



## **Church and Peace Newsletter May 2010**

Dear readers,

In the last few years the peace organisations that started up after the first and second world wars have been celebrating one anniversary after another. In this issue of the Newsletter some people who have been very involved in these organisations play the main roles - either because they have sadly departed this life or because they have just celebrated a big birthday. They have shaped our age and been a source of inspiration for our own witness. It is only just that we should honour them and express our gratitude. Their lives encourage us to follow their example and tackle the challenges posed by our generation.

This Newsletter is of modest scope. So we can only report on or hear from a handful of these notable people: Peter Dyck, Gene Stoltzfus, Hildegard Goss-Mayr, Wilfried Warneck. We would have like to report on many others, e.g. Theo Glück (see p.2, 3rd from the right on the photo), who celebrated his 100th birthday recently, and Jo Pyronnet and Eva Bormann, who have passed away.

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We equally want to look forward, however, and give space to young people. Some of them clearly show how the new generation is taking up the legacy of the past. They are remoulding it in non-violent action, in community life and in witness to peace.

The commitment to peace and justice does not dry up with the withdrawal of the older generation. In a continually changing world it takes on new, contemporary forms. Enjoy reading!

*Navio-Nülle von der Roche*

**Akron - Pennsylvania: Peter Dyck - storyteller, Mennonite pastor, author and lifelong servant to people in need - died on Monday, Jan. 4, 2010. He was 95 years old. His peace and reconciliation ministry is closely related to the history of Church and Peace, especially to the creation of the peace service agency „Eirene“ in 1957.**

Born in Russia in 1914, Peter was a child as the Revolution broke out. He almost died of typhoid and hunger in 1921. He and his family were rescued by food shipments sent by Mennonites in Canada and the USA, a kindness he would not forget. 1927 his family fled Russia and settled in Canada.

During World War II, Dyck served with Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) - a world-wide ministry of Anabaptist churches that responds to basic human needs and works for peace and justice - in England. Motivating his decision was his memory of the aid he received as a child, which had come through MCC: "I knew these were people that do good. They fed our family and our community. Now they are asking me to go and do something like that for others? It would almost have seemed immoral not to say yes," he later said.

In 1944, Peter Dyck married Elfrieda Klassen, a nurse. Once the war ended, the Dycks moved to the Netherlands to direct a massive relief effort. In 1946, they set up refugee camps in Germany for thousands of Mennonites who had fled the Soviet Union. Over time, they led 5,500 Mennonites by boat to South America, predominantly Paraguay.

From 1950 to 1957, Dyck pastored a Mennonite congregation in Kansas. The family returned to Germany to direct the MCC program there and in North Africa for the next 10 years. Peter was involved in the creation of Eirene international service for peace in 1957.

Later on, in the midst of the Cold War, Dyck was responsible for East-West relations on behalf of MCC. He made numerous trips to encourage Baptist and Mennonite congregations in the Soviet Union and assisted Baptist World Alliance in negotiations with Soviet authorities.

From 1981 on, Dyck went on speaking tours. At 90, he could still pack auditoriums. "He



*Peter Dyck (r.) with conscientious objectors in 1961 during orientation with Eirene*

was a passionate advocate for peace, conflict resolution, justice and tolerance," his family said. "He promoted and embodied active participation in bringing about peace in the world." Peter Dyck was very effective, not only in his ability to bring hope to many affected by World War II, but in influencing hundreds of MCC volunteers to learn new languages, skills and world views.

Peter Dyck believed that credit for his efforts should be directed toward God, not him. "It is gratifying and also humbling to think that (God's) purposes are accomplished through ordinary people," he said.

*Summarized from an article by Linda Espenshade (MCC news coordinator) and Ed Nyce (media and education coordinator for MCC).*

**Gene Stoltzfus, founding director of Christian Peacemakers Teams (CPT), visited several groups in the Church and Peace network in 2009. We reproduce here parts of a press release sent out after his sudden death.**

Wednesday, 10 March, CPT's Gene Stoltzfus died of a heart attack in Fort Frances, Ontario while bicycling near his home. He is survived by his wife and many peacemakers who stand on the broad shoulders of his 70 years of creative action.

Gene played a key role in CPT's founding gathering of Christian activists, theologians and other Church leaders in 1986. Two years later Gene became the first staff person of the newly formed organization and was CPT's director for the next 16 years. Gene and CPT's Steering Committee first experimented with various approaches to activate faith-grounded peacemaking. Through the early 90s, Gene gave leadership to solidifying the vision and practice of sustained teamwork in situations of lethal conflict. During the late 90s and early 2000s, he guided CPT through its growth and maturation as an organization supporting nonviolent action around the world.



*Gene Stoltzfus*

After retiring in 2004 he continued his Christian peacemaking through non-violent action, speaking and organizing in the USA, Canada and around the world. He also spent much time in his home writing regular blog entries, working for right relations with First Nations communities, and making furniture and jewelry with wood, twigs and other objects from the woods near his home.

**Hildegard Goss-Mayr, the Honorary President of the International Fellowship of Reconciliation (IFOR), has been working worldwide for decades for non-violence and peace. She has just celebrated her 80th birthday. A long time friend of the European network of peace groups, she is a highly esteemed speaker at Church and Peace events.**

Hildegard Goss-Mayr has been involved in IFOR for more than 55 years. Together with her husband Jean Goss, who died in 1991, she has familiarized hundreds of people in tireless efforts and in many conflict areas with the spirituality and practice of nonviolence in the struggle for justice and peace. A convinced Catholic, she has been nominated twice for the Nobel Peace Prize.

She was born 1930 in Vienna as the daughter of the founder of the Austrian branch of IFOR, Kaspar Mayr. After having experienced the Nazi regime in her childhood, she studied philosophy, philology and history. In 1953 she was the first woman to obtain her doctorate at the Vienna University with the highest distinction. In the same year she started to work for IFOR. In 1958 she married French peace activist Jean Goss.

Until the early 1960s she worked mainly for the development of nonviolent movements and for East-West dialogue. In 1958 groups met at her instigation for the first time to deal with the importance of Jesus' nonviolence. In 1962 she began her work for the development of non-violent liberation movements in Latin America. She became the consultant of bishops such as Dom Helder Camara. Her influence also extended to Nobel Peace Prize winner Adolfo Perez Esquivel, who led the nonviolent struggle against the Argentine military dictatorship.



*Hildegard Goss-Mayr speaking  
at a peace demonstration*

During the Second Vatican Council, together with theologians Yves Congar, Karl Rahner, Bernard Haring, she formulated proposals about nonviolence that were included in the pastoral constitution *Gaudium et Spes*. In the early 1970s, she expanded her commitment to Africa and the Middle East, and in the early eighties to Asia. The success of the "Rosary Revolution" which overthrew the Marcos regime in the Philippines, was also due to her influence and training of groups of nonviolent resistance. In recent years, she has primarily devoted herself to promoting peace in the territory of the Great Lakes in East Africa.

In Austria, she has worked for the implementation of active nonviolence in the Christian churches, for interfaith dialogue, for the promotion of peace service and for the goals of the UN Decade for a Culture of Peace and Nonviolence (2001-2010).

*(summary of a press release from the archdiocese of Vienna)*

**Wilfried Warneck, first Executive Secretary of Church and Peace, turned 80 on 28 December 2009 and celebrated his birthday in a circle of many friends in Wethen, where he lives with his wife Ruth near the Laurentiuskonvent. In a church service, he shared some thoughts on the Beatitudes:**

Whenever we hear the Beatitudes, the question first arises: Who are "the poor" of the Gospel?

Sometimes the answer is obvious. In the 60's, a volunteer in world peace service told of an experience from her childhood at the time of the 2nd World War. Through the streets of the small city in Wurttemberg where she grew up, long columns of prisoners were forced to march again and again on their way from the station to the camp: miserable, almost starving people. Each time, her mother took bread and any water containers she could find to secretly try and bring some relief to at least some of the prisoners.



*Wilfried Warneck*

When Jesus was a small boy, the Roman military destroyed Sepphoris, a city near Nazareth that was considered a hot-bed of terrorism: two thousand men were crucified along the road. The two cities were closely linked - Jesus' mother Mary is said to have originated from Sepphoris. Jesus is not known to have spoken about this childhood experience that must certainly have been extremely traumatic, but one can imagine that he would never have forgotten it. "The poor" would have had a political face for Jesus.

About the same time, there was a wave of impoverishment in Israel's farming community. In collaboration with the elite of Jerusalem, Herod extorted insane taxes from the peasantry to fund his megalomaniac building projects. The chief priests backed him up. The farmers had to take on more and more debt and were gradually driven out of house and home. As fugitives, they had to hang around the "hedges and fences". By contrast, a Galilean carpenter or a fisherman with his own boat and net had to give up something of a modest prosperity if they followed the call of Jesus.

Now Jesus attracts his first followers. How does he live with them? Voluntarily - in the power of the spirit - these people make themselves effectively the same as the poor, living homeless and without income, and they become politically suspect. Here, in the Beatitudes at the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus comes to the heart of their vocation. The Beatitudes are several things at once: a self-portrait of Jesus, a foreword to the rule by which the young group want to live, and the shortest possible concentrate of the spiritual path, onto which the disciples of Jesus venture forth.

A short time later, Christ sends these members of his community out that they do for men what they have seen and learned from him. So God comes to



people, to the miserable and the poor first of all. And the fragrance of the kingdom of heaven spreads into the hell of misery. What is it that they had observed from Jesus? Well, they eat with the outcasts, they sing and pray together, they are there for the sick, and they announce and bring to expression in their preaching that the hour of God has struck.



*Ruth Warneck  
also turned 80*

That is their mission, their task, and this mission has since been repeated by numerous congregations and communities. We also see in it the basic form of our lives, and now and then it is granted to us to see the contours of a Beatitude gleaming in our day-to-day lives, be it in living with the apprentices in Falkenburg, be it in the self-help efforts of homeless families, be it in Peace Service conflict mediation, be it in the sharing of a quiet struggle in prayer at a retreat, be it in the secrecy of personal devotion to everyday tasks and in the related sacrifice. We, with whom you are celebrating here today, have much reason for praise and thanksgiving in view of such experiences.

When it comes to the Beatitudes as a model of life in relationship with the risen and present Christ, there is certainly - above and beyond what has already been said - also the very personal and intimate exchange with him. For this you need no historical and theological knowledge of what social group at one time or another ought to be considered as "the poor". Each of us will be pointed very quickly towards himself alone. Especially when one looks back as an old man and sees all the missed opportunities where one has simply failed, where nothing remains of the image of the person described in the Beatitudes, when I see the disappointed people who felt betrayed by me, the forgotten ones, for whose sake I was not willing to stray from the path that seemed so important to me - then I very quickly become a very poor creature, for whom nothing else remains but to beg for the new spirit that Jesus promises to those who plead for it in the way that children plead with mother or father. Then I learn what it means to be "the poor" of the Gospel: someone for whom it is - without any frills and excuses - a matter of life or death.

Sometimes I have the impression that here, at the beginning of the first major sermon of Matthew's Gospel, that people are being challenged to a similar response as in the closing words about the final Judgement. I could imagine a reaction of one who has been declared righteous: "Lord, when were we poor by the power of the Spirit, when were we prepared to suffer without violence or to seek for justice or to make peace?" Then it could happen to them that Christ may decrypt and reveal to them their own life and show them when it was that the Spirit gained entry and won the upper hand - perhaps occasions long since forgotten by those affected. They thought they had done something not worth mentioning, but now the gate of their father's house opens for them.

However, we do not want to be satisfied with vague impressions; let us look what the text says clearly and unequivocally. And that is compelling: it speaks of "heaven"; this promises to us the fulfillment of complete salvation for all creation! And "comfort" - the resolution of the ancient riddle hiding behind the question "Why?". It speaks of a rulership over the earth without violence, without the exercising of power, only by the force of truth and justice. It speaks of the merciful God turning to us and revealing his own full heart, so that we will no longer be dependent on conjectures about him; we will see him face to face. This is the new reality towards which we strive. This is the new foundation on which we stand - free and secure. God shares with us manifestly all that is his.

**Marius van Hoogstraten is a young Dutch mennonite working in Germany at the office of the Mennonite Peace Committee (DMFK). The following interview helps discover what happened with the vision of Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT), an idea launched in 1984 and implemented since then by pioneers like Gene Stoltzfus (p. 3).**

***Marius, what motivated you to come to Germany for a voluntary service? What were you doing before that ?***

About a year ago, as I was writing my MA thesis and was thinking about what to do next, I found a job advertisement for Military Counseling Network (MCN). MCN is a DMFK project helping US soldiers stationed in Europe to know about their rights and get discharges. I went to Bammental, got excited about the work and applied for the job.



*Marius van Hoogstraten at a Demonstration  
at the Wall*

Before that, I had interned with CPT in Hebron, Palestine, supporting local peacemakers, and was excited about CPT as well. CPT has "Reservists" who serve in a conflict area for 2-12 weeks a year. As I started with MCN, I asked if I could do that. It turned out that this idea fit very well with DMFK's plans for building enthusiasm for CPT in Germany...

Before all this, I got my BA in Philosophy in Amsterdam and went for a year and a half to Egypt, Palestine and Syria to learn Arabic. I spent two months in a Syriac monastery in the desert...

***Your task is to make CPT known in Germany. Tell us about your own experiences with CPT.***

DMFK is currently working at organizing a German-language delegation to one of the areas in which CPT works. In the meantime I am doing presentations and try to encourage people to join English-speaking delegations which are sent on a regular basis to Colombia, Israel/Palestine and Iraq. Anyone over 18 can join: this is the first step to involvement with CPT. We've also set up a website in German, [www.cpt-de.org](http://www.cpt-de.org), and we spread posters and flyers in congregations throughout Germany.

I was part of the CPT team for two months in 2008 in Hebron. It is a Palestinian town where Israeli settlers have taken control of most of the old city center and are supported by several thousand Israeli soldiers, which makes life for the Palestinian residents nearly impossible. The Palestinian population suffers from violence and arson from the settlers, and from raids, curfews and checkpoints imposed by the army.

Our work consisted in "patrolling" - walking in violent areas with cameras. We also spent time monitoring checkpoints. Our role was to check if the soldiers stay within the limits of what they are allowed to do. We also did some reporting - if a family had been attacked by settlers or raided by the army, we assessed the situation, wrote down testimonies, etc.

And then sometimes, people would call us if things got out of hand. Once we were called late in the evening, because the army was raiding a village north of Hebron. The soldiers had shot a 16 year old boy, and taken others away, blindfolded and bound. We went there, tried to take pictures. The soldiers knocked one of us down and took the film away.

Next day the village elders asked us to stay for the funeral. The army was present, blocking the road to the graveyard - the very same platoon that had shot the boy. The village elders did a good job at keeping younger Palestinians away from the soldiers, but violence did break out after the army decided to follow the crowd back into the village. Villagers throwing stones, soldiers shooting... That was the scariest experience in my life.

***And what is going to be your next step ?***

I intend to spend about two months a year in Iraq as part of the CPT presence there, working with Kurdish refugees, supporting them to raise their voices for an end of Turkish and Iranian bombings on their villages, supporting the peace process between Turkey and the Kurds. I'm excited, it's a different type of conflict from the one in Palestine. But in both places, people have withstood incredible suffering, and still have hope and strength to rebuild their society. That is inspiring.

***Your involvement with CPT is rooted in your Christian faith. Tell us about this and about your relationship to your home congregation.***

Christ invites us to stand in nonviolent solidarity with suffering communities, with the powerless who are denied a voice. My faith is definitely a source of motivation, but also of hope and strength. It is easy to become bitter when facing war, oppression, genocide. Faith in an eternal source of justice does



help against cynicism... My focus on the demons of war makes me an outsider in most congregations. It's good to be part of a congregation, though, it helps me see the small, beautiful things of life and remember what peace might look like...

***How do young people react to your involvement with CPT ? Do you tell them about successful CPT actions ?***

A lot of my friends – especially those with a real passion for peace and justice – aren't Christians. They're usually excited to hear that there are Christians who take issues of war and oppression seriously. Usually the image they have of Christians is that they are judgmental, ultraconservative bigots, which, sadly, definitely applies to some Christians.

Secondly, most of my Christian friends think what I'm doing is great and important, but that they could never do it themselves. So that makes saints or heroes out of us, which is bad for my personal humility and perpetuates the idea that CPTers are extraordinary people. We're not. Anyone who's committed can do this work.

And then, thirdly, there are young Christians with an amazing strength of faith who aren't interested in peace and justice, because they believe their personal relationship to Jesus and mission are more important. This shows how peace and justice-focused Christianity has lost touch with my generation.

As for a success story... Focussing on success is dangerous, it is a short-term result-oriented way of thinking. It also tempts us into pride. But I do think of a clearly identifiable "success" of our work in Colombia, where CPT presence, amongst other factors, has empowered communities to non-violently stand up to militias and other armed actors and create pockets of peace...

***If you could express a wish for CPT, what would that be ?***

The old phrase of CPT is „Christians should be ready to devote the same discipline and self-sacrifice to nonviolent peacemaking as armies devote to war“. That speaks to me. If we believe in nonviolence, why are we not willing to devote the same resources to it as society devotes to the military? So I'd wish nonviolent peacemaking became as accepted and supported in the Church as the military and armed "peace missions" are in society.



*Marius with friends in a village close to Hebron: Atta Jaber -right on the picture- has rebuilt his house several time after israeli soldiers distroyed it.*



## **FEVE,**

**which stands for formation and experiences in living together, is part of the quest for a non-violent society based on Justice and Peace. This involves two years of training at a residential community, the Arche in Saint-Antoine, France.**

The crisis our society is undergoing shows that there is a real need for change. The present social model, founded on individualism and the pursuit of economic success at all cost, is no longer conceivable.

That is why we find it necessary to recreate an art of living together: relationships, sharing and joint action, for the good of all. We want to rediscover the rewards of a simple life founded on solidarity and respect for creation, learning to resist injustice.

We have to reinvent work, find a new way of earning our living and a fresh way of life.

The Arche located in Saint-Antoine has been experiencing living together by non-violent means since 1987. It is part of the Arche Community founded by Lanza del Vasto over 60 years ago. Today we are keen to share our experience with others in order to make them available to our times.

The main aim is to propose a course of training and solid experimenting in the field of non-violence and living together to people seeking the right way forward for themselves, and who would like to participate in projects involving the common life and non-violence. Moreover, we desire to create a living, interdependent network of people with training in living together and non-violence, in order to generate creative resistance.

Who does the project address? Young people (single, couples or families) between the age of 22 and 35, who wish to live differently, are on the lookout for alternative projects and want to start working on a future in harmony with their values.



*storage of wood for wintertime*

Look at <http://www.feve-nv.com> to find all important information, the program of formation, and the enrollment procedure. You can sign up right now. The first training session will start in October 2010. Excellent French is required for participation.



**The International Ecumenical Peace Convocation (IEPC, scheduled for 18 – 24 May 2011, in Kingston, Jamaica) will mark the conclusion of the *Decade to Overcome Violence (DOV 2001-2010)*.** Church and Peace has already responded to the first draft of the Declaration on Just Peace, and is at present exploring options for participation in the IEPC. The organisers have already reported on the goals and the work on the Declaration as well as on the convocation programme:

**The IEPC wants to prompt the churches in**

- celebrating the Peace of the Lord and the good will of His people;
- working on a theology of peace which **refutes any theological justification of violence**;
- establishing creative and efficient forms of mediation in order to prevent and overcome violence and promote the cause of peace and justice;
- **committing themselves to a non-violent, peaceful and just theology and practice.** (*emphasis added by the editors*)

**The work on a Declaration on Just Peace continues:**

Moderated by Dr Konrad Raiser a second drafting group is working on a concise Ecumenical Declaration on Just Peace; while compact, this draft offers an appendix with extensive background research material. It will be based on material submitted on the first draft, as well as from existing statements, reports of the ecumenical visits ("living letters") and the findings of expert consultations. In February 2011 this text will be presented to the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches as the theological foundation for the IEPC, and will be discussed at the IEPC in May 2011. It is hoped that this effort will culminate in the adoption of this resolution by the 10<sup>th</sup> WCC plenary assembly in 2013.

**Four highly topical areas have been selected as the main themes of the programme of the Jamaica Convocation:**

**- Peace in the Community**

How can we overcome racism, sexism, and similar cultures that violate the lives of so many?

**- Peace with the Earth**

What are Christian ways to care for creation? What can persons of faith do at the personal and collective levels?

**- Peace in the Marketplace**

What is the role of Christians in the world's markets?

**- Peace among the Peoples**

An interdependent world means Christians must prevent violence and promote reconciliation in new ways. But how?

Bible study, lectures, workshops, as well as prayer time and services will define the working rhythm of the Kingston Convocation. Time will be devoted to the evaluation of experience gained 'in the field'. Existing networks will be reinforced, and opportunities to develop new contacts and new forms of group interaction offered.

## Upcoming events:

### **Southeastern Europe conference**

Place: Novi Sad (Serbia)

Date: **October 13 - 17 2010**

Theme: „In building peace we glorify God“

### **Germanspeaking regional conference**

Place: Thomashof near Karlsruhe (Germany)

Date: **November 26 - 28 2010**

Theme: „Auge um Auge? Zahn um Zahn? - Wege aus der Vergeltungskultur“  
(Keynote speaker Howard Zehr on restorative justice; Seminar of the *Alternatives to Violence* Program for youth)

### **International conference:**

Place: Communauté de l'Arche de St-Antoine

St-Antoine-L'Abbaye

38160 St-Marcellin (France)

Date: **May 19 - 22 2011**

**For more details look up our website [www.church-and-peace.org](http://www.church-and-peace.org) or contact the international office. You can download this newsletter as well as other documents.**



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

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