



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.

Press Release

Autumn meeting of the Administrative Committee of Church and Peace Held at the Community for Reconciliation, Barnes Close, England

“When Christian communities and churches confess the way of Jesus as the only option, this involves a conscious rejection of militarisation, violence and warfare. Proclaiming the option for nonviolence is the prophetic mission of the church of Jesus.” These were the closing words of Antje Heider-Rottwilm, chairperson of Church and Peace, at the autumn meeting of the Administrative Committee at Barnes Close on 7 November. The members of the committee, who came from the Netherlands, Serbia, Switzerland, Germany and the UK, were guests of the *Community for Reconciliation*, which works for nonviolent conflict resolution and peace not only in England and south-east Europe but also in East Africa and India. Christian service for peace leads us to the places of pain in the world – and this is the starting point for what Church and Peace has to say about the issues of war, arms trade, conflict management, and peace.

The Administrative Committee affirmed the joint declaration formulated by the German umbrella organisation of the Evangelical “Action Committee Service for Peace (AGDF)”:

“We regret that the statement of the Council of the German Protestant Church (EKD) on a peace ethics perspective on the UN mandate for intervention against IS terror focusses on the option of delivering weapons and military intervention. This statement follows the tradition of church statements which ultimately justify military action by the state and fails to take proper account of the new orientation towards just peace. We affirm the high priority given by the EKD to the protection of refugees, and encourage the EKD to advocate the timely reception of refugees on a scale appropriate to the degree of suffering. The deficiencies of the new EKD statement underline the need to intensify church peace work and internal debate on peace theology and peace ethics.”

http://friedensdienst.de/sites/default/files/stellungnahme_einsatz_gg_is-terror_14_10_28.pdf

A number of statements from within the European network of Church and Peace address this issue. The Mennonite Theological Seminary Bienenberg in Liestal, Switzerland, writes in a statement entitled “*Using violence against violence?*”:

“(Therefore,) it cannot be said that Christian pacifism is fundamentally doomed to failure, although there is of course no guarantee that it will always lead to the desired result. The same, however, can also be said of military intervention.

We must also not forget that Christian pacifism is a costly path. This too it shares in common with military intervention. The hope of being able to lead a “clean” war with intelligent weapons with which “only” terrorists are targeted and killed without further victims has long since revealed itself to be an illusion.”

http://www.bienenberg.ch/az/deu/images/stories/file/aktuell/Using_violence_against_violence_TSB_faculty_statement.pdf

The meeting of the Administrative Committee was preceded by a networking meeting of British members and partners of *Church and Peace* in Birmingham, at which the World Council of Churches’ (WCC’s) call to join a “Pilgrimage of justice and peace” was discussed. Discussion centred around practical ways in which members could respond to the WCC’s call through their own activities in their own church and social context and how, through networking, the voice of nonviolence grounded in a theology of peace might be amplified.

Church and Peace is an European ecumenical Network of communities, churches, organisations and groups, who are convinced that nonviolence as witnessed in the Gospel is the essential characteristic of the congregation which is following Jesus. Testifying the Gospel leads to nonviolent service and peacemaking. Members commit to witness to nonviolent peace service in their lives. Church and Peace is, inter alia, an Organisation in Partnership with the Conference of European Churches (CEC), Member of the Action Committee Service for Peace (AGDF) and of the 'Network of Christian Peace Organisations' (UK).

Contact:

Davorka Lovrekovic, General Secretary, International Office Church and Peace,

Tel: +49-(0)6445- 5588, gensekr@church-and-peace.org

Ringstr. 14 D-35641 Schöffengrund Tel: +49 (0)6445 -5588, Fax: -5070 E-mail: IntlOffice@church-and-peace.org

www.church-and-peace.org Volksbank Mittelhessen Kto-Nr. 7361 9602 BLZ: 513 900 00

IBAN: DE6951390000073619602 Swift/BIC: VBMHDE5F