

# Faith and Facts: The Impact of War and Violence

## WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

- **Isaiah 11:6** – The wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them.
- **Isaiah 32:16-20** – Then justice will dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness abide in the fruitful field. The effect of righteousness will be peace, and the result of righteousness, quietness and trust for ever. My people will abide in a peaceful habitation, in secure dwellings, and in quiet resting-places. The forest will disappear completely, and the city will be utterly laid low. Happy will you be who sow beside every stream, who let the ox and the donkey range freely.
- **Psalms 33:13-17** – The Lord looks down from heaven; he sees all humankind. From where he sits enthroned he watches all the inhabitants of the earth – he who fashions the hearts of them all and observes all their deeds. A king is not saved by his great army; a warrior is not delivered by his great strength. The war horse is a vain hope for victory, and by its great might it cannot save.
- **Micah 4:3-4** – He shall judge between many peoples, and shall arbitrate between strong nations far away; they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore; but they shall all sit under their own vines and under their own fig trees, and no one shall make them afraid; for the mouth of the Lord of hosts has spoken.
- **John 8:1-11** – Early in the morning [Jesus] came again to the temple. All the people came to him and he sat down and began to teach them. The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery; and making her stand before all of them, they said to him, ‘Teacher, this woman was caught in the very act of committing adultery. Now in the law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?’ They said this to test him, so that they might have some charge to bring against him. Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground. When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, ‘Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.’ And once again he bent down and wrote on the ground. When they heard it, they went away, one by one, beginning with the elders; and Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before him. Jesus straightened up and said to her, ‘Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?’ She said, ‘No one, sir.’ And Jesus said, ‘Neither do I condemn you. Go your way, and from now on do not sin again.’
- **Romans 8:38-39** – For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

## WHAT DOES THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH SAY?

*From the 2008 Social Principles:*

- **Par. 165 – The World Community** – God’s world is one world. The unity now being thrust upon us by technological revolution has far outrun our moral and spiritual capacity to achieve a stable world. The enforced unity of humanity, increasingly evident on all levels of life, presents the Church as well as all people with problems that will not wait for answer: injustice, war, exploitation, privilege, population, international ecological crisis, proliferation of arsenals of nuclear weapons, development of transnational business organizations that operate beyond the effective control of any governmental structure, and the increase of tyranny in all its forms. This generation must find viable answers to these and related questions if humanity is to continue on this earth. We commit ourselves as a Church to the achievement of a world community that is a fellowship of persons who honestly love one another. We pledge ourselves to seek the meaning of the gospel in all issues that divide people and threaten the growth of world community.

- **Par. 165. VI. C. War and Peace** – We believe war is incompatible with the teachings and example of Christ. We therefore reject war as an instrument of national foreign policy. We oppose unilateral first/preemptive strike actions and strategies on the part of any government. As disciples of Christ, we are called to love our enemies, seek justice, and serve as reconcilers of conflict. We insist that the first moral duty of all nations is to work together to resolve by peaceful means every dispute that arises between or among them. We advocate the extension and strengthening of international treaties and institutions that provide a framework within the rule of law for responding to aggression, terrorism, and genocide. We believe that human values must outweigh military claims as governments determine their priorities; that the militarization of society must be challenged and stopped; that the manufacture, sale, and deployment of armaments must be reduced and controlled; and that the production, possession, or use of nuclear weapons be condemned. Consequently, we endorse general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control.

*Regarding specific issues:*

- **Abolition of Torture** – The use of detention and imprisonment for the harassment and elimination of political opponents or other dissidents violates fundamental human rights. Furthermore, the mistreatment or torture of persons by governments for any purpose violates Christian teaching and must be condemned and/or opposed by Christians and churches wherever and whenever it occurs. (*2008 Book of Discipline*, ¶164A)
- **Disarmament** – Peace rooted in justice requires the nurturing of a culture of peace in homes, communities, religious institutions, nations, and across the world; the use of non-violent means of resolving conflict; appropriate systems of common security; and the end of the unrestrained production, sale and use of weapons worldwide. (*2004 Book of Resolutions*, "In Support of the United Nations," ¶326). Whereas, reflecting the church's traditional role as a place of safety and sanctuary, therefore, every United Methodist church is officially declared a weapon-free zone. (*2004 Book of Resolutions*, "Church is a Weapon-Free Zone," ¶241)
- **Middle East** – The United Methodist Church encourages "all leaders of and participants in 'Holy Land Tours' to contact indigenous Christian leaders in the Middle East, and to hear concerns of both the Israelis and Palestinians who live there, as well as visit the biblical and historical sites." (*2004 Book of Resolutions*, "Holy Land Tours," ¶292). "The United Methodist Church calls upon the United States, as a permanent member of the U.N. Security Council, to accept the authority of Security Council resolutions and abide by Resolutions 242 and 338, as well as other relevant Security Council resolutions, that provide a framework for bringing this conflict to a just and permanent end. (*2004 Book of Resolutions*, "United Nations Resolutions on the Israel-Palestine Conflict," ¶323)
- **Nuclear Weapons** – We believe war is incompatible with the teaching and examples of Christ. We therefore reject war as an instrument of national foreign policy, to be employed only as a last resort in the prevention of such evils as genocide, brutal suppression of human rights, and unprovoked international aggression and insist that ... the production, possession, or use of nuclear weapons be condemned. Consequently, we endorse general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control. (*Social Principles*, ¶165C)
- **Terrorism** – The Church condemns all acts of terror, and urges all world leaders to repudiate violence and the killing, and examine the causes of terrorism and affirm international cooperation to confront terrorism. (*2004 Book of Resolutions*, "Plan to Eliminate Terrorism" ¶336)

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- American NGO Coalition for the International Criminal Court - [www.amicc.org](http://www.amicc.org)
- Center on Conscience and War - [www.centeronconscience.org](http://www.centeronconscience.org)
- Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) - [www.cmep.org](http://www.cmep.org)
- Conference of Non-Governmental Organizations in Consultative Relationship with the United Nations (CONGO) - [www.ngocongo.org](http://www.ngocongo.org)
- Faith and Ethics Network for the International Criminal Court - [www.amicc.org/faith.html](http://www.amicc.org/faith.html)
- International NGO Coalition for the International Criminal Court - [www.iccnw.org](http://www.iccnw.org)
- United Nations Association of the USA – Council of Organizations - [www.unausa.org/council](http://www.unausa.org/council)
- Win Without War - [www.winwithoutwarus.org](http://www.winwithoutwarus.org)

Source: *The United Methodist Church – General Board of Church and Society*  
[www.umc-gbcs.org/site/c.frLJK2PKLqF/b.2808967/k.B565/Peace\\_with\\_Justice.htm](http://www.umc-gbcs.org/site/c.frLJK2PKLqF/b.2808967/k.B565/Peace_with_Justice.htm)