



Militarism and Disarmament

Third Assembly, Uniting Church in Australia

It was resolved that the Assembly:

82.57

- (1)
 - (a) acknowledge that God came in the crucified and risen Christ to make peace; that he calls all Christians to be peacemakers, to save life, to heal and to love their neighbours. The call of Christ to make peace is the norm, and the onus of proof rests on any who resort to military force as a means of solving international disputes;
 - (b) note that at this point in history, most governments support military priorities which cause valuable and limited resources to be diverted unproductively towards the purchase of armaments and the maintenance of large military forces; that nuclear weapons are a demonic method of killing and wounding people and poisoning God's creation; and that nuclear war would be catastrophic in terms of both human violence and environmental disaster;
 - (c) affirm that the Uniting Church is committed to be a peacemaking body, seeking to follow the Lord of the Church by encouraging political authorities to resolve political tensions by peaceful means.
- (2) call on the members of the Uniting Church in Australia to support and engage in peacemaking programs and resist reliance on military solutions to political problems.
- (3) direct the Commission for World Mission and the Commission on Social Responsibility to continue education efforts including a publication conveying the facts of the armaments situation and the possible alternatives to war as a means of settling international disputes.

- (4) support the United Nations' work towards general and complete disarmament, commend the following program and instruct the Commission for World Mission and the Commission on Social Responsibility to take steps to ensure
- (a) that greater efforts be made towards the peaceful settlement of international disputes;
 - (b) that encouragement and publicity be given to studies of non-violent methods of national defence;
 - (c) that publicity be given to the implications for the security of non-nuclear weapon nations (including Australia) of having foreign nuclear weapons and facilities on their territory;
 - (d) that balanced, factual information about the arms race and its military dangers be published;
 - (e) that information be widely disseminated concerning the potential for converting military industries and facilities from military to peaceful purposes, thus increasing employment opportunities;
 - (f) that greater publicity be given to the scientific, economic and social costs of the arms race, with special reference to the problems created by the arms trade;
 - (g) that there be increased inter visitation across the lines of political tensions, with a view to stressing the human and individual aspects of the principle of detente;
 - (h) that the rights of all forms of conscientious objection to military service be fully recognized.
- (5) Strongly urge the Australian Government to
- (a) develop an independent foreign policy for Australia, not aligned to either of the super powers;
 - (b) negotiate the gradual removal of all foreign military bases from Australian territory;
 - (c) prohibit all foreign military forces from using Australian bases which by their presence or use of the bases undermine national, regional or international security, stability and peace;
 - (d) ensure that overseas military aid is allocated within guidelines which give significant consideration to the record of the recipient government or organization in the area of human rights violations and international aggression.

- (6) Urge the Australian Government, as another step to general and complete disarmament, to call on the governments of the USA and USSR to
 - (a) complete without delay the negotiation of a comprehensive ban on nuclear tests;
 - (b) complete as soon as possible the current phase of SALT and continue to use this forum to reach agreement on a substantial reduction of their nuclear arsenals;
 - (c) proceed towards a disengagement and reduction of their forces in Central Europe, Asia, central America and Africa;
 - (d) stop all deployment of their forces in the Pacific and Indian Oceans and their nuclear powered vessels traversing these oceans;
 - (e) agree on additional effective measures to ban the military use of Outer Space;
 - (f) agree not to use nuclear weapons;
 - (g) halt the production of weapons-grade fissionable material;
 - (h) ban the production, stockpiling and use of chemical and biological weapons.
- (7) urge the Australian Government to continue to call upon the government of France to cease immediately the testing of nuclear devices in the Pacific or anywhere else.
- (8) direct the Commission for World Mission and the Commission on Social Responsibility to take all appropriate steps through Synods, Presbyteries and parishes to
 - (a) convey these resolutions to our members by all means and as a matter of urgency, and that this be in co-operation with the Council of Christian Education;
 - (b) support people pastorally through the conflicts which may arise;
 - (c) remove any vestiges of support, except in the course of debate, for militarism or the arms race from all our published materials;
 - (d) request all UCA related schools to replace their present military cadet training system with training or activities associated with social service and non-violent activities of friendship and good neighbourliness;

- (e) support the defence force UCA chaplains in their pastoral work and members of the Church who are members of the Defence Forces, and their families, while also encouraging them to study this statement and these resolutions;
- (f) urge theological colleges to have study courses which include Biblical and theological perspectives on peace and related documentation from the World Council of Churches, Christian Conference of Asia, Pacific Conference of Churches, the United Nations and the various national Peace Research institutes.
- (g) support ecumenical and other initiatives for peace and disarmament.