

1 Church of the Brethren
2 Mission and Ministry Board
3 Resolution against Drone Warfare

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5 *Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. . . .*
6 *Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of*
7 *all. If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. Beloved,*
8 *never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God; for it is written,*
9 *“Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.” No, “if your enemies are*
10 *hungry, feed them; if they are thirsty, give them something to drink; for by doing*
11 *this you will heap burning coals on their heads.” Do not be overcome by evil, but*
12 *overcome evil with good.*
13 (Romans 12:14, 17-21)
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16 The Church of the Brethren follows the teaching and example of Jesus Christ, whose willingness
17 to die was unaccompanied by a willingness to kill. In line with our Brethren heritage, we believe
18 “that war or any participation in war is wrong and entirely incompatible with the spirit, example
19 and teachings of Jesus Christ,” (1918 Statement of Special Conference of the Church of the
20 Brethren to the Churches and the Drafted Brethren) and that all “war is sin...[and that we] cannot
21 encourage, engage in, or willingly profit from armed conflict at home or abroad. We cannot in
22 the event of war, accept military service or support the military machine in any capacity,” (1934
23 Annual Conference Resolution on Peace and Goodwill). We seek to live this belief through
24 working for peace in our communities and opposing violence in all forms.
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26 The Church of the Brethren has consistently opposed the use of lethal force and has encouraged
27 measures to support the wellbeing and security of all people. We are troubled by the quickly
28 expanding use of armed unmanned aerial vehicles, or drones. These drones are being used for
29 surveillance and remote killing of people.
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31 In our opposition to all types of war, the Church of the Brethren has spoken out specifically
32 against covert warfare (1988 Annual Conference Statement on “Covert Operations and Covert
33 War”). Drone warfare embodies the fundamental problems that covert warfare entails. The
34 process for determining who is targeted by drones, and why, is decided by a small group of
35 government officials who are not accountable to Congress or the American people for their
36 actions. The names of people who are considered targets for drone warfare have been assembled
37 on what are described as “kill lists.”
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39 Drones are being used as weapons in many areas where the United States is not officially at war,
40 such as Yemen, Somalia, and Pakistan. In some cases, such countries have given the U.S. their
41 blessing to use drones, but then have concealed the fact that it is the United States carrying out
42 these strikes. Concealment of covert activities generates confusion, results in the deaths of
43 countless targeted people and bystanders, and undermines international law and cooperation.
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45 The Church of the Brethren has stated that peace can be achieved only by the unity of all
46 humanity (1991 Annual Conference statement on “Peacemaking: The Calling of God’s People in
47 History”). Drone warfare inherently disrupts the path toward this unity for which we pray and
48 work. To act remotely shields the American people from the horror and discord of war. Though

49 machines carry out the final action of these missions, U.S. citizens may not excuse or disconnect
50 themselves from the lethal consequences of these decisions.

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52 All killing mocks the God who creates and gives life. Jesus, as the Word incarnate, came to
53 dwell among us (John 1:14) in order to reconcile humanity to God and bring about peace and
54 healing. In contrast, our government's expanding use of armed drones distances the decisions to
55 use lethal force from the communities in which these deadly strikes take place. We find the
56 efforts of the United States to distance the act of killing from the site of violence to be in direct
57 conflict to the witness of Christ Jesus.

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60 **Therefore, be it resolved that the Church of the Brethren and its members shall:**

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- 62 1. Call our districts, congregations, and individual members to study this issue in
63 relation to our Brethren history of peacemaking and our biblical understanding of
64 peace, so that Brethren may continue to be dynamic and prophetic peacemakers in a
65 world riddled with violent behavior. We covenant together to care for the victims of
66 this violence, as well as those who are not recognizing the consequences of their
67 participation in this form of violence.
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69 2. Encourage our institutions, congregations, and individuals to pray and work for
70 peace, to follow denominational practices for socially responsible investing, and to
71 support organizations that use nonviolent means to promote stability, justice, and
72 peace across the world.¹
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74 3. Call upon the President and Congress to halt the use of drones in places both foreign
75 and domestic. As followers of Jesus we are called to be a radical witness for peace,
76 and we must reject a deadly and destructive campaign that has killed and wounded
77 many people and created a climate of fear. Additionally, even by the government's
78 standards and goals, this is failing to produce stability or progress toward peace.
- 79
80 4. Call upon Congress to hold the President accountable for his administration's past use
81 of armed drones, and to control the future use of armed drones by instituting
82 legitimate oversight of any deployment of drones by the military or the CIA. We will
83 no longer tolerate secretive "kill lists," and the decision-making process in the matter
84 of armed drones must be made public so that the lethal actions of government may be
85 properly understood and judged.

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87 *But I say to you that listen, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate*
88 *you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. . . .*

89 *Do to others as you would have them do to you.*

90 (Luke 6:27-28, 31)

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- 92 1. -Messenger 1/1/1972, page 5,
93 <http://archive.org/stream/messenger1972121121roye#page/n13/mode/2up>

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95 - Minutes, Church of the Brethren General Board, Executive Committee
96 1/18/1972: Proposed Answer to 1971 National Youth Conference
97 Resolution on U.S. Savings Bond divestment.
98 - Minutes, Church of the Brethren General Board, March 14-17, 1972,
99 pages 4-6, V.2.)U.S. Bonds and Cash Flow Needs, and V.3) Investments
100 -Messenger, 5/1/1972, page 6 General Board investments. . .
101 <http://archive.org/stream/messenger1972121121roye#page/n263/mode/2up>
102 -Brethren Benefit Trust, Socially Responsible Investing (screening, Department of
103 Defense lists, Positive Investment, Shareholder Action)
104 <http://www.brethrenbenefittrust.org/socially-responsible-investing>
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107 **Action of the Church of the Brethren Mission and Ministry Board**

108 The Mission and Ministry Board at its meeting on Sunday March 10,
109 2013, adopted the Resolution against Drone Warfare, and forwards it to
110 the 2013 Annual Conference for adoption.”
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