



DISARMING Pax Christi TIMES

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LENT 2017: REFLECTION FOR ASH WEDNESDAY – PROCLAIM A FAST!

by Marie Dennis Pax Christi International Co-President

Even now says the Lord, return to me with your whole heart, with fasting, and weeping, and mourning; Rend your hearts, not your garments and return to the Lord, your God.” (Joel 2: 12)

Deep in many religious traditions, including in our own Christian faith, is a recognition of prayer and fasting as essential dimensions of spiritual practice. Particularly appropriate in the face of intractable evil or as an expression of repentance, fasting also carries social and political weight – all of which seem particularly important this year.

As Lent begins, we are intensely aware of the pervasive violence that Pope Francis calls: *A Third World War in Installments*: hate speech, racism, Islamophobia, gang violence, anti-immigrant laws and practices, trafficking in humans and weapons, gender violence and sexual abuse, ill treatment of refugees, environmental and ecological destruction, militarism, war, apathy in the face of the tremendous human suffering we have seen in Aleppo, South Sudan and elsewhere, and on and on.

It is right and timely, then, that we proclaim a fast! Perhaps the most urgent need this year is to fast from violence — to join the vibrant, nonviolent resistance to these and so many other expressions of violence.

As we fast, can we in fact learn to “do” peace – not a peace synonymous with my feeling good or with any one nation’s security but something much deeper than that – an integral well-being that embraces all human beings and the rest of creation – a peace that pre-empts every inclination to violence

and war – a new paradigm rooted in an unwavering commitment to nonviolence and to the value of every life?

A fast from violence might help us grapple with our own fear and insecurity, accepting a challenge to live with vulnerability in a world where a majority of people are always vulnerable. A fast from violence might help us reset our priorities from the accumulation of power, wealth and consumer goods to nurturing right relationships with other people and the rest of creation; move from individualism to emphasize community – ultimately the global community; learn to be present, to listen, to wait – to relinquish our need for instant gratification; and re-examine our symbols and myths to strip them of their ability to isolate and blind us.

A commitment to nonviolence is an act of hope. It requires careful theological reflection on the values of our faith tradition in specific situations of violent conflict and war. It requires presence, accompaniment and the nurturing of relationships across boundaries – between countries and cultures, even neighbourhoods. It requires the creation and application of a moral framework and ethical tools for promoting peace in our daily encounters with violence. It requires vigorous spiritual exercises and creative liturgical expression.

Perhaps our fast in this holy season will move us to make or renew a Vow of Non-violence

Recognizing the violence in my own heart, yet trusting in the goodness and mercy of God, I vow for one year to practice the nonviolence of Jesus who taught us in the Sermon on the

Mount:

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons and daughters of God...You have learned how it was said, ‘You must love your neighbor and hate your enemy’; but I say to you, Love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you. In this way, you will be daughters and sons of your Creator in heaven.”

Before God the Creator and the Sanctifying Spirit, I vow to carry out in my life the love and example of Jesus

- * by striving for peace within myself and seeking to be a peacemaker in my daily life;*
- * by accepting suffering rather than inflicting it;*
- * by refusing to retaliate in the face of provocation and violence;*
- * by persevering in nonviolence of tongue and heart;*
- * by living conscientiously and simply so that I do not deprive others of the means to live;*
- * by actively resisting evil and working non-violently to abolish war and the causes of war from my own heart and from the face of the earth.*
- * God, I trust in Your sustaining love and believe that just as You gave me the grace and desire to offer this, so You will also bestow abundant grace to fulfil it.*

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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.

PAX CHRISTI AUSTRALIA

is an Australia-wide

Christian Peace Movement, affiliated with Pax Christi International.

Human rights, justice and integrity of creation are central to its work.

We take a stand against militarism, nuclear weapons and the arms race.

As an ecumenical Christian movement

Pax Christi fosters the spiritual and scriptural dimensions of peace-making.

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SECTION 18 C OF THE RACIAL DISCRIMINATION ACT

Vital to our Multicultural Future

Joseph A. Camilleri

Late last year the Federal Government decided to try once again to weaken the Racial Discrimination Act, and in particular the protections afforded under Section 18C.

The decision to set up an inquiry on how the Racial Discrimination Act might be amended in the name of freedom of speech surprised many because a similar attempt by Prime Minister Abbott a year or so earlier had to be abandoned in the face of strong community opposition. The only possible explanation is that the Government's decision was meant to appease the more conservative elements of the Liberal Party.

A number of faith, ethnic and other community organisations, including Pax Christi Australia, deeply concerned by the government's willingness to bow to racial and religious intolerance, prepared a detailed submission to the Inquiry. It set out the case for retaining 18C in its present form, except for strengthening it by explicitly adding religion into the protection. The submission was endorsed by 100 organisations. The *Coalition to Advance Multiculturalism* has since been formed to maintain pressure on the Government, and promote greater public understanding of the issues involved.

The report released by the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights which conducted the inquiry over an absurdly short period (December to February) was deeply disappointing. It failed to make a firm recommendation for the retention of Section 18C, even though its retention is supported by the overwhelming majority of the faith, ethnic and Indigenous communities of Australia, and is reflected in the overwhelming majority of submissions received by the Inquiry.

We may draw some comfort from the fact that no specific recommendation has been made to repeal or amend Section 18C of the Racial

Discrimination Act. It is pleasing too that the work of the Coalition has had an impact, with its submission and testimony being cited many times in the report.

However, while the Committee has confined itself to listing a range of 'options' – the amendment, repeal, or retention of 18C – it has given the misleading impression that these options have equal validity.

The Community Coalition, of which Pax Christi is a member, intends to oppose any move to amend Section 18C by any party or member of parliament, with all the energy and resources at its disposal. Racial and religious vilification violates the dignity of Australians, inhibits their ability to participate in Australian communal life, and severely damages the social fabric which is the indispensable bedrock on which are built our freedoms and civil liberties.

Section 18C is a valuable element of the Racial Discrimination Act precisely because it reinforces the prevailing societal consensus that racial and religious abuse is a pernicious force which divides and weakens our society. Such abuse must be thwarted by all reasonable legislative means, while at the same time striking an appropriate balance with our freedom of expression.

There is still much work to do. Now more than ever we must continue to advocate for robust legislation and institutions that afford effective protection from racial and religious vilification, and increase public understanding of the Racial Discrimination Act.

We encourage readers of *Disarming Times* to urge any faith or community organisations of which they are members to join the *Coalition to Advance Multiculturalism*. For further information contact Michael Fisher michaelf@aujs.com.au or Denisse Sandoval Denisse.Sandoval@victas.uca.org.au

FLIPPING THE SCRIPT

Fr Claude Mostowik Msc, President Of Pax Christi Australia,
Reflects On Changing Our Conversation From 'Just War' To 'Just Peace'.

An article (Natasha Moore, *Flip the Script, a Message for Christmas*, The Age December 23 2016) just before Christmas said we need to 'flip the script' in our response to violence. It related how a group of people eating and drinking around a backyard table were suddenly confronted by a man with a gun demanding money or he would start shooting. There is tension as guests have little or no cash on them and they try to reason with the man. Then someone says: 'We're here celebrating. Why don't you have a glass of wine and sit down?' In this situation, the man's demeanour changes when he tastes the wine, eats some cheese and then leaves for a group hug. This is a true story told in an episode of National Public Radio's *Invisibilia* programme which focuses on what is called 'non-complementary behaviour'. People usually respond to kindness with kindness and to hostility with more hostility. However, it is very difficult to meet anger or hatred or threat with its opposite, yet the opposite can transform difficult situations.

Jesus was the master of 'non-complementary behaviour' by baffling people by 'flipping the script'. When they expected condemnation they received compassion; those who 'brown-nosed him' were snubbed; religious authorities that tried to entrap him were caught in their own traps. The gospel shows Jesus as calling those who follow him to 'turn the other cheek', to 'love their enemies and pray for those who persecute them', 'welcome the stranger', to go the extra mile. Here, in the Sermon on the Mount we see the paradigm for the practice of 'active' nonviolence. It 'actively' counters injustice strategically. It is not passive nor simply protest. Though many assume that this practice is a lofty ideal, the experience of participants at the Nonviolence and Just Peace Conference held in Rome in April 2016 was otherwise. They came from South Africa, Sudan, Uganda, Kenya, South Sudan, Palestine, Iraq, Croatia, Philippines, Co-

lombia, Mexico and Australia. Many had paid the price for continuing to engage with the so-called 'enemy'. Colleagues, friends and family members had been murdered, disappeared, imprisoned or tortured, or they themselves suffered these traumas, yet were deeply convinced that nonviolence works and is effective.

These 'experts' spoke more loudly of a 'just peace' paradigm as outlined by Pope Francis in *Laudato Si': On Care for Our Common Home*. He acknowledged that 'Human beings, while capable of the worst, are also capable of rising above themselves, choosing again what is good, and making a new start.' In his message of welcome, he referred to such people who did not ignore the 'formidable undertaking to work for peace by living the practice of non-violence' despite the milieu of violence they live in by recognising the humanity of the 'other' and maintaining links, building bridges and overcoming fear by pursuing open and sincere, yet difficult practice of dialogue. As many people live and make peace, care for each other and engage in social justice and try to live in harmony with creation, violence is present in every person's life either personally or virtually. In the face of war, terrorism, fear and enemy-making or othering, structural and systemic violence such as poverty, racism, environmental destruction, and gender violence people have asked if another way beyond violence and war is possible.

Though our world is studded by acts of violence and conflict from the Middle East to West Papua, from the Philippines to parts of Latin America and Sri Lanka to Africa, people remain convinced that the default position of responding to violence with more violence is unviable and ineffective. It is not consistent with being a follower of Jesus, who incarnates the God of Peace. In his powerful message of support to the conference, Pope Francis alluded to a world war that occurs in instalments: "In order to seek solutions to the unique and terrible 'world

war in instalments' which, directly or indirectly, a large part of humankind is presently undergoing..." We need 'true peace' where it is necessary to bring people together concretely so as to reconcile peoples and groups with opposing ideological positions. Pope Francis, in response to peace movements such as *Pace e Bene* and *Pax Christi*, has heard that Christians, Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, are discovering the liberating force of nonviolence as they work to build new societies aimed at justice, participation and peace.

The seeds for Pope Francis' 2017 World Day of Peace Message *Nonviolence: A Style of Politics for Peace*, calling on people to 'flip the script' and live lives of 'active nonviolence' grew out of the April 2016 Nonviolence and Just Peace Conference in Rome co-hosted by the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace and *Pax Christi International*. Its rationale was, *To seek peace, deep peace rooted in justice, shalom – not a mere absence of war, but the fullness of life for all – that is the Christian vocation and way of life. As followers of the One who is Peace, who on the cross overcame the violence of our world and who then called for peace and modeled forgiveness, we are called to help move our broken and violated world toward the full flowering of the New Creation, repeating Jesus' way of active, nonviolent, persistent, risky, creative peacemaking.*

"I pledge the assistance of the Church in every effort to build peace through active and creative nonviolence." - This conference sought to contribute to the Catholic understanding of and commitment to nonviolence. It concluded with an Appeal to the Catholic Church to recommit to the centrality of Gospel nonviolence – an appeal extending beyond the Catholic Church. The World Day of Peace Message seems to be an initial response to the appeal for clearer and stronger teaching on gospel nonviolence. In his message to the Rome gathering, Pope Francis said *'Humanity needs to refurbish all the best available tools to help the men and women of today to fulfill their aspirations for justice and peace, revitalising the tools of*

nonviolence, and active nonviolence in particular'

The challenge is to work together to build up society, communities and businesses by acting as peacemakers. It is to show mercy by refusing to discard people, harm the environment, or seek to power by competition rather than cooperation and choose solidarity to build, through active nonviolence, a peaceful society. Pope Francis' message is particularly welcome because it resonates with the work of Pax Christi and other peace movements around the world which continue to seek creative and peaceful solutions to conflict rather than the default position of resorting to violence with more violence.

Conference attendees came with a view that the 'just war' doctrine needed to be rejected for a 'just peace' paradigm, and that Pope Francis be asked to write an Encyclical on peace and nonviolence. His statement of welcome and support to the conference began a conversation about Catholic teaching on war and peace which would reject 'just war' and engage in a spirituality and practice of nonviolent peacemaking as lived and taught by Jesus. The 'just war' doctrine is deceptive because people come to think that because a war was declared as 'just' it is right and good. However, the technology and destructiveness of modern war would suggest that a 'just war' is never possible. Even, when a just war may have been permissible, it was always an evil. Conference participants envisioned concrete ways to find alternative frameworks that engage with and transform conflict by nonviolent ways such as building trust and just peace; encourage and promote a global con-

versation on nonviolence and respond to violence and injustice with strategies of nonviolent peacemaking and peacebuilding.

Pope Francis has indicated, that *'many powerful people don't want peace because they live off war..... Some powerful people make their living with the production of arms.....It's the industry of death'*. In meetings with the people, especially children, he has focused on peace, how to build it and how to keep it. In this he challenged the military-industrial complex – those who make and export armaments as well as exporting poverty and encouraged discussion on 'revitalising the tools of non-violence, and of active non-violence in particular.....' and that conflict must be faced and not ignored or concealed so as not to remain trapped within a framework of conflict. He reminded the conference participants that the greatest obstacle to be removed is the 'wall of indifference' that affects not only our fellow human beings but also the natural environment, with consequences for security and peace. The final report of the conference reminded us all for the need for forgiveness as 'We confess that the people of God have betrayed this central message of the Gospel many times, participating in wars, persecution, oppression, exploitation, and discrimination.' It went on to say, that '...the Word of God, the witness of Jesus, should never be used to justify violence, injustice or war.' It unequivocally states that there is no 'just war'. It has been used to endorse rather than prevent or limit war. To suggest that a 'just war' is possible undermines the moral imperative to develop tools and capacities for nonviolent transformation of conflict. The call

is to find a new framework and shift to a 'just peace' approach based on Gospel nonviolence. This offers a vision and an ethic that strives to build peace that comes by committing to human dignity and thriving relationships in order to prevent, defuse, and to heal the damage of violent conflict. The belief was that whilst anyone resorts to military force, there will be no attempt to find alternatives that can and do make a difference. Pax Christi International co-president, Marie Dennis, said, *'As long as we say that dropping bombs will solve the problem we won't find other solutions and I think that's more and more clear to us.'* The challenge is to invest creative energy, deep thinking, financial and human resources that could make a difference. The truth is that modern wars have rendered the just war theory obsolete and minimalist. It had a negative focus, emphasising war and not peace. The distinction between just and unjust wars do not account for the massive, indiscriminate violence of modern war. The challenge is to ensure that more people know about nonviolence, its techniques and understand that peace is not the absence of conflict or war but a new vision of 'shalom', just peace, where we take care of the earth, stop killing people and rebuild a world where all people have enough food, housing, health-care, education, employment and respect as persons. This takes imagination and creativity. It takes courage and strength over the long haul.... but there is no other way to peace. Pope Francis' *Laudato Si': On Care for Our Common Home* is a wonderful vision of moving towards flipping the script and a just peace.

Human Rights in Sri Lanka, continued from p5

Recommendations

Considering the above, Pax Christi International therefore calls the Human Rights Council to:

- Refer the case of Sri Lanka to the General Assembly and the Security Council for measures to be taken since the government has not implemented the action points set out in resolution 30/1, which has had a

deleterious effect on the rights of the Tamil people.

- Maintain together with the High Commissioner and its office scrutiny of the human rights situation in Sri Lanka and especially with regard to the situation of the Tamil people.
- Recommend an investigation by the High Commissioner and his office into the sinhalisation and

religious oppression of the North and East of Sri Lanka, and that those found guilty of attacking and persecuting religious minorities be brought to justice.

- Support the establishment of a country office of the High Commissioner in Sri Lanka for increased monitoring and assistance with regard to the human rights situation.

HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN SRI LANKA

Statement to the 34th session of the Human Rights Council of the U.N. General Assembly

This statement was submitted by Pax Christi International and was written by Fr. Pancras Jordan JP, form Pax Christi Queensland

In 2014, the Council through resolution 25/1 established an investigation by the High Commissioner into alleged serious violations and abuses of human rights during the Sri Lankan war. His report confirmed widespread atrocities to have been committed. It also concluded that Sri Lanka's institutions do not have the capacity or the independence to implement the necessary security, judicial and political reforms without international participation. In response in 2015, the Council adopted resolution 30/1, co-sponsored by Sri Lanka, calling on the government to establish a transitional justice program. It set out an agenda promising truth, justice, reparations and guarantees of non-recurrence to victims of human rights violations and other crimes under international law.

Pax Christi International welcomes the work of the High Commissioner as he presents his report on the implementation of the 30/1 resolution at this session. However, we would like to underline that Sri Lanka's commitments regarding implementation remain unfulfilled. In addition, the current human rights situation in Sri Lanka's Tamil North and East has been deteriorating, forming an obstacle to reconciliation, accountability and human rights in Sri Lanka. Further information on the current human rights situation is given below.

Military occupation

Tamil regions are occupied by Sinhalese Armed Forces who treat the area as 'conquered territory' and act with high levels of impunity, where crimes, including rape and theft, go unpunished. The numbers of Sri Lankan military have risen since the armed conflict has ended. There were some 175,000 members of the Armed Forces at the end of the armed conflict in May 2009. This increased to 250,000 in 2012 and

300,000 as of 2017. The expansion of their non-military activities has also increased, including large scale property development, construction projects, and small business ventures. The land currently occupied by the Armed Forces in the Tamil area is 67,427 acres. This has caused great economic and social hardships for Tamil families traditionally engaged in agriculture.

Furthermore, physical and sexual violence by the Armed Forces and police remain a serious problem, and are responsible for the extensive atmosphere of fear in the civilian (Tamil) population. It will remain a serious problem as long as the Sinhalese military remain in the area and remain unaccountable. Prostitution, drug and alcohol abuse have also risen as a result of armed occupation.

Sinhalisation

The mass movement of Sinhalese from the South to the Tamil North and East of the country has important electoral consequences. In time, there will be no parliamentarians from the Tamil community or very few left to represent the Tamil people. This way, Tamils will be left voiceless and vulnerable in the political future impacting their lives.

Religious persecution

The destruction of minority religious groups in Sri Lanka, a multi-religious nation, is of great concern. There have been thousands of attacks on Christian churches, Hindu temples and Islamic mosques, led by groups of Buddhist monks. Judicial systems, including police and the Armed Forces, seem to condone and allow these attacks to be carried out. Bills have been introduced into parliament, with the objectives of preventing conversion and reducing the growth of Christianity. Attacks on ancient religious structures, organisations, businesses and homes belonging to minority religions are widespread, with many worshippers killed and injured. The damaged structures have not been rebuilt, and in most cases have been replaced by Buddhist

temples, structures and statues. Many of these structures have been built in Tamil regions despite low numbers of Buddhist residents, only soldiers.

Torture

In April 2016, the UN Special Rapporteur on torture, Mr. Juan Mendez, and the UN Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers, Mrs. Monica Pinto, visited Sri Lanka. Their reports are a devastating indictment of Sri Lanka. In the words of Mr. Juan Mendez: "The testimonies I heard from victims, including detainees, who took the risk of speaking to me despite safety concerns, persuade me that torture is a common practice inflicted in the course of both regular criminal and national security-related investigations. Severe forms of torture continue to be surrounded by total impunity I have been assured by the authorities that confessions alone are not sufficient evidence for a conviction; however, in practice, 90% of convictions are either solely or mainly based on a confession."

Victims of torture are predominantly Sri Lanka's largely Hindu Tamil minority and alleged perpetrators were members of the intelligence services or military, dominated by the Sinhala Buddhist majority. Victims describe torture chambers equipped with cables, rods and batons for beating victims, and water barrels and a pulley system for hoisting them upside down. There were repeated accounts of severe sexual abuse of both male and female detainees.

Disappearances

The white van phenomenon continues, building a climate of fear among minority groups. Families of the 'disappeared' wait for loved ones to return and cannot continue life until they have access to justice. Families have been seriously affected by pathological family dynamics due to displacement, separation, death, 'disappearances' or injury to bread winners. There are some 89,000 female-headed households in the Tamil North and East of the country.

CHINA RISING: CAPITALIST ROADS, SOCIALIST DESTINATIONS

A Timely Book for the Trump Era

by Wei Ling Chua

America is no longer a superpower and every American election produces presidents with no idea where the problems lie:

The reality is that the estimated cost of overdue maintenance across America's aging infrastructure system by 2020 is \$3.6 trillion, its NASA's scientists and astronauts are mostly in their 50s and 60s. On top of that, it is so cash poor that it has to rely on its enemy, Russia (a country still under US sanctions), to transport its oldest (56-year old) woman astronaut to the International Space Station. Yet, the newly elected president Trump gave priority to the idea of asking Congress to pay for his election promise to build a \$8 billion wall along the Mexican border.

America's economy is built on speculative activities. The main causes of the 2008 Global Financial Crisis were labeled by the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco as 'speculative bubbles and overreaction to technological innovation'. However, all the presidential candidates, particularly Trump, blamed China for the disarray of the US economy, despite the fact that an USCBC found "trade with China supports roughly 2.6 million U.S. jobs, across many industries, and created \$216 billion in growth in 2015. "

American GDP is funded through ongoing, relentless money printing and borrowing, with the amount of national debt more than doubled since the 2008 GFC. Despite such reality, Trump is not asking basic commonsense questions:

1. How did China, a nation invaded, semi-colonised and exploited by a dozen world powers before 1949 for over a century, with a bankrupt economy, 80% illiteracy rate, an average life-expectancy of 36 years, and a hungry population (1/4 world population at the time), rebuild itself from scrap after 1949, and become the big-

gest US creditor, within just six decades of nation rebuilding, while the US national debt is ballooning to \$20 trillion?

2. How, when the Chinese GDP is still more than \$7 trillion smaller than the US', could it generate the world's largest national reserve, and contribute to 33.2% in 2016?

3. How could China replace America as the world's biggest trading nation starting up when its economy was and still is so much smaller than the US?

4. What's wrong with the supposedly bigger US economy? Is it a structural problem? Or an ideological problem? Or is it a problem with bad governance?

At a time when America is running into trade deficits with 101 countries, is it helpful for all the presidential candidates and Congress to habitually blame China for US problems? Will a 45% tariff imposed on China help Trump's America?

American power and influence across the world are diminishing at a rate Trump fails to fully comprehend, and so, throughout his presidential campaign, he thought he could continue to bully the world to make America great again. Trump thinks that he can build thousands of miles of wall along the Mexico border and ask Mexico to pay for it; he thinks he can impose 45% tariffs on all Chinese imports without retaliation from China, which would cause inflation, recession, unemployment and severe damage to the reserve status of the US currency. He thinks he can order his allies from Europe to Asia to pay much more for US military bases in their respective countries.

Obviously, the American election system fails to produce congressmen and presidents with the ability to learn from reality to find creative solutions. Can America be great again with a

political system that lacks self-initiated internal criticism and internal reform? Is Trump aware of:

1. Why in America's backyard, was the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) formed in 2011, with 33 member states, while excluding participation of the US and Canada?

2. Why the decade-plus wars in Afghanistan and Iraq cost U.S. taxpayer \$5 trillion (and according to a report by Watson Institute, there have been over 6,800 US troops and approximately 7,000 contractors, who have died in Iraq and Afghanistan, and that the number of veteran disability claims is over 970,000; but the main beneficiaries of such American military adventurism turn out to be Iran and China – nations that have secured friendship and enhanced trade ties with America's perceived enemies, without firing a single shot?

The fundamental question for Trump is: "Why does American democracy fail so miserably in producing leadership with knowledge, ideas and skills for commonsense reasoning? Why is China's rising so unstoppable? And why will the US's decline speed up, if America continues to pursue a policy that views China as a threat, instead of learning from China for self-improvement?

From history, Trump should take note that each aggressive American political orientation towards China caused China to become stronger and America weaker. Just a few examples:

1) When the US, Europe and the former USSR imposed financial, commercial and technological sanctions against China in the 1950s, then leader, Chairman Mao Zedong initiated a policy of self-reliance, and a secret 100-year modernisation programme that has contributed to China's success to this day;

2) When America named China from cooperating with NASA, and any international space forums, China

successfully engineered its own space program and may become the only country with a space station, when the US-dominated International Space Station is set to retire by 2024.

However, China's space program is open to cooperation with all nations, including America;

3) When the US Congress refused China's desire for more say in the IMF, China successfully launched its own Asia Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), with the endorsement of the world despite severe US pressure on allies not to join. Under these circumstances, China continues to welcome US participation 'anytime' ;

4) While the US continues its irresponsible money printing and borrowing policy, China began a programme of currency swaps across the globe and lifted the status of the RMB as the world's second largest trading currency, without the need to freely float its national money;

5) When America announced its policy to deploy 60% of its navy forces to the South China Seas by 2030 in the name of the Pivot to Asia, China responded by speeding up its One Road—One Belt programme to connect the world through land and ports in the Indian Ocean; and as usual, China has opened its arms for the US and the rest of the world to participate in the programme

6) In 2011, under the endorsement of US, the Philippines renamed the South China Sea as the West Philippine Sea, and used its newly delivered American secondhand warship from the 1970's to chase away Chinese fishermen from these waters. China responded with a massive sea reclamation project and successfully expanded the size of seven islands in the South China Sea, equipped with airports, hospitals, schools, lighthouses, research centers, water desalination plants, ports, tourism and missile defence systems, while offering emergency services and support for all vessels passing through these waters. This, while the US engaged in hundreds of military exercises in the region, and moving its two aircrafts

carriers in and out of the South China Sea — burning money with zero achievement.

The questions that Trump should ask himself are:

1) Why does America have to view other countries as a threat? Instead, China responds to hostility with creative strategies for new institutions, new infrastructures, new economics strategies, and a call for mutual respect and cooperation, what China's President Xi Jinping calls "win-win".

2) Why is the Chinese leadership so effective and creative in its ability to overcome difficulties, without the need to fire a shot?

3) Why is Chinese leadership able to identify problems and execute policies with speed and win-win results?

At a time when there are so many articles and books calling America "a failed state", the world has increasingly recognized the merits of the Chinese political model. Australian electronic retail chain billionaire, Gerry Harvey thinks that the solution to Australia's political chaos is a dictatorship (of the people) 'like China'. Canadian PM Trudeau expresses admiration for China 'basic dictatorship' (of the people); Despite increasing world recognition of the Chinese political model as superior to the current western model, it seems that most Westerners still regard the Chinese model as totalitarian. China's Marxist-Leninist dictatorship of the people, has and continues to engage in decades of non-stop self-generated internal self-criticism, and internal reform, criticism that percolates from the villages and urban streets to the very top of the government administration. This is why the Communist Party of China (CPC) continues to enjoy a +80% approval rating by its citizens, according to the US based PEW Research Center's annual Global Attitude Survey, while America's leadership is consistently scoring around 30% or below in the same survey.

. Have any Western journalists or authors bothered to learn Chinese language and engage in in-depth under-

standing of how the Chinese political model works, before criticising it in an indoctrinated manner, as some kind of totalitarian monster?

It is time for the American politicians, especially President Trump to have an in-depth look into the Chinese political model, how it is structured and how it functions. He also needs to make an in-depth review of past American policies, their consequences to the world, so that America can identify the sources of its continual decline, and hence, formulate the right policies to make the United States great again.

For Donald Trump and all his citizens, the ebook *China Rising: Capitalist Roads Socialist Destinations* by Jeff J. Brown, an American with multilingual skills (fluent in Chinese, Arabic and French), and 13 years' experience living and working in China, is the perfect place to start. This book does a great job of extensive documentation about what America has done and is continuing to do, to get into its current predicaments. Conversely, Mr. Brown provides the same research to showcase China's story, past, present and probable future, and how the Chinese admire and adopt other civilizations' achievements, and are willing to learn from others, for on-going self-improvement. Brown believes that the Chinese political model is a new form of democracy, where the leadership is hyper-mindful of public opinion and its citizens' well-being. The enormous amount of documentation provided in *China Rising* will be a refreshing eye opener to all American policymakers, including Trump, who wish to make America great again.

Wei Ling Chua is an accredited INS and ANFS Freelance Journalist and Independent Researcher of [Media Disinformation](#). He is also author of [Tiananmen Square Massacre? The Power of Words vs. Silence Evidence and Democracy: What the west can learn from China](#). He can be reached at: wchua62@gmail.com. Twitter: <https://twitter.com/OcastJournalist> Read other articles by [Wei Ling](#), or visit [Wei Ling's website](#).

FIFTY YEARS ON, PINE GAP SHOULD REFORM TO BETTER SERVE AUSTRALIA

Richard Tanter

On December 9, 1966, the Australian and US governments signed a treaty for establishing the Pine Gap intelligence facility a few kilometres southwest of Alice Springs.

In the last 50 years, Pine Gap's growth has burst its original security compound. There are now 33 separate antenna systems at Pine Gap, ten times the number it had when it became operational in 1970.

The beating heart of the base, the Operations Building, is now five times the size of its 1970s original, with a floor space that would cover the playing field of the Melbourne Cricket Ground.

Pine Gap's primary cold war role was to provide national level electronic intelligence on Soviet missile capabilities. This was essential for US military planning and, at a later stage, US verification of Soviet adherence to arms control agreements.

Pine Gap's primary mission then, as now, had both defensive and offensive characteristics relating to US nuclear war planning. The satellites also intercepted signals from Soviet radars, revealing their location and technical characteristics. This information then enabled US B-52 bombers on nuclear missions to either evade or jam the radars.

Today, Pine Gap controls the much larger and more powerful electronic surveillance satellites that still do all of that for Russia, and for a great many more countries, including China, India, Pakistan, North Korea, as well as for US allies South Korea and Japan. Also, these satellites and Pine Gap's three more recently established other surveillance systems now provide:

- early warning of a nuclear attack on the US
- information about which Russian and Chinese land missile silos have not been fired, making them key targets in a nuclear retaliatory strike

- the essential technology that makes the US-Japanese missile defence system viable

- the ability to detect the heat blooms of small missiles and fighter aircraft

- battlefield electronic intelligence for US-led wars in the Middle East; and intelligence gathering for space warfare operations.

As a bonus during the Cold War, Pine Gap's satellites collected valuable intelligence on the Soviet leadership from car phones and long distance phone calls over microwave towers.

Today, three of Pine Gap's antennas point up at Chinese, Russian, Indonesian, and many other telecommunications satellites positioned above the equator, intercepting their downward transmissions on an industrial scale.

In the world of Edward Snowden and the Five Eyes Model, Pine Gap has become a key node in the US global network of electronic surveillance, military and civilian, "mashing" diverse types of information in real time into intelligence pictures for combat and counter-terrorism operations.

Australia is an enthusiastic in every aspect of the base's operations. Australians make up half the base's 800-plus personnel.

More than ever, Pine Gap remains at the heart of the Australian alliance with the US. In gaining access to all areas of the base, the Australian Defence Force now has the capability — with borrowed American technology — to use some of Pine Gap's capabilities for its own purposes. This is, though, mostly in connection with planning for coalition war with US forces.

Australia is hardwired into the US global surveillance system and military operations, with consequent legal and moral responsibilities and a default strategic position aligned to the US.

Desmond Ball, who brought Pine Gap to the notice of Australians in his

classic 1980 book *A Suitable Piece of Real Estate*, died recently. Through the 1980s and 1990s, Ball reluctantly supported retention of Pine Gap because, despite its role in nuclear war planning, its interception of Soviet missile telemetry was essential for verifying compliance with US-Soviet arms control agreements.

Several years ago Ball announced that he no longer accepted this justification, and was appalled by the base's role in illegal drone assassinations. There is, he noted, few serious attempts at arms control, and all nuclear weapons states are modernising their arsenals.

Whatever happens at Pine Gap, Ball argued, must be governed by tight rules and procedures. These should in turn be derived from law and the genuine defence interests of Australia, not simply as a result of being embedded in the American alliance.

In his last public interview, just before his death in October, Ball said that Pine Gap now offers Australia "everything, and nothing". He meant that Australia's all-areas access at Pine Gap does not meet the country's real intelligence requirements.

After three disastrous American-led wars of choice in Afghanistan and Iraq/Syria, and a worrying lack of long-term and independent thinking about China, there are good strategic reasons for understanding that those moments when Australian and US interests do not align are more common and more compelling than Australian governments are willing to consider.

The base has capabilities that could genuinely contribute to the defence of Australia. This would depend on the will and resolution of an Australian government capable of identifying these.

It would mean calling for the curtailing of repugnant and strategically dangerous aspects of the base's operations — most obviously contributing

to drone assassination targeting and planning for nuclear war operations. It would also mean indicating to a US administration that the base could only continue with major changes in its operations. Then reform might be conceivable – in theory.

However, given the almost comprehensive inability of recent Australian governments to separate Australian and American interests and to pursue

an autonomous Australian foreign policy, the prospect of reform of Pine Gap is a distant one. It will most likely prove impossible for the foreseeable future.

This article draws on research papers by Desmond Ball, Bill Robinson, Richard Tanter and other colleagues published by the Nautilus Institute as [The Pine Gap Project](#).

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A SPIRITUALITY OF PEACE

Catriona Devlin

Developing a spirituality of peace is a lifetime's work. It involves working on my own inner peacefulness as well as engaging with issues in today's world, especially issues that involve non-peace: issues of violence and injustice and conflict. For me, it needs to be deeply rooted in the words and life of Jesus, as told to us in the Christian Testament. And these words are as relevant today as they were for the early Christians.

My own journey in developing a spirituality of peace has not really been very straightforward, conscious or overt, but the desire has been there all the same, and I now recognise that the peace that I have sought has been dressed in many guises.

As a child I found a kind of peace, in bed at night before going to sleep; it was always there when we went for those Sunday drives in the car around the Gippsland hills; it was certainly there when I looked out at the vast ocean, and to the far horizon, or up at the clear starry sky at night, when my father pointed out the various constellations; and it was there too when I went to Mass on Sundays and other devotional Church times that were part of that era.

As a young woman who joined a religious community of women in the mid-sixties, my life was reasonably peaceful, amidst the busyness of trying to balance my life as a teacher with that of a semi-contemplative. At times life in community demanded "keeping the peace, at any price", so for me it was not always honest, though it mainly kept me out of trouble! It is amazing to me now, to think

that, whilst I was aware of some of the ferment about the Vietnam War, it did not really impinge on me, as I was safely closeted away, working hard for the kingdom, so to speak, but not really "of the world"!

Only in the seventies and eighties, when the effects of Vatican II began to seep into my thinking and living, did I really start to see the close links between justice and peace. A lot of doors opened up and belonging to various groups working for justice and peace, became part of my life. In the beginning my concern was about the indigenous people of Australia but gradually other local areas of injustice impinged on my thinking: homelessness, poverty, inequality, education ... the list was endless and at times overwhelming, and even disempowering.

Then I did one of the ten week courses run by Joe Camilleri. This certainly expanded my horizons and opened me to a greater awareness of peace and justice problems on a global scale. It opened my eyes too to the many groups and individuals of all persuasions, backgrounds and ages who were working hard for peace and justice in so many areas of the world.

At that stage, I was still firmly embedded in education and whilst I had heard of Pax Christi, I did not actually come into contact with it until I started to work at Kildara Centre in Malvern. Michael Henry would saunter in now and then to confirm bookings for the bi-monthly Agapes, and even the occasional gathering for a "Greens" speaker. His lovely non-

chalent manner, combined with his determined passion for justice and peace, had an important influence on me, convincing me that I could join Pax Christi, and could always come to the meetings. Unfortunately it was not until Michael died that I did join - but belatedly I thank him for encouraging me. Since then I have met and been inspired by the many loyal and longstanding members of Pax Christi who continue to work hard on many different peace issues.

Another important influence on my peace journey has been Dan Berrigan. Along the way I had heard about him and his brother Phil, and how they had, with others, courageously fired the anti-war movement in America, during and after the war in Vietnam. But extraordinarily, it was his death last April that really brought him to my notice again. The many eulogies I read from those who had known and worked alongside him, made me realise that this was someone I wanted to know better. His prolific writing both in poetry and prose, really spoke to me and I began to devour everything he has ever written. In fact I am still doing this - and his writing gives me life! It is still relevant to today's issues and is replete with passion, mysticism and anger, with Jesus' life and actions ever central to it all.

It makes me realise that my own peace journey is only just beginning, and I need to commit myself to a long haul.

Catriona Devlin is a member of the Brigidine order and directs the Kildara Spirituality Centre in Melbourne

THE POST-COLONIAL CALIPHATE: ISLAMIC STATE AND THE MEMORY OF SYKES-PICOT

James Renton

Historian James Renton looks at the fateful 1916 Sykes-Picot agreement, which was pointedly denounced by Islamic State in the first video it released.

Ever since Islamic State (IS) spokesman Abu Muhammad al-Adnani announced the establishment of a caliphate on June 29, 2014, analysts have been busy trying to explain its aims and origins. Much of the discussion has concentrated on the IS leadership's theology – an apocalyptic philosophy that seeks a return to an imagined a pristine Islam of the religion's founders. But this focus has led to a neglect of the group's self-declared political aims.

For all the importance of religion in the way IS functions and justifies itself, we can fully understand the caliphate only if we pay close attention to the public explanations – the modernist manifestos – of those at the helm of its overall political purpose.

Viewed from this perspective, the caliphate appears primarily as an attempt to free the ummah – the global Muslim community – from the legacies of European colonialism.

The leaders of IS do not see their caliphate as an exercise in theocracy for its own sake, but as an attempt at post-colonial emancipation.

Looking right back

Certainly, the very name adopted by the declared leader of the caliphate suggests an acute preoccupation with a specifically religious mission that harks back to the early years of Islam. Originally known as Ibrahim bin Awwad bin Ibrahim al-Badri al-Samarra'i (or variations thereof), he took on, long before the summer of 2014, the pseudonym Abu Bakr, the name of the first caliph (the successor to Muhammad as the religious and political leader of the ummah).

Briton Sir Mark Sykes agreed on terms with his French counterpart, François Georges-Picot, for dividing up the region after WWI. Ruling in the years 632-4, Abu Bakr put an end

to dissent against the new Islamic system in its Arabian heartlands. He established the caliphate as an expansionist Muslim empire with military campaigns in, the sources suggest, present-day Syria, Iraq, Jordan and Israel-Palestine.

As a declaration of intent, this choice of name by IS's leader – whose full moniker became, alongside the title Caliph Ibrahim, Abu Bakr al Husayni al-Quarqshi al-Baghdadi – seems to encapsulate much of what we need to know about the new caliphate's ambitions.

Al-Adnani's founding proclamation made a point of celebrating the military victories of the first decades of Islam and how the ummah then "filled the earth with justice ... and ruled the world for centuries". This success, he argued, was the result of nothing more than faith in Allah and the ummah's adherence to the guidance of the Prophet Muhammad.

But the conquest of land and the establishment of a Muslim empire – or state, as those behind the new caliphate prefer to call it – is a means to a very specific end. It is not an end in itself.

Anglo-French infamy

According to al-Adnani, the caliphate is needed to take the ummah out of a condition of disgrace, humiliation and rule under the "vilest of all people". Al-Baghdadi, speaking two days after he was pronounced caliph, was much more specific.

The fall of the last caliphate – and, with it, the loss of a state – led to the humiliation and disempowerment of Muslims around the globe, he said. And this condition of statelessness allowed "the disbelievers" to occupy Muslim lands, install their agents as authoritarian rulers and spread false Western doctrines.

Al-Baghdadi's vague narrative refers to the story of the dissolution after the first world war of the Ottoman Empire, which had governed much of Western Asia for four centuries.

IS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, during his first public appearance at a mosque in the centre of Mosul. Reuters

In its stead, the British and French empires took over significant parts of the region and remained for decades. When their rule came to an end, these colonial states did their best to leave behind successor regimes that would serve British and French interests and those of the wider West.

For IS leaders, these colonial machinations have left the ummah floundering ever since because they took away the essence of power in the contemporary world: sovereignty – territorially based political independence.

The caliphate is urgently needed, al-Baghdadi argues, to rectify this harmful absence. A similar argument for a caliphate, though made with a very different type of state in mind, was articulated by the UK-based scholar S. Sayyid in 2014.

The most explicit evidence of this political objective's primacy is to be found in the new caliphate's propaganda, which has been such an important part of the IS project.

To coincide with the announcement of the caliphate, IS released a video entitled "The End of Sykes Picot". Signed in May 1916, the Sykes-Picot agreement was a secret Anglo French plan for dividing the Asian Ottoman Empire into spheres of influence and zones of direct rule for the two European empires.

The Bolsheviks discovered the agreement in the Russian state archives soon after they took power in November 1917 and revealed its contents to the world.

The Sykes-Picot agreement

The French negotiator of the Sykes-Picot agreement, François Georges-Picot. The Sykes-Picot agreement did not set out the borders of the states that replaced the Ottoman Empire, as the video suggests. But this error is beside the point if we want to understand the significance of the

agreement for IS, and what it tells us about its caliphate.

In the Middle East, Sykes-Picot became shorthand for a whole narrative of Western betrayal and conspiracy in the region. But it also came to stand for the specific European colonial process of robbing the peoples of the region of their sovereignty.

And it is IS's declared goal to undo this process. This is why "The End of Sykes-Picot", above any other possible subject matter for an inaugural film, had to accompany the declaration of the caliphate.

For al-Baghdadi, sovereignty and Islam cannot be separated; thus the need for an Islamic state. He cannot use the term empire, even though it more accurately describes the global

expansionist aims of his caliphate.

This is not just a question of semantics; it goes to the heart of the purpose of IS. The caliphate is needed, its leadership contends, to end the consequences of European empire, of colonialism. It is an effort to finally break away from the colonial condition; an attempt at a new post-colonial ummah.

Liberty from colonialism and sovereignty go hand in hand. The post-1918 world order embodied in the League of Nations and its successor, the United Nations, places the idea of sovereignty at the centre of how we understand power today. Within this system, the absence of a state is the absence of power.

The military defeat of IS and its loss

of territory would, of course, make sovereignty, and thus the caliphate, impossible. But this defeat will not solve the problem of the sense of powerlessness that fuelled the 2014 caliphate in the first place; it will only compound it.

The real long-term challenge that faces opponents of IS, therefore, is not the overthrow of the caliphate – as difficult as that might be – or even to defeat "extremism". It is, rather, to overcome the narrative at the centre of IS's call to arms: Muslim alienation from the world system.

James Renton

Reader in History and Chair of the Ethnicity, Race and Racism Seminar at Edge Hill University UK. This article first appeared in "The Conversation."

IT MAY ONLY TAKE 3.5% OF THE POPULATION TO TOPPLE A DICTATOR, Erica Chenoweth

Many people across the United States are despondent about the new president – and the threat to democracy. his rise could represent. But they shouldn't be. At no time in recorded history have people been more equipped to effectively resist injustice using civil resistance.

Today, those seeking knowledge about the theory and practice of civil resistance can find a wealth of information at their fingertips, training manuals, strategy-building tools, facilitation guides and documentation about successes and mistakes of past campaigns. The United States has its own rich history of effective uses of nonviolent resistance. The technique established alternative institutions like economic cooperatives, alternative courts and an underground constitutional convention in the American colonies resulting in the declaration of independence. In 20th century, strategic nonviolent resistance has won voting rights for women and for African Americans living in the Jim Crow south.

Nonviolent resistance has empowered the labor movement, closed down or cancelled dozens of nuclear plants, protected farm workers from abuse in California, motivated the recognition of Aids patients as worthy of access to life-saving treatment, protected free speech, put climate reform on the agenda, raised awareness about economic inequality, changed the conver-

sation about systemic racism and black lives and stalled construction of an oil pipeline on indigenous lands. In fact, it is hard to identify a progressive cause in the United States that has advanced without a civil resistance movement behind it.

Nonviolent resistance does not happen overnight or automatically. It requires an informed and prepared public, keen to the strategy and dynamics of its political power. Although nonviolent campaigns often begin with a committed and experienced core, successful ones enlarge the diversity of participants, maintain nonviolent discipline and expand the types of nonviolent actions they use.

They constantly increase their base of supporters, build coalitions, leverage social networks, and generate connections with those in the opponent's network who may be ambivalent about cooperating with oppressive policies.

Crucially, nonviolent resistance works not by melting the heart of the opponent but by constraining their options. A leader and his inner circle cannot pass and implement policies alone. They require cooperation and obedience from many people to carry out plans and policies.

In the US on Tuesday, dozens of lawmakers have said they will boycott confirmation votes for Trump nominees. Numerous police departments country-wide have announced that they will not

comply with unethical federal policies (particularly regarding deportations). And the federal government employs more than 3 million civil servants – people on whose continued support the US government relies to implement its policies. Many such civil servants have already begun important conversations about how or dissent from within the administration. . The Women's March on Washington and its affiliated marches which show a population eager and willing to show up to defend their rights.

Of course, nonviolent resistance often evokes brutality by the government, especially as campaigns escalate their demands and use more disruptive techniques. But historical data shows that when campaigns are able to prepare, train, and remain resilient, they often succeed regardless of whether the government uses violence against them.

Historical studies suggest that it takes 3.5% of a population to be engaged in suitable nonviolent resistance to topple brutal dictatorships. If that can be true in Chile under Gen Pinochet and Serbia under Milosevic, a few million Americans could prevent their elected government from adopting inhumane, unfair, destructive or oppressive policies – should such drastic measures ever be needed.

Erica Chenoweth is the co-author of Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict

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
(02) 9550 3845 or 0411 450 953**

The venue: MSC Justice and Peace Centre, 21 Swanson St, Erskineville. 2 minutes walk from Erskineville Station

QUEENSLAND

Pax Christi Meetings

Pax Christi Queensland

Pancras Jordan OP

0415 461 620

pancrasjordan@gmail.com

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1 pm Shared meal

2 pm Meeting

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