

RESOLUTION FOR ENDING THE IRAQ WAR

We, the delegates of the Central Plains Mennonite Conference congregations, assembled in Lincoln, NE on June 19-22, 2008, issue this public request of Pres. George W. Bush and the U.S. Congress to end American participation in the war in Iraq.

As Anabaptist Christians and belonging to one of the historic peace churches, we seek, above all else, to follow the teachings and example of our Lord Jesus. The summary commandments put forth by Jesus are 1) to love God above all else and 2) to love our neighbors as ourselves (Matt. 22:37). Jesus specifies that this includes our enemies: "...Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you...(Luke 6:27) He repeatedly chose to suffer in love rather than to overcome with violence. We believe these to be Jesus' unequivocal instructions for us and for all people.

We believe all Iraqis, "foreign fighters", Afghans and Iranians to be God's creations, humans for whom Christ died (John 3:16-17). As such, they **all** are worthy of our respect and demonstrations of God's love despite the differences of religion, politics and culture. While sin leads individuals in Iraq to do unspeakable violence, military might is far too weak to drive evil and violence from those human hearts. Only God's love and grace can do this. We, Christians, are called to be active channels for this divine love (Rom. 12:14-21).

"We believe that peace is the will of God.... Led by the Holy Spirit, we follow Christ in the way of peace, doing justice, bringing reconciliation, and practicing nonresistance, even in the face of violence and warfare." (Article 22, *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective*, 1995)

Since the United States is globally considered a Christian nation, current American policy and action towards Iraq can only reflect negatively on Christianity. We lament this fact; we wish to bear witness to the Church and her Lord Jesus as loving, selfless Light and Life.

We therefore resolve to respectfully request that:

- 1) U.S. troops be withdrawn in an expedient and peace-sustaining way, leaving no permanent American military bases in Iraq;
- 2) Only *non-military* personnel and organizations assist Iraqis in rebuilding their country, *as requested by the Iraqis*;
- 3) All American funding currently approved for the Iraq War be channeled into humanitarian assistance, reconstruction and ordnance clean-up in Iraq and the surrounding countries negatively affected by this war;
- 4) All American veterans of the Iraq war be given every resource for rehabilitation and healing of body, mind and spirit.

Passed by delegate action June 23, 2008