



Church and Peace Newsletter September 2011

Dear readers,

Can this newsletter capture something of the spirit, of what a special internal and external experience we had during the International Conference of Church and Peace at St Antoine? It carries on – and therefore it is worth it to tell the tale.

I am still under the sway of our stay in the beautiful buildings and their scenery and of the special atmosphere of the Arche Community.

And I am sure that we have experienced in that time, in a special way, how much we belong together: people, groups and churches in the network of Church and Peace and all the people in communities and churches around the world who struggle for the Shalom of God, for God's peace here on earth. The ten year long, intense discussion process within the 'Decade to Overcome Violence (DOV)' of the World Council of Churches (WCC) has challenged us all!

It's about a paradigm shift: Ecumenical consensus is now on the guiding principle of 'just peace' and no longer on 'just war'. That means depriving armed conflict of any legitimacy. It means morally outlawing warfare, making it politically superfluous and also prohibiting it by law. Furthermore, it means calling for justice and making sustainable use of natural resources. This just peace paves the way to the Kingdom of God. This way has become that of the world-wide members of the WCC and the DOV – finally!

But there was one hitch, perhaps the crucial point in this process:

the question of threatened peoples' protection. In 2005 the United Nations adopted the concept of 'responsibility to protect' (R2P) that identifies measures with which the international community can respond to genocide, ethnic cleansing and other crimes against humanity, **before** military action is legitimised.

In 2006 the WCC's General Assembly in Porto Alegre passed a resolution supporting these 'international standards of responsibility to protect' to ensure the well being of endangered populations in situations of armed violence.

Content

- p. 1 Dear Readers**
- p. 3 International Conference**
- p. 7 Prayer around the fire**
- p. 8 Workshop on inter-religious dialog**
- p. 9 A message from Sarajevo**
- p. 10 International Ecumenical Peace Convocation IEPC: Participant Reports**
- p. 13 Church and Peace Message to IEPC**
- p. 14 AGM Review**
- p. 15 Christa Voigt Obituary**
- p. 16 Events 2012**

→

Our Annual General Meeting in 2009 looked critically at the concept of R2P. We hit the bow of the theological conviction that the path of nonviolence in the footsteps of Jesus does not allow violence as the last option, and we expressed our concern that any military option leads inevitably to the neglect of non-military means and to shoring up the primacy of the military. This is underlined in our press release in March on the NATO mission in Libya: '... urgently needed steps were not taken. The international community needed to support, to finance, and to strengthen the nonviolent conflict resolution processes of the region's people. We call for a consistent development of civilian instruments for conflict transformation.'

And then came the International Ecumenical Peace Convocation (IEPC) of the WCC in Jamaica in May as a conclusion of the DOV. The 'Ecumenical Call for Just Peace', which was developed on the basis of responses to a first draft declaration, contained many fundamental challenges. But we were disappointed that once again it held open the option to protect threatened peoples with military or police force.

The decision to meet parallel to Jamaica was right: we experienced the connection to each other and our big responsibility as a European peace network to support the issues of this international meeting in our prayers and in our theological reflection. Our two delegates to Jamaica, Janna Postma and Kees Nieuwerth, represented this connection, along with other churches and groups who are members of Church and Peace.

So we were able to participate in the struggle to find the way to 'Overcoming Violence'. We appealed to the delegates in Jamaica, and expressed once again the conviction of the historic peace churches: 'We reject the idea that Just Peace forces us into a dilemma between the call to nonviolence and the lawful use of force to protect endangered peoples. The use of violent means to create good outcomes fails inevitably, even under the guise of policing.'

The first draft of final message submitted to the plenary of the IEPC declared R2P "part of the just peace concept". Our representatives in Kingston spoke against this and were successful so that the message now reads: 'We continue to struggle with how innocent people can be protected from injustice, war and violence. In this light, we struggle with the concept of the "responsibility to protect" and its possible misuse. We urgently request that the WCC and partner organisations further clarify their position regarding this policy.'

What an important work! The conversation continues, as we wrestle with each other on the path of nonviolence in Jesus' footsteps. And for us it means to continue to work theologically, to further the discussion, and continue to live as examples of what we stand for, and ask:

'O God, replenish your peace in the midst of all your people.'

With kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Antje Heides-Rothwisch". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first name "Antje" written in a larger, more prominent hand than the last name.

Church and Peace International Conference, St. Antoine, France, May 19–22, 2011

The 2011 Church and Peace International Conference took place at the Arche Community St Antoine (between Grenoble and Valence) parallel to the International Ecumenical Peace Convocation held in Kingston, Jamaica. Around 120 people from 16 countries participated.

St Antoine is a picturesque medieval village with a large abbey that was originally a place of welcome and care for the sick and the poor. Today, the Arche Community St Antoine runs a conference centre on the monastic grounds. Last year, the community launched FEVE, a two-year program of initiation into community living for those between the ages of 18–35 with emphases on non-violence, spirituality and simplicity of life .

The conference centre is run in great simplicity ... everyone does their own dishes. It is surrounded by wonderful gardens filled with flowers, organic vegetables, fruits – even figs – with a beautiful view of the Vercors mountain range in the background.

The weekend began with the Annual General Meeting (AGM) which focused on regional reports and reflection on the role of and vision for Church and Peace in the future (see p. 14). After the AGM closed, other participants from all over Europe joined the meeting. Following a presentation on the international Arche Community movement by its current leader, Michèle Le Boeuf, small groups formed to get acquainted with each other. Several excellent interpreters provided translation into German, English, French and Serbian/Croatian/Bosnian.

The main presentation, given by Bernard and Simone Dangeard, from the Arche Community concentrated on the call of God's people in terms of the First Testament and the Gospel of Mark. The speakers stressed the importance of impregnating one's self with the word of God by memorising texts, and they presented key texts in song, which deeply touched the audience.



Chantal Loichemol greeted the conference on behalf of the Arche Community St. Antoine



Bernard and Simone Dangeard during their lecture

The central thesis of the presentation was that God made with His people a covenant in which every believer is integrated. This alliance is not an end in itself: the people's vocation is to convey God's blessing to the world. Small groups discussed the relevance of this message for peace work in the context of communities and groups from which they came. They stressed the importance of a double commitment: to the inner realm (community life, sharing of bread, theological reflection, silence and prayer) and the outer realm (beyond our "comfort zone" in the streets and squares, where one has to reach out to people in need and must resist forces of violence).



Group discussion outdoors

Several individuals shared their vocation stories. One of them, evoking the war years in Kosovo, provoked the protest of a Serbian participant, who saw in this story a condemnation of her people – a sign that the wounds are not healed yet. The dialogue on this topic was continued in plenary, in interviews and in a workshop.

Church and Peace must learn from this encounter and continue to reflect with the believers of this still-divided region about the appropriate role of the network.



Christianne Lasserre and Hans Häselbarth remember Jean Lasserre and Dietrich Bonhoeffer's friendship

A fictional dialogue in German and in French between Jean Lasserre, pastor, author and member of the French branch of the International Fellowship of Reconciliation, and Dietrich Bonhoeffer showed how the divide can be overcome. It showed how the two theologians addressed the issue of violence and war. This dialogue was presented by Hans Häselbarth, son of a German soldier killed early in World War II and Christiane

Lasserre, daughter of Jean. It illustrated surprisingly but very impressively the healing power of reconciliation between former enemies.



Kat Barton reports on anti-atomic weapons campaigns in the UK

The four themes of Kingston – Peace with the Earth, Peace on the Marketplace, Peace among the Peoples, Peace in the Community – were elaborated upon in workshops: theological reflection on the resistance to Mammon and Mars, inter-religious dialogue (see p. 7), reflection upon and examples of an economy of solidarity, sharing on daily life in community, as well as topics such as campaigns against nuclear weapons in Britain and the democratic movement in North Africa and the Middle East.

The work of the conference was embedded in times of prayer and ecumenical celebration reflecting the diversity of the participants. Every night we would meet around the fire for the prayer of the Arche Community, and we were invited to a Quaker worship.

as a sign of communion with the churches around the world supporting the gathering in Kingston. The meeting ended with an ecumenical celebration that picked up the message of the conference in song, speech, movement and prayer. Marisa Johnson, General Secretary of Quaker Friends World Council for Consultation – Europe and Middle East, brought the message on "Christ is our peace." She described the diversity of her community of faith and the range of positions within it. For her, the base denominator between the various trends is the belief in grace. "It is not about **how** we express our belief, but whether we have experienced that power beyond power which allows us to glimpse the possibility of transformation"

Which challenges for life post-conference does she see? "It is not easy to be Children of the Light, the advance party of the Kingdom of God. The divisions in our Quaker tradition, in Christian history, let alone the wider multi-faith, multi-cultural world, show us that the work of reconciliation needs to start from ourselves and our communities in an ever-increasing circle of compassion."



Quaker worship



David Exertier of the Arche Community's FEVE programme spoke about his life path

A message was sent to the delegates in Kingston. It emphasises the communion with them during their stay in Jamaica, reiterates criticism of the concept of the 'Responsibility to Protect (R2P)' and encourages the churches to re-orient their political strategy, to promote non-violent intervention and make peace service a priority.

The life of the Church and Peace network has been strengthened through the conference.

No conference of Church and Peace is ever complete without a festive evening. Late into Saturday night/ Sunday morning the participants let themselves be carried away by singing, music and dance, directed by Brigit-te Mesdag, a member of the Arche Community and the Board of Church and Peace. This too is an expression of the calling of God's people.



Members of the Arche Community dancing

All documents and more pictures of the conference can be consulted on the Church and Peace website.

Marie-Noëlle von der Recke
and Hans Häselbarth



Antje Heider Rottwilm, Jakob Fehr, Michèle Le Boeuf and Zelimir Srncic present the message to Kingston at the end of the worship service

Prayer around the fire

*We are all strangers and pilgrims.
Let us light a fire at the crossroads
To call on the name of the Lord.
Let us close the circle and make a temple in the wind.
Let us make, of where we chance to be, a temple.
For the time has come to worship in spirit and in truth,
To give thanks in every place and at all times.
Let us set a term to time, a centre to outer darkness,
And make ourselves present at the present.
The present we pursued in vain throughout our days,
For it was far from us at its time of being.
Now, here it is, before our eyes and in our hearts, the present.
Fire is the present burning and shining, the present praying.
Fire is the sacrifice of what burns, warmth of life and joy to see.
Fire is the death of dead things and their return to the light.
Fire of joy! Suffering and joy within each other.
Love is the joy of suffering.
Fire is life and death within each other,
Appearance being consumed and substance appearing.
Let us sing glory in the
tongue of fire, evident and
clear to all men.
And you, passersby on the
road of the four winds,
Step into the round and put
your hands in ours.
Blow on us, Lord! Blow our
prayer into flame,
So that our hearts of sticks
and thorns and their fickle
spark of life
May somehow serve thy
glory.
AMEN*



Prayer around the fire

One of the fourteen workshops offered Saturday afternoon dealt with the trialog between the Abrahamic religions. Pierre-Ami Béguin, a member of the Arche Community, was the presenter. Stephan Hünninger, who moderated the discussion, offers this report:



Romain Gury (FEVE, France, I.), and Marius van Hoogstraten (DMFK, the Netherlands) discussing the democratic movement in the Middle East

Pierre-Ami Béguin reported on his trip to Syria, a country marked by both Islam and Christianity, illustrating his theme with photos. His journey led him to churches of various denominations.

He focused on his visit to Deir Marmusa Al Habashi, a Syrian monastery dedicated to inter-religious dialog, particularly between Christians and Muslims. Father Paolo, an Italian Jesuit, has revived an old abandoned Monophysite monastery. Deir Marmusa Al Habashi has been recognised by the Vatican. It is considered a partner of churches and Christians within the context of this region's ancient brotherhood of Muslims and Christians.

Even amid the current tensions in Syria that began in March, the community continues to work in pursuit of a critical and constructive dialog with all partners in the conflict. It is of great concern, that they not see the country fall apart into tribal and religious groups, making the situation even more precarious, especially for Christians.

Starting from Mr. Hünninger's thesis that we can understand and live our Christian faith only with our Jewish and Muslim sisters and brothers, participants reported on their activities in dialog or trialog.

Maria Biedrawa invited us to a seminar commemorating the historic meeting in Assisi 25 years ago. It will be held by the Franciscan family in Paris from 11 to 13 November 2011.

In conclusion, workshop participants summarised their work in this short message:

"Justice and non-violence are the way to peace. They make us discover and appreciate both our own identity and that of the other. Thus we are God's witnesses in the world."



Arthur Krasniqi speaking about the situation in Kosovo/a

Amra Pandžo, member of the organising group of the Southeast Europe regional conferences was not able to join the international conference at St. Antoine. Here are large excerpts from the message she sent:

My name is Amra Pandžo. I am a Muslim from Bosnia and Herzegovina. I have been active in peace building for more than fifteen years. (...)

I am very sad that Islam is too often connected with terrorism, violence, and evil. The stereotypical pictures of 'Muslim terrorists' are present every day in Western media (...). Unfortunately, this contributes to the 'clash of civilisations' and the division of the world into artificial and violent categories (...).

The events around Bin Laden's death have made this especially clear to me. I received letters and messages from Christian friends, including peace builders, apologising for the behaviour of 'their' people. While I appreciate the good intentions behind these messages, they emphasise to me that these categories exist (...) I am disturbed by the association of myself as a Muslim with a man who claims to be Muslim but is, to me, simply a criminal. I believe I am more associated with Christian believers...

I invite you, my Christian sisters and brothers, to (...) resist the idea that the world is divided in good and bad sides (...), in an Eastern and a Western part. I see the lights or stars of the faith all over the globe. I invite you to truly live out your faith, to not believe in labels given to people, but to discover who this person is, who I am facing.

(...) The three Arabic letters, **s, l, m** make up the word Islam which basically means **peace**. As a verb, Islam means **peace building**, the greeting **selam** means: **peace be with you**. (...) My faith calls me to love and accept others. (...) To be a Muslim means to be a peace builder – to bring peace instead of conflicts and war. (...) Unfortunately the stereotypical picture of Islam in the Western world is quite different than the reality that many Muslims live. The Muslims I live with cannot imagine having anything to do with terrorism. After the 1992–1996 war in Bosnia, where many Muslims were victims, there were no examples of revenge. There have never been any suicide attacks or any terrorist attacks in my country. I strongly believe that the Bosnian interpretation of Islam is peaceful and tolerant. (...) That is why we are active internationally in promoting the idea of peace building in Islam.

'O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other (not that ye may despise each other).' (Quran, Al-Hujurat, 13)

I hope this can help to make me close to you. I am sending you a message of peace and love. (...) We could all live in peace and tolerance if we are truly people of faith.'

I wish you a wonderful conference!

Amra Pandžo, Sarajevo

From the 17th to the 25th of May some 1,000 participants from over 100 different nations, representing more than 300 member churches of the World Council of Churches gathered for the International Ecumenical Peace Convocation (IEPC) in Kingston, Jamaica. Kees Nieuwerth, delegate for Church and Peace and Clerk of the Netherlands Quaker Yearly Meeting, reports.

What an inspiring meeting at Kingston!

Or, as it was expressed in one of the many beautiful worship services:

‘And it came to pass that in the year of our Lord, 2011, the global church gathered at Kingston, Jamaica, to celebrate the triumph of peace over violence and righteousness over injustice’.

Asia, Africa and Latin America were well-represented, with a balance between women and men, clergy and lay, older and younger participants. The Historic Peace Churches had a modest but good presence, with a little more than 30 Mennonites, Quakers and Brethren. We had simple but adequate student quarters at the Campus of the University of the West Indies. Plenary sessions were held in an huge tent on the site. Worship services were full of music, rhythm and inspiration, led by our Jamaican hosts. Each day there were small Bible study groups, and the conference in total offered more than 160 workshops.

The most impressive keynote speaker at the opening session was Paul Oestreicher, lifelong peace activist and Anglican priest as well as a member of the Religious Society

of Friends. His contribution was entitled: ‘A New World is Possible’. He immediately set the tone: ‘We have made a pact with Caesar, with power, the very pact that early Christians called idolatry ... we have squared it with our conscience to kill the Emperor’s enemies, and to do this with Jesus on our lips ... The abolition of war is possible. It is as possible as was the abolition of slavery, the slavery that still haunts the history of this nation of Jamaica ... Slavery was made illegal ... That needs to become the fate of war. If the churches of the world fail to embark on such a campaign, we will have nothing of unique significance to say on the subject of world peace ... In theory war is



Worship service at IEPC
(© Peter Williams/WCC)

already outlawed. There are courts to try not only crimes committed in war, but the crime of war itself ... When the still-young discipline of Peace Studies is given the same resources in the world’s universities that are given to Security Studies and the development of weapon systems, we will have made real progress ... Peace will demand the dethroning of the military-industrial complex ... Yes to life means no to war ... The only lasting victory that we can win over our enemies, is to make them our friends.’

The final message declares that the churches are unified in their aspiration that war should become illegal and that the nuclear catastrophe at Fukushima has proved once

again that we must no longer rely on nuclear power as a source of energy. As far as the concept of Responsibility to Protect is concerned, it states: 'We continue to struggle with how innocent people can be protected from injustice, war and violence. In this light we struggle with the concept of the "responsibility to protect" and its possible misuse.' The churches are called to advocate nuclear disarmament and to curb the production of and trade in arms. They are urged to support the right of conscientious objection and to assure asylum for those who resist militarism and armed conflicts. Peace education should move to the centre of the curriculum in schools, seminaries and universities.



*Participant line up to suggest amendments to the final message
(© Peter Williams/WCC)*

Looking back over the Convocation, its plenary sessions, workshops, worship services, Bible studies, and the documents produced, I feel I must conclude that most of the concerns we took to Kingston have been actively raised and put on the agenda of the World Council of Churches!

But the IEPC at Kingston also raises a serious question with the Historic Peace Churches. From the opening session to the final message we are referred to as an example. One might say that since 1953 as the Historic Peace Churches (and IFOR) presented their declaration "Peace is the Will of God" it has taken the churches time to 'move beyond the doctrine of Just War to the commitment to Just Peace'... On the other hand: let us rejoice this is so!

It means though, that members of the three so-called peace churches and the peace movements founded by them, Church and Peace and IFOR, need to patiently persist in the **responsibility to witness** to our heritage: the deeply held conviction that to follow the non-violent way is an integral part of being a disciple of Jesus. In this respect, it is a pity that only a small number of Mennonite, Quaker and Brethren groups are full-fledged members of the World Council of Churches so far. Perhaps this needs serious reconsideration after this historic meeting at Kingston, Jamaica?

Finally, at the closing session of Kingston, the 'founder' of the Decade to Overcome Violence, our Mennonite friend Fernando Enns, spoke once more: 'Look around you, what do you see? What a privilege to participate in this fellowship – so glory be to God and peace on earth! We have come a long way in our journey. Life changing experiences for individuals as well as churches. Justice and peace are the real heartbeat of the ecumenical community! But...we are not satisfied. We are only beginning to grasp this. We are only starting to focus on prevention, non-violent intervention. We must continue to commit ourselves today to explore the theological and ethical foundations of Just Peace. And we need to take bold steps to practise it. In doing so we shall hold one another accountable. The church either accepts the call to Just Peace or it is not the church at all!!'

I cannot but agree wholeheartedly!
Amen, may it be so!

Kingston Peace Convocation – some notes from Janna Postma's Diary

May 16th Buses full of Christians in all shades drive towards the campus of the University. The sunlight, the splendid colours in the city quarters, they hurt our eyes. On our arrival a meal is offered to us. This round building and the student apartments will be our home for the nine days to come. The rooms are small, without air-conditioning. A mosquito, now and then.

May 17th The huge tent waiting for us has room for 1,000 people. Registration is in the auditorium of the University. We sign in for local exposure visits.

May 18th On our way to the city. My bus' destination: 'Youth reaching Youth'. Much praise, theatre: what we see is directly taken from their lives. In the afternoon, the convocation opens. Children sing for us. Speeches: Jamaica's Prime Minister, the Vice-Chancellor of the University, presidents of local and regional Councils of Churches – look, a woman! –, Paul Oestreicher.

May 19th Peace in the Community. A panel: women from Palestine/Israel, an outcast from India. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s son.

May 20th Peace with the Earth. We hear stories and watch how islands are sinking in the Pacific. The panel: an Orthodox man from Argentina, an indigenous woman theologian from Guatemala. In the evening, we are invited to a concert, dance and theatre in the park.

May 21st Peace in the Marketplace. A panel of Jamaicans, Africans, a representative from the WCC-program AGAPE.

May 22nd Communion, (still) divided. A **service** in the tent for all, with a steel band and the University Choir. Then Caribbean day with a musical.

May 23rd Peace among the Peoples. Via satellite, a survivor of the nuclear bomb on Japan. Present with us: Bishop Asadourian (Iraq), the president of the Norwegian Centre for Peace and Human Rights, and Lisa Schirch, a Mennonite Professor of Peace Education.

May 24th Conclusion with a **final message** that had been discussed in all the groups and in the plenary. Pacifists and non-pacifists agreed – nearly: "We continue to struggle with how innocent people can be protected from injustice, war and violence. In this light, we struggle with the concept of the "responsibility to protect" and its possible misuse..."

Has this IEPC been useful? Not just useful but a necessity! There is only one ecclesia, **one Body of Christ**. There exists only **one human kind**. That becomes a concrete reality, here. Many youngsters belong to this ecclesia. They discover questions of coexistence and peace.

What should be done to make this outcome be taken seriously in church bodies and congregations? – We will have to tell stories about people who live along the ruptures in our societies. Because they are right here: **we will not resign ourselves!** We resist the tendency to divide people into better and lesser kinds. We resist violence committed against us and others. We resist the pillage of the earth. We want to **live with the One God**.

Message of the European Conference of Church and Peace to the Ecumenical Peace Convocation in Kingston, Jamaica

To our sisters and brothers assembled in Kingston,

Parallel to the International Convocation in Kingston, we are meeting in the French community of L'Arche of Lanza del Vasto. We, the European conference of peace churches and peace communities from 16 countries in Europe – from Macedonia to the Netherlands, from the Czech Republic to Italy – belong together with you to the community of faith in Jesus Christ seeking to be guided into the way of peace (Lk 1:79).

We are encouraged by the process of the Decade to Overcome Violence and believe that the Ecumenical Call to Just Peace witnesses to the transformation of our churches. We wish to challenge the ecumenical community to continue along the path toward peace. In 2001 in Strasbourg the European churches confessed: “We commit ourselves to work for structures of peace, based on the nonviolent resolution of conflicts. We condemn any form of violence against the human person, particularly against women and children.”¹

We reaffirm this statement of nonviolence and plead as a consequence for a reconsideration of the concept of Responsibility to Protect. We are troubled by the call to use military or police force to ensure the protection of threatened peoples.² Even if violent means are held only in reserve for use as a last resort, this influences the planning of civil action during the earlier phases of conflict. We reject the idea that Just Peace forces us into a dilemma between the call to nonviolence and the lawful use of force to protect endangered peoples.

The use of violent means to create good outcomes fails inevitably, even under the guise of policing. Weapons kill and wound without distinguishing between the guilty and the guiltless. Even in situations where no solution seems possible and where violence is so endemic that a call to counter it with further violence rises amongst victims and within us too, we persist in recommending the use of nonviolent means towards every human being, means which we as disciples of Christ have in abundance.

This implies that the churches must reorient their political strategies: pleading for strengthened commitment to nonviolent intervention organised by the international community, inspired by models like Christian Peacemaker Teams and Peace Brigades International. We call on the churches to increase their own involvement in peace services wherever there is conflict and social disruption.

Violence in any form can never serve to bring about lasting peace with justice. We invite you to resist together with us the temptation of justifying the use of deadly weapons even as a last resort. Let us walk together on the path to peace.

We pray with you today: “O God, replenish your peace in the midst of all your people.”

L'arche, Saint Antoine, May 22nd 2011

¹ Charta Oecumenica: Guidelines for the Growing Cooperation among the Churches in Europe, §8

² Ecumenical Call to Just Peace, §§22–24

Before the international conference in St. Antoine, this year's Annual General Meeting (AGM) was held by Church and Peace. 44 members were represented.

The Administrative Committee (AC) report emphasised the importance of support from the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) for activities in Southeast Europe and also of the staffing of Church and Peace's International Office. The good news is that Susan Pracht has begun her volunteer placement, Martin Schuler will continue as Executive

Secretary, and that Helga Amelung's position will be financed until mid-2014 (a small additional funding amount remains to be received). Marie-Noëlle von der Recke announced in the fall that she will leave her position as General Secretary in late 2012. She was warmly thanked for her work. The process of the AC to choose her successor was presented to the AGM.

Marie-Noëlle von der Recke and Martin Schuler further expounded upon the International Office's report. They were asked about contacts in Eastern Europe, like-minded communities and the Conference of European Churches. For the

communication network, a more systematic approach was proposed and also networking by means of 'social media'.

The regional reports mentioned the Kairos-Palestine Document, the NATO attack on Libya and actions against the Paris-Satory arms fair. Southeast Europe expressed the need for theological texts for inter-religious dialogue. In Germany the government should be convinced to change its course in the areas of weapons production and exports, military interventions abroad and military presence/access in schools. German Quakers wrote a letter to their parliament on North African refugees. The AC was asked to send it to all members encouraging them to support this urgent appeal among their own politicians.

Church and Peace's finances developed rather well in 2010. The treasurer's report was read with the recommendation to release the AC of liability. The AGM unanimously agreed. The 2011 budget (which provides for a further increase in donations because funding from the Evangelical Church in Germany is not expected) was adopted by a large majority. In the spring of 2011, two fundraising sessions were held and also a meeting with representatives of the umbrella organisation Action Committee Service for Peace. The list of fundraising ideas compiled by the AC was presented to the AGM. It was emphasised that if we do our work with passion and enthusiasm, this is the best fundraising.

Brainstorming on the future of Church and Peace was held on six different topics. One topic was on what expectations network members have, including how involved they are willing to get and what opportunities they bring. A point that came up in discus-



Brainstorming about the future of the Church and Peace network



***Three new individual members were welcomed at the AGM:
Brian Tracy, Annik Gentner, and Sabine Dittmann***

sion was whom they see as possible multipliers and message distributors in their respective networks. The results will be analysed and discussed by the AC as they design the job description and fill the post of General Secretary accordingly.

Obituary for Christa Voigt who represented the The German Yearly Meeting of the Society of Friends at Church and Peace conferences and was a member of the Administrative Committee. She died in February 2011. (reprinted from Conscience and Peace Tax International)

Christa learned to hate war when, during WWII and the ten years that followed, she had to grow up without a father. Thus, she was deeply involved right from the start when, with her energetic support, conversations among like-minded people around living room tables developed into the Peace Tax Initiative (from 2003 Network Peace Tax).



In the early 1980s, Christa and Klaus Martin consistently, and in spite of the demands laid upon them by profession and family, engaged themselves against the payment of "military taxes", and for the freedom of conscience when paying taxes. In 1991 they achieved a hearing in front of the highest German financial authority, the first, and so far only, such court case.

On the basis of their personal conviction as Quakers, Christa and Klaus Martin understood their engagement for peace tax as civil disobedience. We have to thank their influence for the fact that the 1984 Quaker Yearly Meeting in Bad Pyrmont made a declaration that supports the aims of the peace tax movement to this day. In 1993 the Peace Tax Initiative received the Aachen Peace Price.

Thanks to Christa's initiative and her whole-hearted work for the refusal of military taxes, contacts with like-minded people in Germany and the world over were established and maintained. Christa was the first German board member of the international movement for the refusal to pay taxes for reasons of conscience, Conscience and Peace Tax International.

Within the framework of religious events – like the first Ecumenical Gathering in Basel, Switzerland, in 1989 – together with Klaus Martin, she managed to have her concern documented in a minority statement, thus laying the foundation stone for this concern being included in the final declaration of the World Gathering of the World Council of Churches in Seoul in 1990.

In her own personal and most convincing way, Christa always managed to link the facts to the people with whom she was treading these paths. She was always particularly concerned about achieving an authentic, warm exchange with others. She succeeded so well in this striving because she approached everybody in so warm-hearted and friendly a manner. She liked sharing her feelings and thoughts with others, and, above all, she was a most sensitive listener! And her laughter would cheer up every heart!

We will remember Christa as decisive and courageous in her engagement for a more peaceful world, one worth living in. We are grateful for what she has given us .

Please note



- French-speaking regional conference:
26th–27th April 2012,
- AGM 2012: 27th–29th April 2012
Venue:
Maison Notre Dame du Chant D'Oiseau,
Brussels
- German-speaking regional conference:
23rd–25th November 2012,
Venue: Thomashof, Germany

Church and Peace is a European, ecumenical network of peace churches and peace church-oriented congregations, communities and service agencies.

Editorial staff: International Office of Church and Peace

Translation: Susan Pracht, Peter Crossmann, Jakob Fehr

Photos: Archive Church and Peace and WCC

International Office: Ringstraße 14, D - 35641 Schöffengrund,

Tel: +49 6445 5588, Fax: +49 6445 5070

IntlOffice@church-and-peace.org

www.church-and-peace.org



Donations:

- EURO BANK TRANSFER: Church and Peace e.V.,
- account no. 7361 9602, Volksbank Mittelhessen, BLZ: 513 900 00
IBAN: DE69513900000073619602, BIC/Swift: VBMHDE5F
- account no. 1014380015, Bank für Kirche und Diakonie KD-Bank, BLZ: 350 601 90
IBAN: DE33350601901014380015, BIC: GENODED1DKD
- France: CHEQUES EN EUROS made out to 'Church and Peace', CCP Nancy, 0466451X036
IBAN: FR93 2004 1010 1504 6645 1X03 641, BIC: PSSTFRPPSTR
RIB: 20041 01015 0466451X036 41
- Switzerland: CEC, 2608 Courtelary, account: 30-38150-4,
BIC/Swift: RBAB CH 22240, IBAN: CH44 0624 0016 1072 4100 9
- US DOLLAR CHECK: To the order of Ivester Church of the Brethren (designation: Church and Peace fund), 25056 'E' Avenue, Grundy Center, Iowa 50638-8761, USA (tax deductible)
- Send STERLING CHEQUES made out to 'Church and Peace' to Gerald Drewett, 20 The Drive, Hertford SG14 3DF