

## ***CDC Resolutions***

1998-2008

### **1998 42<sup>nd</sup> Annual Session at Bluffton College**

ACTION: “On this weekend, the broader Mennonite Church is recognizing the *25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the ordination of Emma Richards to pastoral ministry*. It is with gratitude that we recognize the gift of leadership that women have brought to our churches and conferences. Therefore, be it resolved that the Central District Conference will continue to call out, affirm and encourage the gifts of women in ministry.”

ACTION: “We, as the Central District Conference of General Conference Mennonite Church gathered at Bluffton College, June 18-20, 1998, *deplore and grieve the presence of handguns* in our society and the violence and death caused by the use of the handguns in our homes, schools and communities. Therefore, be it resolved that we call our society to join us in taking a bolder stand against this violence by supporting such actions as handgun legislation, teaching conflict mediation, praying and confronting the economical and racial injustices which lie at the root of this violence and in which we may knowingly or unknowingly participate.”

### **1999 43rd Annual Session at Iowa Wesleyan College**

ACTION: “*Mennonite College of Nursing*: In these very days that the Central District Conference is meeting in its annual session, the Mennonite College of Nursing is celebrating the completion of 80 years of nursing education as an independent Mennonite Church related institution, after which it will become an integral part of Illinois State University in Normal. Its principle historic landmark, the Troyer Memorial Nurses’ Home, has been sold and will continue to be used by another facility. It is appropriate that we use this occasion to express deep appreciation for these eighty years of dedicated service – For the Love of God and Humanity, as stated in the College memo. We call to remembrance the pioneer leaders, such as Peter Schantz and Emanuel Troyer, who convinced the Central District Conference to establish a hospital and training school for nurses, and then solicited the assistance of the Defenseless Conference, thus leading to the establishment in 1919 of the Mennonite Sanitarium and the Mennonite Sanitarium Training School. We recall and express our appreciation for the many dedicated Mennonite administrators (e.g. Benjamin and Lydia Rupp, first Superintendent and Matron; Lena Maxwell, long-time Superintendent of the Nursing School; William Dunn, CEO of the Mennonite Hospital Association; Presidents Jacquelyn Kinder and Kathleen Hogan), as well as staff members, teachers, and constituents who made possible the growth of the hospital program and the nurses training school from its early beginnings to its more formal education program as the Mennonite Training School. Mennonite Hospital School of Nursing and its eventual establishment as the Mennonite College of Nursing with accredited Bachelor of Science and Masters of Science in Nursing Degree programs. We express appreciation for the 2,258 dedicated nurses who completed requirements for Diplomas, Bachelors, or Masters degrees at the Mennonite Hospital School of Nursing and the Mennonite College of Nursing and have faithfully served not only the needs of central Illinois but also the needs of many other parts of the world in a wide variety of service and mission programs. Today we especially express our deep appreciation to President Kathleen Hogan for 30 years of meritorious service, including 15 years as CEO and President, during which she led the Mennonite College of Nursing to be the first fully accredited independent College of Nursing in the United States.

## **2000 44<sup>th</sup> Annual Session at Goshen College (joint session with IMMC, IMC, and OMC)**

No resolutions

## **2001 45<sup>th</sup> Annual Session at Bluffton College**

ACTION: “We, the delegate body of the Central District Conference of the General Conference Mennonite Church, declare the *intent of the Central District Conference to join Mennonite Church USA*. Central District Conference with its member churches will become part of Mennonite Church USA upon the approval of the Plan of Merger (see Membership Guidelines for the Formation of the Mennonite Church USA, section II, 7, b) by the General Conference delegate body in July of 2001.”

## **2002 46<sup>th</sup> Annual Session at Meadows Mennonite Church**

ACTION: “*Resolution for Peace*: Be it resolved that we continue to pray for leaders of nations, especially George W. Bush, Colin Powell, Ariel Sharon and Yassar Arafat, that the seeds of hatred which have been and are being planted might not germinate and the seeds being planted for peace could grow, so that current and future generations might be enabled to live in hope and peace.”

## **2003 47<sup>th</sup> Annual Session at Bluffton College**

ACTION: “We, the delegate body of the Central District Conference, *affirm the Atlanta Mennonite Fellowship in their service to the people of Atlanta*. We support and encourage them in their mission of hospitality to the vulnerable in their midst and in their fellowship together as the body of Christ. During the coming year, we pledge as congregations to engage with Atlanta Mennonite Fellowship in sharing the cup of blessing, in deepening our connection with one another, and in acknowledging our kinship in God’s family. We look forward to completing Atlanta Mennonite fellowship’s application process in our net annual meeting.

## **2004 48<sup>th</sup> Annual Session at Oak Grove Mennonite**

ACTION: “We, the delegates of CDC, ask our *conference leaders to work with leaders from Illinois Mennonite, Indiana-Michigan Mennonite, and Ohio Mennonite conferences, and with MC USA leadership, to explore new possibilities for the way these conferences work together*. This exploration will reflect the reality that these conferences and congregations are part of one denomination, Mennonite Church USA, and that there is a strong call within these conferences and MC USA to become more effective as a missional church. Any new plan will require both the counsel and the confirmation of conference delegates.”

Action: “*Resolution on USA & Iraq*: “We, the delegate body of the Central District Conference, gathered at the Oak Grove Mennonite Church in Smithville, Ohio on June 24-26, 2004, affirm the “*Confession of Faith from a Mennonite Perspective*” — in particular articles 22 & 23 which relate to matters of peace and justice. We commit ourselves to teach more faithfully our understanding of Christ’s call and His way of peace. We believe that the same Spirit that empowered Christ empowers us too: to love enemies, to forgive rather than seek revenge, to practice right relationships, to rely on the community of faith to settle disputes, and to resist evil without violence. In response to all forms of violence, personal and corporate,

private and public, individual and national, we confess our guilt and disclose our shame. We admit our knowledge of God's will for us — God's will that we would live at peace with one another. We know this to be God's will for all humanity. As gathered followers of Christ, and in response to our Savior's call and example, we recommit ourselves to living and speaking for peace. To this end we pray and work for an immediate cessation of all hostilities in Iraq. We lament our nation's chosen form of engagement. We stand in resolute opposition to the invasion and occupation of Iraq. We commit ourselves to praying for our nation's leaders, to offering visions for peaceful alternatives, and to supporting all who are working for an end to the present war. May God bind the hands of all who would do violence and free the hands of those who yearn for peace. We pray for all involved: For those who make decisions, for those who are ordered to carry them out, and for those who are required to endure their consequences. We pray for ourselves too, when we, willingly or unwillingly — knowingly or unknowingly — pay for the very violence we deplore. May God have mercy on us all. In this volatile and uncertain time, [we] pray that the new Iraqi provisional government will rule justly and be like a morning after a long and dark night for the Iraqi people." —*J. Daryl Byler, MCC Washington office director.* May the Spirit of Christ guide us in our every thought and deed."

**ACTION: *Letter to Vietnam:*** Ruth Naylor, Resolution Committee, presented a letter defining the relationship of Mennonites in Vietnam and asking for the release of Mennonite Church leader, Nguyen Hong Quang sent from MC USA. This letter will be sent to the United States Embassy in Vietnam on behalf of Central District Conference. Delegates received copies of the letter and were encouraged to ask their congregations to send copies of the letter as well.

### **2005 49<sup>th</sup> Annual session at Maplewood Mennonite Church**

**ACTION:** "Be it resolved that we, the delegates of Central District Conference, note the *death of Ann Hilty*, First Mennonite Church, Bluffton, Ohio on June 9, 2005. We express our deepest appreciation for her years of service to CDC as conference historian and member of the former Historical Committee."

**ACTION: "*Resolution on Military Recruitment:*** We as Anabaptist-Mennonites are known as an historic peace church. That history begins with those first disciples who followed the nonviolent Jesus in his way of salvation through the cross and Resurrection. The 16th-century Anabaptist-Mennonite movement renewed a witness to the way of radical love for Christian disciples. With the apostle Paul we testify that "we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 5.1). We have taught that faithful obedience to the example (I Peter 2.21-24) and teaching (Matthew 5-7) of Jesus requires us to refuse military service. At many points in our history as a community of faith we have sought options of alternative service when governments instituted compulsory military conscription. Today in the United States we face a different situation. Although officially there is no military draft, we have become aware that the vigorous recruiting efforts by the armed services in fact represent a "virtual draft." We are concerned about the impact of these tactics on both our own young people and the society as a whole.

Current military recruitment efforts

Whereas

- \* Young men and women in high school are being approached by military recruiters with an effort unparalleled in U.S. history;
- \* Promises of money, education, and a profession are being used to entice youth who feel vulnerable and without viable options for their future;
- \* The U.S. military has given its Armed Service Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) test in about 14,000 high schools nationwide to look for potential recruits, often without parents'

- knowledge;
- \* Federal law now provides for student contact information to be released to military recruiters, unless a student takes action to “opt out;”
  - \* Many public school administrators across the country are cooperating with military recruiters to meet recruiting quotas.

Therefore, we, the delegates of Central District Conference, call on congregations to take the following actions.

Commit to Christ's way of peace and to affirm that peace and nonviolence are core Anabaptist Christian commitments.

Learn what your local school administration's current policy is and request they release to military recruiters only contact information of students whose parents request this. This is called an “opt in” policy.

Encourage youth to begin a file about their beliefs regarding conscientious objection to war. Christian Peacemaker Registration forms are available from the MCC web site.

Participate in the organizing of a broad community coalition to work at counter-recruitment strategies.

Spend time with the youth of your congregation developing strong relationships and educating them about conscientious objection to war and nonviolence. (see resource list)

÷If ASVAB test is given in the local high school challenge its appropriateness for students not interested in military service.

÷Be available to counsel youth and offer alternatives to those being actively recruited by military personnel.

Resources:

From MCC: Thermostat: a new DVD and study guide for youth on peace, conscientious objection to war and nonviolence. A website: [www.mcc.org/ask-a-vet](http://www.mcc.org/ask-a-vet), provides e-mail links to military veterans who are now conscientious objectors to war, so youth can have direct conversation with them. Also includes Christian Peacemaker Registration information. Second Mile: curriculum for a congregational journey of peacemaking. Change of Command: video featuring the stories of military veterans now committed to peace and nonviolence.”

## **2006 50<sup>th</sup> Annual session at Bluffton University**

**ACTION: *Resolution of Appreciation for Lee Snyder.*** On this occasion of Dr. Lee Snyder's retirement from the presidency of Bluffton University, we express gratitude for her ten years of faithful service to Bluffton University and to the Mennonite church, for her strengthening of ties between the church and the university, for her commitment to the peace church mission of Bluffton and its impact on students from many backgrounds, for her leadership in building an institution of higher learning that will serve the faith and scholarship of future generations of Central District Conference members, for her wise and steady leadership as moderator of Mennonite Church USA during the historic 2002 merger between the Mennonite Church and the General Conference Mennonite Church, for serving as a role model for leaders of church institutions, especially for women, and for her lifelong commitment to the mission of the church of Jesus Christ. We wish for her and her husband Del God's richest blessings in the years to come.

**ACTION: *Resolution of Remembrance of Barney Habegger.*** We, the delegates of Central District Conference, note the death this past year of Barney Habegger, First Mennonite Church, Berne, Indiana. We remember with deep appreciation his creative and passionate service to the church, his masterful recruitment of people for the projects of the church, and his ability to turn dreams into practical and

accessible realities. We recall with gratitude his service on the Commission on Home Missions and on the board of Camp Friedenswald. We especially note the impact he had on many young and recently planted churches through his work with the men's organization, Join Hands, and we acknowledge the contributions he made to these churches through his hard work, often down on his knees, on behalf of the renewal and reconstruction of church facilities. Many who responded to his call to service were deeply transformed by his life and witness. Thanks be to God.

**ACTION: *Resolution of 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration:*** During this 2006 annual meeting, as we celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Central District Conference, we thank God for:

- those congregations that covenanted in 1957 to create the Central District Conference;
- the congregations that have joined the conference since its beginning;
- the individuals who provided leadership and facilitated the work and ministry of the conference;
- the institutions and programs of the conference where God's love has been made known;
- those issues which have brought us closer together through discussions in which God's will has been discovered and followed.

We thank God for faithfulness to us in the past and in bringing us together this year. We thank God for the stories of how God is working in our congregations.

We pray for God's wisdom and guidance as we seek to:

- strengthen the mutual awareness of the ministries that are emerging among us;
- free the Spirit to move in our midst through faithful stewardship and greater generosity;
- discern the practical shape of God's grace in our discernment of faithful lifestyles;
- articulate more clearly the strengths of our conference's heritage of voluntary congregational and conference relationships;
- extend our hospitality beyond conventional Mennonite habits of connection and relationship;
- expand on our present diversity to more faithfully reflect the global and cultural variety of God's in-breaking reign.

We pray God's vision and strength to continue the journey as God shows us the way. We anticipate the as-yet-unwritten stories of God working in our congregations.

Praise be to God for the past, present, and future faithfulness of that part of the church of Jesus Christ known as the Central District Conference!

## **2008 52<sup>nd</sup> Annual Session at Wheaton, Illinois**

**ACTION: *Iran Resolution***

***Be it resolved: It is Time to Talk with Iran***

### ***The situation:***

*Tensions are mounting between the governments of the United States and Iran. In fact, it appears the U.S. is positioning itself for more aggressive action toward Iran, including the strong possibility of military strikes within the coming months.*

***Our Faith:***

*In the spirit of our assembly theme: "For such a time as this:"*

*\*We know that all are created in the image of God, U.S. and Iranian citizens alike.*

*\*We know that we are called to be bearers of peace in the world.*

*\*We call for the following response,*

***Our Response:***

*The delegates of Central District Conference pledge to:*

*\*Respectfully call on all our elected leaders to talk (pursue diplomacy) with Iran and refrain from military action.*

*\*Pray weekly with our families and congregations for peace with Iran*

*\*Educate ourselves regarding U.S.-Iranian relationships and support Mennonite peacemaking efforts with Iran.*

For more information and resources: [www.centraldistrict.mennonite.net](http://www.centraldistrict.mennonite.net); [www.mennoniteusa.org/peace](http://www.mennoniteusa.org/peace); [www.mcc.org](http://www.mcc.org)