

# Resolution asking the Maine Conference of the United Church of Christ to Call for an End to the US War in Iraq.

*Presented by the Commission for Witness Life of the Maine Conference of the United Church of Christ.*

## A. Background ...

**Whereas** the fruits the US War in Iraq have borne are: the loss of hundreds of thousands of human lives, political instability in an already-fragile region, the fostering of anger and hatred toward America and the resulting breeding ground for the next generation of terrorists, environmental damage on a staggering scale, and profits for many multi-national corporations with little accountability or oversight;

**Whereas** The Just Peace Pronouncement at General Synod 15 (1985) of the United Church of Christ calls *all* settings of the United Church of Christ to be "Just Peace Churches," defining "just peace" as the interrelation of friendship, justice, and common security from violence, calling the church to a vision of shalom rooted in peace with justice, and placing the UCC General Synod in opposition to the institution of war;

**Whereas** the 2002 Annual meeting of the Maine Conference of the United Church of Christ passed a resolution opposing a pre-emptive or unilateral military strike on Iraq and calling for a peaceful resolution to the crisis at that time;

**Whereas** the Council of Conference Ministers and national Executives of the United Church of Christ signed a pastoral Letter in February of 2003 stating "The recourse to war, according to our Christian tradition, is an admission of human failure ... Instead of war, we advocate ... for a more humane and moral course of action which emphasizes economic justice, God's mercy, and a new vision of what it means for humanity to live together on this planet we share";

**Whereas** the Collegium of Officers of the United Church of Christ are currently encouraging us to sign on to a Pastoral Letter dated June 22, 2007 also calling for an end to the US War in Iraq;

## Theological and Biblical Foundations ...

**Whereas** The Prophet Isaiah speaks of the world God intends for us, saying ... "God shall judge between the nations, and shall arbitrate for many peoples; they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks;

nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more" (Isaiah 2:4);

**Whereas** Psalm 34:14 calls all people of faith to "seek peace and pursue it;"

**Whereas** Zechariah speaks of the coming Messiah who shall "command peace to the nations" (9:10);

**Whereas** we witness that the One the Prophets spoke of is Jesus the Christ, our Lord and Savior; and whereas we seek to be faithful disciples of Jesus the Christ, we remember how He said "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God" (Matthew 5:9) and how He said "All who take the sword shall perish by the sword" (Matthew 26:52) and how He practiced what He taught, "turning the other cheek," not returning to violence when it was done to Him;

**Whereas** we look forward to the day when God's liberating reign means peaceful coexistence among all peoples and creatures (Isaiah 11:1-9; Revelation 21:1-6);

**Whereas** James, in his Letter, promises "a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace for those who make peace" (3:18);

**THEREFORE:**

**Be it resolved** that The Maine Conference of the United Church of Christ vote to declare itself a "Just Peace Conference;"

**Be it further resolved** that we call upon our churches and members to consider signing a Pastoral Letter written by the UCC's Collegium of Officers (see it at <http://www.ucc.org/news/significant-speeches/a-pastoral-letter-on-the-iraq.html>);

**Be it further resolved** that since Christians (through Christ), Jews (through the Patriarchs), and Moslems (through the Prophet Mohammed – Peace Be Upon Him – and beyond Mohammed to Ishamel and Hagar) all claim one common ancestor in their faith – Abraham – we call upon the Churches of the Maine Conference of the United Church of Christ to enter into dialogue with other Children of Abraham in acknowledging our shared grief over the human suffering and physical damage of this war and to stand with them in their own witness for peace;

**Be it further resolved** that although the 2007 Annual Meeting of the Maine Conference of the United Church of Christ disagrees with the war in Iraq, we lift

up the men and women of the armed forces who are stationed there for their courage and sacrifice and hold them and their families in our prayers;

**Be it further resolved** that the 2007 Annual Meeting of the Maine Conference of the United Church of Christ call for all sides to end the war in Iraq; We pray that over time this could lead to a safe withdrawal of American and other foreign troops stationed there;

**Be it further resolved** that the 2007 Annual Meeting of the Maine Conference of the United Church of Christ call for an immediate bi-partisan dialogue within Congress to craft legislation which will call for:

- Political dialogue and negotiations among all nations within the region
- Involvement of the United Nations in establishing a peace-keeping force, including care for refugees and a swift and progressive process for establishing safe and secure means by which Iraqi people can return to their homes
- Development of a time table for a measured, safe withdrawal of our troops stationed in Iraq
- The removal of mercenary forces
- A return to adherence to Geneva Conventions and a complete denouncing of the use of any and all torture
- The establishment of Congress of an independent investigation of the influences, powers, and underlying rationale that led our country to war in Iraq, particularly of those individuals and corporations who stand to profit as a result of the war
- And an official pronouncement by the leadership of congress calling national and religious bodies to their best selves, and for an international/inter-religious dialogue and partnering toward a goal of peace with justice in our world.

**Be it finally resolved** that this resolution, if approved, be sent to Maine's Representatives in Congress and its Senators.