

## What Are You Going to Do?

Reflecting on the issues raised in this study guide is the first step of a longer journey. We hope that all the things you have talked about have given you some insights and some further questions, a determination not to be satisfied with the way things are and a recognition that in Christian faith we have immense resources. Can we work for change in ourselves, in our churches and in society?

### *Focusing and Looking Deeper*

In a small booklet like this, we have not been able to mention all the issues around overcoming violence and seeking reconciliation and peace. In order for our actions to be effective, we need to be focused. Try to identify one or two particular issues that you have seen as important. These may be local problems or large global issues. For example, some congregations have taken up the issue of violence on the streets of their local community; others have involved themselves in campaigns to write off the international debts of the economically poorest nations. Whatever you choose, you need to look deeper into the issue, consider the underlying problems and learn from the way other people have responded elsewhere.

### *Know What You Want to Do*

We want to overcome violence. Telling people, for example, to stop abusing children or to end an ethnic conflict is not enough. Violence in most cases is a way of dealing with underlying problems. We have to think through how we can respond to particular problems in non-violent ways and how we can develop just solutions to remove or reduce the causes of violence. We need to be able to suggest positive alternatives to violence and engage both sides in new ways of relating. The amount of violence in the world can overwhelm us and make us believe that there is nothing we can do. By choosing something, however small, where we feel we can make a difference effectively, we start a process of change. Don't worry about all the things you can't do to overcome violence. Start with something you can achieve!

## *Involve More People*

Who else could you involve in your congregation? Many congregations have groups for women and for youth that have energy and imagination. Is there a bible study group that could look more deeply into reconciliation? How does the pastoral care in your congregation support victims of violence? Is there safe space for them to talk about their suffering and those who inflict it? Could you involve other congregations locally and those from other denominations as well as your own? What campaigns, groups and organizations around issues of violence already exist in your locality and nation? How can you link up with them?

## *Prayer*

Prayer is dangerous! If we expect God to change things without changing us, we will be disappointed. As we have found in the earlier pages of this study guide, we are part of the problem of violence and not just spectators. In praying, we open ourselves up, as individuals and churches, to God. The spiritual discipline of prayer will enable us to live lives as individuals and congregations that promote reconciliation and peace. This will also involve changing our ways of relating to others – forgiving and being forgiven. Prayer is a powerful means of being in solidarity with the victims of violence.

## *Don't Keep Your Ideas and Plans to Yourself*

Let other people know what you have learnt and what you intend to do. The Decade to Overcome Violence is an initiative of the churches, so we need to encourage one another by sharing our visions and our activities. Let your national church and your council of churches know how you are getting involved in the Decade. Contact the World Council of Churches, too.

*"It isn't enough to talk about peace. One must believe in it. And it isn't enough to believe in it. One must work at it."* (Eleanor Roosevelt)

## Resources on Overcoming Violence

- 📖 *He Came Singing Peace: Songs to Overcome Violence*  
Compiled and published by the New Zealand Hymnbook Trust, April 2002. Available in English.  
Order from: [jsmse@paradise.net.nz](mailto:jsmse@paradise.net.nz), or Tel: +46 644 902 8855.
- 📖 *Overcoming Violence: Teachers' Manuals for Nursery/Kindergarten 3–6, Middle Elementary 9–10, Older Elementary 10–12*  
Published by the National Council of Churches in the Philippines, 2002. Available in English.  
Order from: [nccp@phil.gn.apc.org](mailto:nccp@phil.gn.apc.org), or Tel: +63 2 928 8636.
- 📖 *Learning Peace*  
Published by Swiss Ecumenical Peace Programme, 2001.  
Available in German and French.  
Order from: [rgeiser@access.ch](mailto:rgeiser@access.ch), or Tel: +41 62 844 3907.
- 📖 *Youth Peace Training Manual*  
Published by the All Africa Conference of Churches, 1999.  
Available in English.  
Order from: [infodesk@aacc-ceta.org](mailto:infodesk@aacc-ceta.org), or Tel: +254 2 444 1338.
- 📖 *Overcoming Violence: The Challenges to the Churches in All Places*  
by Margot Kässmann, 2nd revised printing 2000.  
Available in English and German.  
Order from: [publications@wcc-coe.org](mailto:publications@wcc-coe.org), or Tel: +41 22 791 6111.

Visit the DOV website: [www.wcc-coe.org/dov](http://www.wcc-coe.org/dov)

You will find stories and photos about people and groups around the world on what they are doing to overcome violence. You will find links to a growing list of DOV-related websites of other local, national and international peace movements. And there is a calendar of DOV-related events.

If you have any events, stories, courses and books related to DOV you would like to share with others, please send us an e-mail:  
[dov@wcc-coe.org](mailto:dov@wcc-coe.org)