

A Peace Witness Transformed: The Mennonite Response to the Gulf Wars in 1990-1991 and 2002-2003

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Abstract: Throughout the twentieth century Mennonites in the United States relied on their refusal to obey conscription demands and fight in the nation's wars as a primary expression of their peace witness. However, when the draft ended in 1975 Mennonites lost their primary mechanism to voice their dissent. In the context of the changing dynamics of modern warfare Mennonites struggled during the Gulf Wars and other armed conflicts of the 1990s to find an appropriate peace witness that encompassed the broader concerns of the church while remaining grounded in a collective and unifying commitment to peace.

Early in the fall of 1918, Adam Mumaw, a Mennonite conscientious objector from Wooster, Ohio, arrived in Camp Zachary Taylor in Kentucky. At the time, the U.S. government required all draftees to serve under military command, even those in noncombatant positions. But after he arrived, Mumaw refused to wear the military uniform assigned to him. The soldiers in the camp subsequently grabbed him, repeatedly threw him in the air, and stripped him of his clothes. They stopped mistreating him further only when a lieutenant intervened.¹

Twenty-seven years later, during World War II, Clayton Wenger was also drafted by the U.S. military. Shortly before the U.S. entered the war, however, the government had agreed to allow conscientious objectors to fulfill their military obligation by participating in an alternative program—Civilian Public Service—that was managed by Mennonites and other historic peace churches. For one year, Wenger worked on a soil conservation project at Weeping Water, Nebraska followed by three years of service at various dairy farms in Wisconsin.²

In 1970, at the height of the Vietnam War, Duane Shank, a Mennonite from Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, sent a letter to the United States

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1. Melanie Springer Mock, *Writing Peace: The Unheard Voices of Great War Mennonite Objectors* (Telford, Pa: Pandora Press, 2003), 45.

2. John M. Dvck, *Faith Under Test: Alternative Service During World War II in the U.S. and Canada* (Moundridge, Kan: Gospel Publishers, 1997), 63-65.

government explaining why he would not register for the draft. Three months later Shank was arrested and soon thereafter sentenced to three years of service with a community organizing group.³

At several important junctures in the twentieth century, the U.S. government called on its citizens to serve the nation by going to war. Although the circumstances, conditions, and public forms of pressure to comply varied widely between World War I and the end of mass conscription in 1975, a significant number of Mennonites consistently sought to express their peace convictions by refusing to serve in the armed forces. Although the wartime experiences of these three young men differed in significant ways, they were united by a common theme. Each was drafted by the United States military, and each chose to resist the pressure to conform to the demands of a nation at war as an expression of his religious commitment to peace.

As Mennonites navigated their political relationship with the state during the course of the twentieth century a central concern was how their pacifist principles could be accommodated to the demands of a nation at war. During World War I, the U.S. government expected that all draftees, including conscientious objectors, would do their part for the nation. As a result hundreds of objectors were court-martialed for refusing to obey military orders, including commands to work or drill while in uniform. In the decade prior to World War II, Mennonites and other historic peace churches were able to negotiate an alternative arrangement—Civilian Public Service—in lieu of military service. This option of alternative service remained in place during the Korean War and the Vietnam War, offering thousands of young men a means of serving their country while staying true to their religious or political convictions. Still, some young men and church theologians rejected all accommodations to the conscription system and refused even the option of civilian service.

By the end of the twentieth century the nature of modern warfare had dramatically changed. The technology of modern armies no longer demanded mass mobilization of armed personnel. The introduction of the “all-volunteer army” in 1975 meant that the nation no longer required Mennonites to participate directly in its wars. Although Mennonites celebrated the end of compulsory conscription, the new reality brought an end to a time-tested means by which Mennonites had given public expression to their peace witness. The Gulf Wars against Iraq in 1990-1991 and again in the decade following 2002 elevated this

3. Melissa Miller and Phil Shenk, *The Path of Most Resistance: Stories of Mennonite Conscientious Objectors Who Did Not Cooperate with the Vietnam War Draft* (Scottsdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1982), 21-42.

theoretical question to a matter of urgent debate among Mennonites, a debate that played out in several North American Mennonite periodicals and illustrated the contested, sometimes fragile, understanding of the Mennonite peace witness at the turn of the century. The end of the draft hastened a transformation in the peace witness of the Mennonite Church, in which the focus of Mennonite pacifism moved from conscientious objection, alternative service, and draft resistance to a broader understanding of peacemaking that included a public witness against warfare itself and the larger social, economic, and political forces that led to war. This shift extended the scope of Mennonite peace theology and broadened the base of the peace witness beyond the young men who faced the draft. But it also created deep debate and uncertainty within the Mennonite Church that may have weakened the church's ability to present a cohesive, focused, and unified peace witness.

This study explores the shifting attitudes toward peace among U.S. Mennonites during the last decade of the twentieth century and the first decade of the twenty-first as reflected in the pages of several church-wide periodicals. Although the writings of Mennonite theologians and ethicists on the subject of war and peace have been well documented during this period, we know significantly less about the corresponding attitudes of Mennonites in general, especially since young men were no longer compelled to make a public decision in response to the draft. Assessing popular attitudes is not easy. But the major Mennonite periodicals of the day—*The Gospel Herald* (M.C. through 1998), *The Mennonite* (G.C. through 1998; MCUSA thereafter),⁴ and *Mennonite Weekly Review* (an independent paper)—provide one window into contemporary currents of thought. Although these periodicals privilege the voices of church leaders and likely do not reflect the full breadth of Mennonite attitudes toward peace theology and practice, they nonetheless illuminate the major contours of the discussion during this period and shed light on several critical changes and developments within the Mennonite community of discourse during these years of military conflict.⁵

4. In 2002 the General Conference Mennonite Church (G.C.) and the "old" Mennonite Church (M.C.) completed a long process of merging their two groups to form the Mennonite Church USA.

5. On communities of discourse, see Robert Wuthnow, *Communities of Discourse: Ideology and Social Structure in the Reformation, the Enlightenment, and European Socialism* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989).

THE MODERN WARFARE STATE AND MENNONITES
IN THE UNITED STATES

Many scholars, including the historian Eric Hobsbawm, have identified the twentieth century as the most violent century in human history.⁶ Marked by two world wars, the creation and use of atomic weapons, and bloody civil and ethnic strife, the century witnessed the violent death of more than 100 million people.⁷ To be sure, the devastation of war is nothing new to human history; civilizations have risen and fallen on the destruction of others. But the mass loss of life in the twentieth century came about through two new developments that changed the scale of human destruction and broadened its impact on civilians. The first was the technological advancement of weapons—from the introduction of Gatling gun and airplanes in the early 1900s to the emergence of nuclear weapons by midcentury—that opened up the possibility of destroying humanity itself. The second development was the institutionalization of the modern warfare state.⁸ Not only did modern nations conscript and mobilize large armies but their whole political and economic systems became directed towards the military endeavor. Virtually all aspects of society were marshaled to win the war.⁹ In the U.S. wars of the twentieth century every patriotic citizen was expected to join in the war effort—men went to battle, women entered the workplace, media and governments flooded the nation with propaganda, citizens bought war bonds and grew victory gardens, industrialists produced enormous stockpiles of weapons and ammunition, and farmers grew the food needed to feed the army.

This all-encompassing approach to warfare was problematic for Mennonites. As eighteenth and nineteenth-century immigrants to the United States, Mennonites had come to enjoy sustained security and prosperity by the twentieth century. Although relations with the state had always been difficult for Mennonites in the United States during times of war, the emergence of the modern warfare state in the early

6. Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Extremes: A History of the World, 1914-1991* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1994). A notable exception to this assertion is Steven Pinker who argues that humanity is steadily becoming less violent.—*The Better Angels of Our Nature: Why Violence Has Declined* (New York: Viking, 2011).

7. Jeremy Black, *War Since 1900* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2010), 28.

8. *Ibid.*, 6-11; Susan E. Janzen, *Weathering the Storm: Christian Pacifist Responses to War* (Newton, Kan: Faith and Life Press, 1991), 54-56.

9. Perry Bush, *Two Kingdoms, Two Loyalties: Mennonite Pacifism in Modern America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 13-19. For one historian's contrasting brutal warfare in the nineteenth-century—especially the Crimean War, U.S. Civil War, and French war in Mexico—with the totalizing war of the twentieth century, see Mark E. Neely Jr., *The Civil War and the Limits of Destruction* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2007).

twentieth century posed new challenges.¹⁰ Their religious commitment to the principle of nonresistance—based on a literal interpretation of the teachings of Jesus, who taught that Christians should love their enemies, even sacrificially—brought them increasingly into tension with their fellow citizens and the nation's leaders.¹¹ During the First World War in 1917, Mennonites faced many hostilities, especially toward the men who were drafted and reported to military training camps but refused to put on uniforms or participate in training exercises. When many of these men refused to cooperate, they faced the reality of physical mistreatment and courts-martial. Troubled by this experience Mennonite leaders in the 1930s joined together with other peace churches to negotiate with the government an alternative to military service. Their efforts led to the creation of the Civilian Public Service program in 1940. This initiative required conscientious objectors to devote a period of service to government-approved civilian projects in place of military service, thereby allowing Mennonites and others to perform their civic duty without going to war. The experiences of conscientious objectors during World War II profoundly impacted Mennonites. It not only brought hundreds of young Mennonites out of the isolation of their rural communities, but it also gave public expression to the Mennonite commitment to pacifism while simultaneously enabling them to perform work "of national importance" as the nation was at war. In the years following World War II a consensus between the church and the state had emerged that honored the traditional Mennonite commitment to pacifism in return for a period of service to the state.¹² When the draft was reinstated during the Korean War—and remained in effect through the end of the war in Vietnam—a somewhat similar system of alternative service, known by its Selective Service classification code

10. For example, if Mennonites were drafted in the Civil War they could pay to have a substitute go in their place. Whether this was a faithful response or not, it demonstrated the new Mennonite reluctance to migrate in order to escape military service.—Richard K. MacMaster, *Land, Piety, Peoplehood: the Establishment of Mennonite Communities in America 1683-1790* (Scottsdale, Pa: Herald Press, 1985); Theron F. Schlabach, *Peace, Faith, Nation: Mennonites and Amish in Nineteenth-Century America* (Scottsdale, Pa: Herald Press, 1988).

11. John Richard Burkholder and Barbara Nelson Gingerich, *Mennonite Peace Theology: A Panorama of Types* (Akron, Pa: Mennonite Central Committee Peace Office, 1991), 10.

12. James C. Juhnke, *Vision, Doctrine, War: Mennonite Identity and Organization in America, 1890-1930* (Scottsdale, Pa: Herald Press, 1989); Paul Toews, *Mennonites in American Society, 1930-1970: Modernity and the Persistence of Religious Community* (Scottsdale, Pa: Herald Press, 1996); Gerlof D. Homan, *American Mennonites and the Great War, 1914-1918* (Waterloo, Ont: Herald Press, 1994); Theron F. Schlabach, *War, Peace, and Social Conscience, Guy F. Hershberger and Mennonite Ethics* (Scottsdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 2009), 87-162, all describe this midcentury consensus.

"I-W," replaced Civilian Public Service.¹³ But the basic compact between the government and the church remained in place.

The political and social turmoil of the Vietnam War in 1968, however, prompted many Mennonites to reevaluate their relationship with the state and the compromise they had made more than twenty-five years earlier. Some Mennonites, attuned to the growing secular peace movement, began to broaden their political engagement with the state. As Mennonites were more deeply integrated into American society the church's traditional "two kingdom" theology—a worldview that envisioned the church and state as fundamentally different realms, with the state's use of violence an inevitable part of its fallen nature—was challenged by a new theology that called for a more active witness to the state against its use of any violence. The racial inequities exposed by the Civil Rights Movement, the economic injustices revealed by the War on Poverty, and the deepening violence associated with the Vietnam War prompted a younger generation of Mennonites to not only engage the state on their own behalf, but on behalf of others as well.¹⁴ Some of those who sought a stronger witness to the state even called into question the I-W alternative service program by refusing to cooperate with the government. Not content with merely asking the state for permission to pursue alternative service, they rejected the draft and the alternative service program as a protest against a larger system of destruction and domination that seemed contrary to the Christian witness. The conflict triggered a heated debate among church leaders about what an appropriate response to the draft should look like. Some church leaders who had worked hard to create the civilian service program were offended at the apparent failure of these draft-resisters to appreciate and take advantage of the I-W service opportunity. Others, like Mennonite college professors J. R. Burkholder and James Juhnke, were outspoken in their opposition to the draft. They regarded draft refusal as not only a legitimate option for Christians but even elevated it as the more faithful response.

Although the number of Mennonites who chose to resist the draft was quite small—probably no more than forty—the experience touched off a debate that shaped how Mennonites understood their peace witness and relationship with the state.¹⁵ The traditional two-kingdom theology was being challenged by the assertion that the alternative service programs had been created at the sacrifice of the church's prophetic voice. That

13. Toews, *Mennonites in American Society*, 238-51.

14. Bush, *Two Kingdoms, Two Loyalties*, 188-257; Toews, *Mennonites in American Society*, 311-336.

15. *Ibid.*

debate found expression in the writings of leading Mennonite theologians and ethicists, as well as in a host of study conferences, seminars, and church assemblies.¹⁶ But the conversation that ensued was further shaped by changes in military strategy that eliminated the draft and increasingly focused its attention on specialized skills needed to maintain the technological fire power of the modern warfaring state.

NEW QUESTIONS: THE PERSIAN GULF WAR, 1990-1991

The Gulf War of 1990-1991 marked the first significant experience for Mennonites with the transformed nature of modern warfare. For fifteen years, following the end of the Vietnam War and the elimination of the draft, the U.S. had not engaged in a major military mobilization. To be sure, various military interventions had taken place during that time, including the invasion of Grenada (1983) and an intervention in Panama (1989).¹⁷ But when Iraqi forces invaded neighboring Kuwait on August 2, 1990, the stage was set for an American military intervention in the Persian Gulf on a much larger scale. The immediate roots of the conflict went back to the 1979 Iranian Revolution, the overthrow of the U.S.-backed Shah, and the subsequent American hostage crisis. In the Iran-Iraq War of the 1980s, the U.S. had a strong interest in curbing Iran's influence in the region and maintaining the balance of power with their neighbors. Thus, the U.S. provided a large amount of military aid to Iraq. The result was indecisive, leaving both Iraq and Iran with damaged countries.¹⁸

As Iraq sought to rebuild and strengthen its economic and political position following the war with Iran, its access to major oil reserves directly affected U.S. interests in the region as well, especially when Iraq began to threaten the neighboring country of Kuwait. Iraqi leaders resented Kuwait's refusal to forgive loans made to Iraq during the war, especially in light of the fact that Iraq's struggle against Iranian aggression had been in the interests of smaller nations like Kuwait. Iraq also resented Kuwait's overproduction of oil, which lowered global oil prices and reduced the income that Iraq desperately needed. Finally, and most egregiously, Iraqi leaders charged Kuwait with drilling for oil at

16. Leo Driedger and Donald B. Kravbill, *Mennonite Peacemaking From Quietism to Activism* (Scottsdale, Pa: Herald Press), 1994; Keith Graber Miller, *Wise As Serpents, Innocent As Doves: American Mennonites Engage Washington* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1996); Ervin R. Stutzman, *From Nonresistance to Justice: The Transformation of Mennonite Church Peace Rhetoric, 1908-2008* (Scottsdale, Pa: Herald Press, 2011).

17. James T. Patterson, *Restless Giant: The United States from Watergate to Bush v. Gore*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 205-207, 227.

18. Steve A. Yetiv, *The Absence of Grand Strategy: The United States in the Persian Gulf, 1972-2005* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008), 76-90.

the border of the two countries and stealing Iraqi oil. When Iraqi president Saddam Hussein questioned the United States ambassador about the border conflict with Kuwait a month before the invasion he allegedly was told that the U.S. had “no opinion on Arab-Arab conflicts.”¹⁹

In reality, however, the U.S. and much of the rest of the world had strong opinions about the conflict that ensued. U.S. allies in the Middle East, especially Saudi Arabia, were frightened by Iraqi aggression and feared that Saddam Hussein and his Arab nationalist Baathist Party would eventually push farther than Kuwait. The United States and other Western nations were deeply concerned about the consequences the Iraqi invasion on oil prices; and, in light of the recent collapse of the Soviet Union President George H.W. Bush—leader of the world’s only superpower—did not want to show any signs of weakness in the face of Iraqi aggression. Almost immediately, the United Nations imposed sanctions on Iraq, demanding its immediate withdrawal.²⁰

For nearly five months after the invasion of Kuwait international tension grew. World leaders waited for sanctions against Iraq to force negotiations and their withdrawal from Kuwait. When that did not happen, a U.S.-led coalition of military forces, made up of American, British, Saudi, and Egyptian troops began to assemble in Saudi Arabia. On January 17, 1991, with the blessing of the United Nations, coalition forces began their assault on Iraqi forces in Kuwait. The massive coalition bombardment of Iraqi troops and cities quickly led to the retreat of Iraqi forces from Kuwait. On February 28, only forty-two days after the assault began, the coalition army declared victory and announced a ceasefire. Coalition forces had routed the Iraqi army, suffering only 150 casualties in the process. Although the Iraqi army was not as thoroughly decimated as initially thought—and would, indeed, go on in the following months to violently crush the Kurdish and Shiite rebellions within northern and southern Iraq—the war was quickly proclaimed as a complete success for the coalition and the larger cause of international justice.²¹

For the United States, the Gulf War of 1991 marked a decisive shift in the nature of warfare. Unlike the major conflicts of the twentieth century, this war was brief and relatively painless for U.S. citizens. Military technology and overwhelming firepower had proven to be the crucial factors. Moreover, the United Nations Security Council—including

19. *Ibid.*, 79; Charles W. Kegley and Gregory A. Raymond, *How Nations Make Peace* (New York, NY: St. Martin's, 1999), 201-221.

20. Yetiv, *The Absence of Grand Strategy*, 76-90.

21. Kegley and Raymond, *How Nations Make Peace*, 201-221.

Russia, which until very recently had been a Cold War foe of the United States—had formally supported the United States as the military leader of the international coalition, signifying a dramatic shift from the old Cold War rivalries. Other nations also shared many of the costs of the war. Furthermore, unlike American military actions of the past decade, this conflict involved a long, public build-up. Economic sanctions had been given at least a modicum amount of time to work; and, in contrast to the Vietnam War, the large majority of the American public supported the action. Most significantly, the United States engaged the war without making any demands directly of its citizens. There was no draft or selling of war bonds or calls for national sacrifice. Given the low number of casualties and the support of international funds, the war seemed almost without cost.²² Superior technological military power had replaced a mass conscripted army.²³ The country did not have to restructure its economy to support the war; and American citizens continued to act as if they were living in a time of peace, even as they were celebrating victory on the battlefield.

MENNONITE RESPONSE TO THE FIRST GULF WAR

The character of the Gulf War challenged the Mennonite peace witness that had developed in the twentieth century, hastening a transformation that had begun during the Vietnam War.²⁴ By the end of the Vietnam War, choosing alternative service over induction into the military was still the central unifying aspect of the Mennonite peace witness. But in contrast to previous wars, the Gulf War of 1991 did not require any direct participation by Mennonites, thereby leaving them without a clear form of public witness for their commitment to peace.

The model that tentatively began to emerge, guided by denominational leaders and supported by at least some congregations, was a traditional concern that the draft could be reinstated combined with a new active and vocal opposition to the war, an embrace of direct political advocacy and public protest against the nation's wars, and an affirmation of an alternative lifestyle that rejected unsustainable habits of

22. "Desert Storm: Awesome Air Power Opens Up the First Front in the Campaign against Iraq," *Newsweek*, Jan. 28, 1991.

23. Russell Watson and Gregg Easterbrook, "A New Kind of Warfare: A Mighty Air Armada Strikes Iraq, and War Technology Seems to Cross a Threshold to a New Generation," *Newsweek*, Jan. 28, 1991.

24. By the beginning of 1991 the MCC Peace Office had already brought together a compilation of peace perspectives that explored the many different approaches to peace Mennonites held in hopes of determining an appropriate perspective for M.C.C.—John Richard Burkholder and Barbara Nelson Gingerich, *Mennonite Peace Theology: A Panorama of Types* (Akron Pa: Mennonite Central Committee Peace Office, 1991).

consumption as a constant and visible witness to peace. This emerging witness was deeply shaped by activist models of dissent forged during the era of the Civil Rights Movement and the Vietnam War as well as the influential role of Mennonite Central Committee (M.C.C.), the relief and advocacy organization of the Mennonite Church, and Christian Peacemaker Teams (C.P.T.), an organization supported by Mennonites, the historic peace churches, and other peace-minded Christians that had organized five years earlier to respond to violence and oppression through direct nonviolent action.²⁵

During the buildup to the Gulf War many Mennonite institutions and congregants still feared that a draft would be reinstated. Thus, the initial—almost reflexive—reaction of the church was to ensure that their young men would be safe from military conscription.²⁶ Numerous experts outside the White House argued that the war would be significantly more expansive, involve many more casualties, and take much longer than the government was predicting. By December 1990 nearly one million troops were staged in the Gulf region ready for action.²⁷ Some projections suggested that the army could expect casualties of at least 200 a day and predicted the reinstatement of the draft after three or four months of fighting.²⁸ Already three months before the height of the troop buildup, several Mennonite denominations had asked M.C.C. to join the National Interreligious Service Board for Conscientious Objectors in preparing documents that might be needed in

25. Kathleen Kern, *In Harm's Way: A History of Christian Peacemaker Teams* (Eugene, Ore.: Cascade Books, 2009).

26. Jim Bishop, "EMC and Seminary Cancels Classes for Emergency Sabbath," *Gospel Herald*, Feb. 11, 1991; J. Lorne Peachey, "So What Do We Do Now?," *Gospel Herald*, Feb. 19, 1991; Titus Peachey, "An Open Letter to The House of Representatives," *The Mennonite*, July 10, 1990; Scott Kennedy, "Will We be Prepared?," *The Mennonite*, Nov. 27, 1990; Diana Graber, "I've Done This All Before," *The Mennonite*, Feb. 12, 1990; Judy Weaver, John D. Yoder, and Wayne Steffen, "Teach-in at Goshen College Addresses War and Peace," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, Jan. 31, 1991; Celia Lehman, "Peace Teaching Readies Young People for Draft," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, Feb. 14, 1991.

27. "Iraq Frees Hostages; Saddam Ready to Talk," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, Dec. 13, 1990.

28. Paul Schrag, "Students Face Specter of Draft, Get CO Advice," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, Jan. 17, 1991. Sociologist Thomas Meyers found that expectations of military conscription led to a spike in Old Order Amish young men being baptized in northern Indiana. During the fall of 1990 and spring of 1991, 309 young men were baptized (compared with only 227 young women); only 82 young men had been baptized in the previous year. See Thomas J. Meyers, "The Old Order Amish: To Remain in the Faith or to Leave," *MQR* 68 (July 1994), 386.

order to reinstate the conscientious objector and alternative service option with the United States government.²⁹

However, Congress showed little interest in renewing a draft, and by early 1991 M.C.C. made it clear that a reinstated draft was extremely unlikely.³⁰ Even so, M.C.C. offices were flooded with questions and requests for peace materials related to securing conscientious objector status.³¹ Major Mennonite publications carried information on how to document individual peace convictions and register as a conscientious objector.³² Articles and editorials by church leaders also continued to mention the draft as a possibility. Whether or not they saw it as a real possibility, their advocacy helped to stir Mennonite interest and concern for peace issues.³³ The lessons from the wars of the twentieth century had been learned well—even though many experts outside of the peace churches never regarded the renewal of the draft as a serious possibility, in the early 1990s the church had quickly mobilized in anticipation of a possible military conscription.³⁴

After it became clear that the draft would not be reinstated, Mennonite periodicals instead carried stories of active duty soldiers seeking conscientious objector status, focusing especially on the difficulty soldiers had in obtaining that status.³⁵ A change in the conscription system had reduced the number of days a draftee had to file for conscientious objection and increased the amount of documentation

29. Andrea Schrock Wenger, "Peace is Top Issue at MCC U.S. Meeting," *Gospel Herald*, Feb. 19, 1991; NISBCO and CCCO, "Information Requests Flood CO-Advocate Organizations," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, Sept. 27, 1990.

30. Paul Schrag, "If Draft Starts, MCC to be Employer for CO Service," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, Feb. 14, 1991; Andrea Schrock Wenger, "Peace is Top Issue at MCC U.S. Meeting," *Gospel Herald*, Feb. 19, 1991.

31. Andrea Schrock Wenger, "War Fears Prompt CO Questions," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, Sept. 20, 1990; Paul Schrag, "Peace Agencies Stimulate Action, Get Many Requests as War Appears Imminent," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, Jan. 17, 1991.

32. Paul Schrag, "Student Fact Specter of Draft, Get CO Advice," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, Jan. 17, 1991; Mike Bogard, "Compile a Conscientious Objection File," *The Mennonite*, July 23, 1990; Andrea Wenger Schrock, "Peace is Top Issue at MCC U.S. Meeting," *Gospel Herald*, Feb. 19, 1991.

33. "Fears of War Prompt Questions about Conscientious Objection," *Gospel Herald*, Oct. 9, 1990; Paul Schrag, "Peacemakers Confront Specter of War," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, Sept. 6, 1990.

34. Paul Schrag, "Peace Agencies Stimulate Action, Get Many Requests as War Appears Imminent," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, Jan. 17, 1991; Bush, *Two Kingdoms, Two Loyalties*, 221-275.

35. "American GIs Ask MCC Workers for Counsel," *The Mennonite*, Jan. 8, 1991; NISBCO and CCCO "Information Requests Flood CO-Advocate Organizations," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, Sept. 27, 1990. For Mennonite work with military C.O.s, see Andre Gingerich Stoner, "U.S. GIs and the German Peace Movement in the 1980s through the Gulf War: The Work of the Military Counseling Network," *Mennonite Life* 65 (Summer 2011), http://tools.bethelks.edu/mennonitelife/2011/military_counseling_network.php.

necessary to offer sufficient proof of beliefs.³⁶ Moreover, soldiers who were successful in receiving C.O. status had to give up their rank, salary, and military benefits, and those who were not successful in their appeals were often court-martialed and jailed.³⁷

Even as American news coverage was creating a patriotic narrative in support of the war, Mennonite Central Committee, which supplied 30 percent of all news articles on the war for Mennonite publications, was sharply critical.³⁸ Although M.C.C. did not have personnel in Iraq or Kuwait, long established units in Jordan, the West Bank, and Egypt enabled M.C.C. News Service direct access to the political realities of the region while also providing a historical and regional context for the war and its possible outcomes.³⁹ The experience of the workers in these places shaped Mennonite perspectives on the conflict and its possible consequences.

The M.C.C. unit in Jordan provided an especially crucial perspective on the Gulf conflict. M.C.C. had been working in Jordan since 1950 and had formed close relationships with Christian partners in the country.⁴⁰ Jordan received the largest number of the refugees streaming from Kuwait and Iraq.⁴¹ M.C.C. responded with emergency food and shelter but quickly ran through the \$10,000 allotted to the endeavor and requested additional funds to help with the overwhelming flood of refugees.⁴²

36. Diana Graber, "I've Done This All Before," *The Mennonite*, Feb. 12, 1991; NISBCO and CCCO "Information Requests Flood CO-Advocate Organizations," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, Sept. 27, 1990.

37. MCC News Service, "Soldiers Questioning Mideast War," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, Jan. 10, 1991; Beth Hege, Soldier Opposing War Face Tough Choices," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, Jan. 17, 1991; Paul Schrag, "Marine CO Keeps the Faith while Facing Court-Martial," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, April 18, 1991; Andre Gingerich Stoner, "Four Give Up Money, Prestige to Leave Army," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, April 18, 1991; Paul Schrag, "Marine Objector Sentenced for Refusal to Fight in Gulf," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, Jun. 27, 1991. The end of the draft also had secular implications. One of these was how the army had to become integrated into the marketplace and supply and demand economics.—Cf. Beth Bailev, "The Army in the Marketplace: Recruiting an All-Volunteer Force," *The Journal of American History*, 94, no. 1 (2007), 47-74.

38. Stuart W. Showalter, "The Mennonite Press and the Persian Gulf War Goshen," *Conrad Grebel Review* 11, no. 2 (March 1993), 116.

39. MCC *Annual Meeting Yearbook 1990*, Ed Martin, "Overseas Services: Middle East and South Asia," 124-133. Found in Mennonite Historical Library.

40. *Ibid.*

41. Ardell Stauffer, "MCCers Continue Work with Evacuees in Jordan," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, Sept. 27, 1990.

42. MCC News Service, "Iraqi Crisis Uses MCC Aid Quickly," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, Sept. 6, 1990. Ardell Stauffer, "MCC Worker Reports on Jordanian View of Persian Gulf War," *Gospel Herald*, Feb. 19, 1991; Urbane Peachey, "Crisis in the Persian Gulf Cripples Many Economies," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, Oct. 18, 1990; Ardell Stauffer, "Jordanians Angry With the West," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, Feb. 7, 1991.

This resource, along with the experiences of other M.C.C. contacts in the region, provided an Arab perspective on the war and enabled Mennonites to better understand the direct consequences of the conflict for people of the region. The central problem, according to M.C.C. and other Mennonite leaders—(including the widely-respected economist Carl Kreider—was the double standard practiced by the U.S.⁴³ Iraq had broken international law by invading Kuwait, and the United States was rallying world leaders to pass U.N. sanctions against Iraq and endorse possible military action. However, for decades Israel had violated U.N. resolution after resolution and continued to occupy the West Bank and Gaza Strip, while enjoying full U.S. support. This double standard suggested to Arab nations that Americans were more concerned about their economic interests in oil than upholding the principles of international justice. Arab nations had also opposed the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait; but they sought to mediate the situation through the Arab League, a solution M.C.C. also endorsed.⁴⁴ As Western nations amassed their forces in Saudi Arabia to deter further Iraqi aggression and prepare for a possible attack, readers of Mennonite periodicals were encountering arguments from M.C.C.'s partners in the Middle East that Western interests in the region likely had more to do with global economic concerns than with the principles of fairness and international justice.⁴⁵

Mennonite periodicals also reported on the activities of Christian Peacemakers Teams. During the late 1980s, C.P.T. had drawn attention to the plight of the Palestinian people and the unconditional American support of Israel. Readers of Mennonite periodicals were reminded that the problems and solutions swirling around the Israeli-Palestinian conflict included the whole Arab world.⁴⁶ When the war broke out in

43. Carl Kreider, "Iraq Invades Kuwait," *Gospel Herald*, Sept. 4, 1990; Ardell Stauffer, "How the Persian Gulf Looks from the Middle East," *Gospel Herald*, Jan. 1, 1991; Ardell Stauffer, "MCC Worker Reports on Jordanian View of Persian Gulf War," *Gospel Herald*, Feb. 19, 1991; Delton Frantz, "Saddam Hussein and King Nebuchanezzar: Do We Have Constructive Words?," *The Mennonite*, Sept. 11, 1990; "Robert Hull, "Turn the Gulf Crisis into an Opportunity," *The Mennonite*, Oct. 23, 1990; Duane Friesen, "What Does It Mean to be a Christian in Wartime," *The Mennonite*, March 12, 1991; Ardell Stauffer, "Jordanians Angry with the West," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, Feb. 7, 1991.

44. Carl Kreider, "Iraq Invades Kuwait," *Gospel Herald*, Sept. 4, 1990; Ardell Stauffer, "How the Persian Gulf looks from the Middle East," *Gospel Herald*, Jan. 1, 1991; Delton Franz, "Iraq Crisis: Raising an Alternative Voice," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, Aug. 16, 1990; Urbane Peachey, "Reason: First, Last Resort in Gulf," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, Nov. 22, 1990.

45. Ardell Stauffer, "Middle East Christian Leaders Describe Effects of the Gulf Crisis," *The Mennonite*, May 28, 1991.

46. Ardell Stauffer, "How the Persian Gulf Looks from the Middle East," *Gospel Herald*, Jan. 1, 1991; Ardell Stauffer, "MCC Worker Reports on Jordanian View of Persian Gulf," *Gospel Herald*, Feb. 19, 1991; Robert M. Schrag, "U.S. Plunges Into Historic Cauldron of

1991, C.P.T. leaders drew on their experience in the Middle East to raise awareness about larger issues such as the Israeli occupation of Palestine. Any true and lasting peace with Iraq, they argued, would need to avoid armed conflict and address the Israel/Palestine conflict.

As part of their emerging response to the Gulf War, both M.C.C. and C.P.T. also participated in delegations to Iraq in an effort to form personal relationships with Iraqi people, to lobby for the release of all international hostages, and to promote a nonviolent solution to the conflict. For example, one M.C.C. staff member, John Stoner, and a former worker, Doug Hostetter, were part of a twenty-member Fellowship of Reconciliation delegation that spent five days in Iraq in the fall of 1990. Delegates on the M.C.C. team met with a number of Iraqi officials, including the speaker of the national assembly, the first deputy minister, and the heads of health, religious affairs, and finance and commerce. Both M.C.C. and C.P.T. delegations gave medicine and other aid in response to the shortages caused by the sanctions and scheduled meetings with ordinary Iraqi citizens in order to better understand their concerns in the unfolding crisis. The delegations also met with Iraqi church leaders and worshipped together in prayer.⁴⁷

These M.C.C. and C.P.T. delegations provided Mennonites in the U.S. with firsthand reports regarding official Iraqi understandings of the conflict, the personal difficulties of Iraqi citizens, the shortages of food and medicine, and the struggles of the Christians churches in Iraq. As such, their reports helped Mennonite readers to form an understanding of the crisis distinct from that provided by the mainstream American media. Participants in the delegations were well aware that the perspectives they received were biased; but they were multidimensional perspectives and ones that were not being heard in the United States.⁴⁸ Especially the time spent visiting with Iraqi citizens and worshipping with Iraqi Christians added a new dynamic. The Middle East was both culturally and politically complex. Religion was central in understanding the conflict but national, ethnic, and tribal identity confounded the simplistic distinctions between Jews, Christians, and Muslims.

Conflict," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, Jan. 24, 1991; Ardell Stauffer, "Jordanians Angry With the West," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, Feb. 7, 1991.

47. "Christian Peacemaker Teams Explore Peace Initiative With Iraq," *Gospel Herald*, Oct. 30, 1990; Ron Rempel, "Nobody Wants 'Utter Madness' In Persian Gulf," *The Mennonite*, Dec. 25, 1990; Paul Schrag, "Peacemaker Teams Hope to Send Delegation to Iraq," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, Nov. 1, 1990; Rich Preheim, "On Visit to Iraq, MCCer Finds Hope for Peace," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, Nov. 8, 1990; Rich Preheim, "MCCer Reflects on Visiting 'Enemy City,'" Nov. 22, 1990; Excerpt CPT Report, "Team Promotes Peace Dialogue," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, Dec. 1990; MCC News Service, "MCC Peace Administer Part of a Delegation to Iraq," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, Oct. 25, 1990.

48. Showalter, "The Mennonite Press and the Persian Gulf War," 112.

In addition to providing an alternative understanding of the war, voices from M.C.C. and C.P.T. also played a leading role in encouraging Mennonites to engage in new forms of activism against the war. The nature of that opposition took many forms. At the grassroots level Mennonites sent a barrage of letters to government officials. But they also participated in peace marches, joined in advocacy groups, and promoted new forms of international relationships.⁴⁹ The C.P.T. and M.C.C. delegations to Iraq received prominent coverage in Mennonite periodicals.⁵⁰ A Mennonite member of the Canadian parliament gave a speech denouncing the war and Western consumption.⁵¹ Menno Media distributed numerous radio and television ads opposing the war, reaching an audience of seven to ten million.⁵² This public exposure and prominence may have given Mennonite institutions a new sense of power and agency, leading some to assume that their actions may have actually influenced global politics.⁵³ One editorialist suggested that, "If key questions are asked as soon as possible, perhaps some of the worst excesses of unchallenged military power can be avoided."⁵⁴

Some Mennonites were even prepared to broaden their peace witness beyond the actions of the U.S. government to raise uncomfortable questions about their own complicity in the larger scenario. If, as many Mennonite leaders asserted, U.S. dependence on oil from the Persian Gulf was the primary reason behind the conflict, then the American lifestyle was partially to blame for the war—a fact that led some conscientious Mennonites to raise new questions about their daily

49. Patricia Shelly, "Mennonites Speak Up for Middle East Peace," *The Mennonite*, July 24, 1990; MCC News Service, "MCC Head Speaks Out Against Gulf War," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, Jan. 24, 1991.

50. Ron Rempel, "Nobody Wants 'Utter Madness' in Persian Gulf," *The Mennonite*, Dec. 25, 1990; MCC News Service, "MCC Peace Administration Part of Delegation to Iraq," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, Oct. 25, 1990; Rich Preheim, "On Visit to Iraq, MCCer Finds Hope for Peace," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, Nov. 8, 1990; Ron Rempel, "CPT Urges Release of Hostages, Prays for Peace, Talks to Iraqis," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, Dec. 20, 1990; Excerpt from CPT Report, "Team Promotes Peace Dialogue," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, Dec. 20, 1990.

51. John Bender, "Speaking, Praying for Gulf Peace," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, Jan. 17, 1991.

52. John Bender, "Speaking, Praying for Gulf Peace," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, Jan. 17, 1991; CBS Morning News, "New Generation of Plain Folks," CBS, Feb. 2, 1991.

53. Robert Hull, "Turn the Gulf Crisis into an Opportunity," *The Mennonite*, Oct. 23, 1990; Ardell Stauffer, "MCCers in Jordan Made a 'Significant Contribution,'" *Mennonite Weekly Review*, Oct. 25, 1990; Levi Keidel, "Can Our Prayers Change the Course of History?" *Mennonite Weekly Review*, Jan. 17, 1991.

54. Robert Hull, "Turn the Gulf Crisis into an Opportunity," *The Mennonite*, Oct. 23, 1990.

practices.⁵⁵ As one White House staff member had admitted in late 1990, "If Kuwait's export was oranges . . . there would be no problem."⁵⁶ Indeed, readers, columnists, and guest writers in Mennonite periodicals repeatedly called on Mennonites to reduce their oil consumption as an expression of the historic Anabaptist theme of simple living.⁵⁷ In addition, in the fall of 1990 M.C.C., the (Old) Mennonite Church, and the General Conference Mennonite Church all issued official statements that not only denounced the military buildup and war but also expressed a commitment to move away from a lifestyle that necessitated war.⁵⁸ The joint Mennonite Church and General Conference letter to the president said, "We are prepared to call our people to an alternative lifestyle that consumes less of the world's resources. We are also prepared to pay higher prices for oil as an effort to resolve the crisis with Iraq and as an act of justice for many OPEC nations."⁵⁹ The offer harkened back to older war experiences in which Mennonite leaders worked out a deal with the government to gain exemption for their men from military conscription

55. Carl Kreider, "When the Rich and Poor Wage War," *Gospel Herald*, April 9, 1991; David Hiebert, "Gulf War Tints Presbyterian-Mennonite Peace Gathering," *Gospel Herald*, Feb. 19, 1991; Carl Kreider, "U.S. at War in Persian Gulf," *Gospel Herald*, Oct. 9, 1990; Muriel Stackley, "Is the World Going to War," *The Mennonite*, Oct. 9, 1990; "Letter Informs Bush About Stance of Peace Churches," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, Nov. 15, 1990; Paul Schrag, "No Blood for . . .," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, April 25, 1991.

56. Kegley and Raymond. *How Nations Make Peace*, 209.

57. Steve Shenk, "MCC Board Calls for Cease-Fire in Gulf War," *Gospel Herald*, Feb. 12, 1991; "Fears of War Prompt Questions About Conscientious Objection," *Gospel Herald*, Oct. 9, 1990; Wilma Derksen, "MCC Canada Mourns Outbreak of War," *The Mennonite*, Feb. 26, 1991; William Zuercher, "SC Conf.: Pray for the Middle East," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, Aug. 23, 1990; Paul Schrag, "CPT Suggests Oil-Free Sunday," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, Sept. 13, 1990; Art Meyer, "Wasteful Lifestyles at Root Cause of Oil Crisis," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, Sept. 13, 1990; Andrea Shrock Wenger, "War Fear Prompt CO Questions," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, Sept. 20, 1990; David Schrock-Shenk, "I'd Rather Switch than Fight," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, Jan. 10, 1991; Levi Keidel, "Can Our Prayers Change the Course of History," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, Jan. 17, 1991; Willard Unruh, "We Can be Better Energy -Savers," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, Feb. 28, 1991; Willard Unruh, "We Hold the Key to Lower Oil Use," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, March 28, 1991; Art Meyer, "Change Wasteful Ways," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, April 11, 1991; Paul Schrag, "Peace Education Not Just for Wartime," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, May 9, 1991. The manifesto *Living More with Less*, by Doris Janzen Longacre (Scottsdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1980), had been published just a decade earlier.

58. James Lapp and George Brunk III, "A Letter to U.S. Government from the Mennonite Church," *Gospel Herald*, Sept. 11, 1990; MCC Board Statement, "A Plea for Peace," *Gospel Herald*, Feb. 26, 1991; Paul Schrag, "Letters, Statements Urge Peaceful Gulf Solution," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, Sept. 13, 1990; Beth Hege, "GC/MC Boards' Statement Urges Gulf Peace Witness," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, Nov. 29, 1990.

59. James Lapp, and George Brunk III, "A Letter to U.S. Government from the Mennonite Church," *Gospel Herald*, Sept. 11, 1990.

in exchange for public service work. If Mennonites could expose the true cause of the war, perhaps Americans would not trade blood for oil.⁶⁰

In September of 1990 Christian Peacemaker Teams proposed an "Oil Free Sunday" as a way of acknowledging the role that Western dependence on oil played in the war and to take a symbolic step toward a more sustainable lifestyle that tapped into Mennonite values of simplicity and sacrifice.⁶¹ The idea quickly gained attention through Mennonite publications and even attracted congregations outside of Mennonite denominations.⁶² C.P.T. sent participating groups a packet of informational and worship materials for the event.⁶³ On October 21, 1990, 40 percent of C.P.T.'s 2,000 supporting congregations participated in Oil Free Sunday.⁶⁴ Many people chose to walk or bike to church while others shared rides, hitchhiked, or even rode horseback.⁶⁵ Some congregations, whose members continued driving to church, still used the educational material prepared for that day.⁶⁶ Even though Oil Free Sunday was only a symbolic act, it helped to raise awareness and encouraged conversation about over-consumption and the role it played in American foreign policy. As one participant stated, "it caught the imagination of a lot of people."⁶⁷

The day after the war broke out in 1991 C.P.T. called for an "Emergency Sabbath" as a time of prayer and grieving for the disruption that the war was bringing to people's lives. C.P.T. also challenged participants to engage in direct nonviolent action, although they only specifically mentioned education and prayer as possible options.⁶⁸ Individual congregations chose to participate in the "Emergency Sabbath," as did a number of Mennonite institutions. Both Eastern Mennonite University and Eastern Mennonite Seminary, for example,

60. Paul Schrag, "Peacemakers Confront Specter of War," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, Sept. 6, 1990; Paul Schrag, "Will America Pay for Oil with Blood," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, Nov. 15, 1990.

61. Paul Schrag, "CPT Suggest Oil-Free Sunday," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, Sept. 13, 1990.

62. "Oil-Free Sunday Gains Support," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, Oct. 4, 1990. Local newspapers carried the story and Gene Stoltzfus, director of C.P.T., confirmed that "other Christian groups picked up the call and used it as a basis for discussion." — Gene Stoltzfus, "Oil-Free Sunday Gains Wide Participation," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, Nov. 1, 1990.

63. "Oil-Free Sunday Gains Support," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, Oct. 4, 1990.

64. "Oil-Free Sunday Involves 40% of Churches," *Gospel Herald*, Nov. 13, 1990.

65. *Ibid.*

66. Gene Stoltzfus, "Oil-Free Sunday Gains Wide Participation," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, Nov. 1, 1990.

67. *Ibid.*

68. CPT Report, "CPT Calls for Emergency Sabbath," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, Jan. 3, 1991.

cancelled classes and held services.⁶⁹ E.M.U. filled the day with lectures, seminars, and workshops on Middle Eastern history and various other peace topics; participants marched from the college to the post office, where they sent hundreds of antiwar letters to President George H. W. Bush.⁷⁰ Goshen College also cancelled classes two days after the onset of the war to hold a teach-in that featured seminars and workshops on the Middle East, war, and peace.⁷¹ Victor Stoltzfus, the college president, described the day as “an intellectual and spiritual opportunity.”⁷² Both schools emphasized the significance of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in understanding the Gulf War. Goshen students also joined Fellowship of Reconciliation’s “No Blood for Oil” campaign, filling hundreds of film canisters, painted to look like oil drums, with notes and letters to President Bush pleading that blood not be spilled for oil. In a testimony to the continued concern over conscription and the assumed place of the draft in Mennonite peace practice, Goshen College held a mock draft, simulating what conscripted men would have to face, and students had to defend their peace position to a board of professors.⁷³ These gestures that disrupted routines and focused attention on the war were an effort to demonstrate the centrality of Mennonite convictions regarding their peace witness. Thus, even though personal sacrifices were no longer demanded during wartime, some Mennonites still made the war an intentional disruption to their lives and their relationship to the state.

Alongside these expressions of nonviolent activism, however, a strong traditionalist stream within the Mennonite world—especially the (Old) Mennonite Church—continued to refrain from speaking to government, satisfied that the government had not issued a national demand for military service. Mennonite publications drew heavily on the news releases of activist-minded organizations for their reports, and most articles addressing the topic clearly favored an activist response of some sort—from openly sharing peace convictions, to sending letters to Congress, to even more confrontational acts of protest. However, several articles did at least acknowledge the tension between an activist and a traditionalist approach. For example, in *The Gospel Herald*, J. Lawrence

69. John Bender, “Seminaries Devote Week to Gulf War Response,” *Gospel Herald*, Feb. 12, 1991; Jim Bishop, “EMC and Seminary Cancels Classes for Emergency Sabbath,” *Gospel Herald*, Feb. 12, 1991; Paul Schrag, “Emergency Sabbath Day Time of Peace Witnessing,” *Mennonite Weekly Review*, Jan. 24, 1991. Associated Mennonites Biblical Seminaries also held special worship services and conversations.

70. Jim Bishop, “EMC and Seminary Cancels Classes for Emergency Sabbath,” *Gospel Herald*, Feb. 12, 1991.

71. *Ibid.*

72. Judy Weaver, John D. Miller, Wayne Steffen, “Goshen College Conducts All-day Teach-in on War and Peace,” *Gospel Herald*, Feb. 12, 1991.

73. *Ibid.*

Burkholder, an ethicist and former Goshen College president, laid out four approaches to peace, ranging from traditionalist nonresistance through witnessing nonviolence to vocational pacifism.⁷⁴ J. Lorne Peachey, editor of the *Gospel Herald*, frequently acknowledged that Mennonites were not of one mind in the form of their peace witness and encouraged ongoing conversation within the church.⁷⁵ In an editorial immediately following the outbreak of the war, he pronounced, "A few think the *Gospel Herald* has already had too much material on peace. But this will continue. Without apology."⁷⁶

But even if the editors of Mennonite publications acknowledged tensions within the Mennonite Church, they clearly favored an activist approach. No longer were church leaders and denominational media calling on Mennonites to merely abstain from participating in the nation's war; they were now publicly and actively opposing it. According to a study of Mennonite media and the Gulf War, nearly two-thirds of the editorials in the *Mennonite Weekly Review* supported a witness of nonviolent activism, encouraging readers to publicly voice their opposition to the war.⁷⁷ As Titus Peachey, the M.C.C. Peace Section secretary, declared, "The burden of our witness for peace must rest on the shoulders of all of us, not just the young people who might face a draft. The situation calls us to give public witness to our faith and to think about our acceptance of violent systems that protect our comfortable lifestyles."⁷⁸

The Mennonite response to the First Gulf war thus combined traditional and newly-emerging expressions of peace witness. Initially,

74. J. Lawrence Burkholder, "Mennonites on the Way to Peace," *Gospel Herald*, Feb. 19, 1991. Burkholder's premise was that "Mennonites no longer agree about what Christian pacifism is. Of course pacifism means nonparticipation in war. On that all are agreed. But when it comes to the theological basis for pacifism and its implications for lifestyles, political philosophy, and involvement in society, disagreements abound." Burkholder charted four of the many peace positions that had emerged among Mennonites by 1991. They entailed Traditional "Biblical" Nonresistance, Witnessing Nonviolence, Dialectical Pacifist Political Responsibility, and Vocational Pacifism. Burkholder left his judgment open ended. "Peace pluralism could be seen as . . . the Mennonite church going to seed. If so, this would be too bad. After all the "peace emphasis" is the only obvious distinctive characteristic that Mennonites have left. However, peace pluralism could also be interpreted as a sign of vitality."

75. C.P.T. was particularly controversial because of its aggressive tactics, especially after a demonstration outside Lawry Air Force Base in Denver led to the arrest and detention of five C.P.T. volunteers for trespassing.—Paul Schrag, "The Rocky Road for CPT," *Gospel Herald*, Jan. 8, 1991.

76. J. Lorne Peachey, "Fighting About Peace," *Gospel Herald*, Jan. 8, 1991; J. Lorne Peachey, "So What Do We Do Now," *Gospel Herald*, Feb. 19, 1991.

77. Showalter, "The Mennonite Press and the Persian Gulf," 117.

78. Paul Schrag, "If the Draft Starts, MCC to be Employer for CO Service," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, Feb. 14, 1991; Stutzman, *From Nonresistance to Justice*, 213.

M.C.C.'s top priority was focused on assisting conscientious objectors if a draft should be reinstated. When that fear proved unfounded, attention quickly shifted to doing everything possible to prevent war from happening.⁷⁹ Opposition to war took many forms, including an effort to provide a broader perspective on the causes of the conflict, a recognition that Mennonites themselves bore some measure of responsibility for the war, and public protests against the use of any state-sanctioned violence.

During the buildup to the war there were indeed signs of hope, including an international debate surrounding the conflict and a real push for peaceful solutions.⁸⁰ Once the war began, however, events took a surprising turn. There was no draft and no realistic probability of one. And the war itself went much better than for the U.S. and its allies than even its strongest advocates could have expected.⁸¹

Mennonites, as represented by their leadership in the media, seriously misjudged the geopolitics of the war.⁸² Although the peace conviction of the church was not shaken, there was a sense of disappointment because their efforts seem to have been for naught.⁸³ The week after the war began J. Lorne Peachey wrote in his editorial: "perhaps the best we can do, with little perspective and much sorrow, is ask our questions: What

79. Paul Schrag, "Peace Agencies Stimulate Action, Get Many Requests as War Appears Imminent," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, Jan. 17, 1991.

80. J. Lorne Peachey, "Will There be War?," *Gospel Herald*, Jan. 15, 1991; "Some Hostages Freed; Diplomacy Emphasized," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, Sept. 6, 1990; "More Peaceful Words Spoken in Gulf Crisis," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, Oct. 4, 1990; Rich Preheim, "On Visit to Iraq, MCCer Finds Hope for Peace," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, Nov. 8, 1990; "Iraq Frees Hostages; Saddam Ready to Talk," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, Dec. 13, 1990.

81. John Barry and Evan Thomas, "A Textbook Victory," *Newsweek*, March 11, 1991.

82. J. Lorne Peachey, "January 16, 1991," *Gospel Herald*, Jan. 22, 1991; Kevin Black, "Now that Our World Has Been at War," *Gospel Herald*, March 12, 1991; Mike Chandler, "Why Do I Feel like Sackcloth and Ashes While My Neighbors Feel like Ticker Tape?," *Gospel Herald*, March 19, 1991; J. Lorne Peachey, "What Have We Learned From the War," *Gospel Herald*, May 28, 1991; J. Lorne Peachey, "And There is Peace?," *Gospel Herald*, March 12, 1991; Paul Schrag, "Thoughts on Gulf War, Christian Peacemaking," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, Jan. 31, 1991; Paul Schrag, "War Should Evoke Sorrow, Not Pride," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, March 7, 1991.

83. Mennonites still drew upon the deeper perspectives of their various organizations after the war. M.C.C. and C.P.T. continued to report on the Middle East even after the national coverage had turned a blind eye. They followed the effects of the sanctions that remained in place against Iraq, and the continued occupation of Palestine and growth of Israeli settlements.—Ardell Stauffer, "MCC Sends Post-War Aid to Persian Gulf," *Gospel Herald*, March 19, 1991; MCC News Service, "MCC Relief Fund to Bind War Wounds in Mideast," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, Feb. 7, 1991; Ardell Stauffer, "MCC Shipments Alleviate Suffering Due to Gulf War," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, March 14, 1991; GCMC "CPT Continuing Work After War," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, March 14, 1991; Delton Franz, "Group's Focus; Post-War Mideast," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, March 21, 1991; "Battles Raging in Iraq, Peace Efforts Continue," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, March 21, 1991; Charmayne D. Brubaker, "MCC Gets OK for Iraq Aid; Budget Cut as Giving Drops," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, April 4, 1991.

happened to all our prayers and petitions for peace? What about the letters we wrote?"⁸⁴ In previous wars, the church's peace witness could be judged a success if large numbers of young men took their stand as conscientious objectors—they had been told to fight and they had refused. During the Gulf War, however, Mennonites had not been asked to participate directly in the war; no painful sacrifice was required. The new circumstances left Mennonites without a clear means of expressing their peace witness.⁸⁵ Thus, when the church staked most of its peace witness in preventing the war, and that call to restraint fell on deaf ears, even a brief war felt like a failure, especially among the activists. In addition, the war's brief duration did not give Mennonites enough time to fully develop or mobilize new expressions of Mennonite peacemaking, either as a lifestyle built around simplicity and sustainability or the activist forms of prophetic protest.

MENNONITE CONFUSION IN THE SOMALIA CONFLICT

In the aftermath of the Gulf War the United States carried out several military engagements in the 1990s, including in Bosnia, Haiti, and Somalia. None of these, however, compared with the level of military involvement of the Gulf War and all were heavily endorsed and supported by the international community.⁸⁶ Although these engagements never gained as much attention as the Iraq crisis, they did give rise to a small, yet important, step in the evolving Mennonite peace witness seeking to address the changing dynamic of warfare.

The conflict in Somalia was especially significant since Mennonites had a long history of mission in the country and the military intervention there had generated new theological debates regarding the use of internationally-sanctioned armed force in "solely humanitarian" situations. In 1989, as a result of simmering ethnic conflicts, the legacy of colonialism, and lingering Cold War dynamics, Somalia became embroiled in a vicious civil war among various local warlords. As the conflict reached its climax in 1990 thousands of Somali refugees began to starve to death, a situation made worse by the fact that armed groups frequently stole relief aid sent by the United Nations. Coverage of the

84. J. Lorne Peachey, "January 16, 1991," *Gospel Herald*, Jan. 22, 1991.

85. Earl Martin, "Let's Be More Creative this Time Around," *Gospel Herald*, Jan. 8, 1991.; Andrea Schrock Wenger, "Peace is Top Issue at MCC Meeting," *Gospel Herald*, Feb. 19, 1991; Atlee Beachy, "Psychological Warfare Telling Us to Hate Enemy, Prepare for War," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, Oct. 11, 1990.; Earl Martin, "Today's Peace Movement Different from Vietnam Era," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, Jan. 3, 1991.; Paul Schrag, "If Draft Starts, MCC to be Employer for CO Service," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, Feb. 14, 1991.; Marian Franz, "War Taxes Matter of Life, Death," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, March 14, 1991.

86. Patterson, *Restless Giant*, 338-339.

unfolding humanitarian crisis by Western media prompted an outraged response. In December 1992, the United Nations authorized the United States to lead a military force into Somalia with the goal of “restoring peace, stability, and law and order” in the country.⁸⁷ In the end, U.S. forces narrowed their focus almost exclusively to the safe transport of humanitarian aid. In sharp contrast to the Gulf War, the U.S. had no obvious political or economic interests in Somalia or the surrounding region—no “blood for oil.” Instead, the U. S. military presence seemed clearly limited to protecting Somali refugees and ensuring that humanitarian aid reached their settlement camps.⁸⁸

In a series of articles that appeared in the *Gospel Herald* in the first four months of 1993, Mennonite church leaders described and defended three different peace theologies, none of which focused primarily on the lifestyle questions that had emerged during the Gulf War. J. R. Burkholder, a Mennonite peace educator and Mennonite Church coordinator for peace and social concerns, along with Ted Koontz, director of peace studies and associate professor of ethics at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries, initiated the debate on the U.S. military intervention in Somalia with a *Gospel Herald* article they published jointly in January 1993. There, Burkholder and Koontz defended a modified two-kingdom peace ethic, which recognized that in the fallen order of the “world” the state might legitimately use coercive force to punish the evildoer and protect the good (Rom. 13). Clearly, Somalia was falling into anarchy, with the real possibility of a genocide. In response, Koontz and Burkholder distinguished between a “negative peace” and a “positive peace.” Military action was certainly never good or desired; but it could create at least a temporary end to the violence. The creation of this “negative peace”—that is, the absence of violence—was a legitimate role for the state. In the meantime, however, the church, along with other religious or secular institutions, would work toward a “positive peace” of wholeness and justice. In this scenario, participation in violence and war was not acceptable for the members of the church; but Christians could recognize the state’s role in fulfilling its divinely ordained function of restoring and maintaining order, even as the church focused on its call to work nonviolently toward peace.⁸⁹

In the same issue of *Gospel Herald*, John Paul Lederach, a M.C.C. International Conciliation Service staff member and a consultant to the

87. Peter A. Huchthausen, *America’s Splendid Little Wars: A Short History of U.S. Military Engagements, 1975-2000* (New York: Viking, 2003), 171.

88. *Ibid.*, 160-183.

89. J.R. Burkholder and Ted Koontz. “When Armed Force is used to Make Relief Possible,” *Gospel Herald*, Jan. 12, 1993.

United Nations National Reconciliation program, outlined a plan for mediation and reconciliation that would address the conflict among competing clans in Somalia.⁹⁰ Although Lederach's proposal hinged on the willing participation of the Somali warlords, it was the church rather than the state that would serve in the role of mediator. Two months later J. Lawrence Burkholder, Goshen College president emeritus, countered with an aggressive rebuttal. Burkholder depicted the reintroduction of two-kingdom theology as a return to sectarian dualism; the silence of Koontz and Burkholder regarding the morality of military force made their proposal theoretical and idealistic. Drawing such fine theological distinctions, Burkholder argued, offered no practical solutions to the real problems faced by the people of Somalia, who were left to suffer while Mennonite intellectuals justified their own silence in the face of blatant oppression. The mediation and reconciliation plan proposed by Lederach also had no realistic possibility of working, Burkholder said, especially if the violence was still raging. Instead, Burkholder described the dark side of "responsible love" in a world of ambiguity. Responses to the conflict in Somalia were fraught with moral ambiguity, he insisted. And since ambiguity always contains elements of both evil and good, every decision would inevitably reflect these same qualities. In this vexing situation—in which it was impossible to live up to an unqualified moral ideal—Mennonites were ultimately forced to fall back on the grace of God. The U.S. military action in Somalia was tragic and lamentable, but it was a necessary evil within the larger good of restoring order and peace to a complex conflict.⁹¹

The tension between a tacit acceptance of military action in Somalia by Koontz and Burkholder and its qualified endorsement by J. Lawrence Burkholder became even more complex in the following issue of *Gospel Herald* when J. Denny Weaver, a professor of religion at Bluffton College, weighed in on the conversation. Weaver's article appeared several months after Western intervention in Somali had started and had the benefit of witnessing the initial results of the campaign. Weaver decried both the perspectives offered by J. Lawrence Burkholder and by Burkholder and Koontz. He began by reminding Mennonites that their basis for pacifism was rooted in a commitment to Christ, not a desire to shape the politics of the world order, and he warned against secular understandings that confused and distorted the biblical peace witness. Nonviolence was central to Christian theology because Jesus

90. John Paul Lederach, "Toward a Sustainable Peace in Somalia," *Gospel Herald*, Jan. 12, 1993.

91. J. Lawrence Burkholder, "The Dark Side of Responsible Love," *Gospel Herald*, March 16, 1993.

commanded it—regardless of its effectiveness as a short-term political strategy. At the same time, however, Weaver also questioned American intentions in Somalia and rejected the dichotomy between accepting military intervention or passively looking on, doing nothing. He applauded Lederach's clan-based reconciliation proposal and identified a need for "large scale" peacemaking, similar to C.P.T.'s program but on a much larger scale. By labeling "negative peace"—the endorsement of military violence for its limited benefits—as "just war theology," Weaver attempted to discredit both Koontz and Burkholder's call to remain silent about the military intervention in Somali as well as J. Lawrence Burkholder's argument for an affirmation of military force as a tragic necessity. Although the situation was complex, Weaver denied that there was any *moral* ambiguity—Christ's call to peace made the path clear. Strong engagement by Mennonites that both denounced military force and worked for a positive peace was the only appropriate answer to the crisis. The church should not accept any form of compromise.⁹²

This dispute among Mennonite leaders highlighted a deep uncertainty within the church in the 1990s regarding an appropriate response to the continual shifts in the nature of warfare and the changing demands of the country on its citizens. The church's reaction to the Iraq War in 1990-1991 had been strong and swift. But the Gulf War also made it clear that the U.S. was moving into a new era of warfare. The war unfolded exactly as American leaders projected—it was swift, accomplished limited objectives, enjoyed support from the international community, resulted in few U.S. casualties, and never seriously raised the possibility of a return to national conscription or the draft. Traditional approaches to war, it seemed at the time, were relics of the past. Somalia, although different from Iraq in many aspects, seemed to be even more of a moral certainty for the rest of the world—and even more ambiguous for Mennonites since military intervention seemed to be the only solution to a humanitarian crisis.

Following the Gulf War, James Juhnke, a professor of history at Bethel College, had argued that "the challenge now is to find a place as faithful Christians in a nation which plays out a domestically popular role as world police power without making overt sacrificial demands upon all citizens."⁹³ Now, two years later, the brief sequence of articles on Somalia that appeared in the *Gospel Herald* revealed the confusion

92. J. Denny Weaver, "We Must Continue to Reject Just War Thinking," *Gospel Herald*, April 27, 1993.

93. James C. Juhnke, "Limited War in a Century of Total War," in *Weathering the Storm: Christian Pacifist Responses to War*, ed. Susan E. Janzen (Newton, Kan: Faith and Life Press, 1991), 59.

created by this uncertainty. Whereas the Mennonite response to the Gulf War had begun to solidify an activist approach to peace witness and hinted at a shift in the Mennonite witness that would include broad attention to issues of consumption and environmental sustainability, the responses to the humanitarian crisis in Somalia pointed in quite different directions. But both wars posed the question of how Mennonites would express their peace witness in a context that demanded nothing from them. Koontz and Burkholder returned to the Anabaptist tradition to revive a form of two-kingdom theology.⁹⁴ J. Lawrence Burkholder called for a realist approach that recognized the deep moral ambiguities of legitimate violence to protect the innocent in the face of blatant oppression.⁹⁵ Weaver, building on the vision that led to the creation of Christian Peacemaker Teams, sought to drive the church toward an even more radical activism that firmly rejected all military solutions while also claiming—though without any specific proposal—that the Mennonite Church should intervene on behalf of the Somali refugees in some concrete and dramatic way.⁹⁶ Each of these leaders responded to the complexities of Somalia in different ways, reflecting quite different starting points. The confusion regarding the shape of the emerging Mennonite peace witness would have profound implications less than a decade later when Mennonites once again faced their nation's next major war.

MENNONITE RESPONSE TO THE SECOND GULF WAR, 2001-PRESENT

On the morning of September 11, 2001, two commercial jetliners hijacked by operatives from Al Qaeda, a global militant Islamist organization, crashed into the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center in New York City. Around the same time, another plane crashed into the Pentagon outside Washington D.C., and a fourth crashed in western Pennsylvania. All told, the actions resulted in nearly 3,000 deaths. Amid the grief, confusion, and anger that followed, President George W. Bush assured the American people that those guilty would be dealt swift justice. It soon emerged that the mastermind of these attacks, Osama bin Laden, the leader of Al Qaeda, was living in Afghanistan under the protection of that country's Islamist ruling group, the Taliban. Instead of

94. J. R. Burkholder and Ted Koontz. "When Armed Force is used to Make Relief Possible," *Gospel Herald*, Jan. 12, 1993.

95. J. Lawrence Burkholder, "The Dark Side of Responsible Love," *Gospel Herald*, March 16, 1993.

96. J. Denny Weaver, "We Must Continue to Reject Just War Thinking," *Gospel Herald*, April 27, 1993.

declaring a war on Afghanistan, President Bush declared a war on terror. This war would not be fought in conventionally-defined terms—terrorists could be anywhere and take any form. Since terrorists could be organizations, governments, or individuals the war on terror would have no definable territorial boundaries. This new kind of war would require secret surveillance and interrogation, now legal through the USA Patriot Act (2002). Although the declaration of war was vague about its objective, most of the world's governments rallied around the United States. Less than a month after the September attacks coalition forces invaded Afghanistan. By the end of the year the Taliban regime there had collapsed.⁹⁷

Yet just as President Bush had vowed, the war did not stop in Afghanistan. In his State of the Union address on January 29, 2002, the president identified an “axis of evil”—specifically, Iran, Iraq, and North Korea—as the primary threats to the United States and global security, against Iraq as the administration's primary focus. Over the next year the Bush administration sought domestic and international support for a war with Iraq. As with the Gulf War a decade earlier, the United States first outlined its case against Iraq before the United Nations, citing numerous U.N. resolutions that Iraq was said to have broken and providing covert intelligence that seemed to prove that Iraq intended to create nuclear weapons and was in possession of other weapons of mass destruction. The administration also tried to link the Iraqi regime to Al Qaeda. Although both allegations ultimately proved to be untrue, many Americans found the case made by the Bush administration to be compelling.⁹⁸

In contrast to the first Gulf War, however, the Bush administration soon encountered political opposition to the war in Iraq. By the late fall of 2002, claims that Iraq possessed weapons of mass destruction and was actively trying to acquire materials to create a nuclear weapon had grown increasingly suspect. As the push for war grew stronger so did the voices against it. Three U.N. Security Council members—France, Germany, and Russia—all voiced their opposition. In addition, the World Council of Churches, the Vatican, and numerous mainline North American churches released statements denouncing the prospect of war, as did secular organizations like MoveOn.org and protestors around the

97. Terry H. Anderson, *Bush's Wars* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 55-92. For a political-ethical defense of this approach, see Jean Bethke Elshtain, *Just War Against Terror: The Burden of American Power in a Violent World* (New York: Basic Books, 2003).

98. Anderson, *Bush's Wars*, 93-130. For Iraq War history also see Michael R. Gordon and Bernard E. Trainor, *Cobra II: The Inside Story of the Invasion and Occupation of Iraq* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2006); and Karen I. Greenberg and Joshua L. Dratel, *The Torture Papers: The Road to Abu Ghraib* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

world who took to the streets in London, Madrid, Rome. International sympathy for the U.S. generated by the September 11 attacks quickly dissipated and the U.N. refused to authorize military action. Nonetheless, the Bush administration—with the strong support of the American electorate—pressed forward. On March 19, 2003, the United States military began Operation Iraqi Freedom.⁹⁹

As in the First Gulf War, the American military proved far superior to Iraqi forces. It quickly defeated the organized military resistance and toppled the Iraqi government. On May 1—just six weeks after the war began—President Bush declared “mission accomplished” and announced an end to combat operations in Iraq. However, the American occupation of Iraq continued even though American forces found no weapons of mass destruction or a clear link between the Iraqi government and Al Qaeda, who had been responsible for the attacks on September 11. When U.S. combat troops finally left Iraq in December 2011, the prolonged and expensive occupation had resulted in hundreds of thousands of deaths and was remembered more for the allegations of human rights abuses on the part of the U.S. and its allies than for its liberation of the Iraqi people.¹⁰⁰

For Mennonites, the Second Gulf War represented yet another military conflict that did not conform to the experience of previous wars. As in the First Gulf War, Mennonite denominational periodicals clearly favored various forms of local, national, and international political activism, speaking out against the war in general terms. But the complexities of the post 9/11 world, combined with the conflicted legacy of the Mennonite response to U.S. military action in Somalia, left church leaders unable to articulate a unified approach to Mennonite peace witness. What emerged was a broader, more diffuse, response that included elements of public activism, while introducing a new element of outreach and dialogue with Muslims.

In the weeks following the attacks of September 11, 2001, antiwar voices had generally remained quiet. But following President Bush’s address to the U.N. on September 12, 2002, that called for resolutions against Iraq, those voices, including Mennonites, began to be heard. M.C.C. and the newly-formed Mennonite Church USA had already begun to sell peace flags as a way to commemorate the anniversary of September 11 that they hoped would create a visible witness against the buildup toward war.¹⁰¹ Leaders in the Mennonite Church USA also began

99. *Ibid.*, 93-130.

100. *Ibid.*, 131-169.

101. Laurie L. Oswald, “Peace Flags Can Display Alternative Response,” *The Mennonite*, Sept. 3, 2002; “Fly the Flag,” *The Mennonite*, Oct. 1, 2002; Laurie L. Oswald, “Antiwar

to collect signatures opposing direct U.S. military action.¹⁰² The original goal was 5,000 signatures; by October over 13,000 had come in, and the number would eventually reach 17,000 signatures.¹⁰³ Bearing these signatures, Jim Schrag, newly-appointed executive secretary of MC USA, joined with other religious and secular leaders in an antiwar action outside of the White House.¹⁰⁴ According to Schrag, the public call for peace represented a renewed claim by Mennonites on their traditional pacifist convictions. The church, he stated, was "coming out of mourning and finding its voice through tradition and experience."¹⁰⁵

Not surprisingly, Mennonite periodicals reported an increasing number of other responses throughout the church to the impending war. Cedar Falls (Iowa) Mennonite Church, for example, organized a peace rally that attracted 300 protesters, fourteen of whom trespassed onto the 132nd Iowa National Air Guard Base to pray for a peaceful alternative to war.¹⁰⁶ Pasadena (California) Mennonite Church held a service in Central Park where they signed a letter of opposition to their congressional representative.¹⁰⁷ Around the country, Mennonite congregations faxed letters to the president, took out newspaper ads, or fasted,¹⁰⁸ while individuals organized and participated in marches.¹⁰⁹ As with the First

Resources Offered," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, Aug. 12, 2002; Laurie Oswald, "Banner Wavers: Peace Flags Offer and Alternative for Sept. 11th Anniversary," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, Aug. 26, 2002; J. Daryl Byler, "Worship Services Focus on Iraq, Peacemaking," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, Sept. 9, 2002; Laurie L. Oswald, "Peace Flags Fly Off the Shelves," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, Sept. 23, 2002.

102. Rich Preheim, "Life, Love and Loyalty," *The Mennonite*, Sept. 17, 2002; Laurie L. Oswald, "Signatures Sought for Peace Letter," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, Sept. 2, 2002.

103. Laurie L. Oswald, "12,000 Sign Letter against War with Iraq," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, Sept. 23, 2002; Laurie Oswald, "A Congregation Chorus of 12,000 Voices," *The Mennonite*, Oct. 1, 2002; Robert Rhodes, "From Flags to Fasting, Witnesses against War," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, Oct. 14, 2002.

104. Laurie Oswald, "A Congregation Chorus of 12,000 Voices," *The Mennonite*, Oct. 1, 2002.

105. Jim Schrag, "Many Strands Make One Voice," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, Sept. 23, 2002.

106. David Sensenig, "Scattered Seeds: One Congregation's Small Steps toward Peace in a Time of War," *The Mennonite*, Dec. 24, 2002.

107. "Churches' Peace Witness Takes Various Forms," *The Mennonite*, Dec. 24, 2002.

108. MCUSA News Service, "Peace Campaign Opposes Iraqi War," *The Mennonite*, Dec. 10, 2002; David Sensenig, "Scattered Seeds: One Congregation's Small Steps Toward Peace in a Time of War," *The Mennonite*, Dec. 24, 2002; "Churches' Peace Witness Takes Various Forms," *The Mennonite*, Dec. 24, 2002; MCC News Service, "MCC Stockpiles, Administrator Fasts as Threat of War with Iraq Increases," *The Mennonite*, March 4, 2003; Laurie L. Oswald, "Antiwar Resources Offered," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, Aug. 12, 2002; Robert Rhodes, "From Flags to Fasting, Witnesses Against the War," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, Oct. 14, 2002.; Paul Schrag, "Year Brought Pain, Promise, Peace Witness," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, Dec. 30, 2002.

109. "Mennonites Spread Message of Peace," *The Mennonite*, Feb. 4, 2003; "Marching for Peace," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, Sept. 16, 2002.

Gulf War, students at Mennonite colleges held teach-ins and marches.¹¹⁰ Stories covering these events in Mennonite periodicals were supplemented with various articles and editorials against the war. Although these voices did not generally advocate for specific actions or a dramatic change in lifestyle, they did call for Mennonites to awake from their guilty silence and to give more explicit expression to their peace witness.¹¹¹ The articles and editorials frequently addressed the fundamental depravity of armed violence and the glaring injustice of war, often reinforced with theological arguments for pacifism.¹¹² The time and space devoted to these perspectives in Mennonite periodicals suggests that the editors worried that the Mennonite commitment to a basic peace theology could no longer be taken for granted.

Yet despite a general sense of opposition to the war, the Mennonite peace witness in the first decade of the twenty-first century had no unifying focus.¹¹³ Unlike the First Gulf War, the wars in Afghanistan and

110. "Marchers' Message," *The Mennonite*, Nov. 19, 2002; Robert Rhodes, "Newton Area Events Make Case Against War," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, Oct. 14, 2002; Rosanna Nafzinger, "Goshen Teach-in Confronts Post-9/11 Issues," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, Nov. 11, 2002; John Stoner, "On Campuses, War Clouds Prompt Protest, Debate," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, Jan. 13, 2003.

111. Laurie Oswald, "A Congressional Chorus of 12,000 Voices," *The Mennonite*, Oct. 1, 2002; MCUSA News Service, "Peace Campaign Opposes Iraqi War," *The Mennonite*, Dec. 10, 2002; MCUSA News Service, "March 16 Declared Day of Prayer for Peace," *The Mennonite*, March 18, 2003; Jane Yoder Short, "The Table is Set: Will We Follow Daniel's Example?," *The Mennonite*, April 1, 2003; Everett J. Thomas, "Fools in a Foreign Land," *The Mennonite*, April 1, 2003; Darrin W. Belousek, "Pacifists Have Duty to be Nation's Conscience," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, Sept. 23, 2002; David Gushee, "Naysayers are Needed," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, Oct. 28, 2002; Robert Rhodes, "'Peace Blitz' Encourages Speaking Out Against War," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, Jan. 20, 2003; Robert Rhodes, "Board Stands Against War," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, Jan. 20, 2003; Laurie L. Oswald, "Churches Put Peace Beliefs in Action," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, Jan. 27, 2003.

112. John M. Drescher, "Psychology of Warfare: Seven Elements Needed to Fight," *The Mennonite*, Aug. 6, 2002; Carl Hansen, "Of Infinite Worth: Biblical Values Related to Peace, Justice and Human Rights," *The Mennonite*, Oct. 1, 2002; David Stutzman, "Prayer for Peace in the Shadow of War," *The Mennonite*, Feb. 4, 2003; B. Charles Hostettler, "The Folly of War," *the Mennonite*, Feb. 18, 2003; John Drescher, "Time for a Divorce from War," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, Aug. 26, 2002; Robert Rhodes, "The Immorality of Manufacturing War," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, Sept. 23, 2002; William O. Beeman, "Experts Warn of Iraq War's Impact," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, Oct. 7, 2002; Paul Schrag, "Theory's Restraints are Useful," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, Oct. 21, 2002; Robert Rhodes, "'Just' War a Cynical Paradox," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, Oct. 21, 2002; Joy Brown, "Historical Myths Promote Support for War, Prof Says," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, Nov. 18, 2002; Donal Brown, "Who Will Pick Up Iraq's Pieces," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, Nov. 25, 2002; William O. Beeman, "Public Opinion Matters in U.S. War Plan," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, Feb. 3, 2003; Darrin W. Belouek, "How Can the Battle be Won?," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, March 10, 2003; Edgar Metzler, "War's Myths, Allure Exposed," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, March 17, 2003.

113. Paul Schrag, "Peace. In Countless Small Ways." *Mennonite Weekly Review*, Jan. 20, 2003; Donald B. Kravbill and Linda Gehman Peachev, *Where Was God on September 11?: Seeds of Faith and Hope* (Scottsdale, Pa: Herald Press, 2002). This book offered a Mennonite

Iraq generated virtually no discussion about the possibility of conscription or a draft. Leaders within the church actively opposed the war, but seemed to have no illusions that this form of a peace witness would be effective. Indeed, Mennonite publications considered the war a foregone conclusion.¹¹⁴ In September 2002, Paul Schrag, editor of the *Mennonite Weekly Review*, echoed the sentiments of many when he wrote that the statements by U.S. officials about Iraq "have made it all but impossible, according to the wisdom of worldly power, for them to turn away from the path toward war."¹¹⁵ Instead of imagining that their actions might somehow prevent the war, Mennonite leaders tended to focus instead on obedience to Christ and an unwavering faithfulness to his teachings and example as the basis for their activism.¹¹⁶ As Robert Rhodes, assistant editor of the *Mennonite Weekly Review*, concluded, "What we are called to here is obedient witness."¹¹⁷ Even if there was no hope that those in power would listen, he continued, Mennonites still had a responsibility to witness to the state by calling it to greater justice and peace.

M.C.C. and C.P.T. also played a part in the Mennonite peace witness in months leading up to war in 2003, though their efforts seemed less focused on shaping a collective Mennonite response than had been the case a decade earlier. Even before the first bombs fell M.C.C. began to stockpile humanitarian aid in Jordan and to collect school and relief kits from local congregations.¹¹⁸ In October 2002, C.P.T. sent a large delegation to Iraq; eight members of the team were turned away but

response to the September 11th attacks yet contained almost no perspectives written by Mennonites, drawing instead on other sources.

114. Michael Klare, "War on Iraq Appears Assured," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, Sept. 23, 2002; Paul Schrag, "Peace Petition's Value," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, Sept. 30, 2002; John Rempel, "Time Runs Short to Avert War," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, Dec. 16, 2002; William O. Beeman, "Public Opinion Matters in U.S. War Plan," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, Feb. 3, 2003; Paul Schrag, "Voices for Christ's Peace," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, Feb. 4, 2003; Robert Rhodes, "The Boldest Witness," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, Feb. 17, 2003; Laurie L. Oswald, "Day Set to Pray, Fast for Peace," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, March 10, 2003; Robert Rhodes, "A Matter of Witness Not Miracles," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, March 10, 2003.

115. Paul Schrag, "Peace Petition's Value," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, Sept. 30, 2002.

116. Gilberto Flores, "War is a Fraud Against Life," *The Mennonite*, April 1, 2003; Paul Schrag, "Voices for Christ's Peace," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, Feb. 3, 2003; John Rempel, "Trumpet Sounds War Alarm," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, Feb. 3, 2003; Robert Rhodes, "The Boldest Witness," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, Feb. 17, 2003; Laurie L. Oswald, "Day Set to Pray, Fast for Peace," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, March 10, 2003; Robert Rhodes, "A Matter of Witness not Miracles," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, March 10, 2003.

117. Robert Rhodes, "A Matter of Witness Not Miracles," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, March 10, 2003.

118. MCC News Service, "MCC Stockpiles, Administrators Fasts as Threat of War with Iraq Increases," *The Mennonite*, March 4, 2003; MCC News Service, "In Case of War, MCC Ready to Aid Victims," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, Oct. 14, 2002.

seven managed to gain entrance.¹¹⁹ The seven who were allowed into Iraq camped by a water sanitation facility in an effort to keep American bombers from destroying it.¹²⁰ Their experiences were widely publicized—Cliff Kindy offered stories of sorrow and lament in *The Mennonite* and Peggy Gish later wrote a book about the C.P.T. experience during the buildup and beginning of the war.¹²¹ Yet despite the fact that the two organizations took these steps to stand in solidarity with Iraqi civilians and refugees,¹²² they did not enjoy the same visibility in Mennonite publications as they did during the First Gulf War.¹²³

One new expression of the North American Mennonite peace witness focused on a deeper understanding of Islam. During the First Gulf War, Mennonite periodicals published several articles explaining some basic tenants of Islam.¹²⁴ But after the events of September 11 and the increased animosity in the United States toward Arabs and Muslims, Mennonites leaders began to make more intentional efforts to understand and connect with their Muslim neighbors.¹²⁵ Articles in Mennonite publications, for example, traced the history of Christian and Muslim tensions and offered theological reflections comparing the character of God with that of Allah.¹²⁶ Some Mennonites, like Evan

119. Robert Rhodes, "CPT Sends Group to Iraq on a Mission of Peace," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, Oct. 28, 2002; Dick Benner, "Peace Team Sees Plight of Iraqis," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, Jan. 6, 2003.

120. Rich Preheim, "Worker Remain in Baghdad, Elsewhere in Middle East as War Begins," *The Mennonite*, April 1, 2003; Robert Rhodes, "CPTers are 'Prayerful Presence' in Baghdad," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, March 24, 2003; Robert Rhodes, "CPT Group Experiences Bombing in Baghdad," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, March 31, 2003.

121. Cliff Kindy, "Living in the Bull's-Eye," *The Mennonite*, Jan. 21, 2003; Peggy Gish, *Iraq: A Journey of Hope and Peace* (Scottsdale, Pa: Herald Press, 2004).

122. The gap in time between the two wars and the changes in the two organizations perhaps explain part of this shift as well. The periodicals suggest that individuals mostly viewed M.C.C. and C.P.T. as organizations expressing their own witness against the war and not directing Mennonites toward a specific witness.

123. The decision to stay in Baghdad was similar to the four MCC workers who decided to stay in Vietnam after the "fall" of Saigon. Both were bold moves that radically differed from the many Western agencies that were fleeing the areas.—Cornelius I. Dvck, Robert S. Kreider, and John Allen Lapp, *Responding to Worldwide Needs* (Scottsdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1980), 120.

124. David W. Shenk, "What's the Difference between a Muslim and a Christian," *Gospel Herald*, Nov. 20, 1990; Susan Kennel Harrison, "What About my Muslim Neighbors," *The Mennonite*, Jan. 8, 1991.

125. Interreligious dialogues that Mennonites participated in Iran started in 2000 and became much more prominent after the September 11th attacks according to Stutzman, *From Nonresistance to Justice*, 248-250.

126. Alex Awad, "Learning to Live With Muslims," *The Mennonite*, Nov. 19, 2002; Micah Keller Shristi, "An Immoral Strategy," *The Mennonite*, Feb. 18, 2003; Dawn Kraybill, "Are the Arabs Our Enemies?," *The Mennonite*, May 20, 2003; Larry Everest, "With Iraq, U.S. had Never Held the Moral High Ground," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, Sept. 23, 2002; John Hassell, "Islamic Anti-Americanism Rising," *Mennonite Weekly Review*, Feb. 3, 2003.

Bontrager, a member of Community Mennonite Church in Markham, Illinois who had spent time in Egypt, adopted the ritual of fasting and prayer during Ramadan and reflected on his experience in *The Mennonite*.¹²⁷ Above all, Mennonite leaders encouraged dialogue and deeper understanding between the two religions.¹²⁸ In a 2002 article in *The Mennonite*, Jon Hoover, a Mennonite staff member at Dar Cambani Arabic Studies in Cairo, Egypt, defined dialogue as “opening ourselves to relationship with others and loving our neighbors and enemies just as God has loved us.” “In this dialogue,” he continued, “we prayerfully and gently seek to walk with Muslims in the passion of their lives, even in the face of hostility.”¹²⁹ If the War on Terror was becoming a war on Muslims, then part of the Mennonite peace witness would be to seek out and befriend the unnamed but frequently targeted enemy.¹³⁰

Despite these trends, in the years following 2002 the Mennonite peace witness as reflected in Mennonite periodicals was quite unfocused. No dominant peace narrative emerged within the periodicals that could shape a coherent denominational peace witness or inspire collective action. Aside from general opposition to the war and encouragements to engage with Muslims, Mennonite leaders did not offer a clear or unified perspective.¹³¹

Sixty years earlier, a more hierarchical church structure and the reality of the draft had enabled Mennonite leaders to organize and implement an alternative service program that shaped the church. By the first decade of the twenty-first century, the context had changed significantly. Leaders in the newly-integrated Mennonite Church USA no longer appeared to be in a position to speak for the church in a way that

127. Evan Bontrager, “My Participation in Ramadan,” *The Mennonite*, Nov. 19, 2002.

128. Jon Hoover, “Rooting Dialogue with Muslims in Love,” *The Mennonite*, Nov. 19, 2002; Laurie L. Oswald, “Churches Put Peace Beliefs in Action,” *Mennonite Weekly Review*, Jan. 27, 2003; Robert Rhodes, “‘Peace Pastor’ Breaks New Ground for Church,” *Mennonite Weekly Review*, Feb. 17, 2003; Tony Krabill, “Oversees Churches Oppose Iraq,” *Mennonite Weekly Review*, April 21, 2003.

129. Jon Hoover, “Rooting Dialogue with Muslims in Love,” *The Mennonite*, Nov. 19, 2002.

130. Along with the emphasis on interfaith dialogue, M.C.C. and C.P.T. also maintained their relationships in Iraq. After staying in Baghdad during the March 2003 attack, C.P.T. remained in Iraq and received international attention when four of their members were kidnapped resulting in the death of one member, Tom Fox. After Fox’s death C.P.T. publicly forgave his captors and pleaded for no violent reprisals.—Stutzman, *From Nonresistance to Justice*, 247.

131. To be sure, the merger of the G.C. and M.C. denominations in the summer of 2002, and the overall changes in church structure that ensued from the process, might have also played a role. According to Ervin Stutzman, the “fallout” from the merger resulted in a loss of 167 congregations, creating a tense atmosphere and a caution about issuing public statements on controversial issues in the hopes of keeping congregations in the church.—*Ibid.*, 244-247.

congregational members would welcome. The Mennonite peace witness faltered in part because the church never fully succeeded in institutionalizing a witness to the First Gulf War. No longer able to rely on the draft to unify the Mennonite response in a time of war, church leaders and organizations were forced to acknowledge the growing ambiguity of the peace witness and the expanded role of individuals and local congregations in defining that witness. But following September 11, the conflict itself—the “War on Terror”—also had no tangible objectives and no clear definition of victory. What should a peace witness look like in response to a policy that committed real lives and dollars to an ambiguous war with an ambiguous objective? The divergent views on how the church should respond to the use of military force in Somalia only added to the confusion.

Certainly peace remained an important concern for Mennonites. Indeed, outsiders may have thought that Mennonites emphasized peace to the exclusion of almost any other issue. Nonetheless, despite the fact that the nature of the peace witness had broadened in scope, by the first decade of the twenty-first century Mennonites as a denomination struggled to find coherent and unified ways to give expression to that witness.¹³²

CONCLUSION

The American wars of the 1990s and 2000s varied in cause, objective, and implementation. The First Gulf War declared by George H. W. Bush differed greatly from the Second Gulf War initiated by his son twelve years later. The various military engagements in Haiti, Bosnia, and Somalia during the Clinton years also introduced new complexities regarding the humanitarian role of the military. In earlier times, Mennonites had refused to bear arms, worked in alternative service programs, or resisted the draft completely. Yet in none of these modern wars did the country ask Mennonites in the United States to participate personally. The elimination of the draft left Mennonites with the problem of how to express a peace witness whose primary public focus had been a refusal to be involved with fighting in war. The result was an increasingly divided peace witness that ranged from tacit support for U.S. military intervention, rooted in a traditional two-kingdom perspective, to activist forms of public protest against all military actions, including humanitarian interventions in the face of genocide.

In January 2003, Ted Koontz, the professor of ethics and peace studies at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, published an essay titled

132. *Ibid.*, 220, 245-246.

“Thinking Theologically about War against Iraq” that sought to reframe the conversation.¹³³ In the essay, Koontz identified two distinct “languages” that Christians speak in addressing war and peace. The first and primary language, he argued, consists of the distinctive commitments and beliefs of the Christian community rooted in Christian theology. The second language, by contrast, is that of public policy—the ability to speak on a secular and pragmatic level, usually to those outside the church. Koontz argued that modern Mennonites had become so familiar and fluent with the second language that they were in danger of forgetting their first one. Secular arguments against the war—pragmatic arguments appealing to reason and readily understood in the public square—could often feel more compelling and relevant than theological convictions anchored in the New Testament story of Christ. However, as Koontz argued, in cases like Somalia or Bosnia the second language of public policy offered very little help for pacifists; indeed, in those instances, just war arguments seemed much more compelling. When the ability to speak the first language is lost and only the second language remains, he concluded, the church’s capacity to maintain its pacifist conviction is ultimately severely diminished.

Koontz’s argument captures well a shift that happened in the Mennonite peace witness. During the Vietnam War Mennonites began to learn and use the second language of public policy while still relying on public resistance to the draft to bear witness to the Christian theology at the core of their convictions. However, in the absence of the draft during the Gulf Wars Mennonites were left without a concrete expression to demonstrate their Christian commitments to peace. So their public witness relied increasingly on the second language of political activism.

Certainly a broadened understanding of peace that included the language of public advocacy was a positive change in the Mennonite witness. Becoming more adept in this second language has created opportunities for a richer and more comprehensive peace witness. But for this vision to be fully realized Mennonites may need to reclaim their primary language of Christian theology and develop an embodied ethic that bears a consistent witness to the gospel of peace regardless of the political circumstances. The efforts by some in the church to broaden the Mennonite conversation about the peace witness to include more fundamental questions of lifestyle and consumption, or to challenge popular perceptions of Muslims, point in the direction of an embodied witness to the gospel of peace that goes beyond the draft.

133. Ted Koontz, “Thinking Theologically about War against Iraq,” *MQR* 77 (Jan. 2003), 93-108.

In a 1991 editorial in the *Gospel Herald*, J. Lorne Peachey reflected on the actions Mennonites were taking against the war. "History will judge," he concluded, "whether our efforts were adequate."¹³⁴ Those efforts to stop the war proved inadequate, as did the Mennonite protests against all of the wars that followed. So the struggle to give appropriate expression to a witness for peace in a violent world remains ongoing—an unfinished agenda, not just for the Mennonite Church but for all Christians.

134. J. Lorne Peachey, "So What Do We Do Now?," *Gospel Herald*, Feb. 19, 1991.

