



DISARMING *Pax Christi* TIMES

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ICAN AUSTRALIA'S VIEWS ON THE FIRST DRAFT OF THE UN NUCLEAR WEAPONS BAN TREATY

JICAN Australia welcomes this opportunity to share with the broader campaign network our views on the first draft of the UN convention on the prohibition of nuclear weapons, which we hope to see strengthened in a number of significant ways in June and July. The suggestions below reflect our unique position as a nation that has joined a regional nuclear-weapon-free zone treaty but continues to claim protection from nuclear weapons. Australia does not have nuclear weapons stationed in its territory, but hosts facilities which would play a substantial role in any US use of nuclear weapons. Australia is a major exporter of uranium, including to multiple nuclear-armed states. We are also a nation that has experienced, and continues to endure, the devastating impacts of nuclear testing.

1. Clearer rejection of nuclear weapons in preamble

We are pleased that the draft preamble underscores the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons, and recognises the suffering of the victims of the use and testing of nuclear weapons. This explicit recognition will be of particular significance to the many thousands of Australians, as well as our brothers and sisters in the Pacific, who have suffered as a result of nuclear testing, and whose rights have never been adequately addressed.

We would like to see in the preamble a much clearer rejection of the very existence of nuclear weapons. This will be important not only for increasing the

stigma attached to the weapons, but also for ensuring that no state can join it and continue to claim protection from nuclear weapons. In this respect, we note that Australia's membership of the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty of 1985 has not prevented it from continuing to subscribe to the doctrine of "extended nuclear deterrence", even though that treaty prohibits a wide range of nuclear weapon related activities. A top priority for us is to avoid any loophole in the ban treaty that might allow for this.

We propose the inclusion in the preamble of language from the UN General Assembly resolution on "Ethical Imperatives for a Nuclear-Weapon-Free World", sponsored by South Africa, which has received the support of almost all states involved in the present negotiations. Specifically, we suggest that states parties indicate in the preamble that they are "convinced that nuclear weapons serve no legitimate purpose given their indiscriminate nature, inherent immorality and potential to annihilate humanity and the planet as a whole".

We also consider it important to recognise in the preamble that nuclear testing around the world has had, and continues to have, a disproportionate impact on Indigenous communities. In many places, due to racist and colonial policies and attitudes, indigenous communities have been permanently displaced from their homes and disconnected from their traditional way of life. At the March negotiating session, Sue Coleman-Haseldine described the

suffering of Aboriginal communities in Australia. Karina Lester will speak on this subject in June. We also hope to see in the preamble a reference to the inter-generational effects of nuclear detonations.

Given the importance of the sea for the life of coastal and island people and the severe marine impacts of nuclear testing in the Pacific, we would like to see explicit reference to both terrestrial and marine environments in the preamble and in the operative part of the treaty relating to environmental remediation.

In the paragraph relating to the "role of public conscience", we believe that an explicit reference to the contribution of ICAN is warranted, given the central role that our campaign has played in bringing about this treaty. We note that the conventions on anti-personnel mines and cluster munitions refer, respectively, to the International Campaign to Ban Landmines and the Cluster Munitions Coalition.

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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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As an ecumenical Christian movement

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

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The current draft refers to the role of the International Committee of the Red Cross and the United Nations, but no other specific organisation.

2. Prohibition on engaging in military preparations to use nuclear weapons

We are concerned that the current range of prohibitions set out in Article 1 might not adequately capture the full range of activities that we seek to outlaw and stigmatise through this treaty. We propose the addition of an explicit prohibition on engaging in military preparations to use nuclear weapons. The Chemical Weapons Convention contains a similar prohibition with respect to chemical weapons.

As an ally to the United States, Australia has long been complicit in US preparations for nuclear war. It is important to ensure that, upon joining this treaty, Australia will be forbidden from engaging in all activities that might in any way assist the United States in such preparations. In particular, we hope to ensure that the prohibitions prevent Australia from assisting with nuclear targeting and related activities, particularly involving the base at Pine Gap, a major joint Australia-US military and intelligence facility. The phrasing suggested above should capture these activities.

3. Obligation to prevent the transit of nuclear weapons

We note the absence of any reference in the draft to "transit". We believe that each state party should undertake to prohibit and prevent the transit of nuclear weapons in its territory or at any place under its jurisdiction or control. This would be an important way to limit the ability of non-parties to engage or assist in preparations for nuclear war. Although it is unclear whether nuclear-armed submarines do indeed enter Australian territorial waters, we believe that it is essential to prohibit this under the treaty in order to prevent that possibility. We also believe that it is important to ensure that our airfields and airspace will never be used for the transit of nuclear weapons. The only circumstance in which transit

might be justified is for the purposes of dismantling the weapons. Such an exception could be specified.

4. Prohibition on financing prohibited activities

The prohibition on assisting, encouraging or inducing anyone to engage in any of the activities prohibited under the treaty should include an explicit prohibition on financing. Although it could be argued that the term "assist" already captures financing, we believe that potential ambiguity in relation to the scope of this term could hamper our work to promote divestment from the nuclear weapon industry. Our experience in Australia has been that the prohibition on facilitating the manufacture of nuclear weapons, as contained in the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty, is not widely interpreted to prevent financing, unless such financing is specifically for the purposes of manufacturing nuclear weapons.

5. A clear obligation on stockpile destruction

We believe that the treaty should allow a state with nuclear weapons to join its subject to an obligation to eliminate its weapons within an agreed timeframe and in a transparent, verified and irreversible manner. The specific details for the stockpile destruction process would need to be agreed at a meeting of states parties. The current draft is unclear about the potential accession of nuclear-armed states.

In the process of eliminating its nuclear weapons, the state would be subject to the full range of prohibitions in the treaty, with the exception of the prohibition on possessing the weapons. Thus, the state would not be able to claim that the weapons serve a deterrent function, as it would be banned from ever using them. The state would also be subject to positive obligations in relation to victim assistance and environmental remediation, for instance. This is preferable to a situation where the state is simply bound by a protocol and not the treaty itself.

We recognise, of course, that some states with nuclear weapons will choose to

eliminate their weapons outside the treaty and then join, rather than join the treaty and then eliminate their weapons. But we believe that it is important not to rule out the possibility of a state joining the treaty and then disarming on the basis of a clearly defined and agreed plan for stockpile destruction. This would be consistent with the approach taken in relation to other indiscriminate weapons.

6. Stronger provisions on victim assistance and environmental remediation

We hope to see stronger obligations in relation to victim assistance and environmental remediation. These obligations should apply to all states parties.

Given that more than 300 nuclear test explosions have been carried out in Australia and the Pacific – with devastating and long-lasting consequences for people and the environment – we consider these provisions to be of great importance to our region. We are concerned that the provisions as currently drafted do not meet prevailing international standards on these issues

7. Application of safeguards at least equivalent to those under the NPT

The Australian government has criticised the draft text for including weaker safeguards than those required by the NPT. While this does not indeed appear to be the case, we consider it crucial that the safeguards requirements be at least equivalent to those under the NPT, in order to avoid such criticisms from nations that are hostile to the initiative, and avoid any legitimate basis for the allegation that the ban treaty somehow contradicts or undermines the NPT. We would welcome in the ban treaty the inclusion of stronger and more equitable safeguards provisions than are specified in the NPT. We look to colleagues in the International Panel on Fissile Materials as outstanding independent experts in this field.

8. Our concerns about reinforcing “rights” under NPT

We see no compelling reason for the inclusion of Article 19, and fear that this provision could create significant problems in the future. We are particularly concerned about the use of the word “rights”, which could be interpreted by the “nuclear-weapon states” under the NPT as reinforcing their supposed right to possess nuclear weapons. We also want to avoid any implicit reaffirmation in this treaty

of the “right” of states to use nuclear technology for so-called peaceful purposes. An additional objection is that this provision privileges the NPT over other important treaties, including the nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties. We note that the draft preamble refers to the importance of the NPT, which should be sufficient.

9. Institutional arrangements

In order to ensure the full and effective implementation of the treaty, we believe that it will be important to establish a well-resourced secretariat. This body should have a broad mandate that includes educating the public about the treaty and about the humanitarian impact of the testing and use of nuclear weapons.

We see no possible justification for a state to withdraw from the treaty. We would therefore advocate for the removal of the withdrawal provision. If the negotiating states consider such a provision to be essential, the process for withdrawal should be as onerous as possible, and any such withdrawal should be considered a grave threat to the peace.

The text of the Draft Treaty can be found on <http://www.icanw.org/campaign-news/draft-un-nuclear-weapon-ban-released/>

Australia to watch webcast of UN disarmament negotiations rather than participate

Press Release - 31 May 2017

The Australian government confirmed in Senate estimates on Wednesday that it plans to boycott historic United Nations negotiations in June for a treaty to ban nuclear weapons. Rather than participate, Australia’s diplomats will follow the process by webcast, said Richard Sadleir, who heads the international security division of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. “We will make a point of monitoring it using the webcast facility to just see how the negotiations unfold,” he told the Labor senator Lisa Singh, who has been an outspoken critic of the government’s stance on disarmament. More than 130 of the world’s nations participated in the first round of negotiations in New York in March. But Australia, at the urging of the United States, decided not to participate.

On the opening day of the talks, the

Trump administration’s UN envoy, Nikki Haley, staged a protest outside the UN General Assembly hall, arguing the “bad actors” of the world would never comply with the ban. An Australian ambassador also joined that protest, Sadleir said “It was an opportunity to have the views of a number of countries that didn’t support ban negotiations be registered and heard.”

The Greens senator Scott Ludlam, who will join the talks in June, expressed astonishment. “So we just stood there in mute solidarity with the Trump administration as 130 UN member states started serious work on a UN nuclear ban treaty?” Sadleir responded that “we were standing there aligning with the remarks that were made”. This is the first time Australia has ever failed to participate in multilateral nuclear disarmament

negotiations, he confirmed. Tim Wright, Asia-Pacific director of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), criticised Australia’s stance. “Australia is failing to take the threat of nuclear weapons seriously,” he said. “We have a historic opportunity to make meaningful progress towards nuclear disarmament, and Australia won’t even have a seat at the negotiating table. It is a very sorry state of affairs,” he said. ICAN will coordinate [actions](#) across Australia on 17 June to protest against the government’s position. “We cannot simply sit back and accept this. We need to take to the streets and register our strong opposition,” said Gem Romuld, ICAN’s outreach coordinator.

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ANZAC DAY REFLECTION

Father Claude Mostowik msc

*Tuesday 25 April Murrumbidgee
Peace Park*

Listening to the news, it would seem that religion is more often used as a pretext for violence than peace. But, the Scriptures and our faith traditions contain a strong mandate for compassion and peace. Together they offer a radical reshaping of human relations if we accept them.

Recently when US Tomahawk missiles attacked Syria, the media cheered. One MSNBC reporter said, ["We see these beautiful pictures at night from the decks of these two U.S. Navy vessels in the eastern Mediterranean."](#) We need to let that sink in. Beautiful? In what way can a missile attack be called beautiful? How can anything be called beautiful when connected to war and violence, to the deaths of people in relationship, people with faces? This was not the first time the media applauded the destruction of life in the Middle East.

Let's not forget the lies that drove into war on Iraq. The media might as well have thrown a parade. And when we don't see applause, we often see nothing. This is the case with Yemen, which has endured, and continues to endure, so much destruction in the wake of US-supported Saudi bombings. A Yemeni child dies every 10 minutes from malnutrition. This is the result of bombs like the ones that MSNBC reporter, Brian Williams, called 'beautiful'—children starving to death, children dying from falling bombs and missiles. This is the news we are not being shown but is the news the world deserves to see. When we know the story, we can begin to change the story. We can tell the media that they must be covering the humanitarian crises in Yemen rather than wax poetic about the beauty of Tomahawk missiles. They should in the USA, and in our country, be calling for budgets that support children, education, and the environment over military spending, bombs and war.

The media is the voice of our culture and we can use our own voices to help shape their message. We can show them what beauty is: the beauty of people coming together to demand truth and justice and fairness and peace, the beauty of resistance.

ANZAC Day is a day in which we as Australians and New Zealanders can acknowledge the wounds deep in our countries and acknowledge the failure of war. But let's not forget that this must include those who like the Irish, French and Indians who also fought at Gallipoli as well as the Turkish soldiers who defended their country – and who had never posed any threat to us.

A day such as today glosses over many anomalies. We commemorate but do we remember what our alliances have meant for ourselves and other people. Our leaders try to instil fear in us and the need for security which is often tenuous. We must refuse to listen to different voices to those who would make us more fearful and less than we can be in acting justly and loving tenderly. We need to listen to different voices. Listen to those who dare us to care, to open our arms out to a world desperate for compassion and healing. We can be more. How we are in the world, to be present and recognise the struggle and pain of people around us. What do we hear and see on this ANZAC Day? Fear has been instilled in people around the world that led them to support war and seek greater security. If anything, on this day, as the drums of global war are beating louder without apparent opposition. One would think that this is the time to reflect on the sheer wastefulness of armed conflict but also on the alliances that lead us to war in 1914, 1945, 2003, and the possibilities again in our alliance with the USA. One would think that might be the perfect time to reflect on the sheer wastefulness of armed conflict

Christians have just celebrated Easter and we are still in the Easter

season. Easter means many things but above all it is about life and doing things differently. Let us try to do things differently. ***ANZAC Day should be a call for us to remember and invite us to do things differently – to work to build a culture of peace.*** As we do that, we must not just remember those who died overseas allegedly to defend this country, but the First Peoples who paid in blood to defend their lands, this land that we stand, from invasion.

The contemporary focus on this sacred day is changing from an inherent opposition to militarism since the 1920's to a sudden reinvigoration of ANZAC which seems to contribute to a new militarism and nationalism. ANZAC Day means different things to different people but we must also recognise that we are all part of 'the dark ecosystem of violence' – whether towards Aboriginal people, refugees, asylum seekers, the Earth or peoples we have never met. ANZAC Day should remind us and call us to do life differently. For those who follow the teachings of Jesus, we hear a call to listen to his voice and 'try it my way' in the face of hurt, suffering, violence, etc... try it my way with non-violence, with forgiveness, with compassion and generosity. 'Try it my way' so that you do not become like the one you might consider the enemy. He showed us that we transform the world through the power of love - not through violence, not through war, not through killing.

Too often the churches have through the centuries rejected or ignored Jesus' teaching. They have made a pact in history with forces that promoted violence. Are these not a betrayal of the one who stands amongst us as the representative of the God of nonviolence? They also fail to denounce what is happening in this country: invasion of another country; the moral credence given to war; racism, sexism, corporate greed; obscene accumulation of property

; the moral credence given to war; racism, sexism, corporate greed; obscene accumulation of property and wealth.

There is hope. War and violence are human problems. They can be changed because we have created them. They begin in the sanctuary of our heart. And humanity can change, not by force or threat, but by creating safe places to be heard and to hear and accept others' rights to their own point of view. Peace is possible – whether with our neighbour or be-

yond. It has to constantly worked at. It is happening in Gaza, Palestine and Israel, in Afghanistan. In Australia and beyond.

There is another form of patriotism: to the planet and humanity. The really fundamental changes in history have not come by government dictate, or battles, but groups of people taking little steps and sometimes doing it in response to Jesus' words 'try it my way.'

On this Anzac day, any alternative to war, any act of peace, however small,

is a tribute to those who have died for this country.

Conclusion: *Let us give thanks for the lives of all prophets, teachers, healers and revolutionaries, living and dead, acclaimed or obscure, who have rebelled, worked and suffered for the cause of love and joy. We also celebrate that part of us, that part within ourselves, which has rebelled, worked and suffered for the cause of love and joy. Amen.*

Michael Leunig

Claude Mostowik is President of Pax Christi Australia

TO DWELL IN PEACE: LIVING WITH AND LOVING OUR NEIGHBOUR Reflections at a Pax Christi Retreat 12 -13 May 2017: Caesar D'Mello

Pax Christi' the 'Peace of Christ' communicates what we do. A Retreat fosters a reflectiveness in which to re-visit the theological underpinnings of those words.

'Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you.' (Jn 14:27). This proclamation summarises the teachings of Jesus and sets him apart from his culture, his time and all time. It challenges both his context of the Pax Romana forged by the military might, as well as the social pyramid of the Jewish world structured around a religiously defined class system' based on the hypocrisy of shallow ritualism that marginalised the poor, women, and those regarded as not mainstream. Jesus was clear: there cannot be genuine peace in a society so legitimised. Society needs to be transformed for true peace to be realised.

Jesus' words are revolutionary and relevant. Wherever we turn there is lack of real peace – in homes, among the homeless, in our community, in disempowered indigenous communities here and globally, in the workplace, in playground bullying, in dishonesty in commerce, for those impacted by racism, in interfaith relations, for the impoverished in an economic system tilted towards the privileged, among the refugees and asylum seekers seeking humanity as they face exclusion at home and rejection in receiving countries, in a militarised world that affects and destroys many but enriches the merchants of arms, in our politics, for the Earth. The sin-

gular thread is violence. Violence is violence wherever it occurs as an act or actions of dominance by one individual or group over the other, by the powerful over the powerless. Jesus' message speaks afresh to our times.

The Old Testament provides much insight into the nature of peace. The hope for Shalom, being at peace with self, God and neighbour, features prominently in the Old Testament. It demonstrates a strong bias towards the poor and the marginalised, even more in the New Testament. It voices the pain and suffering of people unsettled by conflict and discord. A constant refrain in the Old Testament is that of radical trust in God, a God who delivers His people from oppression and hardship.

In Is. 65: 17-25, the prophet Isaiah speaks of God's promise of 'a new heavens and a new earth' articulates human aspirations for wellbeing. To quote a few lines from Is. 65: 17-25: *For now I create a new heavens and a new earth, and the past will not be remembered...Be glad and rejoice forever and ever for what I am creating, because now I create Jerusalem Joy' and her people' gladness'..... No more will the sound of weeping or the sound of cries be heard in her, no more will be found an infant living a few days only, or the old man not living to the end of his days. To die at the age of a hundred will be dying young; not to live to be a hundred will be the sign of a curse. They shall build houses and inhabit them, plant vineyards and eat their fruit. They will not build for others to live in, or plant so that others can eat. For my people will live as long as trees, and my chosen*

ones wear out what their hands have made.....

The wolf and the young lamb will feed together, the lion eat straw like the ox, and dust will be the serpent's food. They will do no hurt, no harm on all my holy mountain, says Yahweh.

Even though Isaiah spoke for his times, he prefigures our own times and hopes.

In the New Testament we see a new vision put forward –of a truly human community formed by AGAPE: love and sharing, justice and peace. Love of God and neighbour was essential to Jesus' teachings (Mt 22: 37-40; Lk 9: 25-37). We love God through our neighbour. Who is our neighbour? Only the ones we like and prefer? No. Jesus commands connection with all of God's children. Jesus calls us to reach beyond the narrow confines of the acceptable. How can you have peace if you do not love your neighbour? For people of faith, this is the wellspring of our engagement in the world, of our exertions to make possible a world where people can dwell in peace.

Working for Shalom

The cry for peace is a cry for *shalom*, the biblical concept of 'wholeness', or wellbeing, implying being at peace with oneself and with those around. Inspirational figures, including Martin Luther King and Nelson Mandela, have shaped and struggled for a vision

Luther King and Nelson Mandela, have shaped and struggled for a vision of peace that has resonated with many people of goodwill with whom we should collaborate. Mahatma Gandhi identified seven 'social sins' that unleash instability and conflict in modern society. He named **politics without principle, wealth without work, commerce without morality, pleasure without conscience, education without character, science without humanity, worship without sacrifice**. Gandhi in no way negates the vision of the Beatitudes. As Pope Francis says, the legacy of longing for peace does not belong to Christians alone.

However, the Beatitudes are an important teaching. Meekness, mercy, peacemaking, purity of heart, hunger and thirst for justice are ways of responding in a society whose shalom is broken. There cannot be peace in the world if those torn down by the violence and conflict blighting their lives are unable to achieve their holistic, God-given destiny of 'life to the full'. The Beatitudes are a tough call, but we cannot act alone to change the world. As the Brazilian saying goes, *'if you dream by yourself, it is only a dream; if you dream with others, it is the beginning of reality'*.

As we survey the international scene with its unprecedented level of violence, we are reminded of Jesus' words: *'Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall see God'* [Mt. 5:9]. For his times and ours, this is a challenging statement. He experienced resistance driven by ignorance, prejudice, self-interest, the desire to dominate. The powers felt threatened by his message, and so was the leadership of a dead religion sustained by the fulfilment of routine rituals. In other words, Jesus was defeated by the prevailing political and religious terrorism of the day! He paid with his life. Nevertheless, the path of non-violence is at the core of Christ's message. Have we really tried negotiating non-violently our way out of conflicts? Condemning our adversaries is the usual practice, but has there been a genuine attempt at dialogue to hear the other side and even acknowledge our role in the conflict as it brews

rather than wait for the point of no return? If we had the humility to attempt this, our world could be different. True peace cannot come from adversarial attitudes and strategies. It springs from truth. To be humble is to be truthful. But such conduct is condemned as back down and loss of face. Our response for resolving conflict is to stake our position by pointing to our military strength. We are bound to be locked in an impasse: violence begetting violence! To quote Pope Francis: *'An ethics of fraternity and peaceful coexistence between individuals and among peoples cannot be based on the logic of fear, violence and close-mindedness but on responsibility, respect and sincere dialogue'*. For instance, with regard to North Korea, a former Chinese Ambassador to Australia, Madame Fu Ying, said: *'Only through dialogue can mutual security be achieved... The nuclear issue ... escalated in the absence of ... talks'*. We should recall examples of dialogue and negotiations from recent and past history that have pre-empted or ameliorated conflict.

We need every bit of nous and moral courage for a total commitment to peace, because the task of waging peace will be thwarted by those who justify violence: the political interests, the arms merchants, the spin doctors, and columnists who advocate armed interventions, They are well-equipped to press their point of view, and will do everything in their power to frustrate those who get in the way. Jesus' message in questioning the power structure of the day was unacceptable to its beneficiaries. The leaders of a dispensation that perpetuated an unequal and discriminatory regime would go to any length to defend their pre-eminence.

Today, the followers of Jesus' way may be spared crucifixion. However, if we take a moral and just stance vis-à-vis today's issues questioning the orthodoxy of the day, we can expect to suffer a form of crucifixion by being ignored as naïve 'bleeding hearts.' A world of technology and military hardware, expert jargon, and the weight of so-called 'public opinion' in the corridors of power could make us feel powerless to influence events. Many of our church members have

no problems staying with the 'respectable'! But who is naïve? Those with the message of non-violence that provides a real chance for peace, or those who, claim 'realpolitik' as their argument? Einstein's definition of insanity is: *we expect different outcomes by doing the same thing over and over again*.

St. Paul in Rom 12: 14-21 enjoins us *'to make no enemies'*. This may appear to be defeatist. He also adds *'overcome evil with good'*. Overcoming evil with good is all consuming work. It requires competence in modern communications, networking, media, impeccable research and analysis, advocacy in the public square joining people of goodwill, and visionaries, committed to the wellbeing of humanity and the earth. Waging peace needs all the help it can get against the forces and interests arraigned against it. Overcoming evil with good is what constitutes peace-building. It should be noted that after setting out the Beatitudes, Jesus declares *'you are the salt of the earth'* [Mt 5:13]. He asks: *what is salt good for if it loses its saltiness?*

Understanding the spirituality of peace is to understand and practise a prophetic spirituality in our conflicted world. Archbishop Desmond Tutu calls it 'the spirituality of transformation', grounded in the teachings and experience of the Old Testament prophets, Jesus and the early Christians, that transforms the world by interrogating its values. The prophets help crystallise what response our faith calls for to the cry of the poor, the distribution of wealth, the environment, racial and gender justice, war and peace, to offer an alternative based on justice, dignity and human wellbeing. Had prophetic biblical teachings led us, we would know that conflict is a consequence of inequitably structured economics, that earth abused is earth poisoned, that ultimate security cannot come from militarism. Prophetic spirituality makes the powers and principalities and their beneficiaries uncomfortable because those who question, question the system at the roots. Unsurprisingly, the prophets were marginalised as Jesus was. In our supposedly civilised times, our vision and alternatives may be treated with civility. But do the shap-

ers of our world, often linked with the interests of the global neo-liberal economic system and the 'military-industrial complex', respond? They do not. The unity of the human race remains fractured when decision makers enable the obscene inequality of a billion living on or below the \$1.85 a day and another two billion not much above it while 66 billionaires own the equivalent wealth of the bottom half of the world's population. Having conflated peace with military security the world's expenditure on arms is growing, enriching producers at the cost of many who remain poor and homeless, while the earth is just a quarry for resource extraction with no thought for the consequences of such action. All of these factors trigger and entrench conflicts that make war and peace a live concern for us all. Being at the margins is where we have to be

because hope for humanity will come from the margins as we take risks for justice and peace, and engage with the holders of power. Inspired by the teachings of Christ, we come together to pray and act together on our prophetic vision.

As peace-makers, we live out our faith as 'contemplatives in action'! *Who is Jesus Christ for us today?* The words '*the Love of Christ moves us*' are well known within the life of the Church. The deeper the faith, the more we are drawn to become peace-makers whatever the outcome, knowing that, the biggest failure as the Prince of Peace was Jesus himself. Yet that faith has been the inspiration and foundation for countless people down the ages who have accomplished extraordinary changes. Faith-based peacemaking makes us see efforts grounded in Pax Christi as our investment in human-

kind. They can be aptly described by the metaphor in T S Elliot's 'Murder in the Cathedral' – 'sapphire mixed with garlic'. There is a side of humanity that sparkles, but the rest of it does not. Let's go out and bring a little sparkle by taking our place in the public square, and help bring about a Culture of Peace. I end with the words of the Venerable Archbishop Oscar Romero: *Peace is not the product of terror or fear. Peace is not the silence of cemeteries. Peace is not the silent result of violent repression. Peace is the generous, tranquil contribution of all to the good of all. Peace is dynamism. Peace is generosity. It is right and it is duty.*

Caesar D'Mello is a member of Pax Christi. He was formerly director of Christian World Service (CWS) Australia, the aid and development agency of the National Council of Churches in Australia

ISLAMIST VIOLENCE IS "IN PART A PRODUCT OF WESTERN DISDAIN" Interview with Karen Armstrong

Interview conducted by Claudia Mende Karen Armstrong is a British scholar of comparative religion. She is the author of several bestsellers on the history of religion. Her newest publication deals with violence in Judaism, Christianity and Islam. "*Fields of Blood: Religion and the History of Violence*" (2014).

Interview by Claudia Mende

Ms Armstrong, in an article for "*The Guardian*" you wrote that the barbaric violence of IS may be "at least in part, the offspring of policies guided by our disdain". Would you write that again now, after the Paris attacks?

Karen Armstrong: Yes, most certainly. If the attack on "Charlie Hebdo" was indeed inspired or backed by al-Qaida, it was politically as well as religiously motivated. In Paris, it attacked the sacred symbol of modern secular Western civilisation: freedom of expression. Freedom of expression was an Enlightenment ideal; it was essential to capitalist society that people were free to innovate without being suppressed by the restrictions of Church, class or guild. In Paris, the terrorists were saying in effect: "You attack our sacred symbol (the Prophet Muhammad); then we will attack

yours! Now you see what it feels like." *But what does this have to do with Western disdain?*

Armstrong: The Prophet has been caricatured in the West as a violent, epileptic, lecherous charlatan since the time of the Crusades in the Middle Ages; this distorted image of Islam developed at the same time as our European anti-Semitism which caricatured Jews as the evil, violent, perverse and powerful enemies of Europe.

So yes, the attack on the magazine was in part a product of Western disdain. The attack on the Jewish supermarket, which seems to have been backed by ISIS, was directed against Western support for Israel. Here too, there is an element of disdain: there has been little sustained outcry against the massive casualties in Gaza last summer, for example, which seems to some Muslims to imply that the lives of Palestinian women, children and the elderly are not as valuable as our own. *Where do you see the roots of this disdain?*

Armstrong: The Enlightenment ideal of freedom was, in practice, only for Europeans. The Founding Fathers of the United States, who were deeply influenced by the Enlightenment,

proudly proclaimed that "All men are created equal" and enjoyed the natural human rights of life, liberty and property. But they felt no qualms about owning African slaves and driving the Native Americans out of their ancestral lands.

John Locke, the apostle of tolerance, wrote that a master had "absolute and despotical" rights over a slave, which included the right to kill him at any time. This continues: many of those who marched for freedom of expression in Paris were leaders of states that have supported regimes in Muslim majority countries that denied their subjects basic freedoms; Britain and the US, for example, continue to support the Saudi regime. Again, a disdain: *our* freedom is more important than yours.

Shouldn't we also look at certain Koranic verses and their interpretation throughout history to explain the phenomenon of Islamist terror?

Armstrong: "Throughout history", these Koranic verses have not inspired terrorist activities. Any empire depends upon force; this is true of the Indian, Chinese, Persian, Roman, Hellenistic and British empires and it is also true of the Islamic em-

pires. Furthermore, until the modern period, Islam had a far better record of tolerance than Western Christianity. When the Crusaders conquered Jerusalem in 1099, they slaughtered the Muslim and Jewish inhabitants of the city in a massacre that shocked the Middle East, which had never seen such unbridled violence. And yet it was 50 years before there was any serious Muslim riposte. There is more violence in both the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament than there is in the Koran.

Most Christian theologians would disagree.

Armstrong: Those theologians who claim that there are no passages in the New Testament like Koran 2.191–93 have perhaps forgotten the Book of Revelation, which is the preferred text of many Christian fundamentalists who look forward to the battles of the imminent End Time that will destroy the enemies of God. They interpret these texts literally and quote them far more frequently than the Sermon on the Mount. The aggression towards the enemy commanded in Koran 2:191 concludes: "If they cease hostilities, there can be no further hostility." (Koran 2. 193). No such quarter is allowed those who fight the Word of God in the battles of Revelation.

Why is this never mentioned in debates on this subject?

Armstrong: One might argue that this book is uncharacteristic of the New Testament as a whole, but exactly the same can be said of the "sword verses" of the Koran. Even Jesus, who told his disciples to love their enemies and turn the other cheek when attacked, warned his followers: "Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth; it is not peace I have come to bring but the sword." (Matthew 10: 14). All scriptures have violent passages that can be quoted out of context, given undue importance, and made to cancel out the irenic teaching that inspires all faiths at their best.

There is a popular understanding that Islam has violence incorporated into its beliefs from the very beginning. What do you think?

Armstrong: This popular belief originated at the time of the Crusades, when it was Western Christians who

were attacking Muslims in the Near East; it may reflect a buried anxiety and guilt: Jesus had told his followers to love their enemies not to exterminate them. The conviction that Islam had always been a religion of the sword was promoted by learned monks during the twelfth century: they were projecting their concern about their own behaviour onto their victims.

But what about the beginnings of the Islamic empire?

Armstrong: In the early years, while the Muslims were an embattled minority in Mecca, the Koran forbade them to retaliate and attack their aggressors. But when they were forced by intensified persecution to flee Mecca and found an infant state, the Muslims, like any state-builders, had to fight, and the Koran endorses this. But military historians tell us that Muhammad and the first caliphs are almost unique in building empires more by diplomacy than by violence: Muhammad, by uniting the Arabian Peninsula, which had previously consisted of warring tribal societies, and imposing the Pax Islamica there; and the first caliphs, the Rashidun, in the cultivated lands of the Middle East.

Another difference between East and West is the lack of separation between state and religion in the Arab world. Why does secularism have such a difficult stand?

Armstrong: The secularism that developed in the West during the eighteenth century was a radical innovation. Before the modern period, religion permeated all human activities because people wanted to make their lives significant. The idea of "religion" as a personal, private quest essentially separate from all other pursuits was unknown in pre-modern Europe as well as in the rest of the world. No other culture has anything like it. Words that we translate as "religion" (such as "din" in Arabic or "dharma" in Sanskrit) refer to an entire way of life. Trying to take "religion" out of politics would have been as difficult as taking the gin out of a cocktail. This was not because they were too stupid to distinguish two entirely different activities but because such questions as the

plight of the poor, the maintenance of public order and public security, and justice were matters of sacred import.

So secularism is perceived as an essentially Western concept?"

Armstrong: It is a Western innovation; we were able to develop it under our own dynamic and not at somebody else's behest. It was essential to our modernisation and many therefore found it liberating. But in the Arab world, it was merely a foreign import; it was imposed by colonial powers and came with political subjection rather than political freedom. When the colonialists left, it was often imposed so cruelly that it seemed positively evil.

When Ataturk secularised modern Turkey, he closed down all the madrasahs. His policies of ethnic cleansing forever associated secularism with the violence of the Young Turks, a secularist group who had seized power in Ottoman Turkey and committed the Armenian massacres during World War I. These rulers wanted their countries to *look* modern (that is, European), even though the majority of the population had no familiarity with Western ideas.

What about Egypt, the motherland of Islamism?

Armstrong: After an attempt on his life in 1954, Gamal Abdel Nasser incarcerated thousands of members of the Muslim Brotherhood, the innocent along with the guilty minority. Most were imprisoned without trial for doing nothing more incriminating than handing out leaflets or attending a meeting. One of them was Sayyid Qutb. As he saw the Brothers being beaten, tortured and executed in this vile prison and heard Nasser vowing to secularise Egypt on the Western model and confine Islam to the private sphere, secularism seemed a great evil. In prison he wrote "Milestones", the "bible" of Sunni fundamentalism, the work of a man who has been pushed too far and was executed, at Nasser's special request, in 1966. The other Brothers were radicalised in these terrible prisons; when they were released in the 1970s, they took their extremism into the mainstream.

PEOPLE POWER FIGHTING FOR PEACE

Brendan Caulfield James

London's Imperial War Museum seems an unlikely place to host an anti-war exhibition. Yet this is exactly what it is currently doing. The staging of such an event is perhaps a tribute to the persevering efforts of the peace movement in this country. In the show, some peace groups even claim an increase in membership.

I went along to have a look and found it an absorbing, attractive multi-media display, covering WW1 to the present day. It explores how peace movements have influenced perceptions of war and conflict. From conscientious objectors to peace camps and modern day marches, Fighting for Peace tells the stories of passionate pacifists and the struggles they endured for the anti-war cause. Over 300 objects including paintings, literary extracts, posters, placards, banners, badges, videos and music reveal the breadth of creativity of these protest movements.

Here are my impressions. During WW2, women also were conscripted, though for non combatant roles. In 1916, out of 16,000 conscientious objectors, 9,000 were granted alternatives to combat and 6,000 imprisoned. In WW2, out of 62,000 who were called up, 1,000 were tribunalled. As one would expect, Quakers figure largely among them, though they differed in their responses to warfare. There were the absolutists, who refused to fight on principle and ended up in jail. There were others who took on non-combatant roles, even volunteering to defuse unexploded bombs. There were also those, like

Sidney Carter the song-writer, who argued that the threat from Nazi Germany justified taking up arms. Groups such as the Friends Ambulance Unit, the Non-Combatant Corp, the Non-Conscription Fellowship, the No More War Movement and the Peace Pledge Union reflect this diversity of response. Emily Pankhurst, Sigfried Sassoon, Wilfrid Owen, Arthur Conan Doyle, H G Wells, Fenner Brockway and Sarah Hipperson are some of the names that stood out for me. Viewers are reminded that 215,000 people were killed and 155,000 injured when the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima.

The famous 1959 Easter March to AWE (Atomic Weapons Establishment) Aldermaston is recorded. The work of CND (Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament), which organised it and continues to campaign against nuclear weapons, is given wide coverage. Bruce Kent, its charismatic leader for many years, is rightly remembered for his outstanding services. The Women of Greenham Common are given due recognition for their courageous stand against the US nuclear airbase there. Also noted is the million-strong march urging Tony Blair not to invade Iraq that was ignored with tragic consequences. Another activist remembered is Brian Haw. In 2001, he left his family to set up a protest camp outside Parliament and stayed till his death in 2011.

This exhibition evoked in me many personal memories. I had gone on a Pax Christi Peace Walk with Bruce Kent from Burgundy to Geneva. I now live just a few miles from AWE

Aldermaston & AWE Burghfield and continue to participate in ongoing protests there. I had plucked up courage to shake Brian Haw's hand as he carried on his sombre vigil. I belonged to a local group that supported the Women of Greenham Common, some of whom became friends. I was active in Nukewatch, a citizens network that monitors the movement of convoys ferrying warheads from AWE Aldermaston & AWE Burghfield to nuclear submarines in Faslane, Scotland. I am still involved with NAG (Nuclear Awareness Group) and NIS (Nuclear Information Service), both of which are based locally and close to the hub of UK's nuclear war industry.

Three hours later, I staggered out of IWM, stimulated but needing some R&R! For those interested, a book about the exhibition is available. "People Power – Fighting for Peace from the First World War to now" by Lyn Smith is published by Thames & Hudson – ISBN 9780500519158. Google also has information about it. In her recent book, "Doughnut Economics", Kate Raworth makes the point, "From prehistoric cave paintings to the map of the London Underground, images, diagrams and charts have long been at the heart of human story telling." This is what I found so appealing about the exhibit - its visual impact. The exhibition lasts till 27 August 2017. So, if any reader plans to travel to London before then, a visit to its IWM would be well worthwhile.

Brendan James is a long time member of Pax Christi Victoria, resident in England

"MORE THAN A PROPHET" Book Review by Keith Stodden

More than a Prophet, An Insider's Response to Muslim Beliefs About Jesus and Christianity. Emir Fethi and Ergun Mehmet Caner. *Kregel Publications Grand Rapids, Michigan 2003.*

This is a book, published in 2003 in America, which I came across in the Op Shop where I volunteer. The authors are brothers who were born into a Sunni Muslim family in Turkey. They became Christians and held academic positions as Professor of Theology and Professor of Church History in America.

They write for the world's one billion Muslims, Jesus is a prophet, a highly respected prophet but one of many throughout history. Their book answers nearly 150 questions about Muslim and Christian faiths and is a helpful introductory resource for those seeking to understand Jesus. I highly recommend this book about the mind and heart of Jesus, as our people are confronted by Islam, not only as a political issue.

CHEMICAL WEAPONS VICTIMS — THEIRS AND OURS:

Mike Rivage-Seul

It is extremely interesting to compare the Trump administration's response to the use of chemical weapons in Syria and its apparent ignorance of similar weapons use by the U.S. and U.K. in Fallujah in March and November of 2004 under the leadership of Mad Dog [Mattis](#), our current Secretary of Defence.

We all know about Mr. Trump's [reaction](#) a few days ago to the deployment of chemical weapons in Syria. In the face of denials by the Syrian government, and on evidence that remains undisclosed, the Trump crowd was determined to "punish" the al-Assad government for the heinous crime of using chemical weapons. In his justification for "punitive measures" on April 6th, President Trump paid particular attention to the photographic evidence of chemical weapons use by the al-Assad government. Specifically, he reminded us of the child victims involved. The pictures Mr. Trump was referring to included these:



But what about the U.S.-inflicted atrocities behind photos like these



According to a study published in 2010, "[Beyond Hiroshima – The Non-Reporting Of Fallujah's](#) pictures of the deaths and birth "American" use of depleted uranium including white phosphorous in

[Cancer Catastrophe](#)," those are defects directly resulting from uranium and chemical weapons in Fallujah in 2004. And it's not simply a question of birth defects.

According to the same study infant mortality, cancer, and leukaemia rates in Fallujah have surpassed the rates recorded among survivors of the U.S. atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945. Following the Fallujah offensives, the rates in question rose by 60%. Dr Mushin Sabbak of the Basra Maternity Hospital explained the rises as resulting from weapons used by the U.S. and U.K. "We have no other explanation than this," he said.

And the problem extends far beyond Fallujah. Increased cancer rates and astronomical rises in birth defects have been recorded in Mosul, Najaf, Basra, Hawijah, Nineveh, and Baghdad. As documented by Mozghan [Savabieasfahani](#), an environmental toxicologist at the University of Michigan, there is "an epidemic of birth defects in Iraq." She writes, "Sterility, repeated miscarriages, stillbirths and severe birth defects – some never described in any medical books – are weighing heavily on Iraqi families."

Australian anti-war activist, [Donna Mulhearn](#), who has travelled repeatedly to Fallujah, talking with Iraqi doctors as well as affected families, added to the list:

"babies born with parts of their skulls missing, various tumors, missing genitalia, limbs and eyes, severe brain damage, unusual rates of paralyzing spina bifida (marked by the gruesome holes found in the tiny infants' backs), Encephalocele (a neural tube defect marked by swollen sac-like protrusions from the head), and more."

Several highly remarkable aspects of the situation just described immediately present themselves. For one there is the almost total silence of the media about the crimes of the U.S. and U.K. Then there is the lack of outrage (or even awareness?) on the parts of President Trump and U.N. ambassador, [Nikki Haley](#).

And what about those members of Congress so concerned about damage and pain to unborn fetuses? (I mean, what we have here in effect is a massive abortion operation by the United States in an entirely illegal war which has already claimed more than a million mostly civilian casualties.)

However, what is most remarkable about the contrast between responses to Syria and Iraq is the continued surprise of "Americans" by reprisal attacks by Muslims, which continue to be identified by our media as irrational and evil "terrorist attacks."

That is, on the one hand, the U.S. feels free to self-righteously rush to judgment and “punish” the suspected perpetrators of the Syrian attacks. But on the other, it downplays, classifies, or otherwise suppresses photographs and scientific reports testifying to its own much worse crimes. Once again, those outrages are carried out against unborn fetuses, living children, women, the elderly and male adults – the very same population cohorts that so concern our “leaders” when they are attacked by designated enemies.

The logic is inescapable. What’s good for the goose is good for the gander. If the U.S. is outraged by the killing of innocents and feels the need to “punish” the suspected perpetrators, someone else the right to treat the United States in the same way. (We might not know of the crimes of our government and military, but the whole Arab world knows!)

So we shouldn’t be surprised by any “terrorist” attacks that mimic on a comparatively small scale the U.S. response to the killing of the “beautiful little babies” that so concern Mr. Trump.

That’s the cost of hypocrisy, double standards, wars of aggression, and the use of outlawed weapons of mass destruction. In war ghastly offensives elicit ghastly counter-offensives.

Mike Rivage-Seul is Emeritus professor of Peace & Social Justice Studies. Berea College, Kentucky, Liberation Theologian, activist.

ULURU STATEMENT FROM THE HEART

We, gathered at the 2017 National Constitutional Convention, coming from all points of the southern sky, make this statement from the heart:

Our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tribes were the first sovereign Nations of the Australian continent and its adjacent islands, and possessed it under our own laws and customs.

This our ancestors did, according to the reckoning of our culture, from the Creation, according to the common law from ‘time immemorial’, and according to science more than 60,000 years ago.

This sovereignty is a spiritual notion: the ancestral tie between the land, or ‘mother nature’, and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who were born therefrom, remain attached thereto, and must one day return thither to be united with our ancestors. This link is the basis of the ownership of the soil, or better, of sovereignty. It has never been ceded or extinguished, and co-exists with the sovereignty of the Crown.

How could it be otherwise? That peoples possessed a land for sixty millennia and this sacred link disappears from world history in merely the last two hundred years?

With substantive constitutional change and structural reform, we believe this ancient sovereignty can shine through as a fuller expression of Australia’s nationhood.

Proportionally, we are the most incarcerated people on the planet. We are not an innately criminal people. Our children are alienated from their families at unprecedented rates. This cannot be because we have no love for them. And our youth languish in detention in obscene numbers. They should be our hope for the future.

These dimensions of our crisis tell plainly the structural nature of our problem. This is the torment of our powerlessness.

We seek constitutional reforms to empower our people and take a rightful place in our own country. When we have power over our destiny our children will flourish. They will walk in two worlds and their culture will be a gift to their country.

We call for the establishment of a First Nations Voice enshrined in the Constitution.

Makarrata is the culmination of our agenda: the coming together after a struggle. It captures our aspirations for a fair and truthful relationship with the people of Australia and a better future for our children based on justice and self-determination.

We seek a Makarrata Commission to supervise a process of agreement-making between governments and First Nations and truth-telling about our history.

In 1967 we were counted, in 2017 we seek to be heard. We leave base camp and start our trek across this vast country. We invite you to walk with us in a movement of the Australian people for a better future.

Source from ABC News: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-05-26/constitutional-recognition-rejected-by-indigenous-leaders-uluru/8563928>

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 Street, Erskineville. 2 minutes walk from Erskineville Station

QUEENSLAND Pax Christi Meetings Pax Christi Queensland

**Pancras Jordan OP
0415 461 620**
pancrasjordan@gmail.com

Clare Cooke SSpS
mcccl@holyspirit.com.au

**Pax Christi National Council
Meets on Skype no less
than bimonthly
for issues of national import**
Contact:
02 9550 3845
0411 450 953

Pax Christi Australia National Conference

11-13 August 2017
Edmund Rice Centre
16 Henley Road
Flemington, N.S.W
(Flemington Station)

Saturday 12 August, All Day
A joint forum with the NSW
Ecumenical Council:

Interfaith Conversa- tions on Non Violence

Other details TBA soon.

National Day of Action to Ban Nuclear Weapons: Saturday 17 June 2017

Melbourne
1pm State Library,

Sydney 12pm-3pm
2-12 Macquarie St, Parramatta

Brisbane 12pm-3pm
Queens Garden,

Canberra 12pm-1pm
Rally at Garema Place,

VICTORIA Agapes and Public Forums

June Agape

Has India Lost its Soul?
♦Is India still a secular nation?
♦Why is India able to recycle
Australia's resources,
♦but not its own?

**Valentina Satvedi, Tom Leydon,
Jacob Kavunkal, and Caesar
D'Mello** have Indian
roots and know India well.
They are passionate about this an-
cient land of rich cultures, nature
and spiritual traditions.

Sunday June 18
at Kildara, rear 39 Stanhope
Street, East Malvern.

12.30 for 1 p.m.

Western Suburbs Forum

**Sudanese History,
Culture and the experi-
ence of being a refugee.**

St. Theresa's Church,
Drummartin Street, Albion,

1.30 pm

Saturday 15 July
Bring some afternoon tea

I/We wish to apply for or renew membership of the International Christian Peace Movement - Pax Christi Australia. (Membership is from January to December)
(Please tick box if you wish to receive your copy of Disarming Times by e-mail)

Name..... Address.....

.....P'code.....Phone.....

Email..... Mobile.....

ENCLOSED \$..... (Single \$35; Low income \$20; Family \$45)
Please return to: (New South Wales) P.O. Box A 681 Sydney Sth 1235,
All others: P.O. Box 31 Carlton Sth Vic. 3053