

**Christian Unity and Peacemaking**  
**“Faithful Conversations”:**  
**Engaging divisive issues without dividing**  
**2011 General Assembly**  
**Nashville, Tennessee**

**A New Design offered to Assembly to engage difficult issues**

The Council on Christian Unity has developed a new process for engaging the 2011 General Assembly in faithful conversation and dialogue around the potentially divisive issues of unity, war and peace. This process was developed in response to a resolution that was referred to the CCU by the Indianapolis General Assembly in 2009 on “Christian Unity and War.”

The design proposed by the CCU, working in partnership with the Disciples Peace Fellowship (the original submitters of the 2009 resolution), hopes to provide a “safe space” for honest and tough dialogue, but without moving to a vote – and without creating division and a sense of “winners and losers” within the family of the church.

With an approach that involves personal sharing from a variety of perspectives, the design invites Assembly participants at a Plenary session on Sunday, July 10, to engage in further reflection in one of three Monday afternoon “*Faithful Conversations*” exploring the issues of:

- *Christian Perspectives on War and Peace*
- *Pastoral and Theological Perspectives on War, Peace, and Unity*
- *New Developments Regarding War and Peace in the Ecumenical Movement*

In preparing for these conversations, major attention has been given to offering diverse perspectives from Disciples throughout the presentations on issues of war and peace -- from congregational pastors who minister to families that have members in the military; from young adults who are uncertain as to what their faith and their church teaches about war; and from military chaplains, and pacifists, and just-war advocates.

**Detailed information about the “Faithful Conversations”**

**Monday, July 11 (2:30-5:00 pm): Convention Center Meeting Rooms**

**1. Christian Perspectives on War and Peace** (*Timothy Lee, moderator*)

Part A: Three Historical Perspectives in Christian Tradition (*Sharon Warner*)

Part B: Historical Perspectives among the Disciples of Christ (*Jim Higginbotham, moderator. Craig Watts, Newell Williams*)

**2. Pastoral and Theological Perspectives on War, Peace, and Unity** (*Virzola Law, moderator*)

Part A: Fishbowl panel presenting the different positions and identifying the issues

*(Ellen Lewis; Krista Johnson, Rita Nakashima-Brock; Steve Doan)*

**Part B:** Focused conversation on the way the issues get “played out” and “lived out” in congregations. Using the values modeled in the discussion consider what it would take to address issues of War and Peace while manifesting our God Given unity with particular attention to the way the table shapes, informs and guides our discuss. *(Doug Skinner and Cathy Myers Wirt)*

### **3. New Developments regarding War and Peace in the Ecumenical Movement**

*(Robyn Fickes, moderator)*

**Part A:** Reporting on recent events and ecumenical statements related to War and Peacemaking from NCCC and IEPC/WCC ( *Tamara Nichols Rodenburg, La Marco Cable, Jordan Blevins, Robert Welsh*)

**Part B:** Looking to the Future: Seeking and Building a Just Peace *(Scott Thayer, Dennis Sparks)*

## **Leadership for the “Faithful Conversations”**

### **1. Christian Perspectives on War and Peace**

**Timothy Lee** *(Moderator)*: Professor of History of Christianity and Director of the Asian Studies Program, Brite Divinity School, Ft. Worth, Texas

**Sharon Warner**: Professor of Educational Ministry, Lexington Theological Seminary, Lexington, KY; member of DPF Executive Committee

**Jim Higginbotham** *(Moderator)*: Assistant Professor of Pastoral Care, Earlham College, Richmond, IN; member of DPF Executive Committee

**Craig Watts**: Pastor, Royal Palm Christian Church, Coral Springs, Florida; member of DPF Executive Committee

**Newell Williams**: President and Professor of American and Modern Church History, Brite Divinity School, Ft. Worth, Texas

### **2. Pastoral and Theological Perspectives on War, Peace and Unity**

**Virozla Law** *(Moderator)*: Spiritual Life Pastor, Mississippi Blvd. Christian Church, Memphis, TN; experience in addressing conflict within congregations

**Ellen Lewis**: Associate Minister, University Christian Church, Ft. Worth, TX; retired Air Force Colonel in Military Intelligence

**Krista Johnson**: Disciples Young Adult serving as the Peace Program Coordinator for the Mennonite Central Committee,

**Rita Nakashima Brock:** Founding Co-Director of “Faith Voices for the Common Good;” has served on various ecumenical, international delegations to support peace-making processes, including Guatemala, El Salvador and South Africa.

**Steve Doan:** Military Chaplaincy Endorsement Officer, Disciples Home Missions; former instructor on Just War Theory at the US Military Academy, West Point, Maryland

**Cathy Myers Wirt:** Co-regional minister, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Oregon; works with members and congregations whose members serve in military during armed conflict

**Doug Skinner:** Pastor, Northway Christian Church, Dallas, Texas; a leading Evangelical voice in the Disciples of Christ

### **3. New Developments Regarding War and Peace in the Ecumenical Movement: Seeking Just Peace**

**Robyn Fickes** (*Moderator*): Disciples Young Adult leader in ecumenical movement; member of the Board of CCU

**Tamara Nichols Rodenburg:** Former Interim President, Disciples Seminary Foundation, Claremont, CA; participant in the 2011 International Ecumenical Peace Convocation, Kingston, Jamaica

**La Marco Cable:** Mission Interpretation and Education, Division of Overseas Ministries; participant in the 2011 International Ecumenical Peace Convocation, Kingston, Jamaica

**Jordan Blevins:** Member of Church of the Brethren; Advocacy Officer and Ecumenical Peace Coordinator for the National Council of Churches in the USA

**Robert Welsh:** President, Council on Christian Unity (CCU), Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

**Scott Thayer:** Pastor, Bethany Memorial Church, and Chaplain at Bethany College, Bethany, West Virginia; member of Board of CCU

**Dennis Sparks:** Executive Director, West Virginia Council of Churches, and director of “Care-net,” a support program for military families