

## **Background Statement for a Resolution on Nonviolence**

World Conference resolution 1273 [2000], identifies Community of Christ as a peace church and encourages us to seek ways to achieve healing and restorative justice. On this note, in the Christian world today, there are active steps being taken by churches towards reviving the role nonviolence plays in our shared faith. Community of Christ was urged in the recent added section of Doctrine and Covenants to “remember that the way of suffering love that leads to the cross also leads to resurrection and everlasting life in Christ’s eternal community of oneness and peace.”

In March 2017, at the creation of a field peace team for Europe, the idea of this resolution was shared and debated. We asked ourselves questions like: “What role should nonviolence play, as an integral part of the gospel of Jesus Christ and of our understanding that in the pursuit of peace, peace is the way? What does it mean to become a people of the temple, and to be a church pursuing peace on and for the earth? What does the way of suffering love mean? How can we practice this in the world today?”

Members in the British Isles and the Western Europe Mission Centres in Community of Christ recall the Christian crusades, the colonial history of mother-nations, and the nationalisms that led to two world wars in 1914-1918 and 1939-1945. In addition, the world will be commemorating the end of World War I in 2018. We believe that previous World Church Resolutions have paved the way for this consideration. Among them are WCR 1177 [1982] (... “We, as a church, promote peace” and “We, as a church, oppose all forms of destructive violence, such as national and international conflict, war, withholding of food, terrorism, and mental and physical abuse...”); WCR 1216 [1990] (... “to include in the ministries of the Temple creative initiatives for peace and justice on behalf of the poor and oppressed peoples of the world, including initiatives designed to facilitate nonviolent efforts on the part of peace-loving people to reconcile oppressors and oppressed”); and WCR 1227 [1992] (... “intensify our efforts to heal the causes of violence, war, prejudice, discrimination, greed, hunger, and oppression”... “That we pledge... [to] be actively engaged in the pursuit of peace, all as taught to us by Jesus Christ.”).

For those reasons, and because the 2019 World Conference will celebrate the 25 years since the Temple in Independence, Missouri, was dedicated to the pursuit of peace, reconciliation and healing of the spirit, a resolution on nonviolence is both timely and right.

This resolution is distributed to members in the British Isles Mission Centre and the Western Europe Mission Centre for their prayerful consideration and input.

## **Resolution on Nonviolence**

Whereas, Community of Christ has been admonished from its earliest days to hear the words of the Living Christ, and to listen again to the voice that calls us to the great and marvelous work of building the peaceable kingdom of God on earth, even Zion; and

Whereas, Community of Christ has a logo, inspired by Isaiah 11:1-10, that shows how nonviolence is central to the way we conceive of peace; and

Whereas, Community of Christ, today, is called to become a prophetic people that embodies in the lives of its members the ministries of the Temple through the pursuit of peace, reconciliation and healing of the spirit; and

Whereas, Community of Christ's enduring principles and mission initiatives call us as a people to share Christ's peace throughout all of creation and embody God's love for all creatures; and

Whereas, previous World Church resolutions such as WCR 1177, WCR 1216, and WCR 1227 have been in support of the use of nonviolent methods in establishing peace, and

Whereas, there are no known Christian writings between 100 CE and 313 CE which approve of Christian participation in warfare; and

Whereas, more recent Biblical scholarship provides disciples with a greater understanding of the nonviolent mission and life of Jesus Christ; and

Whereas, the founding vision of Community of Christ was of the peaceable kingdom of God on earth, a nonviolent Zion with economic justice for all; and

Whereas, violence clearly affects the weak and the poor, the vulnerable and the marginalized disproportionately; therefore be it

*Resolved*, that Community of Christ reject all forms of violence, including acts of terrorism, war, and financing wars, and declare them contrary to Christ's invitation to "love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you" (Matthew 5:44); and be it further

*Resolved*, that Community of Christ reaffirm its Enduring Principle "Sacredness of Creation" and abandon the idea that violence against human life, non-human life, and the earth, can be justified; and be it further

*Resolved*, that Community of Christ reaffirm its Enduring Principle "Worth of All Persons" and oppose ideologies of violence and injustice expressed in diverse forms of nationalism, populism, racism, and bigotry; and be it further

*Resolved*, that Community of Christ commit to nonviolence, continue its support of peace education and invite its members to embody Christ's nonviolence through local, global, ecumenical and interfaith actions towards justice and peace for all.

#### **Submitted by Peace Team Europe**

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