



# Church and Peace

## International Office

*Church and Peace* is a European ecumenical network made up of congregations, communities, organisations and individuals committed to active witness for peace

Wilfried Warneck left us on 10 March 2015. This man of peace, so profoundly moulded by the gospel and a faithful disciple of Jesus Christ, has completed his earthly journey, surrounded by his wife Ruth and the members of his community, the *Laurentiuskonvent*.

Two main themes ran through the whole of Wilfried Warneck's life and work: service and community. From his youth and when he was training for the ministry, he launched or accompanied an impressive number of social and community initiatives. After spending three years at Taizé, he returned to Germany to found the Laurentiuskonvent with companions of like mind. 56 years later, this ecumenical community of families and singles still exists and continues to personify the fellowship and diaconal vision that inspired its founders.

Wilfried Warneck was successively the executive secretary of organisations such as the social service agency *Förderergemeinschaft Kinder in Not* (working among homeless children), *Weltfriedensdienst* (an overseas development organization) and *Eirene* (International Christian Service for Peace). He was one of the founders of the platform for Christian peace services in Germany, the Action Committee Service for Peace (*Aktionsgemeinschaft Dienst für den Frieden*). From 1975 to 1990, he expanded and inspired the work of *Church and Peace* as its executive secretary. This is a European ecumenical network of communities from religious orders or groups of families, of parishes, peace movements, peace services and training centres founded by the historical peace churches and the International Fellowship of Reconciliation. Finally, supported by the Laurentiuskonvent, Church and Peace and friends sharing his vision, he founded in 1992 the organization "peace diaconate", known today under the new name of "acting without violence" (*gewaltfrei handeln*).

Wilfried Warneck attended the WCC assembly in Vancouver (1983), the ecumenical convocation in Seoul (1990), and the European ecumenical assemblies in Basel (1989) and Graz (1997). There he courageously represented the minority position of pacifist Christians, becoming the spokesperson of the members of Church and Peace to affirm that objecting to the use of armed force and service for peace are at the very heart of the church's witness and calling.

The life and vision of Wilfried Warneck were strongly marked by the spirituality of Taizé, the theology of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the exegesis of André Trocmé and Jean Lasserre, and Mennonite theologians. Yet the theological and practical vision expressed in his sermons and writings is very original, very personal and very nuanced.

All those who knew Wilfried Warneck will keep the memory of a prophet of modern times. He was genuinely humble, extremely discrete and of the utmost integrity. His gentleness and friendliness, even in the most heated of debates, made him an open and kindly partner in talks involving the most diverse people and their opinions. During the last few years of his life, marked by a grave illness, he amazed more than one visitor with his still lively interest in developments on the political scene and in the life of the churches and communities. But he was no less interested in the lives of his visitors themselves.

A pioneer of peace work within the churches has just left us, and an authentic witness to Jesus Christ. Our thoughts go out to his wife Ruth, who, over the decades, supported and shared his commitment with all her strength. The witness of Wilfried Warneck encourages us to pursue his vision of a church genuinely promoting community and truly committed to serving peace and the poorest of the poor.

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- Donations to Church and Peace, Volksbank Mittelhessen, IBAN: DE6951390000073619602, BIC: VBMHDE5F
- Send STERLING CHEQUE to the order of 'Church & Peace' to Gerald Drewett, 39 Postwood Green, Hertford Heath, SG13 7QJ Heath, SG13 7QJ or alternatively make transfer by BACS to sort code 08-90-78 and account 50342831 and send email notification to [gerald.drewett@ntlworld.com](mailto:gerald.drewett@ntlworld.com)
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