



Newsletter

Conference 2023
Overcoming Racism

Christian Pacifism
In the Face of War

Creation Care
A Radical Change
of Lifestyle



Overcoming Racism in the Church

A call to those in the Global North to take up the collective challenge

I came with a particular perspective as I joined the Church and Peace European conference on the theme 'Overcoming Racism in the Church', held on 29 September–1 October in Baarlo, the Netherlands.

I am a Quaker. Friends in the Global North are beginning to grapple with our history of colonialism, mission work and profit from the exploitation and enslavement of people. Quakers in the last two centuries have preferred to remember our passionate participation in the abolitionist movement but not our direct profits from enslaved people. We are relatively small in number, and our wealth, acclaim and global recognition is concentrated in the Global North while the majority of our members live in the Global South.

Nearly 100 people from 15 European and

non-European countries came to the conference, which focused on the verse 'Then God said, "Let us make human beings in our image, after our likeness"' (Genesis 1:26). People of colour, affected by racism, contributed their experiences and analyses as speakers during plenary sessions and in workshops.

I was particularly struck by what I perceived as a relative agreement that 'something must be done about racism' and, indeed, even an acknowledgement that many of the congregations represented did not necessarily reflect the full, multicultural and multi-ethnic character of our European communities. This seemed like a refreshingly new and welcome openness.

But what should we do? One speaker, who is originally from Nigeria but lives and leads a congregation in the

UK, made a comment about how the majority of Quakers are in the UK. I realise that not only must we address the many questions about colonialism, mission work and racism we have left unanswered, those of us in Europe or the US who've directly benefited from these injustices must do more to acknowledge the majority of our spiritual siblings, who live in Africa and other parts of the Global South.

This would help others who are aligned with us, as peace churches or activists or even other beneficiaries of injustice, see the example of a faith community taking issues of inclusion – and, ultimately, truth and reconciliation – seriously.

This is part of what I appreciate so much about attending ecumenical gatherings of this kind. Sharing in worship that is

continued on page 3



Church and Peace

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

Editorial team:

Lydia Funck, General Secretary, and
Terri Miller, Individual Member

Church and Peace International Office

Mittelstraße 4, D-34474 Diemelstadt-Wethen
Tel: +49 5694 9905506
intlooffice@church-and-peace.org
www.church-and-peace.org

Translation and proofreading:

Terri Miller

Layout: Benji Wiebe, mennox.de

Production: Marion Wiebe, mennox.de/it

Find us on social media

 youtube.com/@churchandpeace3338

 instagram.com/church_and_peace

 facebook.com/groups/1161641020530889

Support Church and Peace

Account in the UK:

Send Sterling cheques to the order of 'Church and Peace' to Gerald Drewett, 39, Postwood Green, Hertford SG13 7QJ or alternatively make a transfer by BACS to sort code 16-58-10 and account 20745001 and send email notification to gerald.drewett@ntlworld.com

Account in the USA:

Send US Dollar checks to the order of 'Ivester Church of the Brethren (designation: Church and Peace fund)'; to: Ivester Church of the Brethren, 25056 'E' Avenue, Grundy Center, Iowa 50638-8761, USA (tax deductible)

Account in Germany:

Church and Peace e.V.
Bank für Kirche und Diakonie KD-Bank,
IBAN: DE55 3506 0190 1014 3800 07
BIC: GENODE33DKD

Opinions expressed by authors do not necessarily reflect the views of Church and Peace. Church and Peace reserves the right to edit material received for publication.



Photo: Kristin Flory

Strengthened by collective engagement

Dear readers,

As the public climate in Europe and around the world becomes more and more hostile to humankind, I believe that Christian peace activists (also) have a duty to make a difference. Over my past seven years as General Secretary of Church and Peace, I have seen time and again that there are people who fulfil this duty, and I have experienced this as a great blessing and encouragement.

This newsletter reports on our conference 'Overcoming Racism in the Church', sharing impressions of the gathering's challenging inputs, encounters and search for what overcoming racism means in daily life.

In addition, despite – or precisely because of – the current catastrophes in the world, this issue is about the ongoing activities of Church and Peace members: activities against hatred

and enmity, against reliance on military solutions to conflicts, against nuclear deterrence, against overexploitation of creation and instead towards justice, peace and integrity of creation. Once again this year, those whom we have welcomed as new members have made us realise how necessary and energising it is to do this work together.

I hope you enjoy reading this issue of the newsletter, the last in my capacity as General Secretary of Church and Peace. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for the many enriching encounters, the supportive relationships and the rich and always encouraging collective engagement.

All the best,

Lydia Funck

Overcoming Racism in the Church

continued from page 1

both similar and different to what is familiar to me. Hearing other faith communities struggling with familiar challenges and celebrating common joys.

Because we all have our work cut out for us. For example, Britain Yearly Meeting has taken a decision on reparations, an ambitious plan which aligns with much of what we discussed at the Church and Peace conference, but I'm not clear how familiar this is to our members. We need to support those of us who are looking for concrete ways to acknowledge, learn more and help repair some of the hurt caused by the legacy of racism in our faith.



Photo: Church and Peace

Gatherings like the Church and Peace conference are an important first step, where we come together and acknowledge the collective challenges we must face, together.

*A Quaker living in Italy, **Evan Welkin** represented Friends World Committee for Consultation - Europe*

and Middle East Section, a Church and Peace member, at the 2023 European conference.

Ulrike Flämig, Evan Welkin and Yoram Karusya in one of the conference workshops.

Dr Masiwa Ragies Gunda

We must face our fears

Why do we fear being equal to others that look different? Why do we fear honestly re-memoing the past, how that past is responsible for the present and already deciding the future?

I am looking forward to further and deeper conversations around the fears that people have, fears that make racism, xenophobia or other forms of discrimination between ethnic groups acceptable because by being racist or xenophobic we feel and think we are protecting or defending ourselves and our own ethnic group.

Overcoming racism is overcoming these fears that, in many cases, have now been institutionalised in our laws, policies and practices.

Dr Masiwa Ragies Gunda, World Council of Churches (WCC) programme executive on Overcoming Racism, Racial Discrimination, and Xenophobia. Read more of his reflections on the conference: <https://www.oikoumene.org/news/at-peace-conference-wcc-focuses-on-overcoming-racism>.



Photo: Ivars Kupcis/WCC

Conference 2023

The Racism within Us

An ongoing process of self-reflection

The workshop 'Critical self-reflection of white and Christian spaces – Understanding the racism in us' challenged participants at the Church and Peace European Conference 2023 to examine racist attitudes and actions close to home and offered insights and recommendations for confronting racism in European churches.

Facilitated by Isabelle and Bruno Eliat-Serck from Belgium, the workshop aimed to address a fundamental challenge – recognising racism within ourselves and predominantly white Christian spaces.

Through skits, role plays and small group discussions, participants examined their attitudes, language and behaviours as white Christians. This shedding of light on the

subtleties of racism that often go unnoticed emphasised the need for collective exploration to envision a truly antiracist alternative.

Participants delved into BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and people of colour) experiences to foster empathy and a deeper understanding of racism's impact. Recognising and agreeing that discrimination, due to factors like physical, social or cultural differences, can affect people for a long time became the basis for participants to work towards overcoming racism and fostering empathy for those who experience it.

The attempt to simulate an inclusive board meeting was revealing as participants struggled with

unconscious racism even in the role play. This realisation underscored the vital role that continuous self-reflection and learning play in the fight against racism. 'We definitely need each other's help to overcome (unconscious) racism in our churches', Isabelle summarised.

Participants recommended steps that white Christians can take to dismantle racism including

- actively holding individuals accountable for racist behaviour and immediately intervening
- fostering open and safe spaces for dialogue about racism
- providing a non-judgmental, open platform to share experiences

Prioritising inclusivity everywhere, but especially in decision-making structures of churches, can help build Christian spaces characterised by diversity, solidarity and equality.

The workshop concluded that the journey to overcome racism in the Church is ongoing and multifaceted, and it requires the collective efforts of all: actively confronting unconscious racism and committing to creating more inclusive Christian and faith-based spaces where all are truly welcome, valued and heard.

Together, we can work towards a Church free from racism and discrimination, embodying the true spirit of peace and unity.

Workshop participants in conversation



Photo: Marina Mebis

Conference 2023

Theology as a Decolonising Participatory Practice

Conference speakers Kirsten van der Ham and Andrés Pacheco Lozano moderated a participatory workshop on the topic of decolonising theology.

The concern of decolonising theology has theoretical links with feminist theology and liberation theology. In practical application, the struggle against apartheid in South Africa in the 1980s and the Black Lives Matter movement from 2013 onwards were pioneering.

Colonial theology is characterised by the colonial masters actively teaching what is right and the colonised passively accepting this. Decolonisation of theology concerns both content and forms of transmitting of knowledge. The workshop aimed to overcome how, in colonial practice, those who have knowledge stand in opposition to those who do not. The educator Paulo Freire criticised this form of learning as a 'banking method' in which the passive student's head is filled with knowledge.

Doing theology is not a question of experts educating non-experts. As a methodological approach we therefore practised the group jigsaw method to tackle the issue of racism in theology and church. We studied the voices of two Black theologians in the Netherlands who worked on the topic in the 1980s and 1990s but were largely ignored by mainstream Dutch theology: Doreen Hazel and Sonny Hof.



Photo: Church and Peace

First, we formed 'home groups' of four, whose members were selected at random. These groups each discussed the question, What do I know about 'decolonising theology'?

The participants then formed so-called expert groups, each of which acquired expertise on one of four texts by Doreen Hazel and Sonny Hof. In the expert group, each person first read the assigned text individually and then the four group members discussed it together.

Finally, everyone went back to their home group. There were now four people sitting there who had read four different texts. Each person presented their text to the others in turn, and everyone discussed each text.

Discussing the texts encouraged further reflection on how we can work towards a decolonising peace theology and work for peace. An important realisation was that we are all shaped by colonial racist theology and practice. The way we express and live faith in the colonial tradition often excludes people of colour. So, if we are called to change our church life and theological practice, what is stopping us?

This workshop method was exciting and made clear that we, as children of God, are all experts. The richness that our different biographies and perspectives hold is important and must find equal space in our discourse about God (theology) in order to go a step further on the path of decolonisation.

Josef Freise is a Church and Peace member from Germany.

Small groups share their new expertise.

Christian Pacifism in the Face of War

A day like no other at the Mennonite church in Neuf-Brisach

On 18 November, the Mennonite Church of Béthel in Neuf-Brisach, France, invited people to a day of meeting and reflection on Christian pacifism in the face of war. The day brought together Mennonite churches and members of the Church and Peace network, including members of the Soc association, the French branch of the International Fellowship of Reconciliation, the Communauté de l'Arche de Lanza del Vasto and Quakers.

The day began with a talk by Corentin Haldemann on the theme 'Our pacifist and nonviolent convictions in times of war'. Current conflicts in Ukraine and Israel-Palestine, among others,

often put our convictions to the test when a prevailing view is that there is no alternative to supplying weapons to defend our democracy. So, it's important to remember that pacifism and the choice of nonviolence are not just a question of ethics, but an expression of our faith!

Biblical references such as Matthew 26:52 ('All who take the sword will perish by the sword.') or Luke 7:9, where Jesus praises the centurion's faith, have often been used by churches to justify war and encourage people to join the army. Corentin asked the participants to reflect on these texts and others, with the aim of acknowledging the limits of our own convictions. How

should we react when faced with real violence? Is nonviolence the only strategic solution, and what do we do when there are other, better strategies? A Quaker friend pointed out that 'the opposite of violence is not nonviolence, but justice'.

Then Bruno Sägeser from Schänzli Mennonite Church in Basel, a former Church and Peace Board member, shared his experience of 'hospitality as a means of building peace'. He recounted how he had been welcomed and visited many times by Korean Christians, which had enabled him and his wife, Heidi, to forge friendships with sister churches in South Korea.

After lunch, the participants gathered for a 'World Café', meeting in discussion groups around themes such as 'How to live and build peace in my family' or 'How to act as a church against violence in our country'. The discussions were lively and fruitful and were then reported back to all the participants. It was an opportunity to share what everyone had learned or discovered during the day, a day which ended with a time of prayer and song.

It was a day of refocusing and examining our own convictions but also of opening up to other associations and Christians who share our concerns and convictions.

Participants at the 'Christian pacifism in the face of war' day, a tri-national event initiated by members of Church and Peace.



Photo: Claudine Brun

Every Part of Creation Matters

Churches urged to take proactive role to address the climate crisis and promote sustainability

'Every part of creation matters!' This was the message to the churches in Europe from the 2023 Assembly of the European Christian Environmental Network (ECEN) on 31 August–3 September in Roskilde, Denmark.

The conference offered over 80 participants from churches in 25 countries a space to discuss vital concerns in the rapidly evolving field of eco-theology, to assess developments related to shaping key EU policy responses to climate change and to outline a vision of a sustainable future in Europe.

In his input 'Every part of Creation matters', Church and Peace vice-chair Kees Nieuwerth highlighted that biodiversity faces a dire threat from human activities, risking the extinction of species at an alarming rate due to our unsustainable exploitation of nature.

He pointed to the European Green Deal as a step forward towards a green economy even though it does not question the mainstream growth paradigm or sufficiently analyse the paradigm's impact on the Southern Hemisphere.

Kees noted that, despite commitments like the Paris Agreement and the European Green Deal, governments often fall short in aligning policies with sustainability, particularly regarding agriculture and fossil fuel support.



Photo: Peter Pavlovic

'Churches in Dialogue with Politics' panelists: (l. to r.) Fiona Paulus, Ecumenical Youth Council of Europe; Kenneth Mtata, programme director for Public Witness and Diakonia, World Council of Churches; Marianne Bigum, member of the Danish Parliament and vice-chair of the parliamentary Climate, Energy and Utilities Committee; Kees Nieuwerth.

To address these crises, we cannot stop at mitigation and compensation, he stressed, rather 'we need transformation'. This means challenging the belief in unlimited growth and promoting a 'radical change of lifestyle' akin to a spiritual conversion.

'We need to rediscover that creation is a sacred gift to be treasured. We need to develop an economy of simplicity and sufficiency, a circular one for the welfare of our fellow creatures and our fellow human beings', Kees urged.

He called for climate justice advocates to engage the churches in a fundamental shift to address

the climate and biodiversity crises from a spiritual and practical standpoint, promoting sustainable and responsible actions within their communities and beyond.

Read the full text of Kees's paper 'Every Part of Creation Matters': <https://www.church-and-peace.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Every-part-of-creation-matters-ECEN-2023-Kees-Nieuwerth.pdf>.

Visit the ECEN website for key documents and a gallery of photos from the assembly: <https://ecen.org/assemblies/ecen-assembly-2023-materials>.

AGM 2023

Meet the Members

At its Annual General Meeting on 14 September 2023, Church and Peace welcomed four new members to the network.

Sascha Palm

Protestant, lives in Bonn, Germany

My faith inspires me to get involved in the world and in the Church. I am currently doing further training at the Laien-Uni Theologie (Theological University for Laity) and have completed further training as a peace theologian. As a coach, engaging in dialogue, listening to each other and engaging in joint action have become important to me and have shaped me. With my membership in Church and Peace, I want to emphasise the value of the different Christian traditions living and working together in the spirit of a European and international ecumenism for peace.



Leonie Glahn-Ejikeme

Quaker, lives in Bad Pyrmont, Germany

When I studied in Giessen in the early 1980s, I was able to get to know the Church and Peace office in Laufdorf near Wetzlar and experience all its activities. As a member of a small religious community, I find networks with kindred spirits important, encouraging and healing. As a delegate for the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Germany from 2016 to 2022, I have participated in and helped to organise many events. I would like to continue to support the network, whose values I share, and to engage with like-minded people in the constant struggle for a healthy, wholesome and equal way of living together for all creatures.



Ecumenical Forum of European Christian Women, German Section

Ecumenical, Germany

The German section of the Ecumenical Forum of European Christian Women was founded in 1982. Made up of Christian women and women's associations from various churches of the European ecumenical movement, the network has 87 individual and 24 organisational members. Our aim is to give a voice to European Christian women and to organise ecumenical encounters. We seek allies and resources to overcome language and material barriers and to promote work for peace, justice and the integrity of creation. We value and support the work of Church and Peace and are pleased to become an associate member.



Third Order Community of the Christusbruderschaft Selbitz

Protestant, Germany

The Third Order Community is a group of single people, couples and families who live in a special bond with the community of the Christusbruderschaft Selbitz. We are a fellowship which shares the vocation and spirituality of the community in a binding and tangible way and realises its own form in everyday life. Our aim is to be a dwelling place of God's love among people and to live in the love of Jesus Christ. Today, over 100 women and men belong to the Third Order Community. We have been an associate member of Church and Peace since 2005 and are pleased to become a full member now.



Diary

5–7 June 2024

Board meeting

Wethen, Germany

24–27 October 2024

European Conference and Annual
General Meeting

'Resisting War Today: Preparing
Collective Nonviolent Alternatives'

Brussels, Belgium

20–22 November 2024

Board meeting

Neuwied, Germany

29 November–1 December 2024

German-language regional
conference

'Climate and military: Resisting the
principalities and powers'

Karlsruhe, Germany

Check for events at: [https://www.
church-and-peace.org/en/events](https://www.church-and-peace.org/en/events)



Web Resources

Impressions from the CEC Assembly
by Lydia Funck

*Resources from the 2023 European
conference*

'Every part of Creation matters'
by Kees Nieuwerth

'Theologische Perspektiven auf
feministische pazifistische Wege zum
Frieden' -

'Gemeinsam in und für Europa – ist der
Geist der Charta Oecumenica noch
lebendig?'
by Antje Heider-Rottwilm

'European conference on racism and the
Church: A needed debate'
Press release, 5 October 2023

More Church and Peace press releases
Download and share in your networks!
[www.church-and-peace.org/en/
documents](http://www.church-and-peace.org/en/documents)

Church and Peace YouTube Channel
www.bit.ly/ChurchandPeaceonYoutube

Full of Gratitude

*Chairperson Antje Heider-Rottwilm brings news of
upcoming personnel changes in the Church and Peace
International Office.*

It is with a heavy heart that we have to say goodbye to **Helga Amelung** after 18 years of conscientious, reliable administrative work. Helga has made her mark on Church and Peace through her dedication and calm nature. She will be taking on a new professional challenge in Wetzlar. As a memento, she received a book with greetings from network members and memories of our time together, in which great appreciation was evident.

Another significant change is on the horizon, as we will also be bidding farewell to our General Secretary **Lydia Funck** in March. For seven years Lydia has shaped the network with impressive charisma and expertise, strengthening, rejuvenating and expanding it. Lydia will be taking on new professional challenges as the person responsible for international networks and ecumenism at Bread for the World-Germany. We are pleased for her and say goodbye full of gratitude

for her service with Church and Peace.

'I still remember the first event I took part in in Croatia in 2017. Since then, I have always been impressed by the ecumenical and interreligious diversity of the members' commitment to justice, peace and reconciliation throughout Europe. These experiences and encounters were a piece of heaven, or a valuable treasure chest, that will continue to accompany me in the future,' Lydia says.

We wish Helga and Lydia God's blessing and guidance on their journey.

We have found a new General Secretary who, together with Marina Mebs, will form the new team of the International Office: theologian and activist **Juliane Prüfert** will take over Lydia's area of responsibility from mid-February and will certainly add her own touch to it. We look forward to working together!



United Kingdom***Pilgrimage for Nuclear Disarmament***

During a four-day journey from Barrow-in-Furness to Grange-over-Sands, the Christian Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament advocated for the abolition of nuclear weapons and prayed for global peace. Emphasising the theme of transformative pilgrimage, 'From Darkness to Light', participants shared a sense of fellowship and marvelled at the beauty of God's creation.

<https://t1p.de/oilsp>

**United Kingdom*****Open Letter Calls for De-escalation and Dialogue in Palestine and Israel***

Church and Peace, the Anglican Pacifist Fellowship, the Christian Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, and Quakers in Britain are among representatives of 14 peace organisations and over 700 church members and leaders who signed an open letter to the British Foreign Secretary in October 2023 in light of the escalating violence in Israel and Gaza. The letter, issued by the Network of Christian Peace Organisations, calls for promotion of 'de-escalation and dialogue' in Palestine and Israel. It highlights the immense human suffering and urges leaders to pursue lasting 'non-military' solutions to peace in the region. <https://ncpo.org.uk/israel-gaza-october23>

**Switzerland*****Book Offers Help When Gender, Culture and Faith Collide***

In her book *Quand genre, culture et foi s'entrechoquent* (When Gender, Culture and Faith Collide), Marie-Noëlle Yoder from the Study and Conference Centre Bienenberg provides insights for dealing with questions raised by gender and sexual orientation. With 20 questions followed by possible answers, this book, part of the French-language series 'Éditions Mennonites', invites readers to question and rethink prejudices and constructively address questions about their personal faith. <https://www.editions-mennonites.fr/2023/10/quand-genre-culture-et-foi-sentrechoquent>

**Germany/Austria*****Quakers Stand Up for Climate Justice***

Under the name Earthcare Witness, members and friends of the Religious Society of Friends - Quakers from Germany and Austria have come together to campaign for peace, justice and the integrity of creation. By taking a stand against the repression and criminalisation of climate activists or by participating in protests, Earthcare Witness calls for concrete steps towards global climate justice.



the Network

**Belgium*****Event Series Explores Violence in the Bible***

Sortir de la Violence hosted a series of events from October 2023 to February 2024 that revealed hidden meanings behind recurring themes of violence in biblical texts. Drawing on the theories of René Girard, the sessions offered participants different interpretations of how to understand violence in the Bible.

**Germany*****Discussion Guide: Learning to Talk about Israel and Palestine***

The German section of the Ecumenical Forum of European Christian Women has published a discussion guide in preparation for the 2024 World Day of Prayer, which has Palestine as its focus. It aims to help people learn to talk about the conflict-laden topic of Israel and Palestine and centres on the sharing of personal experiences and feelings. <https://t1p.de/d11zw>

**Germany*****Perspectives for Nonviolent Coexistence in the Holy Land***

Refo Moabit in Berlin hosted two inspiring evenings during which representatives of the organisation Combatants for Peace told their stories as former enemies — a Palestinian fighter and an Israeli soldier. United in the conviction that the military occupation must end, they together demonstrated new prospects for nonviolent coexistence in the Holy Land.

Croatia***Believers for Peace Oppose Dehumanisation in the Middle East***

In response to the spiralling violence in the Middle East, Believers for Peace have issued the statement 'Right now, despite everything' expressing concern for all the people in Israel and Palestine, speaking out against any dehumanisation of others and reminding all believers of their duty to work for peace. The network, which includes Ana and Otto Raffai as active members, works with people from Muslim and Christian faith communities in South-East Europe to promote religions as a force for peace. <https://t1p.de/r9r2b>

**Greece*****Report Sheds Light on Human Rights Violations on Lesbos***

The new report 'Deadly End' by Aegean Migrant Solidarity examines the lethal, inhumane conditions in the Moria Reception and Identification Centre on the Greek island of Lesbos between 2016 and 2020. The report reveals that deaths were not isolated incidents but a result of the centre's design and operation. The publication was supported by the German Mennonite Peace Committee, which regularly organises study trips to Lesbos. <https://www.dmfk.de/ams-deadly-end-bericht>

Deutsches Mennonitisches Friedenskomitee

The Last Word

‘The image of which we are is love’

A reflection on Genesis 1:26: ‘Then God said, “Let us make human beings in our image, after our likeness.”’

Each of God's creations is a masterpiece, but the most remarkable earthly creation is, and

this likeness. The problem is that all too often, the proposition ‘Humans bear the image of God’ is inverted, and we form a human image of God, too human in fact to be truly God.

God is not an old man in a cloud nor is he some kind of superman with human feelings. God is much more complicated and complex than we think. God's way of acting in the world is much more subtle: it's a power of love, an impulse of life, leading to progressive evolution.

Our text is not a revelation about the nature of God, but about the nature of human beings.

God did not create us out of loneliness or boredom. God is entirely self-sufficient. It is out of love that God gives humankind the grace to be his creatures and to be in God's image. Being created in God's image means that we were made to be in relationship with others. Our essential and most fundamental need is to love and be loved, since the image of which we are is love.

All forms of racism go hand in hand with attacks on dignity and violations of human rights. Faced with this reality, we must be determined not to turn a blind eye.

If we are to respond to the legitimate claims of those affected by racism, which relate to the most basic rights, we need to recognise the nuances and complexity of the issue and open our eyes not only to individual behaviour but also to the interaction of norms and structures – implicit and explicit – in society.

We are called upon to repent of racism in order to re-establish the divine image that we have lost. Social peace and the harmony of our societies depend on it.

God's will is for us to love one another (John 13:34), for, ‘Those who say, “I love God”, and hate their brothers or sisters, are liars; for those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen.’ (1 John 4:20).

Summary of the sermon by Pastor Yawo Kakpo from Togo, a Church and Peace individual member, during the closing worship of the Church and Peace 2023 conference. Discover the full sermon text and other resources from the conference at: <https://www.church-and-peace.org/en/documents/conferences/2023-european-conference>.



Pastor Yawo Kakpo

remains, the human being. After completing the creative activity, God ‘looked at everything he had made and saw that it was very good’ (Genesis 1:31).

The likeness of God to humans is not a matter of appearance but requires faith against appearance. Faith itself is the only possible confirmation for understanding