

Reaction of the Evangelical Church in Germany to the Initial Statement towards an Ecumenical Declaration on Just Peace presented by the World Council of Churches

I. Fundamental remarks on the Initial Statement towards an Ecumenical Declaration on Just Peace presented by the World Council of Churches

The Evangelical Church in Germany (Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland, EKD) fundamentally welcomes the World Council of Churches' (WCC) first draft of an Ecumenical Declaration on Just Peace. To begin with, it welcomes the choice of subject, for, among the aspects and facets of the subject that relate to overcoming violence, overcoming war-related violence has a prominent role. Peace is of and by itself a central topic of political and theological reflection. Preserving, promoting and renewing peace is a prime task for Christian churches and society, the international society (evtl. besser: global community) in particular.

Secondly, the EKD welcomes the central concept selected for statements on peace ethics, namely "just peace." This is an extraordinarily helpful and productive concept in peace ethics, which has also been the focus of the EKD's thinking, notably since 2001 ("Peace Ethics on Probation"). This reflection was summed up in 2007 in the EKD Council's Peace Memorandum "Live from God's Peace – Care for Just Peace¹."

The EKD responds positively to the following points in the WCC's Initial Statement and fundamentally supports them:

- Peace in biblical witness (shalom/eirene, paragraphs 14ff) is perceived in a many-faceted way. The draft statement rightly makes it clear to what extent peace is different and means more than the mere absence of war and violence.
- From the biblical findings the idea of peace as a gift of God (see paras. 12, 17, 18, 21) is rightly given special emphasis. Biblical evidence is rightly provided in order to focus on the "not primarily what human beings can achieve" but something given them by God.
- The WCC statements on violence and power(s) are nuanced, these being concepts which have many different meanings in German as well (paras. 28-38).
- The idea that worship is the origin and source of peace (para. 53), from which the church lives and which it then endeavours to take into the world, corresponds rather exactly to the statements in the second body of the EKD's 2007 Peace Memorandum (see its section 2.1).
- The esteem shown for the special witness of the historic peace churches (para. 56) is not just gratifying in terms of peace ethics, but may also be useful in conversations with, and among, the churches themselves (see the example of the Roman Catholic-Mennonite dialogue in para. 95).
- The EKD shares the view that there is a deep-seated connection between spiritual peace orientation and practical peace-building (paras. 74f).
- Another point worthy of note and support is the need to build just institutions and ways of life (para. 85) in order to achieve just peace.
- The idea of soul-craft (para. 86f) also plays a major part in section 2.2 of the EKD Peace Memorandum, there called "formation of the heart." In both texts it is regarded

¹ The English text of the Memorandum is online in pdf and HTML at:
<http://www.ekd.de/english/texts.html> and http://www.ekd.de/english/live_from_gods_peace.html.

as a precondition for the development and transformation of character and conscience, and for peace education.

- Possibly there could be continuing cooperation with “working allies” (paras. 94-98), i.e. between radical pacifists and representatives of the theory of a just war. When it comes to overcoming wars and conflicts, the emphasis is on possible cooperation, in contrast to antagonistic models. However, this idea calls for very careful examination in a given case.

We have deliberately mentioned these positive aspects first. The following sections express occasional criticism of the WCC’s Initial Statement. This criticism should be considered against the background of our overall positive assessment and be used constructively for the further elaboration of the text, or for a new draft statement. Here it must be kept in mind that the intention of the text is mainly pragmatic, i.e. it aims at concrete action by churches.

This being said, we will go ahead and mention three fundamental criticisms of the text that in the view of the EKD, indicate a need for further clarification.

The first relates to the statement that the present situation in the world has to be understood as a “kairos,” even a “kairos of grace” (paras. 8, 12). The present time is crisis-ridden and characterized by the convergence and interconnection of threats; as the Decade to Overcome Violence comes to a close, this means for the churches both a commitment and a great opportunity that is, in some sense, historically unique. But large parts of the text fail to mention the great threats to peace through international terrorism, or only refer to them in passing. Postulating a “kairos” is always theologically risky, particularly in our tense and complex times. Such a “kairos of grace” is hard to diagnose and it is rarely unambiguously manifest.

Secondly, a proposition that cannot apply without comment to the churches of the Reformation and the EKD concerns the sacramental character of the church as a whole (“the church as sacrament of peace,” paras. 52, 54f). For good theological reasons, the EKD holds to the essence of the sacrament as a bodily means of grace given by Christ and thus to the two traditional sacraments (Baptism and the Eucharist). However, we would not object at all to talking about the Christian Church as an effective sign of peace.

Finally, the EKD lacks sufficient clarity on the relationship between the key idea of just peace and the proposition that pacifists can have working alliances with advocates of the theory of just war. There seems to be an inconsistency in the text here. On the one hand, para. 89 states: “Different traditions, a common pathway. From the differing traditions of Christian peacemaking, just peacemaking has created a common pathway appropriate for our time. The older traditions of Christian pacifism and just war theory no longer control peace thinking.” These statements suggest that the doctrine of just peace has replaced the other two, older traditions, or is in the process of doing so. It would then consequently constitute a new, third category apart from the other two doctrines or traditions, which would recede into the background. The EKD shares this point of view.

On the other hand, the idea developed in paras 94 to 99 of the “working alliance of pacifist and just war traditions” (99) apparently means that these two traditions still exist alongside and in contrast to one another, but could currently converge at the practical level. That is an interesting idea, which may be considered convincing on the example of the Iraq war of 2003. But is then the doctrine of just peace only the name of the new working alliance? Is that claimed to be its identity? Or are there suddenly three or even four categories operating alongside one another? Then the relationship of the doctrine of just peace to the working alliance between “just war” and “pacifism” would need to be clarified. This text has not done that but it should be done if the WCC continues to defend the concept of the working alliance.

II. Answers to the questions asked by the WCC

1. Can you agree with this account of the biblical sources and the Trinitarian conclusions?

The survey of the biblical sources names many Bible passages relevant to the peace issue, but it necessarily remains a subjective and thus a rather random choice. The idea of choosing a meditative introduction, relating to the well-known Christmas story from Luke 2, appears to be a very effective way of introducing the theme. This story contrasts the religious and political dimensions of social reality, represented in the persons of Jesus and Augustus. In so doing it relates earthly, i.e. political peace to heavenly peace, the peace of God, in all their necessary difference.

By contrast, the Trinitarian theological statements about the inner being of God seem quite speculative. We cannot ultimately decide whether the Trinitarian *perichoresis* is to be interpreted as “the embrace of love, peace, and beauty” (25) and whether “our participation toward that *perichoresis*, that eternal dance” (25) consists in “building peace.” These are possibly appealing, indeed fascinating ideas conducive to doxology. However, whether they correspond to reality, in other words, whether they are true, is a completely different question. Not all Christians (and all Christian churches) will be able to accept these Trinitarian statements, nor will the arguments convince people who work for peace in the world but do not identify with the Christian religion. The specific Trinitarian theological approach has thus a doubly exclusive effect. In particular, the EKD has grave doubts about the text’s tendency to make statements about the essence and works of God and then, seamlessly and without differentiation, draw conclusions about the being of the world and the work of the church.

With respect to the primarily practical purpose of the text we ask, moreover, whether it is necessary at all to plumb the speculative depths of Trinitarian theology. Does this bring us closer to our goal? Possibly the idea underlying these reflections is to create a certain way of connecting up with other religions and ways of thinking, by introducing a “flexible” rather than a “fixed” image of God. One is bound to wonder, however, whether this theological construct actually lends itself to making such a connection, or whether it does not tend to distort the issue.

2. Can you agree with the reflections on human sin and the nature of violence?

The anthropology outlined in paras 27ff names all essential points of view that need to appear in such a description, also from a Protestant point of view: all human beings are God’s creatures (“earthlings”), and thus vulnerable and mortal. They are “created in God’s image” and have turned away from God as their creator. The Bible calls this propensity to turn away from God “sin.” The section on human sinfulness says that through sin, humanity have “lost their original image.” This statement calls for clarification. Does it mean that, through the Fall, human beings are no longer to be seen as beings made in God’s image? This interpretation is problematical, to say the least, if saying that humanity is made in the image of God means precisely that they cannot *lose* their destiny to love, and that this is also assumed to be the case after the Fall (see e.g. Gen 9:6; James 3:9).

Paras. 29ff describe violence as being a consequence of sin. That can be accepted. However, the initial definition of violence (29) is extremely unclear and thus not very helpful: “*violation of limits, a trespassing into the space each living thing rightfully requires for the unfolding and fulfillment of its raison d’être.*” The EKD Peace Memorandum, however,

described violence as “hurtful, destructive, life-threatening violent actions which, by their very nature, lead to escalation.” In its first part, the definition of violence proposed by the WCC sounds too harmless, almost euphemistic, since the destructive character of violence may be presupposed but is not named here. In its second part, it seems broad, vague and undefined. One could argue about many points of detail in the examples of violence extensively described in the following paragraphs. Thus the extremely general criticism of the global economy as an expression of violence will not meet with undivided approval (para. 32). The vagueness of the underlying concept of violence does not always enable the necessary differentiation in argumentation. Moreover, it may also be the case that precisely the rigid, unswerving preservation of borders constitutes an expression of violence, as illustrated by the intra-German border and the Berlin Wall. The proposed definition of violence thus does not seem sufficiently objective. Nevertheless, the fact that *pleonexia*, i.e. the greed or the addiction to get more and more, is a *root* of violence is an important insight worthy of approval and dissemination.

3. What are the ways in which your church engages in peace education for all its members, especially the children and young people?

The EKD’s Peace Memorandum contains sufficient information to answer this question in section 2.2. Some important passages follow.

2.2 Educating and nurturing for peace

(50) ‘Every worship service can and should educate for peace.’ In principle, the whole of the Christian Church—especially its Protestant manifestations—can be seen as an institution of education, if we understand ‘education’ as not limited to a merely cognitive transfer of knowledge but encompassing a holistic process of character formation. This understanding of education comes from the recognition that human beings are made in God’s image. It therefore essentially means ‘formation of the heart,’ and includes educating and nurturing for peace. Alongside the life of worship, over the centuries churches have founded many educational institutions for children, young people and adults at every stage of life. The education given at these institutions always encompasses both that fundamental element identified above and an explicit inculcation of the values and standards that grow out of the Christian faith. The formation of the heart, ethical guidance, and practical work for peace belong together and cannot be separated.

(51) There are both theoretical and practical aspects to peace education. Ever since the work of Jan Amos Comenius (1592-1670), Protestant theology has enjoyed an awareness of the basic unity of practice and theory on the one hand and an understanding of the educational theory, politics and teachings involved in studying peace (irenicism) on the other. Among the truths we can learn from his writings are [sic] the fact that practical programmes for peace education and nurturing must reflect a realistic image of humanity if they are to have any long-term effect. Such an image will have at least three elements. Firstly, it will see human beings as God’s creatures. This createdness binds us to all other creatures and is essential to help us understand our relationship to our environment with sensitivity and solidarity. Secondly, human beings are creatures with responsibility. As history shows, we spend our lives in practical rebellion against God, and are capable of fathomless evil and cruelty. Overcoming violence is therefore a life-and-death affair. Finally, humanity is made in the image of God. It is because of this that we can hope that the power of sin may be halted effectively, and that people may be brought up and educated to value peace, which is an essential condition for overcoming violence. It is the image of God in people that enables them to act in God’s way in their treatment of others—with love and a willingness to forgive and seek reconciliation.

(52) Education simply cannot begin too early in a human life. A Christian understanding of education will therefore seek to inculcate values of peace and justice from the very beginning. Thus, bringing children up to value peace needs to form an essential part of the elementary Christian education that largely takes place in nursery schools. The 8,000-plus nursery schools run by EKD member churches can contribute to this; the Protestant and the Roman Catholic churches together operate nearly 40 per cent of all the nursery schools in Germany. The aim of the practical work of these facilities is firstly to show how peace and justice have their roots in the Christian religion—for instance, in the example of Jesus—and to make that understandable to children. Secondly, it is to enable them to put the Christian understanding of peace into practice in real-life, everyday situations. This is why it is important for the social, linguistic, cultural and religious differences found within nursery schools to be admitted, taken seriously and used as a starting point for these educational processes. This includes knowledge of one's own roots, respect for what is different or unknown, and the development of a culture of fair, constructive debate. Education and nurturing for peace are a lifelong task.

(53) The EKD sees its responsibility to educate as continuing throughout people's lives, taking various forms and involving different kinds of institutions. Alongside nursery schools, church schools, the provision of religious education in the state school system, children's services, and work with children, young people and confirmation candidates are particularly significant. Young people and adults are served by the German Protestant Kirchentag (Deutscher Evangelischer Kirchentag or DEKT), youth-work and/or Protestant adult education opportunities, and the Protestant Academies (Evangelische Akademien). Church journalism and its presence in the media—including on the Internet—make their own particular contribution. The Committees and Advisory Commissions of the Council for various issues—most importantly the Advisory Commission for Public Responsibility—regularly address questions of peace ethics and policy. The EKD publishes Memoranda. The *Ostdenkschrift* ('The situation of the displaced persons and the relation of the German people to its neighbours in Eastern Europe,' 1965), *Friedensaufgaben der Deutschen* ('The responsibilities of Germans for peace,' 1968), *Der Friedensdienst der Christen* ('The duty of Christians to peace,' 1969), *Frieden wahren, fördern und erneuern* (published in English as 'The Preservation, Promotion and Renewal of Peace,' 1981), *Schritte auf dem Weg des Friedens: Orientierungspunkte für Friedensethik und Friedenspolitik* ('Steps on the road to peace: guidelines for ethics and policy,' 1994/2001) and *Richte unsere Füße auf den Weg des Friedens* ('Guide our feet into the way of peace,' 2002), and many other texts, are marked by a great continuity of content, focusing on a conception of peace characterized by reconciliation, truth and justice. The Christian peace services that make up the AGDF provide practical opportunities for training. These can take the form of basic, short-term training on preventing and overcoming violence, or long-term, comprehensive training to prepare for work in peace and development organizations. Alongside the AGDF, another major player in this area is the Evangelical Development Service (Evangelischer Entwicklungsdienst - EED), which shows, through its many diverse activities, that civilian peacemaking and development assistance are more than just good neighbours—they are each vital for the other.

4. Can you share successful projects and experiences which would be helpful for other churches?

For almost three decades, the EKD has supported the "Ecumenical Peace Decade" that takes place annually in Germany. This is a 10-day period in November during which many congregations focus on the topic of peace. To mark the occasion, the EKD devises and distributes with others an "Intercessory Worship Service for Peace in the World." The whole work process is participatory and creative, and this may perhaps be an idea for other Churches to take up. It would be conceivable that different denominations getting together regularly to design services and devotions on the issue of peace, which could be held in many of their congregations. (<http://www.ekd.de/frieden/bittgottesdienst.html>)

The following projects should be mentioned as examples from the field of civil peace service supported by the EKD and run by the Action Committee Service for Peace (Aktionsgemeinschaft Dienst für den Frieden, AGDF), an action group for peace services, and the Protestant Association for the Care of Conscientious Objectors (Evangelische Arbeitsgemeinschaft zur Betreuung der Kriegsdienstverweigerer, EAK):

a) *“Priority for nonviolence”*

With this project, the AGDF pursues the goal of encouraging churches and their agencies together to press for a “policy change” towards priority for nonviolent methods of conflict management, strategically using their own capacities in this field. The idea is to advocate for the implementation of just peace and the overcoming of violence more strongly than before, using the potential for church influence on German and European foreign and security policy, and directly on global flashpoints. In so doing, the AGDF responds to the mandate of the EKD Council to expand civil conflict management, as raised e.g. in the memorandum “Live from God’s Peace—Care for Just Peace” (October 2007).

The first objective of the project was to present an understandable paper on the present state of civil conflict management in practice and research. A further objective was to promote discussion in church circles. The result is the book presented on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the AGDF by the peace representative of the EKD Council. Published by Publik Forum, it is entitled “Gewaltfrei streiten für einen gerechten Frieden. Plädoyer für zivile Konflikttransformation” (Debating nonviolently for just peace. An argument for civil conflict transformation).

The project process is participatory. Experts have been invited to discussions. In addition, the EKD, the Evangelical Church of the Rhineland (Evangelische Kirche im Rheinland, EKIR), the Evangelical Development Service (EED) and the Protestant Academy Berlin have volunteered not just to promote the project financially but also to actively support its development.

The first broad goal of writing a paper for the (Protestant) Church with clear recommendations to politicians was then narrowed to concentrate on addressing mainly church actors whose demands and recommendations to policy-makers can be derived in connection with hands-on issues from day-to-day political activity. However, this calls for a further process of understanding among church actors, as is foreseen through other study days and also in the framework of the Conference for Peace-building. The first study day took place with representatives of the EED, mission associations, Bread for the World and AGDF in Bonn at the beginning of October 2008.

b) *The “Schritte gegen Tritte” (Steps Against Kicks) Project*

The contact person for this project is Pastor Klaus Burckhardt, Hanover, <http://www.schrittegegentryitte.de>.

c) *Conflict management in schools*

This is, e.g. about dealing with bullying and training conflict pilots for school students, Rev. Claudia Kuchenbauer, Nuremberg, <http://www.arbeitsstelle-kokon.de>.

d) *Conflict management in the family*

Mediation and peace-building with generations: Rev. Claudia Kuchenbauer, Nuremberg, <http://www.arbeitsstelle-kokon.de>.

e) *Young people become peace-builders*

Deacon Stefan Maaß, Karlsruhe, <http://www.friederle.de> or <http://www.friedensstifter-baden.de>.

5. In which ways have you become involved in building peace ministries?

The EKD funds and supports the Evangelical Development Service (EED). It finances the Protestant Association for the Care of Conscientious Objectors (EAK) and proportionately the Action Committee Service for Peace (AGDF), which is an umbrella and professional organization for civil peace services. Civilian contributions to constituting peace are made by all three organizations. The borders between peace and development work are partly blurred, as shown by the work of both the EED and the individual member organizations of the AGDF (e.g. Eirene e.V.).

The most comprehensive structure for peace-building in the jurisdiction of the EKD is the Conference for Peace-building established by the EKD Council. Its members include all the civil organizations in the field of peace mentioned here, as well as peace research, Protestant academies and educational organizations and Protestant military chaplains. Together, the AGDF and the EAK manage the affairs of this conference. The chairperson is the peace representative of the EKD Council. Since October 2008 that function has been held by the Presiding Clergyman of the Evangelical Church of Bremen, Rev. Renke Brahms. Here is more information about the civil peace organizations mentioned above:

a) Founded in 1999, the Evangelical Development Service (EED) is a development agency of the Protestant churches in Germany. Every year it funds about 300 projects and programs in Africa, Asia and Latin America, in Oceania, South East Europe and the Caucasus. The EED advises its partners and supports them financially. It provides German experts for projects overseas and gives scholarships to young staff from partner countries. The EED's partners are churches, Christian organizations and non-church supporters. The EED works with them worldwide for a life in dignity. Its mission statement is justice, peace and the integrity of creation. Development in partnership is a core element of its work. In Germany, the EED supports the development policy education work of 500 groups and congregations. It gives subsidies to seminars and fact-finding tours, campaigns, research projects and information materials. With its advocacy and community relations, the EED carries development policy concerns into the church and society. (<http://www.eed.de>)

b) The Protestant Association for the Care of Conscientious Objectors (EAK) is an association of coordinators for conscientious objectors in civil and volunteer services in the EKD member churches. On behalf of the EKD, the EAK coordinates and finances the pastoral care of young people doing civil and volunteer service; the EAK informs about the fundamental right to conscientious objection and all related questions including services for recognized conscientious objectors. The events of EAK members, as a rule four-day support seminars (retreats) and workshops to deepen (peace) issues, totaled over 5000 participant days in 2008. The EAK works in churches and the general public for the human right of conscientious objection and the free exercise of that right, which involves demands to abolish outdated compulsory military service and instead to establish voluntary (peace) services, in which nonviolent action can be taught and learned. Further information on the EAK is available in German on <http://www.eak-online.de>, which illustrates the various activities of EAK members.

c) The Action Committee Service for Peace (AGDF) is a professional umbrella association for voluntary peace services within the EKD. It links up 35 member organizations and initiatives through regular information exchange, services, study conferences and organizing task forces to check e.g. quality standards for peace work and compliance with them. Every year several thousand younger and older people meet in short-, medium- and long-term voluntary service projects run by AGDF members, or as professional peace workers; in addition, many people support local initiatives for peace-building. At the international level, the AGDF works for cooperation with all organizations, institutions and actions devoted to promoting peace, and gives them information—via international organizations—about the need for peace-building and options for action. More information on the AGDF is available at <http://www.friedensdienste.de>, which also contains links to the activities of the AGDF members.

6. In which ways are you expressing the calling of the churches to care for creation? Does it have an impact on the theological training of your ministers and on the management of your buildings?

For many years the Council and Synod of the EKD have spoken out repeatedly on questions of environmental protection. Important examples concern the civil use of nuclear energy and latterly the issue of global climate change. The EKD Synod held in Bremen in November 2008 chose climate change as its focal theme. This led to an important statement:

http://www.ekd.de/synode2008/kundgebung/beschluss_kundgebung_klima_wasser_lebenswandel.html. In July 2009 the EKD Council published a memorandum (an extensive position paper) on climate change entitled “UMKEHR zum Leben: Nachhaltige Entwicklung im Zeichen des Klimawandels” (“Turning to Life: Sustainable Development in the Context of Climate Change”). It argues that the time has come for a complete change of direction in climate policy, addressing its appeal to society, the churches and individuals in equal measure.

The topic of caring for creation plays an important role in the theological training of pastors. However, the various EKD member churches and different training institutions (universities, colleges, seminaries) have their own distinctive accents in this regard.

Here is a resolution adopted by the EKD Synod in Bremen in November 2008 setting out steps for practical action:

“Resolved by Synod that

1. The EKD Council may propose to its member churches that they set themselves the target of cutting their CO2 emissions by 25% by 2015, with 2005 as the base year. Further, the member churches are requested to form round tables on the climate issue. 2. The EKD Council may propose to its member churches that they promote the necessary societal rethinking in energy and climate policy through educational and youth work, in particular with the aid of the study ‘Zukunftsfähiges Deutschland in einer globalisierten Welt,’ (Sustainable Germany in a Globalized World) in the congregations and church institutions. 3. Having regard to Recommendation Ten of the Message of the Third European Ecumenical Assembly in Sibiu, Synod asks the EKD Council to promote a common European Ecumenical Day for Creation in the period between 1st September and 4th October.”

Paragraphs 1 and 2 of this resolution will most likely also have an impact on the administration of church buildings in the EKD member churches. Church environmental management, also and even essentially related to buildings, has existed for a long time in the form of the “Green Cock”. (<http://www.gruener-gockel.de>)

It should be added that, in October 2008, the two big development agencies Bread for the World and Evangelical Development Service (EED)—in cooperation with Friends of the Earth Germany (BUND)—issued the study “Zukunftsfähiges Deutschland in einer globalisierten Welt” (Sustainable Germany in a Globalised World). It is accompanied by educational programs and materials for congregations, intended to assist them in discussing the suggestions in the study and putting them into practice in their local churches: <http://www.eed.de> and <http://www.zukunftsfahiges-deutschland.de>.

7. How do these approaches to “Just Peace” correspond to traditions and thought forms in your church? Which elements do you wish to add?

The EKD is very concerned to establish the key idea of just peace as a basic peace-ethical concept, also in ecumenical contexts. The EKD by no means wishes to relapse into the traditional doctrine of just war. The most important reason is that a Christian peace ethics cannot be based on the basic concept of war, because it would then be on a slippery slope from the start. That is shown in the fact that over the last one and a half thousand years this

doctrine has mostly been used to justify wars, although it was actually meant to prevent and contain them. The doctrine of just peace (and this alone) can, by contrast, take up and implement important, justified concerns of the doctrine of just war in the form of an overarching perspective of peace ethics.

One important element of a doctrine of just peace could be general “criteria for law-abiding force,” as proposed by the EKD in its current peace memorandum. The relevant passage reads:

(102) Contemporary international law has superseded the concept of the 'just war.' There is no place for the bellum iustum doctrine in a model whose goal is a just peace. However, this does not mean that we ought or need to reject the moral criteria that the bellum iustum model employed. For underlying these criteria are principles that can be applied not only to cases of war but also (on the basis of the fundamental idea of individual self-defense or defense of another) to police law, to the exercise of the right to resistance within a state and to legitimate struggles for liberation. These principles are grounded in the universal principles for an ethics of lawful force, which may be formulated, regardless of the context in which it is deployed, as follows:

- *Permissible causes: the use of force may be permitted to oppose the most severe forms of violent attack, where human rights and universally recognized justice are under threat, for the protection of life, and the strength of universal law must not be left defenseless against the 'law of the strong.'*
- *Authorization: the banner of resistance may be taken up only by those competent to act in the name of the universal interests of all those potentially concerned; forcible resistance must therefore always be subordinate to the rule of law.*
- *Right intention: force may be used only in defense against a present, evident attack; it must be constrained by the goal to (re-)establish conditions for peaceful coexistence and its execution must be planned with that aim in mind.*
- *Ultimate resort: the use of violence must be necessary as an ultimate resort; that is to say, all effective peaceful means of conflict resolution must have been exhausted. The “ultimate resort” criterion does not necessarily mean chronologically last; rather, it means that, of all appropriate (i.e. effective) measures, the least violent is to be preferred in every case.*
- *Proportionality of consequences: the harm done through the first use of violence must not be responded to by infliction of even greater harm; consideration must here be made of economic, social, cultural and environmental, as well as political and institutional repercussions.*
- *Proportionality of means: the force used must, on the one hand, be appropriate—that is, in all likelihood adequate to achieve success in allaying the threat or ending the conflict; on the other, the scope, duration and intensity of the methods used must be designed to limit suffering and damage to a necessary minimum.*
- *Principle of discrimination: persons and institutions not directly implicated in the first use of force should be spared.*

(103) In the traditional understanding of morality, all of these criteria have to be met for the use of forcible resistance to be legitimate, whether it is a matter of domestic resistance, a struggle for liberation, or a military conflict between nations. However, even where all these criteria do appear to be met, it remains problematic and ambiguous from the viewpoint of Christian ethics to speak of a “justification” of the use of force. In any situation where the responsibility for our own or others’ lives forces us to take actions that will themselves endanger or destroy life, not even the most careful assessment of consequences will free us from the risk of incurring guilt.

An important addition to the peace ethical discussion to date, and also to the Initial Statement, could be putting the development and use of a *ius post bellum* on the peace-ethical agenda. Such a “post-war law” has hitherto existed only in outline and it could be taken up as an ecumenical project. This process could, and should, take account of the experience gained in South Africa with its Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Finally, the EKD is concerned to raise general awareness of the need to protect cultural diversity, as set out in the UNESCO Convention of October 2005 on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions. This is an important building block for the peaceful coexistence of all societies. After all, the world in which we live is characterized by cultural and religious diversity. This diversity is worthy of protection as an expression of freedom of conscience and religion. A serious dialogue of cultures and religions would be beneficial to peace and to overcoming violence. Christians and the Christian churches should thus stand up for protecting diversity and at the same time enable, promote and conduct the necessary dialogue.

8. Please share relevant stories and concrete recommendations with the Office of the International Ecumenical Peace Convocation. Be certain to include peace-building as soul-craft and as crafting just institutions and a just order.

a) The EKD recommends that the different Christian Churches in the different countries of the earth contribute to establishing and expanding Christian peace and reconciliation ministries. The EKD has witnessed several good examples of this in the last few years. Action Reconciliation Service for Peace (Aktion Sühnezeichen Friedensdienste, ASF, see <http://www.asf-ev.de>) is such an organization with a clear Protestant profile. Another, more ecumenical organization in this field is Ecumenical Service for a Ministry of Shalom (Oekumenischer Dienst Shalomdiakonat, OeD, see <http://www.schalomdiakonat.de>). They are both member organizations of the AGDF.

The important thing is that while the above-mentioned civil peace services have Christian and also church roots they are also independent partners of the EKD and, as part of civil society, extend beyond church borders far into society. From the EKD's viewpoint, it is exemplary that organizations like these two set up Christian volunteer services and professional peace ministries and send them out into many countries of the world. This is beneficial to peace, development, and confidence-building between people, nations, countries and churches alike.

b) With respect to just institutions, the EKD, as extensively described and substantiated in the 2007 peace memorandum, recommends the expansion and constant reinforcement of lawfully constituted multilateral organizations at the global and regional level like the United Nations, the European Union and the African Union. The goal of peace and human security is best served by an international peace order that is also organized to be a legal order. Within individual states, the EKD prefers the organization of the political system as a democratic community, this being a system that is especially conducive and related to peace. However, it warns against wanting to forcibly inflict democratic orders onto other states and peoples. The fact that a just world order should also include a better and more just distribution of the earth's goods and resources (distributive justice) and that more or better justice serves peace is something that the EKD has championed for a very long time, and reaffirms here. Worldwide poverty must be combated, hunger and thirst must be stilled and educational opportunity for all must be increased. Besides EED, Bread for the World (<http://www.brot-fuer-die-welt.de>) must be mentioned as a Protestant organization that has been working successfully in the area of development assistance for fifty years.

III. Final comment

The EKD has found the Initial Statement Towards an Ecumenical Declaration on Just Peace stimulating and helpful in several respects. To our view, it is particularly important that it clearly focuses on the key term of just peace and that the process is consistently focused on the practice of peace-building. The collection, screening and evaluation of examples of good practices from many Christian churches and different continents and countries may help us to find—and take—suitable steps on the road to peace in our respective contexts.

There is no doubt that the text constitutes an important stage on the path towards the Ecumenical Peace Convocation in Jamaica in May 2011. We would like to see further work on it in order to clarify and sharpen the profile of the key idea of just peace. The EKD will be happy to continue to participate in this process.

Hanover, 1 September 2009

(Bishop Dr. Wolfgang Huber, Chairperson of the Council of the Evangelical Church in Germany)