



ENCOUNTERING RECRUITMENT



*You reveal the path of life to me. . . ;
in Your presence is abundant joy;
in Your right hand are eternal pleasures.
Psalm 16:11*

Dear Friend,

Military recruitment has reached a level of intensity never seen before in U.S. history, and any male or female between the ages of 16 and 25 can now be reached by recruiters, facilitated by the No Child Left Behind Act and the Pentagon data base.

There is an urgent need to educate our young people about the realities of military life, war, and recruitment so they can make informed responses when contacted by recruiters and also be prepared should a draft be reinstated.

As people of Christian faith, we believe that the life of Jesus is an example of living in a nonviolent way. Jesus taught that his followers should love God completely and love their neighbors as themselves. He also instructed that we should love our enemies. The Church of the Brethren has confessed through the years that through our understanding of God in Jesus, all war is sin. This confession often brings us into tension with the society at large and provokes conflict within our communities of faith.

As a community of faith, we welcome your involvement in providing young people in your congregation or parish with an alternative understanding of the military and war. It is important that young people understand what is happening in the effort to recruit them to serve with the military.

While youth in our congregations are very important to us, let us also understand that we have a responsibility to provide information and alternative options to the youth in our communities beyond our church walls. Today, there is no legal draft, and the military is searching for young men and women to serve.

The most vulnerable youth are those in communities with lower economies. When life options are limited, youth become more vulnerable to military recruiters. This "poverty draft" disproportionately draws from poor and working class communities and communities of color.

On Earth Peace | *an agency rooted in the Church of the Brethren*

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Recruiters often find youth desiring what they offer: a life of meaning and pride, discipline, and belonging. Some communities welcome recruiters and the promises they make. Some young people feel that there are no options besides the military available for job training or college education. Some seek adventure and travel.

It is important for people of faith and conviction to interrupt this pathway toward the soul- and society-crippling experience of war and to offer instead the path of life. It matters for followers of Jesus to get involved in the lives of young people to mentor and accompany, to provide spiritual formation, point out possible pitfalls, and indicate another way of living.

This packet provides an overview of entry-points and basic resources for getting started with responding to military recruiters in your community. I look forward to joining with your efforts and learning together how to expand this exciting and important work!

Yours in peace & grace,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Matt Guynn".

Matt Guynn
coordinator of peace witness
On Earth Peace