Churches seeking Reconciliation and Peace

2001-2010

DECADE TO

OVERCOME VIOLENCE
Churches Seeking Reconciliation and Peace
What is the Decade about?

The Decade to Overcome Violence (DOV) 2001-2010: Churches seeking reconciliation and peace calls churches, ecumenical organizations and all people of good will - to work together at all levels (local, regional, global) with communities, secular movements, people of all living faiths for peace, justice and reconciliation.
What is the DOV?

- An invitation to address the issue of violence
- A spiritual journey for individuals, churches and movements
- A study and reflection process
- An opportunity for creative projects
What does the DOV do for us?

It calls us to walk with those oppressed by violence, and to act in solidarity with those struggling for justice, peace and the integrity of creation.

It calls churches to repent for our complicity in violence, and to engage in theological reflection to overcome the spirit, logic and practice of violence.

It moves the concern for just peace from the periphery of the church to its very center.
Violence!

The DOV is the prophetic ecumenical call to everyone in response to the growing epidemic of violence that holds us in suspense between fascination and fear, passion and indifference.
Confusion of conflict and violence

War as an institution has ceased to exist

No monopoly on violence

Lower threshold to resorting to violence

Proliferation of weapons (SALW)

Big business feeds (on) violence

A deeply seated fascination with violence

Violence increases to its extremes

The human capacity for self-destruction personal/collective is apparent
Amsterdam 1948

WAR

“War as a method of settling disputes is incompatible with the teaching and example of our Lord Jesus Christ. The part which war plays in our present international life is a sin against God and a degradation of man.”
Uppsala 1968

NONVIOLENT CHANGE

Inspired by Martin Luther King the WCC Executive Committee asks staff to explore means by which the World Council of Churches could promote studies on non-violent methods of achieving social change.
Nairobi 1975

HUMAN RIGHTS & RACISM

JUSTICE, PEACE & CREATION

We affirm the full meaning of God’s peace. We are called to seek every possible means to establish justice, achieving peace and solving conflicts by active non-
Johannesburg 1994

Programme to Overcome Violence (POV)

Peace to the City Campaign
Harare 1998

OVERCOMING VIOLENCE

Decade to Overcome Violence (DOV)
Churches seeking Reconciliation and Peace
Porto Alegre 2006

Vulnerable Populations at Risk

Statement on The Responsibility to Protect
Kingston 2011

GLORY TO GOD AND PEACE ON EARTH

Just Peace
Violence Prevention
Non-violence
Background of the DOV

- WCC Programme to Combat Racism
- JPIC - Seoul 1990
- Decade Churches in Solidarity with Women
- 1994 in Johannesburg: “Apartheid is gone, violence is still with us”
- 1995 Program to Overcome Violence (POV)
- 1998 Harare: DOV 2001 - 2010
Amsterdam 1948 - War is incompatible with the Gospel

Uppsala 1968 - Nonviolent change (MLK, Gandhi)

Nairobi 1975 - Human Rights, Racism (PCR)

Vancouver 1983 - Justice, Peace, Creation (JPIC)

Johannesburg 1994 - Overcoming Violence (POV) - Peace to the City (PCN)

Harare 1998 - DOV - "wide varieties of violence"
Amsterdam 1948: War

“War as a method of settling disputes is incompatible with the teaching and example of our Lord Jesus Christ. The part which war plays in our present international life is a sin against God and a degradation of man.”
Ask the Central Committee to explore means by which the World Council could promote studies on non-violent methods of achieving social change, bearing in mind that the issue of using violent or non-violent methods of social change has been raised in the Reports of Sections III, IV, and VI.
Programme to Combat Racism

civil rights campaigns in the US, assassination of M.L. King, Apartheid in South Africa...
...in the Gandhi Centenary year, that the teaching and leadership of Mohandas K. Gandhi in encouraging non-violent political and social change be considered in these studies, in view of his influence on Martin Luther King and the way in which they both sought to make real the teaching of Jesus about love and justice;...
Nemi/Cardiff 1971: Justice

VIOLENCE, NONVIOLENCE AND THE STRUGGLE FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE - Exploring Strategies of Radical Social Change
that the WCC appoint a staff member within its Programme Unit II, to work on training and education in nonviolent methods of social change. Such a person can do much to 'rescue the concept of nonviolence from being misconstrued as passivity and to show the positive possibilities of nonviolent action....
Nairobi 1975: Human Rights

Emphasis on Human Rights and Structural Violence
Vancouver 1983 - JPIC

Justice, Peace, Integrity of Creation
fall of the Berlin wall - churches “part of the solution rather than part of the problem”?
Seoul 1990 - JPIC Consultation

We affirm the full meaning of God’s peace. We are called to seek every possible means to establish justice, achieving peace and solving conflicts by active non-violence...

We commit ourselves to practise non-violence in all our personal relationships, to work for the banning of war ... and to press governments for the establishment of an international legal order of peace making.
Johannesburg 1994: POV

Programme to Overcome Violence
Goals of the DOV
Addressing holistically the wide varieties of violence, both direct and structural, in homes, communities and international arenas, and learning from the local and regional analysis of violence and ways to overcome violence.
Challenging the churches to overcome the spirit, logic and practice of violence, to relinquish any theological justification of violence and to affirm anew the spirituality of reconciliation and active nonviolence.
Creating a new understanding of security in terms of cooperation and community, instead of domination and competition.
Learning from the spirituality and resources for peace-building of other faiths to work with communities of other faiths in the pursuit of peace, and to reflect on the issue of religious and ethnic identities in pluralistic societies.
Challenging the growing militarization of our world, especially the proliferation of small arms and light weapons.
Multiple Entry Points

- local (parish level)
- ecumenical (on local level)
- civil society (NGOs)
- government institutions (public schools etc)
- international bodies (UN)
Four Themes for the DOV

- The spirit and logic of violence
- The use, abuse and misuse of power
- Issues of justice
- Religious identity and plurality
Partners in the DOV

- Regional & National Ecumenical Organizations
- Pontifical Council Justice & Peace
- Member churches, denominational Bodies
- Ecumenical networks and special ministries
- International Coalition for the (UN-)Decade
- WHO, UNESCO, VPA
- Non-Governmental Organizations
UN Decade for a Culture of Peace and Nonviolence for the Children of the World
World report on violence and health

SUMMARY

World Health Organization
Geneva
World Health Assembly: Violence Prevention is a Public Health Priority
The public health approach outlines four steps for preventing violence:

1. Define the violence problem through systematic data collection

2. Conduct research to find out why it occurs and who it affects

3. Find out what works to prevent violence by designing, implementing, and evaluating interventions

4. Implement effective and promising interventions in a wide range of settings and evaluate their impact and cost-effectiveness
4400 people die every day from violence
Violence - WHO Definition

The intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment or deprivation.
An estimated 1.6 million people lost their lives to physical violence in 2000. About half were suicides, one-third were homicides, and one-fifth were casualties of armed conflict.

Types of Violence

- Self-directed (suicide, self-abuse) 50%
- Interpersonal (family/partner, community) 30%
- Collective (social, political, economic, armed) 20%

Homicide and suicide rates by WHO region, 2000

The Nature of Violence

Physical
Psychological
Sexual
Deprivation or Negligence

In 2000, the rate of violence-related death in low- to middle-income countries as a whole was more than twice that in high-income countries, although rates vary between regions and even within countries.

The majority of violence is non-fatal and results in injuries, mental health and reproductive health problems, sexually transmitted diseases and other problems. Health effects can last years, and may include permanent physical or mental disability.

Besides the toll of human misery, violence exacts social and economic costs which – though hard to quantify – are substantial.

Levels at which violence takes place
An ecological model of interpersonal violence

- Socetal:
  - poverty
  - crime
  - unemployment
  - drugs
  - weak institutions
  - rapid changes
  - economical injustice
  - poverty
  - poor infrastructures
  - insufficient legal provisions

- Community:
  - abuse
  - psychological troubles
  - abuse of alcohol
  - violent past

- Relationship:
  - dysfunctional family
  - parental violence
  - socio-economical situation
  - violent friends

Militarism kills without war

1 square = $ 1 Bio.
50% of the $ 950 Bio world-wide are spent by the US

1/3 of the world military expenditures would be needed to address the world’s pressing issues
World Military Expenditure, 1995–2004

- SIPRI 2005


Year:
- 1995
- 1996
- 1997
- 1998
- 1999
- 2000
- 2001
- 2002
- 2003
- 2004
- 2008
Hunger is the biggest killer

According to the UN report on world hunger, a child younger than 5 dies of hunger every 5 seconds.

Hunger is one of the consequences of the world’s economic and military priorities.
Issues churches address frequently...
Domestic violence

REAL MEN DON'T HIT WOMEN
Economic globalization
Youth & Violence
Culture of Peace
WCC Activities related to the DOV
Activities of the WCC

Launches worldwide

DOV Study Guide

Interactive Website
www.overcomingviolence.org

Annual Focus

International Day of Prayer for Peace - Sept 21

DOV Newsletter/Updates

Council-wide programs
Inter-religious Relations & Dialogue
Interfaith Initiatives

- Religion, Power and Violence (Conference, DVD)
- Critical Moments Conference
- “Thinking Together” think tank
- Global Priorities Campaign to change budget priorities [www.globalpriorities.org](http://www.globalpriorities.org)
- International Day of Peace Vigil [www.idp vigil.org](http://www.idp vigil.org)
other WCC activities

- Impunity, Restorative Justice
- Advocacy (UN)
- Human Rights

Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel
Annual DOV Focus

- Mobilising Churches & Communities into the DOV
- Promote Understanding & Awareness
- Solidarity - Encourage Local & Regional Churches
- Celebration - Highlight Peace and Justice Work
Annual DOV Focus 2002

End the illegal Occupation of Palestine
Support a Just Peace in the Middle East
Annual DOV Focus 2003

Healing Sudan & Reconciliation
2005 - Asia
2006 - Latin America

Y todavía buscamos la paz

2001-2010
DÉCADADA PARA SUPERAR LA VIOLENCIA

2006 Foco América Latina
Consejo Latinoamericano de Iglesias
www.oci.org.ec
seeing, naming, overcoming

- Trafficking - thousands of people, mostly women and children are subject to exploitation
- Youth - the violence industry is aiming at youth as prime consumer
- Migration - European countries face this major challenge of our time of globalization
- Militarization - military spending, service, and development jeopardizes just peace
Domestic and Interpersonal Violence – causes more deaths than armed conflict

Human Security - a common task beyond borders and above national interests

The Environment - facing the consequences of violence towards the earth

Violence in the Church – looking within ourselves

A Theology of Just Peace - churches moving from just war theory to just peace practice
We Believe in "One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church"

On the Way Towards the Visible Fellowship of the Churches in Europe

Our Common Responsibility in Europe
I. We believe in “the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church”.

A common call to faith
On the Way Towards the Visible Fellowship of the Churches in Europe

1. Proclaiming the gospel together
2. Meeting one another
3. Acting together
4. Praying with one another
5. Continuing dialogue
Our Common Responsibility in Europe

1. Helping to shape Europe
2. Reconciling peoples and cultures
3. Preserving creation
4. Deepening fellowship with Judaism
5. Cultivating relations with Islam
6. Encounter with other religions and world-views
2008 - The Pacific
2009 - The Caribbean
Theme to be set
2010 Africa
International Day of Prayer for Peace - September 21

The WCC calls churches to

- pray for peace during services on Sept 21
- observe 24-hour peace vigils
- pray in particular for churches in the region of the Annual Focus
International Day of Prayer for Peace

21 September 2007

Make me a channel of your peace
An Initiative of the World Council of Churches

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
and where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek
to be consoled as to console;
to be understood as to understand;
to be loved as to love.
For it is in giving that we receive:
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned;
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.
Amen

St. Francis of Assisi
DOV at the 9th Assembly

- Plenary “Youth Overcoming Violence” - Message and recommitment for the mid-term

- Ecumenical Conversation: Churches Responding to New Threats to Peace and Human Security

- Mutirao: DOV Quo Vadis (mid-term) etc

- DOV Exhibit

- Peace march and vigil in the city
Issues & Trends

- Terrorism & counter-terrorism
- Commercialization of violence - entertainment
- Suicide
- Gender roles and gender violence
- Confusion of conflict and violence
- Violence in the church
- Stories, examples, practises
- The Responsibility to Protect (UN Reform)
- Evidence-based violence prevention (WHO)
The DOV Coordination Office

- Awareness building - understand violence and learn non-violence
- Communication - highlight creative initiatives of violence prevention and peace making
- Networking - facilitate links and collaboration among actors in the field
Assembly Mandate

- Consultative process to develop an ecumenical declaration on just peace
- International Ecumenical Peace Convocation (IEPC) to be held in 2011
- “Living Letters” team visits
9th Assembly Mandate

in looking to the second half of the DOV, endorses that the regional foci be continued;

that more sharing of successful examples be developed to encourage churches and local congregations to respond to overcoming violence in their own contexts supported by international mutual visits; ...
Churches seeking Reconciliation and Peace

that a process of wide consultation be undertaken towards developing an ecumenical declaration on “just peace”;

and finally, that the conclusion of the DOV be marked by an International Ecumenical Peace Convocation.
Challenges...

- hidden forms of violence
- violence in the church/by clergy
- world sports events
- networking, informing each other, living letters
- assessment of theological, spiritual work
- help churches own the Decade
- confusion of conflict and violence
The Gospel of Jesus Christ Compels us to Promote a Culture of Nonviolence

Neal Blough
Peace begins with you

 Violence? - Say NO!

 Peace? - Do it with simple and gentle acts!
What are the biggest obstacles for building communities of peace for all in your context?

How is the church a community of peace for all in your context?

In what way do you expect the DOV to be helpful in building communities of peace for all?

What are your dreams for the second half of the Decade and in what ways could these dreams come true?
Global Links

- www.who.int/topics/violence/en
- www.unesco.org
- www.idpvigil.com
- www.peaceoneday.org
- www.globalpriorities.org
You can receive periodic updates from the WCC/DOV by signing on at

www.oikumene.org/e-news
www.overcomingviolence.org