



Church and Peace

International Office

Church and Peace is an ecumenical network of Christian communities, churches and organisations in Europe committed to the peace church vision.

Church and Peace International Conference on Vulnerability and Security Corrymeela, Northern Ireland, 14-17 June 2007

Message

At the Corrymeela Community Centre in Northern Ireland more than 100 participants from some 13 different nations and many different church traditions and faith communities gathered for the 2007 international conference of Church and Peace.

The theme of our conference was: "Not by might, nor by power...but by my Spirit (Zech. 4:6) – A Conference on Vulnerability and Security".

During our meeting we explored pathways to true security and visited church-related cross-community peacebuilding projects in the torn and broken Northern Irish society. These projects proved to be a real sign of hope!

What have we learned?

- that security is a gift of God which calls for a way of life in solidarity with all people and that requires the acceptance of some level of vulnerability;
- that we live on God's earth and are entrusted with responsible stewardship;
- that in our world a child under the age of five dies from hunger and malnutrition every five seconds;
- that 1000 people are killed every week by small arms, most of which are owned by civilians;
- that 95% of the victims of war and armed conflict nowadays are civilians;
- that we have lived uncritically with a false sense of security, and having been aware of the suffering have done too little to relieve it;
- that in a divided society suffering from violent conflict, true peace requires the transformation of relationship. This takes courage, the sharing of stories and the investment of our time and resources;
- that these conflict situations are deeply rooted in history and people's emotions;
- that true security calls for breaking down both the inward or emotional and the outward or physical walls that separate us;
- that in the midst of conflict situations we are called to follow a vision that takes us beyond the "enemy experience" with its fear and feelings of insecurity and enables us to meet each other as fellow human beings;
- that in so doing we may be messengers of God's peace and will be strengthened by the knowledge that we do his will;
- that true security requires us to work towards creating justice locally, nationally and internationally, so that in the words of the Psalmist, "peace and justice have embraced" (Psalm 85:10);
- that real security can come about only if we follow the call of Jesus to love our neighbours and even our enemies;
- that we can allow ourselves to be vulnerable in the living presence of God;
- that we need to continue to call on all Christians, churches and people of goodwill to mobilize for true peace. "Peace is my parting gift to you, my own peace, such as the world cannot give." (John 14:27)

Adopted unanimously by the participants of the Church and Peace international conference at Corrymeela, 16 June 2007