



„Guide our feet into the way of peace“

Declaration
on Just Peace

VEREINIGUNG DER
DEUTSCHEN
MENNONITENGEMEINDEN

A submission to the
ecumenical
“Decade to Overcome
Violence”





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into the way of peace“

Declaration on Just Peace

Vereinigung der Deutschen
Mennonitengemeinden (VDM)

A submission to the ecumenical
“Decade to Overcome Violence 2001-2011:
Churches Seeking Reconciliation”



*„Friedensstifter wolln wir sein, Christus lädt uns dazu ein...
Tochter, Sohn von Gott geliebt, trage weiter, was er gibt“
("We seek to be peacemakers, Christ has invited us to join this task...
Beloved daughters, sons of God, carry on what he has given us.")*

We have taken up the invitation of Christ from hymn 488 of the German Mennonite Hymnal (Mennonitisches Gesangbuch, 2004), and in a variety of ways we have set out on the path toward a peace declaration. There is no comparable document in all of the nearly 125 years of the Union of German Mennonite Congregations (VDM).

This peace declaration was formulated in a cooperative process that listened to the voices of many of our congregants, in accordance with our theological conviction of the "priesthood of all believers". And so this result has great importance for us. Many people contributed suggestions, and the final text was then agreed upon by congregational delegates at a special general assembly of the VDM. This peace declaration also serves as our contribution to the International Ecumenical Peace Convocation of the World Council of Churches to be held in Jamaica in 2011, at the close of the Decade to Overcome Violence.

My thanks go out to all congregations that participated in the process, to all individuals who gave of their time and energy in our struggle to give expression to our faith, and to the Mennonite Peace Center Berlin and its advisory board for having guided the entire process. We also wish to thank James Jakob Fehr of the German Mennonite Peace Committee for having provided the English translation of this text.

The process is not at an end: Now we are called to continue working for a Just Peace within our Mennonite community, within the larger ecumenical fellowship and indeed in all of society. In all our exertions we trust in God's guidance and seek to orient ourselves on the message of peace in Jesus Christ. And so we pray: "Lord, guide our feet into the way of peace." (Luke 1:79)

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Chair of the Union of German Mennonite Congregations
(Vereinigung der Deutschen Mennonitengemeinden)*



„Guide our feet into the way of peace“

*... to give knowledge of salvation to his people
in the forgiveness of their sins,
through the tender mercy of our God,
when the day shall dawn upon us from on high,
to give light to those who sit in darkness
and in the shadow of death,
to guide our feet into the way of peace.“*

Luke 1:77-79



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Foreword

The following text is the product of a concentrated process of discussion within the Union of German Mennonite Congregations (*Vereinigung der Deutschen Mennonitengemeinden, VDM*). Along the path toward a common peace declaration our insights were deepened by numerous conversations and group discussions. We set ourselves three goals:

- to deliberate on and articulate the convictions held within the congregations of the VDM,
- to make our peace witness transparent for others and to raise our voice concerning the social and political issues of our day, and
- at the close of the Decade to Overcome Violence to make a contribution as one of the Historical Peace Churches¹ and as charter member of the World Council of Churches on the way toward the International Peace Convocation in Kingston, Jamaica in 2011.

This peace declaration stands in the theological tradition of those who have reflected on the biblical concept of “just peace”.² Using as a guideline the seven shared faith convictions of the Mennonite World Conference³, it interprets each of these from the viewpoint of a Just Peace theology.

¹ The term „Historical Peace Churches“ designates those Protestant confessional churches for whom nonviolence is an integral part of their ecclesial identity. The term “historical” refers back to the long ecclesial traditions of these three denominations: the Mennonites, the oldest Protestant free church, which originated among the Anabaptists of the Reformation era, the Church of the Brethren, which emerged from the Pietist movement of the 18th century and the Society of Friends (also known as Quakers) whose roots are among the Puritans of the 17th century. Cf. Fernando Enns, “Friedenskirchen, Historische / Mennoniten”, in: *Taschenlexikon Ökumene*, Frankfurt (2003), p. 107f.

² The concept of a “just peace” gained currency as a conceptual model for Christian peace ethics through the ecumenical assemblies of Magdeburg (1988) and Dresden (1989) in East Germany. This model, developed through the Conciliar Process for Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation, distinguishes itself from earlier conceptual frameworks for peace that focus primarily on weapons reduction and just war theory for the sake of preventing or curtailing war. The Just Peace model criticizes these earlier models for being too narrowly focussed and for not adequately integrating justice with peace. Cf. “Zum Begriff des gerechten Friedens - ein kurzer Überblick zur Genese des Begriffs”, http://www.menno-friedenszentrum.de/fileadmin/downloads/Der_Begriff_des_gerechten_Friedens.pdf

³ Cf. www.mwc-cmm.org. Quotations of these “Shared Convictions” as adopted at the General Assembly in Pasadena, California on March 15th, 2006, are set in boxes at the appropriate places in our text.



A. THE THEOLOGY OF JUST PEACE AND NONVIOLENCE

By the grace of God,
we seek to live and proclaim
the good news of reconciliation in Jesus Christ.
As part of the one body of Christ at all times and places,
we hold the following to be central to our belief and practice:

I. Shalom of God - The Promised Peace

“Shalom! Peace be with you!” are the words with which Jesus greeted his companions.⁴ This salutation, an integral part of daily life for the people of Israel, means completeness, wholeness, wellbeing, and it has its wellspring in justice. “The fruit of righteousness will be peace, the effect of righteousness will be quietness and confidence forever.”⁵

1. God is known to us as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the Creator who seeks to restore fallen humanity by calling a people to be faithful in fellowship, worship, service and witness.

Shalom encompasses peace with God, peace among human beings and also peace with and within all of creation. Shalom is the promised and just peace of God: all broken and unjust relationships are to be made right, as they were originally intended in creation. Justice means freedom from oppression⁶, as well as just treatment for those suffering injustice, the poor and the foreigners.⁷ Whoever trusts in this divine justice will experience shalom, God’s just peace.⁸

We live in a world in which shalom is still incomplete. However, through God’s own self-revelation, we know that the Kingdom of God is already beginning to take on substantial form in our world. This is the foundation of the hope that is actively transforming our present-day world. “Thus says the Lord: Keep justice, and do righteousness, for soon my salvation will come, and my deliverance will be revealed.”⁹ For this reason we witness to God’s will for “peace, justice and the integrity of creation” in our worship, ministry and mission - in the midst of all brokenness and human frailty.

⁴ See John 20:19. (Quotations are from the NRSV, except where otherwise noted.)

⁵ Isa 32:17 (NIV); see also Rom 6:18.

⁶ See Ex 3:7.

⁷ See Ex 22:20-26; Isa 32:16.

⁸ See Ps 37:37.

⁹ Isa 56:1 (RSV)



II. Reconciliation in Jesus Christ - Freed from Violence

Through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ God revealed his will for just peace and has made his Kingdom into a reality for us.

2. Jesus is the Son of God. Through his life and teachings, his cross and resurrection, he showed us how to be faithful disciples, redeemed the world, and offers eternal life.

We see this in the way that Jesus allies himself with the poor and suffering, the persecuted and with all who long for justice¹⁰, including those who are burdened by guilt. Jesus' manner of living is our paradigm and an invitation to follow him along the

path of love, reconciliation and overcoming violence.¹¹ God pledges his messianic peace to the meek, the merciful, the peacemakers and those who hunger and thirst for righteousness.¹²

God reveals his love for enemies in the way of Jesus toward the cross and in his rejection of violence.¹³ Jesus shows how God's justice aims at reconciliation, not retribution, vengeance or destruction. In our faith we thus experience freedom from guilt.

In the resurrection of Jesus God's love proves victorious even over the power of death. All "principalities and powers" are exposed as limited and insufficient, because God's compassion is not halted even by death. Divine justice prevails through mercy.

In this way God restores his relationship to humanity, so that we can experience healing among ourselves and with all of creation. God's justification liberates us so that we can walk the path of love, nonviolence and reconciliation -however weak and imperfect our efforts may be.¹⁴

¹⁰ See Mat 5:6.

¹¹ See Mat 5:39ff; Mk 10:42; Rom 12:17-21; 2Cor 5:16-21.

¹² See Mat 5; Mat 11:28-30.

¹³ The term "violence" (in German: *Gewalt*) is used here in the sense of harmful action toward others, whether in physical or psychological manner, whether in direct or indirect forms through structural or cultural violence.

¹⁴ 2Pet 2:21.



III. The Responsibility of the Church - The Witness of Peace

By God's grace we acknowledge Jesus Christ as Lord of our lives. In baptism we receive and confess the reconciliation in Christ and express our will to follow Jesus along the path of nonviolence. In this reconciled community we acknowledge our solidarity with all fellow Christians; together we seek to bring reconciliation where violence and injustice still hold sway.

3. As a church, we are a community of those whom God's Spirit calls to turn from sin, acknowledge Jesus Christ as Lord, receive baptism upon confession of faith, and follow Christ in life.

A shared interpretation of the Bible is also possible through fellowship with Christians from other cultures and traditions. This exchange shields us from arrogance, complacency and self-righteousness. In a "life of obedience" we want to listen to God's liberating instruction and to each other. This will open our eyes to our own

4. As a faith community, we accept the Bible as our authority for faith and life, interpreting it together under Holy Spirit guidance, in the light of Jesus Christ to discern God's will for our obedience.

responsibility for those who are suffering or threatened in any given situation. Together with our brothers and sisters of faith from other cultures and traditions we want to seek shared opportunities to overcome violence and to live just lives. To this end we pray for the guidance of the Holy Spirit as we seek the will of God.

We confess that we often do not act in accord with God's will for shalom. In this imperfect world we are confronted with difficult decisions, where we can even bear guilt through our nonviolent actions or through our failure to act. Therefore we seek counsel, comfort and courage in the community of believers, so that we do not fall into resignation. In all our decisions and actions we trust in the gracious and merciful forgiveness of God.

There is no sphere of life in which our faith in Christ should not be the ultimate court of appeal for our decisions and actions.¹⁵

5. The Spirit of Jesus empowers us to trust God in all areas of life so we become peacemakers who renounce violence, love our enemies, seek justice, and share our possessions with those in need.

We understand the call to be peacemakers as our responsibility to the world. We resist any attempt to legitimate violence theologically: The commandment “thou shalt not kill” and Jesus’ call to love our

enemies are directly relevant for contemporary political disputes. We oppose the use of military violence. Because all humans are created in the image of God and consequently their dignity is inviolable, violence can never be a legitimate instrument for human beings, and thus also not for governments. Hence, we oppose military service and encourage each other to participate in peaceful civilian services.

We see our calling as a peace church and therefore we support conflict prevention, nonviolent interventions during conflicts and reconciliation and healing in the aftermath of conflict.¹⁶ We realize that following this path can in the end lead to endangering our own lives.

We are conscious of our responsibility toward persons whose lives are threatened, whether they are suffering violence that is politically sanctioned, whether through military, economic or terrorist means or through criminal activity.

We distinguish military violence from the actions of force and protection used by police. The latter must adhere to the principles of law, respect all human rights and aim at the reduction and de-escalation of violence. Wherever possible police actions should desist from employing weapons and using violence.¹⁷

We know that members of our congregations may have struggles with their conscience, should they decide to serve in police or military forces. In such situations we want to offer help towards a decision that is oriented toward the Gospel and Christ’s love of enemies. As congregations we are committed to accompanying our members and respecting their decisions.

¹⁵ See Mt 6:24.

¹⁶ 2Cor 5:16-21.

¹⁷ In the United Nations Organization and the World Council of Churches the possibility of intervention by the international community in cases of severe human rights violations or genocide is being deliberated. However, to date there are no international police troops who have been trained in the principles of law and justice, the use of proportionate means, techniques for deescalating and limiting violence, and who stand under the control of international legal jurisdiction. A further problem with this concept is its criteria for employing such troops, which are reminiscent of the dogma and intentions of “just war”. We fear that in the actual deployment these international police forces could easily be caught up in the conflict and might then use military violence. Together with the community of Churches we wish to work toward ways of ensuring that both in definition and in practice such “international police troops” do not incline toward violence.



In the local congregation we experience spiritual strengthening, assurance in our journey of faith and ethical direction. We celebrate the Lord's Supper as a meal of reconciliation, remembering the restored fellowship in Christ, and as a meal of hope, envisioning the promised shalom

6. We gather regularly to worship, to celebrate the Lord's Supper, and to hear the Word of God in a spirit of mutual accountability.

of God. In this way God's Spirit calls us to a life of peace. We regard the local congregation as the primary context in which we practice and experience a culture of nonviolence. In the immediate experience of community we are responsible for one another and seek patterns for living in just relationships. And we believe that these patterns hold promise for all of humanity, for as the Scriptures say "there is no distinction".¹⁸

The unity afforded by our faith in Christ breaks through all barriers that might separate us. In its actions and in its witness to the gospel, the community of faith addresses itself to the larger context of living with others in the world.

7. As a world-wide community of faith and life we transcend boundaries of nationality, race, class, gender and language. We seek to live in the world without conforming to the powers of evil, witnessing to God's grace by serving others, caring for creation, and inviting all people to know Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord.

We are part of a nation and its institutions, and so we participate in and take on responsibility for it. We acknowledge the important service of the state in protecting the weak and defending the rule of law - among the latter this includes protecting human rights, freedom of conscience and

religion, conscientious objection to military service and freedom of opinion.¹⁹

The institutions and laws of the state should not be regarded as absolutes. It is the responsibility and calling of the church of Jesus Christ to raise objections to inequality, to work for justice and to assist in the development of means for nonviolent conflict resolution. A clear and unambiguous separation of church and state is indispensable, in order that the church can apply its ethical capacities for solidarity and critical discernment within the state.

Among the duties of the church within society is the issue of addressing and overcoming the causes of violence. This includes counterposing to a globalization that is dominated by economic interests the concept of "accountable stewardship", which directs our action not by motives of power and profit-

¹⁸ See Rom 10:12, Gal 3:28.
¹⁹ See Rom 13.



making, but by solidarity and mutual responsibility²⁰. This stewardship extends to the created order that has been entrusted to us, so that all may have access to clean air and water and so that nature's resources may be preserved for all of humanity.

One of the challenges of a pluralistic society is the possibility of nonviolent co-existence of people from diverse religions, as well as those without any confession. A significant hallmark of the authenticity of our peace church witness is our capacity to give voice to this witness in the encounter with persons having other convictions. We believe that genuine dialogue is grounded in our faith in Christ. In these situations we witness to our own faith and at the same time take seriously the beliefs of our counterpart.²¹

²⁰ Included within the concept of „accountable stewardship“ are the following criteria: respecting the integrity of the environment (or creation), social needs, peaceful coexistence and the needs of the different generations. Cf. „Unsere Verantwortung für Gottes Schöpfung“, EKD-Text 52, Hanover 1995.

²¹ See 1Pet 3:15f.



In these convictions we draw inspiration from Anabaptist forebears of the 16th century, who modeled radical discipleship to Jesus Christ. We seek to walk in his name by the power of the Holy Spirit, as we confidently await Christ's return and the final fulfillment of God's kingdom.

Anabaptists and Mennonites have expressed their faith and their understanding of following Jesus in various ways over the centuries. Some have lived in intentional communities and shared their wealth, others as a scattered alliance of like-minded persons in societies dominated by other confessions. Some have separated themselves; others have been open to other views and have witnessed within that context. Some have strictly opposed any kind of violence; others have acknowledged the legitimacy of the use of violence by the authorities. Indeed, in some cases they have themselves used violence to protect others and themselves (so, for example, in the case of Mennonites in Russia who organized their self-protection against irregular troops in 1918-1920).

We regard the numerous ruptures among Anabaptists and Mennonites both as admonition and as obligation to live in tolerance and acceptance of one another in our differences, even as Christ has accepted us "for the glory of God".²² In our working together and in our candid disputes with one another, we seek that which brings about reconciliation and communion. When disagreeing about the appropriate means to reduce and overcome violence or about how to witness faithfully for peace, we want to abide in conversation with each other and allow ourselves to be challenged by one another.

The New Testament directs our attention to the life and path of Jesus Christ. We are called to follow him, to learn how to love our enemies and take the path of reconciliation. The call to discipleship challenges us as individuals and as congregations to take the path of nonviolence.

²² See Rom 15:7.



B. THE PROVING GROUNDS OF JUST PEACE AND NONVIOLENCE

The task of peace is not restricted to ending violence. It also seeks to establish structures that will contribute to a just and long-lasting peace. The church's peace work includes activities in various areas and at all levels of human interaction:

- between individuals and within families
- within congregations
- in the immediate social context
- at the workplace, at schools and training centres
- within institutions and movements
- at various governmental levels
- at the international level

Hence, working for peace is not a supplementary activity, but rather the common thread of all human engagement that enables us to build a culture of peace. "Since wars begin in the minds of human beings (men), it is in the minds of human beings (men) that the defences of peace must be constructed."²³ Peace is a constant goal for life and instruction. The goal is to:

- communicate techniques for peace
- motivate capabilities for peace and
- teach practical skills for peace

Central to the task of a comprehensive peace-building is a decisive response to violence. What is required is both creativity and the will to break through the chains of violence when reacting in a nonviolent manner to violent situations. This includes:

- prevention - preventing conflicts
- mediation - intervening in conflicts
- reconciliation - healing after conflicts

Congregations are confronted by various circumstances and so they need to apply divergent solutions to their contexts. Consequently, the challenges facing urban congregations may not pose any great problem for rural congregations, and vice versa. And yet the issues of conflict, violence and peace remain relevant for all congregations, no matter what their concerns.

²³ See the preamble to the UNESCO Constitution of 1945 in the expanded version of 2001: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0013/001337/133729e.pdf#page=7>



I. The Task of Peace within our Congregations

Conflict transformation

Congregations that practice nonviolent resolution of conflicts are engaging in prevention and reconciliation, when they:

- talk directly with each other instead of talking about each other
- involve as many persons as possible in their decision-making processes, and
- speak to and deal directly with conflict, in order to halt or prevent the loss of caring and respectful communication with one other.

Healing and reconciliation

Congregations work as agents of healing when they offer themselves as a “sheltered space”, where persons feel safe to end their silence and to talk about their experiences of violence, for example in cases of domestic violence.²⁴ This safe space should be made available to all concerned parties, both victim and offender. We can develop practices of reconciliation in the aftermath of conflict.

Integrity of creation

Each congregation can engage in exemplary actions within its own environment, for example by purchasing fair trade products or by using its buildings in an ecologically responsible manner.

²⁴ This definition comes from Bremen’s general medical council: *Diagnose: Häusliche Gewalt. Ein Leitfaden für Ärzte und Ärztinnen*, ed. Ärztekammer Bremen in Zusammenarbeit mit der TK, May 2006: „Domestic violence refers to violence among adult partners within a relationship and includes

- physical violence (e.g. blows, kicks, strangulation, the use of weapons, deprivation of food)
- psychological violence (e.g. sleep deprivation, constant verbal abuse, humiliation, threats)
- sexual violence (e.g. forced sexual relations, rape by the partner)
- social violence (e.g. confinement, forbidding social contacts)
- economic violence (e.g. refusal of financial needs, forbidding employment)

Often more than one form of violence will be used by the offender. Children frequently observe these actions or are also its victims. Victims and offenders come from all social and economic backgrounds, independent of education, income, social status, culture, origin or age.”



II. Peace as the Task of our Congregations in their immediate Social Context

There are various opportunities for encounters within one's neighbourhood, depending on the respective social context of each congregation. Through cooperation agreements and networking we can work together in the areas of preventing violence and together take steps to work for peace and reconciliation. We support projects that are committed to teaching nonviolent approaches in dealing with conflict.²⁵

We support the observance of joint worship services with other confessional churches, for example on the International Day of Prayer for Peace (Sept. 21), the Ecumenical Peace-Decade (*Ökumenische Friedensdekade*, Ecumenical 10 Days of Peace in November) or the Women's World Day of Prayer (first Friday in March). Where there is a local association of Christian churches, this can provide a platform for joint activities in the immediate social context.

Local ecumenical activities

Wherever we witness outright or hidden racism, we must object to it forthrightly and openly. We want our congregations to be places that are known for their warm hospitality.²⁶

Intercultural and interreligious encounter

Developing a peaceful and open relationship to persons of other religious convictions is an area of growing importance in present-day society.

Together with other churches we are striving for more open encounters and for inter-religious dialogues that are marked by mutual respect.²⁷ Our churches should be meeting places for these events.

²⁵ An example of this is the project "Faustlos" (= Fistless), a school curriculum that develops social and emotional competence and thwarts aggressive behaviour in schools and kindergartens: www.f Faustlos.de. The church programme, "Schritte gegen Tritte" (= Steps against Kicks), works to prevent violence among teenagers beginning at age 13; it deals with structural, ethnic and person violence and trains teenagers in methods of nonviolent conflict resolution, using materials that are adapted for the gender-specific needs of young persons: www.schrittegegentritte.de.

²⁶ For example, the "Café International", a joint project of the German Mennonite Relief Agency (*Mennonitisches Hilfswerk*), the Berlin Mennonite Church and the Council of African Christians in Berlin and Brandenburg.

²⁷ For example, the project called "Weißt Du, wer ich bin?" (= Do you know who I am?), a joint project of the Central Council of Jews in Germany, the Central Council of Muslims in Germany (ZMD), the Turkish-Islamic Union for Religious Affairs (DITIB) and the Association of Christian Churches in Germany (ACK), www.weisstduwerichbin.de.



Because of the inseparable connection between the Jewish and Christian faiths and because of the painful historical experiences of the 20th century in Germany, we hold the Jewish-Christian dialogue to be of great importance, in order that we may give genuine expression to our peace witness and our service of reconciliation.

We regard every form of discrimination as a real danger for peace in our society. We want to offer our protection to all its victims and offer them a home in our congregations.

III. The Task of Peace at National and International Levels

“Introducing elements of an ideal society into the raw realities of a world full of violence” - with these words the Mennonite Central Committee²⁸ described its motivation for registering itself as an NGO at the United Nations Organization. This challenge can be turned into reality at different levels and through various kinds of institutions and organisations.

Some examples of this are included in the following list:

- **German Mennonite Relief Agency (Mennonitisches Hilfswerk)**
Example: The project “Le Pelican” in Kabul, Afghanistan trains young people as bakers and assists them in setting up their own businesses.²⁹
- **German Mennonite Missions Committee (Deutsches Mennonitisches Missionskomitee)**
Example: project to build a well in Hammady, Ghana³⁰
- **Mennonite Voluntary Services (Christliche Dienste)**
Example: Volunteers work in various parts of the world caring for children and the elderly, building homes for the homeless, working in soup kitchens and food distribution - for the sake of peace and reconciliation. Afterward they bring their newly won perspectives and experiences back into their home settings.³¹

²⁸ MCC is an international relief organisation directed by North American Mennonites: www.mcc.org.

²⁹ See www.menno-hilfswerk.de.

³⁰ See www.mission-mennoniten.de.

³¹ See www.christlichedienste.de.



- **German Mennonite Peace Committee (Deutsches Mennonitisches Friedenskomitee)**

Example: Seminars for young people teach them how to engage non-violently in conflicts.³²

- **Military Counseling Network**

Example: American soldiers who want to leave the military receive counselling and legal aid for court cases.³³

- **Mennonite Peace Center Berlin (Mennonitisches Friedenszentrum Berlin)**

Example: Membership on the advisory council of the advocacy worker appointed by the Union of Evangelical Free Churches (Vereinigung Evangelischer Freikirchen) at the seat of the German government in Berlin affords the opportunity to participate directly in the daily work of political policy and decision-making, cooperating with other religious and non-religious representatives.³⁴ This follows the model of the MCC's advocacy offices at the US government (Washington D.C.) and the United Nations (New York).³⁵

- **Institute for Peace Church Theology at the University of Hamburg, Germany**

Example: training for students of peace theology and cooperation with other faculties and the social sciences in the field of peace education³⁶

- **Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT)**

Example: CPT sends long-term teams of trained peace workers into regions of conflict. The teams focus on documenting and publishing cases of human rights abuses, offer protective accompaniment of endangered persons, mediate contacts between local and/or international human rights organisations and develop nonviolent alternatives to resolving conflicts. CPT has had a continuous presence in Palestine's West Bank since 1995, in Columbia since 2001 and in Iraq since 2002. Periodically, teams and delegations are sent to other places of conflict, for example, supporting local

³² See www.dmfk.de.

³³ See www.mc-network.de.

³⁴ See www.menno-friedenszentrum.de.

³⁵ See www.mcc.org/us/washington and www.mcc.org/un.

³⁶ See www.theologie.uni-hamburg.de/afk.



groups working to overcome racial violence against First Nations groups in Canada.³⁷

- **Center for Peace and Justice at Eastern Mennonite University in Harrisonburg/VA, USA**

Example: offering special intensive training programmes for professional peace workers from all parts of the world, including non-Mennonites and non-Christians.³⁸

- **World Council of Churches (WCC)**

Example: Through the VDM's membership in the WCC and through its delegate to the WCC's Central Committee, we give a voice to the peace churches at an international level, for example in initiating the ecumenical Decade to Overcome Violence.³⁹

³⁷ See www.cpt.org.

³⁸ See www.emu.edu.

³⁹ See www.oikoumene.org and gewaltueberwinden.org/de.



„Guide our feet into the way of peace“

May this prayer motivate, guide and accompany us in all our efforts, planning and action.

*Agreed upon in Hanover, December 5, 2009
General Meeting of the VDM*

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