Striving for Peace

Kingston, Jamaica, was the host city for the World Council of Churches’ (WCC) International Ecumenical Peace Convocation in May. The theme was “Glory to God and peace on earth”. It was the culmination of the WCC’s Decade to Overcome Violence, which has sought to network and bring attention to the peacemaking initiatives of its various member churches. More than 2,000 participated.

The convocation leaders took time to recognize the work done during the decade to overcome violence, and also invited churches to “renew their commitment to nonviolence, peace and just peace,” through a variety of events including the planting of peace trees, a peace Sunday and a peace concert in Kingston.

Churches around the world joined convocation participants in prayers, special events and worship services including the use of a Caribbean prayer for peace which was translated into more than 20 languages, and singing the convocation theme song, “Glory to God, Peace on Earth,” written by Jamaican musician Grub Cooper.

A series of consultations on a variety of peace and reconciliation-related topics took place in the years prior to the convocation, which built significant momentum. One group travelled to the United States last fall to dialogue about gun violence. Another group met with Kenyans struggling with post-election violence. The Rev Dr Jayasiri Peiris, general secretary of the National Christian Council of Sri Lanka said the consultation visits represented the church striving “to be the living body of Christ”.

The International Ecumenical Peace Convocation participants heard many stories of transformative peace efforts, but also honestly studied where differences and suffering still exist. The convocation became a milestone in ecumenical deliberations on peace and justice.

*Today we pray that each one of us will be peacemakers in our world.*

You make the difference...

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