



Newsletter

Choosing a logic of peace – Annual General Meeting 2016

Leaving behind the concept of "just war" – Roman Catholics on the way back to non-violence

Resisting the temptation of violence – a visit to Kosovo/a and Serbia



Credit: Margrit Kruber-Arnold

Choosing a logic of peace over security

Church and Peace AGM 2016

What does it mean to "live secure" in today's Europe? This question was in the spotlight at Church and Peace's Annual General Meeting (AGM) in 2016.

Meeting 10-12 June at the Loisy Centre near Paris, the network affirmed its commitment to building true security through nonviolence rooted in a spirituality of peace. And underlined this with a vigil at the Eurosatory arms fair the following week.

We could not have predicted during planning last year just how relevant the AGM theme - "...and they shall live secure" from the book of Micah - and meeting place - mere kilometres from the Stade de France, where three suicide bombers struck during the November 2015 attacks - would be, Chair Antje Heider-Rottwilm said in welcoming the AGM participants.

The question of security was front and centre in France and the many places the members had travelled through to reach the AGM, but peace and security were often confused, she noted, quoting Dietrich Bonhoeffer's words of 1934: "There is no way to peace on the way to security."

Working for true security

Some 80 network members from 14 European countries, including Albania, Croatia, Kosovo/a, Macedonia and Serbia, talked about the impact of security-related issues on their lives and work in recent months, and shared about nonviolent responses:

- Theological reflection on the link between language and politics
- Promoting the shift to a just peace concept at the institutional level of the Church

- Inter-religious dialogue
- Support for Christian-Muslim peace building
- Welcoming refugees
- Programmes to challenge racism and exclusion, and prevent extremism
- Campaigns against the arms trade

Particularly striking was the decision of the Belgian association Sortir de la Violence to remain open to others by going ahead with a planned training course in Brussels the day after the terrorist attacks.

Living secure

Questions of security are not new for Church and Peace, with past conferences focusing on the concept of "common human security" and the "responsibility to protect" civilians at risk of genocide and similar violence.

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Church and Peace

A European ecumenical network of peace churches, and peace-church oriented congregations, communities and service agencies.

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Credit: Olivera Savić

"And they will live securely..." (Micah 5,3)

Dear Friends of Church and Peace,

We chose Micah's promise a year ago as the motto for our Annual General Meeting in Loisy near Paris in June of this year, because we wanted to concern ourselves with theological and nonviolent alternatives to military concepts of security. We had no idea that this subject would be so timely in France, in Europe, and in a world in crisis. The input from Maria Biedrawa, Christine Schweitzer, and Neal Blough, relating both to spirituality and to the politics of peace, was all the more thoughtful and challenging. The subsequent press release hopefully stimulated the interest of many of our friends; the texts of the contributions to the conference can be found on the Church and Peace website.

It was encouraging to receive three applications for membership at the AGM: an individual application from Novi Sad; an application for corporate membership from the Swiss Anabaptist Forum for Peace and Justice; and an application for associate membership from the Evangelical Church in Baden, Germany. With every individual, every group, and every church the network grows and becomes stronger!

And visits to members strengthen our togetherness too (Southeastern Europe report), as does news of renewal in the Roman Catholic Church.

See <http://bit.ly/29AYy54> for press releases.

As a pan-European peace church network we are not only concerned with the EU. However, we do follow carefully the discussions and decisions of European (i.e. EU) institutions. Do they contribute to a reduction in the level of violence globally? Can we detect a paradigm shift towards peacebuilding through nonviolent conflict management? In this connection, in March, we expressed strong support for the decisions of the European Parliament regarding restrictions on arms exports.

We also reacted to the decision regarding mutual aid following the terrorist attacks and to the new foreign and security strategy of the EU which was published recently by presenting our own understanding of a "strong and secure" Europe as an alternative – security in terms of social justice, upholding human rights, sustainable development, welcome and protection for people who are at risk, fair relationships with other regions throughout the world and a comprehensive and rigorous strengthening of civilian conflict management!

All this is underlined by the encouraging message of the conference: Micah's promise means: Let everyone live in security! May this newsletter provide you with stimulating reading.

Warm greetings!

Anje Heider-Rotholz

Choosing a logic of peace over security

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Keynote speaker Dr Christine Schweitzer said a paradigm shift was needed from the prevailing logic of security to a logic of peace. There can only be security when there is security for all, based on justice and achieved through nonviolence.

Spiritual security

The biblical model of emotional and spiritual security meant finding a way to transform the paralysing sense of powerlessness when the only response seems to be violence, noted nonviolence trainer Maria Biedrawa of the French branch of the International Fellowship of Reconciliation.

Welcoming powerlessness and its limits and confusions, and realising that security is to be found in God alone, opens a door to a "Holy Land" where nonviolence can be born and right relationships formed.

Required: spiritual discipline

Christian peacemakers needed spiritual roots for nonviolent

action, Dr Neal Blough of the Paris Mennonite Center underlined in his sermon exploring Matthew 5:38-45 and Ephesians 6:13-18.

What we need to resist was not humans but the "forces of evil" that manifest themselves in structures and in relationships, and our weapons were not to be found at Eurosatory, he reminded AGM participants.

"Practicing and having spiritual discipline is not a luxury but a necessity in a world with no security in sight," said Dr Blough. "To confront our lack of security we have to put down deep spiritual roots and cultivate trust."

Visit www.church-and-peace.org for AGM resources and photos.

Terri Miller



Credit: Margrit Kruber-Arnold

Dr. Neal Blough

AGM Highlights

- Support for an ecumenical call to the UN to declare all war and armed conflict illegal, and to develop a civilian peacekeeping service
- New corporate member: Anabaptist Forum for Peace and Justice, Switzerland
- New associate member: Evangelical Church in Baden, Germany
- New individual member: Olivera Savic from Novi Sad, Serbia
- New Administrative Committee member: Vjollca Racaj, Fellowship of the Lord's People, Kosovo/a

Get Involved!

Did you know 2016 is the 100th anniversary of the recognition of the right to conscientious objection to military service? Highlight this milestone by becoming a war tax resister!



Credit: Margrit Kruber-Arnold

(left to right) Keynote speakers Christine Schweitzer and Maria Biedrawa, Chair Antje Heider-Rottwilm.

Vigil at Eurosatory

People from all over Europe came together in a witness for peace at the entrance to the Eurosatory arms fair outside Paris, 13-17 June. During the three days 12,000 leaflets were given out, discussions took place with visitors to the world's largest exhibition of land-based weaponry, and people prayed together.

"This is where wars begin. That's why we're here and why we want to engage in dialogue with the people who come to this arms fair"

Andrew Lane, Quaker Council on European Affairs staff member

Quakers have been organising these vigils for quite a few years now. They have been a relatively small group. This year they were joined by 35 participants of the Church and Peace Annual General Meeting which was intentionally held in the Paris region. "For me it was the best conference so far. First we engaged in intensive theological and political discussion around the theme of security.

And then we went out and took part in this action together," said a member of Church and Peace from Serbia. "Because supplying more weapons to areas of conflict doesn't contribute to security."

On the first day there were protests not only at the arms fair but also outside the stock exchange in the centre of Paris. It is unacceptable for people to make money out of weapons and warfare. Other people suffer the consequences: death or injury, and human suffering resulting from the destruction of entire regions and growing waves of refugees. Precisely because they work to support refugees in their own societies, many of the participants want to engage in dialogue at a major source of the problems which cause people to flee.

It was astonishing how easy it actually was to get into a friendly discussion. Not everyone who is sent to Eurosatory by the company they work for is happy about it. A Syrian man said that he and his family had fled to another Arab country because of the war. He now works for a firm which provides water treatment systems



and also supplies military camps in areas of conflict. He was drawn into a discussion because one of the protesters asked the "arms dealers" streaming out of the station, "Is anyone interested in a cheap, tried and tested concept of security?"

This question is the basis for our commitment. How can we organise security for everyone – not just for the rich countries of the global North? Christian activists have been working for peace through justice and mutual respect long before the attacks of the past few months in Nigeria, Iraq, Bangladesh, Pakistan and many other countries as well as in Europe.

The arms dealers were no longer faceless. Some of us were identified by passers-by who said with a smile, "Oh, look! There are the pacifists!" We too must show our faces, be prepared to answer awkward questions, and persist in telling people about our vision of a world in which everyone can live together and enjoy security, justice and equality. We can do that every two years in Paris and in many other places as well, especially wherever we happen to live.

Davorka Lovreković

More information is available at <https://stopfuellingwar.org/>.



Credits: Olivera Savić

Leaving behind the concept of “just war”

Roman Catholics on the way back to nonviolence

Should we become atheists in order to understand that nuclear arms do not fit with the gospel and Christian faith? Or should we be agnostics to understand that any war is a mistake, that it is a lie – because war destroys what it claims to defend?

Such provocative questions were heard at the conference on “Nonviolence and just peace: a contribution to Catholic understanding and a commitment to nonviolence”, which took place on the invitation of the Pontifical Council for Justitia et Pax and Pax Christi International from 11 to 13 April in Rome.

The conference brought together 85 people from all over the world. Most of them are active in working for peace and human rights, and have a rich fund of knowledge about theology and peace theory. Priests and bishops, the members of Justitia et Pax are important for the support of nonviolent strategies in the work of the Roman Catholic Church. One of them was Bishop Bettazzi, one of the few remaining bishops who was at the Second Vatican Council, who radiates the spirit of Vatican II as he struggles for a church seeking justice.

Nonviolence is on its way back again in the work of the Roman Catholic Church. It is not a matter of inventing something new but of returning to the sources – to the experience of the early church. This means doing without the concept of “just war”, a concept which does not achieve its purpose

of controlling war but instead has often served to legitimise it. Two basic aspects of nonviolence were represented at the conference: nonviolence as forming trust and relationships, and non-violence as the struggle for justice, a catalyst to bring conflicts into the open, a strategy of resistance against injustice.

Several participants, above all priests and laypeople from Africa, had been living in circumstances of direct violence for decades. They stressed how important it was to build trust again and find strategies for nonviolent action based on dialogue or the readiness

to dialogue. It was shattering to listen to the victims of abductions who underline their trust of every person, even to those who took them hostage. They bore witness

to the fact that their attitude of loving the enemy, encouraged by the example of Jesus’ humanity, had saved them from mortal

danger. This attitude appealed to the humanity of their opponents. They were convinced that even among enemies there must be individuals willing to enter into dialogue. In their experience, dialogue begins not with the perpetrators themselves but with victims of violence, particularly women.

"It is not a matter of inventing something new but of returning to the sources – to the experience of the early church"

Ana Raffai in conversation with Jozef Felix, Belgium (Pax Christi International) and Rose Marie Berger, USA (Sojourners)



Credit: Ana Raffai

"It is crucial that all those involved in social change should participate"

Some participants stressed that nonviolence was more than "not killing" and that condemning war was not enough to abolish war. Nonviolence is also a strategy in countering injustice, developing resistance strategies and methods of action. Dialogue is often no longer possible in the context of social injustices and it is not good – when thinking about nonviolence – to restrict it to dialogue. Sometimes nonviolent actions can create the necessary pressure to enable dialogue. In order to realise nonviolent alternatives, we leave the concept of just war behind us. That involves no longer using the term. It also means promoting ideas about nonviolence in educational situations, primarily in religious education, and enabling people to take nonviolent action.

French philosopher Jean-Marie Muller said that the world is ready to accept the nonviolent alternative. Maria Stephan's research shows that nonviolent strategies are a successful model for action. It is crucial that all those involved in social change should participate. Everyone should ask the basic question regarding nonviolent action: what kind of person would I

like to become thanks to this change? The goal of nonviolent resistance to injustice is to awaken humanity in every person. This nonviolent vision is founded on the understanding that everyone wants to be seen, heard and loved. From human encounter, inspired by Jesus, grows nonviolent change, which is always a free decision. This decision makes it clear what God we believe in, the *Dieu des armées* (God of armies) or a *Dieu désarmé* (unarmed God). Muller humorously calls the confusion about the admission of violence in the Christian context a "spelling mistake".

Social changes call for new theologies and approaches to peace. The latest research shows the weakness of the R2P (responsibility to protect) concept, i.e. the moral obligation to defend the victims of violence with the use of force. Instead, the accompanying concept is to be developed, that of support through presence with the victims, so that the victims of violence are strengthened in their resistance, e.g. in Mexico or Colombia. Although the extent of violence is immense, the victims call for the immediate end to all violence, which they hope to achieve through their nonviolent resistance.

The powerful effect of the Rome conference derived from the participants, who were resolved

to continue with their nonviolent activity. They gathered in order to change the paradigm of their strong church: away from a just war towards active nonviolence. With their well-founded enthusiasm for nonviolence they are endeavouring to "infect" Catholics all over the world. The final declaration of this conference is a real tool: an occasion for dialogue, in particular with representatives of the institutional church. The peace-builders are also willing to engage in dialogue and have formed an open working group that will continue the work.

The final statement can be downloaded at <http://bit.ly/29UKIYA>

Ana Raffai

Ana, nonviolence trainer and individual member of Church and Peace, attended the conference in Rome.

"The goal of nonviolent resistance to injustice is to awaken humanity in every person"



Credit: Martin König

Nonviolence in the face of Boko Haram

Peace prize awarded to Nigerian church and Christian-Muslim initiative

As a peace church we fight violence with love and believe that this is the right path," affirms Ephraim Kadala, pastor in the Kadala der Ekklesiyar Yan'uwa a Nigeria (EYN), a church that emerged from mission work of the North American Church of the Brethren in northern Nigeria.

But answering questions about love of enemy in the time of Boko Haram is not an easy task for the pastor.

Before, there were 63 EYN church districts. Now, only six are left. Two-thirds of the members have fled, seeking safety in camps for internally displaced persons (IDP) or with friends and family. Many people have disappeared – of the 276 schoolgirls abducted in 2014 by Boko Haram, 178 were members of EYN. Pastor Kadala knows many of them.

Yet, in the face of terrorism, flight and kidnap, the members of this peace church are steadfastly dialoguing and building peace

together with their Muslim neighbours.

Since 2010 EYN has been a part of the Christian and Muslim Peace Initiative (CAMPI), which runs programmes such as peace camps at high schools, and conflict resolution and trauma healing seminars in the IDP camps as well as other locations. They also help meet people's material needs, regardless of their faith.

To strengthen and encourage them on this path of costly discipleship, the German Mennonite Peace Committee awarded EYN and CAMPI its Michael Sattler Peace Prize on 20 May 2016.

Before receiving the award, Pastor Kadala and a member of CAMPI shared about their work with different churches, peace groups and mosques in Germany.

Read more at <http://bit.ly/2aca57E>.

Events

Britain and Ireland Regional Day

"And they shall live secure"
(Micah 5,4)

This Church and Peace Britain and Ireland day of reflection and discussion will look at what makes us secure, and what makes us insecure, and how the churches can play a prophetic role in building true security in the region today.

29 October, Bull Street Quaker Meeting House, Birmingham, UK

Information and registration (by 20 October): Barbara Forbes - forbesbarbarae@yahoo.co.uk



German-language Regional Conference

"And they lacked for nothing"
– *Reflecting on Economics and Justice*

The German-language regional conference will focus on questions of economic justice, including links to refugee flows, terrorism and war. We'll look at biblically-based economic principles and alternative economic models.

25-27 November, Thomashof, Karlsruhe, Germany

Information and registration (by 17 September): Brigitta Albrecht – brigitta.a@dmfk.de



Resisting the temptation of violence

Report on a visit to Kosovo/a and Serbia

We received a warm welcome from the congregation of the "Fellowship of the Lord's People" - six months after they hosted the international conference of Church and Peace. Vjollca Racaj¹ made time to show us something of her work as a youth worker and as project

coordinator of the "House of Hope" for Roma families. We were able to observe some children's activities which were organised and run by ten young people under her supervision.

We talked afterwards with some young people about the possibilities for youth work in a somewhat radical Muslim context. The legal system in Kosovo/a is still only weakly developed, so the country is a paradise for international terrorism. There are some glimmers of hope: A planned attack on the Dečani/Deçan monastery was discovered beforehand and prevented, and a man from Peć/Peja was arrested for money laundering for IS.

At the next stop on our journey, Gjakova/Djakovica, we spent most of our time visiting Jeton Sokoli and the congregation which he leads. The church runs a café opposite the bus station. That's where the life of the congregation happens. Together with Jeton we made a short visit to the Serbian Orthodox sisters who are the only Serbs left in the town. They have to have police protection.

We were especially moved by a visit to the Roma settlement where Jeton teaches English to children and youth as part of a social inclusion project. A young woman showed us the centre where classes are held and also showed us round the village. As we walked round we were surrounded by cheerful adults and children. We met people who spoke German everywhere we went and this was



¹ Vjollca Racaj was elected to the Church and Peace Administrative Committee in June 2016.

*Visit to a
Roma settlement*

no exception. These people have already tried to take their fate into their own hands, only to be deported. How are we changed by this visit?

After a brief stop in the Dečani/Dečan monastery, we arrive in Gorazdevac/Gorazhdevc. Our host, Sasa, wants to show us, before sunset, some sites which are of historical significance to Serbs. He tells us about the violent attacks which make life difficult. Nevertheless, he and his NGO work together with a local radio station which tries to make the voice of the Serbian population heard and promotes inter-ethnic cooperation and democracy. He showed us a very old wooden church and gravestones which were several centuries old. He sees no future for himself here. The life of Serbs in this place will soon be consigned to history. The grief is etched into his face.

Back in Pristina we were able to reflect on and talk about everything that we had experienced. The young people are often disaffected with those with political power, because they just want to be Kosovar. They want to get away from thinking in ethnic categories. There is a growing awareness that separation, including the separation from Serbia, has brought disadvantages, especially where the economy is concerned. New ways have to be found to tackle unemployment. Some people are thinking, for example, about re-introducing Serbian classes, because

understanding is only possible when people speak a common language.

We had already asked Vjollca, before our visit, whether she would like to travel with us from Pristina to Belgrade to visit the Church and Peace members there. Vjollca had agreed, so we travelled to Belgrade on the night bus and arrived on Monday morning in time for worship at Bread of Life. This was Vjollca's first visit to Serbia. She was deeply moved when, during the worship, she heard the tune of a song which she knew and loved from her own church. "I'm very blessed," she said during the welcoming after the worship, "to be able to meet Serbs in Serbia!"

And once again a visit to a Roma project – in Sorin, just outside Belgrade – made a great impression on us. Here it has been possible to enable children to complete secondary education and students are now going on to university for the first time. A member of the project staff said of the project and its future: "It isn't enough just to have great enthusiasm. One has to build solid foundations."

In the evening two days before we left, we attended the launch of a book about Semun, a city near Belgrade. Marijana Ajzenkol, who has been associated with Church and Peace for many years, was one of the authors and had written about her experiences of interfaith work. The event included many musical contributions, so it was an inspiring occasion even for



those of us who didn't understand Serbian.

*Roma children
at a playgroup
session*

We travellers from Germany felt richly blessed by all our encounters. The wounds of war and expulsion still run deep. At the same time we marvel at the power of faith which overcomes national, ethnic, and religious barriers. Such encounters stimulate the imagination and the courage which we need to overcome spiritual and material deprivation and to hold up an invitation to compassion as an antidote to the temptation of violence.

***Ernst von der Recke,
together with Christa Walny
and Stephan Hünninger***

Netherlands

Identity not terrorism

Corporate member Kerk en Vrede (Dutch International Fellowship of Reconciliation) is heading off extremism among technical college students.

Through the programme "Show Your Struggle," the students – often Muslim or from immigrant backgrounds – explore their identity and what they want their place to be in Dutch society.

They learn to challenge racism, discrimination, and oppression without resorting to violence.

IFOR intends to export the programme to Belgium, Germany, and the UK.

Credit: Lucas Johnson



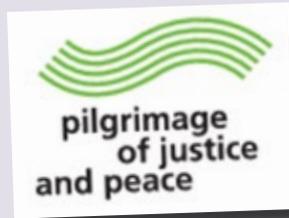
Germany

Pilgrims at home

It's possible to be a pilgrim without leaving home, corporate member Weierhof Mennonite Church learned at its annual Bible seminar in 2016.

Reflecting with Mennonite theologian Fernando Enns, they realised they were on a pilgrimage of justice and peace with refugees coming to their village. They've integrated individual hospitality into congregational life through updates, prayer and support.

"We saw how the [World Council of Churches'] theme is very close to our lives," a member reported.



France/Syria

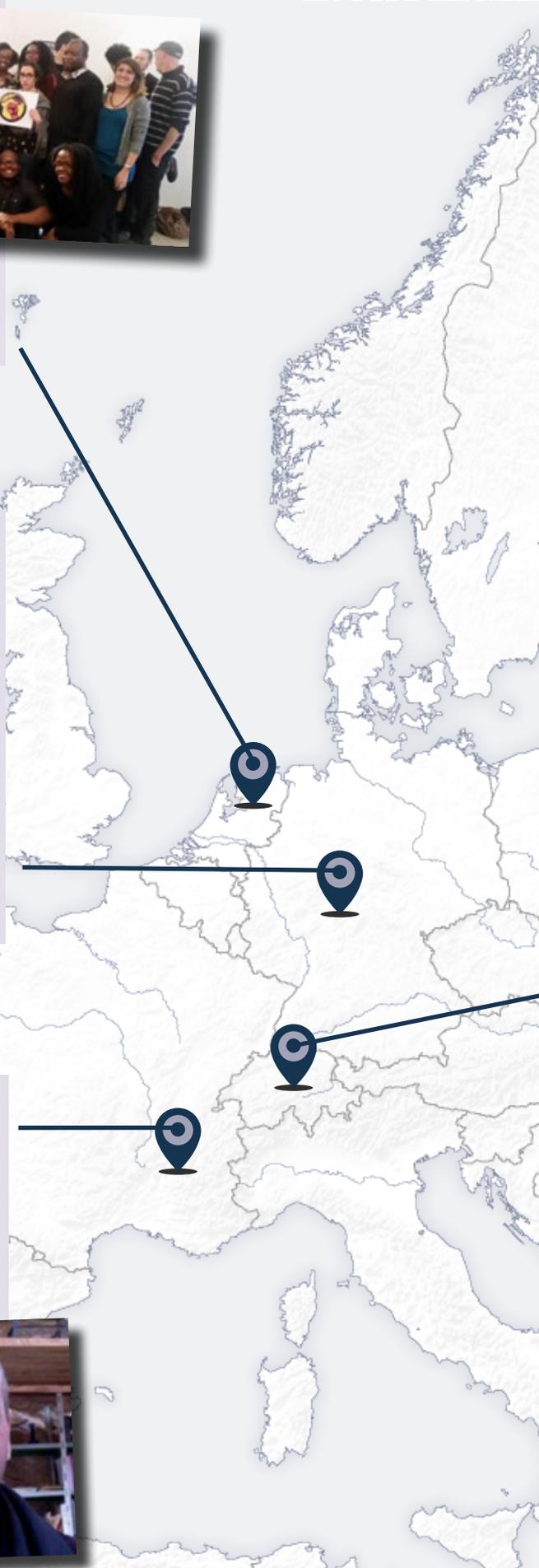
Love of enemy in practice

Bernard Dangeard, member of the Community of the Ark serving on the Administrative Committee, has lifted up an inspiring story of love of enemy.

In an article by Lebanese daily *L'Orient-Le Jour*, Fr Jacques Mourad, abbot of the Mar Elian monastery in Syria, tells how he used the challenge of his ISIS captors to see his experience as a hostage as a "spiritual exercise" to find a path out of fear and inner turmoil to prayer for those who were holding his life in the balance.

Fr Jacques's testimony is available in French at <http://bit.ly/293wZz8>.

Credit: © Fr. Ziad Hittal/ACN



the Network

Europe

Nonviolence Works! available in German

Fünfundfünfzig Erfolge für die Gewaltfreiheit



Church and Peace has co-published a German version of the handy resource *Nonviolence Works!*

The pamphlet, produced in 2010 by UK peace organisations, contains 55 examples of how nonviolence has been used successfully as an alternative to military intervention in conflict situations worldwide. The stories tell of sustainable changes brought about without violence – from regime change to protection of human rights and the environment.

Order from the International Office or download at: <http://bit.ly/294DT62>. English original available online at: <http://bit.ly/29ukIER>.

Europe

What future for Europe?



The Conference of European Churches (CEC) has invited churches and partner organisations like Church and Peace to reflect on the future of Europe and the churches' role in building a community of values.

In an open letter CEC underlined that "Project Europe," originally a peace initiative, is more than an economic community and "Europe" is broader than the European Union.

Responses are welcome through December 2016: www.ceceurope.org/open-letter/

Switzerland

New prioress at Grandchamp



In February the members of the Grandchamp Community elected Sr Anne-Emmanuelle as their new prioress. She will follow current leader Sr Pierrette, who is stepping down after 17 years in the role.

Sr Anne-Emmanuelle will be installed during a festive worship service on 18 September.

Greece

Welcoming the stranger

Christian Peacemaker Teams has restarted its human rights project on the Greek island of Lesbos, which received 500,000 refugees in 2015.

A multinational team is accompanying the refugees. Together with local activists they give support, monitor conditions and observe court cases.

The German Mennonite Peace Committee is supporting the project, which runs until November. More about CPT: www.cpt.org



Credit: Robbyar

The Last Word

Living Securely

On the need to put down spiritual roots

Most of the conflicts in our world are over questions of security: living space or territory and the desire to accumulate more possessions in order to be “more secure” (money, privileges, power). Jesus’ point is clear: we need these things to live. But to really live, especially to live together, we cannot make money, food, clothing, power or privilege our reason for being and living.

"Practicing and having spiritual discipline is not a luxury, but a necessity in a world with no security in sight"

In the face of terrorist attacks that kill innocent people, can we sit back and do nothing? How do we turn the other cheek in such a situation? How can we “love” our enemy when he or she is standing there with a Kalashnikov?

And can we really trust the words of the psalmist who tells us to wait patiently for the Lord, to refrain from anger and turn from wrath, and not to fret in the face of wicked schemes? (Psalm 37:7-9)

The lifestyle Jesus himself shows us and that he teaches seems to leave us in a totally vulnerable posture.

Since there are unstable forces at work in the world, life is a fight. In this fight, we must not mistake who is the enemy. We are not fighting humans, but “forces of evil” that often enough hold us captive. These forces are manifested in the world structures and in our relationships. We must not mistake our weapons, either. We will not find them at Eurosatory.

Instead we are to arm ourselves with spiritual weapons: the belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, the shoes of readiness that comes from the

gospel of peace, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And we pray in the Spirit. (Eph. 6:14-18)

Practicing and having spiritual discipline is not a luxury, but a necessity in a world with no security in sight. From a Christian point of view, non-violence is first of all a question of faith and spirituality before being a question of ethics.

The Church is called to be a school of peace, pardon and reconciliation. She is also the place where we are trained in the spirituality of peace, non-violence and trust.

In order to learn to confront our worries and lack of security we have to put down deep spiritual roots and cultivate trust. Then we can combat fear, stop demonising others, and admit that we too are tempted by attitudes and practices that are far removed from the Gospel of Peace.

We need places and practices where we can learn to leave worry behind, so that we will not be afraid when our security is threatened. For this, we need peace communities.

Faced with anxiety and a lack of security, let's encourage our roots to grow deeply in order to produce the fruits of the Spirit.

Neal Blough

CPT team welcomes refugees arriving on the Greek island of Lesbos



Credit: James Fehr