Resources for Christian Pacifism:  
Biblical, Historical, and Traditional

1. Scriptures

Matthew 5:38-48
38 "You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' 39 But I say to you, Do not resist an evildoer. But if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also; 40 and if anyone wants to sue you and take your coat, give your cloak as well; 41 and if anyone forces you to go one mile, go also the second mile. 42 Give to everyone who begs from you, and do not refuse anyone who wants to borrow from you. 43 "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' 44 But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, 45 so that you may be children of your Father in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous. 46 For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? 47 And if you greet only your brothers and sisters, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? 48 Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

Matthew 5:3-10
3 "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 4 "Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. 5 "Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. 6 "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. 7 "Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy. 8 "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. 9 "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. 10 "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Romans 12:9-13, 14
9 Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; 10 love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor. 11 Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. 12 Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. 13 Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers. 14 Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them.

1 John 4:7-21
7 Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. 8 Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. 9 God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. 10 In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. 11 Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. 12 No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us. 13 By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. 14 And we have seen and do testify that the Father has sent his Son as the Savior of the world. 15 God abides in those who confess that Jesus is the Son of God, and they abide in God. 16 So we have known and believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them. 17 Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness on the day of judgment, because as he is, so are we in this world. 18 There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear; for fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not reached perfection in love. 19 We love because he first loved us. 20 Those who say, "I love God," and hate their brothers or sisters, are liars; for those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen. 21 The commandment we have from him is this: those who love God must love their brothers and sisters also.
Romans 5:7-8
7 Indeed, rarely will anyone die for a righteous person-- though perhaps for a good person someone might actually dare to die. 8 But God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us.

1 Corinthians 13:4-7
4 Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. 7 It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

Galatians 5:19-25
19 Now the works of the flesh are obvious: fornication, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, anger, quarrels, dissensions, factions, envy, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these. I am warning you, as I warned you before: those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. 22 By contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against such things. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. 25 If we live by the Spirit, let us also be guided by the Spirit.

James 4:12
12 There is one lawgiver and judge who is able to save and to destroy. So who, then, are you to judge your neighbor?

James 3:17-18
17 But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without a trace of partiality or hypocrisy. 18 And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace for those who make peace.

1 Peter 3:16-18
16 yet do it with gentleness and reverence. Keep your conscience clear, so that, when you are maligned, those who abuse you for your good conduct in Christ may be put to shame. 17 For it is better to suffer for doing good, if suffering should be God's will, than to suffer for doing evil. 18 For Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, in order to bring you to God. He was put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit,

1 Peter 3:8-9
8 Finally, all of you, have unity of spirit, sympathy, love for one another, a tender heart, and a humble mind. 9 Do not repay evil for evil or abuse for abuse; but, on the contrary, repay with a blessing. It is for this that you were called-- that you might inherit a blessing.

Acts 4:19
19 But Peter and John answered them, "Whether it is right in God's sight to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge;

Acts 5:29
29 But Peter and the apostles answered, "We must obey God rather than any human authority."

2 Corinthians 4:8-10
8 We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be made visible in our bodies.
2 Corinthians 13:11-13
11 Finally, brothers and sisters, farewell. Put things in order, listen to my appeal, agree with one another, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you. 12 Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the saints greet you. 13 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with all of you.

Mark 8:27-38
27 Jesus went on with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi; and on the way he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that I am?" 28 And they answered him, "John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets." 29 He asked them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answered him, "You are the Messiah." 30 And he sternly ordered them not to tell anyone about him. 31 Then he began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. 32 He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. 33 But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, "Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things." 34 He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. 35 For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it. 36 For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? 37 Indeed, what can they give in return for their life? 38 Those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."

Luke 9:52-56
52 And he sent messengers ahead of him. On their way they entered a village of the Samaritans to make ready for him; 53 but they did not receive him, because his face was set toward Jerusalem. 54 When his disciples James and John saw it, they said, "Lord, do you want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?" 55 But he turned and rebuked them. 56 Then they went on to another village.

Zechariah 9:9-10
9 Rejoice greatly, O daughter Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter Jerusalem! Lo, your king comes to you; triumphant and victorious is he, humble and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey. 10 He will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the war-horse from Jerusalem; and the battle bow shall be cut off, and he shall command peace to the nations; his dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth.

Matthew 26:51-52
51 Suddenly, one of those with Jesus put his hand on his sword, drew it, and struck the slave of the high priest, cutting off his ear. 52 Then Jesus said to him, "Put your sword back into its place; for all who take the sword will perish by the sword.

Revelation 13:10
10 If you are to be taken captive, into captivity you go; if you kill with the sword, with the sword you must be killed. Here is a call for the endurance and faith of the saints.

Galatians 3:28
8 There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.
Galatians 3:11
11 Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law; for "The one who is righteous will live by faith."

Colossians 3:11
11 In that renewal there is no longer Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and free; but Christ is all and in all!

2 Corinthians 5:18-20
18 All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; 19 that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. 20 So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

1 Peter 2:13-17
13 For the Lord's sake accept the authority of every human institution, whether of the emperor as supreme, 14 or of governors, as sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to praise those who do right. 15 For it is God's will that by doing right you should silence the ignorance of the foolish. 16 As servants of God, live as free people, yet do not use your freedom as a pretext for evil. 17 Honor everyone. Love the family of believers. Fear God. Honor the emperor.

Philippians 3:20
20 But our citizenship is in heaven, and it is from there that we are expecting a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Philippians 1:27
27 Only, live your life in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that, whether I come and see you or am absent and hear about you, I will know that you are standing firm in one spirit, striving side by side with one mind for the faith of the gospel,

Romans 12:2
2 Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God-- what is good and acceptable and perfect.

2 Corinthians 5:17
17 So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!

Some Passages Which Have Caused Difficulty

John 2:13-16  Matthew 10:34-35
Mark 12:13-17  John 15:13
Romans 1:19-21  Ephesians 6:10-17
2. **Church History**

- **Ambrose** (ca. 339-397; the Bishop of Milan and one of the great doctors of the Western Church).
  
  In a speech against Auxentius:
  
  o “The soldiers of Christ require neither arms nor spears of iron,” and, “The servants of God do not rely for their protection on material defenses but on the divine Providence.”

- **Pope Nicholas I** (c. 800-867)
  
  o “The soldiers of the world are distinct from the soldiers for the church. Hence, it is improper for the soldiers of the church to fight for the affairs of the world, which involves them inevitably in the spilling of blood.”

- **Henry Child Carter**, (Date: hymn writer) penned the lyrics:
  
  Give me to see the foes that I must fight,
  
  Powers of the darkness, throned where Thou shouldst rain,
  
  Read the directions of Thy wrath aright,
  
  Lest, striking flesh and blood, I strike in vain.

- **Christopher Butler** (Date) Abbot of Downside said at the Vatican Council,
  
  o “The weapons of the gospel are not nuclear but spiritual; it wins it victories not by war but by suffering.”

- **Tarachus**, a third century soldier convert stated,
  
  o “Because I was a Christian I have now chosen to be a civilian.”

- **The Synod of Ratisbon** (742) a formal meeting of bishops and representatives of several churches convened for the purpose of regulating doctrine or discipline decreed,
  
  o “We absolutely and in all circumstances forbid all God’s servants to carry arms, to fight, and to march against an army or against an enemy.”

- **John Hick** (1922– ) philosopher and theologian:
  
  o “Is the internal peace of the Body of Christ to be merely a dependent reflection of the degree of political amity prevailing in the world at a given time? Is the unity of the World Council of Churches to be merely a shadow of the precarious unity of the United Nations? If so, Christianity is in the last resort a world religion only by courtesy of, and in proportion to, the momentary success of men’s political contriving….Indeed it is difficult to conceive a more effective reversal for the cause of Christ than that after nearly two thousand years of Christian history His committed disciples should engage in fratricidal conflict with one another, their distinctive way of life and mutual relationship being thereby abandoned or suspended. If the Christian revelation is true, there can be no power of evil strong enough to compel Christian people, united in faith to their one Lord, to wage war upon one another and so to crucify afresh the Christ whose Body they are.”

- **Charles Wesley** (1708-1788), hymnist of the English Revival penned:
  
  Love, like death, hath all destroyed,
  
  Rendered all distinctions void;
  
  Names, and sects, and parties fall:
  
  Thou, O Christ, are all in all.
Justin Martyr (c. 100-165; Christian philosopher, martyr, and apologist) wrote a defense of Christianity to Antonius Pius in about 138.

- He cites Isaiah 2:44 – “nation shall not lift sword against nation nor ever again be trained for war” and continues: “You can be convinced that this has happened….We who used to kill one another, do not make war on our enemies. We refuse to tell lies or deceive our inquisitors; we prefer to die acknowledging Christ” (1 Apol. 39).

In another work, The Dialogue with Trypho, he writes similarly, after quoting the same prophecy:

- “We who were filled with war and mutual slaughter and all wickedness have each and all throughout the earth changed our instruments of war, our swords into ploughshares and our spears into farming tools, and cultivate piety, justice, love of mankind, faith and the hope which we have from the Father through the Crucified One” (110).

Tatian the Apologist (second century), a Syrian convert of Justin Martyr, writing Discourse to the Greeks (ca.160):

- “I do not want to be an emperor; I do not want wealth; I refuse military office; I loathe sexual looseness” (11), and again “you intend to make war and take Apollo as your adviser in murder” (19).

Athenagoras (late second century), Christian philosopher and apologist,

- In defense of Christianity to Marcus Aurelius (ca. 177) in which he explicitly says that Christians may not take life “even justly,” and refuse to watch public executions or gladiatorial fights.
- Human life is sacred to the Christian: “How could anyone accuse of murder and cannibalism men who, as they well know, cannot bear to see a man killed even if justly….We, thinking that to watch a man being killed is practically equivalent to taking life, refuse to attend gladiatorial displays” (An Embassy about the Christians, 35).

Irenaeus (ca. 1880), Bishop of Lyons

- “If the law of liberty, that is the Word of God, proclaimed to the whole earth by the apostles who went out from Jerusalem, has achieved a revolution of such magnitude that the very peoples have made their warlike lances and swords into ploughs and changed them into sickles which he gave for reaping corn, and now do not know how to fight, but when struck offer even the other cheek, the prophets made this declaration of no one but him who accomplished it” (Against Heresies, 4, 56, 4).

Clement of Alexandria (c. 150-215)—a father of the Eastern church

- “We are being educated not in war but in peace” (The Tutor 1, 12, 98).
- “We are the race given over to peace” (2, 21, 32).
- “We have made use of only one instrument, the peaceful word, with which we do honor to God” (4, 42).
- “We do not train women like Amazons to be manly in war, since we wish even men to be peaceable” (Miscellanies 4, 8, 61).

Origen (c. 185-254), a Christian theologian and teacher writes in his defense Against Celsus:

- “The existence of many kingdoms would have been an obstacle to the extension of Jesus teaching throughout the whole world, not only because of what has just been said, but also on account of people everywhere being compelled to bear arms and to make war for their countries….How would it have been possible for this peaceable teaching, which does not even allow men to take vengeance on their enemies, to
prevail, unless at the appearance of Jesus the world’s affairs have changed everywhere into a gentler state?” (2, 30)

- “If a revolt had been the cause of the Christian’s combining, and if they had derived their origin from the Jews, to whom it was allowed to take arms on behalf of the families and to destroy their enemies, the Law-giver of the Christians would not have altogether forbidden the killing of a human being, teaching that violence done to a man on the part of his own disciples, however it becoming to his own Divine legislation to allow the killing of any man whatever” (3, 7).
- “To those who ask us where we have come from or who is our commander, we say that we have come in accordance with the counsels of Jesus to cut down our warlike and arrogant swords of dispute in ploughshare, and we convert into sickles the spears we used in fighting. For we no longer take a sword against a nation, nor do we learn any more to make war, having become sons of peace for the sake of Jesus, who is our commander” (5, 33).
- If, according to Celsus’ supposition, all the Romans were to be converted they will by praying overcome their enemies—or rather they will not make war at all, being guarded by the Divine power, which promised to save five whole cities for the sake of fifty righteous men. (8, 70)

**Tertullian** (ca. 160-220)—the first great Christian Latin writer

- The Lord’s capacity for suffering was wounded in Malchus, and so he cursed the works of the sword forever. (*On Patience 3*)
- For what war should we not have been fit and ready, however outnumbered, we who face massacre so readily, were it not that in our way of life it is more permissible to suffer death than to inflict it. (*Apology 37*)
- Is it right to occupy oneself with the sword, when the Lord proclaims that he who uses the sword shall perish by the sword? And shall the son of peace, for whom it will be unfitting even to go to law, be engaged in a battle? And shall he who is not the avenger even of his own wrongs, administer chains and imprisonment and torture and executions? …The very act of transferring one’s name from the camp of light to the camp of darkness is a transgression. Of course, the case is different if the faith comes subsequently to any who are already occupied in military service, as with those whom John admitted to baptism, and with the most believing centurions who Christ approves and whom Peter instructs; all service must be left at once, as has been done by many, or else recourse must be had to all sorts of quibbling, so that nothing may be committed against God….Do leaves make up the laurel of triumph—or do corpses? Is it decorated with ribbons or tombs? Is it besmeared with ointments or with the tears of wives and mothers—perhaps some even who are Christians—for Christ is among the barbarians as well? (*On the Garland 11-12*)
- How shall the Christian wage war, no, how shall he even be a soldier in peacetime, without the sword which the Lord has taken away? For although soldiers had come to John and received the form of their rule, although even a centurion had believed, the Lord afterwards in disarming Peter ungirded every soldier. (*On Idolatry 19*)
- Who shall produce truth, gentleness and justice with the sword, and not their contrary, deceit, harshness and injustice, which are the proper business of battles? (*Against Marcion 3, 14*)

**Cyprian**, a controversial bishop of Carthage from 248-58 and a follower of Tertullian.

- The whole world is wet with mutual blood; and murder, which in the case of an individual is admitted to be a crime, is called a virtue when it is committed communally. Impunity is claimed for the wicked deeds, not on the plea that they are guiltless, but because cruelty is perpetrated on a grand scale. (*Letter 1, 6*)
We have not in such a way given our name to warfare that we ought only to think about peace, and draw back from and refuse war [a deliberate paradox, but he is speaking of martyrdom, as he goes on to show] when in this very warfare the Lord walked first—the Teacher of humility and endurance, and suffering—so that what he taught to be done, he first of all did, and what he exhorts to suffer, he himself, first suffered for us. (56, 3)

God wished iron to be used for the cultivation of the earth, and therefore it should not be used to take human life. (On the Dress of Virgins 11)

Adultery, deceit and the taking of life are mortal sins…. after partaking of the Eucharist the hand is not stained with blood and with the sword. (On the Value of Patience 14)

• Minucius Felix (second or third century) author of Octavius, which is one of the most attractive of early Christian writings.
  - It is not right for us even to see or hear of a man being killed. (30, 6)

• Lactantius (ca. 250-325)—the last of the great Christian writers before Constantine
  - Someone will say here: ‘What therefore, or where, or of what sort is piety?’ Assuredly it is among those who are ignorant of war, who keep concord with all, who are friends even to their enemies, who love all men as their brothers, who know how to restrain their anger, and to soothe all madness of mind by quiet control. (5, 10, 10)
  - Why should the just man wage war, and mix himself up in other people’s passions—he in whose mind dwells perpetual peace with men? Is it likely that he who regards it as wrong, not only to inflict slaughter himself, but even to be present with those who inflict it and to look on, will take pleasure in human blood? (5, 18, 13)
  - When God prohibits killing, he not only forbids us to commit brigandage, which is not allowed even by the public laws, but he warns us not to do even those things which are regarded as legal among men. And so it will not be lawful for a just man to serve as a soldier—for justice itself is his military service—nor to accuse anyone of a capital offense, because it makes no difference whether you kill with a sword or with a world, since killing itself I forbidden. And so, in this commandment of God, no exception at all ought to be made to the rule that it is always wrong to kill a man, whom God has wished to be a sacrosanct creature. (6, 20, 15)

So the church did not demand that their converts leave the army, but they did not accord them full church membership until they did. The evidence for this is to be found in church orders from Egypt and Syria, dating in their present form from the fourth century but clearly going back earlier.
  - For example, from Egypt statute 28 reads “They shall not receive into the church one of the emperor’s soldiers. If they have received him he shall refuse to kill if commanded to do so. If he does not refrain he shall be rejected.”
  - From Syria we have a document entitled The Testament of our Lord. In it we read: “But if soldiers wish to be baptized to the Lord, let them cease from military service or from the position of authority, or else let them not be accepted.”

The tensions at the end of the third century saw Christians contracting out of the army and suffering martyrdom in consequence. We have some of their statements at their trials.
  - Tarachus said “Because I was a Christian I have now chosen to be a civilian.”
  - Marcellus said “I threw down my arms; it was not seemly that a Christian man, who renders military service to the Lord Christ, should render it by earthly injuries.”
  - Maximilian said “I cannot serve as a soldier; I cannot do evil; I am a Christian.”
  - We also have an epitaph erected by Pope Damascus over two martyrs Nereus and Achilleus. They had signed up for soldiery, undertaking cruel
duties. Together they watched their overlord’s commands, ready to do his bidding at the spur of fear. A miracle of faith! All at once they laid aside their madness, they turned, they fled, the abandoned the general’s godless camp, they threw down their shields, their helmets and blood-smeared swords, They rejoiced to acknowledge and bear along Christ’s triumphs. Through Damascus believe the power of Christ’s glory.

- James Douglas author of *The Non-Violent Cross* (1968)
  - When Constantine raised the cross above his troops, he raised before the Christian Church the same temptation which Satan had set before Christ on the mountain with the sight of all the kingdoms of the world. And the Christian Church—for understandable reasons and without the critical perspective of 1600 years—accepted Constantine’s offer.

- Persecution could not destroy the church’s witness; worldly power went far towards doing so.

- Bishop Butler at Vatican Two
  - Let us indeed show all sympathy for statesmen in their immense difficulties; let us gratefully acknowledge their good intentions. But let us add a word of reminder that good ends do not justify immoral means; nor do they justify even a conditional intention of meeting immoral attack with immoral defense. *Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth.*

- Tom Lehrer, a Harvard humorist and mathematician, has a wry comment:
  - The Lord’s my Shepherd, says the psalm. But, just in case, we’d better get a bomb.

- Gandhi (1869-1948)
  - Though I cannot claim to be a Christian in the sectarian sense, the example of Jesus’ suffering is a factor in the composition of my undying faith in nonviolence which rules all my actions, worldly and temporal….Jesus lived and died in vain if he did not teach us to regulate the whole of life by the eternal law of Love. *(The Law of Love. 79)*

3. Documents

The Assemblies of God position from 1917 until 1967. (Taken from Jay Beaman *Pentecostal Pacifism* page 24)

Resolution Concerning the Attitude of the General Council of the Assemblies of God Toward Any Military Service which Involves the Actual Participation in the Destruction of Human Life.

While recognizing Human Government as of Divine ordination and affirming our unswerving loyalty to the Government of the United States, nevertheless we are constrained to define our position with reference to the taking of human life.

WHEREAS, in the Constitutional Resolution adopted at the Hot Springs General Council, April 1-10, 1914, we plainly declare the Holy Inspired Scriptures to be the all-sufficient rule of faith and practice, and

WHEREAS the Scriptures deal plainly with the obligations and relations of humanity, setting forth the principles of “Peace on earth, good will toward men.” *(Luke 2:14)*; and
WHEREAS we, as followers of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, believe in implicit obedience to the Divine commands and precepts which instruct us to “Follow peace with all men,” (Heb. 12:14); “Thou shalt not kill,” (Exod. 20:13); Resist not evil,” (Matt. 5:39); “Love your enemies,” (Matt. 5:44): etc. and
WHEREAS these and other Scriptures have always been accepted and interpreted by our churches as prohibiting Christians from shedding blood or taking human life;
THEREFORE we, as a body of Christians, while purposing to fulfill all the obligations of loyal citizenship, are nevertheless constrained to declare we cannot conscientiously participate in war and armed resistance, since this is contrary to our view of the clear teachings of the inspired Word of God, which is the sole basis of our faith.

The current position of the Assemblies of God
As a Movement we affirm our loyalty to the government of the United States in war or peace. We shall continue to insist, as we have historically, on the right of each member to choose for himself whether to declare his position as a combatant, a noncombatant, or a conscientious objector.

The position of the United Pentecostal Church International in 1930
We recognize the institution of human government as being of divine ordination, and in so doing, affirm unswervingly loyalty to our Government; however, we take a definite position regarding the bearing of arms or the taking of human life.

As followers of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, we believe in implicit obedience to His commandments and precepts, which instruct us as follows: “…that we resist not evil…” (Matt. 5:39); “Follow peace with all men…” Hebrews (12:14). (See also Matt. 26:52; Rom. 12:19; James 5:6; Revelation 13:10). These we believe and interpret to mean Christians shall not shed blood nor take human life.

Therefore, we propose to fulfill all the obligations of loyal citizens, but are constrained to declare against participating in combatant services in war, armed insurrection, property destruction, aiding or abetting in or the actual destruction of human life.

Furthermore, we cannot conscientiously affiliate with any union, boycott, or organization which will force or bind any of its members to belong to any organization, perform any duties contrary to our conscience, or receive an mark, without our right to affirm or reject same.

The United Pentecostal Church International clarified their view in 1940
However, we regret the false impression created by some groups of so-called “conscientious objectors” that to obey the Bible is to have a contempt for law or magistrates, to be disloyal to our Government and in sympathy with our enemies, or to be unwilling to sacrifice for the preservation of our commonwealth. This attitude would be as contemptible to us as to any patriot. The Word of God commands us to do violence to no man. It also commands us that first of all we are to pray for rulers of our country. We, therefore, exhort our members to freely and willingly respond to the call of our Government except in the matter of bearing arms. When we say service, we mean service—no matter how hard or dangerous. The true church has no more place for cowards than has the nation. First of all, however, let us earnestly pray that we will with honor be kept out of war. We believe that we can be consistent in serving our government in certain noncombatant capacities, but not in the bearing of arms.
4. Pentecostals

4.1. Individuals

- In 1922 D. M. Panton preached that (D. M. Panton, “Coming War,” The Pentecostal Evangel, 25 November 1922, 10) (Alexander, Peace to War, 43)
  - The Church’s right attitude to war [is to] at least refuse to participate in war herself, and so make good her profession of peace. In the first two centuries of our era, so swordless was the Church of Christ, that Celsus, the Gnostic, in the first written attack ever made on the Christian Faith, grounds his censure on this very fact, and says: The State receives no help in war from the Christians; and if all men were to follow their example, the Sovereign would be deserted, and the world would fall into the hands of the barbarians.

- The early leader of Quakerism, George Fox, wavered on pacifism but confirmed his position in 1659. (Alexander, Peace to War, 95)
  - All that pretend to fight for Christ, are deceived; for his kingdom is not of this world, therefore his servants do not fight. Therefore fighters are not of Christ’s kingdom, but without Christ’s kingdom” (Fox, Journal, 357; quoted in Brock, 23).

- J. W. Welch, the chairman of the executive presbytery and author of the article, also stated his own opinion: (Welch, “An Explanation,” The Weekly Evangel, 19 May 1917, 8. Welch expressed a cultic law pacifism that allowed noncombatant military service, i.e. he was an alternativist pacifist rather than an absolute pacifist. Yoder, Nevertheless, 97. Brock and Young, Pacifism in the Twentieth Century, 42.) (Alexander, Peace to War, 96)
  - Personally I should deplore the necessity for our young men to bear arms against others, but would be pleased to see many of them serve in a capacity that would afford them an opportunity to save life and to point men to Christ who may be facing death in the trenches.

- In 1991 Dempster published another article…provided his revision of Beaman’s “cultural assimilation thesis.” Dempster claimed that pacifism lost out because it was never the majority position, it was instead a position held by “a prophetic minority.” His perspective eventually made it into Proclaim Peace: Christian Pacifism from Unexpected Quarters. (Alexander, Peace to War, 316-7)

- Joel Shuman authored an article with the shameless title, “Pentecost and the End of Patriotism: A Call for the Restoration of Pacifism Among Pentecostal Christians.” (Shuman, 71-72. Emphasis added) (Alexander, Peace to War, 317)
  - This essay is intended to be prophetic in nature…it is meant to “reinforce a vision of the place of believing community in history, which vision locates moral reasoning….” The 1967 decision of the Assemblies of God officially to abandon its historical position as a pacifist church was a grievous error…the Assemblies of God ceased to exist in a way consistent with the radical eschatological vision which energized it from its beginning….My arguments here are concerned with the Assemblies of God, simply because this is the community of which I am a member and with which I am most familiar.

  - Bartleman claimed to have written over 550 articles. He also published 250,000 copies of 85 tracts he wrote in a two year period. Frank Bartleman, How Pentecost Cam to Los Angeles: As It Was in the Beginning (Los Angeles: by the author, 1925), 93, 127; reprinted in The Higher Christian Life: Sources for the Study of the Holiness,
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- “We are fattening on the blood of other nations, profiting by their murder and their ruin. It is ‘blood money.’ We are killing innocent wives and children.” [Bartleman, “The War—Our Danger,” Word and Work, (November 1915), p. 300]
- We have killed off about all of our American Indians. What we have not killed outright we have starved. . . . Will not God deal in judgment with such a nation as this? Most assuredly! We have stolen the land from the North American Indians. . . Our wrong to the black people was avenged in blood. What will the next be?

- D.L. Moody was a conscientious objector in the Civil War and stated that (William Moody, The Life of Dwight L. Moody [New York: Revell, 1985]). (Alexander, Peace to War, 103)
  - “there has never been a time in my life when I felt I could take a gun and shoot down a fellow human being. In this respect, I am a Quaker”

- Refusing military service, “to fight for God, nation, and flag,” incensed the American public….In 1918 Dave Allen, a twenty-six year old Pentecostal in Alabama, was beaten and shot to death by two police officers in his home, in front of his wife, because he would not fight in World War I. The report of his murder was printed in a Pentecostal magazine. It started by quoting the letter from Sister Allen, his widow. “The asked him to hold up his hands; he did that also. They then proceeded to handcuff him. He asked them not to do it as he would go without it. They then began beating him almost to death, they shot him and lift him dead in the floor[sic].” J.B. Ellis, the Church of God (Cleveland, Tennessee) overseer of Alabama who had himself served time in jail for refusing to buy war bonds, traveled down to investigate and get all the details. In this context of “the most strenuous nationalism that the United States had ever known” the Assemblies of God argued for and tried to embody Christian nonviolence. (Alexander, Peace to War, 136-7)
  - I talk to many who were present immediately after the killing and that all said that the circumstances surrounding the murder corroborate with the testimony of Sister Allen. Evidently they had knocked him over on the bed and beaten him almost to death there. A great pool of blood was on the bed. From the sign on the floor, as well as the statement of his wife, he got up off the bed and was beaten across the room, through the door and about three or four feet into another room where they shot him twice. Both balls entered his breast ranging downward, indicating that he was on his knees when they shot him. Sister Allen said that he kept his hands above his head all the time trying to ward off the blows and protect his head. His hands, head and neck were beaten almost to a pulp. The Dr. who held the inquest said he would hardly have recovered from the blows if they had not shot him…Brother Allen was in the second draft and was called for in October. Knowing that his Bible church opposed war, he felt he could not kill….He carried his Bible with him everywhere he went….We feel he might be classed among the martyrs. We extend to his wife and parents our heartfelt sympathy. God’s grace will be sufficient. Keep pressing on….I am looking for the time to come when many will have to seal our testimony with our blood.

- William Burton McCafferty (1889-1963), who eventually served as a professor and Academic Dean of Southwestern Bible Institute (now Southwestern Assemblies of God University) in Waxahachie, Texas…(Alexander, Peace to War, 139-40)
  - In Luke 22:49, the disciples asked Jesus, “Lord, shall we smite with the sword?” They prayed, but, instead of waiting for an answer, one immediately drew the sword and went to battle…Let us wait for an answer from God. Let us not begin to reason from the natural point of view….What was the answer of Christ to the disciples (Christians) to his question? (Matt. 26:51) “Put up again thy sword into its place.” This is what God is saying to the Christians of today, “Ye followers of the Prince of Peace, disarm
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The argument that we must go to war in behalf of the weaker nation because of its being in the right, is not consistent with the doctrines of Christ. It is also against the teaching of Christ to fight in self-defense. ‘For even hereunto were we called, because Christ also suffered leaving us an example that we should follow his steps, who did no sin (violence, Isa. 53:9) who, when he was reviled, reviled not again…. ’ [Ibid. McCafferty appealed to the life of Jesus as an example to be followed. In so doing, he aligned with the type of pacifism Yoder called “the imitation of Jesus.” “Its content is not abstract commands but rather the life and word of Jesus. His command and example are to be followed without calculation of social possibilities…. It does not expect widespread acceptance, but neither does it acquiesce in the world’s noncompliance with Jesus’ norm.” Yoder, Nevertheless, 120.]

John 17:16. Our citizenship is not of this world, our citizenship is in heaven. Phil. 3:20. We belong to the kingdom of God and the kingdom of God and the kingdoms of this world are not allied…. Christians are separate from the world and are subjects of God’s kingdom, a kingdom of peace…. [McCafferty, “Should Christians Go To War?” 1.]

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The argument that we must go to war in behalf of the weaker nation because of its being in the right, is not consistent with the doctrines of Christ. It is also against the teaching of Christ to fight in self-defense. ‘For even hereunto were we called, because Christ also suffered leaving us an example that we should follow his steps, who did no sin (violence, Isa. 53:9) who, when he was reviled, reviled not again. . . .’ (Ibid.)

John 17:16. Our citizenship is not of this world, our citizenship is in heaven. Phil. 3:20. We belong to the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of God and the kingdoms of this world are not allied. . . . Christians are separate from the world and are subjects of God’s kingdom, a kingdom of peace. . . . (Ibid.)

Donald Gee (1891-1966) believed that a converted soldier would leave the military if he was properly disciplined. (Alexander, Peace to War, 161-2) (Kenyon)

However passionately patriotism may overwhelm everything else in time of war, the world certainly expects the Christian church to take a stand against the war, and it is deeply disappointed at heart when that stand is not taken, however much it may persecute for the time the “conscientious objector.” [Donald Gee, “War, the Bible, and the Christian,” The Pentecostal Evangel, 8 November 1930, 6. Gee viewed the role of the church as that of a virtuous minority who emulated Jesus by nonviolently standing for what was right regardless of the consequences. This outspoken pacifist was elected chairman even after World War II.]

He [the Christian conscientious objector] accepts the principle of Calvary, and the refusal to use physical force as a means to attain victory over evil. Such objection is based upon the simple obedience as a Christian to the teaching and example of Jesus Christ, and an acceptance of them as the final rule for the disciple, whatever the cost. [Donald Gee, “Conscientious Objection,” The Pentecostal Evangel, 4 May 1940, 4.]
Jay Beaman encouraged Pentecostals with his conclusion. (Alexander, *Peace to War*, 301)

- Pentecostals need to ponder whether they can long maintain their distinctive views about the church and the Holy Spirit, while conforming to mainstream Evangelical socio-religious views. By asking in what ways their earlier pacifism formed a part of their whole belief system, Pentecostals may come to see that this loss signaled other losses too. It may be time to ask in what way this movement, founded upon a desire to be open to the renewing ministry of the Holy Spirit, can continue to have a prophetic role in the life of the church. [Beaman, *Pentecostal Pacifism*, 123.]

- What does one tell soldiers once they are converted? Are they to leave the military? It would seem from a pragmatic point of view, that the answer to these questions to a large extent, determine the success of ministry to servicemen. If one answered that the soldier who is born again should stay in the military, one immediately destroys some of the arguments that would keep other Christians from joining in the first place. [Pentecostal Pacifism, 71]

In a 1976 interview with Edith Blumhofer, Ernest Williams reported that a few AG ministers and adherents continued to sense that the movement had “lost something” when it had veered from pacifism. (Blumhofer, *The Assemblies of God: a Chapter in the Story of American Pentecostalism*, 354, 435.)

E.S. Williams (Kenyon)

- …in this dispensation we are followers of the Lord Jesus, “the Prince of Peace,” who has said, “they that take the sword shall perish by the sword.” Christians should ever be loyal and helpful to their Government, but it would be well for them to request noncombatant service in time of war. [E.S. Williams, “Questions and Answers,” *The Pentecostal Evangel*, 22 November 1941, 16.]

E.N. Bell (1917)

- “War is wrong, and no Christian should go who can honorably and lawfully keep out of it.”


- “From the very beginning, the movement has been characterized by Quaker principles. The laws of the Kingdom, laid down by…Jesus Christ…have been unqualifiedly adopted, consequently the movement has found itself opposed to the spilling of blood of any man, or of offering resistance to any aggression. Every branch of the movement, whether in the United States, Canada, Great Britain, or Germany, has held to this principle.” [B.F. Lawrence, *The Apostolic Faith Restored* (St. Louis: Gospel Publishing House, 1916), p. 36]

Sydney Booth-Clibborn’s *Blood Against Blood*

- General Sherman: ‘War is hell.’ The Duke of Wellington who won the battle of Waterloo: ‘War is a detestable thing. If you had seen but one day of war, you would pray to God that you might never see another.’ George Fox, when offered a captaincy: ‘I cannot fight, for the spirit of war is slain within me.’ Sydney Smith: ‘God is forgotten in war: every principle of Christianity is trampled upon.’ Tertullian: ‘Our religion teaches us that it is better to be killed than to kill.’ John Wesley: ‘Shall Christians assist the Prince of Hell, who was a murderer from the beginning, by telling the world of the benefit or need of war?’

John Alexander Dowie

- No person who went into the army to shoot and kill would remain a member of the church [Zion Banner, 23 September 1902]
Appeal to the sword, and you appeal to brute force and superior power, and whoever has the best sword and the best gun will win....All that is foreign to Christianity. [“Zion College Lectures on Prayer,” Leaves of Healing, 8 December 1900, 210]

Charles F. Parham

To murder a fellow creature! To receive therefore even less than thirty pieces of silver, and perhaps live to receive the plaudits and honor of a more cowardly and imbecile nation; for that nation is imbecile which retains its existence through the struggling exploits of war. We hang our heads in shame to see Christian nations and individuals yield themselves to the embrace of the Molech God, Patriotism, whose principle doctrine was honor, there to have consumed in the death struggle the feeling of philanthropy and humanity; spending millions to build the first for the consummation of these virtues, while the cause of Christ languishes, heaven loses, hell opens her jaws, and so-called Christian nations feed [by war] to satisfy her gluttonous appetite....Yet while thousands of men will volunteer and suffer the hardships and privations of an earthly war for glory, few, indeed, will volunteer and endure the slightest privations for the Master’s kingdom and eternal glory. [Parham, The Everlasting Gospel, reprint ed. (n.p., 1911, n.p., n.d.), 78]

Leonard Newby (Kenyon)

To the question, “Is it not an awful thing for one Christian nation to be fighting against another Christian nation?” he emphatically replied, “There is not, and has never been, such a company of people as a CHRISTIAN NATION, and never will be until the Lord comes.” [E.L. Newby, “Light on the Present Crisis,” Weekly Evangel, 1 July 1916, 6-7, 9.]

Hollenweger (Kenyon)

It is true that Williams leaves open the question of whether military service can be reconciled with the Christian conscience. Everyone must decide this according to his own conscience. But that one should not play volleyball on a Sunday afternoon is quite clear to him; it is compromise with the world. [Hollenweger, Pentecostals, 36]

AMAZING SHIFT -- Plank, Called to Serve

Favored you are if you learn to recognize....freedom is a bomb [that] four aircraft-carrier men load aboard a plane at Christmastime with a scribbled note upon its back, “Peace on earth, goodwill toward men.” (109)

God’s purpose and mission for you is to bring Him glory in the military, and to witness faithfully to the reality of His presence in your life. (100)


Down in the swamp patty under the sky,
    A place full of horror to live or to die
Burning by day in the heat of the sun,
    Shiv’ring by night when the day’s course is run;
Sniping at enemies as planes roar o’erhead;
    We succor the living; we bury the dead.

Down in the rice paddy, death all around,
    Planes in the blue sky, bombs on the ground;
Terror and darkness are with us at night,
    Evil stalks everywhere in broad daylight;
No hope for respite when the day is gone,
    No place out of range of the rifle or gun.

Down in the Viet swamp, far from our friends,
The flash of a rifle—another life ends.
Fever and ague wrack the body and soul,
Life is a torture in this dismal hole;
Yet we’re buoyed up in our terrible plight;
\[For God is still with us, and our cause is right.\]

Down in the swamp hope with one life to give;
Freely it’s given that freedom may live;
Closer and closer we cling to the earth,
Dreaming of home and the land of our birth;
We stand by our comrades, no foes can divide;
We’re true to our buddies who fight by our side.

Down in the rice paddy, under the rain,
Hoping our efforts will not be in vain;
Bearing the brunt of an unending fight,
\[Doing our utmost for God and the right.\]
Americans, pray for your sons on the line;
\[Be true to your country; seek guidance divine.\]

4.2. Positions
- In 1915, The Weekly Evangel strongly recommended Blood Against Blood to all of its readers when E.N. Bell and J.R. Flower served as editors. (“Blood Against Blood: Should Christians Go to War?” The Weekly Evangel, 10 July 1915, 3) (Alexander, Peace to War, 87)
  - A most striking, realistic, and forceful book by Arthur Sidney Booth-Clibborn, an English Pentecostal Evangelist and Elder who has put into words the principle burning in the hearts of all the Pentecostal saints on the subject of whether a Christian should go to war or not. This book presents war from a Christian standpoint and is not intended for those out of Christ. Should the United States go to war with Germany, or any other nation, what shall be the attitude of the Pentecostal people. Send for a copy of this wonderful book and then make a decision. Price 55 cts. Postpaid. The Gospel Publishing House…
  - Another advertisement lauded it by stating that “The Gospel Publishing House is in possession of a powerful book” and encouraged Pentecostals to “purchase it and become imbued with the spirit of its contents, in a complete opposition and protest against war and the shedding of blood.” (The Weekly Evangel, 19 July 1915, 1.) (Alexander, Peace to War, 87)
- Jay Beaman found that sixty-two percent of Pentecostal denominations formed before 1932 had official pacifist articles. [Jay Beaman, Pentecostal Pacifism (Newton, Kan.: Mennonite Brethren Press, 1989.)] (Alexander, Peace to War, 154)
- An unnamed author in 1915 provided evidence that many American Pentecostals were more concerned about promoting peace than supporting war. (Paul N. Alexander, “Spirit Empowered Peacemaking: Pentecostal Pacifism in the Twentieth Century,” The Ekklesia Project 2002)
  - the nations [should have] . . . spread the Gospel of Peace and made known the rule of Jesus . . . ‘the King of Peace’ instead of obeying the ‘traditions of men’ and preparing big guns, air craft, rapid firers [sic], submarines, a big navy, and bigger army for the destruction of human life.
- The full Assemblies of God pacifist resolution, with its title, read as follows: (Alexander, Peace to War, 154)
Resolution Concerning the Attitude of the General Council of the Assemblies of God Toward an Military Service which involves the Actual Participation in the Destruction of Human Life.

While recognizing Human Government as of Divine ordination and affirming our unswerving loyalty to the Government of the United States, nevertheless we are constrained to define our position with reference to the taking of human life.

WHEREAS, in the Constitutional Resolution adopted at the Hot Springs General Council, April 1-10, 1914, we plainly declare the Holy Inspired Scriptures to be the all-sufficient rule of faith and practice, and

WHEREAS the Scriptures deal plainly with the obligations and relations of humanity, setting forth the principles of “Peace on earth, good will toward men.” (Luke 2:14); and

WHEREAS we, as followers of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, believe in implicit obedience to the Divine commands and precepts which instruct us to “Follow peace with all men,” (Heb. 12:14); “Thou shalt not kill,” (Exod. 20:13); “Resist not evil,” (Matt. 5:39); “Love your enemies,” (Matt. 5:44); etc., and

WHEREAS these and other Scriptures have always been accepted and interpreted by our churches as prohibiting Christians from shedding blood or taking human life;

THEREFORE we, as a body of Christians, while purposing to fulfill all the obligations of loyal citizenship, are nevertheless constrained to declare we cannot conscientiously participate in war and armed resistance which involves the actual destruction of human life, since this is contrary to our view of the clear teachings of the inspired Word of God, which is the sole basis of our faith. [Jay Beaman, *Pentecostal Pacifism* (Newton, Kan.: Mennonite Brethren Press, 1989. Emphasis in the original.) (Alexander, *Peace to War*, 154)

- During the last two years of World War I, the Assemblies of God promoted conscientious objection and witness several of their own claim exemption. Joseph D. Mininger (1879-1941), the founder of the Mennonite Gospel Mission in Kansas City, Kansas, found about four Assemblies of God conscientious objectors imprisoned at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas in 1919: Eddie Clemens of New York, Reginald Sass of Wisconsin, Virgil J. Stauffer of Indiana, and William Schulz of Michigan. Pentecostals represented 7.3 percent of the conscientious objectors at Fort Leavenworth, a disproportionately high amount given Pentecostalism’s still relatively low numbers. (Alexander, *Peace to War*, 157)

- The 1947 General Council appointed a committee to evaluate the appropriateness of the article on military service….the committee reported that they did not find it necessary to change the position. (Alexander, *Peace to War*, 232-3)
  - After considerable thought and prayer on this very vital subject, your committee feels that it will be unable to formulate an article on Military Service that will better represent the attitude of the Assemblies of God than that which is now part of our General Council By-laws. [General Council Minutes, 1947, 13.]

- A survey of American Assemblies of God ministers conducted in April 2001 revealed that ninety three percent agreed with the statement, “It is appropriate for a Christian to support war.” Sixty-five percent of these pastors agreed that “The principles of Jesus support war.” Even more, a significant seventy one percent, said that they themselves “would kill in a war.” These were not Pentecostal lay people who supported war and would kill, these were the pastors of the Assemblies of God churches in America five months before September 11, 2001. (Alexander, *Peace to War*, 277) [Paul Alexander, “Spirit Empowered Peacemaking: Toward a Pentecostal Charismatic Peace Fellowship,” *Journal of the European Pentecostal Theological Association*, Vol. 22, (2002):78-102.]
Although much denominational literature could be cited to show this, it will be sufficient to quote part of a resolution passed by South Western Assemblies of God University’s board of regents in response to faculty members signing a Pentecostal letter to President Bush asking him not to invade Iraq in March 2003. They unanimously agreed to “express concern regarding faculty members taking any public stand in opposition to the war situation currently facing America.” (Alexander, Peace to War, 277) [“Summary of Interaction with Dr. Paul Alexander Concerning His Involvement in a Petition Against the United States Initiation of a War in Iraq.” Personal files of the author. Marlon Millner authored the letter, “Send Judah First: A Pentecostal Perspective on Peace,” and several dozen Pentecostal pastors, students, laity, and teachers signed it. http://pcpf.org/index.php?option=com_content&view&id=261&Itemid=45]

Michael Chase and Joel Kruggel were ordained ministers from Illinois who presented to the General Council in 1981 that did not even make it to a vote....Most of the resolution follows so that it can be fully appreciated. (Alexander, Peace to War, 307)

WHEREAS. The Scriptures exhort: “Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace” (Rom. 14:19, NIV) and to “make every effort to live in peace with all men” (Heb. 12:14, NIV); and our Lord Jesus taught “blessed are the peacemakers” (Matt. 5:9); and
WHEREAS. There are those in our Assemblies of God fellowship, and among our fellow Christian believers, who while purposing to fulfill all the obligations of loyal citizenship, nevertheless fell constrained by the Holy Spirit and the teaching of Scriptures that they cannot conscientiously participate in war and armed resistance which involves the actual destruction of human life, nor conscientiously pay taxes authorized for military expenditures and the production of weapons (especially nuclear weaponry) which will result in the destruction of human life; and
WHEREAS. The present tax system in the United States is working a grievous injustice against people who, while not required to bear arms, must still pay for others to do so and for the continuing and widening arms race; and
WHEREAS. We as Christians are called to be salt and light in this world and to speak prophetically to our society with the Gospel message of salvation and peace, and therefore should look for alternatives to war to settle international conflicts; and
WHEREAS. A bill to establish a World Peace Tax Fund, i.e., H.R. 4897 and S. 880, has been introduced in Congress which would amend the Internal Revenue Code to provide that taxpayers conscientiously opposed to participation in war may elect to have their income, estate, or gift tax payments spent for nonmilitary and peace-related purposes; therefore, be it
RESOLVED, That the 39th General Council of the Assemblies of God go on record in support of the swift passage of legislation establishing a World Peace Tax Fund, and to urge individual members of the Assemblies of God to write their appropriate legislators.[fn67]

Although the Council could have amended any or all of the resolution that was deemed unacceptable, instead they decided that “this is a political matter, and as a General Council we ought not to take a stand for or against any political issue, no matter how popular or unpopular it might be.” (Alexander, Peace to War, 308)[fn68]

However, the opposite position has since appeared. In a widely distributed packet entitled “Political Involvement and the Church: Does the Assemblies of God Involve Itself in Political Issues?” (Alexander, Peace to War, 308)

- The Assemblies of God encourages its members and adherents to influence society and the political process by voting, maintaining strong moral convictions and holy lifestyles (Matt. 5:13), praying for government officials (1 Tim. 2:2), encouraging and promoting
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legislation that strengthens the nation morally, and speaking out both corporately and individually against any political issues that would have an adverse affect upon the kingdom of God or His moral absolutes.

- In 1917 the Executive Presbytery of the Assemblies of God went on record declaring the Council to be opposed to the participation of Christians in military combat. When the 1917 resolution was printed, the Evangel asserted that the resolution was in keeping with the overall attitude of all of Pentecostalism. (From Kenyon)
  - Every branch of the movement, whether in the United States, Canada, Great Britain, or Germany, has held to this principle [of nonviolence]. When was first broke out in August of 1914, our Pentecostal brethren in Germany found themselves in a peculiar position. Some of those who were called to the colors responded, but many were court marshaled and shot because they heartily subscribed to the principles of non-resistance. Great Britain has been more humane. Some of our British brethren have been given non-combatant service, and none have been shot because of their faith. [“The Pentecostal Movement and the Conscription Law,” Weekly Evangel, 4 August 1917, 6]

- Quote from “War! War!! War!!!” Christian Evangel, 15 August 1914, 1.
  - Be ready, for in such an hour as ye think not, the son of man cometh. Don’t be too much absorbed in watching the daily papers for war news, but keep looking up with enraptured gaze for the return of the Lord.

- George T. Sisler’s poem, “War ‘Profits,’” posed the question of war’s worth to the makers of war. (Weekly Evangel, 29 April 1916, 7)
  
  Do you to whom people have granted great power
  Make boast of the work you have done,
In hurling poor men at other men’s throats
  With a longing to kill and to burn?
Know ye not that these men you have fired with hate,
  With a hunger and thirst for strife,
Will at last stand with you there where all shall bow down
To a might omnipotent Christ?

Think you that the love of that Galilee man
  As portrayed in Gethsemane,
The love that He bore to a sin-cursed world
  Will continue a love—to ye?
Nay sirs, His Spirit not always doth strive
  With those so desirous of blood;
And the love you now spurn will to anger be turned
In that day when you stand before God.

The “what doth it profit?” this question so old,
  Yet with meaning and force still new,
Is asked of you now as you stand with the power,
And the wealth you have gained about you.
When you know that those men,—filled with anger and hate—
Whom you spurred on with your greed and lust,
Must with you finally stand at the judgment bar
And be judged by a God who is just?

5. Bibliography

5.1. General


5.2. Pentecostal


For the most comprehensive bibliography of primary and secondary sources concerning Pentecostals and pacifism see Paul Alexander’s *Peace to War: Shifting Allegiances in the Assemblies of God* (Cascadia, 2008).

5.3. **Links**

Pentecostal/Charismatic Peace Fellowship  [www.pcpf.org](http://www.pcpf.org)