

The International Ecumenical Peace Convocation in Kingston, Jamaica, 24 May 2011

Final Plenary

Brief Observations on the IEPC and the Way Forward

by Fernando Enns

(moderator of the DOV Reference Group and the IEPC planning committee)

Sisters and Brothers,

Look around you! What a privilege and what a joy it is to address one another as brothers and sisters. It reminds us of this fact: God welcomes us to participate fully in the holy community of the Trinity of love, creating among us a fellowship of caring. Glory to God!

We have come a long way in our ecumenical pilgrimage towards peace and justice. The *Decade to Overcome Violence – Churches seeking Reconciliation and Peace 2001-2010* has created that specific space for us: and we shall rejoice and be grateful for all the wonderful things that have become possible – far too many to capture them on paper or even the Internet, life-changing experiences for individuals as well as churches, I know.

As the ecumenical family – represented here in Kingston at this very moment of the IEPC – we realize: Justice and Peace is the real heart-beat of the ecumenical movement, for it is the reconciled ecumenical community in Christ that welcomes and starts to accept the call to become ambassadors of reconciliation. Glory to God! – For it is a gift to be part of this common understanding.

And yet, we are not satisfied!

Yes, we understand – better than ever before – the complexities and interdependence of poverty, racism, militarism, gender and generation based violence, but we are only beginning to understand our own inflictions. We are only starting to grasp the possibilities to care for one another. The church shall not speak for the marginalized; the true church *is*, where the marginalized are. No, we are not satisfied.

Yes, we understand, that the clock is ticking for Mother Earth and the climate that allows life, but we are only beginning to see examples within some churches who accept the call to be responsible house-holders. No, we are not satisfied.

Yes, we have learned that there are creative ways to rally overcome violence in our communities and that we shall not keep silent to domestic violence, but we are only starting to create safe spaces for victims and perpetrators, as well as for those who suffer from

discrimination, certainly including lesbians and gays. No one is excluded from the love of God, why can't we be more inclusive? No, we are not satisfied.

And yes, we realize that the old doctrine of just war has become obsolete – finally. We reject any justifications of wars, including the “new wars”, and the misuse of religions to legitimize them, but we are only starting to focus on violence prevention and peace education, non-violent conflict resolution, and processes for the healing of wounded souls – in order to protect the most vulnerable. No, we are not satisfied.

Therefore, Brothers and Sisters, our journey must continue. Standing on the shoulders of our ecumenical mothers and fathers we commit ourselves today, here in Kingston

- to explore more deeply the theological understanding of just peace
- to unfold together the ethical implications and relevance in each context
- to allow ourselves to be enriched by that spiritual growth which will lead us into a plain life
- to invite believers of our sister religions to join our pilgrimage towards just peace
- to take bold steps together, practical, political, and public.

And we shall hold each other accountable.

As we continue our ecumenical pilgrimage towards the next WCC-Assembly in that violently divided peninsula of Korea in 2013, we shall discover, that all of this is really informing ourselves of who we are: the Ecclesia, the church of Jesus Christ.

And that church is either ecumenical or it is not a church of peace and justice.

For the church is either accepting that grace of participating in the triune love by responding to the call to just peace – or it is not the church at all.

So let us be reassured and comforted by this beautiful fellowship of reconciliation, which we all have had the privilege to experience here in Kingston.

It shall carry us forward, encourage us, and empower us, until we fully anticipate that eschatological reality of God's Shalom.

Peace be with you.