



# CENTER FOR PEACE CHURCH THEOLOGY

NEWSLETTER



PHOTO CAPTION: SOME  
OF THE PARTICIPANTS IN  
THE SUMMER SCHOOL  
2020 FROM AMSTERDAM  
AND HAMBURG,

COLLAGE CREATED BY  
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# FOREWORD



## DEAR FRIENDS OF THE ATF,

The Corona pandemic is a challenge to life, teaching and learning. Changing our daily lives to few face-to-face encounters is a major limitation. Anyone with a little imagination and contact with young people suspects that it is not a good way to study. The very things that are typical for the first semester: getting out of the parental home, meeting new people, making contacts that sometimes last a lifetime, discussing and developing enthusiasm for learning and understanding, are precisely what is so difficult at the moment. I would like to thank our ATF team for their dedication and creativity in meeting the new challenges of teaching, which is now exclusively online.

Corona is relentlessly exposing what was not good in many areas of our lives, even before the pandemic. In Germany, but also worldwide, the contrasts between rich and poor are becoming even more apparent, both in terms of care for the sick and the distribution of vaccines. Reflecting Peace Theology on the pressing issues have become all the more important. The questions discussed at our ATF, e.g. of postcolonial studies, become burning topics in this context, because they bring the different perspectives - cultural, regional, economic, gender-specific - into dialogue with each other. For this we need a forum for critical discussion and for joint learning by students and teachers.

I would like to thank all ATF supporters who make this possible. We care about the future of the younger generation and the impact of peace theology. May the God of peace bless our work.

Yours, Bernhard Thiessen

Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the ATF



Photo: Thea Martin

# PEOPLE



## WE ARE HAPPY WITH JULIA FREUND!

Dear friends of the ATF,

a little update from me from parental leave: Our son **Joshua** has arrived well in this world and is discovering new wonders every day! He keeps us neatly on our toes and enchants us at the same time. It is truly a gift to watch him grow and learn and be amazed at the little things he takes such great joy in. I sincerely hope that there will be the opportunity to meet again soon. Until then, I hope you will be well protected during this time.

Sincerely yours

Julia Freund (research assistant at the ATF)

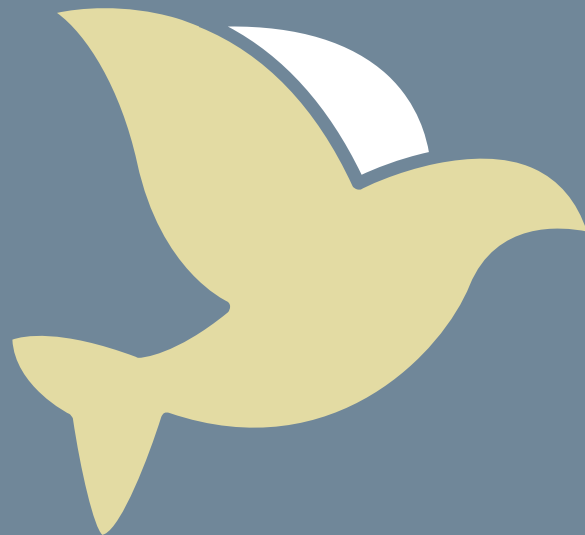


# PEOPLE



## DR. ASTRID VON SCHLACHTA

On the occasion of the half-decade "Anabaptist Commemoration 500 Years. Daring!", which commemorates the first adult baptism within the Anabaptist movement in 1525, we plan to engage Dr. Astrid von Schlachta - a proven expert on early modern history from an Anabaptist perspective - to teach at the ATF for the next five years, beginning as early as the upcoming summer semester. We are currently seeking to establish a position (50% research assistant, for an initial five years). This is to be made possible through foundations, congregations, and individuals.



SUMMER SEMESTER 2021

ASTRID VON SCHLACHTA

## **BETWEEN MARTYRDOM AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP. THE HISTORY OF ANABAPTISTS IN THE EARLY MODERN PERIOD**

This seminar focuses on the history of Anabaptist communities in the early modern period and in the 19th century. Stigmatized and criminalized in the 16th century, Anabaptists were initially unable to found lasting communities. Their faith was punishable by death and martyrdom followed. The spectrum of Anabaptists the Mennonites and the Hutterites, as well as the Amish group and Neo-Anabaptist communities that formed later. The seminar shows the political, legal and social framework of Anabaptist existence and raises questions about the toleration of denominationally deviant subjects. The legally and politically extremely ambivalent position of these groups will be examined. The course will be structured by introductory lectures, source exercises and the elaboration of secondary literature. The seminar takes place as an online event.

STEPHAN VON TWARDOWSKI AND THE ATF TEAM.  
FORMATIO MENNONITICA, MAY 07-08+JUNE 18-19.

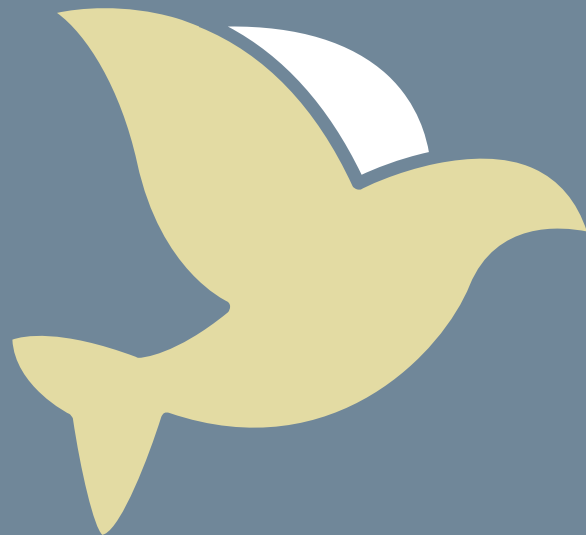
## **JUST PEACE - DIETRICH BONHOEFFER'S CONTRIBUTION TO AN ECUMENICAL THEOLOGY OF PEACE**

Hardly any German-speaking theologian of the 20th century is as well known as Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906-1945). Theological reflection and existence, faith and life are closely related to each other in his work. His political resistance against the National Socialist regime, his inner-church resistance against the German Christians, and his commitment to Jews ultimately led to his martyrdom shortly before the end of World War II.

The creativity of his theological thinking cannot be explained without his manifold ecumenical relations. In his relevant lectures in the context of the ecumenical movement, he unfolds approaches to a theologically coherent and ecclesologically grounded ecumenical peace ethic in view of the burning questions about the nature and mission of the international ecumenical community, which offer orientation up to the present discussions about a "Just Peace".

This week-end seminar will focus in particular on contemporary research approaches. Today, for example, postcolonial and critical reflections on racism shed new light on Bonhoeffer. On the 75th anniversary of the commemoration of Bonhoeffer's murder, several publications on his life and work have appeared, which will also be examined.

# RESEARCH & TEACHING



SUMMER SEMESTER 2021

FERNANDO ENNS 08-11 APRIL 2021

**EMSTM - EUROPEAN MENNONITE STUDENTS OF THEOLOGY MEETING**

**TOLERANCE, POWER AND IDENTITY: EXCLUSION AND EMBRACE FROM A MENNONITE PERSPECTIVE.**

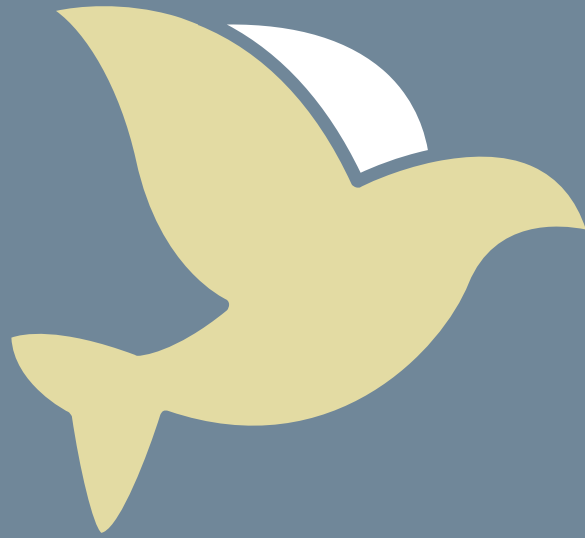
Mennonite theology students and doctoral students from all over Europe (and those who sympathize with them) are invited each spring to deepen theology from a Mennonite perspective. In addition, there is an opportunity to exchange experiences and to support each other in questions of study. These meetings are usually also attended by several visiting Mennonite students from other countries when they are in Europe. - This year the focus will be on the challenging topic of "tolerance". Lecturers from Mennonite Seminary Amsterdam will contribute from Mennonite history and theology/ethics, Bible studies will ask questions of the sources. Against this background, current practical, socially relevant questions will be discussed.

MARIE ANNE SUBKLEW

**DOES SUFFERING HAVE MEANING?**

The question of theodicy in a comparison of religions

The question of suffering remains a fundamental question of religions. Bertrand Russell, the atheistic mathematician and philosopher, once asked: Imagine you were omnipotent and could intervene in everything - wouldn't the world look different then? Most people would probably affirm without much hesitation. If they were omnipotent, they would intervene and prevent at least the most terrible misfortune and suffering. Many religious traditions proclaim a message consisting in the promise that existence has a meaning. If this promise is not to remain merely an empty assertion, they must find answers to the question of what the meaning of suffering is. The answers of the various religions could hardly be more diverse. In the seminar we will look at the views from Christian, Jewish, Islamic, Hindu and Buddhist perspectives.



## RETROSPECT 2020

### SUMMER SCHOOL, SEPTEMBER 2020

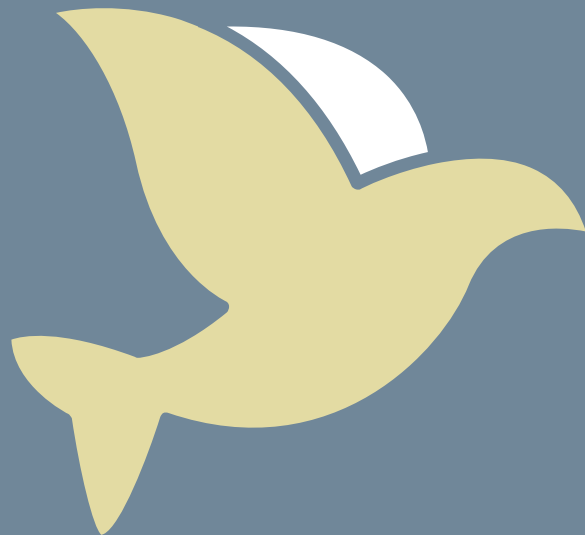
CONSTRUCTION AND POWER OF NARRATIVES IN CONFLICT-LOADED SOCIETIES - POLARIZATION AND/OR TRANSFORMATION

Cooperation of the Interdisciplinary Research Group on Peacebuilding (University of Hamburg) and the Amsterdam, Center for Religion and Peace & Justice Studies (Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam)

Can a Summer School as a special place of learning also function digitally? Our first digital Summer School began with this question and some apprehension. For one week, the group of students from Amsterdam and Hamburg worked intensively on the topic of narratives and their power to shape identities, to exclude people, but also on their potential to create peace.

Even though it was noted that especially the personal encounter was missing as an important part of the Summer School, the Summer School 2020 was a complete success. At the end of the week, the participants said goodbye with the feeling of having spent a very intensive time, which brought many enriching discussions, the space for personal reflections and creative engagement with the topic.

Particularly impressive was a digital visit to the Amsterdam Tropical Museum, which made it very clear how intertwined we are in our diversity through our (family) histories. Also watching videos about "the power of narratives", which were produced as a group work by the participants formed the conclusion of the week, made a deep impression on me and made me think back to this time frequently even after the conclusion of the Summer School.



## RETROSPECT 2020

### INTERNATIONAL NETWORK "RECONCILIATION RESEARCH", NOVEMBER 2020

For the second year in a row, ATF was privileged to host the annual meeting of the interdisciplinary research network. We would have loved to host participants again at the Hamburg Mennonite Church, but unfortunately we had to switch to a digital format. We were surprised how international the group has become through this format and how many new participants were present. There were exciting presentations on the psychological aspects of conflict, on the effects of Apartheid in South Africa, or on the impressive reconciliation work in the Middle East and North Africa. - We will be part of next year's meeting again with the ATF, which will then be hosted by the University of Jena.

### MENNOFORUM 2020/21

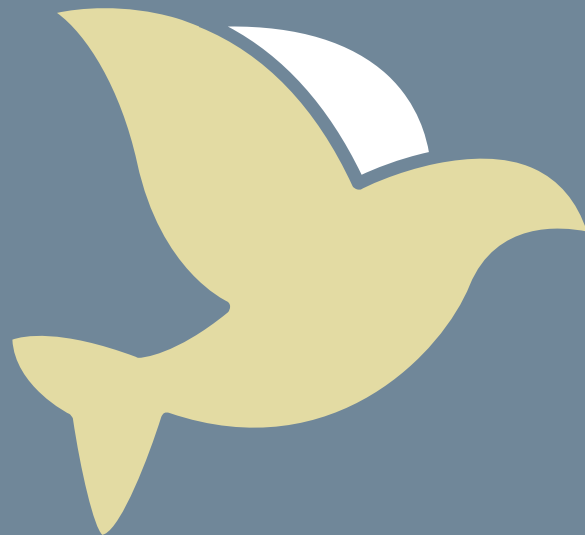
On October 3, 2020, the thirtieth anniversary of German unity, the exhibition "Mennonites in the GDR," prepared by Bernhard Thiessen, was launched in Hamburg and the accompanying exhibition catalog was presented. In the evening, a lively roundtable discussion, composed of contemporary witnesses and researchers of Mennonite history in the GDR, was held.

Unfortunately, the other three mennoFORA planned for the winter had to be cancelled due to COVID-19 restrictions.

### SYMPOSIUM "ANABAPTIST COMMEMORATION, 500 YEARS. DARING!", OCTOBER 2020

Together with the Society of Free Church Theology and Journalism (GFTP), ATF and the Mennonite Historical Society (MGV) organized a symposium as part of the opening of the "Pentade" (five years) "Anabaptist Commemoration, 500 Years. Daring!" under the 2020 annual theme: "Religious Freedom." Specialized presentations from different temporal and geographical perspectives stimulated discussion. They will be published in the annual volume of GFTP 2021.





## RETROSPECT 2020

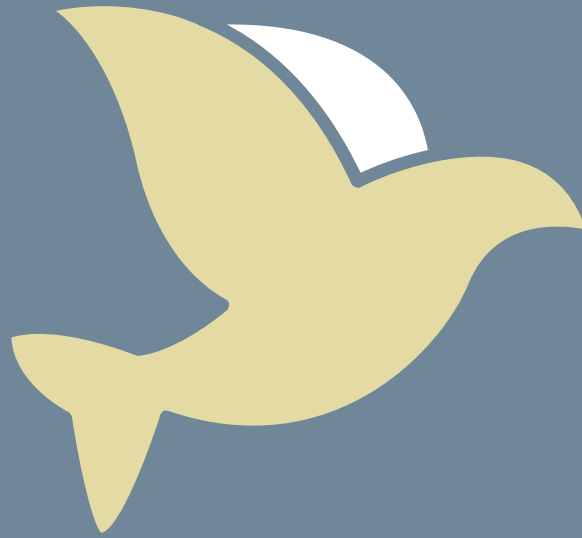
WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES, "HATE SPEECH AND WHITENESS" WEBINAR, OCTOBER 2020

The WCC has organized a series of five webinars in which theological reflections on "Hate Speech and Whiteness" were contributed and discussed by different people from different contexts. These seminars were organized by the Justice and Peace Pilgrimage Theological Study Group, and moderated by its chair, Fernando Enns. All the seminars can be viewed at: <https://www.religionpeacejustice.com/lectures>



STUDY DAY "TALKING ABOUT PEACE", SEPTEMBER, OCTOBER 2020

The Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Committee of the Regional Synod of the Lutheran Church in the North has organized three digital study days on peace in the fall of 2020. The second study day "Peace - How to get there? Religions and People in Responsibility" took place in cooperation with ATF and was moderated by Marie Anne Subklew. Information on all three study days can be found at: <https://www.xn--redenberfrieden-3vb.de/>

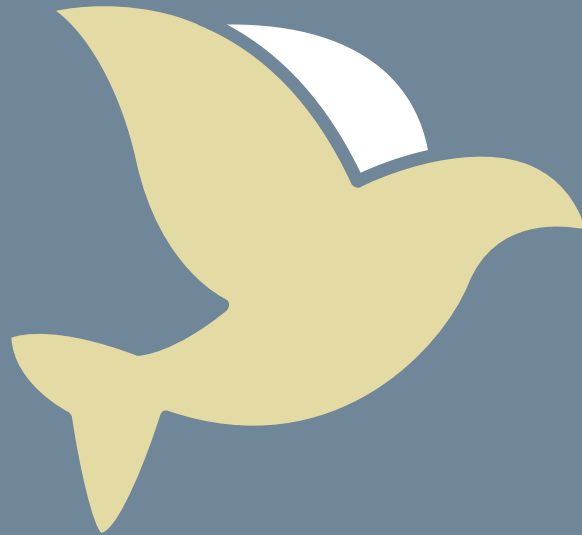


Ökumenische Rundschau 4/2020: Marie Anne Subklew & Stephan von Twardowski, Hg. (2020), Zusammenwachsen – 30 Jahre deutsche Einheit im Spiegel kirchlicher Vereinigungsprozesse. Leipzig: EVA 2020.



Ökumenische Rundschau 1/2021: Stephan von Twardowski (Hg.) Postkolonialismus und Ökumene, Leipzig: EVA 2021.

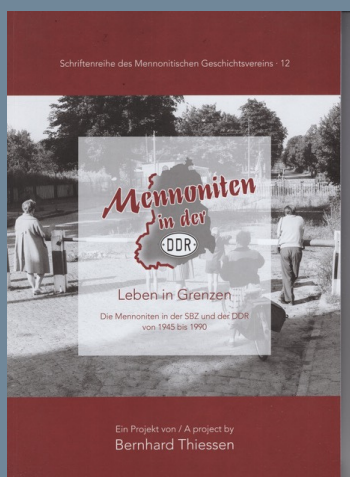
NEWLY PUBLISHED



## GEWAGT! GEMEINSAM LEBEN

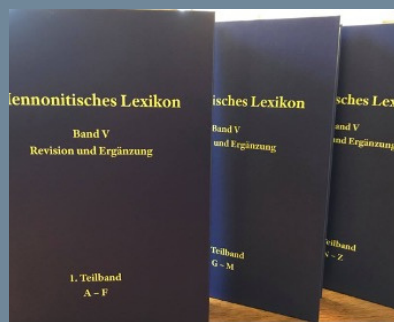
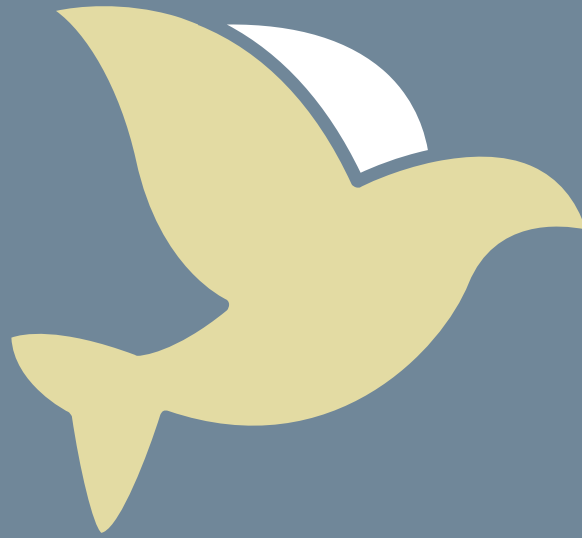
### 500 JAHRE TÄUFERBEWEGUNG – THEMENHEFT 2

Herausgeber: Verein „500 Jahre Täuferbewegung 2025 e. V. Arbeitsgemeinschaft Christlicher Kirchen, Ludolfusstraße 2-4, D-60487 Frankfurt

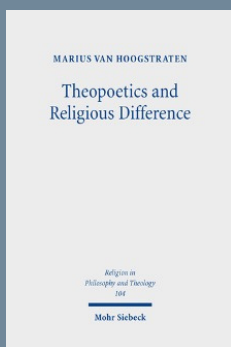


Bernhard Thiessen, Leben in Grenzen – Die Mennoniten in der SBZ und der DDR von 1945 bis 1990. Schriftenreihe des Mennonitischen Geschichtsvereins Nr. 12, (Bezug über den Mennonitischen Geschichtsverein, [info@mennonitischer-geschichtsverein.de](mailto:info@mennonitischer-geschichtsverein.de), zum Preis von € 15,- oder unter [www.mennoniten-ddr.de](http://www.mennoniten-ddr.de))

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Mennonitisches Lexikon Band V (Teilbände 1-3). Im Auftrag des Mennonitischen Geschichtsvereins, hg. von Hans-Jürgen Goertz, Bolanden-Weierhof 2020, erhältlich bei der Mennonitischen Forschungsstelle (<https://www.mennonitischer-geschichtsverein.de/mennlex-band-v/>)



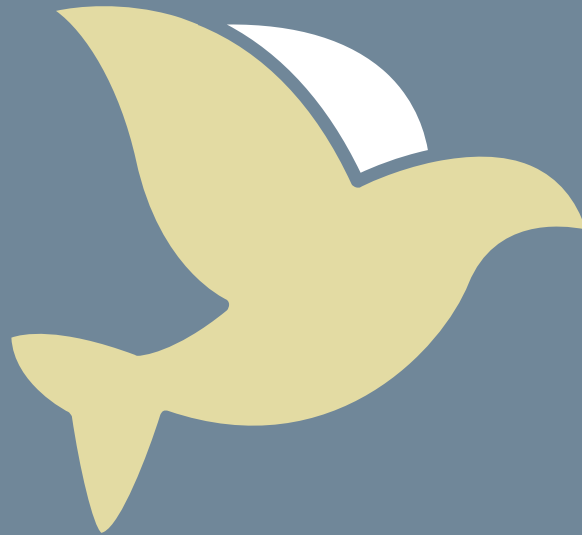
Marius van Hoogstraten, *Theopoetics and Religious Difference. The Unruliness of the Interreligious: A Dialogue with Richard Kearney, John D. Caputo, and Catherine Keller*, Mohr Siebeck 2020.



Pilgerweg der Gerechtigkeit und des Friedens. Mennonitisches Jahrbuch 2021, 120. Jg., Hg. von der Arbeitsgemeinschaft Mennonitischer Gemeinden in Deutschland.



# DATES



## EMSTM

TREFFEN DER EUROPÄISCHEN MENNONITISCHEN THEOLOGISTUDENTEN  
**TOLERANZ, MACHT UND IDENTITÄT: AUSGRENZUNG UND UMARMUNG  
AUS MENNONITISCHER PERSPEKTIVE.**

08.-11. April 2021, (Online-Anmeldungen bitte an die ATF)

## PUBLIC LECTURES ON PEACE-THEOLOGY 2021

**POST-COLONIAL APPROACHES TO BUILDING JUST PEACE**

Amsterdam Center for Religion and Peace & Justice Studies

Online Lecture Series

Every Thursday in April 2021, 13.30-15.15 h

Location: online (Zoom)

Please register at: [friedenskirchen@uni-hamburg.de](mailto:friedenskirchen@uni-hamburg.de)

## FORMATIO MENNONITICA

**JUST PEACE - DIETRICH BONHOEFFER'S CONTRIBUTION TO AN  
ECUMENICAL THEOLOGY OF PEACE (STEPHAN VON TWARDOWSKI)**

Block seminar: 07/08 May & 18/19 June; Fri 14-21:00 & Sat 9-16:00

(online, please register with ATF)

## READING

**"SHADOW PLAY. PASTOR ECKART GIEBELER BETWEEN CHURCH, STATE  
AND STASI" (MARIE ANNE SUBKLEW).**

April 7, 2021, 20.00, Evangelische GemeindeAkademie Blankenese,  
Mühlenberger Weg 64 a, Hamburg. Registration is requested, Email:  
[gemeindeakademie@blankenese.de](mailto:gemeindeakademie@blankenese.de)

Tel: 040 866250-16.