Just Peace.

A New Framework for an Ecumenical Social Ethics

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Introduction: "Glory to God and Peace on Earth!"

"Glory to God – and Peace on Earth"! (Lk 2:14) This has been the biblical motto of the recent International Ecumenical Peace Convocation (IEPC) of the World Council of Churches (WCC). It has proven to be most appropriate to start any theological and ethical reflection on peace and justice ("Peace on Earth") by the doxology "Glory to God!"

1000 Participants from more than 100 nations gathered at the campus of the University of the West Indies (Mona) in Kingston, Jamaica, 2011. As a truly ecumenical gathering, representing churches from all traditions, including the roman-catholic church and some Pentecostal communities, we confessed our common understanding: "We understand peace and peacemaking as an indispensable part of our common faith. Peace is inextricably related to the love, justice and freedom that God has granted to all human beings through Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit as a *gift* and *vocation*. It constitutes a pattern of life that reflects human participation in God's love for the world."[1] To accept the gift (or grace) of peace as a common vocation of the church worldwide and as a central expression of our common faith in the triune God is a milestone in a long ecumenical journey.[2]

This global Peace Convocation marked the culmination of the ecumenical "Decade to Overcome Violence: Churches Seeking Reconciliation and Peace. 2001-2010", which was decided upon by the VIII Assembly of the WCC in Harare/Zimbabwe in 1998. One of the goals of that decade was to "move peace-building from the periphery to the centre of the life and witness of the church".[3] For the past ten years, churches throughout the world–often with partners from other religions and from the secular realm–have become engaged with determination in investigating and exploring possibilities for violence prevention, non-violent methods of conflict-resolution, civil forms of conflict management, training of civilian peacemakers and active work for reconciliation after recourse to violence. Universities and Seminaries have contributed their

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[1] Glory to God and Peace on Earth. *The Message of the International Ecumenical Peace Convocation*, Kingston (Jamaica): World Council of Churches 2011, http://www.overcomingviolence.org/en/resources-dov/wcc-resources/documents/presentations-speeches-messages/iepc-message.html [14.06.2011].

[2] See the detailed description of these developments in: Fernando Enns / Stephan von Twardowski, „Ehre sei Gott – und Friede auf Erden". Das Ringen der Gemeinschaft der Kirchen um friedensethische Positionen; in: Hans-Georg Link / Geiko Müller-Fahrenholz (ed.), Hoffnungswege. Wegweisende Impulse des Ökumenischen Rates der Kirchen aus sechs Jahrzehnten, Frankfurt a.M.: Lembeck 2008, 348-377. See also Fernando Enns, "Ehre sei Gott – und Friede auf Erden": Der lange Weg zu einer ökumenischen Friedenskonvokation"; in: Mache Dich auf und werde Licht!: Ökumenische Visionen in Zeiten des Umbruchs / Arise, Shine!: Ecumenical Visions in Times of Change. Festschrift für Konrad Raiser, ed. by Dagmar Heller et al., Frankfurt a.M.: Lembeck 2008, 322-333.

[3] http://www.overcomingviolence.org/en/decade-to-overcome-violence/about-dov.html [14.06.2011].

insights from research and think-tanks. All these activities have often been summed up as 'developing cultures of peace'.[4]

And yet: we are not yet satisfied. How could we be? There is such an extensive field of injustices as ongoing obstacles for peace. The peace convocation identified the wide range of direct/personal violence, indirect/structural violence as well as cultural forms of violence.

a. Peace in the Community[5]

Violence in our communities has many ugly faces. We have listened to the voices of struggle within communities and neighborhoods in one of the most violent capitols of the world–Kingston. Young people are killed on the streets every single night. We have met courageous persons, inventing new steps towards community-building by creating safe spaces, for example by initiating theatre plays with those kids, allowing them to express their sorrows and joys. Together, churches are seeing more clearly now that "peace education must move to the centre of every curriculum in schools, seminaries and universities."[6] This education is "a profoundly spiritual formation of character that involves family, church, and society… Peace education promotes active nonviolence as an unequalled power for change that is practiced and valued in different traditions and cultures."[7]

b.   Peace in Economic Relations[8]

We have listened again to the witnesses of dehumanizing poverty–in Zimbabwe for example. The churches´ message from Kingston is clear: "The global economy … provides many examples of structural violence that victimizes not through the direct use of weapons or physical force but by passive acceptance of widespread poverty, trade disparities and inequality among classes and nations."[9] The Bible–in contrast–signals a vision of life with "abundance for all" and therefore the churches are starting to advocate for alternative "economies of life",[10] that are inclusive, respecting everyone´s dignity and allowing fair participation for all. "The alternative to poverty is

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[4] For a definition of the concept of 'a culture of peace' see reflections by: György Konrád, Kultur des Friedens?; in: Horst-Eberhard Richter (ed.), Kultur des Friedens, Gießen: Psychosozial-Verlag 2001, 39-49: „Was Kultur des Friedens ist? Vielleicht etwas, das nicht beim Namen genannt werden muss. Was wir täglich tun, ohne es so zur Kenntnis zu nehmen." (49) ("What is a culture of peace? Perhaps something that inevitably cannot be named: what we do daily without being aware of it").

[5] Cf. WCC Central Committee, *An Ecumenical Call to Just Peace*, „Guide our Feet into the Way of Peace", Document No. GEN 10, Geneva, February 2011., 30 and 31.
http://www.overcomingviolence.org/fileadmin/dov/files/iepc/resources/ECJustPeace_English.pdf [14.06.2011].

[6] *The Message of the International Ecumenical Peace Convocation.*

[7] *An Ecumenical Call to Just Peace*, 28.

[8] "Peace in the Marketplace", cf. *An Ecumenical Call to Just Peace*, 36-38.

[9] *The Message of the International Ecumenical Peace Convocation.*

[10] Ibid.

not property; the alternative to poverty and property is community, and the spirit of community is solidarity and mutual help." (Jürgen Moltmann)[11]

c.   Peace with the Environment[12]

We have been informed by the representatives from the Pacific region, how seriously climate change is calling their very existence into question: some are starting to leave their homes, because their islands are flooded. We have listened to the voices from Fukushima, Japan, who described their anger and fear. They reminded us of the atomic hell of Hiroshima.[13] – "To care for God's precious gift of creation and to strive for ecological justice are key principles of just peace"[14], the Convocation affirmed (cf. Genesis 2:4b-9). We noticed, that "the environmental crisis is profoundly an ethical and spiritual crisis of humanity… Natural resources and common goods such as water must be shared in a just and sustainable manner."[15]

d.   Peace among Peoples[16]

"We witness with concern and compassion the struggle for freedom, justice and human rights of the people in many Arab countries… Our love for the peoples of Israel and Palestine convinces us that the continued occupation damages both peoples".[17] With a common voice the churches acknowledge: "History, especially in the witness of the historic peace churches, reminds us of the fact that violence is contrary to the will of God and can never resolve conflicts. It is for this reason that we are moving beyond the doctrine of just war towards a commitment to Just Peace."[18] – But we are just beginning to see that this requires moving from exclusive concepts of national security to an understanding of safety for all. All of us continue to struggle with how innocent people can be protected from injustice, war and violence, being convinced of our "responsibility to protect" them.[19] "The Way of Just Peace is fundamentally different from the

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[11] Jürgen Moltmann, On a Culture of Life in the Dangers of this Time. Lecture presented at the International Congress on "Just Peace", Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, 23-24 June 2011 (to be published soon). Cf. Fernando Enns, Breaking the Cycle of Violence: Building Community - Mechanisms for Overcoming Violence and Some Suggestions for Theological Reflection; in: The Ecumenical Review, Vol.53, No.2, April 2001.

[12] "Peace with the Earth", cf. *An Ecumenical Call to Just Peace*, 33-35.

[13] "The nuclear catastrophe of Fukushima has proved once again that we must no longer rely on nuclear power as a source of energy." *The Message of the International Ecumenical Peace Convocation.*

[14] Cf. *An Ecumenical Call to Just Peace*, 35.

[15] *The Message of the International Ecumenical Peace Convocation.*

[16] *An Ecumenical Call to Just Peace,* 39-41.

[17] *The Message of the International Ecumenical Peace Convocation.*

[18] Ibid. In the ecumenical *Call* it is stated: "…we feel obliged as Christians to go further–to challenge any theological or *other* justifications of the use of military power and to consider reliance on the concept of a "just war" and its customary use to be obsolete." *An Ecumenical Call to Just Peace,* 23.

[19] Cf. WCC, Vulnerable Populations at Risk–the Responsibility to Protect. Statement of the WCC 9th Assembly, Porto Alegre, Brazil, 14-23 February, 2006; http://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/wcc-commissions/international-affairs/responsability-to-protect/vulnerable-populations-at-risk-the-responsibility-to-protect.html [14.06.2011].

concept of "just war" … it embraces social justice, the rule of law, respect for human rights and shared human security."[20] – A new concept of "Just Policing" might find an ecumenical consensus in near future.[21]

Reading "the signs of the times" in a global ecumenical gathering like the one in Kingston, Jamaica, illustrates most clearly that we are just beginning to understand and develop a holistic and coherent concept of "just peace". – What can be expected from the field of theology? The short description of some of our deliberations as well as the meaningful Bible studies in Kingston teach us at least two things: 1. The Hebrew Bible as well as the New Testament unmask the truth of evil and provide us with a very realistic Anthropology. We are confronted with the *simul iustus et peccator* of human nature. 2. There is no escape from acknowledging the ethical dilemmas when we deal with the complex challenges of injustice within a theological framework of the `fallen creation´. And yet we shall no longer allow this interpretation of the reality we live in to justify or legitimize the use of violence.

Today we know: the past "Decade to Overcome Violence" was just a start for the global ecumenical family into a much more profound exploration of the *gift* and the *vocation* to just peace.

I.   **The Interdependence and Inseparability of Peace and Justice: An Eschatological Approach**

a.   Just Peace – The Biblical Vision of *Shalom*

In the preparatory *Call* to the Churches, the Central Committee of the WCC admits: "Too often, we pursue justice at the expense of peace, and peace at the expense of justice. To conceive peace apart from justice is to compromise the hope that 'justice and peace shall embrace' (Psalm 85:10)."[22] The German Luther-translation (of 1984) reads more accurate: justice and peace shall *kiss* each other (Hebr. *nashak* = to kiss each other, "… *dass Güte und Treue einander begegnen, Gerechtigkeit und Frieden sich küssen…*"). This biblical metaphor informs us about the wisdom, that

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[20] *An Ecumenical Call to Just Peace*, 10.
[21] Cf. *A Mennonite and Catholic Contribution* to the World Council of Churches' Decade to Overcome Violence; in: The Ecumenical Review (2008); http://www.overcomingviolence.org/fileadmin/dov/files/iepc/Mennonite_and_Catholic_contribution_to_DOV.p df [14.06.2011]. Cf. Gerald W. Schlabach, Just Policing, Not War: An Alternative Response to World Violence, Liturgical Press 2007.
[22] *An Ecumenical Call to Just Peace*, 1.

any subordination of peace to justice or justice to peace will fail. "The Bible makes justice the inseparable companion of peace (Isaiah 32:17; James 3:18). Both point to right and sustainable relationships in human society… the 'wellbeing' and integrity of creation."[23]

Exploring anew the common roots of justice and peace with our Jewish brothers and sisters, the churches of the ecumenical community have learned not to reduce peace to the absence of war, a too narrow "negative concept of peace."[24] Rather, *shalom* in the Old Testament means "'completeness, soundness, welfare, peace.' Shalom is a broad concept, embracing justice (*mishpat*), mercy, rightness (*tsedeq*) or righteousness (*tsedeqah*), compassion (*hesed*), and truthfulness (*emet*)."[25] Integrity and Wholeness are possible when there is liberation from oppression, and justice for victims of injustice, the poor and the foreigner. In short, *shalom* means full life for all, by means of life-enhancing relationships, such as between God and humans, between each other, and within creation. *Shalom* is God's promised just peace.[26]

From this vision of *shalom* emerges the knowledge of the need for redemption as well as the confidence in it. Thus, the fragmentary and provisional nature of the "kingdom of God" (*basileia tou theou*) does not lead to coming to terms with violent and unjust relationships, but on the contrary it encourages us to not accept the apparently insuperable circumstances as the last word. We do have a sense of what is unjust. We do know of a world according to God's purpose–and we do know that we already have a share in it. We take seriously Paul's request: "Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good" (Romans 12:21). To face evil in all its horror and ugliness while not allowing ourselves to be possessed by it. To see how limited the power of evil is in the end, because another reality–God's just peace–has become a permanent presence in the world, through the *Christus praesens*, the Holy Spirit.

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[23] Ibid., 3.

[24] Such a "negative concept of peace"- research has as its major concern international relations and nation states and international alliances as its subject matter. Concentration on the origins, development or prevention of military conflicts ignores the fact that in times without war the situation is by no means peaceful. Cf. Zentrum für Konfliktforschung, Philipps-Universität Marburg: Friedens- und Konfliktforschung – Über die Schwierigkeiten, ein Fach zu beschreiben; http://www.uni-marburg.de/konfliktforschung/studium/fachbeschreibung [14.06.2011]. Defining of the research area needs to be further developed, for alongside "military violence there also exist other various forms of violence that from another perspective at least demands the same attention, e.g. torture or enforced relocation. With the introduction of the concept of violence, discussion was widened, and that discussion continues to this day and is particularly controversial. As well as direct forms of violence, social conditions come into view characterized by many sorts of oppression or exploitation, in which direct physical violence is not used (structural violence)." Ibid.

[25] *Initial Statement towards an Ecumenical Declaration on Just Peace*; http://www.overcomingviolence.org/fileadmin/dov/files/iepc/peace_declarations/drafting_group/Initial_Stateme nt_JustPeaceDeclaration_full.pdf, 5 [14.06.2011]. Cf. Klaus Koch, *Sdq* im Alten Testament: Eine traditionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung. Diss. masch. Heidelberg 1953.

[26] Cf. Perry B. Yoder, Shalom: The Bible´s Word for Salvation, Justice and Peace. Newton/KS: Faith & Life Press 1987.

b. Just Peace – the Biblical Vision of Transformative Justice

Violence does not give birth to justice. Peace only becomes possible when justice is fully experienced by everyone. Without justice, peace will remain an illusion. Therefore it is also essential to explore our understanding of justice more deeply since we know, that justice is not a neutral term at all.

Since its very beginnings the WCC has contributed to the development of international law. The rule of law promises to reduce and deter violence. Today we witness international tribunals as well as an International Criminal Court, judging war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity.[27] Perpetrators are held accountable by the international community, at least some of them. The at least symbolic function of this far-reaching achievement shall not be underestimated. Victims are not left alone with their desire for revenge, which could perpetuate the circle of violence anew.[28] Yet, we realize that these judicial matters are a far cry from real compensation or *doing justice*. Common juridical means of the western tradition and culture still follow the logic of punishment and atonement.[29] In order to really pave the way for the healing of broken relationships as well as of broken 'souls', a restorative approach to justice is required; as it is put into practice–to a certain extent–by some "truth and reconciliation commissions" (cf. South Africa, Sierra Leone, Guatemala, et.al.)[30] or "victim-offender-reconciliation" programs.[31]

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[27] For a definition of "crimes against humanity" see the Rome Statue of the International Criminal Court (ICC), Art. 7 (1): "…acts when committed as part of a widespread or systematic attack directed against any civilian population, with knowledge of the attack: (a) Murder; (b) Extermination; (c) Enslavement; (d) Deportation or forcible transfer of population; (e) Imprisonment or other severe deprivation of physical liberty in violation of fundamental rules of international law; (f) Torture; (g) Rape, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, forced pregnancy, enforced sterilization, or any other form of sexual violence of comparable gravity; (h) Persecution against any identifiable group or collectivity on political, racial, national, ethnic, cultural, religious, gender as defined in paragraph 3, or other grounds that are universally recognized as impermissible under international law, in connection with any act referred to in this paragraph or any crime within the jurisdiction of the Court; (i) Enforced disappearance of persons; (j) The crime of apartheid; (k) Other inhumane acts of a similar character intentionally causing great suffering, or serious injury to body or to mental or physical health." http://untreaty.un.org/cod/icc/statute/romefra.htm [14.06.2011]. In addition to crimes against humanity, the Statue lists genocide, war crimes, and the crime of aggression as crimes within the jurisdiction of the ICC. Cf. Ibid., Art. 5.

[28] Cf. Heinz-Gerhard Justenhoven, Internationale Schiedsgerichtsbarkeit. Ethische Norm und Rechtswirklichkeit, Stuttgart: Kohlhammer 2006

[29] For a discussion of the different functions of punishment, see: Jens Kreuter, Staatskriminalität und die Grenzen des Strafrechts. Reaktionen auf Verbrechen aus Gehorsam aus rechtsethischer Sicht, Öffentliche Theologie Bd.9, Gütersloh: Kaiser 1997.

[30] In opposition to international tribunals, truth commissions usually have no penal power. Cf. Audrey R. Chapman, Truth Commissions of Forgiveness and Reconciliation; in: Rodney L. Petersen and Raymond G. Helmick (eds.), Forgiveness and Reconciliation. Religion, Public Policy, and Conflict Transformation. Philadelphia: Templeton Press 2002, 257-277. Definition: „Truth commissions are temporary bodies mandated by governments or international agencies to investigate and make findings about acts and patterns of violence and gross human rights violations that took place during a specified period of time (…) truth commissions can go beyond a court of law and render a moral judgement about what was wrong and justifiable and in that way help to frame the events in a new national narrative of acknowledgement, accountability, and civic values". Ibid., 257. "In a few situations, nongovernmental organisations and church agencies have also sponsored the work of unofficial truth commissions". Ibid., footnote 2.

[31] Cf. Conflict Transformation and Restorative Justice Manual: Foundations and Skills for Mediation and Facilitation, ed. by Michelle Amster and Lorraine Stutzman Amstuz, 5th ed., Akron/PA: Mennonite Central Committee Office on Justice and Peacebuilding 2008. For an indepth study see Stephanie van de Loo, Versöhnungsarbeit. Kriterien –

That is a start. – In this regard, especially Mennonite legal practitioners and theologians from North-America and Canada have advanced studies and developed and promoted practices over the past 30 years.[32]

From the perspective of Jewish-Christian faith, justice is not primarily a virtue (as it was for Aristotle)[33] or a general principal for equal treatment, but first and foremost justice is something that God offers to humankind. The biblical notion of God´s justice always contains the dimension of mercy. Therefore God´s justice is called a „saving justice", which does not punish according to wrong doings or reward ccording to *good works*, but which makes whole–motivated by sheer love–and thereby creates a new relation between God and humankind.[34] God justifies the sinner, unconditional, *sola gratia*! – This is the ultimate reality of God´s justification that needs to re-orient the churches´ understanding of human justice: a renewing "transformative justice", which frees victims *and* offenders from their captivity. It is this creative and transformative justice[35] that holds the promise to break the vicious cycles of violence.

   c.   An Eschatological Approach to Theology as Primary Orientation for Ethics

In light of these reflections, we will need to revisit our theological concept of God´s Last Judgment, within an eschatological approach to just peace.[36] First and foremost, *God´s* judgment contains the promise of a necessary revelation of all brokenness, all damage, harm and trauma. To reveal the final truth is in fact to judge the sins of violence and to acknowledge injustice. We shall see fully! But this is not the end. Truth is rather the indispensable step towards ultimate forgiveness, restoration and compensation, healing and reconciliation: God´s creative and saving justice, which cannot be earned but only be received, shall be experienced in this truth. Hate,

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theologischer Rahmen – Praxisperspektiven. Theologie und Frieden Band 38, Verlag W. Kohlhammer, Stuttgart 2009.

[32] Cf. as a pioneer work: Howard Zehr, Changing Lenses. A New Focus for Crime and Justice, Scottdale/PA: Herald Press ²1995 (1990). Among others: Howard Zehr and Barb Toews (eds.), Critical Issues in Restorative Justice, Monsey/NY: Criminal Justice Press 2004. Jarem Sawatzky, Justpeace Ethics: A Guide to Restorative Justice and Peacebuilding. Eugene: Cascade Books 2008. Paul Redekop, Changing Paradigms: Punishment and Restorative Discipline, Waterloo/ON and Scottdale/PA: Herald Press 2008.
For biblical studies see: Christopher D. Marshall, Beyond Retribution. A New Testament Vision for Justice, Crime, and Punishment. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans 2001. Elaine Enns and Ched Myers, Ambassadors of Reconciliation Vol. II, New Testament Reflections on Restorative Justice and Peacemaking, New York/NY: Maryknoll 2009.
[33] Cf. Aristoteles, Die Nikomachische Ethik. Aus dem Griechischen und mit einer Einführung und Erläuterungen versehen von Olaf Gigon. München: DTV ⁵2002. Ursula Wolf, Aristoteles´ Nikomachische Ethik, Werkinterpretationen, Darmstadt: WBG 2002, 269f. Otfried Höffe (Hg.), Die Nikomachische Ethik. Klassiker Auslegen Bd.2. Berlin: Akademie Verlag 1995.
[34] See various contributions in: Bernd Janowski, Die rettende Gerechtigkeit, Beiträge zur Theologie des Alten Testaments 2, Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener 1999.
[35] Cf. Jürgen Moltmann, Gerechtigkeit für Opfer und Täter; in: Moltmann, In der Geschichte des dreieinigen Gottes, Beiträge zur trinitarischen Theologie, München: Kaiser 1991, 74-89.
[36] Cf. Günther Thomas, Gottes schöpferische Gerechtigkeit; in: Ruth Heß / Martin Leiner (ed.), Alles in Allem. Eschatologische Anstöße (FS für J. Chr. Janowski), Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener 2005, 109-132, 117.

retribution, punishment, anger, sorrow are not eternal, but God´s enduring love is! – Anticipation of this transformation must re-shape our human efforts of reconciliation in the present.

It becomes obvious that only an eschatological approach to all theology provides coherence to these ethical reflections. The promise of the fulfillment of God´s kingdom is the identity building and orienting force. If Christians give witness to their faith by anticipating the counter-reality of God´s *shalom* in the midst of this imperfect world, a corresponding "messianic ethic"[37] becomes possible, an ethic of *compassion*[38], empathy and advocacy towards every fellow human being as well as towards nature.

Accordingly a preliminary definition of just peace is proposed by the *Ecumenical Call*: "Within the limitations of tongue and intellect, we propose that Just Peace may be comprehended as *a collective and dynamic yet grounded process of freeing human beings from fear and want, of overcoming enmity, discrimination and oppression, and of establishing conditions for just relationships that privilege the experience of the most vulnerable and respect the integrity of creation*".[39] Since we know of just peace as the promised redemptive grace and consummation, it becomes the orienting energy in our "journey into God´s purpose for humanity and all creation, trusting that God will 'guide our feet into the way of peace' (Luke 1:79)".[40]

II. Towards a Theology of Just Peace

"As often as the church of Christ has reached a new understanding of its nature it has produced a new theology, appropriate to this self-understanding. A change in a church's understanding of itself is proved genuine by the production of theology. For theology is the church's self-understanding of its own nature on the basis of its understanding of the revelation of God in Christ…". Dietrich Bonhoeffer, in 1932.[41]

Following Bonheoffer's argument, we acknowledge: If the churches are actually beginning to develop a new self-understanding as churches, for whom just peace has in fact become as central

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[37] This term was used frequently by John Howard Yoder. Cf. in addition Stanley Hauerwas, The Peaceable Kingdom, A primer in Christian Ethics, Notre Dame/IN: University of Notre Dame 1986.
[38] In addition see: Ingolf U. Dalferth und Andreas Hunziker (ed.), Mitleid. Konkretionen eines strittigen Konzepts, Religion in Philosophy and Theology 28, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck 2007.
[39] *An Ecumenical Call to Just Peace*, 11.
[40] Ibid., 12.
[41] Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *A Theological Basis for the World Alliance?*; in: No Rusty Swords: Letters, Lectures and Notes 1928-1936, ed. Edwin H. Roberston, New York: Harper & Row 1965, 157-158.

as they have proclaimed at the global Peace Convocation 2011 – this must and will find expression in a new theology and ethics. – The *kairos* today is similar to that in 1932 Europe.

The development of a corresponding and coherent theology will be the litmus test for this new self-understanding of the churches´ acceptance of that *gift* and *vocation* to just peace. It is a great invitation to revisit some fundamental theological concepts together! – Here I can only outline some possible general directions.

a. Theology – "God of Peace" and the Powers

Our image of God shapes and orients our ethics. How is the image of God in the Judaeo-Christian tradition contributing to build right relations? There is no doubt that in the history of thought (*Wirkungsgeschichte*) of our faith tradition, elements of the image of God have lead to legitimize violence. But at the same time we observe, that it is precisely the God-image of this specific tradition that has set free impulses to overcome violence and struggle for right relations time and again. The ambivalence of this history proves, how important it is to revisit self-critically our own tradition from the perspective of the grace of just peace.

One of the most obvious challenges seems to be the notion of God´s omnipotence. It has mislead believers to instrumentalize religion for the sake of one´s own power. *Gott mit uns!* – "God with us" – has always been a dangerous attempt to follow one´s own goals, to enforce one´s own power by trying to instrumentalize God´s omnipotence. – How then should we speak of God´s almightiness?

In this regard, the most impressive story in the New Testament is found in Lk 4 ("The Temptation of Christ"). The devil offers to Jesus all power over the earth, if he only worships him. The true omnipotence of God is revealed in Jesus' renunciation of power.[42] The primary message here is precisely the relativizing function of God's almighty power over against any other power.[43] Following this line of thought, believers experience a freedom to not simply conform with the seemingly 'given realities' of politics, coercion or even their own rationality. – The omnipotent is the "God of peace" (Phil 4:9).

b. Christology – Reconciliation and New Creation

In Christian faith, the essential movement of God with creation is expressed through incarnation, in Christ. God does not remain distant and abstract. God gives himself into our violent world in

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[42] Cf. Francois Bovon, Das Evangelium nach Lukas, Evangelisch-Katholischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament (EKK), Vol. III/1, Zürich: Benziger and Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener 1989, 191ff.
[43] Cf. John Howard Yoder, The Politics of Jesus, Grand Rapids / MI: Eerdmans ²1995.134ff.

order to save, and to reconcile. This performative movement of self-giving could become a strong impulse for the re-formation of the church´s self-understanding.

Today the ecumenical family confirms: "Jesus[']… peace is expressed by the spirit of the Beatitudes (Matthew 5:3-11). Despite persecution, he remains steadfast in his active non-violence, even to death. His life of commitment to justice ends on a cross, an instrument of torture and execution. With the resurrection of Jesus, God confirms that such steadfast love, such obedience, such trust, leads to life. This is true also for us."[44]

The Church believes and confesses that God in Christ has renewed and made right the relationship between Godself and creation, once and for all, indestructibly. We are justified and hence liberated to a life in just relationships. Human beings [who perform violent acts] can no longer be reduced to their actions, but remain justified in God's eyes (*coram Deo*) – even though their *acts* of violence are to be condemned as sin.

The gift of reconciliation must not be separated from the call to become "ambassadors of reconciliation" (2 Cor5). In a common contribution to the Decade to Overcome Violence (DOV), two churches as diverse as the Mennonites and the Roman-Catholic Church cite Pope John Paul II as follows:[45] "It is by uniting his own sufferings for the sake of truth and freedom to the sufferings of Christ on the Cross that man is able to accomplish the miracle of peace and is in a position to discern the often narrow path between the cowardice which gives in to evil and the violence which, under the illusion of fighting evil, only makes it worse."[46] – Because we believe in that final possibility of overcoming violence, it is both unrealistic and purposeless to resign to the presence of violence. All creativity is necessary in order to follow Jesus on that "narrow path" of active nonviolence. But Christians know: In Christ we are already part of that *new creation* (Rom 6).

An ethics of just peace must find ways of interpreting this great movement of God in Christ towards reconciliation in such a way that it communicates to the realities of the present world. What are the ethical implications of praising the 'salvation through the cross', or the 'saving power of the Blood of Christ'? Mennonite theologians have begun to interpret the cross as a

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[44] *An Ecumenical to Just Peace*, 4.
[45] *A Mennonite and Catholic Contribution.*
[46] http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_01051991_centesimus-annus_ge.html, 25. [20.02.2010].

"nonviolent atonement" (J. Denny Weaver)[47], as God´s ultimate act of non-violence (John Howard Yoder),[48] challenging some traditional interpretations of that central doctrine.

c. Pneumatology – Consummation and Spaces for Life

Justified life is still experienced in "broken" forms. Nevertheless Christians trust that God's Spirit will consummate all of creation. Jürgen Moltmann has pointed out the completing „formative metaphors" of energy, space, and form, necessary in order to circumscribe the experiences of the Holy Spirit. *"Der göttliche Geist wird erfahren als der Herr, der befreit, und als der freie Raum, in dem keine Bedrängnis mehr ist... und der betroffene Mensch erfährt sich selbst geborgen und freigesetzt in dem weiten Raum des Geistes, in dem er aufatmen und sich entfalten kann"*.[49] The simultaneous reality of being safe and experiencing an open space for self-development within a community are the preconditions for building cultures of peace. Theologically speaking, this is the gift of the Holy Spirit, since the Holy Spirit creates that community (*koinonia*): an open ecumenical space for people from different cultures and traditions that offers the freedom to participate in it. It is not a space of total arbitrariness. As an *ecumenical* space, it provides safety, since it is experienced in the form of a reconciled community–a space for life. The Christian´s unconditional commitment to peace and justice is not based on some humanistic notion of individual freedom, but rather rests on faith convictions that we share in the community of that ecumenical fellowship, called to live in accordance with this understanding of holiness (1 Pet 1:15-16). – It seems appropriate to describe the process-character of performing a life of just peace in regard to the work of the Holy Spirit.

d. God in Relation – a Trinitarian Theological Framework

A Trinitarian framework ("*Rahmentheorie*")[50] – not to be reduced to a sophisticated philosophical speculation on God´s nature – helps us to explore consistently those interpretations of creation by God, reconciliation (or redemption) by Christ and consummation by the Holy Spirit in a coherent and inclusive way. It is especially the orthodox tradition that has moved ecumenical

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[47] Cf. J. Denny Weaver, The Nonviolent Atonement, Grand Rapids/MI: Eerdmans 2001. For the ongoing discussion cf. Conrad Grebel Review, Responses to J. Denny Weaver's The Nonviolent Atonement, Spring 2009. In addition see: Jürgen Moltmann, Der gekreuzigte Gott. Das Kreuz Christi als Grund und Kritik christlicher Theologie, Gütersloh: Kaiser ⁶1993. Frey, Jörg / Schröter, Jens (Hg.), Deutungen des Todes Jesu im Neuen Testament, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck 2005.

[48] Cf. the extensive writings of John Howard Yoder, first of all: Preface to Theology. Christology and Theological Methods, Grand Rapids/MI: Brazos 2002. The ongoing discussions within Mennonite circles can be followed in: Willard Swartley (ed.), Violence Renounced. René Girard, Biblical Studies and Peacemaking. IMS Studies in Peace and Scripture 4, Telford/PA: Pandora 2000.

[49] Cf. Jürgen Moltmann, Der Geist des Lebens. Eine ganzheitliche Pneumatologie, München: Kaiser 1991, 287-291, 290.

[50] Cf. Christoph Schwöbel, Trinitätslehre als Rahmentheorie des christlichen Glaubens. Vier Thesen zur Bedeutung der Trinität in der christlichen Dogmatik; in: Wilfried Härle and Reiner Preul (eds.), Trinität. Marburger Jahrbuch Theologie X, Marburg: N.G.Elwert 1999, 129-154.

theology to re-visit Trinitarian doctrine.[51] A trinitarian framework helps us to recognize that the God of Abraham and Sarah and the God who frees Israel from slavery is the same who has become incarnate in Jesus Christ and thus indwells (*shekinah*) this violent world with divine life-giving Spirit.[52] Christian belief does not have a static but a dynamic image of this God in relation. This image is characterized by the great bond of love within the fellowship of God's own relational self. From there flows the decisive belief that we *participate*–in and through Christ–in the fellowship of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Believers are drawn into the building of *shalom*, and it is only now that they *can* act liberated from violence.[53] That implies, inasmuch as it is legitimate, that the Church does not idly long for the promised just peace of God, but commits itself to make this reality of participating in the Divine a part of human experience.

From these theological insights we then go on to seek expression of that self-understanding of the *una sancta*, the Church ecumenical.

e. Ecclesiology: Koinonia and Witness

If we explore the Church as the "People of God", the "Body of Christ", and the "Temple of the Holy Spirit", this will be of relevance for it´s self-understandings.[54] If there is no coherence between the *proclamation* of just peace and the *formation* of the church, how shall the church become a credible witness to that gift of relational Peace? The ecumenical community does not only proclaim an eschatological hope, but it is itself a community of hope. Church does not only *have* a distinct social ethics, Church *is* in itself a distinct social ethics,[55] as that reconciled *una sancta*. The church that lives the peace it proclaims is what Jesus called "a city set on a hill for all to see" (Matthew 5:14).

I want to propose that an ecumenical just-peace-Ecclesiology must then include the following aspects: the anticipation and celebration of the peace of God (in *leiturgia*), the witness for peace (in *martyria*), and service for justice (in *diakonia*). Worship, witness and service for just peace are essentially social activities and reflect that given community by the Holy Spirit (*koinonia*).

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[51] Especially by the writings of John D. Zizioulas, Being as Communion. Studies in Personhood and the Church. Crestwood: St.Vladimir´s Seminary Press 1985 (²1993).

[52] Cf. Jürgen Moltmann, Trinität und Reich Gottes. Zur Gotteslehre. München: Kaiser, ³1994 (1980).

[53] In my view, this was the decisive new insight in the ecumenical discussions that took place between the Historic Peace Churches and the 'magisterial' Churches during the 1950s and 1960s (the so-called Puidoux conferences): *participatio* instead of *imitatio Christi*. Cf. Fernando Enns, *The Peace Church and the Ecumenical Community*. Ecclesiology and the Ethics of Nonviolence. Copublished by Kitchener/Ontario: Pandora Press and Geneva: World Council of Churches 2007.

[54] This has been developed in more detail in: Enns, The Peace Church and the Ecumenical Community.

[55] Cf. Thomas Best and Martin Robra (eds.), Ecclesiology and Ethics. Ecumenical Ethical Engagement, Moral Formation and the Nature of the Church, Geneva: WCC 1997.

Therefore the ecumenical community could be described as a community of "alternative quality" within a globalized world of communities. In her existence in time and space theology must serve as that constant self-critical investigation in order to understand where and how churches are inflicted in violent structures and where and how they legitimize injustices–in liturgies, in confessions of faith, in its lives and teachings–in order to confess God´s gift of peace (*ecclesia semper reformanda*).[56] The church of just peace is–of necessity–a confessing church!

III.   The Ecumenical Context

a.   Interdenominational

From the previous considerations it has become most obvious: developing such a Theology of just peace has to be carried out as an ecumenical task.[57] The grace of just peace and the vocation to just peace is given to the church ecumenical–in order to be shared beyond church boundaries, for the church ecumenical is not an end in itself.

At the beginning of the modern ecumenical movement, there was the deep insight that the divided state of the churches was an obstacle to their witness and mission. That, it was said, must not continue. Unity must be sought amid all the differences of approach between the churches. In each case it came down ultimately to the credibility of the Christian faith and thus to the self-understanding of the churches in fellowship with other churches. The vision of unity is contemporaneous with the peace witness of the Church of Christ. The transmission of the gift of reconciliation in Christ is the deepest and ultimate motive for our striving for reconciliation between Christians, "…despite differences in ethnic and national identity, and even in doctrine and church order."[58] For being a Christian and thus belonging to the *sanctorum communio* transcends any other given or chosen identity.[59] The awareness that Christians are in fact reconciled in Christ creates a unity of reconciled divesity.

b.   From a Particular Perspective

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[56] The 1934 Barmen Confession has expressed this most clearly. Barmer Theologische Erklärung. Einführung und Dokumentation, ed. by Alfred Burgsmüller and Rudolf Weth, Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener ⁵1993.
[57] My understanding of doing ecumenical theology has been laid out in: Fernando Enns, Ökumene und Frieden. Theologische Anstöße aus der Friedenskirche. Theologische Anstöße Vol. 4, Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener (to be published in 2012), Chapter A. Theologie im Horizont der Ökumene–Ökumenische Theoriebildung.
[58] *An Ecumenical Call to Just Peace*, 16.
[59] Cf. Eddy van der Borght, Just Peace and the Unity of the Church. Lecture presented at the International Congress on "Just Peace", Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, 23-24 June 2011 (to be published soon).

Such an understanding of the ecumenical community of churches–in reconciled diversity–presupposes strong and self-confident identities within that communion, for true community is only possible in diversity, if it shall not resume to uniformity. No tradition–shaped by time and culture–holds all truth there is.

Historic Peace Churches, like the Mennonites, are that part of the global ecumenical community, for whom non-violence has been an essential part of their Christian faith and identity–at least in most parts.[60] Faced with the disasters of 20th Century, the ecumenical family has invited these traditions explicitly to share their Peace Theology and Ethics of non-violence.[61] It is the distinct and direct link of Theology and Ethics, always reflecting on the ethical implications of any theological sentence, which Mennonites bring to the ecumenical table: less concerned about doctrinal orthodoxy and more focused on orthopraxis, it might be our specific "undogmatic" way of *doing* theology, very conscious of the contextuality of any theological reflection. This approach includes a welcome of any proposed corrections by the other traditions. It is a humble approach–and at the same time quite ambitious, since it requests to hold each other accountable within the ecumenical family.

Mennonites (*Doopsgezinde*) in the Netherlands realized earlier than any other Mennonite church, that theological reflection and education is a necessary task in order to constantly clarify the church's self-understanding as well as its ability to dialogue with other denominations, with new trends in sciences, and with society at large. Samuel Muller (1785-1875) from Krefeld (Germany), who became one of the leading theologians of the *Algemene Doopsgezinde Sociëteit* and seminary professor in the 19th Century, taught his students that "theological development outside their own denomination could benefit Mennonites as well, and he made sure that new English and German ideas in the fields of theology and philosophy were incorporated into seminary lessons."[62] Under the strong influence of "Modern Theology", Mennonites "felt at home within the main-stream of the so-called *vrijzinning-protestantisme…*, characterized by tolerance towards

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[60] Cf. Sara Speicher und Donald D. Durnbaugh, Art. "Historic Peace Churches"; in: A Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement, ed. by Nicholas Lossky et.al., Geneva: WCC ²2002, 521f.

[61] Cf. Donald F. Durnbaugh (ed.), On Earth Peace, Discussions on War / Peace Issues between Friends, Mennonites, Brethren and European Churches 1935-1975. Elgin/IL: The Brethren Press 1978. Documented contributions to the past "Decade to Overcome Violence" can be found in: Fernando Enns, Scott Holland, Ann Riggs (eds.), Seeking Cultures of Peace. A Peace Church Conversation, Geneva: WCC 2004. Donald E. Miller e.al. (eds.), Seeking Peace in Africa: Stories from African Peacemakers. Telford/PA: Cascadia 2007. Donald E. Miller, Gerard Guiton, Paulus S. Widjaja, Overcoming Violence in Asia. The Role of the Church in Seeking Cultures of Peace, Telford/PA: Cascadia and Geneva: WCC 2011.

[62] *Testing Faith and Tradition*. 64. In his inaugural address in Zuthpen, Muller spoke on Titus 2:7: "Show yourself in all respects a model of good works, and in your teaching show integrity, gravity, and sound speech that cannot be censured" (ibid, 63).

other religious currents, an emphasis on individual spirituality and human autonomy, a longing for moral and religious renewal and emancipation from ecclesial patronage".[63] This kind of liberalism emphasized the responsibility of each believer within church and society to express Christian faith first of all by *living* an example.

c.   In Interreligious Dialogue

During the Peace Convocation in Jamaica, where representatives from other faiths were constantly involved in our deliberations, we recognized again that "… the promise of peace extends to all people regardless of their traditions and commitments."[64] There will be no peace on earth, if we cannot find peace among the religions, as Hans Küng has pronounced so strongly in his World-Ethos Project.[65] Just peace cannot be established or experienced apart from people of other faiths. Today, all theological reflection and concrete action takes place in the context of plural societies and increasing globalization of all areas of life.

In interreligious dialogue we find that great opportunity to develop true respect and "costly tolerance" towards the Other–who will remain the Other–as well as to find common ethical ground with our "sister-religions" (Jayasiri T. Peiris).[66] If we only take our own faith and the faith of the Other seriously. We will have to listen to their faith confessions as they will have to listen to ours'–since it is only in the realm of those faith-systems that we will start to understand the Other's struggle for peace with justice. If such witnessing to each other is not possible, the relations will remain superficial; they will not prove to be sustainable in times of crisis ("cheap tolerance").

Final Remarks

…on to the X. Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Busan / Southkorea 2013: "God of Life, lead us to Justice and Peace".

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[63] Ibid., 65. "Muller and others were proud of the non-dogmatic Doopsgezinde approach to Bible, the traditional rejection of dogmatism and the independent individualist approach to religion" (ibid, 64). Still, "Muller was a community builder…", ibid. 67.
[64] *The Message of the International Ecumenical Peace Convocation.*
[65] Cf. Hans Küng, Projekt Weltethos, München/Zürich: Piper [10]2006. In addition: Hans Küng (ed.), Dokumentation zum Weltethos, München/Zürich: Piper 2002.
[66] Cf. Fernando Enns, The Peace Church: Identity and Tolerance in Pluralist Societies. Bechtel Lectures 2005 at Conrad Grebel University College, Waterloo/Ontario; in: Conrad Grebel Review, Fall 2005, 19-31.

Compassionate God

We speak of love and are accomplices in violence

We cry for justice and are entangled in injustice

We claim the truth and accept a lie

We hope for peace and fail to live it

Prince of Peace

You have taken upon you the sin of the world

You have suffered the violence of humankind

You have confronted the injustice of the powers

And faced the force of death

Creator Spirit

Give us the courage and strength

To speak the truth in love

To do justice with peace

To be merciful as you are.[67]

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[67] A prayer from The World Council of Churches, "Telling the Truth about Ourselves and the World: a Study Guide for Individuals and Churches Together to Reflect and Act on while the 2001-2010 Decade to Overcome Violence: Churches Seeking Reconciliation and Peace is being Celebrated at the International Ecumenical Peace Convocation", Geneva: WCC 2010.