

General Board

Business Item No: GB-10-0693

Title: Update on Resolution on “Unity and War” referred to the Council on Christian Unity

Origin: Council on Christian Unity

Background Information:

1. After the 2009 General Assembly, the Board of the Council on Christian Unity moved ahead in follow-up to the resolution on “Christian Unity and War” that was referred to the CCU. A first decision was to identify and name a sub-committee (“working group”) of the Board that would include participation of the Disciples Peace Fellowship, as well as other representative voices and perspectives within the life of our church in relation to the issues of war and peace-making. The following persons were named, and agreed to serve on this working group:

Representing the Council on Christian Unity: Robyn Fickes, Laura Evans Mahn, Scott Thayer and Sean Weaver (and Andy Mangum, as CCU Board chair)

Representing the Disciples Peace Fellowship: Bruce Ervin, Kayla Coffee-Prose, and Craig Watts

Representing other voices and perspectives: Michael Kinnamon (theologian and scholar who has written on the issues of unity and war); Michael Mooty (local pastor who has congregational members and family who serve in the military); Sir Walter Scott (former military chaplain); and Humberto Pimentel (family member serving in military).

Staff: Robert Welsh has served as the staff person to the working group.

2. The group has held two conference calls (January 19 and February 9, 2010) to begin its work and to establish the basic direction of its proposals on how to address the issues in the referred resolution. From these conversations, two basic decisions were approved:

a. The design for our work would be based upon the model set forth in the resolution that came to the 2009 Indianapolis General Assembly on “A Call for Action,” (even though the resolution was not approved); and

b. The goal of our work is “*to offer to the church a four-year process of study, engagement, dialogue, worship, prayer and action around the issues of Christian unity and war/peace-making.*”

3. In the February 9 conference call, the working group outlined five elements to give concrete shape and direction to our future work:

a. To request that there be resources groups, workshops or a “learning track” offered at the Nashville Assembly in 2011 to present different positions and perspectives (theological, biblical, historical and contextual) related to the topic of Christian unity and peace (including the issues of opposition to war and disarmament).

b. To develop a packet of resource materials that would be made available to the church widely (printed and on-line) addressing these issues as background and study by those coming to the Nashville Assembly – e.g., an article by Michael Kinnamon and Jan Linn in their recent book on “unity and war”; articles by Craig Watts on these themes; the “Just Peace Statement” from the World Council of Churches; etc.

c. To prepare a “Report” to the 2013 General Assembly in Nashville (a) summarizing the work of this group, (b) offering some substantive reflection and discussion of the issues involved, and (c) calling for a churchwide process of study and engagement as we look to producing a statement for adoption by the 2013 General Assembly to serve as the “Disciples position” on Christian unity, non-violence, and peace-making.

d. To identify and encourage specific “actions” that could be pursued by members and congregations related to the issues of peace and war -- for example, to develop and identify worship resources on the issues of peace and unity; to offer suggestions for sermons on these themes; to reach out locally in one’s community to join with other congregations and churches in local witnessing to peace and peace-building; to coordinate programs of contact and communication by members and congregations with political leaders in one’s community and nationally around issues of war and peace; etc.

e. To gather information about and to explore ways that Disciples might be engaged in the initiative of the World Council of Churches in overcoming violence and the preparations for the “International Ecumenical Peace Convocation” in Kingston, Jamaica, in May, 2011.

2/14/10

Recommended Action:

That the report be received.