



2257 Old Philadelphia Pike
Lancaster, PA 17602
Tel. 717-394-8107
Toll free: 800-238-0126
www.atlanticcoastconference.net

Dear Friend:

Congratulations on your 18th Birthday! Whether this special birthday has already occurred in the past year or is coming up in the year ahead, we offer our best wishes to you. This milestone is often thought of as a coming of age, a time to take on more responsibility as an adult and to make some significant decisions. This is an exhilarating time, full of possibility and perhaps some fear.

One issue to consider is this: what is your attitude towards the military? Currently, only young men are required to register with the Selective Service System. However, as we're sure you know, the military is really advertising itself as a place of opportunity for young women too. Don't get sucked in by this slick message! The military would teach you how to participate in killing and destruction when ordered to do so. In contrast, Jesus calls his followers to love our enemies and not to use violence to defend ourselves or to get our own way. In the Mennonite Church we believe that we owe a higher allegiance to Jesus than to the government when it comes to military participation. Who is really in charge of our lives – Jesus Christ or the President?

However, being a Christian peacemaker in this world means a lot more than just refusing to join the army. It also means being a positive force for good!! Enclosed are several brochures that describe some great Christian service opportunities. Spending anywhere from a month to three years with Mennonite Central Committee, Eastern Mennonite Missions, or Mennonite Mission Network will challenge you and deepen your faith like nothing else. As you learn from and contribute to the lives of others, you will be equipped for a lifetime of Christian work. It's an adventure and we encourage you to think about it.

Also enclosed is an introduction to the Peacemaker Registration Form. The full form can be found at co.mcc.org/us/co. It raises some good questions that will help strengthen your commitment to be a peacemaker; in fact, it might be something your friends, family, or others in your church would want to fill out too! The enclosed "Making Peace with Enemies" brochure further explains this Christian understanding. When you have printed and completed this form, keep a copy in a safe place for yourself and send a copy to Mennonite Central Committee (address is listed at the end of the form).

Well friend, you have a lot to look forward to! Blessings as you live each day. If you get a chance, ask your friends what they are thinking of doing when they turn 18. Talk with your parents and pastor about these issues. Spend time in Bible study and prayer. God wants the best for you and wants the best from you too.

Sincerely yours,

Atlantic Coast Conference
Peace & Justice Committee

Enclosures:

1. Service opportunity brochures from Mennonite Central Committee, Mennonite Mission Network, and Eastern Mennonite Missions
2. Christian Peacemaker Registration information and online resources (complete form at co.mcc.org/us/co)
3. Making Peace With Enemies; Ten Truths Christians Need to Know
4. Making Peace with Enemies brochure