

3.0 CONCRETE STEPS - RESOLUTION OF THE SYNOD OF THE PROTESTANT CHURCH IN BADEN¹

3.1 BECOMING A JUST PEACE CHURCH

Committed work for peace is rooted in prayer and worship. Prayers for peace in the world are an integral part of many church services. In addition, the annual ecumenical "Peace Decade" and the International Day of Prayer for Peace (21 September) will continue to be occasions for celebrating worship services for peace. Working for peace and reconciliation is at the heart of the Church's witness. This witness cannot just be left to the Church as a whole; It requires long-term commitment at every level within the Church. The Church is regarded by the public as an authority on ethical issues and is rightly expected to express its views on violence, injustice, and persecution.

As we turned our attention to peace ethics, we became aware that we have paid too little attention to the subject of peace and have not done enough to strive for peace. We need to ask ourselves more often how much our lifestyle and consumption aggravate conflict and sow the seeds of war. We do not take a clear enough stance, when people are threatened or hurt by violence. We do too little to ensure that nonviolent means are used to resolve conflicts.

We now want to take responsibility for justice and peace. And we urge Christians at all levels of our Regional Church to do as much as they can to implement the following suggestions and recommendations in their own circles.

1. **The Regional Synod undertakes to put the subject of peace on its agenda at least once during each term of office** and to review: the steps which have been taken so far within the Regional Church on the way towards just peace; what needs strengthening; what needs to be done differently; and what new initiatives need to be taken.
2. The Church has a mission to broadcast the message of the Gospel. **The Regional Synod asks the Protestant Church Council: to make the peace message of the Bible heard in regular discussions with political leaders;** to express criticism of the one-sidedness of military options; and to question the justification of the numerous foreign missions of the armed forces. Likewise, the development and implementation of nonviolent approaches and methods of conflict prevention, conflict resolution, and peacebuilding should regularly be made the subject of discussion.

The Regional Synod also asks the leaders of the church districts to regularly invite parliamentarians to meetings and to raise concerns and make known the church's positions on current issues of peace and justice.

¹ These concrete steps are part of the discussion paper, "GUIDE OUR FEET INTO THE WAY OF PEACE (Luke 1:79). Please note:

The discussion paper of the Protestant Church in Baden was adopted by the Synod on 24 October 2013. It is intended to further the debate on issues of peace ethics. Section 3.0, under the heading "CONCRETE STEPS - RESOLUTION OF THE SYNOD OF THE PROTESTANT CHURCH IN BADEN", contains the actual resolution of the Synod in the form of twelve self-commitments (3.1.) and practical proposals for the implementation of the task of "BECOMING A JUST PEACE CHURCH" (3.2.).

3. The Protestant Church in Baden promotes conflict prevention and civil conflict management by training professionals in constructive conflict management and sending peace specialists out to other countries. This should be done in cooperation with partner churches in other countries and ecumenical organisations, e.g. through:
- support for individual employees of the Civil Peace Service, in order to foster identification with the Civil Peace Service;
 - lecture tours around the Regional Church by CPS workers ("Civil Instead of Military" project);
 - support for groups which are working nonviolently for change in countries ruled by dictators or torn apart by civil war;
 - twinning with congregations in crisis regions.

The two programmes, "Young People Becoming Peacemakers" and "Voluntary Ecumenical Service for Peace", should be continued and other peace education programmes should be developed.

The Protestant Church Council is asked to submit appropriate proposals to the Regional Synod before its conference in the spring of 2014.

4. Social justice and the right to sustainable development are fundamental prerequisites for peace among peoples. Socially just economics and care for the environment and the foundations of life are essential. Climate change is one of the key challenges of the 21st century in relation to the environment, social justice, and peace. The consequences are especially severe for people in poor countries. There is an urgent need for strategies which combine climate justice, social justice, and the right to development, and which indicate ways in which (church) behaviour can be changed. The Regional Church, in its climate protection strategy, has already submitted a plan for CO₂ reduction. The Church has also commissioned a project for "environmentally friendly and socially fair procurement". The implementation of this ambitious project is not only a challenge for the management; It is also a spiritual challenge, because it requires far-reaching changes in behaviour on the part of individuals as well as the Church as a whole.

We encourage congregations to continue - or to begin - steadfastly and courageously playing an active part in this process.

5. The Protestant Church in Baden is committed to an expansion of church peace research in cooperation with the FEST (Protestant Institute for Interdisciplinary Research), which will foster intercourse between academia, the church, peace organisations, society, and political institutions, and will intensify inter-religious dialogue on the subjects of "religion and peace" and "religion and conflict".

The Protestant Church Council is asked to consider commissioning the FEST² to conduct a research project on the subject of "just policing". This should clarify whether, and how, police enforcement measures can be used more and more often in inter-state conflicts instead of military

force.

6. Now that a national law has been passed to phase out nuclear power as a source of energy, it is time to draft - perhaps in agreement with other EU Member States - a medium-term scenario for phasing out military means of securing peace.

Members and employees of the Protestant Church Council and members of the Synod are asked to raise this concern in meetings with the member churches of the Community of Protestant Churches in Europe (CPCE).

7. Weapons should be exported only in accordance with laws and regulations. And the decisions of the Federal Security Council should be transparent. Arms exports should be stopped altogether in the medium term.

The Regional Synod calls on the federal government and the members of the German Bundestag to implement this. The Protestant Church in Baden will therefore push for implementation of this policy in discussions at all levels with politicians who carry responsibility.

The annual Arms Export Report of the Joint Conference Church and Development (GKKE) can be used as the basis for such discussions.

8. Many congregations also have direct relationships with companies which manufacture armaments - through members of the congregation and direct contact with companies. Some of the Church's income comes from the tax paid by employees. There is therefore a shared responsibility, which needs to be shouldered jointly. The Regional Church has already established the following criterion for capital investments: "Companies which operate in fields which we consider to be ethically dubious (e.g. armaments production, gambling) are to be excluded from the investment portfolio."

The Protestant Church Council is asked to examine the extent to which church tax funds can be directly employed for the relief of suffering caused by weapons, either now or in the future.

9. **In the Regional Church's educational and training institutions, "active nonviolent conflict management" and "ways and means of working for peace" are to become a compulsory part of the curriculum.**
10. **The Protestant Church Council and the representatives of the Regional Church on the Synod of the EKD (Evangelical Church in Germany) are asked to advocate strongly, in the member churches and bodies of the EKD (Synod, Church Conference, and Council): that the debate on the subject of peace be intensified;** and that the discussion paper published in 2007 be developed further - in the light of the discussion process in Baden and the changed global context - toward a more definite adoption of the option for nonviolence in accordance with a comprehensive understanding of just peace. Policing measures which serve to prevent and avoid escalation are to be given greater attention in this debate.
11. In inter-church and interfaith discussions, opportunities for mediation and other forms of peaceful intervention by representatives of churches or other faiths should be mentioned. And the participants in such discussions should be encouraged to take up these opportunities. **We encourage all those involved in inter-religious dialogue to raise this matter persistently.**

12. In 2014 we will remember the beginning of the First World War 100 years ago and the beginning of the Second World War 75 years ago. In the same year, we will celebrate the 25th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall and the peaceful revolution in Germany. Worship services to mark these occasions will provide opportunities to give thanks for peace and to confess our guilt.

The Regional Synod asks the congregations and districts, and the service and social work agencies to make our common responsibility for peace and justice a subject of discussion during the year.

This can be done in meetings for encounter and dialogue, at conferences at academies, in biography workshops, in cooperation with local societies, in schools, at memorials, and in discussions with soldiers, representatives of peace groups, politicians, and people who have witnessed historical events.

3.2 Learning Peace

Peace can be learned and must be taught. Methods of constructive conflict management and the practice of active nonviolence have to be learned, practised regularly, and organised. For the purpose of developing and implementing appropriate projects and programmes, the feasibility of the Protestant churches in the southwest setting up a "Protestant Institute for Peace Education" should be investigated.

The following additional steps are proposed:

- Constructive nonviolent conflict resolution can already be learned in kindergarten.
- In work with young people in confirmation classes, the "Young People Becoming Peacemakers" scheme has proved to be successful and should be expanded further. If candidates for confirmation, when they are taught the basic tenets of Christian faith, also learn how to deal with conflict, it becomes clear that action for peace by Christians necessarily follows from faith in God.
- Mediation training is well established in schools everywhere and shows young people how important the role of mediator can be in conflict situations. There is scope for extending the "Young People Becoming Peacemakers" scheme here too. Peace education should be part of the profile of Protestant schools.
- Issues of peace ethics and constructive conflict management should have a permanent place in the religious education curriculum. Historical case studies (Gandhi, Martin Luther King, the Philippines, Liberia) can demonstrate to young people the effectiveness of nonviolent action. The contribution of faith communities to peace through multifaith peace work (Nigeria, Liberia) should be given special attention in RE lessons.
- Congregations which make a point of acting as "peacemakers" in their work, e.g. in kindergartens, confirmation classes, adult education, or parish work, deserve to be honoured.
- The subject of "nonviolent conflict transformation" needs to be an integral part of the curriculum at every stage of church training courses.
- Peace theology should already be offered as part of theological training; The second phase of the training of pastors needs to include: information on the institutions and structures of the peace work of the regional church and the EKD as a whole; and also basic knowledge of subjects such as methods of constructive conflict transformation and the true significance for peacebuilding of religious actors at national and international levels. In this way, pastors and other church workers can be enabled to respond to the peace issues of our time in both theological and political terms.

- Ecumenical, inter-religious and intercultural learning is an important building block of peace education. Projects such as FIT (Fit through Intercultural Training) have proved to be successful and should be taken up and further developed, as necessary. The same applies to the "Voluntary Ecumenical Peace Service" of the Regional Church and the partnership work, in which questions of peace ethics feature strongly in ecumenical and intercultural dialogue.
- The Protestant Academy of Baden and the Protestant Institute for Interdisciplinary Research (FEST) continue to address the issue of peace and questions of peace ethics in a variety of ways in their conferences and events. They highlight and analyse the potential of the world religions for both violence and peace. At conferences at the Academy, the interrelationships between peace and economic activity at regional and global levels are a regular subject of reflection. And sustainable approaches, which contribute to peacebuilding and conflict reduction, are sought in the context of business ethics and social ethics.
- The Church's Industrial Mission (KDA) plays an active role in specific crises and conflict situations in the working world, by trying: to persuade participants in conflict to engage in active conflict management; to de-escalate conflict through discussion and mediation; and to show how relationships can be conducted with reduced violence.
- The Church's Rural Mission (KDL) frequently addresses the problems of developing countries and the dependency which is created by structural violence (e.g. land grabbing).
- Where the subjects of "overcoming violence" and "making peace" are concerned, it is necessary to be aware of the different contributions which are made by women and men - and the different ways in which they can be affected by violence. There is an important role here for the Regional Church's Frauenarbeit (work with women) and Männerarbeit (work with men).
- The ecumenical youth project, "Memorial to the Jews persecuted on 22 October 1940", should be developed into a long-term peace education programme.

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