

Spirituality of Advocacy in Pax Christi International International Representation, Advocacy and Campaigning

1. Pax Christi International has had Special Consultative Status at the United Nations since 1979. Through its representative status with international bodies such as the United Nations, UNESCO, the European Union, the African Union, and the Council of Europe, Pax Christi International brings the experiences and concerns of its members in the Global Network to the international arena.¹ Pax Christi Member Organizations engage in advocacy appropriate to their own unique social and political context on the national level.
2. In order to promote a just and peaceful world, Pax Christi believes that it must influence those parties and individuals which have power within the current world order. Thus, as an international peace movement with members throughout the world, Pax Christi International sees international representation at certain international and regional bodies as integral compliment of its work.
3. Working through its international representation, Pax Christi believes that it can be an effective member of collaborative efforts to influence those international systems and entities in order to promote peace and justice. Pax Christi can both contribute to and benefit from the experience and expertise¹ of the relevant international and regional bodies.
4. With Member Organizations, Church related organization, ecumenical partners, and other bodies that spread its constituency widely around the world, Pax Christi International wields a high potential for effective advocacy. Guided by the faith and by the social teachings, we attempt to raise a voice in the face of grave human rights' violations and threats to peace.² We strive to constantly strengthen the capacity to respond with advocacy initiatives in situations of conflict emergencies and human rights' violations.

Spirituality of Advocacy

5. The peace spirituality behind Pax Christi International's advocacy is founded upon the preferential option for the person, the whole person, "created and loved by God." Advocacy inspired by this spirituality must, therefore, focus upon the perspective of the human person. Such advocacy urges us to accompany and serve those who suffer and are victims of selfishness and unjust structures, and at the same time, to be present where decisions are made in order to wield a transformative influence on the complex

¹ "Presence at Intergovernmental Organisations. List of International intergovernmental organisations towards which Pax Christi International engages in advocacy work." Read in 2008-0096.

² The International Secretariat prepared an advisory package entitled "Avenues for Advocacy in the U.N. Human Rights Council; A Pax Christi International Advisory Package." Ref.: 2009-0379-en-gl-HR.

issues of those injustices. This spirituality, then, invites us to build bridges between rich and poor, to overcome the borders that separate and marginalize people, to establish bonds of collaboration between those who hold decision-making power and those who can hardly make their voice heard.

6. Expressing solidarity with affected partners is a must, but that is not enough. By listening and analysing the positions of victims and partners living and working in conflict areas, the network of Pax Christi International can be mobilised for effective advocacy action in a “globalised solidarity.”
7. Advocacy is more than critically engaging decision-makers on behalf of the poor, oppressed, and other victims of violence. It is political action with, and by the marginalised executed in order to amplify their voices within the democratic framework of nation states and international governmental bodies. This necessarily involves mass mobilisation on certain issues, strengthening collective bargaining, and democratic and non-violent struggles and campaigns. The thrust is towards policies that enact a special concern for those impoverished and oppressed.
8. Spirituality for advocacy focuses on a new world-order. We are looking forward for a world governed by a new set of values. This alternative vision would be more people-centred, more ecologically respectful, more concerned for the disadvantaged, more socially just, and more spiritually enriching.
9. To start from the level of the people we are working with means, first of all, to listen to their stories and to learn from them. We can only realise what they have to teach us if we humbly accept that they have the knowledge of the issues affecting them, while we arrive as marginally informed outsiders. It is this act of humility that allows us to advocate from the perspective of victims and the poor, the only perspective that makes our work credible in the eyes of those we want to influence.
10. Our advocacy is grounded upon fundamental ethical convictions; it is a necessary element of the search for justice and peace. These convictions arise at two levels: one of foundational moral principles (solidarity, economic and social justice) and the other of juridical principles (national laws, international norms and standards).
11. Listening to the victims of violence is the starting point of our methodology. The starting point of our advocacy is God, our desire to love and serve God. Our goal is to build a just society, based on gospel values. We hold the conviction that God is the beginning of our advocacy, and also the end, and is with us every step of the way.

Advocacy in a Globalised World

12. The world today is characterised by different actors, which operate beyond the boundaries of nation states: transnational corporations, international media, and

international political and judicial organisations. Also, events or realities which may begin in one political context frequently have implications well beyond the borders of the arena in which they originally occurred: financial crises, global warming, energy crises, refugee flows, and environmental pollution.

13. With this inevitable globalization, the international community and its specialised agencies such as the United Nations are going through a major transformation. The UN Security Council has needed to be broadened and restructured. The UN Peace Building Commission has been created. The UN Human Rights Council has doubled its budget and created about 315 new positions. At the same time, states have created new styles of working and regional groupings of countries have been formed, such as the European Union, the Organisation of Islamic Countries and others. With 3,051 NGOs accredited with the United Nations³ and 407 NGOs accredited with the Council of Europe, NGOs need to create a strong collaboration among themselves, thematic groupings (clusters), and common action in order to be effective and get results in the vast world of intergovernmental bodies.
14. Amidst globalization and ever-expanding intergovernmental systems, advocacy must be integrated into our strategic action. Indeed, our exposure to those suffering through violence and poverty calls not only for a specific response of aid, but also for interventions to denounce unfair structures that cause of human suffering.
15. Along with economic globalisation, we are simultaneously witnessing what we call a “globalisation from below,” a crucial concept for us who “network from below” for justice and peace. Technological advances such as the Internet allow international people’s movements and solidarity organisations to exchange information and organise international advocacy campaigns in conjunction with other multilateral players. Globalisation cannot be wished away. Despite the many negative features connected with it, there are also new opportunities for those who work towards the “globalisation of solidarity” (Pope John-Paul II). Cooperative globalisation, rather than globalisation built on competition, is therefore integral to any networking for justice and peace. Under this model, networks stimulate cooperation without neglecting the autonomy and self-determination of individual groups.
16. Traditionally, in times of peace at least, only diplomats conducted international politics. Economic growth, democratisation in the west, the increasing importance of issues such as human rights, disarmament, and development have all helped broaden the actors of international relations from just the professional diplomat to a wider range of actors: non-diplomatic civil servants, non-state lobby groups, development aid groups, and other NGOs. This ‘new diplomacy,’ modelled on values rather than state sovereignty, works through coalitions – or networks – of state and non-state actors.

³ There are 136 organisations in general consultative status; 1,955 in special consultative status and 960 on the Roster – dated 10 October 2007.

17. Working with its members, the public, other peace campaigning groups, civil servants, and politicians, Pax Christi International promotes the view that global peace and security is achievable by tackling the systematic causes of violence and building conditions of peace. Our work includes dialogue with civil servants and the military as well as offering submissions to politicians and other authorities.
18. Equally important is addressing the roots and causes of significant issues, and joining with other like-minded organisations to raise awareness globally and influence policy makers at regional, national and international levels. Effective advocacy operates at local grass roots level, at the national level where, for instance, landmine bans can be enforced and monitored, and at international level in terms of agreements on humanitarian and disarmament law.

Networking Worldwide

19. Networking in a globalised world ensures that the various actors pool expertise and complement each other by working on different elements of a situation. Networks should decide upon specific campaign focuses/issues. Choosing a focus or issues might be complicated because of the limited resources and the great diversity of situations calling for a response in so many countries. If we want to be effective in helping to generate change, we need to choose one or two global issues, broad but well-defined on which we decide to work together closely by each contributing part of our available resources to the joint work.
20. Almost all of our peace campaigning and networking is done in partnership with other groups.⁴ Sometimes it is relevant and appropriate that Pax Christi International acts on its own. But more and more in today's world, networking and collaboration are essential components of effective advocacy. We see collaboration as an essential part of peace building work and are pleased to play a facilitating role where we can. We operate in conjunction with peace organisations and peace networks on all continents. We work with Churches to develop ecumenical thinking on reconciliation, dialogue, peace and justice, and with other Christian peace organisations to expand the attention churches give to peace and justice issues in general. We do the same with other religions in an inter faith context. Through networking, Pax Christi International also seeks to have a transforming influence, making religion an unequivocal force for peace and justice. Pax Christi International is Catholic in origin and tradition, and also firmly committed to cooperation with other ecumenical and religious traditions and with all who share its values, principles and objectives. We are linked with other agencies worldwide, sharing experiences and resources, and working together on joint projects whenever possible.

⁴ See list of international coalitions, campaigns and NGOs at www.paxchristi.net. This list is made according to the 5 concerns and 8 strategies within the "Framework for the global Pax Christi Network (2008-2010). November 2007.

21. Networking for peace must include peace building from below, especially, but not only, in conflict zones and in potential conflict areas. Many NGOs recognise “local ownership” as essential for breaking cycles of violence. Political settlements on the official level cannot hold unless broad-based constituencies have the means and resilience to rebuild trust. Peace building is a process of healing and reconciliation, but it also involves the reallocation and redistribution of political power.
22. Local networks and initiatives have the advantage of direct access to affected populations, knowledge of local languages and conditions, and the ability to gain people’s trust (for example: women’s groups, inter-faith initiatives, local business striving for job creation, or the use of radio to counter disinformation or provide a forum for debate). Local strength and resilience should be supported. Establishing groups committed to human rights, justice, indigenous self-determination, or sustainable development is not sufficient if these groups lack engagement with political structures. Community-based organisations and coalitions, together with local governments, need strategies to bridge gaps in responsibility and accountability, by identifying consensus on needs, tasks, roles, and establishing forums and networks where government representatives and the community can listen to each other. A more integrated “up and down” approach is needed to bring all stakeholders – men, women, elders, youth, traditional and official leadership, religious representatives, and government bodies together for integrated impact and change.
23. Building up an international advocacy network takes time. One can make use of its own network – but it might be more constructive to link up with other networks. The formation of a coalition of networks could be helpful. That coalition should be fed by professionalism and a long-term commitment. Advocacy work is a dynamic process. Working flexibly with other faith-based networks which share a common approach is helpful as well.
24. Networking for Peace is a very demanding but essential way to effectively contribute to peace, justice, and reconciliation through globalised solidarity. How do we organise ourselves to be effective and efficient in this respect?

Definitions

25. I refer to *advocacy*⁵ as a planned piece of work that seeks to bring about change in a given context. It encompasses:
 - a. Policy analysis, evidence-based research and strategizing;
 - b. Campaigning, awareness raising and mobilizing; and
 - c. Lobbying and influencing decision- and/or policy-making.

⁵ Some wording is taken from “CIDSE Rough Guide to Advocacy.” March 2007. www.cidse.org

26. The word *campaign* refers to the very broad range of organizing activities and political and social advocacy aimed at correcting situations of injustice and generating positive change in people's lives.
27. *Lobbying* is a systematic effort to bring one's own analysis and recommendations to the attention of decision-makers in order to influence them. Getting one's point/issue on their agendas!
28. There are two basic functions or roles when doing advocacy work: (1) Bringing an issue raised by your partners, and their recommendations, to the attention of national and/or international decision-makers; and (2) Advocating and proposing solutions, lobbying relevant decision-makers together with your partners.
29. Advocacy is critical; it implies something needs changing. Advocacy is more than merely providing a commentary. It is directed towards the achievement of some social change deemed necessary. Advocacy is part of a search for justice, usually starting with the struggle against manifest injustice.
30. Advocacy is constructive. Next to mass mobilisations, it entails dialogue with governments and with international institutions about how objectives might realistically be achieved. Advocacy itself is a form of conversation or dialogue. It seeks to include the very people we challenge in the conversation, not to simply reject them. It is important that advocates "never break that bridge of dialogue." Advocacy refers to the whole infrastructure of activities supporting the direct "conversation" that engages with decision-makers.
31. The potential targets of advocacy are broad. Country-specific advocacy in peace and human rights issues ideally takes on different forms at the national, regional, and international levels. The links between action at national and international levels are crucial for an effective advocacy. In addition, it is possible to distinguish between two types of target groups:
 - A. Those which bear the responsibility for the violation, or who neglect doing something about it, and/or those that can exert pressure on the former in one way or the other, and
 - B. Those whose mandate makes them directly and specifically responsible for the promotion and protection of human rights.
32. Advocacy includes the involvement and commitment of the communities or network. This involvement has to be seen as a process. Information-sharing is crucial. Campaigning always goes public, including effective media work which can be an instrument of persuasion, even of "pressure."

Media as the Window to the World

33. Media can be a powerful tool to build public opinion and attract intergovernmental attention, but a message has to be newsworthy in order to attract media interest; it has to be something that the media thinks would interest its readers, listeners, or watchers. Consider specifically targeting media that the interested decision-makers are listening to. However, be aware that using the media as a vehicle for lobbying can backfire; after all, we ultimately cannot control it. Also, politicians might feel compelled by the media to take a stance too early; they will not like having to go back on their judgment and could potentially blame advocacy organizations that they feel pushed by them to take a stance prematurely.
34. The media could be the “window to the world” if we have objective information that needs to be heard. However, sometimes media information in the news is not enough to change public opinion and policy decision makers. Media, public opinion, and politics have to feed each other. Unfortunately, conflicts only hold the attention of the international media for a short period of time, especially on national television channels. Too often, the news only focuses on stories with high levels of violence. Still, media can dominate the public opinion. Our approach should be: make news and take the initiative in contacting journalists and media channels. Put the issue on the media’s agenda.
35. Advocacy work and lobbying usually require additional skills, training programmes, and, in some circumstances, the empowerment of programme officers, hiring of additional specialist staff, and/or working together with existing advocacy and campaign departments. Particularly in cases related to peace and security matters, it is important to build on the knowledge and capacities of local member organisations and partners for information and analysis. The root causes of a conflict, for instance, must be understood in order to resolve it. Effective lobbying requires populations to have strong networks and solid monitoring and information gathering at the community level. It is extremely important to ensure that international advocacy is rooted in the views of the affected society; this gives legitimacy and provides an opportunity for the affected society’s empowerment. However, independent advocacy is sometimes needed, e.g. when there is a high degree of political sensitivity.
36. For an advocacy initiative to be successful we must be clear about what changes we want to achieve, as well as who will deliver them. Who and on what level one can make the difference? Effective advocacy depends on the ability to inform, motivate and persuade a policy maker and/or compel him/her to take action. Different people will be persuaded at different times by different styles or arguments: moral, legal, practical.
37. Some examples of advocacy methods include direct lobby, indirect lobby, media, publications, capacity building/empowerment of beneficiaries and/or local partners, campaigning, training officials, public opinion, using electronic communications, website, etc. Formats for message delivery include face-to-face meetings, letters, phone calls, executive briefing packets, fact sheets, policy forums, petitions, testimonies, public debates, press releases/press conferences, radio and television interviews, Pastoral

Letters, diocesan newsletters, etc. These methods are even more effective when mutually concerned partners deliver a strong message together: partners visiting decision makers, compiling photos and/or video testimonies, sharing their stories, etc.

38. Effective advocacy requires high-quality work, free of all partiality, preformed with intellectual competence, and above all, with comprehensive knowledge of the situations for which advocacy is being undertaken. Choose what is ethically desirable and politically possible. Such advocacy should help to stimulate collaboration, especially with other works of Churches and religions, and other representative actors in the globalised world, such as social movements, NGOs, corporations, and international institutions.
39. Advocacy is also aimed at training and empowering local communities. It must be people-centred. The engagement of faiths leaders as religious decision-makers is indispensable for advocacy at local, national and international level.
40. In addition to research and the obvious collaboration with like-minded people and organisations, we need to identify other partners at a local and global level, even if we are only advocating for local change. It is important to choose our partners wisely because it will cost energy to build links and this energy should not be wasted. In the northern hemisphere, we are more likely to engage in direct lobbying with the centres of power. Effective communication on all levels is indispensable.

Prophetic and Pragmatic

41. Advocacy entails two interrelated elements: “prophetic” and “pragmatic” advocacy. Advocacy must be prophetic: speak the truth, confront injustice and build a more just and dignified life together. Prophetic advocacy holds up some ideal state of affairs; even if this is not readily attainable the ideal must be stated, so as to serve as a compass for the direction of current policy. Pragmatic advocacy seeks certain measurable, incremental changes in specific policies or practices. The prophetic stance can always be criticised as naïve or impractical. The pragmatic approach can be condemned as compromised or short-sighted. In any case, discernment is required. Advocacy on justice issues will quickly bring the advocates into potential conflict with vested interests that appear to sustain injustice. Discernment needs to be applied to our own capacity to handle negative or hostile reactions, to our own attitude toward conflict and to our possible “enemies.”
42. It is possible to carry out a silent lobby “behind the scenes.” “We will see what we can do” is often behind this mentality! But we must also influence public opinion by sending out messages. Good communication should be at the heart of any strategy of advocacy, and it should be spread abroad by experienced communicators.
43. Some see their role as simply that of amplifying the voice of the victims of violence – not speaking with them or for them, but creating the space for them to speak. Others see

their role as advocating for the victims and/or with the victims as the victim may not always be the best placed to advocate for themselves, especially in complex cases where highly technical or international issues are at stake.

Advocacy with and towards Christian Churches

44. As a faith based peace movement, Pax Christi's work is based on a commitment to prayer and spirituality, study, and action for peace. It strives for dialogue and co-operation with Churches, non-governmental organizations, and movements working in the same field - whether they are Christians from other denominations, Muslim, Jewish, Buddhist, or non-religious groups. Pax Christi's strong sense of spirituality is inspired by the original motivation of the movement: reconciliation, where opposing parties come together to create a new relationship.
45. As a non-governmental organisation, Pax Christi International is working independently within and outside the Catholic Church and it is well embedded in the ecumenical world. Pax Christi International has developed specific avenues for advocacy collaboration with the World Council of Churches (WCC). To mention three examples: (1) Pax Christi International is a member of the Advocacy Core Group of the Palestine-Israel Ecumenical Forum (PIEF) convened by the WCC in September 2007; (2) Pax Christi International joins the regular ecumenical advocacy delegations during the United Nations meetings on nuclear disarmament; and (3) Pax Christi has a history of participation in the Decade to Overcome Violence. Pax Christi International has also a long tradition of regular contacts with other churches including, among other activities, a relationship of dialogue with the Russian Orthodox Church (since 1974).
46. Member organisations on the national and diocesan level maintain regular contacts with their respective National Bishops' Conferences. They give occasional input on important matters such as on ongoing conflicts: the Israeli – Palestine relationship, disarmament, and human rights, to name a few. Some of our member organisations have a long history in this type of advocacy.
47. On the regional and international level, it is Pax Christi International that maintains contacts with Apostolic Nuncios, Permanent Observers of the Holy See at the United Nations and other intergovernmental bodies, and different Roman dicasteries such as the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace or the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity. Examples on the regional level are (1) Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM); (2) the Commission for the Bishop's Conferences of the European Community (COMECE); and (3) the Council of European Bishops' Conferences (CCEE).
48. We give a special attention to collaboration with religious congregations, both national and international. Pax Christi International joins Rome's religious congregations' Commission for Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation (USG/UISG) to campaign

together for important international events such as on the World Day of Social Justice (20 February), the World Environment Day (5 June), the International Day of Peace (21 September), the International Day for Nonviolence (2 October), to name a few.⁶ Many fruitful relationships and joint initiatives have been developed with different Christian and secular NGOs and networks.⁷

Conclusion

49. Advocacy is a dynamic and ongoing process of dialogue engaged with centres of power, empowerment, and different strategies, and thus calls for a great deal of flexibility. It involves a global vision and grassroots connection. It is not possible without belief and passion!
50. The idea that we can make a difference if we are passionate about the cause is fundamental. One has to go for it! Our campaigns and advocacy need to be developed on the basis of profound knowledge of the situations of poverty and human rights violations, a knowledge that produces sound analysis and yields solid, feasible proposals. But above all, the campaign and the advocacy must be carried out passionately. It is not enough to simply offer more expert analyses for drawing up a law or explaining a series of facts in a clear manner. We have to believe earnestly in our aims, and so communicate passion to the politicians and the officials, as well as to ordinary laypeople.

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⁶ See the list of International Events on www.paxchristi.net.

⁷ See list of international coalitions, campaigns and NGOs at www.paxchristi.net. This list is made according to the 5 concerns and 8 strategies within the “Framework for the global Pax Christi Network (2008-2010). November 2007.