

Resolution Number: **C-10**

Subject: Re-examination of Just War Theory

Moved By: (Name) Mrs. Phyllis Creighton from the Diocese of Toronto

from the Diocese of **Note: The mover and the seconder must be members of the General Synod and be present in the House when the resolution is before the synod for debate.**

BE IT RESOLVED:

call upon Anglicans to re-examine Just War Theory and its implications for Christian response to war and militarism; and

request that the Faith, Worship and Ministry Committee establish a task group to provide basic information and materials that will assist dioceses and parishes in this re-examination and to facilitate the exchange of views in response to this call.

EXPLANATORY NOTE/BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

General Synod in 1965 noted that “our Church has previously stated that war as a method of settling international disputes is incompatible with the teaching and example of our Lord Jesus Christ” (cited in Act 87, GS 1983). It made clear its “rejection of war as an instrument of international policy” in 1992 (GS Act 115). The worldwide build-up of armaments to their present historically unprecedented levels rests, however, on acceptance of war as a means of resolving conflict. And Christian participation in wars has a chequered history. The basis of Christian refusal of war and accommodation to war-fighting thus deserve study.

In the course of the 20th century, the civilian portion of war-related deaths has vastly increased, climbing from ten percent at its dawn, to less than 50 percent in the years up to 1950, to over 90 percent in the 1990’s (Project Ploughshares’ figures). The toll of deaths and maiming from landmines fuelled a popular movement supported by many Anglicans that achieved the treaty banning them and, in turn, has brought war-fighting in question.

Technological developments in weaponry also push us to re-examine the relevance of Just War concepts. With the fire-bombing of Dresden in World War II, total war became a reality. Through weapons of mass destruction - nuclear, biological, chemical - cities can now be obliterated with push-button ease, vast areas can be made uninhabitable or unusable for growing food, neutrality is unprotectable, and genetic mutation and irreparable damage to earth could be set in motion. And further, the demonization of Nazis and the Japanese which made total war acceptable in the 1940’s has been re-enacted in the 1991 Western shift of Saddam Hussein’s image from an ally armed by the U.S. against Iran to the new Hitler.

Again, so-called Christian nations (the U.S., U.K., France, Canada) are busily making weapons sales, for financial gain, to states that often then sink deeper into the enslavement of debt. In the result, resolution of conflicts by violence is being promoted, along with wars and hatred.

Thus the re-examination called for in the motion is timely.

Submitted by: Mrs. P. Creighton, Synod Member