

**Resolution responding to Military Recruitment  
Central District Conference Annual Meeting**

**June 23-25, 2005**

**Introduction**

WE as Anabaptist-Mennonites are known as an historic peace church. That history begins with those first disciples who followed the nonviolent Jesus in his way of salvation through the cross and Resurrection. The 16th-century Anabaptist-Mennonite movement renewed a witness to the way of radical love for Christian disciples. With the apostle Paul we testify that "We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 5.1).

We have taught that faithful obedience to the example (I Peter 2.21-24) and teaching (Matthew 5-7) of Jesus requires us to refuse military service. At many points in our history as a community of faith we have sought options of alternative service when governments instituted compulsory military conscription.

Today in the United States we face a different situation. Although officially there is no military draft, we have become aware that the vigorous recruiting efforts by the armed services in fact represent a "virtual draft." We are concerned about the impact of these tactics on both our own young people and the society as a whole.

**Current military recruitment efforts**

**Whereas**

- \* Young men and women in high school are being approached by military recruiters with an effort unparalleled in U.S. history;
- \* Promises of money, education, and a profession are being used to entice youth who feel vulnerable and without viable options for their future;
- \* The U.S. military has given its Armed Service Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) test in about 14,000 high schools nationwide to look for potential recruits, often without parents' knowledge;
- \* Federal law now provides for student contact information to be released to military recruiters, unless a student takes action to "opt out;"
- \* Many public school administrators across the country are cooperating with military recruiters to meet recruiting quotas.

**Therefore**, we, the delegates of Central District Conference, call on congregations to take the following actions.

- Commit to Christ's way of peace and to affirm that peace and nonviolence are core Anabaptist Christian commitments.
- Learn what your local school administration's current policy is and request they release to military recruiters only contact information of students whose parents request this. This is called an "opt in" policy.
- Encourage youth to begin a file about their beliefs regarding conscientious objection to war. Christian Peacemaker Registration forms are available from the MCC web site.
- Participate in the organizing of a broad community coalition to work at counter-recruitment strategies.
- Spend time with the youth of your congregation developing strong relationships and educating them about conscientious objection to war and nonviolence. (see resource list)
- If ASVAB test is given in the local high school challenge its appropriateness for students not interested in military service.
- Be available to counsel youth and offer alternatives to those being actively recruited by military personnel.

**Resources:**

From MCC: **Thermostat**: a new DVD and study guide for youth on peace, conscientious objection to war and nonviolence. **A website: [www.mcc.org/ask-a-vet](http://www.mcc.org/ask-a-vet)**, provides e-mail links to military veterans who are now conscientious objectors to war, so youth can have direct conversation with them. Also includes **Christian Peacemaker Registration information**. **Second Mile: curriculum** for a congregational journey of peacemaking. **Change of Command**: video featuring the stories of military veterans now committed to peace and nonviolence.

From Missional Church Committee of the Central District Conference, June 2005