

CENTER FOR PEACE CHURCH THEOLOGY

NEWSLETTER



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There's war!

Suddenly no longer far away, but very close. A military attack by a nuclear power on another independent state seemed unthinkable to many, at least in Europe! We have friends in Ukraine and Russia. We read their desperate news, their pleas for our help and our prayers. The images of war leave us stunned.

But we also see the millions of people around the world who are demonstrating against the war. We admire the courage of the Russian people who are raising their voices against their own government at great personal risk.

"In war, truth is the first sacrifice", said Aeschylus (525-456 BC). Truth, however, is sacrificed long before war begins, in favour of propaganda and excitement, in order to get people to support a war in the first place, to legitimise it or even to participate in it themselves. That is why constant political analysis is also indispensable for theological-ethical reflection.

In the tradition of the historical peace churches, which regards non-violence as an essential feature of the Christian faith, we in the ATF are looking for a theology and ethics that orient political action in such a way that a Just Peace is possible. This requires the creativity of all people, no matter to which nationality or culture they count themselves, regardless of their religious affiliation or world view.



"How does peace become?" - Dietrich Bonhoeffer asked forcefully at an international ecumenical conference in 1934. He forcefully pointed out the confusion between "security" and "Peace" towards. "There is no way to peace on the path of security," was his conviction. "To demand security is to have mistrust, and this mistrust in turn gives birth to war. To seek security is to want to protect oneself." At the time, Bonhoeffer called on the churches as an ecumenical movement to work together for peace without fail. This call is as topical as it was in 1934.

New power for non-violent peace-building arises from the spiritual dimension of faith. Therefore, the many political prayers that are taking place now are suitable places to find - together with others - ways out of the spiral of violence.

When this Circle of Friends letter is printed, we do not know what the situation will be like in Ukraine, Russia, Europe and the world. We work and pray for peace.

1. March 2022, Peace Church Theology Centre, University of Hamburg

<https://www.theologie.uni-hamburg.de/einrichtungen/arbeitsstellen/friedenskirche.html>

FOREWORD



DEAR FRIENDS OF THE ATF,

Times are changing. The challenge for peace theology remains: reflection and action for peace in justice.

People in our society and also at universities are driven by many fears:

- * Fear of contracting Corona,
- * Fear of the restriction of basic democratic rights,
- * Fear of losing livelihood due to lack of income, including in student jobs,
- * Fear that a generation is growing up among students, young people and children who will be permanently damaged by the rigid restrictions on contact with their peers,
- * Fear of climate change.
- * Yes, and finally the fear of a warlike East-West confrontation with regard to Ukraine.

What could be the tasks of peace theology in the face of these fears?

Peacemaking in justice means opening people up to conversations and not closing them off, making contacts and not refusing them, promoting solidarity and not isolation. We want to train our students in peace and conflict transformation so that our society and also our communities do not fall apart.

We want to bring peace theology further into the discourse of the universities and into the conversations of the congregations. For example, we are networking even more with colleagues in Amsterdam, with the boards of trustees of the ATF and Doopsgezind Seminarium meeting in Elspeet last October. We also want to connect researchers. We kicked off with the first international Mennonite Graduate School in January 2022, and we offer courses for interested people from congregations, such as the online seminar on Mennonite history and theology. Likewise, responsible persons met again for further conceptual planning and to secure finances.

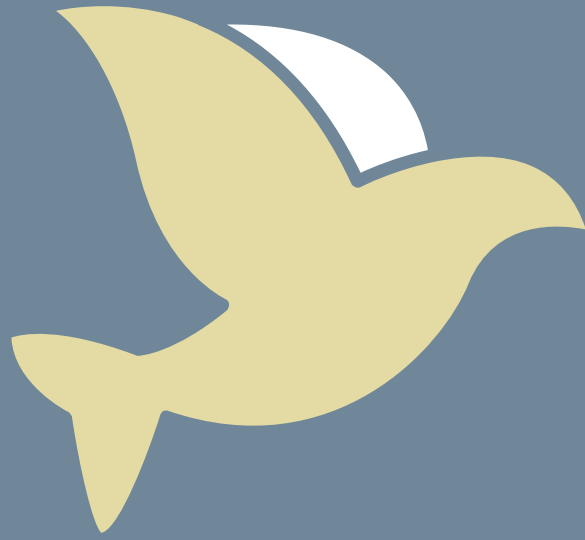
I thank all those who support these concerns financially and implement them professionally at the ATF and I look forward to a good spring with many new impulses.

Stay protected and carried by the love of God in Jesus Christ.

Yours sincerely, Bernhard Thiessen Pastor (retired),

Chair of the Board of Trustees of the ATF





SUMMER SEMESTER 2022

ASTRID VON SCHLACHTA

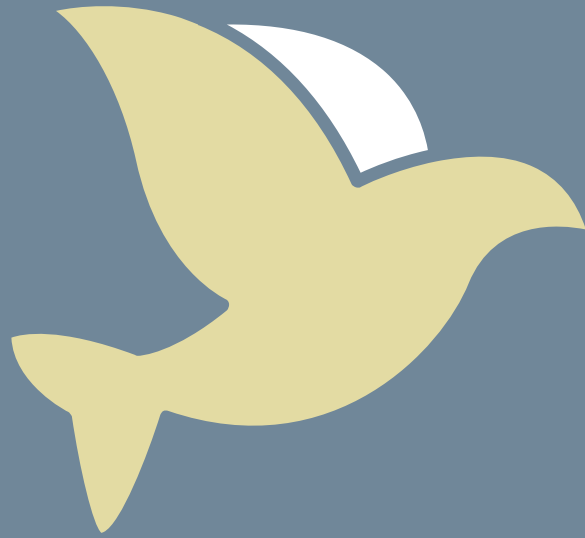
Anabaptists in the context of early modern society

This advanced seminar deals with the history of Anabaptist congregations against the background of the political, religious and social conditions in the early modern period. Questions arise as to how the various territories dealt with confessionally deviant subjects and congregations, as to the power to define norms, and as to the development of freedom of conscience and tolerance.

Stigmatised and criminalised, the Anabaptists, who emerged in the course of the Reformation, were initially unable to found lasting congregations. Their faith was punishable by death. The spectrum of Anabaptists includes not only the original or permanent congregations of the Mennonites and the Hutterites, but also the Amish group and the New Anabaptist communities that formed later.

Legally and politically, the position of Anabaptists remained ambivalent throughout the early modern period. Denominational deviance was always in a precarious situation, so that negotiating conditions for settling or staying as well as migration were part of the life experience of many denominationally deviant subjects. Diverse migration movements led to the founding of new settlements in North America and Russia.

The seminar also examines political communication about the Anabaptists. Thus, denominationally deviant groups had to face accusations of "sectirerery" and "sedition". But they also tried to influence their fate as politically extremely active subjects.



SUMMER SEMESTER 2022

ASTRID VON SCHLACHTA

The topicality of history - remembering and creating identity Course on the history of the Anabaptists

The course, which is aimed at interested persons from the various congregations, but also at all other interested persons, will deal on the one hand with how representatives of Anabaptism or Mennonism saw their history. What narratives about Anabaptist history were told and how were these narratives influenced by the present in which the writers lived? How was identity to be created through the analysis of history in the present?

On the other hand, the course will take a look at how Anabaptists were treated in general and non-Anabaptist confessional historiography. How were the Anabaptists seen and what message was associated with the portrayal of their history?

Course topics include: 19th century historiography (such as Antje Brons), the messages of Anabaptist commemorations and Menno Simons biographies, the portrayal of Anabaptists in the incipient "impartial historiography" (such as Gottfried Arnold), and the roles of Anabaptists/Mennonites in literature and religious socialism.

The course starts on 5 April and ends on 28 June; it takes place on Tuesdays, 17:30-19:00, via Zoom.

All the texts we cover during the semester will be compiled in a reader that will be sent out at the beginning.

5.4: Antje Brons and Co.: The writing of history picks up speed

12.4: Identity for later generations: the Hutterite history books

26.4: The gaze of others: Arnold's History of Churches and Heresies

3.5: 18th-century historiography: Simon Friedrich Rues and the "impartial historiography"

10.5: Mennonite Self-Representation: Congregations and Migration in Retrospect

17.5: Learning from history? The message of Anabaptist commemorations

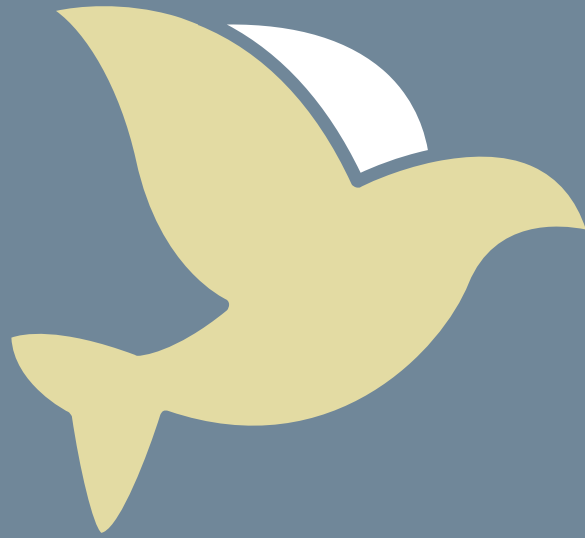
31 May: The founding father? A look at Menno Simons

7.6: Anabaptists in literature: Ernst von Wildenbruch and Co.

21.6: Religious Socialism: Robert Friedmann's and Eberhard Arnold's View of the Anabaptists

28.6: Only spectacular? Münster in the discussion

Information and registration at: Astrid.von-Schlachta@posteo.de



SUMMER SEMESTER 2022

MARIE ANNE SUBKLEW

Religion makes peace

The relationship between religion and violence has been a popular topic not only since the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 in New York. Religions have a potential that can be used in conflicts to legitimise, mobilise and exercise violence - a potential for conflict and violence, in other words, that is directed towards domination instead of understanding, towards escalation instead of peace. The other aspect, that people do not use violence for religious reasons and work for peace and reconciliation, is often neglected in public and media perception.

Based on concrete case studies of violent political conflicts worldwide, the work of religion-based actors and groups will be examined with regard to the potential for peace but also the conflict-exacerbating aspects of different religions.

To this end, the conflicts will be analysed as well as the religious justification patterns of individuals and groups. The focus of the seminar will be on the peace potential of the religions without neglecting the conflict-exacerbating aspects.

ATF TEAM

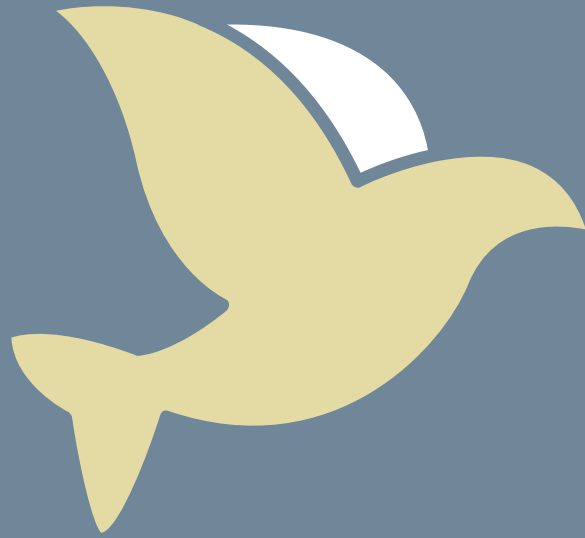
21-24 April 2022

EMSTM - European Mennonite Students of Theology Meeting

"Mennonite Innocence" - On Guilt and Violence within the Peace Church

During the past decade, a lot of research has been done - by Mennonites and Non-Mennonites, by historians and theologians, to uncover some of the suppressed stories of the peace church tradition and community. This is a painful process, since Mennonites are used to present themselves as victims, refugees, minority groups, the oppressed, etc.. Today, we see more clearly, that infliction in military actions is part of that peace church tradition, sexual violence takes place within these discipleship communities as well, and lands where they "started from zero" were actually taken from Indigenous Peoples. How much were - and are - Mennonites part of the "colonial project", which implies involvement in slave trade and racism? - The inspiration for the title came from Gloria Wekker's groundbreaking work "White Innocence. Paradoxes of Colonialism and Race" (2016).

During this weekend-end seminar - which also marks the yearly meeting of the European Mennonite Students of Theology Meeting (EMSTM) - we will analyze the narratives and re-visit them, by lectures, workshops, and excursions. A Sunday morning worship will be held at Mennonite Church Hamburg-Altona.



SUMMER SEMESTER 2022

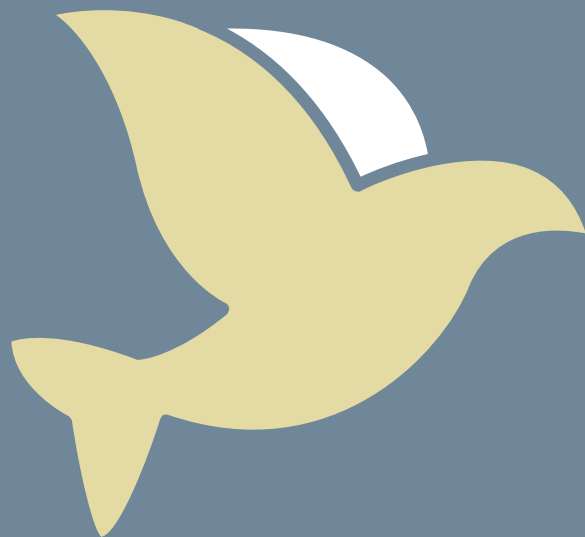
FERNANDO ENNS, MARIE ANNE SUBKLEW, FRIEDERIKE CORD, JULIA FREUND
Formatio mennonica, May 13/14 + June 10/11

The 2022 Assembly of the World Council of Churches - History, Issues, Challenges

In September 2022, the World Council of Churches (WCC) invites to its 11th Assembly in Karlsruhe. Since its foundation in 1948, the WCC assemblies, which take place every seven/eight years, have been thematic focal points in the life of this worldwide fellowship of churches (which in Germany includes not only the EKD churches but also the Old Catholics, the Mennonites, the Methodists and the Quakers - soon to be joined by the Baptists). The historical developments of the WCC can be traced through the themes of the assemblies. Starting with the debate on the experiences of the world wars, through the political liberation movements in the 1960s and 1970s and the period of bloc confrontation (until 1989), to today's issues of economically dominated globalisation and the global crisis. The history of the WCC assemblies shows that the political questions of the time required theological responses in the light of the biblical witness. The questions always remained central: "What does this mean for the unity of the church (in Christ)? What unity is given here, what unity can be sought and lived?" Theologically, a development from Christocentrism to Trinitarian models can be traced, from interdenominational ecumenism to current dialogues with believers of other religions. In view of the upcoming Assembly, current socio-political issues will be reflected theologically: Racism, sexism, polarised societies, nuclear threat, climate change. How can / how should a fellowship of more than 350 member churches and over 550 million Christians* respond appropriately?

In this seminar, the history of the WCC with its issues and challenges will be explored on the first weekend, and then the upcoming Assembly "on our doorstep" will be looked at on the second weekend.

Together with various churches and agencies 'in the North', the Center for Peace Church Theology is also organising a pre-consultation in Hamburg (26-30 August) to seek direct exchange with delegates travelling to Germany from all over the world for the Assembly. Students of this seminar have the opportunity to participate in this pre-consultation (on the topic "Unification and Healing").



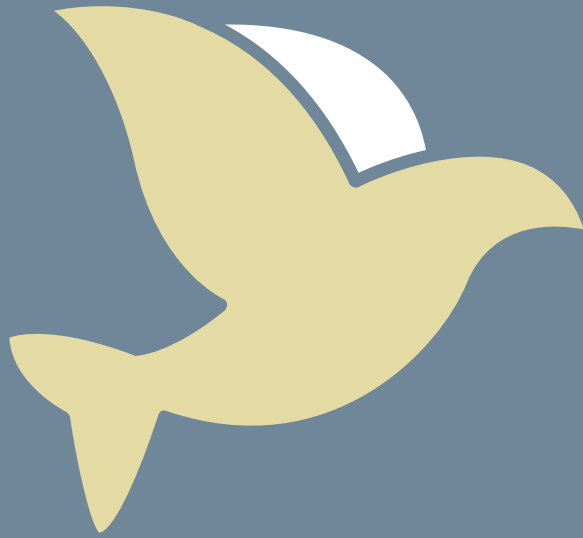
RETROSPECT WINTER 21/22

mennoForum 2021/22

In the winter semester 2021/2022, the mennoForum dealt with the question "What is normal? Representatives from science and teaching, artists, philosophers, journalists, psychologists, theologians and historians were invited to this series of topics on three evenings. The topic was chosen because many people longed for "normality" during the Corona crisis. But what is normal? Who defines it? And where does our need for normality or for what we consider normal come from? For each evening there is a report to read and the recorded Youtube livestream to watch. You can find both on the mennoForum homepage: mennoforum-hamburg.de

Graduate school

From 28-30 January, Mennonite doctoral students and researchers on Anabaptism, peace ethics and theology met for the first joint "Mennonite Graduate School in Europe". Due to the pandemic situation, the event did not take place in Menno-rode as planned, but online. 25 participants from Germany, the Netherlands, Poland, Paraguay and North America, among others, presented their research projects to each other, discussed and exchanged ideas. On Friday, the focus was on getting to know each other. A virtual research poster gallery was created via an online platform, which provided an initial overview of the participants' various projects. The variety of topics ranged from historical works such as "Apocalyptic and Eschatological Speculation in Sixteenth Century Anabaptism", "Mennonite farms and households in the Vistula valley in the late 18th century" to peace theology topics such as "Mary in Latin America: a Mennonite perspective", "Women's Spiritualities as a resource for empowerment and participation in peacebuilding". The evening ended with good conversations over a drink together in a virtual "beach bar". On Saturday, the content-related work was then deepened in small group discussions on the research projects. Thinking together in interdisciplinary and international contexts yielded many exciting impulses and the concentrated exchange of topics, thoughts and tips beyond one's own research contexts was perceived as very profitable by the participants. The event will definitely be repeated next year, hopefully then in hybrid form, with the possibility of direct personal contact



RETROSPECT WINTER 21/22

Study Day

February 1st 2022, 3.00 to 9.15 p.m.

Just peace and coming to terms with the colonial legacy - a blank space

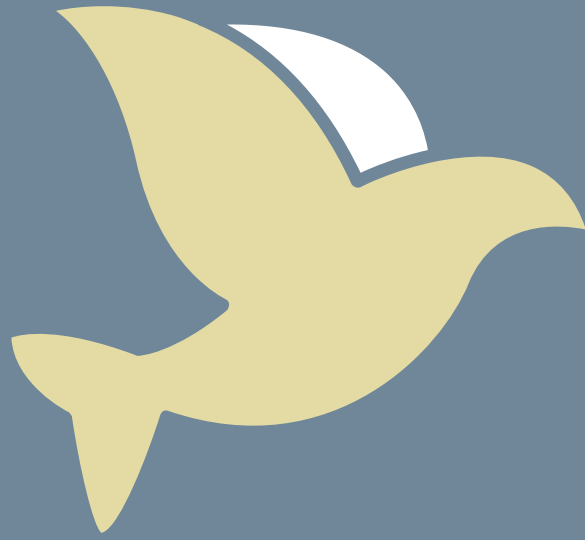
One of the basic prerequisites of Christian peace work is knowledge of the conflicts of past violations that reach into the present. In view of an increasingly complex world in which different conflict situations are interlinked, church partnership and peace work also face particular challenges.

In the awareness that the consequences of colonial and racist structures are still effective today, questions of particular urgency arise for Christian peace ethics and peace work: Are they possibly (still or again) the continuation of missionary-colonial dominance under different auspices? Or are they characterised by historically and thus also guilt-conscious, context-sensitive solidarity?

Although sensitivity to hidden neo-colonialism has grown, the question remains: Are those who have to live with the consequences of colonialism and racism equal actors in coming to terms with the past and in the joint projects of peace and partnership work? Does their perspective have a firm place in the concept of just peace? Especially for churches that have embarked on the path of just peace, there is a special obligation to deal with the colonial past, as was repeatedly pointed out at the study day.

At the study day, different experiences, expectations and perspectives were shared, gaps uncovered and critically reflected upon. The study day took place with the participation of the ATF in cooperation with the Conference for Peace Work in the Region of the EKD, the Protestant Academy in Berlin and the German Commission *Justitia et Pax*.

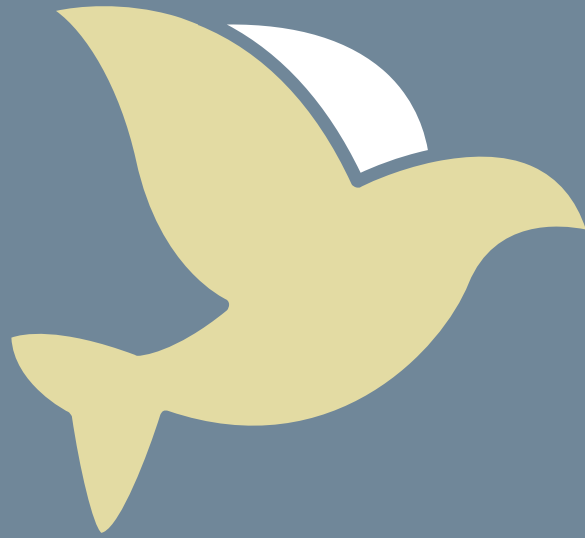
WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES



NEWS FROM THE WCC

The Assembly is "the supreme legislative body" of the WCC and usually meets every eight years. The EKD has taken the lead - together with the other churches of the ACK - in inviting people to Karlsruhe. The AMG is actively involved in the preparatory process, in various committees. The congregations in the immediate vicinity of Karlsruhe and the local ACKs will play a special role in this. In the north, the Center of Peace Church Theology is preparing a "pre-consultation" in advance of the Assembly, together with churches in Hamburg and the wider area.

The motto of the Assembly is: "The love of Christ moves the world towards reconciliation and unity". There will be various plenary sessions, thematic workshops and the business sessions for the official delegates. For the AMG, Fernando Enns and Deborah Fellmann - additionally as youth delegate - have been nominated. In addition, the AMG has nominated Catalina Lorena Bonilla from the Mennonite sister church in Colombia for the youth programme. Since several representatives from other peace churches will be coming to Karlsruhe, there is also the possibility of inviting these people to our congregations.



NEWS FROM THE WCC

Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace

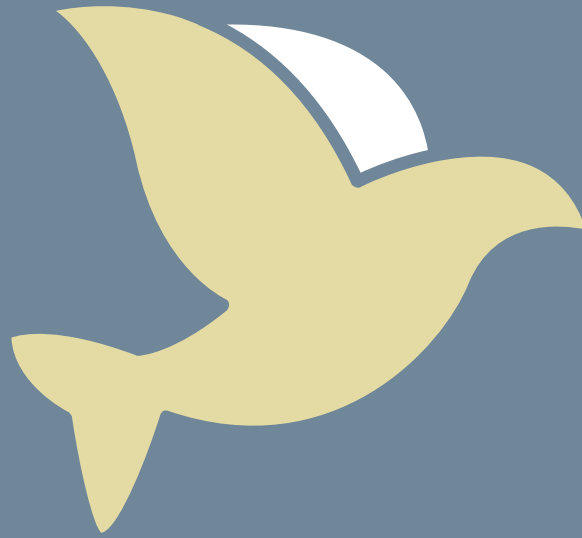
We are particularly involved in this programme. Together with Jennifer Martin from Jamaica as co-chair of the international steering group, Fernando Enns' task is to prepare the annual meetings. Throughout the year, we stay connected to the staff in Geneva via video conferences.

The annual focus in 2022 will be on the European region (after 2016: Middle East-Israel/Palestine; 2017: Africa-Nigeria, 2018: Latin America-Colombia, 2019: Asia-Thailand, 2020: Pacific-Fiji, 2021: North America). Once again, there will be different "pilgrimage stops", e.g. in Italy (refugee work), in the Balkan region (reconciliation) and then in Germany.

During the Central Committee meeting in Feb. 2022 we were able to present our findings in the form of a document: The Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace. Towards an Ecumenical Theology of Companionship. This brings together and theologically reflects on many of the experiences of the past years, under four themes that have emerged as priorities from the Pilgrim Team Visits so far: 1. land and displacement, 2. truth and trauma, 3. gender justice, and 4. racism. This document will now serve as an important background document for the Assembly. It was also decided that a concrete proposal will be developed in the coming weeks on how this pilgrimage can continue in the WCC and in the churches after the Assembly.

In all parts of the world there are many activities that are connected to the pilgrimage of justice and peace. The ACK working group (in which Martina Basso is involved) has, for example, developed a pilgrimage app that can be used individually for one's own pilgrimage. <https://www.oekumene-ack.de/themen/glaubenspraxis/pilgerweg-der-gerechtigkeit-und-des-friedens/>

NEWLY PUBLISHED



NEWLY PUBLISHED



WAGED! LIVE CONSISTENTLY 500 YEARS OF THE ANABAPTIST MOVEMENT - ISSUE 2

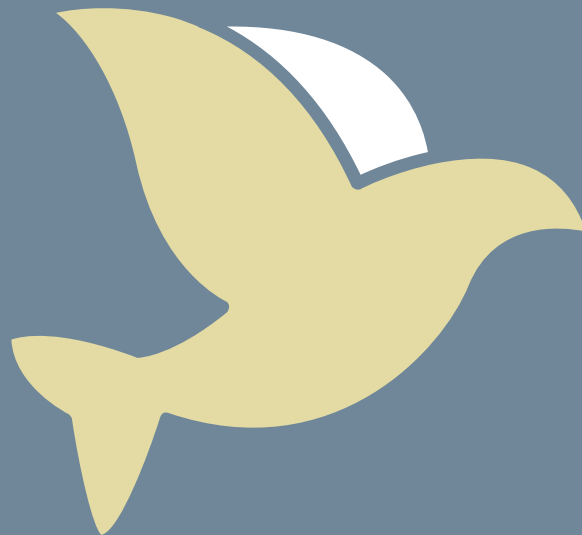
Publisher: Association "500 Jahre
Täuferbewegung 2025 e. V.
Arbeitsgemeinschaft Christlicher Kirchen,
Ludolfusstraße 2-4, D-60487 Frankfurt



Stephan von Twardowski The Peace of Christ and the One Church

On the ecclesiological foundation of
Dietrich Bonhoeffer's ecumenical
ethics, 2022.

NEWLY PUBLISHED



NEWLY PUBLISHED



Knut V.M. Wormstädt, Narrating Reconciliation. A process-theological study of ecumenical reconciliation encounters with Mennonites, 2022.

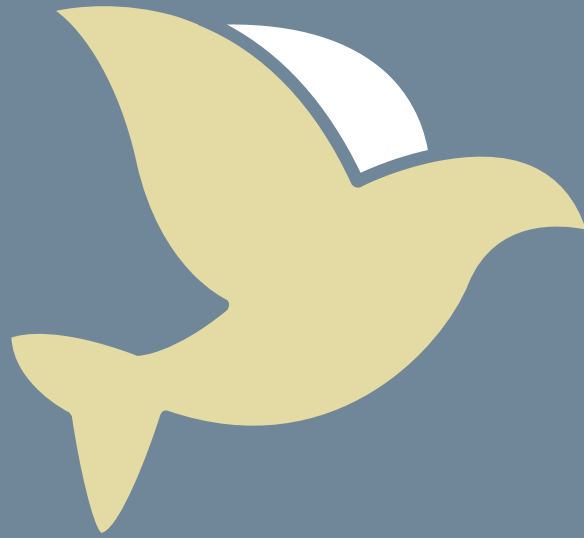


Alle G. Hoekema & Gabe G. Hoekema, Hardship, Resistance, Collaboration: Essays on Dutch Mennonites During World War II and Its Aftermath. Institute of Mennonite Studies, 2021.



Fernando Enns (ed.), The Baptism and entry into the church, lutheran/mennonite/roman catholic trilateral talks 2012-2017, Leipzig and Paderborn 2022.

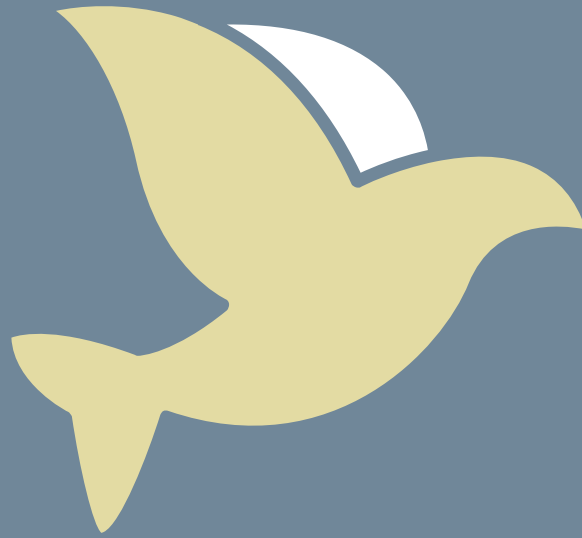
NEWLY PUBLISHED



NEWLY PUBLISHED

Fernando Enns, Charismatic, Pious, and Humorous for a Just Peace. Inspiring Encounters with Desmond Tutu; in: Sarojini Nadar et al. (eds.), *Ecumenical Encounters with Desmond Mpilo Tutu. Visions for Justice, Dignity and Peace*, Oxford: Regnum 2021, 148-151.

DATES



EMSTM - European Mennonite Students of Theology Meeting

"Mennonite Innocence" - On Guilt and Violence within the Peace Church
21-24 April 2022, Mission Academy at the University of Hamburg,
Rupertstrasse 67
22609 Hamburg

Formatio mennonica

The 2022 Assembly of the World Council of Churches - History, Issues,
Challenges
Block seminar: 13/14 May & 10/11 June; Fri 14-21:00 & Sat 9-16:00

LCC International University, Lithuania

Conference for the opening of the Center for Dialogue & Conflict
Transformation, "Stories Shaping Peace".
Fernando Enns gives the keynote lectures, 16-19 March
-> <https://lcc.lt/lt/research-at-lcc/conference-stories-shaping-peace>

Amsterdam Center for Religion and Peace & Justice Studies: Public Lectures 2022

"Mennonite Innocence. - Dealing with Violence and Guilt in a Peace Church.
From 5 April 2022 every Tuesday evening (six evenings), 19-20:30

Churches Against Nuclear Weapons Project Group

Service in Büchel. Sermon: Fernando Enns, 25 June 2022

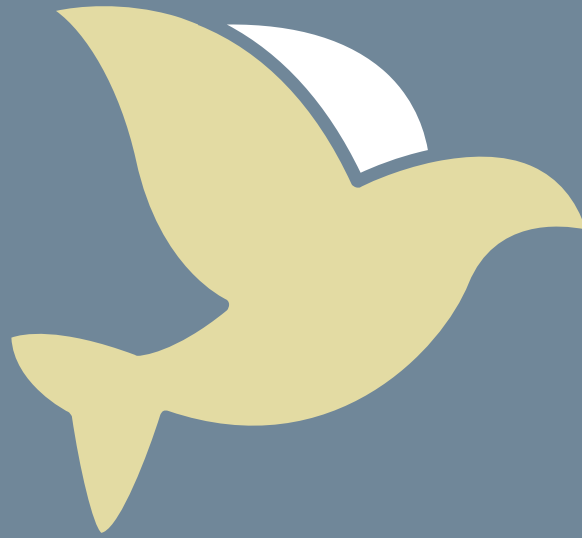
Mennonite World Conference - Assembly (hybrid), Indonesia,

5-10 July 2022. The ATF organises workshops.

World Council of Churches - Assembly, Karlsruhe, 31 Aug - 8 Sept 2022.

ATF is involved in various events and is involved in Hamburg in organising
and running the "Pre-Consultation", 26-29 Aug 2022.

DATES



DMFK and MFB meeting

"God loves me - you too? God's likeness, identity and exclusion".

8-10 April Mennonite Peace Centre Berlin

Hatred has spread in the middle of our society: e.g. hatred of Jews, Muslims, People of Colour, LGBTI, Sinti and Roma. According to a survey, people find the influence of Jews on Germany too great, for example, and about half of all respondents think that immigration of people of the Muslim faith should generally be banned. Many respondents link their racist attitudes to the demand for "more courage for a strong German national feeling". Such attitudes are also widespread in the midst of the churches; love of one's neighbour and hatred of one's neighbour seem to be close to each other. During the conference we want to discuss the following questions, among others: Does the talk of the image of God change the concept of human dignity? Who defines identities? Do the setting of boundaries inevitably lead to exclusion? How can churches create spaces where people can free themselves from different pigeonholes?

Speakers:

Dr. Marie Anne Subklew-Jeutner, Center for Peace Church Theology, Martina Basso, MFB Director

Registration by e-mail: menno.friedenszentrum@email.de by telephone: 033742 - 618 501 by post: MFB, c/o Basso, Oehna 56, 14913 Niedergörsdorf

On the trail of the martyrs - a cycle pilgrimage in the middle of Germany

Eisenach-Gotha-Reinhardsbrunn-Erfurt-Jena, 13 to 18 August 2022

All those interested in Anabaptist history have the chance this summer to set out together in a small group (up to 20 people) to "learn" more about the Anabaptists of the 16th century. Between Eisenach and Jena we will cycle short stages (maximum 35 kilometres) or travel by train, bus or on foot. Arrival and departure will be by individual train.

We will visit those places in central Germany where Anabaptists lived at the beginning of the 16th century. But the pilgrimage also leads to the places where they were imprisoned and executed. In addition to information about the fates of the Anabaptists - e.g. by Fritz Erbe, Barbara Unger, Margarete Koch, Hans Römer or Hans Peißker - the programme also includes devotions, lectures, meetings and exchange. Nice accommodation (single and double rooms) including breakfast awaits us in Eisenach, Gotha (two nights) and Erfurt (two nights).

The bicycle pilgrimage will take place on. It will be led by Ulrike Arnold and Astrid von Schlachta (Mennonite Historical Society). The costs are expected to be 360 euros (single room) or 260 euros (double room). Information and registration by 1 April 2022 to: Ulrike Arnold, Am Werrauferpark 2, 37269 Eschwege, Tel. 05651-339281, unseregeschichtslehrerin@web.de