

The EcoJustice Committee of the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada

September 2003



An Outline for a Time of Reconciliation

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The Peace and Nonviolence Working Group
of the EcoJustice Committee of the General Synod
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INTRODUCTION

The EcoJustice Committee of General Synod offers *An Outline for a Time of Reconciliation* for use by dioceses, parishes, and ecumenical groups wishing to participate in the 2001-2010 Decade to Overcome Violence (DOV), declared by the World Council of Churches in February 2001.

In the pages that follow, you will find a simple workshop outline with prayer and scripture resources, as well as an overview of the WCC Decade to Overcome Violence and the involvement of the Anglican Church of Canada.

The Peace and Nonviolence Working Group of the EcoJustice Committee produced this resource, based on material developed by the Toronto Conference of the United Church of Canada and adapted for Anglican usage by the Rev. Cheryl Kristolaitis.

May you find every blessing as you seek to overcome violence in a world that cries out for peace.

Maylanne Maybee
Coordinator for Justice Education and Networks
The Anglican Church of Canada
September 2003

A WORKSHOP

DESIGNED BY CHERYL CURTIS AND BRIAN PERKINS-MCINTOSH
ADAPTED FOR ANGLICAN USAGE BY REV. CHERYL KRISTOLAITIS

TIME REQUIRED: 1 hour

PURPOSE:

- to introduce the Decade to Overcome Violence: Churches Seeking Reconciliation and Peace (DOV)
- to encourage parishes, deaneries and dioceses to undertake a project or discussion of the DOV
- to deepen and share understandings of reconciliation
- to share learnings about reconciliation

YOU WILL NEED

- name tags, if necessary
- flipchart, markers, masking tape, clock
- copies of hymn books (*Common Praise* or *The Hymn Book*)
- a worship centre with a candle
- group facilitators for small groups
- handout: "The Anglican Church of Canada – Work and Resources relating to The Decade to Overcome Violence" (see page 12).

A WORD ABOUT THE HOUR

This opportunity for reflection is framed within a time of worship. Guided by local tradition and the Spirit's call, provide time for singing, scripture, prayer and silence. Prayers for use and suggestions of Scripture passages on which to reflect are found at the end of this outline; possible hymns are listed with each section. Try keeping a moment in silence in prayer immediately following the reading or in the midst of personal sharing to allow for individual reflection.

During the course of this reflection a wound, personal or communal, may be touched. Respond in the context of worship in a manner consistent with your practice as a community and as the Spirit leads. Consider using silence for reflection, offering a prayer such as the one suggested here or for those in anxiety (*BCP*, page 54, #37) or affliction (*BAS*, page 682, #26), and singing a hymn such as "Healer of Our Every Ill" (*Common Praise* #612) at that time. We suggest that someone be available for extending pastoral care if the group is unable to address the wound sufficiently.

PRAYER FOR THOSE JOURNEYING TO RECONCILIATION AND PEACE



Holy and Gracious One,
Source of life and Fount of love,
in whom all good things are found,
look with mercy upon the abrasions of our souls.
Tend our wounds.
Wash away the grit and grime of our brokenness
which we have embedded in our being
and which keeps us from healing.
Blow upon us your Spirit's healing kiss of peace
that we may draw strength from one another and from you.
This we ask in the name of Jesus the Christ,
our Companion on the journey. Amen.

GATHERING (5 minutes)

Light a candle. Open with a version of the Lord's Prayer or other prayers calling for God's reign (*see Prayer Resources*). If possible, sing an appropriate hymn such as "There's A Wideness in God's Mercy" (*Common Praise* #606, *Hymn Book* #76), "What Does the Lord Require" (*Common Praise* #171), or "We Lay Our Broken World" (*Common Praise* #613).

INTRODUCTION (5 minutes)

- Welcome everyone
- Introduce the Decade to Overcome Violence: Churches Seeking Reconciliation and Peace (DOV) theme. Refer to "Why a Decade to Overcome Violence?" (*page 22*)
- Read a definition of Reconciliation (*page 11*)

SMALL GROUPS (15 minutes)

Divide into groups of three to five. Arrange in advance to have a facilitator for each group.

- What personal experience have I had that helps me better understand what reconciliation means?

OR

- When have I seen or experienced a damaged relationship begin to transform or heal?

These guiding questions are meant to provide people with a possible framework for discussion, and to encourage them to use their own experiences as they reflect. The questions are meant mainly to "jump-start" conversation; you need not feel that people must stick to them strictly if you see that they are sharing thoughts or feelings that beckon from a somewhat different path.

This discussion time is intended to help create a space during which people can share personal stories and reflections that help us go deeper in our understanding of reconciliation. Perhaps the most important aspect of this exercise is that each person has the opportunity to speak, if they choose, and to be heard.

PLENARY (10 minutes)

- Do you need silence, music, scripture, or prayer now? See “A word about the hour” (page 5)
- Review the ongoing reconciliation work of the Anglican Church in Canada. See The Anglican Church of Canada – Work and Resources relating to The Decade to Overcome Violence (page 12)
- Identify any diocesan, regional, or local reconciliation work that is familiar to you.

SMALL GROUPS

Divide into the same small groups. Note the responses generated in the discussion on flipchart paper. These notes will form the basis for next steps and will be used in the closing. The following are suggested questions to initiate discussion.

- What experience have you had that has been a catalyst for you to actively seek peace and reconciliation?
- In the light of recent world events, do you think God is calling us to new peace and reconciliation initiatives? If so, what?
- Where is a reconciling presence needed in our ministry?
- How shall we engage in our reconciliation ministry? What learnings, resources, support do we need to move ahead?

PLENARY (5 minutes)

Do you need silence, music, scripture, or prayer now? See “A word about the hour.” (page 5.)

CLOSING (5 minutes)

Close with the prayer “Reconciliation” or other suitable prayers from the Prayer Resources (page 19), and/or a hymn from *Common Praise* such as “The Church of Christ in Every Age” (#584), “When God Restored Our Common Life” (#583), “O God of Every Nation” (#593) or “Let There Be Light” (#572, *Hymn Book* #274). Lay the notes from the small group discussion time on the worship centre as an offering and sign of our commitment to work for justice, reconciliation and peace.

NEXT STEPS

- This is the beginning of engaging in the DOV theme. This process encourages a conversation which will deepen over the course of a decade. We hope these initial discussions will invite and inspire us and the parishes and communities of which we are part to deeply consider how we may create a more reconciled world.
- We are all encouraged to keep learning about reconciliation and to share our learning with one another.
- As we engage in new forms of ministry to our troubled and beautiful world, share what we learn about reconciliation through these ministries.
- Local leaders are encouraged to use the notes from small group discussions to identify action steps in the parish or other ministry setting in which this workshop was offered. For more information see page 8.

This workshop is adapted from original work by Cheryl Curtis, United Church Toronto Conference minister for social justice and ethnic ministries, and Brian Perkins-McIntosh, minister at Church of the Master United Church, Scarborough, Ontario. It has been adapted by Cheryl Kristolaitis, Anglican priest and Chaplain of Luther College, University of Regina, for the Peace and Non-Violence Working Group of the EcoJustice Committee of the Anglican Church of Canada.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

1. WEB SITES:

- World Council of Churches' Decade to Overcome Violence at www.wcc-coe.org/dov.nsf
- Project Ploughshares at www.ploughshares.ca
- KAIROS – Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives at www.kairos-canada.org
- The Anglican Church of Canada at www.anglican.ca
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A DEFINITION OF RECONCILIATION



The Henry Martyn Institute: International Centre for Research, Interfaith Relations and Reconciliation is an Anglican Church of Canada partner in India. Here is the Institute's working definition of reconciliation:

Reconciliation is a process of struggle, of bringing together estranged people, leading towards transformed relationships and structures, based on justice.

THE ANGLICAN CHURCH OF CANADA -

WORK AND RESOURCES RELATING
TO THE DECADE TO OVERCOME VIOLENCE

A NEW AGAPE — A NEW RELATIONSHIP

At General Synod in 2001, the Anglican Church of Canada gathered around the theme “Towards Healing, Reconciliation and the New Life.” Central to that theme and that gathering was the work of healing and reconciliation in light of the Anglican Church’s history with residential schools. Within the church’s ongoing ministry of reconciliation, the particular need and priority for reconciliation with the aboriginal peoples of this church and this land was affirmed at General Synod.

In the Anglican Church of Canada’s work of healing and reconciliation, the Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples (ACIP) speaks of a New Agape, a new relationship. The Anglican Church of Canada is committed to a new relationship with the Indigenous (or Aboriginal) Peoples of Canada based on a partnership which focuses on the cultural, spiritual, social, and economic independence of Indigenous communities. ACIP has outlined some characteristics of such a new relationship, characteristics which tell us a great deal about reconciliation (emphasis added):

- Wholeness for people and communities requires that we **restore the circle of life** as embodied in the Covenant, with its emphasis on self-determination.
- New relationships will happen only in a context in which honest efforts are being made to **eradicate lingering social injustices**.
- Efforts to **heal the wounds** caused to individuals and communities by the residential schools experience must be designed and led by Indigenous Peoples.
- Healing of our relationships is done locally, **person by person, community by community**.

COMMITMENT AT GENERAL SYNOD 2001

A motion on the Decade to Overcome Violence was passed which gives direction to our work as the Anglican Church. It says that we resolve to:

1. Reaffirm the decision of the Council of General Synod in May 2000, formally to support the World Council of Churches’ “Ecumenical Decade to Overcome Violence: Churches Seeking Reconciliation and Peace 2001–2010.”
2. Work with partners in Canada and around the world to take up the call of the Decade to:
 - Be and build communities of peace in diversity
 - Repent together for our complicity in violence
 - Analyse different forms of violence and their interconnection
 - Engage in theological reflection to overcome the spirit, logic and practice of violence
 - Embrace creative approaches to peace-building within the Christian tradition, local communities, secular movements, and other living faiths
 - Stand alongside victims of violence and to seek to empower those people who are systematically oppressed by violence
 - Act in solidarity with those who struggle for justice, peace and the integrity of creation. (from the Call of the Decade)
3. Promote a culture of non-violence that values love, compassion, and justice, and that rejects violence as a means of solving problems, and join with the Episcopal Church in the USA and other faith communities in observing the United Nations’ Decade for a Culture of Peace and Nonviolence for the Children of the World (2001–10).
4. Encourage dioceses and parishes to engage in learning and action throughout the decade on issues identified by the Council of General Synod in May 2000, and on other issues of war, peace-building, and nonviolence as they arise, with the assistance of the EcoJustice Committee, the Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples, the Primate’s World Relief and Development Fund, and ecumenical organizations such as Project Ploughshares and KAIROS – the Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiative.


SO WHAT ARE WE DOING?

The Decade to Overcome Violence is a broad mission thrust within the member churches of the World Council of Churches. The Anglican Church of Canada has committed to participate in DOV by building on previous work as well as taking new initiatives in areas such as:

- **A New Agape** – fostering a new relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in our church
- **Just War? Just Peace!** – creating and distributing educational resources for those seeking to understand the issues and ethics of war, militarization, and peacemaking in our world today
- **The Anti-Racism Working Group of General Synod** – developing a clear and current anti-racism policy, as well as educational models and other resources for the committees, councils, and board of General Synod
- **Raising awareness in Anglican dioceses and parishes** of the concept of “restorative justice” as an alternative to “correctional justice” and its application within and beyond the church
- **Strengthening organizational links** and collaborating on peace initiatives with the World Council of Churches, KAIROS – Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives, the Commission on Justice and Peace of the Canadian Council of Churches, and Project Ploughshares
- **Building a database and network** for support and information sharing among Anglicans across Canada who are concerned about peace and non-violence as a living expression of our faith.

PRAYER RESOURCES


RECONCILIATION



Lord God, bring us together as one,
reconciled with you and reconciled with each other.
You made us in your likeness,
you gave us your Son, Jesus Christ,
Who has given us forgiveness from sin.
Lord God, bring us together as one,
different in culture, but given new life in Jesus Christ,
together as your body, your Church, your people.
Lord God, bring us together as one,
reconciled, healed, forgiven,
sharing you with others as you have called us to do.
In Jesus Christ, let us be together as one. Amen.

Adapted from *A Prayer Book for Australia, Prayers for Various Occasions*, #7.


IN TIMES OF NATIONAL/ INTERNATIONAL TENSION



Almighty God, ruler of all, in whose kingdom peace and
righteousness abound;
we pray for those who are in conflict....
Take away prejudice, cruelty and revenge.
Grant that barriers which divide may crumble,
suspicions disappear and hatreds cease,
through Jesus Christ our mediator. Amen.

From *A Prayer Book for Australia, Prayers for Various Occasions*, #2.


PRAYER OF CONFESSION



O Christ,
in whose body was named
all the violence of the world,
and in whose memory is contained
our profoundest grief,
we lay open to you:
the violence done to us in time before memory;
the unremembered wounds that have misshaped our lives;
the injuries we cannot forget and for which we have not been
forgiven.
The remembrance of them is grievous to us;
The burden of them is intolerable.

We lay open to you:
the violence done in our name in time before memory;
the unremembered wounds we have inflicted;
the injuries we cannot forget and for which we have not been
forgiven.
The remembrance of them is grievous to us;
The burden of them is intolerable.
We lay open to you:
those who have pursued a violent knowledge the world cannot
forget;
those caught up in violence they have refused to name;
those who have enacted violence which they have not repented.
The remembrance of them is grievous to us.
The burden of them is intolerable.

We lay open to you:
the victims of violence whose only memorial is our anger;
those whose suffering was sustained on our behalf;
those whose continued oppression provides the ground we
stand on.
The remembrance of them is grievous to us.
The burden of them is intolerable.
O God, you have searched us out and known us,
and all that we are is open to you.
We confess that we have sinned:
we have used our power to dominate
and our weakness to manipulate;




we have evaded responsibility
and failed to confront evil;
we have denied dignity
to ourselves and to each other,
and fallen into despair.

We turn to you, O God;
we renounce evil;
we claim your love;
we choose to be made whole.

Adapted from A Prayer Book for Australia, Prayers for Confession 4 and 5.

WORLD PRAYER FOR PEACE



For peace in your country
For the victims of violence everywhere
For those struggling for peace and justice
For churches in conflict situations

For a world without war and violence
Lead me from death to life, from falsehood to truth,
Lead me from despair to hope, from fear to trust.
Lead me from hate to love, from war to peace,
Let peace fill our beings, our world and our universe.
Amen.

From the Vancouver Assembly of the World Council of Churches

PRAYER FOR THE CLOSE OF A MEETING

God of all eternity,
We have gathered together
to hear your Word,
to listen to your Spirit and to one another,
and to discern our way into your future.
Guide us as we leave this place.
Give us the courage and love of Jesus
to seek a world where all your children are free.
Give us the faith to move ahead,
not knowing fully where we go,
but that you lead us.
This we ask in the name of Jesus the Christ. Amen.



INTERCESSIONS FOR PEACE

These intercessions, originally from *Waging Reconciliation* (edited by Ian Douglas) can be prayed with song by singing a verse of “Come Now, O Prince of Peace” (*Common Praise* #588) between each of the prayers. Alternatively, participants can pray a common response such as “Come now, O Prince of Peace, and reveal yourself through our lives.”

May the weapons of the world be turned into food and shelter,
and acts of destruction into programs of hope,
and may all people, in every land, live in peace.

That the church will witness to love that overcomes fear,
stretching beyond itself to proclaim,
through word and action, the promises of salvation.
That the light of eternal life may spread across the souls of all who have died,
and their courage burn brightly within the heart of a grateful nation.

That Christ will unbind us from our sins—our pride and hypocrisy, our
greed and false judgments—and lead us into perfect freedom.

In thanksgiving for those who serve others,
who release the best in humanity,
and who speak for those who are too weary to raise
their voices.



SCRIPTURE RESOURCES

AN AFFIRMATION OF FAITH AND ACTION TO OVERCOME VIOLENCE

Listen to the Word of God. Listen to what the Spirit is saying to the Church.

The creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. (*Romans 8:21*)
All of creation longs for freedom. What we do, we do for all the earth.

They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. (*Isaiah 2: 4b*)

Neither shall we learn war any more. We will seek to learn the ways of peace.

Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: “May they prosper who love you. Peace be within your walls and security within your towers.” (*Psalms 122: 6-7*)

We will work for peace and security, not only for our home community, but for all the peoples of the world.

The Lord bless and keep you; the Lord’s face shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord’s countenance be upon you, and give you peace. (*Numbers 6: 24-26*)

Be at peace with one another. (*Mark 9:50c*)

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. ...Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid. (*John 14:27*)

Peace is a sign of God’s presence in our communities, our churches and our selves. We will seek to live God’s peace.

Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her. (*John 8:7b*)

We will remember that in any situation, violence is a violation, not a response.

Love your enemies, do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return. Be

merciful, just as God is merciful (*Luke 6:35a, 36*)

As God is merciful, we will be merciful. We will love without expectation of reward.

Blessed are you who are poor for yours is God's domain. Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you will be filled. (*Luke 6: 20b, 21a*)

Is not this the fast that I choose; to loose the bonds of injustice, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? (*Isaiah 58:6*)

We will not stand by while others hunger. We will choose the fast God seeks: breaking every yoke of oppression.

For [Christ] is our peace; in flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is the hostility between us. So he came and proclaimed peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near.

(*Ephesians 2:14,17*)

When we let the division of hostility crumble we know Christ's peace.

It is for this that you were called – that you might inherit a blessing. Let them run away from evil and do good; let them seek peace and pursue it. (*1Peter 3: 9b, 11*)

When we seek to do good and pursue the peace of Christ, we know the blessing to which we were called.

All this is from God, who has given us the ministry of reconciliation, entrusting the message of reconciliation to us.

(*2 Corinthians 5:18 a,c, 19b*)

We know the peace of Christ. We are called to its blessing. We will give ourselves to the ministry of reconciliation.

Inspired by Brian McIntosh's "Litany to Overcome Violence"; written by Cheryl Kristolaitis.

SCRIPTURE SUGGESTIONS

Use "An Affirmation of Faith and Action" or choose one of the scripture references it contains, or one of the other scripture suggestions below. Read the Scripture passage over, and reflect on the following question: What insights or implications does this scripture passage have for our current mission to overcome violence with reconciliation and peace?

They have treated the wound of my people carelessly, saying, 'Peace, peace,' when there is no peace. (*Jeremiah 6:14*)

O Lord, you will ordain peace for us, for indeed all that we have done, you have done for us. (*Isaiah 26:12*)

How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the messenger who announces peace, who brings good news, who announces salvation. (*Isaiah 52:7*)

My steadfast love shall not depart from you, and my covenant of peace shall not be removed, says the Lord, who has compassion on you. (*Isaiah 54:10b*)

Peace, peace, to the far and the near, says the Lord; and I will heal them. (*Isaiah 57:19*)

Let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like an everflowing stream. (*Amos 5:24*)

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. (*Matthew 5:9*)

Let us then pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding. (*Romans 14:19*)

The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (*Philippians 4:7*)

Clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts . . . and be thankful. (*Colossians 3:14-15*).

WHY A DECADE TO OVERCOME VIOLENCE?

The Eighth Assembly of the World Council of Churches (WCC), a fellowship of more than 300 churches, including The Anglican Church of Canada, gathered in Harare, Zimbabwe, in 1998 to discern priorities and programmes until the next assembly in 2005. At the assembly delegates established the Decade to Overcome Violence: Churches seeking Reconciliation and Peace (DOV) which was officially launched in February 2001.

During the assembly, churches committed themselves to a pilgrimage to seek reconciliation and peace under the banner of the Decade to Overcome Violence (DOV). The Decade is an effort to overcome the violence of division in our societies and to respond to the yearning for peace and a life of dignity for future generations. It is an invitation to churches, organizations, and individuals to join together and work for peace. The Decade is also time for people to share ideas and strategies on how to overcome violence using non-violent techniques.

THEMES OF THE DECADE

The World Council of Churches had identified four themes for its work on the Decade. They are:

- To examine **the spirit and logic of violence**. Violence is legitimized by prevailing norms, values, belief systems and cultures—beliefs which religious interpretations are often used to justify. Doctrines of redemptive violence, just war and holy war have their roots in particular assumptions about the nature of God and human beings. How can the churches overcome the spirit and logic of violence within and around us? What alternatives can the churches offer from their understanding of scriptures and traditions to a world torn by violence?
- To consider **the use, abuse and misuse** of power. Understanding violence means acknowledging the role of power in the manifestations of violence. Violence is an irresponsible exercise of power or retaliation to such power. We have become used to a world in which power is concentrated in the hands of a few, the socially and economically privileged. Churches are often among the

privileged and, within churches, issues of power and privilege remain. How do churches relate with their own power structures as they seek to grow in faithfulness to the gospel imperatives? How do churches deal with their own abuses of power? What are alternative ways churches can define and exercise power?

- To work on issues of justice. Peace and justice cannot be pursued separately because violence is rooted in injustice. Economic structures and policies which cause human suffering and social structures and values which nurture inhuman practices are forces and forms of violence. Overcoming violence means overcoming the root causes of such violence. Included in this is the struggle for restorative justice—healing the memories of violence, dealing with the challenge of impunity, and striving for reconciliation. How do the churches make justice their guiding value? How do we work for nonviolence in violent social, economic and political structures?
- To reflect upon religious identity and plurality. In an increasingly pluralistic world the assertion of identities—religious, ethnic, linguistic and social—has become a cause of conflict and violence between and among communities. A community's identity not only evokes loyalty but is often manipulated by religious, social and political powers and used as an instrument to pursue its ends. Even terrorism as a form of violence is committed for reasons of identity, whether patriotic, ideological, revolutionary or reactionary. Religious fanaticism, in all its forms, is threatening to divide communities and cause large-scale violence. In the face of this, how do churches witness to their faith in God who heals, reconciles and unites? How do churches work with one another and with people of other faiths to rethink the realities of their denominational presence and exclusivist claims?

FOR FURTHER STUDY:

An extensive educational guide on the themes of the Decade to Overcome Violence can be downloaded from the World Council of Churches website, www.wcc-coe.org/dov.nsf.

GOALS OF THE DECADE

In order to move peace-building from the periphery to the centre of the life and witness of the church and to build stronger alliances and understanding among churches, networks, and movements which are working toward a culture of peace, the goals of the Decade to Overcome Violence are:

- Addressing holistically the wide varieties of violence, both direct and structural, in homes, communities, and in international arenas, and learning from the local and regional analyses of violence and ways to overcome violence.
- Challenging the churches to overcome the spirit, logic and practice of violence; to relinquish any theological justification of violence, and to affirm anew the spirituality of reconciliation and active non-violence.
- Creating a new understanding of security in terms of co-operation and community, instead of in term of domination and competition.
- Learning from the spirituality and resources for peace building of other faiths, to work with communities of other faiths in the pursuit of peace, and to challenge the churches to reflect on the misuse of religious and ethnic identities in pluralistic societies.
- Challenging the growing militarization of our world, especially the proliferation of small arms and light weapons.

RESPONSE OF THE ANGLICAN CHURCH OF CANADA TO QUESTIONS POSED BY THE WCC ON THE DECADE TO OVERCOME VIOLENCE. OCTOBER 2000.

INTRODUCTION

1. The theme of “overcoming violence” has much to offer us in our present context. Our initial reaction was, “Oh no, we cannot do another program!” But as we talked, we moved from apathy to enthusiasm.
2. We see this as an overarching theme, an umbrella under which we can reframe a lot of the work we are currently doing. We also note that our current policy base can support the various sub-themes or issues we need to address.
3. We believe that overcoming violence has to begin with repentance and humility, an acknowledgment of endemic violence in our society at all levels. But the statement, “we will overcome,” inspires us to positive, sustained action.

WHAT ISSUES DO WE NEED TO ADDRESS?

4. The primary issue we will be addressing for the next decade (at least) in our church and in Canadian society is the shameful legacy arising from the violent treatment of aboriginal peoples by the government of Canada and the historic mission churches.
5. Violence against creation has many forms in our culture, e.g. poor management of our natural resources such as fish stocks, lumber, mining, water, etc. e.g. pollution of soil, air, water, e.g. biotechnology in all its many aspects.
6. Domestic violence happens throughout our society, with women and children being the victims in most cases.
7. Poverty is a form of economic violence, and arises for us from the globalization of capitalism which is widening the gap between rich and poor, as well as causing the deterioration of our social

programs throughout Canada. We feel the loss of our power as citizens to determine our own future. Our work in opposing the MAI (Multilateral Agreement on Investments) and the WTO (World Trade Organization) falls into this category.

8. The violence of exclusion is evident in our church and in our society. We struggle against racism, sexism, homophobia, etc. Symptoms of exclusion include sexual harassment and assault against women, gay-bashing,” high suicide rates in aboriginal communities, etc.
9. We note with anxiety, signs in Canada of a “culture of violence” which is manifest in the entertainment media (TV, movies, music), in sports, in bullying behaviour among school children, etc.

WHAT DO WE HAVE TO OFFER?

10. Our main offering will be our painful struggle to foster healing and reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in our church and in Canadian society as a whole. In the face of crippling litigation, we are hoping to develop alternative processes of dispute resolution and models of restorative justice. To the extent that these work for us, we may have good models to share.
11. We are engaged in difficult reflections about our mission history, about the devastating consequences of colonialism coupled with insensitive cross-cultural mission practices in Canada. We will share our thoughts and learnings, which are firmly based in our current reality. We will be able to witness to the cost of violence to the aggressor as well as to the victim.
12. Our three-year Canadian Ecumenical Jubilee Initiative is well grounded in local congregations, parishes and communities. This work gives us a strong point of departure for launching a Decade to Overcome Violence, as well as many opportunities to build on what is already established as an excellent ecumenical initiative.
13. Because our country is relatively peaceful, i.e. not at war, we can offer a safe haven for meetings and discussions between groups embroiled in violent conflicts in other parts of the world.
14. We suggest the Decade to Overcome Violence Everywhere (DOVE) as a fitting name and acronym.

WHAT DO WE HOPE WILL BE ACHIEVED?

We hope to develop a variety of models for healing and reconciliation, for restorative justice, for conflict resolution between groups. We hope to learn from each other, worldwide, as we struggle in our own local contexts, and share what works and what doesn't.

We hope to change hearts, minds and behaviours by raising awareness of different forms of violence. Our goal is greater respect for ourselves, in all our diversity, as children of God, and greater respect for the whole of God's creation.

We hope for a heightened awareness of the interconnectedness between peace and justice issues and economic issues, which in turn will help us to challenge the globalization of capitalism and the diminishing ability of nation states to control macroeconomic forces. We hope to begin to understand how to create and sustain life-giving, healthy communities.



The Peace and Nonviolence Working Group
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