

Friends United Meeting  
General Board

June 17, 2001

**"We set our feet on the way of the cross."**

worship of commitment to the

Decade to Overcome Violence —  
Churches Seeking Reconciliation and Peace  
(2001-2010)



## Introduction

This morning's worship is a slightly adapted version of the worship service that launched the Decade to Overcome Violence. That world-wide launch, held on February 4, 2001 in the Gedächtniskirche of Berlin, Germany, is being echoed by churches all over the world who are using these worship materials in their own acts of commitment to the Decade. Today, as we worship together in repentance, intercession and commitment, you are invited to pray for God's guidance for Friends United Meeting as we engage with Christians in all places in a mission of reconciliation and peace.

## Musical preparation

### Prelude

*Song for Peace, by Nestor de Hollanda Cavalcanti, performed by Trio Aquarius with Juliana Franco, soprano. From the chamber ballet "Peace to the City — a song for peace", composed and choreographed in Rio de Janeiro, as a contribution to the WCC Decade to Overcome Violence.*

### Silence

### Greeting (sit)

Blessed is our God now and for ever and unto the ages of ages.

**Amen.**

### Lament (sit)

A voice is heard in Ramah, lamentation and bitter weeping. Rachel is weeping for her children; she refuses to be comforted for her children, because they are no more. (Jer 31:15)



*Musical lament*

**Ososo**

*Geonyong Lee, Korea*

Even when I cry out, "Violence!" I am not answered; I call aloud, but there is no justice. (Job 19:7)

*Musical lament*

Remember this, O Lord, how the enemy scoffs, and an impious people reviles your name. Do not deliver the soul of your dove to the wild animals; do not forget the life of your poor forever. Have regard for your covenant, for the dark places of the land are full of the haunts of violence. Do not let the downtrodden be put to shame; let the poor and needy praise your name. Rise up, O God, plead your cause; remember how the impious scoff at you all day long. (Ps 74:18-22)

*Musical lament*

Remember this, O Lord,  
**Remember this, O Lord,**

Do not let the downtrodden be put to shame.  
**Do not let the downtrodden be put to shame.**

Rise up, O God.  
**Rise up, O God.**

**Reading from the Book of Acts 7:54-8:1** *(sit)*

When they heard these things, they became enraged and gnashed their teeth at Stephen. But being filled with the Holy Spirit, he gazed into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. "Look," he said, "I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!" But they covered their ears, and with a loud shout all rushed together against him. Then they dragged him out of the city and began to stone him; and the witnesses laid their coats at the feet of a young man named Saul. While they were stoning Stephen, he prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Then he knelt down and cried out in a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." When he had said this, he died. And Saul approved of their killing him.



**Confession** *(sit)*

Saul, later St. Paul the Apostle was among those who executed Stephen, the first Christian martyr. Saul was convinced that he was doing a good and holy thing as he watched the killing. Christians have a painful history of either participating in or passively supporting violence for the best of reasons. Victims and the oppressed can become in their turn oppressors. At times we resort to

aggression, violence and intolerance. At times we are the ones who cause pain in others. At times we watch and approve. Brothers and sisters in Christ, we will not overcome violence until we acknowledge the violence that is within us. Few of us are free from its grasp.

We take a moment to name this violence silently.

### **Song** *(sit)*

#### **O Lord Hear My Prayer**

*Taize, France*

### **Forgiveness** *(sit)*

*Two churches, one in Coventry, England, and the Gedächtniskirche in Berlin were bombed in World War II. In a remarkable gesture of reconciliation the people of Germany helped rebuild Coventry Cathedral and to this day a prayer is said in both places Fridays at noon. The response is a prayer of Jesus, "Father forgive." We will respond with this prayer in many different languages.*

The hatred which divides nation from nation, ethnic group from ethnic group, class from class,

**Vater, vergib**

The covetous desires of people and nations to possess what is not their own,

**Father, forgive**

The greed which exploits the work of human hands and lays waste the earth,

**Père pardonne**

Our envy of the welfare and happiness of others,

**Padre, pardónalos**

Our indifference to the plight of the imprisoned, the homeless, the refugees,

**Aberdgi yongserhasoser** (Korean)

The lust which dishonors the bodies of men, women and children,

**Baba dariji** (Yoruban)

The pride which leads us to trust in ourselves and not in God.

**Pater, afes** (Greek)

Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.



Hear the good news.  
Christ is our peace.  
He has united those who were separated.  
He has broken down the wall of hostility.  
Through his death he has reconciled us with God in one  
body.  
He has proclaimed peace to those, who were far away,  
and to those who were near. (Eph. 2:14-17)  
How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the  
messenger  
who announces peace, who brings good news,  
who announces salvation  
who says to Zion, "Your God reigns!" (Is. 52:7)

**Song** *(sit)*

**Confitemini Domino**

*Taize, France*

**Reading from the Gospel of Matthew 5:43-48**  
*(sit)*

[Jesus said,] "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven; for he makes his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet only your brothers and sisters, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect."

**Intercession** *(sit)*

*You are invited to offer prayers, out loud or silently — for victims and perpetrators of violence, for situations of violence, and for your enemies. We will sing the Kyrie response at the beginning and at three points during the time of prayer.*

*Dinah Reindorf, Ghana*

**Lord's prayer** *(stand)*

**Vision of peace** *(sit)*

In unison with the experiences of the victims of violence, with the way of Jesus Christ and with the witness of our Fathers and Mothers in the faith, we are

joined together, reconciled with one another and encouraged by one another through the cross of Christ.

Together with the ecumenical community of churches we commit ourselves to work for a culture of non-violence and to overcome the violence we encounter in our lives.

Together we are carried forward by the vision of the one Church, of the people of God on the way, challenging all separations of race, gender, age or culture and striving for justice, peace and the integrity of creation.

Enough children have suffered violence. We are longing for the day, when the prophesy of Micah will come true, when "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."

The cross of Christ is the refuge of all who are afflicted and hurting, the source of reconciliation and the place where we are bound together in peace. The power of the cross will set limits to violence and transform it.

We add our voice to the voices of all Christians of every time and place in the world-wide ecumenical movement. We set our feet on the way of the cross, and we pray for the strength to walk on it.



## **Affirmation** *(sit)*

*In unison, alternating sides of the room.*

The cross is the way of the lost.  
The cross is the staff of the lame.

The cross is the guide of the blind.  
The cross is the strength of the weak.

The cross is the hope of the hopeless.  
The cross is the freedom of the slaves.

The cross is the water of the seeds.  
The cross is the consolation of the bonded laborers.

The cross is the source of those who seek water.  
The cross is the cloth of the naked.

The cross is the healing of the broken.  
The cross is the peace of the church.

*(St. Yared, Ethiopia, 10<sup>th</sup> century)*



**Hymn** *(stand)*

**Make Me a Channel of Your Peace**

*The Prayer of St Francis*

**Commitment** *(stand)*

Friends of Christ, you are invited to make your own commitment to reconciliation. What are the next steps to which God calls you to make peace? While we sing, you may express your commitment either silently or aloud. You may then come forward to receive a Liberian cross, a bullet that has been transformed into the shape of a cross, a vehicle of violence remade into a sign of salvation. Let this cross travel with you as a reminder of God's claim upon you during this decade.

Silence

**Dona Nobis Pacem Domine**

*Taize, France*

**Send Out Your Light (Ps 43:3)**

*Iona Community, Scotland*

## Laudate Omnes Gentes

Taize, France

## Liberian crosses of peace

### **Benediction** (*stand*)

May the God of love, who loves us freely,  
strengthen us in our love for others.  
May Jesus Christ, who gave his life for us,  
grant us grace to give our lives for others.  
May the Spirit, who dwells in us,  
empower us to live for others.

**Amen**

### **Blessing** (*stand*)

All this is from God, who  
reconciled us to himself  
through Jesus Christ, and gave  
us the ministry of  
reconciliation. (2 Cor 5:18)  
Therefore, go in peace, and  
greet one another in love.



The cross that you will receive this morning was forged from a spent cartridge used in the Liberian civil war. Former combatants, such as George Kollie and his brother-in-law George Togba (pictured left), have declared that they are no longer prepared to carry arms, but that they will transform instruments of death into symbols of peace. A group of ten people now use this craftsmanship

as a way of coming to terms with the past and working for a non-violent future in Liberia. Togba, a former military intelligence officer in the defunct National Patriotic Front of Liberia, traveled to Berlin for the worldwide launch of the Decade to Overcome Violence, to share his story and distribute his crosses in a worship service (pictured right). As you carry this symbol with you, allow it to become a tangible reminder of how the cross of Jesus Christ has overcome violence, and pray that you too may become an instrument of His peace.



*Note: because these were once live cartridges, it is not recommended to use them as candle holders.*