



Welcome to DOV



Give Peace A Hand

A Congregational Resource
for the
Decade to Overcome Violence:
Churches Seeking Reconciliation and Peace



NATIONAL
COUNCIL OF
CHURCHES IN
AUSTRALIA

DOV in Australia





Welcome to DOV

despite the suffering and trauma expressed
within the stories of the Stolen Children,
the responses of Aboriginal people
have been extraordinarily generous.
This is a time when we need that spirit of generosity.
It is a time to feel the connections of a shared past.
It is a time to guard against things that fragment us.
And it is a time to cherish those things which bring us together
- those things which have helped us to survive,
- those things that will create a better future for us all.
Lowitja O'Donaghue
(Patron, DOV in Australia)

Give Peace a Hand is not a new slogan for Australia. In 2001 the Refugee Sunday National Poster Competition had this as its theme, and as a symbol it is intimately connected both with the tens of thousands of years of Aboriginal spirituality in this land and with the continuing contemporary journey towards reconciliation with the indigenous peoples of Australia.

Give Peace a Hand as a resource for congregations is therefore intended as a practical aid to enhance existing Australian Christian efforts for reconciliation and peace, setting these in the global context of the ecumenical Decade to Overcome Violence as initiated by the World Council of Churches in 2001. For together we seek to respond more joyfully and positively to the gift of God who reconciles us together in one Body through the Cross.



*(Unless otherwise noted, **Give Peace a Hand** is based on the congregational resource prepared and written by Colleen Geyer for Queensland Churches Together in 2002, as edited and developed by Jon Inkpin for the NCCA. It is intended to be used and copied as appropriate and is also available for download from the NCCA website at www.ncca.org.au/dov. The Decade to Overcome Violence logo is used by permission of the World Council of Churches, and is warmly encouraged to be used by others with acknowledgment)*

DOV in Australia





Welcome to DOV



How to use this resource

- ▶ **Read** the background information in this section, and familiarise yourself with the contents of the resource.
- ▶ **Consider** which sections will be relevant to your congregational context.
- ▶ **Consult** with the clergy and people who are also interested in the Decade to Overcome Violence to decide how to use the resource in your congregation.
- ▶ **Implement** your plan in an appropriate way within your congregation.





Welcome to DOV

***All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ,
and has given us the ministry of reconciliation 2 Cor 5.18***

To be peacemakers and people who work towards overcoming violence is not easy. It requires courage and commitment to just living and mutual understanding between all people. Yet this is what is required of us as followers of Christ, who when he lived on this planet in human form, exemplified in his life a dedication to justice and compassion, and to love and respect for all. In our present world, peace may appear a distant possibility. Confronted daily by new and continuing arenas of conflict, it seems the global situation has become one of violence, rather than one of peace. Within this context, it can be difficult to recognize the presence of God.

Instigated at the end of the 20th century, the World Council of Churches Decade to Overcome Violence was to reflect on what had been the most violent century in modern history, and to seek ways to overcome violence and build peace. However the events of 2001 and 2002 have left us wondering if we are now looking *towards* the most violent century in the world's history.

This resource has hence been developed to aid congregations and faith communities to explore the opportunities to be agents of peace and compassion in the Decade to Overcome Violence.

✚ The aims of the resource are to -

- Make congregations and people aware of the Decade to Overcome Violence, and the possibilities for local action that work towards overcoming violence and promoting peace.
- Encourage congregations and people to work within their local community with programs, projects etc which are relevant to the concerns that exist in the community.
- Encourage congregations and people to be aware of global issues concerning violence and the promotion of peace, and to consider how they can contribute to programs and projects that seek positive change.
- Promote awareness of the work of Christian peace and justice-making agencies, such as Christian World Service and the related programs which it promotes - *force ten*, Christmas Bowl Appeal, Drop the Debt program, Refugee and Displaced Persons etc.

✚ The resource is based on the beliefs that -

- God is present in the world and in creation.
- God's people and church are a part of the community in which they live.
- God's people, following the gospel example of the life of Jesus, commit themselves to justice for all people and for creation.

✚ The resource consists of the following sections -

- Welcome - What *is* DOV? (background to the Ecumenical Decade to Overcome Violence)
- Biblical Reflections
- Taking Action as a Group
- Kids Connexion
- Prayer and Worship Resources
- Further Ideas and Resources
- How to contact State Ecumenical Bodies for more assistance

Let us work together to make a difference - overcoming violence with ways of peace.

DOV in Australia





Welcome to DOV

World Council of Churches Initiative



The Decade to Overcome Violence (2001-2010) stems from the World Council of Churches' (WCC) passionate engagement with the issues of justice, peace and the integrity of creation, while relentlessly exploring the purpose of Christian unity in a broken world.

In the closing hours of the WCC meeting in Harare, Zimbabwe, Fernando Enns, a pastor from the Mennonite Church in Germany, called on the assembly to declare the period from 2001-2010 as a Decade to

Overcome Violence. Fernando's proposal was the fruit of a series of discussions in Germany between WCC Assembly delegates and among the historic peace churches, such as the Mennonites, the Society of Friends (Quakers) and the Church of the Brethren.

The WCC committed themselves to a pilgrimage of peace at the end of the most violent century in human history. The Assembly called the churches, ecumenical organizations and all people of good will, to work together to overcome violence through peace and justice.

The WCC encourages churches and communities to address issues of violence in their own contexts and to work together for peace, justice and reconciliation in the Decade to Overcome Violence. This period (2001-2010) runs parallel to the United Nations Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence for the Children of the World.

For more information on the Ecumenical Decade to Overcome Violence, visit the World Council of Churches website, www2.wcc.coe.org/dov



Seek peace and pursue it... Psalm 34:14

DOV in Australia





Welcome to DOV

What is peace?

Peace is more than simply the absence of war or violence.

Peace also involves co-operation and non-violent social change, aimed at creating more equitable and just structures in the communities and societies in which we live.

To create peace, we all need to work together. That's what the Decade to Overcome Violence is all about - working in our churches and in our communities in order to promote new ways of living - as part of the creation of God.

What is violence?

Violence is often legitimised by the prevailing norms, values, belief systems, cultures and structures of relationships in our societies.

The World Council of Churches has identified the following areas of violence that need to be addressed - we could probably add more -

- Violence between nations
- Violence within nations
- Violence in local communities
- Violence within the home and family
- Violence within the church
- Sexual violence
- Socio-economic violence
- Violence as a result of economic and political blockades
- Violence among youth
- Violence associated with religious and cultural practices
- Violence within systems



"We are convinced: A clear witness to peace and nonviolence grounded in justice is what the world needs today from all churches together... As Christians, we are motivated and encouraged by the Gospel message of the peace of Christ and the rich biblical tradition of peace with justice... We want to engage in constructive efforts to build a culture of peace.
(Message from the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches, Geneva 1999)

DOV in Australia

