

Rodney Petersen, June 2011

## **BTI Schools Participate in Ecumenical Just Peace Gathering**

***“Join in the Harvest! Participate in an IEPC Course for Seminarians!”*** This was the word that went out on the World Council of Churches website ([www.wcc-coe.org](http://www.wcc-coe.org)) for students from around the world to participate in this fashion in the International Ecumenical Peace Convocation (IEPC). Not only did the event attract over 1000 official church delegates and workshop leaders, but student delegates, WCC stewards, media recording artists and assistants in a variety of capacities joined in the 10-day event on the campus of the University of the West Indies, Kingston, Jamaica (May 2011) – and 42 persons participated as mentors or students in a course jointly offered by Boston University School of Theology, host United Theological College of the West Indies and with support from the Interdenominational Theological Center (Atlanta).

The course “tracked” the IEPC seen as both a "harvest festival" celebrating the achievements of the Decade to Overcome Violence (DOV) which began in 2001, and precursor to the next General Assembly of the WCC (2013). The DOV was designed to call attention to the ways communities of faith are implicated in violence as well as to the unique resources with which they are equipped for overcoming violence. Both the Convocation and the course provided a unique opportunity for ecumenical formation even as it encouraged individuals and churches to renew their commitment to nonviolence, peace and justice.

Four trajectories were highlighted in the Convocation. These were Peace in the Community, Peace with the Earth, Peace in the Marketplace and Peace Among the Peoples. Daily Bible studies, rich worship experiences, plenaries, “reasonings” (workshops) and “innerstandings” panels, additional plenaries, and evening cultural events defined the time for delegates and students alike.

Students in the course had the special privilege of working with DOV and IEPC materials. For some, engaged with the DOV process in previous years, materials were not new while for others the melding of biblical material with cutting edge social thinking was something new and valued. The DOV material that students drew upon included the DOV Report with its rich assembly of Annual Regional Studies material, the Living Letters and work of solidarity with struggling communities of faith worldwide, the Expert Panels and Ecumenical Just Peace material.

The objectives of the course were to pick up on the work of the DOV and its Convocation and to help to carry that work forward by giving attention to the following:

- 1) to survey areas of violence which confront the churches in areas of concern to students,
- 2) to begin to become skilled as peace-makers with respect to IEPC themes, and
- 3) to foster learning in the context of ecumenical formation.

For further information on the course, contact co-facilitators Rev. Dr. Rodney L. Petersen ([petersen@bostontheological.org](mailto:petersen@bostontheological.org)) or Rev. Dr. Glenroy Lalor ([glenroy.lalor@gmail.com](mailto:glenroy.lalor@gmail.com)).