


NO TO TORTURE  
CONFERENCE/WORSHIP/PLENARY SESSION, A COMPILATION

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One of the participants in the Conference, Michelle Dennis wrote eloquently:

“I am a layperson with little formal education in theology. I have never been a political activist before. I confess to feeling a great deal of fear, despair and helplessness regarding our country's decisions about human rights. What can one person in a small town in the middle of the country do?

But then MIAMI! I understand better than ever before how important and POSSIBLE it is for me/you/us to DO something and MAKE A DIFFERENCE. I now have words to convey my belief in the necessity for humane treatment of all human beings. I/we now have connections to many people, from many different backgrounds and political philosophies, all of whom are in agreement with the error or torture and the rightness of humanity.

The ‘From Horror...Hope’ curriculum makes me feel empowered and hopeful. I know that while it may be small at first, I can do something important. Each of us can. And remember, avalanches begin with a small trickle of pebbles. Maybe I can not be an avalanche, but the conference in Miami convinced me that I can help get one started.”

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Michelle Dennis alludes to the curriculum available to teach issues related to torture. <http://www.no2torture.org/study/outofhorror.shtml> provides the free downloadable curriculum designed for either a single two hour session (50 pages) or five one hour sessions (104 pages).

"How do we talk about torture?" is also available online at [www.what-i-see.blogspot.com](http://www.what-i-see.blogspot.com) .

- ❖ “These atrocities were committed by people who went to church and by people who felt that they were protecting themselves and their country from subversives.”
- ❖ “‘The pleasure has been mine’, Daisy insisted”
- ❖ The worship services

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The movement to end torture is not new. The movement to end torture did not start with the people meeting at Abique's Ghost Ranch during the June 2005 Peacemaking Conference. PCUSA's web site, <http://www.pcusa.org/peacemaking/> points to Dr. Martin Luther King as a leader fighting torture by example:

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day  
January 16, 2006

The King Center reminds us that, "Martin Luther King, Jr. Day is not only for celebration and remembrance, education and tribute, but above all a day of service. All across America on the Holiday, his followers perform service in hospitals and shelters and prisons and wherever people need some help. It is a day of volunteering to feed the hungry, rehabilitate housing, tutoring those who can't read, mentoring at-risk youngsters, consoling the broken-hearted and a thousand other projects for building the beloved community of his dream."

Going on,

***"Cowardice asks the question - is it safe?  
Expediency asks the question - is it politic?  
Vanity asks the question - is it popular?  
But conscience asks the question - is it right?  
And there comes a time when one must take a position  
that is neither safe, nor politic, nor popular  
but one must take it because it is right."***

--- Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

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***San Francisco Presbytery voted this week to send  
[The Presbyterian Initiative Against Torture](http://www.calvarypresbyterian.org/Presbyteriansagainsttorture.php)  
( <http://www.calvarypresbyterian.org/Presbyteriansagainsttorture.php> )  
to the General Assembly.<sup>1</sup>***

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<sup>1</sup> copied from <http://www.no2torture.org/> January 15, 2006

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By George Hunsinger

Torture violates the basic dignity of the human person that all religions hold dear. It degrades everyone involved -- policy-makers, perpetrators and victims. It contradicts our nation's most cherished ideals. Any policies that permit torture and inhumane treatment are shocking and morally intolerable.

Torture and inhumane treatment have long been banned by U.S. treaty obligations, and are punishable by criminal statute. Recent developments, however, have created new uncertainties. By reaffirming the ban on cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment as well as torture, the McCain amendment, now signed into law, is a step in the right direction. Yet its implementation remains unclear.

The President's signing statement, which he issued when he signed the McCain Amendment into law, implies that the President does not believe he is bound by the amendment in his role as commander in chief. The possibility remains open that practices like water boarding (near drowning), induced hypothermia (prolonged chilling of the body), stress positions, sleep deprivation, sexual humiliation, and desecration of religious objects will continue.

Furthermore, in a related development, for the first time in our nation's history, legislation has now been signed into law that effectively permits evidence obtained by torture to be used in a court of law. The military tribunals that are trying some terrorist suspects are now expressly permitted to consider information obtained under coercive interrogation techniques, including degrading and inhumane techniques and torture.

We urge Congress and the President to remove all ambiguities by prohibiting:

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Exemptions from the human rights standards of international law for any arm of our government.

The practice of extraordinary rendition, whereby suspects are apprehended and flown to countries (e.g., Egypt, Syria, Uzbekistan) that use torture as a means of interrogation ("torture by proxy").

Any disconnection of "cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment" from the ban against "torture" so as to permit inhumane interrogation.

The existence of secret U.S. prisons around the world.

Any denial of Red Cross access to detainees held by our government overseas.

Any holding of detainees indefinitely without charges, without habeas corpus, and otherwise without due process.

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We also call for an independent investigation of the severe human rights abuses at U.S. installations like Guantanamo, Abu Ghraib, and Bagram Air Force Base in Afghanistan.

Nothing less is at stake in the torture abuse crisis than the soul of our nation. What does it signify if torture is condemned in word but allowed in deed? Any nation that fails to abolish cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment from its interrogations is approaching spiritual death. Let America abolish torture now -- without exceptions.

Initial Endorsers (partial) (institutions listed for identification purposes only)

Abdullahi Amhed An-Na'im, Emory Law School  
Fr. William Byron, Loyola College in Maryland  
Tony Campolo, Eastern Baptist University  
Sr. Joan Chittister, OSB  
William Sloane Coffin, Jr., senior minister, Riverside Church (NYC) (ret.)  
Robert Edgar, general secretary, National Council of the Churches of Christ  
Rabbi Amy Eilberg, Morei Derekh Training Program  
Mohamed Elsanousi, Islamic Society of North America  
Rabbi Edward Feld, Jewish Theological Seminary  
Barbara Green, director, Churches' Center for Theology and Public Policy  
Bishop Thomas Gumbleton, Pax Christi  
Stanley Hauerwas, Duke University  
Fr. David Hollenbach, S.J, director, Center for Human Rights and International Justice, Boston College  
Sr. Dianna Ortiz, director, Torture and Survivors Support Coalition  
Peter Paris, Princeton Theological Seminary  
Rabbi David Saperstein, director, Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism  
Hozan Alan Senauke, Buddhist Peace Fellowship  
Ron Sider, president, Evangelicals for Social Action  
John Thomas, president, United Church of Christ  
Glen Stassen, Fuller Theological Seminary  
Tarunjit Singh, secretary general, World Sikh Council  
Kathryn Tanner, University of Chicago  
Joe Volk, executive secretary, Friends Committee on National Legislation  
Rabbi Brian Walt, executive director, Rabbis for Human Rights  
Rabbi Arthur Waskow, director, Shalom Institute  
Jim Wallis, Sojourners  
Nicholas Wolterstorff, Yale University  
**Coordinator: George Hunsinger, Princeton Theological Seminary**

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**From a presentation given by Catherine Gordon:**

“Presbyterian ideology has an interdenominational focus”

“Our actions must not be based on fear or anger.”

“Martyrs and lone warriors are not acceptable options.”

“We are doing what we are called to do, ... talk everyday with who we see.”

“With regard to Iraq specifically, Congress is more ready to criticize administrative policy. The momentum is gaining to speak out against and counter the Patriot Act.”

“There is much to do. There are Presbyterians in Congress to reach further.”

“Historically, we (the U.S.A.) have been torturing for a very long time. Torture is not a new issue. Torture being talked about openly is new. As torture has recently been declared pseudo-legal by the presidency, there is less hope.”

“The directions to help combat torture include 1) Mission definition 2) Inquiry to the facts and 3) Educating citizens to the ill effects of torture.”

“The five point curriculum on torture is helping Christians understand the issues more.”

“The definitions themselves are fluid. ‘cruel and unusual’, ‘extraordinary rendition’, ‘closure of secret’ and ‘in the interest of national security’ tend to obscure torture where it exists.”

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**From a presentation given by Chaplain (Major General) Kermit Johnson, (Ret.)**

Note: The group felt that this presentation should be published, so it won't be available while that is being pursued. - Roy

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**From a presentation given by Gail Brown**

“We (defined to be you and me) are afraid of causes statistically. The problem is in letting people in authority know they are acting wrong. A ditto giving some detail of the court system was passed out. Briefly,

In Guantanamo Bay:

1. Haudi Vs. Rumsfeld - even U.S. citizens can be picked up and imprisoned on suspicion and imprisoned.
2. Resul vs. Bush - Non U.S. citizens have no access to the U.S. court system. There is no jurisdiction.
3. Rumsfeld vs. Padilla – A U.S. citizen held as an enemy combatant does not have access to a lawyer, a trial, visitation and may be held indefinitely with no charge formally made within two years

Hamden vs. Rumsfeld – If a ‘detainee’ is tortured, there is no recourse as the military tribunal is in charge. No civilian court has jurisdiction. There is no right to appeal unless the military tribunal sentences the detainee to life imprisonment or death and then only if the tribunal violated the U.S. constitution. It is an open question, ‘at what point has the constitution been violated?’ If the ‘detainee’ is the ‘worst of the worst’ give them their day in court! What are they afraid of? -Solicitor General Paul Clement asked the Supreme Court to dismiss an appeal by Salim Ahmed Hamdan, a terror suspect held at Guantanamo Bay. Hamdan is challenging the administration's plan to try him and others by military commission.

Question: What kind of limit does the U.S. President have to lock someone up and throw away the key?

Answer: There is a problem; civil right’s groups do not have access to prisons. There are no checks and balances. The ‘War Times Act’ was enacted during the Clinton Administration. It has been ruled the Geneva Convention does not apply.

In summation,

- A) Clergy must speak out
- B) Show support of the ‘no2torture’ movement by wearing an orange wrist band
- C) There is a legal problem in identifying torture as its definition stating ‘water boarding’ is not torture and there are many other ‘outs’ legislated to protect people in governmental service if they use torture. Leaders and prisoners alike are both in a law free zone from the two extremes of absolute power and absolutely no rights.

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**By Michael Spezio, Postdoctoral Scholar in Social Neuroscience, Caltech**

This presentation may be found on the no2torture website:  
[http://www.no2torture.org/come/miami06/torture\\_effects.ppt](http://www.no2torture.org/come/miami06/torture_effects.ppt)

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By Reverend Kirsten Klepfer, Pastor, Grinnell, Iowa

My theological concerns these days are directly influenced by my current situation – that of pastor in a small church in a small town in the middle of Iowa. I feel deeply the pain and horror of people in my congregation when they look at what is going on in the world, and I feel and share a sense of hopelessness or at least inadequacy in doing much more than letter writings, marches, and giving money. At our worst, we are paralyzed by the magnitude of need and suffering. My growing concern is that our theology and worship liturgy are inadequate to form us as a body that can actually change things.

Now, it is necessary that I briefly say more about my location and context in order to facilitate communication. First, for the sake of convenience, I will use the terms “we” and “our”, and in general what I mean is myself, many people in my congregation and many of the people I have encountered in Presbyterian churches that face the challenge of knowing that our faith calls us to address social injustice and feeling like we are so often spitting in the wind.

My hope today is to ask with you what the role of the church is and should be and what constitutes a theology that would compel the church to be what it is called to be. Given our particular reason for gathering, I want us to seriously ask what is our relationship to the state, to politics to our government because I think understanding that relationship is essential to exploring what theology lies behind how we go about responding to injustices committed by the state. This is probably more about ecclesiology than theology, although the former must grow out of the latter.

I only want to raise the questions, mostly because I don’t have any answers and I often feel convicted by my own thinking - and I want people to be with me in that pain. I also want to affirm what we are doing here which is building together a body of disciples able to stand against and witness against torture in meaningful and effective ways. But as we have gathered as Christians, I would like to wonder with you: What difference does it make that we are Christian when we think about how to respond, what to do and why? Is it different from gathering as any other kind of group?

**It is of course not possible for me to walk into church and ask that we give up everything, hit the road, walk into the most painful, marginalized areas of the world in service of some kind of idea that this is what God wants. . . . Yet every day, army recruiters walk into our high schools and ask just that of young people in service of the idea of the United States.**

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One answer to that question may be, quite simply, we are here because we are Christian and our faith compels us to figure out how to stop this. Our faith is the motivator and our context and culture determines our strategy for action. And that's undoubtedly reason enough, and I respect that. Where I run into trouble is in the area of hope. I wonder where, specifically, we locate our hope for addressing issues of justice in this world.

Let me set up a comparison:

The people I have found in the pews of churches – including myself – for the most part are willing to live as serious but ultimately domesticated disciples. Good people, who, by cultural standards, really do amazing things. They might give 10% of their income away, or write letters to their elected officials. They feel outrage at the injustices around us, build house for habitat for humanity, and much more. But, I think we are, as a corporate body – as the church large and small, still falling dramatically short of the radical life to which Jesus calls us and for good reason. What do we really expect of ourselves? It is of course not possible for me to walk into church and ask that we give up everything, hit the road, walk into the most painful, marginalized areas of the world in service of some kind of idea that this is what God wants. I, as a pastor, would be considered unrealistic, naïve, idealistic, and unemployed.

Yet every day, army recruiters walk into our high schools and ask just that of young people in service of the idea of the United States. And people, hundreds of thousands of people, have given up their lives as they know it – their jobs, families and homes – at least for a period of time, and walked smack dab into one of the most dangerous places in the world because their government has asked them to, and they have pledged allegiance to that government. Many have died in that service. That is powerful discipleship.

The heart of our theology is found in the heart of the Torah; what Jews would call the Shema – Adonai is our God, Adonai alone. You shall love Adonai your God with all your heart and all your soul and with all your might. This is, of course, repeated by Jesus as being the greatest commandment in the gospels.

The choice is present throughout the whole bible, and on down through history. Where is our allegiance? And what most threatens our allegiance to God alone? We know that we are willing to dedicate our lives to some things. And, when we do this, consciously or not, we become people serving those things to which we dedicate our lives. Capitalism, security, country, safety, comfort, you know the list. Then, when we are serving our gods and our lives are molded around them, those gods also become that to which you look for hope and salvation.

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Today, with the issue of torture before us and as we consider how we can continue to respond as Church, I think the question that confronts us is how does our claim of allegiance to God above all else, known in the life of Jesus, inform how we interact with the powers that torture or allow for torture or encourage or are complicit in any way. And where do we place our hope for change?

I worry that Christians of all political and theological persuasion run the risk of locating our hope in the state. Maybe we are tempted to do this because the church has so utterly failed in providing compelling visions and ideologies, where the state has at least been successful in amassing a strong sense of allegiance and loyalty to a concept or idea of the United States of America.

You could argue that the state has so exceeded the church in capturing the center of our lives that even those of us who recognize ways in which the state is in direct conflict with our values as Christians are left with only two choices – that of saying “no” to the state or of conceding. Said another way, we can either get the state to change or live with what we have. It is a model of the church always responding to the actions of our government. We work day and night, some of us, trying to get the government to do what we believe they should. We are aware of the power wielded by the United States over so many lives, and how urgent it is that we wield that power responsibly. For Christians, at our best and least selfish, we want our government and country to reflect God’s realm with Christ at the center. And I believe that our work to this end is an important part of Christian discipleship.

If our model for discipleship is Jesus, then what did his life look like in relationship to the secular political powers of his day? Jesus’ life, I think, was a sustained constant practice of voluntary dislocation. He made himself a beggar, walked the streets, ate with sinners, talked to prostitutes, hung out in places where the marginalized frequented, immersed himself with the ill. If we aren’t at least wondering if we should be doing the same as disciples in Christ, then we are neglecting something. But, is the message in Jesus’ life one that simply tells us how to act, who to help and what is right and wrong? It seems like the community of Jesus and his disciples were not just helping people on the margins from some “other location”, but God in Jesus and the disciples were living the realm of God right in the midst of the marginalized.

Is not the call of discipleship to live in such a way as to create an alternate reality – or if you believe in a sovereign God, maybe not create but witness to the alternate reality that God has already established among us. Jesus lived as if the kin-dom were real, and everyone around him including the state were so affected by his authority and power that they were forced to respond to him. That feels different to me than the treadmill we are

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on today. One question to ask of the gospels is “what difference did Jesus’ life make in terms of changing the systems and governments and politics of his time?” Another question we could ask is, “what was the response to the life, relationships and community Jesus was building?” When necessary, Jesus responded directly to power and spoke truth, and did so as one who lives with a different kind of power and authority. And, he could do this because of how he lived because he operated from within a different realm.

We stand in a long tradition of the question of Christ and Culture. Neibuhr re-invigorated the question within our particular American context 55 years ago. Currently, there is a large movement of Christian scholars and leaders that advocate what they call (strangely, I think) a post-liberal Christianity. Their critique – directed mostly at the liberal Christian church is that we have allowed, and maybe even encouraged, the church to be co-opted and subsumed by the political agenda. Stanley Hauer was/is probably the most visible of these writers – as visible as possible in this time when Christians are almost invisible – except when their faith is directly tied to or invested in the power of the state. I have struggled with his understanding of the church and the often confrontational nature of his writing. But, I think he is asking in some ways the question of where we locate our hope – again, the “we” being myself, my church and I think many liberal, protestant churches.

As a pastor, I am convicted by this. I think my ecclesiology is weak and that I do locate my hope in the civil society more than in the power of coming together as the body of Christ believing that that action is formative in and of itself and has the potential to create a subversive alternate reality. For example, the practice of communion in many churches has been reduced to an individualistic personal spiritual experience rather than a powerful act of re-creating the resurrected body of Christ that would be inherently intolerant toward any distortion of either the spiritual or physical body of Christ universal. I also wonder if I as a pastor neglect spiritual disciplines as a corporate body that when practiced over and over again actually shape and form the church “into” something powerful. This “something” may be a group of people motivated to act directly against the state when necessary. But cannot our very formation, our church liturgies, be a witness against other “liturgies” in our society? Other liturgies like shopping, seeking power, watching TV, etc. William Cavanaugh, a professor of theology at St. John’s University in St. Paul Minnesota, even calls torture a kind of perverted liturgy that forms social bodies into a kind of perverted community. And, he argues, our church liturgies are essential and necessary to counter such competing liturgies.

Cavanaugh is a practicing catholic who spent time in Chile in the 1980’s during Pinochet’s reign. He suggests that a faith that consists only of signs and indications and suggestions for what we should do in the “real” world utterly fails at standing against the

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practice of torture. He writes, “Liturgical symbols give Christians new ways to imagine power, and perhaps motivate them to commit to making the world a better place. Nevertheless, the problem with this view is that to enter the political is to leave the liturgical.”

I wonder if my church services, and maybe others like it, have become places where people go to learn what they should do, to be inspired to go out and act, but are not places where a new reality is established that is defiant and subversive to the reality created by our other liturgies in life. Our practices, even the ones we hope will change the world for the better, cannot simply participate in and mimic the practices of the state. We cannot create the body of Christ by making our churches look like shopping malls, and we cannot end torture by amassing enough political power to overthrow our government. Those very means to ends will shape us, and we will lose our ability to be a body that can speak truth to those powers.

I find this a compelling issue, if only because I feel despair when I “hope” that the political forces will change significantly. If I were honest, I would have to say I make a distinction between the religious and secular realms and then, I draw on my religion to buoy me up so that I can work in the secular realm to seek justice and peace as I understand those things. And I allow the politics to set the agenda and the terms of engagement. This is truly a confession. I don’t know if I trust the likes of Hauerwas and Cavanaugh who seem to actually believe that the church can be changed into something through worship and through liturgy. But what if I and those of us gathered here agree even a little bit. How would that change what we do, or add to what we do – as activists...Christian activists?

I think there are obviously issues and questions that arise in looking at church activism in this way. The most obvious one to me is that of exclusivity. If we trust our liturgy and Christian practices to create an alternate reality, where does that leave those who do not participate in our liturgy? How decidedly and singularly Christian do we even want to be in our work for justice and love in this world? If we claim allegiance only to Adonai, where does that place others who share the vision, passion and integrity to the same principles of our faith? What is our responsibility toward this issue and how do our actions affect the reality for good or bad for non-Christians? Another question that arises for me is what would this shift in hope mean or rather encourage in terms of our political action and participation? Would we be encouraging, with such a theology/ecclesiology, people to give up on the political process and advocacy?

I believe strongly not just in the effectiveness, but the necessity of engaging directly our government, participating in the political process in ways that grow directly out of faith

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and faith convictions. But I am feeling an increasing sense of urgency in exploring the potential of our Christian disciplines and practices in and of themselves as being the most hopeful possibility for creating another reality into which all can enter and experience a different way of living. That reality could spread and create entire spheres where actions like torture are intolerable because of the very reality constituted by such a gathered body. If communion is the re-membering of the body of Christ, torture would be the ultimate distortion and the direct inverse of that reality.

To borrow a term from the labor movement, worship and specifically the practice of communion can be an ongoing practice of “organizing” the church – organizing into the body of Christ. That body would necessarily and by definition operate under different terms and practices than the terms and practices of civil society. We would “be” in the world an alternate reality that by our very existence challenges bodies formed by other “liturgies” – liturgies that inevitably lead to the distortion of God’s realm and justice.

I will suggest one small way in which I might be able to move toward this kind of radical trust in the power of Church practice. That is in the area of voluntary dislocation. This, I think, needs to be a constant practice of the church body, and not just as a means to effect change for other people. But, I think choosing to locate ourselves in places of discomfort actually changes who and what we are. We need to do this as churches, not just individuals. We can and should do things as individuals. But this practice should be a liturgy of the church – a ritual of formation. And possibly the very act of communion is in some ways a choice of voluntary dislocation because it is so contrary to the known, comfortable and self-serving liturgies of society.

This is the life we see lived by Jesus and his band of congregants. In terms of torture, I think we begin to do this when we face the truth of what it is, that it happens, and read accounts of victims in order to get a small, small taste of their suffering. And we must do this together...as church. We choose, in whatever ways we can, to literally “be” with them. “Be” in both the physical and ontological sense of being the body of Christ in the midst. And to be, in the face of seemingly unmitigated power in the state, the reconstituted body, that does not tolerate the liturgy of torture. Maybe it would be, in its very reality, enough to demand a response from the powers that be, and force people, societies and systems to choose between the liturgies of death and the reality of life. So, we just need to figure out how to do that...

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From Rev Edward T. Brogan, Dmin  
Director: Presbyterian Council for Chaplains

**Army Ended Abuse Probe Early**

Associated Press | January 13, 2006

WASHINGTON - The Army closed a criminal investigation of abuse allegations by an Iraqi detainee last year, finding no reason to believe his claims, even though no Americans involved in the case were questioned, according to Pentagon records made public Thursday.

Internal Army documents about the Iraqi's capture on Jan. 4, 2004, and his subsequent interrogation at an unspecified facility at or near Baghdad International Airport were not reviewed, the records show, because investigators were told they had been lost in a computer malfunction.

The Iraqi, whose full name was blacked out in the documents by U.S. censors, is described as a relative of a former bodyguard for Saddam Hussein.

The detainee alleged that he was kicked in the stomach once and punched in the spine once by his interrogators. He said he was placed in front of a window air conditioner after being stripped naked and having a bag placed over his head. Cold water was poured over the bag every few minutes, he said, and he was dragged around a room by his arm.

The investigation records were among thousands of pages of records released by the American Civil Liberties Union, which obtained them from the Defense Department as part of a Freedom of Information request.

Army spokesman Paul Boyce said more than 500 investigations have been conducted on allegations of detainee abuse and that so far at least 251 military members have been court-martialed or given other forms of punishment.

"This effort by the U.S. Army Criminal Investigation Command demonstrates the Army's continuing and tireless commitment to investigate any allegation of detainee abuse by any unit or soldier, and to locate possible witnesses to allegations of detainee abuse," he said.

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The documents include numerous references to investigators being blocked from a thorough investigation, yet the matter was closed a final time on June 17, 2005, by the Army Criminal Investigation Command.

An April 8, 2005, report, for example, said an Army investigation unit had been unable to fully investigate 23 criminal cases "due to the suspects and witnesses involvement in Special Access Programs and/or the security classification of the unit they were assigned to during the offense." Special Access Programs are highly classified activities such as Task Force 6-26, which was hunting high-value targets like insurgent leaders.

A Feb. 26, 2005, report said that even though the Iraqi who made the abuse allegations had given a detailed description of the interpreter who was present, as well as others, "no effort was made to identify and interview the interrogators and screening personnel who were working" at the screening facility.

A report two weeks earlier said, "The only names identified by this investigation were determined to be fake names utilized by the capturing soldiers," yet it added that "necessary requirements" of the probe had been met.

"Hell, even if we reopened it we wouldn't get any more information than we already have," it concluded.

The records indicate that the Iraqi was captured in a house in Tikrit, Saddam's home town, and screened by members of Task Force 6-26. They also indicated that the probe was impeded in part by the fact that Task Force members involved in captures of detainees had been authorized to use fake names.

The case was initially closed Oct. 27, 2004, about three months after it was opened. A memo explaining the decision said records to refute or substantiate the alleged abuses "could not be located," adding that this result "did not diminish the integrity or credibility of (the) allegation" by the unidentified detainee.

Even so, the memo said, investigators said continuing the investigation "would be of little or no value and leads remaining to be developed would not impact on the investigative findings of this investigation."

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Four months later the probe was reopened after a review concluded that the investigation was flawed. Commenting on the absence of documentation, the review said the "'lost records' explanation is unacceptable" - referring to the assertion that records had been lost in a computer glitch.

"The bottom line is this detainee's circumstances were rather unique, due to his relationship to another high-value detainee," the review said. "Because of this relationship, the interrogators would have prepared and submitted a report to higher echelons."

In an indication that superiors were kept informed, one of the investigation documents released Thursday noted that investigators had been instructed to provide an update "concerning the conduct of our investigation" to Maj. Gen. Geoffrey Miller, who was in charge of detainee operations in [Iraq](#) from March-December 2004.

Also Thursday:

-Military officials said Miller had declined to answer questions in two courts-martial cases involving the use of dogs during interrogations at the detention center at the U.S. naval base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. Miller commanded that facility from November 2002 to March 2004.

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Overall notes from Rick's computer:

From Deb. Bowsher

Notes on Group Check in Discussion

1/7/2006

**Young Adult Group:**

There are several objectives (Megan speaker) and ways to get there.

Main goal is to work individually to speak to them and motivate them "A Passion for Action" Educating and Mobilizing Communities for daily Living and responsibility"

Recognizing Young Adult's work best in local communities, we hope to get other young adults to write letters and make calls to legislators and focus life on how we live each day. Good ways for Young Adults' to do this are:

1. To use Internet YONg Group Space Book
2. My Space net groups also use cell phones to communicate with each other
3. Developing a Young Adult No2Torture website for Young Adults to post ways to mobilize people in their own communities.

**College Group**

No college students at the group meeting are Presbyterians at this point but Mark Koenig will fix this. (ha ha). We wish to focus on campuses to demonstrate projects to gather various campus constituencies. We will work through Peace Week at campus to key note this week with Michael Spezio. Feb 20-24 is the week for this to happen. This college group will seek pragmatic ways to respond, gather information and support this Peace Week. This group hopes to use issues discussed this 36 hours as a rallying point.

**Military Group**

(Ed Brogan spoke). Enough ideas for next six hours were generated. Two paths were developed:

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1. Focus on torture and peace is of deep concern for members and families of military personnel in congregations. We can reach through PCUSA chaplains to send information pieces like Michael Spezio's power point presentation but also we need to discover how to reach into this more fully:
  - Scientific v pastoral responses. We want to send letter to chaplains seeking permission to continue contact and open dialog with them. This effort will be open to everyone attending this conference!
  - Host workshops as seminaries, synod and GA meetings that teach people how to support their military. Also find ways to interface with local congregations in other denominations.
  - Have Seminary Days that teach seminarians and others for not just active duty but for reservists also as reservists do not have the same debriefing mustering out of service opportunities of 'regular' military service people.
  - Get articles into PT more care for churches through n2t.org.
  - We are urged us to look at MBVB.org to see how to care for congregations and military persons in faithful manner.
  - Suggest look to work with Stephen Ministries website and Executive Presbyters websites to offer them support and learn from them (Stephen ministries has wonderful training already.)
  - Useful to place overt statement that says what we have been saying about standing clearly against torture and also standing for support of military on website n2t make sure it says this is not about being for or against war and open page that allows people to offer their support for this effort... electrons are cheap.
  - Link no2torture web site with PCUSA site so they can cross ref n2t per Mark Koenig offer.

**Congregational Constituency Group:**

(Cara speaks) Ideas include:

- Have a resource in communities to educate people where
  - People of faith may obtain information on issues relating to torture
  - Help people recognize we are less secure when torture is being used
  - Use local radio station add campaigns
  - Talk with editors of local papers so they can write about torture in a more favorable light – if they know you, they will see your value.
  - Go to community boards

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- Go to the state and federal representatives expressing our views on torture
- Set up petitions in congregational website
- Use door to door solicitations as a method to get signatures on these petitions(in pairs works better than being along generally).
- Host workshops at local level on the torture issue using this conference as a model
- Recognize we are serving Jesus Christ & all is subservient to His Will that we constantly strive to understand and act on.

**Issues Rick sees coming** forward from these groups.

1. How to stay connected
  - a. Use web site and related tools to lift up aspects of concern
  - b. How can we model this conversation across country?
    - i. Will lit play in Peoria and LA?
    - ii. See if we can do something in other areas.
    - iii. Carol will give 10 hrs a week to get these going
    - iv. Try to replicate our experience around country.
  - c. On 3 March 2006 a presbytery is focusing on peacemaking is there someone who can speak on this in Missouri? Mark Koenig might be able to do this.

**EVALUATION**

Affirmations. What should be carried forward...

Simplicity do it on a shoestring no hotels etc.

High level of information from speakers quality gives us grounded feeling

Ability to discuss questions that are deeply meaningful for us. That we were willing to discuss these things is good.... As is willingness to share divergent points without conflict

Appreciate different talents and hearing about different things in faith communities all over. Also just meeting each other

Wide range of age and experiences in group

Prayers of confession were essential to what we are trying to do here.

Feels good about being a Presbyterian.

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Appreciate passion that we exhibit – it's energizing

Worship elements help us remember who we are and why we are here.

Appreciate Christian events and the welcome they have received.

Appreciates theology and ability of keeping us on task - Ricks gift

Willingness of church hosts to allow us in

Thankful for the music it allows us to bridge between each section of Megan's work

Welcome of all to friend from Morocco.

Helps for next time:

Comments from Ed were helpful, but he hopes to have more military here next time

Written directions on maps next time

More outward show for public keep us where we can be seen

Emphasize public witness or not????? How do we keep it safe for military but still in the public eye is an issue.

Cheap place to fly into is good.

Audio or videotape this next time... Have speakers donate them.

Invite more local people get presbyteries to participate

Are there torture survivors who are willing to speak next time that would be good...

Dianna Austin is survivor as is Maurice from el Salvadore

Moderator was able to get through weekend without newsprint.

Opportunity to sleep in sanctuary was wonderful no cost is imperative for most of us.

Showers would have been nice

Michelle is here – Clerk of Session will open SERVV shop here at church for us.

Native Miamian is willing to guide us towards places to visit if we are staying and Laura will ensure safety of luggage.

Kirsten needs people to get in touch with drivers to know who's on first.

Worship will close us in peace.

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Carol Wickersham who was instrumental in planning and making this gathering possible perhaps summed up the conference in an email: “. . . Again, I hope others who participated will share their reflections with the group, and always I hope you will keep posting articles that you find and most especially share how you and others are organizing around this issue in your area. We need to set many fires to let people know that the light still shines in the darkness.”

Indeed, a model that has been established in Miami can be duplicated in Presbyteries and Congregations and wherever groups of people can meet to express their need to be humane to other human beings.