

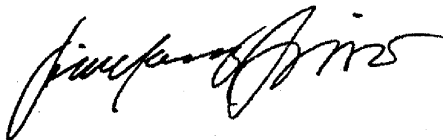
that same night. The Springfield Executive Committee will meet on October 4, and I will attend that meeting to follow up on issues raised in the congregational meeting. Next steps will be determined from there.

Second, ~~no other action by the district is required at this time. There has been no violation of polity. Some may feel that there is at least "policy" to be enforced in this matter. Under the present circumstances I will take no action against Kres Lipscomb or against the Springfield congregation, any more than I would take action against any pastor or congregation who would support military action in Iraq. This though the polity statement on war clearly condemns all war as sin, while polity—or policy—statements on homosexuality can at this point only be said to imply that homosexuality is a sin.~~

My counsel is to follow closely the progress of a query to Annual Conference that will come from the South/Central Indiana District. The query is in response to the situation in that district that resulted from the action of the Manchester Church of the Brethren to authorize their pastors to perform same-sex marriages. The central question of the query is how individuals and congregations can dissent from Annual Conference decisions. In other words, is there a way for us to be in unity when some of us must dissent from official polity on conscientious grounds? I trust that the discussion around this query will bring more clarity to how we can relate to each other with respect over such emotional issues as homosexuality and war.

Finally, just as with the Springfield congregation, I hold the rest of the district accountable to the task of maintaining unity as Brothers and Sisters in Christ engaged in a shared ministry. Let our communication around this and all issues be open, honest, and respectful. And let us take counsel from Paul Grout, speaking recently at the Southern Pennsylvania District Conference, who said that we must not find our unity in any one *issue*; nor must we let any one issue divide us; but we must first and foremost find our unity *in Christ*. So let us seek the mind of Christ in all things.

Your Brother in Christ,



Jim Yaussy Albright, District Minister