

1 **NO. 0919**

2
3 **(SENSE OF THE ASSEMBLY)**

4
5 **CHRISTIAN UNITY AND WAR**

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8 WHEREAS, Disciples founder Barton Stone, who insisted that “unity is our polar star,” also
9 declared, “Nothing appears so repugnant to the kingdom of heaven as war;” and

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11 WHEREAS, Disciples founder Alexander Campbell taught that the church is the “one Christian
12 Nation composed of all the Christian communities and individuals in the whole earth” and
13 insisted that when Christians of differing countries fight each other in war this sets Christ’s
14 kingdom against itself; and

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16 WHEREAS, J. W. McGarvey long time professor and president of Lexington Theological Seminary
17 – then College of the Bible – appalled at the prospect of Christians killing each other in war,
18 declared, “I would rather, ten thousand times, be killed for refusing to fight, than to fall in
19 battle, or to come home victorious with the blood of my brethren on my hands;” and

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21 WHEREAS, Disciples of Christ leader and pioneer of the ecumenical movement Peter Ainslie
22 proclaimed that war offers “the most spectacular display” of the divided church’s “false
23 interpretation of religion;” and

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25 WHEREAS, Disciples of Christ throughout our history have affirmed the unity of the church as a
26 sign of the wholeness of the human family and that war represents the greatest rupture
27 between humans and communities; and

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29 WHEREAS, Disciples of Christ have not always made explicit the intimate connection between
30 our commitment to Christian unity and our opposition to war as part of our larger witness in
31 working for peace;

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33 THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of
34 Christ) meeting in Indianapolis, IN July 29-Aug 2, 2009 affirms the conviction of those forebears
35 who saw that the pursuit of Christian unity entails the repudiation of war; and

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37 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Assembly acknowledges that an expression of our pursuit of
38 Christian unity, the Disciples of Christ have a strong tradition of opposing war; and

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40 FINALLY, BE IT RESOLVED that this Assembly strongly urge Disciples as they work and give
41 leadership in ecumenical bodies to highlight peacemaking as an expression of Christian unity.

47 The General Board recommends that the General Assembly
48 REFER Business Item No. 0919 to the Council on Christian Unity
49 to work with Disciples Peace Fellowship in further investigation.
50 (Debate time: 24 minutes)

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54 Rationale for recommendation:

- 55 • To allow for further discussion about the Disciples tradition of individual discernment.
- 56 • To allow for the development of the resolution as a pastoral message to the whole
- 57 church.
- 58 • To allow for further discussion about the term “war” as it is used in modern contexts.
- 59 • To allow for further reflection about the historic Disciples’ position concerning unity,
- 60 peace and justice.
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