



DISARMING TIMES

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Nuclear Non Proliferation Review Conference (NPT)

This was one of the papers prepared by Japanese For Peace for the Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) Consultation Meeting with the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and shows the role of NGOs to achieve a world with zero nuclear weapons. April 16, 2010, Melbourne.

The nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) will take place in New York at the United Nations from 3 – 28 May, our government and nearly every other in the world will be working on nuclear weapons disarmament and non-proliferation issues in the United Nations. Civil society has a huge and important role to play both at the conference and back home too.

We are grateful for this opportunity to discuss and share our views with all the participants gathered today, in order to achieve our common goal, the elimination of all nuclear weapons. We represent a Melbourne-based peace group called, *Japanese for Peace*, which was formed in March 2005. One of our aims is to create a world free from nuclear weapons. We are strongly committed to spreading the messages from the *Hibakusha*, the survivors of the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945, who insist that nuclear weapons and humankind cannot co-exist.

On 20th March 2010, as part of the lead-up to the NPT Review Conference, we held an *Australia-Japan Peace Forum* with the theme of the abolition of nuclear weapons. We invited Dr Tilman Ruff, former President of Medical Association of Prevention of War and a NGO advisor to the International Commission on Nuclear Non-

Proliferation and Disarmament (ICNND), and Professor Toshiyuki Tanaka of the Hiroshima Peace Institution as guest speakers.

Thanks to these excellent speakers we have learnt about the positions of the Australian and Japanese Governments and updated our ideas on the role that civil society can play in working toward nuclear disarmament.

In this statement we would like to focus on some of the points arising from the forum, as well as recent political issues surrounding the NPT, in the light of our firm stance of peace-building.

1. The use of nuclear weapons is a crime against humanity

When we discuss nuclear issues, we need to remind ourselves how lethal these weapons are when they are used. The experience of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945, where more than 100,000 civilians were killed in-

stantaneously in both cities, shows the cruelty of even small nuclear weapons..

We note the advice of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) on the legality of nuclear weapons in 1996: "the threat or use of nuclear weapons would generally be contrary to the rules of international law applicable in armed conflict, and in particular the principles and rules of humanitarian law." Civil society brought

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DISARMING TIMES

A quarterly journal of Pax Christi Australia. It aims to provide members and interested peacemakers with peace news and views both local and international. We endeavour in each edition to reflect the three-fold emphasis of Pax Christi which engages members in study, Non-violent action and prayer for peace, justice, human rights, development and inter-faith and inter-civilisation dialogue.

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New urgency around banning nuclear weapons

The first foreign Doctor in Hiroshima to assess the effects of the atomic bombing and assist its victims was the International Committee of the Red Cross delegate Dr Marcel Junod, his chilling summary ". . . *Every living thing was petrified in an attitude of acute pain*"

With the issues of nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation assuming some urgency on the world stage a recent report by the International Committee of the Red Cross insists that the debate about nuclear weapons must not be conducted only on the basis of military doctrines and power politics. The existence of nuclear weapons poses some of the most profound questions about the point at which the rights of States must yield to the interests of humanity; the capacity of our species to master the technology it creates; the reach of international humanitarian law; and the extent of human suffering we are willing to inflict, or to permit, in warfare. The currency of this debate must ultimately be about human beings, about the fundamental rules of international humanitarian law, and about the collective future of humanity.

The report goes on to say; that we now know that the destructive capacity of the nuclear weapons used in Hiroshima and Nagasaki pales in comparison to those in current arsenals. According to many scenarios of nuclear weapon use, the human and societal destruction would be much worse. We also know that the use of a fraction of the weapons held in current arsenals would affect the environment for many years and render agriculture impossible in vast areas. The implications for human life are indeed sobering.

The report by the President of The Red Cross points out: Although nuclear weapons' potential for destructive force increased by a factor of many thousands during the Cold War, the ability of States and international agencies to assist potential victims did not.

The ICRC encourages all States, and those in a position to influence them, to seize with determination and urgency the unique opportunities now at hand to bring the era of nuclear weapons to an end.

At the same time the peace movement and civil society must also join in this momentum, urged on by the opening sentences of Dr. Marcel Junod's testimony which began: "The physical impact of the bomb was beyond belief, beyond all apprehension, beyond imagination. Its moral impact was appalling". We must never allow ourselves to become morally indifferent to the terrifying effects of a weapon that defies our common humanity, calls into question the most fundamental principles of international humanitarian law, and can threaten the continued existence of the human species.

**Nuclear Weapons Statement to the Geneva Diplomatic Corps by Jakob Kellenberger
President International Committee of the Red Cross**

20 April 2010

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this issue to the ICJ to obtain an opinion on the threat or use of nuclear weapons. This was, in fact, a significant achievement. It was the result of a global movement initiated by three international NGOs, the International Association of Lawyers Against Nuclear Arms (IALANA), the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW) and the International Peace Bureau (IPB). This movement was called the World Court Project and a number of Japanese peace organisations participated in it, including the Japan Confederation of A- & H-Bomb Sufferers' Organisation.

As Professor Tanaka stated in his speech, the use of nuclear weapons is genocide and thus is a crime against humanity. We share this opinion and publicise it whenever we discuss nuclear disarmament. It is clear that our ultimate goal is to achieve a world with zero nuclear weapons. It is urgent and inevitable if we are to survive.

2. A Nuclear Weapons Convention (NWC) is the most effective step towards the total abolition.

With the outcome of the International Court of Justice mentioned above, the world's first Model Nuclear Weapons Convention was created by Costa Rica, a country well known as a nation without military forces. Costa Rica, together with Malaysia submitted an updated version of the model convention at the NPT Preparation Conference in April 2007. Now the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) is actively promoting the Model Convention globally. A number of Japanese peace organisations support NWC and will attempt to promote it at the NPT Review Conference. The Japan Council against A & H Bombs has collected more than five

million signatures so far for an appeal to the NPT conference. This appeal states: We call on the nuclear weapons states and all other governments to agree to commence and conclude negotiations of a treaty, a Nuclear Weapons Convention, to ban and eliminate nuclear weapons without delay.

Unlike the NPT, the NWC will establish concrete limits and thresholds to reduce the numbers of nuclear weapons, and be binding on all signatories in a fair and comprehensive manner. This convention would ensure that Nuclear Weapons States are obliged to eliminate their nuclear weapons within a limited time frame.

We strongly urge the Australian Government to lobby the Japanese Government to create a wider nuclear free zone in Asia-Pacific and North-East Asia, and distance itself from US military policies.

3. More collaborative work between Australia and Japan is necessary

The creation of ICNND has played an important role on a variety of levels, though we were disappointed in some aspects of the report ICNND issued in December last year, in particular, its failure to set a specific time frame for nuclear weapons elimination. Since the Commission has engaged with civil society to a certain degree, it has opened up space to exchange views and as a result the united voices of NGOs have had an impact on the outcome of the Commission. We are pleased that the ICNND report includes the recommendation of NWC.

Despite such developments and the hopeful outlook for the upcoming NPT, both the Australian and Japanese Governments seem to be reluctant to lobby the US Government on the NWC issue. Both countries are US allies and live under the so-called 'nuclear um-

brella'. However, living in a unipolar world after the Cold War has not lessened the nuclear threat, but has increased it and accelerated nuclear proliferation. North Korea has now tested nuclear weapons and pressure is mounting on Japan to develop nuclear weapons.

Organisations from civil society have been working together for the past few years on nuclear issues. Dr Tilman Ruff and Mr. Akira Kawasaki, an executive of Peace Boat, have built cooperation in this sector between Australia and Japan. Their work as NGO advisers for ICNND has heightened the profile of the anti-nuclear campaign, and this has benefited both the Commission and the two Governments.

Thus we are extremely disappointed to learn that the Australian Government has decided not to include NGO delegation in the official delegation to NPT Conference this time. We sincerely ask the government to respect NGOs' remarkable contribution as mentioned above and invite them to become part of the official mission.

Also, we strongly urge the Australian Government to lobby the Japanese Government to create a wider nuclear free zone in Asia-Pacific and North-East Asia, and distance itself from US military policies. Japan is the only country which was attacked by nuclear bombs. It has a special responsibility not to let any nation use nuclear weapons.

Although we, Japanese for Peace, cannot send our delegation to NPT, we are committed to do our best for the success of the NPT Conference here in Melbourne.

Finally we would like to share a *Hibakusha's* message to conclude our statement: The first user of the atomic bomb must be the first abolisher.

Dr Hideko Nakkamura Representative Japanese for Peace www.jfp.org.au

For updates on the NPT see: dimity@icanw.org

From a culture of war . . . To a culture of peace

By Bruce Kent

- Vice president of CND, Pax Christi UK and the Movement for the Abolition of War

The time has run out for traditional military answers. Ours is a culture of war, but cultures can change. We need education in peace and in international understanding, and so much more. . .

Not long ago I went hunting with friends in a cemetery in West Hampstead. We were looking for the memorial to a man I had only just heard of, Sir William Randal Cremer. Why? Because he was the first Briton to be awarded, in 1903, the Nobel peace prize. We found his memorial at last, covered in bramble bushes. On the list of famous people at the entrance to the cemetery his name does not even appear. A hero of peace, who spent much of his life promoting the notion that international disputes can and should be settled by arbitration not war, has been forgotten.

I was reminded once again in that cemetery that ours is a culture of war and violence, not of peace. That this is so seems obvious. The males of our Royal family appear endlessly in uniform. Their rite of passage is service in the armed forces. Public events and processions are often dominated by the military. Remembrance Sunday, when we are all urged think of 'our dead', has become the next best thing to a national holy day of obligation. No TV presenter or politician would dream of appearing without a red poppy. Displays of military aircraft are ideal for family outings and picnics. Major cathedrals and churches are rich in military memorials. Military chaplains have military rank, salaries and pensions. War films and war stories are staple media diet. War toys are still acceptable gifts for children. School cadet corps are still normal in, but not only in, 'public schools'. Recruiting teams make regular school visits. We are now even to have a national 'armed forces day' in order to promote greater respect for the

Services. Gross media violence is now normal entertainment.

Cultures change and it ought to be our business to make ours one of peace, not war. Without demeaning or disparaging the bravery of the military or their role in our society, how do we reduce their high significance in our national psyche and put peace in pride of place?

Accept that cultures do change, and the next thing we have to be convinced of is that we ourselves can promote such change. Racism and anti-semitism exist still, but are no longer respectable. Smoking was once so normal that non-smokers were made to feel wimpish. Not now. Homophobia was open and almost normal. Not now. Cultures change, sometimes for the better, sometimes for the worse. And we can help make it change for the better.

Where to start?

Public events and processions, for instance, do not have to have an exclusively military character. By all means let the military have a part to play, but if the qualification is bravery then why not representatives of other national services as well? UN peacekeepers? The fire service? Coastguards? Lifeboat and ambulance crews? The police? Perhaps we should just have one major National Bravery day on which we honour all those who have put their lives at risk in public service.

What of schools and colleges? My hope is that one day, as consciousness of global citizenship develops, every pupil moving into a secondary school will be given their own personal

copy of both the United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Citizenship is now on the curriculum, but it is rarely thought of as international citizenship. The Final Report of the 1978 first special UN Session of Disarmament called specifically for education on issues of peace and war. Most people have no idea that there ever was such a session or what it said about public education. The UN Charter itself is a largely unknown document.

School and college careers rooms should not only offer military job opportunities. Parents should be asked if jobs in firms exporting arms should be advertised at all. Careers rooms should also provide information about jobs, paid and voluntary, in the peace, justice and human rights fields, and information about peace-directed higher education. Too often today the study of foreign languages is neglected.

Perhaps every school should twin with another in a country where there is or could be violent conflict. Too often raising money for projects in poorer countries is the beginning and end of international understanding. Why do we have such an unequal world? is the question that needs to be put.

There are some countries now promoting the idea of a Ministry of Peace. What a good idea. An official government body responsible for monitoring the ways in which policies across the board promote or damage peace prospects. Such a body might challenge some of the dogmas which still dominate public thinking – for instance that WWII was the only way of stopping Hitler and the

Bomb was the only way to end WWII. It is these myths which still dominate much thinking on war and peace.

National holidays could do with some additions. Perhaps we could add some specifically peaceful ones to our present list. May 15 is International Conscientious Objectors day. The UN Charter was signed on June 26, 1945. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted unanimously on the December 10, 1948. Those three additions would do for a start. Scrap Bank holidays and replace them with something more meaningful.

Place names are not sacred and some might well be changed. It is probably too late to do anything about Trafalgar Square or Waterloo Station. But what about Greenham Common park for the land left over after the Olympics or Douglas Home stadium in honour of the British officer who went to prison in WWII rather than open fire on civilians.

Many museums could also refocus. Some are already doing so. London's Imperial War Museum for instance regularly hosts peace history conferences and has exhibitions which are far from warlike. The National Army museum not long ago had an exhibition of pictures of facial injuries inflicted in the First World War. No one looking at those pictures could be moved to think of anything but the horror, the futility and the pity of war.

Recently I visited the Hiroshima museum which records the disaster of August 6, 1945. No one could ever talk casually about nuclear war who has seen such an exhibition.

So many other institutions could help to promote a culture of peace. Local authorities have their own independence. Some already have created and published peace trails around their towns and

cities to locations with peace significance. The one in London starts with the Gandhi memorial in Tavistock Square. Mayors for Peace is a great initiative, coming as it did from the Mayor of Hiroshima. It has now become a worldwide movement of local authorities.

Peace is too important to be left to governments

This is a good time for change. It does not take a PhD to understand that globally we face threats to our real security to which there is no traditional military answer. Terrorism is not the only such threat. Security for most people means a supportive family, a safe place to live, employment, good health care, protection in old age and food on the table.

Yes we take reasonable precautions against burglars, but getting on well with the neighbours is far more important than arming each house with weapons which, if ever used, would destroy all the houses in the street.

Perhaps every university course, arts or science, should have an essential international peace component. Scientists have to learn to be willing to refuse military research, especially when it is aimed at the development of weapons of mass destruction. Would-be lawyers and our courts should be able to develop and give force to international as well as national law to this end.

Churches might re-examine some of their language of liturgy, hymns and old testament partiality for one people. There could be a more internationalist perspective to Remembrance Day ceremonies. It is an ideal day to make the central message, 'honour all those who have died in war by working for the elimination of war itself'. Wars, whatever they tell you, are neither inevitable or compulsory.

Anti-poverty and environmental protection groups must make it clear that war is a major cause of poverty and of environmental damage. Global warming is in part a consequence of military activity. In its turn it will also become a cause of war. Too often, development groups avoid foregrounding the fact that war is one of the greatest if not the greatest cause of world poverty.

The current struggle for essential resources like water will cause conflict and the flow of millions of refugees. Resource conflicts will lead to war unless nonviolent systems of law and justice are in place. The trillion and a quarter dollars spent every year on the world's military is indeed what President Eisenhower once called 'a theft from those who hunger...'

There are 27,000 nuclear weapons in the world today, each a possible Hiroshima, and every one of them accident prone. There have already been several major accidents, amongst dozens of lesser ones, which have taken the world to the very edge of nuclear disaster. What sort of security is this?

Lord Louis Mountbatten can have the last word. In 1979, describing the nuclear arms race, he recalled the old Roman precept, 'If you want peace prepare for war' and described it as 'absolute nuclear nonsense'. He broke with the culture of his own military past, risked unpopularity and had the courage to explore new directions. That is a task for all of us, if we are serious about building a culture of peace. Culture has to change. We are all part of the process of making that change happen.

Source:

www.opendemocracy.net/5050/bruce-kent/fromculture-of-war-to-culture-of-peace-O

WAR IS BLOODSHED IT IS NOT THE ANSWER

Palm Sunday Reflection at Ecumenical Peace Service

Wesley Uniting Church Lonsdale Street Melbourne

Deborah Storie, 28 March 2010

[Readings: Luke 23:26-43 & Psalm 230]

Some wars are easier to resist than others. Remember February 2003? Hundreds of thousands of us thronged the streets to oppose the US-led war in Iraq. The biggest peace demonstrations Australian had seen. The biggest in Melbourne since Vietnam. Natasha Stott Despoja told the rally: War is bloodshed. It is not the answer. A person in the crowd said: We're on the brink of disaster; this is an opportunity to turn the tide.

Global estimates of peace demonstrations that weekend range from 10 to 30 million people. The people had spoken. A visible, embodied voice against war.

Surely we would not go to war now. The invasion of Iraq began on March 20, 2003.

The war in Afghanistan is different. In October 2009, vigils and rallies around Melbourne marked eight years of military occupation in Afghanistan, sought to expose the lies that confuse war with security, and called for the withdrawal of Australian troops. These gatherings were small and received a mixed response: some people were sympathetic, even grateful. Others were frankly hostile. A man spat at me at Flinders Street Station. Many were confused, most people avoided our eyes.

Somehow people have been persuaded that this war will save Afghan women from Taliban and save us from terrorism. Somehow politicians have forgotten that war is bloodshed, that it is not the answer. Somehow people no longer try to turn the tide. Our soldiers are there. They need to be there. Somehow.

Jesus was crucified between

two other men. Luke calls them *kakourgoi*, evildoers, or workers of evil (Lk 23.32, 39), translated 'criminals' by most English versions. John records 'two others' without qualification (Jn. 19.18). Matthew and Mark call them *lestai*, bandits (Mt 27.38; Mk 15.27). The Roman Empire was plagued by bandits. To those in power, bandits were violent men who had no respect for law and order and even less for private property. Bandits were criminals, murderers, terrorists—they

Somehow people have been persuaded that this war will save Afghan women from Taliban and save us from terrorism. Somehow politicians have forgotten that war is bloodshed, that it is not the answer.

deserved to die. To those who were poor, struggling to survive, harassed by tribute and debt collectors, by local and foreign soldiers, and deeply resentful of a military occupation that seemed like it would never end, bandits were men who risked and gave their lives for others, freedom fighters, heroes, Robin Hoods. Like most outlaws, bush-rangers and insurrectionists before and since, many first century bandits were dispossessed or displaced, desperate men who took to violence because they were denied a viable alternative. They could join the army, state-legitimated violence. Or join the resistance, outlawed violence. Or, they could move between the two. Jesus demonstrated a viable, if costly, alternative.

Why was Jesus killed? Why did he attract such hatred? Why were some, but not all, of the

Jewish leaders determined to kill him? Why did most, but not all, of the common people hang on his every word? There are many reasons. Let me mention two.

The first begins shortly after Jesus starts his public ministry. Returning to Nazareth, his home town where he grew up, Jesus goes to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, as is his custom. He stands up to read, is given the scroll of the prophet Isaiah, unrolls the scroll, and finds the

place where it is written:
The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me

to bring good news to the poor.

He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind,

to let the oppressed go free,

to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.

Jesus rolls up the scroll, gives it back to the attendant, and sits down. The eyes of all the synagogue are fixed on him. He says, "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." All speak well of him, amazed at his gracious words—at first.

Things change fast. The good news Jesus proclaims, the year of the Lord's favour, comes without vengeance for enemies. It involves embracing enemies and making them friends, even heroes. Remember the widow at Zarephath in Sidon?

Remember Naaman the Syrian, a commander of an enemy army? Forget all that us and them stuff. This freedom, this release, this good news, this vision (Shalom!) is for everyone. Hearing this, all the synagogue are full of rage. They drive Jesus out of town. They try to kill him.

A second reason Jesus was killed is that he showed the religious/political leaders who they really were, and what the religious system they lead really did.

The picture he drew was not at all how they wanted to be seen, nor how they saw themselves. Remember that last week in Jerusalem? Remember the escalating conflict between Jesus and the chief priests, the scribes and the leaders of the people? Remember the dangerous questions they asked him? Remember how he used Scripture to question, confront and accuse? Remember the stories he told?

Imagine you are there.

Jesus enters the temple, drives out those who are selling things there, and says, "*It is written, 'My house shall be a house of prayer'; but you have made it a den of robbers*" (Lk. 19.45-46).⁸ No wonder they are angry.

Jesus tells a story about a vineyard (Luke 20.9-19). The scribes and chief priests know the Scriptures. They know the parable is a commentary on Isaiah 5.

For the vineyard of the Lord is the house of Israel...

He expected justice but saw bloodshed; righteousness but, behold, a cry...

Ah, you who join house to house, who add field to field, until there is room for no one but you and you are left to live alone in the midst of the land!

They realise he told this parable against them. No wonder they want to lay hands on him

And then the question of tribute (Lk 20.20-26): "Teacher ... Is it lawful for us to pay tribute to Caesar or not? And the answer: "Give to Caesar the things that are Caesar's; and to God the things that are God's." Hear the psalm reverberate through Jesus' words: "The earth is the Lord's and everything in it; the world and all who live in it! (Ps 24). Nothing belongs to Caesar. Nor to any earthly king! No wonder they

are afraid.

The story of Elijah, the widow of Zarephath in Sidon and her son is told in 1 Kings 17.

Rediscover Naaman's story in 2 Kings 5.8 Jesus combines Isaiah 65.7 and Jeremiah 7.11. Each brief citation conveys a freight of meaning.

And those other questions about authority, about marriage and resurrection, political questions haunted by the memory of John. The question of divorce got John killed (Lk. 3.18-20; 9.7-9. Cf Mt 14.1-12) and caused a war that killed many more. Such things are best not remembered, best not talked about with Herod alive, well and in Jerusalem for Passover. Subversive memories. Dangerous hope. No wonder they want to silence Jesus.

The mirror Jesus held up confronted the chief priests and the leaders of the people with their true reflection, what they really looked like, what they really did.

They were zealous for the Law but perverted the Law, using it to deny life rather than give it. It was their job to protect and provide for widows, orphans, the poor and the stranger. Instead, they presided over a system that devoured widows' houses (Mk 12.40; Lk. 20.47) and robbed the poor. Confronted by truth, they didn't like what they saw. They didn't want to believe it. They wanted to deny it. They killed the One who spoke Truth.

Like the prophets before him, Jesus reminded the people of God who they were and what their vocation was: to be a blessing to the whole world; a ministry of reconciliation not of vengeance. He reminded the chief priests, the scribes and the elders of things more important than protecting their own privilege, defending their honour, increasing their wealth. There was another way, a better vision. Jesus, a prophet mighty in deed and word (Lk. 24.19), offered a vi-

able alternative to those in power: salvation through repentance; the things that make for peace (Lk. 19.42).

So why has it been so easy to sell this war? Why is it that people, even Obama (who opposed the war in Iraq, appreciates difference and advocates tolerance and understanding in all other places) can see no alternative in Afghanistan and Pakistan to death and annihilation? Why have so few church leaders spoken out against this war? Why have no politicians remembered that war is bloodshed; that it is not the answer?

I suspect it has something to do with what Taliban show us about ourselves. They do not envy us. They do not want to be like us; they see nothing in us they want to emulate. They look beneath our rhetoric of democracy, equality, freedom, tolerance and justice, and see greed, inequality, slavery, addiction, decadence and corruption, violence against women and against the poor. We do not want to believe this picture is true, or even partially true. We do not want to admit that our society is like that. We want to deny it. And so we refuse dialogue and despise and destroy those who might just tell us what we most need to hear.

It definitely has a lot to do with money. Fortunes are being made in Afghanistan, both from the military intervention and from the so called reconstruction effort. They cast lots to divide Jesus' clothing (Lk. 23.34). We cast contracts to divide the spoils of war.

•[For example, over 40% of all humanitarian assistance donated to Afghanistan returns to donor countries as corporate profits or consultant salaries. Matt Waldman, "Falling Short: Aid Effectiveness in Afghanistan." (Kabul: Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief and Oxfam International, 2008).]

What role might church have in all this? Our ministry is both prophetic and pastoral: *Through*

Continued on Page 8

Christ, God has made us His friends. He has given us the ministry of reconciliation" (2 Cor 5.18). Reconciliation does not mean denying the threat of international terrorism; it does mean responding to it in ways consistent with the Gospel of peace and Jesus' call to love both neighbour and enemy. It does not mean denying the violence of our own society; it does mean creating a safe place in which we can find the courage to hear and see the truth, to repent, to turn around, to change. There is no room for complacency or self-righteousness.

Repentance hurts but it is still good news:

If you, O Lord, should mark iniquities, Lord, who could stand? But there is forgiveness with you, so that you may be revered.

O Israel, Hope in the LORD.

For with the Lord there is steadfast love and with Him there is great power to redeem. It is he who will redeem Israel from all her iniquities (Ps 130.3, 7).

John Paul Lederach in his book, *The Moral Imagination: The Art and Soul of Building Peace* Oxford University Press, 2005 explains that enemies are constructed in several stages.

- At first, all that happens is that we look at other people and focus on our differences.
- Second, we view their difference in a negative way. We decide they are a threat to us, that they are wrong. We label them: *Taliban*.
- Third, we begin to see ourselves as intrinsically better than them, worth more than they are, more worthy.
- Fourth, we de-humanise them and erase, or refuse to see, the image of God in them. We use terms like 'un-mitigated evil.' At this stage the idea of dialogue, or of non-military engagement and future reconciliation, becomes impossible.
- Finally, we no longer accord them the dignity, consideration or respect we naturally accord

other people. They deserve no kindness. They have no rights. We feel no compassion when they suffer. We can commit atrocities against them and feel no guilt. We anticipate their annihilation with satisfaction, even with pleasure.

Reconciliation reverses that process.

- As a first step, reconciliation requires us to respect the image of God, not only in the poor and the asylum seeker, but also in those we fear most, who want to kill us, or who maim and torture others.

Reconciliation does not mean denying the threat of international terrorism; it does mean responding to it in ways consistent with the Gospel of peace and Jesus' call to love both neighbour and enemy.

- Second, we recognize our common humanity, our sinfulness and God's grace. We look for the good in the other person and recognize the potential for evil in ourselves. In the shadow of the cross, all are guilty and all are forgiven. Lederach calls this 'solidarity in sin.' It makes dialogue possible again.
- Third, we refuse to assent to the hierarchies of worth and worthlessness, of good and evil that wars depend on.
- Fourth, we remove all labels and appreciate difference rather than fearing and wanting to eradicate it.
- Finally, when we look at other people we focus on all we have in common, the things we share. We recognize that our welfare depends on their welfare: their Shalom is ours. Only then can we truly imagine and live towards a future

that includes them, a future that is shared.

Human stories that reveal people's faces, their feelings, hopes and fears, are an essential part of this process.

A few years ago, while evaluating a community development project in rural Afghanistan, I asked a group of women to tell me about their lives. First they discussed the seasons, when it rained and when it didn't, when locusts came and when they didn't, a flood that swept crops away. Then they spoke about conscription. 'People who could afford it, town people, sent their sons to Pakistan or Iran so they didn't get taken as soldiers. Some even sent boys to America or Australia. But we needed our sons to work the fields so we could eat. The Northern Alliance took everything. If a commander saw a sheep he'd eat it. If he saw a healthy man, he'd take him. So we hid our boys in the mountains and they worked the fields at night. Taliban were different. They took one sheep in ten and one man for 10 or 20 houses. They called the elders and told us to choose. So we raised all the money we could, and offered it to whomever would take it. The men who took it were desperate, the poorest of men. They took the money, bought rice, oil, flour, gave it to their wives, kissed their children, and left. They went with Taliban. They knew they wouldn't come back. They are our sons, our brothers, our fathers. Their children are ours.'

And this is where refugee advocates must be very careful. We should, we must, advocate for asylum seekers. We must listen to and remember their stories. We must remind our country that asylum seekers are people too. And we must do all that without bolstering a larger agenda of hatred and fear. We must undercut the rhetoric of 'unmitigated evil' and advo-

cate for asylum seekers without dehumanizing or demonising Taliban. Taliban is not the epitome of evil. War is evil. When a country like Afghanistan is highly militarized, young men and boys can try to hide, they can run for their lives, they can fight (with the state or with the resistance, whichever catches them first), or they can starve. Middle class families sometimes have more options, but for poorer rural folk the good choices just aren't there, and hiding is increasingly difficult.

The vocation of the church is to catch a glimpse of the vision God has for how the world shall be but is not yet; to articulate that vision in ways that speak to our generation; and to live in ways that anticipate, enact and embody the future of God's promise in our time and place, if imperfectly and in part. [Paraphrased from Walter Brueggemann and Lesslie Newbigin.]

The vision God gives us is one that embraces all creation. All have enough; none have too much: each family beneath their own vine and fig tree. Rains fall in due season; fields and forests yield abundant fruit. Weapons are beaten into plough shares and pruning hooks. No one makes anyone else afraid. Fullness of life is enjoyed by all.

The good news is that we do not have to succumb to fear and selfishness. There is a viable alternative. Like the chief priests, the scribes and the elders of the people, we are not compelled to protect our own privilege, to defend our reputations, to increase our wealth. There is another way. The kingdom is coming. It is even among us. We may be small in number, but we are here, called to be who we are: salt, yeast and light, witnesses to resurrection love, love that denies death the final word. Your kingdom come; your will be done on earth as in heaven. Amen.

The Sri Lankan Tamil Diaspora after the LTTE

International Crisis Group report Tuesday, 23 February, 2010,

Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora groups should move away, once and for all, from the failed agenda of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and instead put their energies into the quest for a sustainable and just peace in a united Sri Lanka.

The latest report from the International Crisis Group, examines political dynamics within the Tamil diaspora since May 2009, as Tamils abroad adapt to the LTTE's defeat. It also looks at the potential for new forms of militancy within the diaspora, especially among the younger generations, radicalised by the deaths of thousands of Tamil civilians in the final months of the war. While there is little chance of the Tamil Tigers regrouping in the diaspora, most Tamils abroad remain profoundly committed to a separate state of Tamil Eelam in Sri Lanka.

"New diaspora initiatives attempt to carry forward the struggle for an independent state in more transparent and democratic ways, but they must repudiate the LTTE's violent methods", says Robert Templer, Crisis Group's Asia Program Director. "And they must also recognise that the LTTE's separatist agenda is out of step with the wishes and needs of Tamils in Sri Lanka".

The gap between the diaspora and Tamils in Sri Lanka has widened. Most in the country are exhausted by decades of war and are more concerned with rebuilding their lives under difficult circumstances than in continuing the fight for an independent state. Without the LTTE to enforce a common political line, Tamil leaders in Sri Lanka are proposing substantial reforms within a united Sri Lanka. While Tamils have the democ-

atic right to espouse separatism non-violently, Tamil Eelam has virtually no domestic or international backing. With the Sri Lankan government assuming Tamils abroad remain committed to violent means, the diaspora's continued calls for a separate state feed the fears of the Rajapaksa administration and provided excuses for maintaining destructive anti-terrorism and emergency laws.

The Sri Lankan government must address the legitimate grievances at the root of the conflict: the political marginalisation and physical insecurity of most Tamils in Sri Lanka. The international community needs to press Colombo much more strongly for political and constitutional reforms. Donors should insist that money given to redevelop the north and east is tied closely to the demilitarisation and democratisation of the region. This should include giving Tamils and Muslims a meaningful role in determining the future of the areas where they have long been the majority. Donor governments and the United Nations must also insist on an independent investigation into the thousands of Tamil civilians killed in the final months of fighting in 2009.

"Tamils in Sri Lanka currently have little appetite for a return to armed struggle", says Templer. "But should the Sri Lankan state continue to fail to respond to their collective aspirations, some may eventually seek a solution through violence and could find willing partners in the diaspora".

***Read the full Crisis Group briefing at: <http://www.crisisgroup.org>**

BOOK REVIEW

Peter Kennedy; *The Man Who Threatened Rome*

Portrait of a Rebel Priest - Martin Flanagan.

The People Speak - Michele Gierck
Introduction by Paul Collins

Reviewed by Michael Henry

For anyone attempting to unravel the impasse that produced the crisis at St. Mary's South Brisbane it may be helpful to start with a new book just released in the United States called "*The Neo-Catholics: Implementing Christian Nationalism in America*" by Better Clermont. In a much smaller version of events and with a far less nationalistic bent than the Religious right takeover in the US, we witness, here in inner-suburban Brisbane, the role played by a small group of 'conservative' Catholics in fashioning church agenda according to their mindset. Although the events may start with these handful of 'religiously correct' church people, the journey soon moves far beyond their machinations to unearth a remarkable and extraordinary story.

It would be helpful also to put this 'crisis situation' at St. Mary's in the wider church context particularly covering the past forty years since Vatican 2 and the closing of ranks against changes introduced by Pope John XXIII. The absorbing new book on the life and times of Peter Kennedy and the journey of a parish into exile does refer to wider forces influencing this conflict and probably compels a greater examination and exposure of these forces, but this book is more a celebration of the life of a parish community – and an enlightened and difficult but inspired role of the parish priest in that community.

I must admit at the outset, that coming from a background in Pax Christi where Agape informs and nourishes peacemaking and from

years of attending the South Melbourne parish where social justice overarches the story and where the parish priest preaches what he practices, I have a great deal of sympathy for what has been going on at St Mary's South Brisbane. I must admit also that the public stoush between parish priest and hierarchy, as I came to know it mainly through TV and media, left me worrying about the outcome and the collateral damage that is the inevitable result of an unequal contest. The outcome of which is written in the history of such conflicts.

The situation of St. Mary's can be partially understood through the necessary tension between 'church' and 'mission' arising around what Gospel compels on the one hand and the preserve of authority, power and privilege of church on the other. Those who study mission speak in terms of 'maintenance' and 'mission'. Simply put, those at the centre strive among other responsibilities to 'maintain' the institution, exercise authority and preserve power and privilege; while at the fringes (mission) are those who seek to identify with the powerless and the poor and the dispossessed and the disadvantaged. Hence the tension - which in truth should be at the creative heart of genuine spiritual growth in any faith community. Peter Kennedy claims that Christianity is dying in Australia. Conversation and dialogue between 'the centre' and the 'fringes' may well be essential for its survival and renewal

Unfortunately, the recent crisis in South Brisbane is a lesson how the 'centre' often responds to threats from the fringes. Firstly the church ignores the fringe dwellers (lets them be as long as possible); secondly the church authority attempts to absorb them into the centre; and if this fails - moves to isolate, to

discredit and finally cast off. The process in this case may have been more humane but none the less predictable.

From reading the story of St. Mary's what can't be hidden is the unholy disenfranchising of the community. In my view this disconnect with the community is at the heart of the lethargy in the church. I have always accepted that there are three pillars that support the foundation of Christian belief and practice namely; revealed truth in the scriptures; the teaching authority of the church and the lived experience of the community. Each informs the other and becomes blended by time and culture. To ignore the spirit that moves in the community is to invite lethargy and conformity. This is especially so when the community being ignored actively engages the poor and the marginalised as gospel imperative. St. Mary's (now-in-exile) seems to have adopted the only approach that people on the fringes can adopt - out of necessity - that of solidarity and a spirituality that is self-sustaining.

By definition, a crisis contains both risk and opportunity. The book: *Peter Kennedy, The Man Who Threatened Rome* is well titled, for the risk it would seem is mostly for church credibility and the capacity to be 'servant' to an educated community of believers. Someone once said, the most important word in the English language is 'relevance'; while you might want to challenge that claim there is no doubt that the danger from being ir-relevant is the unholy state of being uninspiring. The book searches for what makes St Mary's different. Reading the book it is hard to escape the inspiration of people on a journey in search of truth and road-to-Emmaus type presence in Agape, sharing and compassion.

The section of the book on by Pax Christi member, Michele Gierck "The People Speaks" allays much of my concern about

the outcome of this journey by revealing the depth of experience in that community and the wisdom that comes from these experiences. This crisis will be addressed on many levels but most of all it provides an unique opportunity for the voices on the fringes to be heard. The people speak!

Martin Flanagan – one our best Australian story tellers – in an early chapter 'Portrait of a Rebel Priest' interviews Peter Kennedy and focuses our attention throughout the book on the role this contemplative and pastoral man plays in the life of the community. For Pax Christi people, this combination of action and contemplation would appeal. Here is a happening that goes beyond Vatican 2 in search of a new language and a new story for a faith community, and is a story too of a parish in search of a patch of their own.

There are many contributors that you will enjoy in this book including Paul Collins and a dozen theologians including Hans Kung and Sr. Veronica Brady, as well as artist Shane Howard.

There is much in the book to provoke thought and reflection. It won't leave you neutral. I fully recommend it.

You can order the book online :
www.michelegierck.com.au
(\$30 +PP)

Any queries please contact:
micaela@eis.net.au

BOOK REVIEW

What's Wrong with Anzac? The Militarisation of Australian History by Marilyn Lake and Henry Reynolds (New South Books, \$29.95).

Why write a critique of the celebration of the Anzac spirit when so many people treat it with reverence, and wonder, like the Governor-General, if we can "do it justice" as a nation. It is a fair question and a sensitive subject.

There is great depth of feeling invested in the Anzac story. We are aware of the recent upsurge of interest, we note the proliferation of war books and the popularity of pilgrimages to Gallipoli, the battlefields of France and the Kokoda Track.

But we also know that many Australians are deeply disturbed by and recoil from the relentless militarisation of our history. And they feel that their concerns are overwhelmed by well-funded, much-publicised, official rhetoric. They are disturbed that criticism of the myth of Anzac is often seen as tantamount to disloyalty.

With Australians positioned as either for or against the Anzacs, the digger has again become a divisive figure as much

as a unifying one. Like those who are concerned with the homage paid to the Anzac spirit and the militarisation of our history, we are concerned about the ways in which history is used to define and distort our national heritage and national values.

We suggest that Australians might look to alternative national traditions that gave pride of place to equality of opportunity and the pursuit of social justice: the ideals of a living wage and decent working conditions, the long struggle for sexual and racial equality.

In the myth of Anzac military achievements are exalted above civilian ones; events overseas are given priority over Australian developments; slow and patient nation-building is eclipsed by the bloody drama of battle; action is exalted above contemplation.

The key premise of the Anzac legend is that nations and men are made in war. It is an idea that had currency 100 years ago. Is it not now time to cast it aside?

UN slams Australia over the NT intervention... again *National Indigenous Times*, February 24, 2010.

The Australian government's intervention into Northern Territory Indigenous communities is inherently racist, breaches international human rights obligations and must be changed immediately, according to a UN report released February 2010. The United Nations special rapporteur on Indigenous human rights, James Anaya, expressed serious concerns over the controversial initiative designed to stop child sexual abuse in Aboriginal communities.

The measures specifically target Indigenous people and impair certain rights and freedoms,' Prof Anaya, a University of Arizona human rights law professor said. It does

impair self-determination of Aboriginal communities, their ability to make certain choices about how their communities are run.'

In 2007, the Howard government suspended its own anti-discrimination law - the Racial Discrimination Act - so it could ban alcohol and hard-core pornography in Aboriginal communities and restrict how Aboriginal people spend their welfare cheques.

The measures (continued by the current government) are 'incompatible' with Australia's international human rights obligations, including the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, Prof Anaya said. Further, he said, there is no proof any of the measures have actually improved the lives of Aboriginal people.

NOTICE BOARD

NEW SOUTH WALES Pax Christi Meetings

We normally meet on the First Monday of each month at 6.00pm for shared meal that members bring and the meeting follows at 6.30 pm..

**Contact: Claude Mostowik
0295503845 or 0411450953**

The venue: MSC Justice and Peace Centre, 15A Swanson Street, Erskineville. 2 minutes walk from Erskineville Station.

QUEENSLAND Pax Christi Meetings

Pax Christi Queensland Branch meets monthly.
Contact:

**Pancras Jordan OP
0415 461 620
panjordan@yahoo.com**

**Clare Cooke SSps
mccooke@msn.com**

VICTORIA Agapes and Public Forums

Agape: June 20th 12:30

At Kildara Centre 39 Stanhope Street Malvern
Theme: Discussion and action on threat by Rio Tinto to reopen Panguna Gold Mine.

Agape August 15th 12:30

Kildara Centre 39 Stanhope Street Malvern

Nuclear Disarmament: update on NPT review Conference NY

September 17 18 19

National Pax Christi Conference at Kildara Centre

Agape: October 17 12:30

St John's Elsternwick
Muslim / Christian Dialogue in conjunction with Centre for Dialogue.

AGM November 21

Kildara Centre Malvern

Agape December 12 12:30

At St. John's Elsternwick
Israel/Palestinian conflict

Australia's role to reduce the nuclear threat:

Policy Brief from the **Australian Conservation Foundation** says that Australia should set firm pre-conditions on Uranium sales to strengthen nuclear safeguards, and reject proposed uranium sales to China and to Russia and should take a leadership role on nuclear disarmament by promoting a **Nuclear Weapons Convention** at the United Nations in 2010. Headings include:

- **Nuclear security risks far outweigh any claims for a nuclear expansion**
 - Nuclear waste and terrorism risks
 - Dual use-link between military and 'civilian' nuclear programs
 - Australia must stop contributing to intractable nuclear waste problem
 - Australia must act decisively to end the production of weapons usable plutonium
- **Strengthen safeguards and reform bilateral uranium export agreements**
- **Australia should take up a leadership role for nuclear disarmament**
 - Act on public concern against Australian uranium sales to countries with nuclear weapons.
 - Deliver on Australian Government policy commitment to the NPT and the supply of uranium.

For more information please contact ACF Nuclear Free Campaigner David Noonan Email: d.noonan@acfonline.org.au

I/We wish to apply for or renew membership of the International Christian Peace Movement - Pax Christi Australia. Membership is from January to December)

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