

## **To all Fellow Christians: They shall not learn war anymore**

Voices from Schorndorf

### **Introduction**

The “War against Terror” which was declared after 11 September 2001 cannot be won because war itself is terror and therefore will only give rise to further terror. Six years on we live in a world where killing and being killed have become daily events and human life is worth less and less. There is a worrying trend towards attempting to resolve every kind of conflict by force.

### **The Role of Christendom**

As Christians we acknowledge that since the days of Emperor Constantine oppression and military force have been utilised by Christians. The present economic and military superiority of the industrialised West is identified by the rest of the world with Christianity. NATO is perceived as an aggressive Christian force which intervenes all over the world and wages war to secure its own interests. Meanwhile the radical wing of the world’s second largest religion, Islam, is counter-attacking the “godless West” with terrible new methods of warfare such as suicide attacks.

### **The Mission of the Christian Church**

The message of the Old and New Testament can be summarized as follows: God has chosen the people of Israel, Jesus of Nazareth and the Christian Church to be a blessing for the world. The unstoppable rise of the Christian Church as an unarmed, non-governmental organisation occurred because its message of the dignity and rights of every human being convinced more and more people. Jesus taught that God loves even godless people, and that evil cannot be overcome by evil. He gave his life for this principle. We ask in the Lord’s Prayer for God’s Kingdom to come, and for our sins to be forgiven as we are prepared to forgive those who sin against us.

Have we forgotten that we ourselves need to be delivered from evil?

### **Leaving the Wrong Path**

The false path of Christendom and the distortion of the Gospel become strikingly evident when Christians themselves organise or are drawn into a murderous struggle against fellow human beings and threaten to destroy mankind.

Can war ever be just? Can the killing of other human beings ever be right?

It is possible to change our ways. Many Christians are endeavouring to eliminate the culture of hate and fear by non-violent means. Moreover many people of other faiths as well as non-governmental organisations worldwide have recognised that our present ways cannot continue. They are committed to giving desperate people new hope and the courage to face life. Yet despite these efforts the danger for mankind keeps on growing.

Why is this?

## **Overcoming Militarism**

Even at the beginning of the third millennium humanity's ancient habit of arming ourselves to fight the enemy continues undiminished and with ever more deadly weapons. Many people cannot imagine an end to this situation. Christians should not be so defeatist.

In the peace movement during the 1980's many embraced the prophetic promise: "They shall beat their swords into ploughshares, neither shall they learn war any more." (Isaiah 2,4; Micah 4,3)

Wars are waged by human beings and can equally be abolished by us. Let us remember the appeal of the United Nations Charter after World War II "to save future generations from the scourge of war..."

Our goal is to "**Not learn war any more**".

What is required in today's world is not fearless heroism risking one's life to destroy the enemy or self sacrifice in a suicide attack. What is required is Jesus' courage, the courage of ordinary men and women who would rather die themselves than kill their fellow human beings.

The latest figures of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) show that in 2006 **US\$1204 billion** were spent worldwide on military armaments.

We demand a diversion of these funds to support civil society working in non-violent ways for peace, justice and preservation of the earth.

We raise our voices and proclaim: We have lost faith in the idea that military force inflicted on others can protect us in the long term.

We raise our voices and demand a change of direction from our own government. We expect them to commit themselves to a policy of overcoming war and to the vigorous pursuit of this goal.

## **Mobilisation for Peace**

These "Voices from Schorndorf" are offered in support of the programme of the World Council of Churches' Decade for the Overcoming of Violence 2001- 2010, which is mobilising the churches throughout the world for peace. This initiative will be concluded with the promulgation of an Ecumenical Declaration on a "Just Peace" at an international gathering in May 2011.

We want the goal of "no longer learning war" to be included in this peace declaration.

We ask "all Christians" to join these "Voices from Schorndorf", to put pressure on their governments and to support the peace programme of the World Council of Churches.

Monday, 23-07-2007: 28 Voices

This contribution comes from a prayer group meeting every Monday in Schorndorf in Baden-Württemberg, Germany to pray for the peace in the world. They call themselves "Ökumenisches Montagsgebet für den Frieden in der Welt".