



EDITORIAL



Dr. Geiko Müller-Fahrenholz

It is a joyful moment for me to see the first number of our E-Bulletin appear on your screens. In three years the International Ecumenical Peace Convocation will take place in Kingston, Jamaica. So it is high time to offer you relevant materials in order to become engaged in this unique event.

The Last General Assembly of the World Council of Churches (meeting 2006 in Porto Alegre, Brazil) decided to have a Peace Convocation in 2011, both as a “harvest festival” of the Decade to Overcome Violence and as a “planting season” for fresh initiatives. Why did they chose “peace” to be the positive counter-term to violence? This edition of our e-bulletin and those that are scheduled to follow during the next years are meant to provide answers.

Violence is a universal phenomenon, a vicious and disastrous abuse of human power that reaches into every corner of our lives, from the most intimate to the most global. Violence works like a downward spiral that sucks human beings, social institutions, economic and political structures and not least the Earth herself into a murderous embrace. This is such an overwhelming reality that many human women and men take it to be the law by which the world is run.

The motto that we have chosen for the Convocation affirms a counter message: “Glory to God and Peace on Earth” – these words from the well-known Christmas story open up a different horizon. The motto insists that the peace of God is the energy that keeps the world going.

God’s Peace has many faces, and comes in bits and pieces. We have singled out eight thematic areas, and you will be reading about them in this journal.

Violence in Theology and Theology Against Violence; Peace at Heart; Peace Begins at Home; Peace in the Virtual World; Peace to the Streets; Peace on Earth is Peace with the Earth; Peace in the Market Places; Make Peace, Not War [[read more...](#)]

Our work in these areas needs your support, your comments and proposals. Hence we hope that this can also become something of a forum and a base for networking. We also plan to offer Bible studies, such as the one in this issue by our Reference Group Moderator Fernando Enns, on Luke 2, 1 – 21. You will find short reports about the Living Letters, the ecumenical team visits that take the ecumenical peace agenda to the churches around the globe.

It is my hope that this bulletin will become a useful and inspiring instrument to connect our efforts in the service of the divine “prince of peace”.

Dr. Geiko Müller-Fahrenholz

EXPERT CONSULTATIONS

One of the main streams that will feed the process leading to the Convocation in 2011 are expert consultations. Experts from different par of the world, from different background and from different confession gather to reflect on several issues related to the 8 main IEPC themes. So far, the following consultations have taken place:

31. Mar 08 - 4. Apr 08 International Peace Symposium on “Peace and Human Security: Global Insecurity and Overcoming Violence”

Seoul, Korea



International Peace Symposium on “Peace and Human Security: Global Insecurity and Overcoming Violence” (March 31 – 4 April 2008) in Seoul (South Korea). The event is the result of a fruitful collaboration between the DOAM Deutsche Ostasienmission, Tomisaka Christian Center, Korean Peace Foundation, and the Decade to Overcome Violence (DOV). Participants reflected on the concept of “human security” and its relation to “Overvulnerability” and Invulnerability. [[more](#)]

3. Dec 07 - 5. Dec 07 **Worship, spirituality and the IEPC**

Baar, Switzerland



"Worship, spirituality and the IEPC" (3-5 December 2007), at the Focolare centre in Baar (Switzerland), and organised with P202. At this meeting, participants gathered to start planning the process leading to the IEPC by working out an overall framework for the Convocation, as well as by already looking at details of the spiritual life - bible studies, worship, prayer, music, silence and other forms of spiritual expressions - during and towards the Convocation. [\[more\]](#)

16. Nov 07 - 18. Nov 07 **The Responsibility to Protect: International Ecumenical Consultation**

Evangelische Akademie Arnoldshain - Schmitten, Germany



Does the human family have the responsibility - or even the duty - to intervene when states are no longer capable or willing to protect some segments of their population? How can adequate information about gross human rights violations be secured? These and related concerns are on the agenda for discussion during this consultation, which is part of the European focus of the Decade and of the preparatory process leading to an Ecumenical Declaration on Just Peace to be presented to the International Ecumenical Peace Convocation in

May 2011. [\[more\]](#)

5. Nov 07 - 9. Nov 07 **Ecumenical Conference on Poverty, Wealth and Ecology**

Dar es Salam, Tanzania



When does the pursuit of economical wellbeing turn into greed? This is one of the questions to be discussed at a 5-9 November ecumenical consultation in Dar es Salaam. Joint church strategies and actions for addressing the interlinked problems of poverty, excessive wealth, and ecological degradation in Africa are intended results. [\[more\]](#)

1. Oct 07 - 4. Oct 07 **Healing of Memories - Reconciling Communities**

Dublin, Ireland



This international ecumenical consultation will assess best practices in dealing with large-scale crimes affecting entire nations or ethnic communities. [\[more\]](#)

17. May 07 - 20. May 07 **International Conference on Forgiveness, Peace and Reconciliation**

Volos, Greece



This event is sponsored by Volos Academy for Theological Studies, Boston Theological Institute, and World Council of Churches. [\[more\]](#)

LIVING LETTERS VISITS

"You show that you are a letter from Christ delivered by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts." (2 Corinthians 3:3,RSV)

Living Letters are small ecumenical teams, composed of 4 - 6 women and men from around the world and from different confessions, and who have witnessed violence in its various forms and are engaged in working for just peace. The team visits a country to listen, learn, share approaches and challenges in overcoming violence and in peace-making, and to pray together for peace in the community and in the world. [\[read more...\]](#)

So far, a Living Letters delegation has visited the following countries:

Sri Lanka - 4-12 August 2007 [\[read more...\]](#)

USA - 15-23 September 2007 [\[read more...\]](#)

Kenya - 30 January - 3 February 2008 [\[read more...\]](#)

Sudan - 26 March - 2 April 2008 [\[read more...\]](#)

Other visits are also scheduled for the rest of the year.

DRAFTING GROUP

During its 9th Assembly held in Porto Alegre, members of the ecumenical adopted a statement on “Vulnerable populations at risk. Statement on the responsibility to protect”, where they made the following recommendation:

h) Asks the Central Committee to consider a study process engaging all member churches and ecumenical organisations in order to develop an extensive ecumenical declaration on peace, firmly rooted in an articulated theology. This should deal with topics such as just peace, the Responsibility to Protect, the role and the legal status of non-state combatants, the conflict of values (for example: territorial integrity and human life). It should be adopted at the conclusion of the Decade to Overcome Violence in 2010. [[read more...](#)]

Hence, the International Ecumenical Declaration on Just Peace that will be adopted at this Convocation will be one of the culminating points of the Decade to Overcome Violence (DOV). With this in mind, a Drafting Group composed of eminent theologians from different confessions has been formed in order to reflect on the Declaration on Peace.

The Drafting Group will meet for the very first time in July 2008, in Nadi (Fidji). The Group is composed of the following nine people:

Dr. Benga Daniel, Rev. Dr. Wanda Deifelt, Prof. Musa Dube, Fr. Kurian Jacob, Dr. Hong-Hsin Lin, Dr. Geiko Muller-Fahrenheit (Coordinator of the Group), Dr. Muriel Orevillo-Montenegro, Prof. Larry Rasmussen and Prof. Robert Schreiter.

BIBLE STUDY

Excerpt from bible study on Luke 2, presented by Rev. Prof. Dr. Fernando ENNS during the WCC Central Committee meeting (February 2008)

Glory to God – and Peace on Earth. This is the motto that has been chosen for the International Ecumenical Peace Convocation, to mark the culmination of the Decade to Overcome Violence in the year 2011. In the morning-prayer we have listened to the words from the gospel of Luke: Glory to God and peace on Earth is right at the centre of the Christmas Story. Our reflections this morning should provide some orientation on our common journey towards the International Ecumenical Peace Convocation.

Luke 2 contains the story that I personally remember the best from my early childhood. Having grown up in a white middle-class protestant church in Southern Brazil, it was common to organize a Christmas play with the children – every single year. Usually I did not want to be one of the angels, since they were dressed like girls. It was much more exciting to be one of the shepherds, since they looked like real boys and had long sticks in their hands. But the best choice was to be Joseph: dressed like a boy but not having to say a word on stage –no memorizing of difficult and strange words from the Bible. Just sitting there with Mary. – What I understood in those days was very basic: something very special had happened. Joseph and Mary were poor people. The shepherds were afraid of the angels, but later they rejoiced with them. And this newborn child was different from us kids, it had a strange impact on everyone who encountered it. In the end everyone was very happy and we got presents. I remember the wonderful feelings of becoming part this very special story. [[read more...](#)]