



International Day of Prayer for Peace

21 September 2005

The World Council of Churches

The World Council of Churches promotes Christian unity in faith, witness and service for a just and peaceful world. An ecumenical fellowship of churches founded in 1948, today the WCC brings together over 340 Protestant, Orthodox, Anglican and other churches representing more than 550 million Christians, and works cooperatively with the Roman Catholic Church.

<http://www.wcc-coe.org>

The Decade to Overcome Violence

The Decade to Overcome Violence (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 and people of all living faiths, for peace, justice and reconciliation.

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

As an initiative of the World Council of Churches, the Decade is a global movement. It attempts to strengthen existing peace networks as well as inspire the creation of new ones.

Copies of this brochure in several languages may be downloaded from the DOV website and are available on request from the DOV office.

<http://www.overcomingviolence.org>

Photos: WCC **Cover Illustration:** Asia Focus Banner **Design:** Aplin Clark

The mural project was commissioned by the Christian Conference of Asia from Lei Garcia and Ugatlahi. It is a collective creation of young Filipino visual artists who are also community organizers. Dr Hope Antone, Lei Garcia and Ugatlahi conceptualized the mural.

WCC Decade to Overcome Violence
P.O. Box 2100, CH-1211 Geneva 2
Tel: +41 22 791 60 47
Fax: +41 22 791 64 06
dov@wcc-coe.org



an initiative of the World Council of Churches



God, you are the God of life.
Transform us in the depths of our hearts
into people, through whom your peace
is carried forth into your world.

Send your Spirit into the hearts of those
who are captured in the net of violence
be it as perpetrators or as victims
and let us never give up the search
for the chance to talk to them.



21 September 2005: The International Day of Prayer for Peace

In 2005, the World Council of Churches joins for the second time the UN International Day of Peace by inviting congregations worldwide to pray for peace in all participating churches on 21 September, the preceding Sunday, or the following Sunday. The theme for 2005 is “Building communities of peace for all” chosen by churches from Asia, the region for this year's DOV annual focus.

An Invitation from the World Council of Churches

When the world is at war in so many places and the forces of violence, war and oppression seem to be increasing, praying for peace may seem to be a futile exercise. But we Christians believe both in the power and in the promise of peace, and we also believe in the power of prayer.

Prayer is part of Christian spirituality, a spirituality which is not a call to turn inward, to retreat from social action and public life but, on the contrary, a call to awaken and to pursue the continuity of things of the spirit with action for justice and peace.

That is why, in the framework of the Decade to Overcome Violence, the World Council of Churches has called on its member churches to observe an International Day of Prayer for Peace on 21 September.

On that day, we want to lift up people in all nations who are working together for a peaceful world. Let us encourage them and walk in solidarity with them. Let us intercede for them and give thanks to God for them.

Samuel Kobia
General Secretary

The UN International Day of Peace

In 2001, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution (55/282) designating 21 September of each year as a day for the entire world to observe a day of peace and nonviolence. In 2004, UN secretary general Kofi Annan supported the proposal of the WCC to establish an international day of prayer for peace.

Violence

Violence may be defined as 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.

Four types of violence are:

Physical

The spread of small arms is a major factor.

Psychological

Includes threats, extortion, etc.

Sexual

1 out of 4 women experience sexual assault in their lifetime.

Deprivation or Negligence

24,000 people die every day from hunger.

Three forms of physical violence

(Deaths by physical violence):

Individual (incl. suicide) 50%

Interpersonal (incl. domestic) 30%

Collective (incl. war & terrorism) 20%

Source: World Health Organization, World Report on Violence and Health 2002

http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/world_report/en/

Prayer for Peace in Asia

For homeless children begging in the streets of Colombo, close to a million internally displaced Burmese, prostituted women waiting under Bangkok night lights, church people and peace advocates killed in the Philippines:

We pray for peace.

For the victims of war-torn East Timor, Tuvalu and Kiribati threatened by the rising sea level because of global warming, the alarming rate of suicide incidents in Tokyo, sexually abused migrant workers in Singapore:

We pray for peace.

For factory workers receiving low wages in Beijing, the long-standing rift in the Korean Peninsula, oppressed and persecuted Dalits in India, refugees starving to death in Afghanistan:

We pray for peace.

For tsunami victims in South Asia, troubled relationships between Taiwan and China, babies born without eyes in Saigon caused by Agent Orange, brothels filled with thousands of child sex slaves in Cambodia:

We pray for peace.

We pray for peace so that carpenters building rich peoples' houses will have roofs over their heads, the life-giving earth will bless us with its fruits, farmers, whose tears and blood have watered the fields, will have food on their tables, textile workers will clothe their weary bodies, and those who struggle for peace will find justice, because Christ is our peace.

Philippines

Observe and Support the International Day of Prayer for Peace

There are many ways in which church communities and individuals can support the International Day of Prayer for Peace.

Be creative! Some communities have used the day for public events, art contests, educational and cultural programmes. Church bells have tolled at noon and school children have written stories and letters. Other ideas for action include:

- Organize a time of prayer and reflection on peace in your community, workplace, school or home
- Share information about the Day of Prayer with others. Distribute copies of this brochure
- Prepare a 24-hour prayer vigil for peace with other faith communities around the world (see: www.idpvigil.com)
- Arrange a meeting with representatives of other church and religious communities to discuss how faith groups can build a culture of peace.

Visit the DOV website to find out what others are doing and to share additional resources.