

NO. 0919

(SENSE OF THE ASSEMBLY)

CHRISTIAN UNITY AND WAR

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Disciples Peace Fellowship