

## **World Evangelical Alliance & World Council of Churches**

**International and Ecumenical News (WEA & WCC April-May 2013 )**

**First Binding Arms Trade Treaty.** The world's first Arms Trade Treaty, adopted on 2 April, and voted by 155 countries, is “a milestone in efforts to bring commerce in deadly weapons under much-needed controls,” according to the general secretary of the *World Council of Churches* .

“Churches in all regions share in the suffering caused by armed violence, [and] churches and organizations in more than forty countries joined the Ecumenical Campaign for a Strong and Effective Arms Trade Treaty led by the WCC (since 2011).” general secretary Tveit noted. “We can all now give thanks that national authorities responsible for public safety and well-being have finally adopted binding regulations for the global arms trade.”...

The campaign focused on the ways that the new treaty can help to save lives and protect communities. Campaigners made repeated contacts with governments in their countries in parallel with ecumenical lobbying in treaty meetings at United Nations sessions in New York and Geneva.

“From Syria to Democratic Republic of Congo, from Sudan to Colombia, our prayers will continue for people afflicted by violence and injustice,” Dr Olav Fykse Tveit said. “With them, we all need weapons to be controlled, given up and melted down into useful implements.”

The *World Evangelical Alliance* has also commended the UN for Passing the Global Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) to regulate the international multi-billion dollar trade in conventional arms. Hopes for Significant Reduction of the Illicit Arms Trade have been expressed by Geoff Tunnicliffe, Secretary General of the WEA (Apr 3, 20130).

**WEA Bible Translation Review** In the light of various controversies about Bible translation, Wycliffe Global Alliance and SIL International approached the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA) in March 2012 to independently review their best practice in the translation of "God the Father" and the "Son of God."...The Panel's mandate was therefore very focused, excluding intense wider debates about contextualization, for example.

The resulting 33-page report includes ten recommendations to Wycliffe and SIL: amongst others, that translators need to consider four primary contexts if the message of the Bible is to be accurately and clearly communicated to an intended audience today: the contexts of the Hebrew Scriptures, the New Testament, the translator's own culture, and that of the intended audience.

The WEA Panel recommends e.g. that when the words for “father” and “son” refer to God the Father and to the Son of God, these words always be translated with the most directly equivalent familial words within the given linguistic and cultural context of the recipients. Because of the significant potential for misunderstanding of the words for “father” and “son” when applied to God... the Panel recommends that translators consider the addition of qualifying words and/or phrases ...to the directly-translated words for “father” and “son,” in order to avoid misunderstanding.

The WEA also challenges Wycliffe and SIL to seek to engage other mission agencies in the global missiological issues raised by the report's recommendations. Wycliffe and SIL agreed to abide by any recommendations the Panel made. (The full report can be seen at the WEA web-site).

**World Week for Peace in Palestine Israel** (Sept 22, 2013 12:00 AM to Sept 28, 2013 11:55 PM) During the week following the International Day of Prayer for Peace, church organizations, congregations, and people of faith are encouraged to make a common witness by participating in worship services, educational events, and acts of advocacy in support a just peace for Israelis and

Palestinians: to "Pray, educate, and advocate for justice in Palestine".

The Palestine Israel Ecumenical Forum (PIEF) of the World Council of Churches invites member churches, faith-based communities, and civil society organizations to join together in 2013 for a week of advocacy and action in support of an end to the illegal occupation of Palestine and a just peace for all in Palestine and Israel. Congregations and individuals around the globe who share the hope of justice will unite during the week to take peaceful actions, and to create a common international public witness. The theme in 2013 is: "Jerusalem, the city of justice and peace."(WCC)

### **WEA Peace & Reconciliation Initiative Summer Institute for Reconciliation (April 19, 2013)**

The Duke Summer Institute, hosted by the Duke Divinity School Center for Reconciliation, will be held from May 27th to June 1st, 2013. This unique five-day intensive Institute, hosted by WEA Peace and Reconciliation Initiative partner the Duke Divinity School Center for Reconciliation, serves to nourish, renew, and deepen the capacities of Christian leaders in the ministry of reconciliation, justice, and peace-building through creating a diverse learning community that engages the best in theological scholarship and practical wisdom for ministry. This year's faculty includes Andrew Marin, Ellen Davis, John Perkins, Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove, Cheryl Sanders, Curtiss DeYoung, and Mary Nelson.

Past participants have included leaders of faith communities and faith-based organizations from more than 40 USA states, 25 countries, and 20 denominations. Participants bring their own rich and diverse experiences to the Institute and receive shared inspiration, transformative learning, and revitalization in their ministries of reconciliation through in-depth teaching, prayer and worship, shared meals, and opportunity to reflect on their own vocation and ministry context.

Applications will be accepted through April 30; scholarships are available

**Mining and Extraction issues at World Social Forum.** At the recent *World Social Forum*, held in Tunis, Tunisia, ecumenical voices in the World Council of Churches (WCC) workshop there, "From Eco-debt to Eco-justice: Mining, reparations and defending the global commons", warned of the grave consequences of extraction of natural resources and mining, which they say generate tremendous amounts of social and ecological debt.

Nicolas Sersiron from the Committee for the Abolition of Third World Debt in France declared "The debt is forcing countries in the South, and more recently and increasingly in the North, to pursue an ecologically destructive development path based on the extraction and exploitation of natural resources," he said. Brazilian activist Fr. Dario Bossi, who works for *Justiça nos Trilhos* (Justice on the Rails) pointed out that people in resource rich communities are made to believe that mining is the only way to survive ... "Despite that mining brings about terrible ecological costs in deforestation, contamination of water sources, air pollution and climate change, it continues to take place" he said, noting that states have increasingly failed to protect the rights of people and nature.

Carmencita Karagdag, coordinator of the Peace for Life network, highlighted the criminalization of people's movements protecting ecology in the Philippines. "In the last two years alone, nine ecological defenders, including indigenous leaders and church workers, have been killed for their resistance against large-scale mining," said Karagdag. The WCC's consultant Athena Peralta of the Poverty, Wealth and Ecology project spoke of socio-economic inequalities and militarisation of mining zones. "Both mining and extractive activities, accompanied by heightened militarism and myriad ecological consequences have a disproportionately heavy cost on people, especially on women in the communities".

The participants called on churches to deepen community organization, research and engage in

advocacy on issues related to mining in their countries and regions. The discussions also stressed that reparations for ecological debt for mining cannot be reduced to monetary compensation, as it often involves human right violations.

As a joint action, the assembly agreed to hold a *Global Day of Action* against mining and extractivism, tentatively set on 19 October. The new paradigm invites Christians “to participate in God’s mission” of shalom, writes Metropolitan Geevarghese Coorilos, in ways that reorient mission activities to become “mission from the margins,” uniting in solidarity and hospitality with those whose lives are jeopardized by poverty, illness and violence. (WCC)

### **Prayer Requests for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Year since Japan's Earthquake and Nuclear Disaster:**

After noting increased needs for emotional and spiritual care for survivors, widening disparity among people in temporary homes, decreasing numbers of volunteers and decreases in funding, the Japan Evangelical Alliance asks for additional support and prayer. Prayer Requests include:

- (1) That Christ’s love and hope will touch those affected people who are suffering from 3.11 Disaster. Also many care-givers and disaster chaplains will be trained and will protect relief workers from burn-outs.
- (2) For churches, relief organizations and regional networks to be able to continue relief ministries – especially for provision of staff and funds, as well as establishing sustainable framework for those relief ministries.
- (3) For Japanese Christians and churches to continue to pray for and engage in recovery of churches and people’s lives in the disaster stricken Tohoku area, especially for churches in Fukushima that are struggling with radioactive contamination.
- (4) For harmonious collaboration among different church groups and organizations, as well as unity among existing churches and new churches to reach out and witness Christ’s love to their local communities.
- (5) For churches in Japan outside of devastated areas to reconsider their engagement to local communities as they prepare for the next disaster, so that they would be ready to share Christ’s love at the time of disaster, which in turn paves the way for a revival across the nation of Japan.

(WEA)

**Building an interfaith community.** "What can we, as people of faith, do to respond and to overcome the pressing challenges of our time, such as violence and conflict, and build together mutually accountable societies based on respect and cooperation?"

This is the question which 30 young Christians, Muslims and Jews from around the world are to explore, in themselves an interfaith community, during a summer seminar at the WCC's Ecumenical Institute in Bossey, Switzerland, 12-30.08.2013.

The structure of the programme includes spiritual exposure and sharing reflection on sacred scriptures as well as lectures and workshops on thematic issues. Applications are invited and participants should be between 18-35 years of age, well grounded in their own faiths and be positioned to influence the thinking of members of their wider faith communities after completion of the summer course. (WCC)