the War in Afghanistan 2011

Whereas: in 2001, the Church of the Brethren General Board called for the end of military operations in Afghanistan, saying, “We are deeply concerned that these strikes will cause further death and destruction, and will exacerbate the problems confronting those working to feed and care for millions of suffering Afghan people. We also urge the US government to refrain from similar military strikes against other nations”ⁱ;

Whereas: the Church of the Brethren has issued no further statement addressing the continuing war in Afghanistan;

Whereas: this September 11 will mark 10 years since the terrorist attacks in New York City, Washington, D.C., and Pennsylvania;

Whereas: in 2010 the National Council of Churches of Christ, USA, of which the Church of the Brethren is a member, called “upon the President of the United States to negotiate a withdrawal of US and NATO forces from Afghanistan to be completed as soon as possible without further endangerment to the lives and welfare of US and NATO troops, Afghan troops and Afghan civilians”ⁱⁱ;

Whereas: the Church of the Brethren has consistently spoken to the sinfulness of war—of the human cost both in lives lost and lives irreparably changed, in the financial cost and the priority that military spending is given over humanitarian efforts, and in the cost to our souls as we rely on violence for our security rather than the vision of God;

Whereas: at the International Ecumenical Peace Convocation of the World Council of Churches, to which the Church of the Brethren sent a representative and additional delegation, held in Kingston, Jamaica, in May of 2011, the convocation community stated, “We are unified in our aspiration that war should become illegal” and that “History, especially in the witness of the historic peace churches, reminds us of the fact that violence is contrary to the will of God and can never resolve conflicts”ⁱⁱⁱ;

Therefore, be it resolved, that the Church of the Brethren:

1. Calls on the President of the United States and members of Congress to begin an immediate withdrawal of all combat troops from Afghanistan, and instead to invest resources into the development of the Afghan people and infrastructure;
2. Calls on the denomination to continue to support the ministry of Church World Service in Afghanistan, and to explore the possibility of new relationships and possibilities for Brethren Volunteer Service placements in Afghanistan through Global Mission Partnerships;
3. Calls on the denomination, districts, congregations, and individuals to continue to support the work of groups like Christian Peacemaker Teams, seeking to provide an alternative to violence;

- 44 4. Calls on districts, congregations, and individuals to actively minister to those affected by
45 the war in Afghanistan: returning veterans of the military, those serving in noncombatant
46 roles, peacemakers seeking an alternative to armed conflict, and their families ;
47 5. Calls on districts, congregations, and individuals to engage openly in interfaith and
48 intercultural dialogue to create a culture of conversation and respect;
49 6. Calls on congregations and individuals to study documents and actions of the Church of
50 the Brethren’s historic peace stance, along with resources on just peacemaking from a
51 biblical, theological, social, and political context; and
52 7. Calls on churches and individuals to pray for and pursue a world of just peace.
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55 ***References and resources***

56 *The concept of “just peace” is a relatively new term, particularly for the Church of the Brethren.*
57 *Growing out of the World Council of Churches Decade to Overcome Violence, there are a*
58 *number of resources for congregations seeking to study and apply the meaning of just peace,*
59 *including:*

- 60 • An Ecumenical Call for Just Peace - [www2.wcc-](http://www2.wcc-coe.org/uploads.nsf/index/call2justpeace/$FILE/EcumenicalCalltoJustPeace.pdf)
61 [coe.org/uploads.nsf/index/call2justpeace/\\$FILE/EcumenicalCalltoJustPeace.pdf](http://www2.wcc-coe.org/uploads.nsf/index/call2justpeace/$FILE/EcumenicalCalltoJustPeace.pdf)
62 • Just Peace Companion - [www2.wcc-](http://www2.wcc-coe.org/uploads.nsf/index/just_peace_companion/$FILE/JustPeaceCompanion_draft_18_Apr.pdf)
63 [coe.org/uploads.nsf/index/just_peace_companion/\\$FILE/JustPeaceCompanion_draft_18](http://www2.wcc-coe.org/uploads.nsf/index/just_peace_companion/$FILE/JustPeaceCompanion_draft_18_Apr.pdf)
64 [Apr.pdf](http://www2.wcc-coe.org/uploads.nsf/index/just_peace_companion/$FILE/JustPeaceCompanion_draft_18_Apr.pdf)
65 • National Council of Churches “A Christian Understanding of War in an Age of
66 Terror(ism)” and accompanying Study Guide -
67 www.brethren.org/gensec/documents/christian-understanding-of.pdf

68 *Resources are also available for ministering to veterans and those affected by conflict and war:*

- 69 • The Truth Commission on Conscience and War has resources on moral injury and
70 returning veterans - <http://conscienceinwar.org/>
71 • On Earth Peace has introductory resources for congregations wishing to start a ministry
72 for returning military personnel - [www.onearthpeace.org/programs/peace-](http://www.onearthpeace.org/programs/peace-witness/welcome-home-project/index.html)
73 [witness/welcome-home-project/index.html](http://www.onearthpeace.org/programs/peace-witness/welcome-home-project/index.html)
74 • The Center for Justice and Peacebuilding, at Eastern Mennonite University, has resources
75 for Transforming the Wounds of War - www.emu.edu/cjp/pti/twow/

76 *Resources are also available for preparing oneself and congregation and then entering into an*
77 *open space of interfaith and intercultural dialogue:*

- 78 • The United States Institute for Peace has a resource on “Building Interreligious Trust in a
79 Climate of Fear: An Abrahamic Trialogue” - [http://www.usip.org/publications/building-](http://www.usip.org/publications/building-interreligious-trust-climate-fear-abrahamic-trialogue)
80 [interreligious-trust-climate-fear-abrahamic-trialogue](http://www.usip.org/publications/building-interreligious-trust-climate-fear-abrahamic-trialogue)
81 • The Council for a Parliament of the World’s Religions has a variety of resources on
82 interfaith dialogue - www.parliamentofreligions.org/index.cfm?n=4&sn=7

- 83 • The Interfaith Commission of the National Council of Churches of Christ, USA has a
84 resource on “Getting to Know Neighbors of Other Faiths” -
85 www.nccusa.org/pdfs/neighbors3.html

86 *Church of the Brethren’s Statements that address issues of war and violence particularly*
87 *relevant to the war in Afghanistan:*

- 88 • [AC 91 M Peacemaking: The Calling of God’s People in History](#)
89 ○ This statement reflects the denominations desire to not just react to events of the
90 world, but clearly state the Christian call to peacemaking
91 • [AC 96 R Nonviolence and Humanitarian Intervention](#)
92 ○ This resolution reflects the call of the church to address how nonviolence
93 responds to the needs of the global community.
94 • [AC 2003 Call for a Living Peace Church](#)
95 ○ This resolution reflects the Church of the Brethren’s call to not only be a Historic
96 Peace Church, but one whose peace witness is very much alive.
97 • [GB 2001 Resolution on the Events and Aftermath of September 11, 2001](#) (PDF)
98 ○ This resolution reflects the response of the Church of the Brethren to the events
99 surrounding the terrorist attacks on the United States, and the response of the
100 United States.
101 • [MMB 2008 Resolution on the Responsibility to Protect](#)
102 ○ This resolution is an affirmation of the responsibility for nonviolent intervention
103 and protection of civilians at times of possible mass casualties.

ⁱ Church of the Brethren General Board, 2001, “Resolution on the Events and Aftermath of September 11, 2001”
www.brethren.org/about/policies/2001-september-11-aftermath.pdf

ⁱⁱ National Council of Churches of Christ, USA, 2010, “Resolution to End the War in
Afghanistan”www.nccusa.org/pdfs/AFGHANRESOLUTION11.09.10.pdf

ⁱⁱⁱ World Council of Churches, “Message from the International Ecumenical Peace Convocation”
www.overcomingviolence.org/en/resources-dov/wcc-resources/documents/presentations-speeches-messages/iepc-message.html

^{iv} Underlined documents are available online at www.brethren.org/ac.

“The Mission and Ministry Board at its meeting on Saturday, July 2, 2011, adopted the Resolution on the War in Afghanistan by unanimous consent, and forwards it to the 2011 Annual Conference for adoption”