

DISARMING Pax Christi TIMES

The Journal of Pax Christi Australia

Vol 44 No.

June 2019

HAVE WE, AUSTRALIA, BECOME A COUNTRY THAT BREEDS MASS MURDERERS WITH OUR WORDS?

Professor Richard Flanagan

In this speech given at the Palm Sunday Rally for Refugees, Richard Flanagan says we are better than our politicians' dark fears

J have only ever heard Behrouz Boochani's voice through speakers. One day, he will stand here before us, and we will hear and see him in the flesh. As a free human being. And I am here today to say that day is coming.

Because change is coming. You can feel it, you sense it. It is coming and it will not be denied. But it needs us to fight for it and to keep fighting for it, and we need to fight for it, not only for the refugees of Manus and [Nauru](#), but for our own salvation.

There is no fineness of oppression. We become the words we use. One small lie inevitably must be paid for with another larger lie, and that with more again. To rob one human of freedom demands that we must rob another, or the crime becomes too obvious. That is why to falsely imprison one human for no crime is a scandal while to kidnap and falsely imprison thousands for no crime is called a national necessity

This was, and always was only about the basest electoral politics, playing to a racist idea of Australia, that over 20 years, gave cover and then legitimacy to increasingly dangerous and murderous groups in our society.

And so it went for two decades until the horror of Christchurch, when New Zealand could truthfully say in atonement, "he is not one of us".

But he is one of us. And the terrible

truth is that we are him. We are our media, which too often promotes neo-Nazis. We are our parliament, which voted for a neo-Nazi slogan, resolving that it is OK to be white. We are our senator, who called for a "final solution" to the so-called problem of immigration.

We are our leaders of both major parties, who for too long competed in open cruelty towards refugees. We are our prime minister, who has said those on Manus and Nauru may be paedophiles, rapists, murderers.



Behrouz Boochani:

And yet it is the refugees of the camps who suffered sexual abuse, rapes, violence, and the psychological destruction of one human being after another in Australia's name – our name – in Australian internment centres. And so we became the words we used. In the almost two decades since Tampa, it is we who have become the paedophiles, the rapists, the murderers.

In the 2001 election, we decided who would we become and the circumstances in which we could become a new country. We became the charring flesh of 23-year-old Omid Masoumali as he burnt himself to death on Nauru. We became the screams of

Hodan Yasin, who did the same thing a few days later. We became the ignored begging of a woman refugee on Nauru being raped.

We became these words, we became these things, in the eyes of the world and in our own hearts, and now the shame of it must end, because we can no longer go forward as a nation when Australia's soul is daily a little more stained by such evil.

Someone is responsible. Someone is guilty. And it is they and not the innocent of Nauru and Manus who should be in jail. That is why there must be a royal commission into these camps – so that Omid Masoumali did not burn himself to death in vain; so that Reza Barati's murder is not completely meaningless; so that the countless lives and souls destroyed know some justice.

We need to establish the truth of what we did in those camps so that the white nationalists, the racial supremacists, the Islamophobes – those many new disguises for what is an older evil:

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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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Unsourced material in *Disarming Times* may be copied with due acknowledgement. A copy of the publication would be appreciated. Not all views expressed in this journal are equally shared by Pax Christi Australia.

Disarming Times is printed by Arena Press
2-14 Kerr St. Fitzroy 3065 Ph 03 9416 0232

fascism – cannot argue that it is in our national interest to persecute, vilify and destroy innocent human beings.

Because there are so many unanswered questions about those camps.

Where did the billions of our dollars go? How could so much taxpayers money be spent and the asylum seekers still be unsafe and often hungry? Who is responsible for the numerous human rights violations, the corrupt business deals, the many criminal acts? Who sanctioned the immense suffering? Who promoted it and who covered it up to keep the evil charade going?

This is not a time for pessimism, but optimism. After 20 years, Australia is once more beginning to move. We are not what we were in 2001. We have lived the shame, we have seen the cost in human lives, and we understand we are less free in consequence. It is time Australia once more walked tall in the company of other nations; time that we no longer bred mass murderers with our words.

And I tell you today, we will win. The camps are mired in the stories of their horror and the corruption that fed off the horror. The camps have lost all moral legitimacy and their closure is only a matter of time.

When a Chinese Communist Party-aligned billionaire – previously found by ASIO to represent a serious security risk – is able, on the payment of a \$20,000 fee to an ex-Liberal minister, to secure a lunch meeting with the immigration minister to advance his claim for a visa, it's no longer possible to take a single word that this government says on border

security seriously.

Listening to Behrouz Boochani, I thought we should never ever think words don't matter. Never ever think one person speaking their truth to power won't be heard if they are brave enough for long enough. If one jailed man and a mobile phone can achieve what Behrouz did then together we can close the camps.

In this election and after, we must push harder than ever. We must fight and continue to fight and never ever give up. Because Christchurch proves one thing: national security does not lie in the fairytale of border security; it does not repose in the ongoing torture of free human beings: it exists in tolerance and human decency.

We are better than our politicians' dark fears. We are not their hate. We are optimistic about a country built on openness. We are hopeful about our Australia that has as its compass the recognition that strength resides in the willingness to help the weakest.

It is our time, it is our country, and we are no longer marching to the beat of those who would sell it out to the NRA, to the neo-Nazis and the mass murderers.

We become the words we use.

Mr Morrison, Mr Shorten: use different words: love, kindness, compassion, goodness, justice. Mr Morrison, Mr Shorten, tear down those camps.

Close Manus and Nauru now. Close the camps and bring them home.

This is an edited version of a speech by Richard Flanagan given at the Palm Sunday Refugee Rally, Melbourne, on 14 April 2019.

'To be hopeful in bad times is not just foolishly romantic. It is based on the fact that human history is a history not only of cruelty, but also of compassion, sacrifice, courage, kindness. What we choose to emphasize in this complex history will determine our lives. If we see only the worst, it destroys our capacity to do something. If we remember those times and places—and there are so many—where people have behaved magnificently, this gives us the energy to act, and at least the possibility of sending this spinning top of a world in a different direction. And if we do act, in however small a way, we don't have to wait for some grand utopian future. The future is an infinite succession of presents, and to live now as we think human beings should live, in defiance of all that is bad around us, is itself a marvellous victory.' **Howard Zinn**

BUILDING A PEACE - INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX

Dr. Keith Suter

The disarmament situation is gloomy: there is the collapse of Cold War nuclear weapon treaty system and there is a continuing high level of military expenditure. Therefore the peace movement needs to do things differently.

Here is an idea for a “Peace-Industrial Complex”

The term “Military-Industrial Complex” was popularized by President Eisenhower in his 1961 Farewell Address to Congress. He had been a professional soldier for most of his working life and had seen how the US military had been transformed from a small fighting force into a large permanent warfighting establishment.

In 1940 the Greek army was larger than the US army. The US entered World War II on December 7 1941 (after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour) and so there was a rapid expansion of the US defence forces. The US was transformed during 1941-5 and so ended the war as the world’s major military power.

Eisenhower had lived through all this. As a traditional “small government” Republican he worried about how a new expensive industrial complex had been created to exploit the new military era - all at great cost to taxpayers.

The small number of corporations in the Military-Industrial Complex are not necessarily violent or warlike: they just want to make an easy profit. The workers in the Military-Industrial Complex are not necessarily violent or warlike: they just want a job.

The factories and other facilities are scattered around the US. Any attempt (as President Clinton found out in the post-Cold War 1990s) to cut back on military expenditure, will hurt voters in a constituency and so

they lobby their member of Congress to protect their work.

In retrospect Clinton failed to provide a vision of what the conversion of military facilities to peaceful uses would entail. For example, all military contracts should contain a provision requiring the contractor to have alternative plans to cope with the ending of a military contract and the redeployment of the workers to peaceful purposes.

In my second PhD, I looked at the need for the creation of a “Peace-Industrial Complex”. There is not a lack of ideas for disarmament – but a lack of political will. The creation of a Peace-Industrial Complex would be a way of generating political will.

Money is important for the shaping (if not corrupting) of US politics and so perhaps that same reasoning could be applied to ending the arms race: corporations could use their influence in the interests of peace.

Only a handful of companies make money out of war. Many more benefit from peace (such as health, law, education, tourism, and fast food outlets).

For example: Joan Kroc (1928-2003), the widow of the McDonald’s CEO Ray Kroc was a supporter of US peace movement, and she gave US\$50million for the University of Notre Dame for the Joan B Kroc Institute for Peace Studies. Her argument was that in the event of World War III there would not be a market for fast food.

Therefore it is necessary to mobilize businesses for peaceful interests.

As to the fears that many people have for their defence-related jobs, they just want employment. Therefore, the proposed Peace-Industrial Complex would need to campaign to

ensure that as defence jobs declined, there was a compensatory rise in the non-defence employment sector (health, education, welfare and public transport are all very labour intensive)

A campaign for a Peace-Industrial Complex will require some new ways of thinking, such as new coalition thinking. It will require peace groups to be in a dialogue with business interests and business councils such as institutes of company directors.

If we redefine “national security” from just a focus on military matters to also include economic and social indicators, the peace movement needs to build a coalition with welfare, anti-poverty groups.

The growing popular action on climate change has already generated some new coalitions (such as the insurance industry being aware of the economic impact of climate change). We could finance environmental programmes via the conversion of military expenditure to environmental protection.

Finally, the economics profession could be brought into the debate by being challenged to think about how US\$1.7Trillion is being so badly spent each year: what does such a high level of military expenditure do to distort the rest of the economy?

To conclude, the campaign for a Peace-Industrial Complex will require our creating a holistic vision of future society to inspire a wide variety of organizations, companies and individuals to work together.

This article is an edited version of an address at the 2019 Annual Meeting of Pax Christi New South Wales. De Keith Suter is a global futurist and media commentator in national and foreign affairs.

See <http://www.keithsuter.com>

PEACE IN ASIA: WHO BENEFITS FROM MILITARY ESCALATION?

by Caesar D'Mello

On the very day that Indian fighter jets were reportedly pounding the Islamist Jaish-e-Muhammad (JeM) base in the state of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, just one hundred kilometres from Islamabad, Pakistan's capital, as a group we were visiting *Gandhi Smriti* in Delhi where Mahatma Gandhi, acclaimed the Father of India, was killed. A series of sculpted slippers reconstructs his brief last walk that was suddenly ended by an assassin on 30 January, 1948. Gandhi, an ardent advocate of non-violence, was a broken man when he saw his dream of a united and peaceful India, for which he had laboured most of his life, abandoned when the British in 1947 partitioned Greater India into the two nations of India and Pakistan, as we know them today.

Gandhi paid the ultimate price for his active commitment to harmony between Hindus and Muslims that was virulently opposed by some. That antagonism still poisons India-Pakistan relations, the aerial bombing of 26 February, 2019 being its latest expression. This decades-long hostility is rooted in the decision at Partition by Maharaja Hari Singh to cede Kashmir, a state with a Muslim majority, to India.

Much suffering and death have ensued ever since. There have been umpteen skirmishes, and major wars in 1948, 1965, 1971, 1999 and 2004. There has also been recurring terrorist action led by various Pakistan-based militant groups to 'liberate' Kashmir from India, the most brazen being the incursion in Mumbai in November 2008 when after three days of mayhem 166 Indians lay dead with many wounded.

The bombing of the training base was a reply to a militant act on 14 February, 2019 for which JeM claimed responsibility. An Indian military convoy was targeted in a suicide bombing in Pulwama in Indian-occupied Kashmir that took the lives of 42 Indian soldiers. It appears its motivation was to be a spring-

board for another chapter in the conflict between India and Pakistan. India's claim of destroying the JeM site and killing many cadres was disputed by Pakistan which, in a tit for tat response, bombed what it says were 'non-civilian targets' in India. So the stalemate remains.

Who benefits? What learning has arisen from the hostilities?

Having receded from the brink, the nations' leaders, and others of goodwill, need to reflect on the recent events given the tripwire nature of the conflict. What has been learned, especially if the status quo ante remains mostly unchanged, poised to blow up another day? Sadly, historic conflicts are not unique. Kashmir is one that keeps festering. While it is wise to study the root causes of any conflict, leaving the two combatants trapped in a downward spiral of mutual hatred and periodic reciprocal violence is not. To enjoy the fruits of lasting peace Pax Christi Asia-Pacific believes that rather than persist on the path of instinctively responding in kind, it is an urgent responsibility of all concerned to find a sustainable way out of the endless impasse.

The recent violence was most unhelpful in many ways. Those living in areas bordering the Line of Control in divided Kashmir suffered greatly. The fearful sight of noisy air force jets hovering above notwithstanding, lives were disrupted. The majority, being farmers, were deeply anguished over losing homes, crops and livelihoods. Relocating to safer places meant spending their limited resources on rents and other costs. The wider community, too, was tense, as is obvious from the appeal by Sunila Ruth, a Christian member of Pakistan's National Assembly, to Pope Francis to support 'dialogue and negotiation' to help end the conflict. Christians and many others took part in public vigils declaring, 'War is not the answer'.

The Prime Minister of Pakistan, Imran Khan, articulated what appeared to be a face-saving way out for both

countries when he asked, "With the weapons you have and the weapons we have, can we really afford a miscalculation"? Acknowledging 'the hurt that has been caused due to the Pulwama attack', he said, "we should sit and settle this with talks". A captured Indian pilot was returned to the Indian authorities. Had there been reciprocity from the Indian side, the situation would have been diffused earlier, providing an opportunity for a dialogue on security, Kashmir, and effective ways to neutralise militant groups. Instead, the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi maintained an aggressive stance, having earlier promised 'a jawbreaking response'. This fuelled a nationalistic mood in sections of the country believing their war as 'just', and demanding 'a swift and appropriate reply'.

At the height of the conflict war hysteria was at its peak in both countries. Pakistan's public and social media were awash with anti-India belligerent messages. Combative sections of the Indian media endorsed actions such as removing the pictures of Pakistani cricketers from view, Indian cricketers using caps with military fatigue designs, airlines issuing boarding passes displaying the Indian flag, and so on. It was widely believed that this environment was exploited for the national elections. A high level of military preparedness over the years, and the sort of expenditure involved in the latest engagement between the two countries absorb increasing proportions of precious resources for developing and amassing conventional and nuclear weaponry. The known defence expenditure by India reaches \$60 billion a year! Military requirements are met, but the needs of the many poor in both countries do not have the same priority. As Archbishop Sebastian Shaw of Lahore commented, "escalating defence budget should instead be diverted to develop people".

Peace is too precious and basic a human right to be reduced to a zero sum game run on mutually retaliatory actions. History has shown the role of asymmetrical approaches in achieving peace when a magnanimous give and take becomes a circuit breaker. Every chance should be seized, even if in the past any attempts were thwarted, including by non-state actors who should be brought to heel. Realising long lasting

peace by negotiations is preferable to living in a constant cycle of violence and the shadow of a nuclear threat. It is crucial that ways forward discussed are realistic and based on justice, and serious attempts made by both sides to tone down the war rhetoric. The relatively new government of Pakistan and the Indian government that emerges from the elections have a new window 'to give peace a chance', in the spirit of Mahatma Gandhi who

denounced 'politics without principle'. Pax Christi Asia-Pacific stresses that *"diplomacy and other peaceable ways...will serve.. not only the peoples of India and Pakistan but also ..of Asia-Pacific and beyond"*. **Caesar DMello, from Pax Christi Australia, and Asia-Pacific, is a consultant on South 'development', climate change, and peace concerns.** (caesarmdm@gmail.com)

PEACE IN ASIA 2: NORTH KOREA THE NORTH KOREA-USA SUMMIT IN HANOI: A Pax Christi Asia-Pacific Reflection, Caesar D'Mello

BARELY SIX WEEKS AGO* the world's news focused on two almost concurrent events significant on account of their potential consequences for peace in Asia and beyond. On 26 February Indian air force jets crossed into Pakistan with a mission to destroy a madrasa of the militant group, Jaish-e-Muhammad, sited a hundred kilometres from Islamabad, that country's capital. A day later, at the other end of the continent, the leaders of North Korea and the United States of America met in Hanoi, Vietnam, for their second face to face meeting. All the four countries in question are nuclear-armed, with any misjudgement resulting in widespread death and devastation.

Even though the Hanoi Summit has now passed, reflecting on why it failed would be instructive in light of the unresolved peace concerns. It was preceded by an air of lightheartedness belying the gravity of the impending discussions. "Welcome to Hanoi, City of Peace" signs, placards all over town featuring stylised doves and handshakes, a South Korean pastry chain pleading for peace on the Korean Peninsula, a local barber advertising free Trump or Kim hairstyles gave an air of excitement and expectancy to Hanoi, but the talks failed.

To understand Hanoi, we need to revisit the earlier Singapore Summit that ended with an agreement to establish "new US-DPRK relations" and build "a lasting and stable peace regime on the Korean Peninsula", but

the substance of what was agreed remained vague. "Denuclearization" to the Americans meant "complete and verifiable" dismantling of the North Korean nuclear weapons as a *sine qua non* of further steps, but for the North Koreans a key part of it was the removal/ reduction of America's security commitment to South Korea as a condition for their disarming.

Before leaving the US, President Trump had said he was "in no rush" so long as "there is no testing". The specific objectives of the meeting, however, were not clear. Observers speculated that North Korea would be willing to let go of the Yongbyon nuclear reactors, seen as past by its use-by date, and allow inspections to ascertain that the Punggye-ri site, the location of the underground detonation of nuclear devices, was truly decommissioned. The North Koreans were believed to have learnt enough from their tests. There was talk of liaison offices planned in each other's capitals to assist with eventual normalising of diplomatic relations and a 'peace declaration'. Mr Kim was expected to press for the lifting or softening of UN sanctions to enable new economic activity, especially in collaboration with an eager South Korea. The Hanoi Summit was a disappointment, however, to anyone hoping for a new leaf turned in a conflicted region of the Asia-Pacific. "It was about the sanctions", said Mr Trump to the several thousand members of the international media. North Korea had insisted on some reshaping of

relations, and at least partial relief from sanctions before they would consider disarmament. The US had demanded a verified closure of North Korea's main nuclear sites, or a timeline for the dismantling of all nuclear facilities for any concessions. The gap was unbridgeable, demonstrating that peace outcomes result from robust preparation, not hubris, bullying or flattery. No common ground appeared to have been arrived at after the vagueness of Singapore. Trump's pre-Summit self-assurance on a deal with his "friend" Kim Jong-un whom he had earlier taunted as a "little Rocket Man" was unhelpful. The suggestion of a Nobel Peace prize for the American president suddenly disappeared.

An opportunity lost!

A transactional approach proved to be inadequate for discussions with a regime shaped by a legacy of decades of hostility and isolationism. Mr Kim's grandfather, Mr Kim Il-Sung, the founding President of North Korea, grounded in Marxist-Leninist ideology but disaffected with it later, had launched his own notion of *Juche* or "self-reliance" that became the national governing philosophy and framework, promoted almost as a cult. *Juche* decreed it as the duty of the North Korean people to be independent of other nations in their political thinking, economics and defence, and an understanding of this was needed. To the Kim dynasty nuclear weapons, far from being viewed

as discretionary assets, were existential guarantees of security. The fate of Libya's Muammar Gaddafi may have been a cautionary tale to Mr Kim against giving up nuclear weapons without a durable *quid pro quo* consistent with the self-respect of a country that had agreed to participate in negotiations.

A most disappointed observer of the Hanoi talks was South Korea and its President, Mr Moon Jae-in. He had expected the Hanoi summit to be a launching pad for closer relations with North Korea actively cultivated since his own summit with Mr Kim. The centenary of the March 1st movement, a rebellion against the Japanese

colonial power that both Koreas celebrated, was hoped to be the occasion to announce his vision for economic cooperation. So, for now at least, the opportunity was lost.

The failure of Hanoi once again pointed to the challenges facing efforts to resolve conflicts, especially those entrenched over a long history of intransigence, grievances and an absence of goodwill. In contemporary times it can be legitimately questioned whether sustainable resolutions can be effected through an emphasis on a military zero sum game. The following advice bears repeating for decision-makers and relevant institutions responsible for peace outcomes: *Peace*

is not merely the absence of war, nor can it be reduced solely to the maintenance of a balance of power between enemies. (Pastoral Constitution, *Gaudium et Spes*, 1966. Second Vatican Council).

Genuine peace requires the establishment of an order based on justice and goodwill that is greatly enabled by the elimination of grave threats to it. In this spirit, Pax Christi Asia-Pacific calls on "all states to sign and ratify the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). The accession of all to this Treaty, including by the USA and North Korea, would be a huge and unprecedented step towards providing true security and stability to the whole world".

NO REAL IMPEDIMENTS TO AUSTRALIA SIGNING THE NEW BAN ON NUCLEAR WEAPONS;

Dr Marianne Hanson

The Australian Labor Party's conference in December passed a binding resolution to sign and ratify a United Nations treaty which outlaws nuclear weapons. Nonetheless, some in the party were sceptical, and asked for certain conditions to be met.

The resolution re-stated the value of the ANZUS alliance, and noted that a future Labor government will sign after taking account of the presence of effective verification and enforcement mechanisms, assurances that the ban-treaty will be compatible with the longstanding Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and that there is a need to work to achieve universal support for the Ban Treaty.

Shadow Defence Minister Richard Marles has said that there will have to be "certainty" that signing the treaty will not endanger the ANZUS alliance.

For his part, former Foreign Minister Gareth Evans stated that "the difficulty for Australia in terms of signing or ratifying the ban treaty is that, to do so, we would effectively be tearing up our US alliance commitment."

Much as I respect Evans' outstanding work on the need to prevent nuclear war, I am perplexed by his assumption that the ban-treaty is wholly incompatible with our alliance commitments.

Australians seem to fear anything

which might threaten our relationship with Washington. But signing the nuclear ban, if it is done correctly, need not spell the end of our alliance.

The first point to note is that ANZUS is not explicitly a nuclear alliance, and that we are not unequivocally under a US umbrella, covered by extended nuclear deterrence. The word "nuclear" does not appear in the treaty, suggesting that ANZUS could just as easily be viewed as a mutual pact to assist each other using conventional military forces, which in all likelihood is what would happen anyway in the event of a conflict.

ANZUS commits its members to "consult together" and "act to meet the common danger" whenever the security of any one of them is threatened. This falls far short of a commitment on the part of Washington to use nuclear weapons to defend us, but since 1994 the phrase 'extended nuclear deterrence' has been formally linked – unilaterally, by Canberra – to ANZUS.

But even if we accept that ANZUS does provide us with extended nuclear deterrence, this does not automatically mean that we cannot sign the nuclear ban, a treaty that most of the world's states have supported. There are some important, and yes, difficult, steps that we would have to take.

We would first need to renounce a

reliance on US nuclear protection, even if that reliance has been only self-perceived and self-declared.

Given that any use of nuclear weapons would violate international law and produce devastating consequences, given that US conventional weapons' capabilities are phenomenal, and given that ANZUS is not explicitly a nuclear umbrella, this should not be an overly-difficult position to take. What would be more complicated and require significant attention is the reform of our military and intelligence relationship with Washington, our "Joint Facilities" at Pine Gap and elsewhere in Australia.

Any state that wishes to sign the nuclear treaty has to pledge not to do anything to assist a nuclear weapon state in its nuclear plans. Australia would therefore have to extricate itself from all activities which might assist our ally's policies of nuclear deterrence or plans for nuclear launch. This would be a complex task, involving substantial technical and political challenges, but it can be done. There is important detailed work emerging which identifies how our Joint Facilities would need to be transformed, to make us compliant with the nuclear ban, and observers within Australia have already provided submissions on moving to a purely conventional weapon – or non-nuclear – alliance

with the US.

Will all this annoy Washington enough to break-off our alliance completely? It could be that the necessary changes to our shared military and intelligence roles will be simply too much for the US to stomach. If so, then yes, the US might choose to “tear up the alliance.”

But it is a mistake to think that this will automatically happen, or that ANZUS is at risk in its entirety. There are some important new studies which show that it is indeed compatible for a state to remain in a military alliance with the United States *and* to renounce nuclear weapons. The most recent is from Harvard Law School, which concludes very clearly that “Australia can renounce its nuclear umbrella arrangement and preserve its military alliance with the United States.”

Even some NATO states are exploring ways in which they can remain in the NATO alliance while also signing up to the Nuclear Test ban treaty. For them, the position is more complicated than it is for Australia, because these states very explicitly *are* under a US nuclear umbrella.

And if they can explore ways of supporting a nuclear weapons ban while remaining in alliance with Washington, surely we can do the same? Modifying our stance on nuclear weapons will not automatically spell the end of ANZUS.

A point made by sceptics was that if the nuclear weapon states will not

sign the treaty, we should not do so either. But this is disingenuous, and a stalling procedure. Over the past century, arms control processes have shown that de-legitimisation is a first step in a long process of eliminating a weapon which has come to be seen as inhumane and which contravenes international law. This has happened with biological weapons, chemical weapons, and more recently with landmines. Initially, many states possessing these weapons – including the US – did not sign up. But the moral and legal pressure placed on such states over time has meant that these weapons are now heavily stigmatised, and their possession and use have dropped dramatically.

The ban treaty will not, of course, eliminate nuclear weapons overnight. But it is an important and necessary legal step in the long process which seeks to prevent nuclear war, and it asks the nine nuclear states to undertake a phased, balanced, and verifiable elimination of their nuclear arsenals.

Australia should be signing up. We need not wait for nuclear-armed states to join first. Gareth Evans suggested that rather than asking them to sign the ban – which we know they won’t, for some time at least – we should instead pursue a step-by-step process, calling for reduced numbers of nuclear weapons, a doctrine of no-first-use, and for de-alerting. But that kind of process has got us nowhere in the past decade: there are still almost 15,000 nuclear weapons

held by nine states, and all of these states are busy modernising, rather than reducing, their arsenals .

This is precisely why the rest of the world has pushed for a ban treaty, a treaty which, by the way, clearly reinforces the NPT, which requires the elimination of nuclear weapons.

Finally, it is worth remembering that when New Zealand rejected nuclear weapons, the sky did not fall. New Zealand and America remained ostensible allies, even as they fumed at each other outwardly. There are many firm friends of the West who support the ban. In any case, the US has resumed working with New Zealand on military and intelligence issues, with enhanced defence cooperation policies now well in place – all based, of course, on conventional rather than nuclear weapons.

Australia should not wait for unrealistic conditions to be met before we give full support to the nuclear ban. Believing that there is no possibility of successfully modifying our relationship with the US is self-defeating. We must examine the Harvard and other reports before claiming that the alliance will be lost. ANZUS – even in a modified form – is likely to survive. Let’s not rule out the option of designing our own future in a way that suits us.

Dr Marianne Hanson is an Associate Professor of International Relations at The University of Queensland. Reproduced with permission.

“RESTORING A BROKEN PROMISE”

Pax Christi Aotearoa-New Zealand statement on the Christchurch bombings

Kevin McBride

Pax Christi Aotearoa-New Zealand joins the many organisations, groups and individuals who have shared their condolences with the victims of the tragic events in Christchurch, with their families and the wider Muslim communities in New Zealand and worldwide. Such an attack on people practising in peace the faith in which they believe must be a warning to all of us that there are undercurrents of intolerance and ha-

tred running under the surface of our society. These must be addressed if we are to live in the peace which brought those victims to our society, the peace to which we all aspire.

This tragic occasion is also a time for us to raise serious questions about the foundations of our society, especially where diversity of belief, of ethnicity and of culture is questioned or attacked.

We support the Government’s inten-

tions regarding the availability of firearms, especially the kind of automatic weapons which were used in this attack. It is time to ask if the latter have any authentic place in our society. They are inappropriate for hunting, target-shooting and recreational use but they played a critical role in the massacre which has afflicted the Muslim communities in Christchurch. Promises to investigate the efficacy of our gun laws must be fulfilled now.

Questions have also been asked about the focus of our security agencies. Should they be more concerned about signs of instability among local groups exhibiting high levels of racial, religious or cultural intolerance, seemingly behind the motivation for this week's tragedy? Did security agencies and police fail to identify signs of instability in the apparent perpetrators of the Christchurch massacres? Do we have other similar disaffected people or groups who might find the support that the agents in this week's event found to enable them to carry through their evil plans? Are we an easy target for international terrorism?

It is also important that we hear the call of those educationalists seeking a stronger emphasis at all levels on a more authentic and complete teaching of the history of our biculturally-founded nation. A clear awareness of the realities of our history can provide a firm step in the direction of necessary reconciliation of our peoples. It is also essential that incoming migrants

are assisted to a similarly clear historical awareness so they can understand the reasons for tensions that exist in our country as well as the steps that have been taken to heal historical injustices.

There are many aspects of life in New Zealand that need examination and



remedy particularly the growing development of an Us/Them mentality which extends across the comparative wealth, gender, cultural, employment and political fields, to name a few. One of the key values of the foundational Maori culture of our nation is *Whanaungatanga*, the inter-relationship of all things. It suggests that there is no Us/Them but only Us, that we are all in this life together, that

when the bell tolls, it tolls for you and for me, for *whenua* (land) and *moana* (sea), for all things, living and dead.

We are all victims of the Christchurch massacre. It is our dead we bury and our damaged young men and women we need to heal, so as to give them a sense of belonging and of sharing the same journey as everyone and of being the peace we all need if we are to enjoy fullness of life.

As we pray in our mosques and churches and homes for the victims of the Christchurch massacre, for the peace of the dead and the living, may we also pray that we turn our minds, hearts and hands to the task of addressing its causes. In this way, the land of Aotearoa may become in truth a land of peace, *aroha* and justice for all for which so many long.

Kia okioki rātou i runga i te rangimarie. May they rest in peace.

Kevin McBride is National Coordinator, Pax Christi Aotearoa-New Zealand

REFLECTIONS ON EARTH@PEACE CONFERENCE

Anna Sakurai

Conference Highlights

An offering as rich as that provided by the Earth@Peace conference makes it challenging to focus on just a few highlights. Perhaps the aims of the conference provide a beginning, and a guiding compass through this task. Earth@Peace promised to enrich an emerging conversation to explore new directions, new ways of thinking and acting on peace-making and peace-building. To rethink the relationships between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians, the way we shape our economy and environment, our use and dependence on military power and use of force, engagement with the peoples of the Asia Pacific including with their diverse faiths and cultures. Many of the speakers were extremely experienced, having devoted themselves and their work to understanding and in some cases to trying to resolve some of the darkest issues that have crippled Australia from advancing fair.

Amongst the great and the good of

our city, our state, our land, a number of speakers brought precious lived experience.

- Precious because so extremely costly.
- Precious because often so difficult to bring to light.
- Precious because so incredibly rich.

All too often such voices are ignored or simply over looked. Sometimes they are even silenced. So it was wild and refreshing to hear from speakers with such a deep and important lived insight of the issues about which they talked, offering an understanding that did not shy from the complexity, but which demonstrated deep compassion. This was the highlight of the conference for me, which provided participants with an opportunity to connect with those who have deep, lived experiences to share, whether they were speaking out in front of us, or sat alongside us, with open minds and hearts full of stories to be told and shared. Here, some reflections on

those whose presence moved me deeply.

Although the customary indigenous welcome can become a quick run-through to be checked off at the beginning of proceedings, the welcome of Uncle David set the tone for the two days. Warm, but with gravitas, and also with lightness. He brought his deep roots in the land, and in work on sustainability reflecting the indigenous knowledge of his forefathers and mothers, the sensitivity of his community and his people. This was the beginning of two very full days of deep reflection and consideration. How do we tread more lightly on this land? How do we make sure that we do not bump and bruise? How do we heal each other when we do, and acknowledge the deep hurts and harms that still groan throughout the land? How do we consider our own role humbly but without cynicism; energy to act decisively; and with determination? In our working group we decided to col- late some of the informational

resources together, so that we can access them ourselves and refer to the information easily. I will collect and upload these resources online so that we can share them beyond the workshop participants to the conference participants, and further still. As for more abstract uses and purposes for the insights and contacts, this is in gestation. Thinking continues on these and other matters, but I will make sure to let you know once I move from reflection and discernment, to action. There are so very many things to do!

A few final thoughts

One thing that I have ruminated on is what can be done to reach out to non-faith-based communities and individuals, to the many floaters and drifters out there, of which I feel myself to be a part, spiritual but sickened by what some of the institutions enable.

Concerned, but unclear about next steps.

Then there are others who are simply scared, or uncertain, insecure or in precarity. What can be done to reach out to those who might not yet sing from the same choir book?

One of the fundamental take-aways of the conference was that there are still good people amongst us. Everyday we are fed information that challenges this, and contradicts our desire to believe that we are capable of better things, that a better world is possible. Being in the presence of so many who have dedicated their time to making a difference was in itself refreshing, and I wonder whether this is something that can be replicated on a smaller scale somewhere where people can come together and find nourishment for the soul, a place to rest and replenish the spirit, friendship and camaraderie.

One small flame in the Eastern tradition is carried from church to home, from family to friend at Easter time shielded from the wind and protected from the rain. Will it light a candle at home, will it warm the hearth? Will it spark off and light an engine, a motor of activity? Or will it be a bonfire that clears away the dust and darkness? One can never be sure where the little flames will go. But this conference feels like just such a moment, passing on a flame. Carried and shielded and covered, but also uncovered. I am extremely grateful for the scholarship which you gave me, which in turn gave me an opportunity to carry the flame onwards.

Anna Sakurai is a Japanese Australian, involved in anti war movement through Japanese for Peace. She is co-founder of the Pacific Fellowship an NGO which seeds funds promising initiatives in the Pacific Region

EASTER DAY MASSACRE OF CHRISTIANS IN SRI LANKA. Kumara Illangasinghe, Anglican Bishop Emeritus of Kurunagala,

"Father forgive them for they do not know what they are doing" Luke 23:34.

Sri Lanka is once again in deep shock and saddened by the attacks on the peaceful worshippers on Easter Sunday and the innocent visitors from abroad and from within Sri Lanka, who were at the hotels. The carnage is unprecedented in the recent times, when as a nation Sri Lanka was struggling to emerge from the depths of racial, ethnic and religious divide.

During the long and violence-ridden history of our nation, many have been trying hard and assisting ordinary people of our country to overcome religion-based oppression, domination and violence. Even at this most crucial hour, it is important for our people to understand that such drastic and violent action cannot be generalised. We are thankful that the people of all religions and of all ethnicities in the country are able to understand this situation and they have shown much maturity in the aftermath of this most recent and horrendous wave of violence.

Against such creative background, it is extremely sad to note that those who

have been responsible in all aspects of security, maintaining law and order and governance, have started the dirty practice of pointing fingers at each other and attempting to evade responsibility. In addition to passing the responsibility to others, they themselves and their stooges are making vain attempts shamelessly to defend themselves, to the extent of justifying their inaction.

As a genuine and a responsible community of people and those who govern them and wield power, let us be humble enough to accept our weaknesses and shortcomings and express our regret. It is only then that the people will be able to forgive and understand us. May those who have been and are responsible, have the courage to be humble and honest.

As expected there have been many attempts to gain political advantage, amidst death and destruction. Let us whole heartedly condemn and reject such heinous attempts and drive such persons away completely and forever, from the sacred arena of good governance and politics. It is such personal and selfish agendas that have destroyed the fabric of our society and

divided our communities.

We have observed in the recent days that many a statement has demanded that the perpetrators be brought to justice. But it is important for everyone to understand that such appeals are not directed towards asking for the "pound of flesh" and that our demands cannot stop at that.

We need to go beyond and engage in committed acts of consoling and healing. We cannot also ignore the fact that there has been serious breakdown in our intelligence networks and of the rule of law. As usual, the irresponsibility and indifference of those in authority, have allowed such carnage.

Those who thought it fit to act in these most destructive ways and their thoughts, reasons and understandings alone, are the causes for this appalling carnage and certainly no particular religious or ethnic group should be held responsible or targeted. However, initially let us remind ourselves the words of Jesus from the cross, "Father forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing".

This is important to console ourselves amidst loss, frustration and hopelessness. Jesus sacrificed himself in order

that others may have life and have life abundantly. He showed us that it is only in losing that we gain. It is only after death, that resurrection will be experienced.

There is no meaning in Easter, without Good Friday. The seed having fallen on the ground had to die, before it starts germinating. Therefore, the words of forgiveness from the cross are not only meaningful, but also a valuable part of God's purpose and had to be experienced by Jesus himself. Without those words of forgiveness, the death of Jesus would not have been meaningful and the resurrection itself could not have been complete and the true purpose of God couldn't have been achieved. This is the truth about life that we learn anew.

It has been a hard process of learning and experience for the victims. Further we need to explore the reasons for these extremist elements to act in such horrific ways and what they intend to gain. Because they belong to a particular group, either religious or ethnic, there is every possibility of finding fault with and tarnishing the whole group.

We appeal to all people to be much more rational in this and be responsible in their thoughts and actions. This is pure terrorism, which is worldwide, and we need to emphasise on the need to deal with that. It remains the responsibility of the government to ensure security of all people in the country, irrespective of where they

belong, ethnically or religiously.

This is not the time for any person or a group to retaliate. There is no need to take the rule of law in to anyone's hands, except that we leave it to those to whom that responsibility has been assigned. It is the responsibility of the citizens of our country to extend our cooperation to those who are responsible for law and order.

Let us remind ourselves the year 1983, when a black July erupted due to loss of lives and their funerals. We do not need a repetition of such enormity, which took over 30 years to overcome. But that overcoming too was very limited and insufficient. Hence the continuing struggle we are called to engage in the areas of reconciliation and healing.

We appeal to all concerned to not seek short term solutions. Long term and lasting solutions are needed, for which we need to commit ourselves.

While we extend our heart-felt condolences and the assurance of our prayers to those who have been the victims and their families, and wish speedy recovery to those injured, we need to resolve within our own faith traditions to be guided by the teachings of our spiritual founders. Sri Lanka is blessed with four or more major living religions and our people are equipped with adequate religious resources to face this emotional situation. Let us decide and commit to draw from our own faiths, as well as from those of others to maintain sanity in our communities. .

We need to organise ourselves in inter-faith and inter-ethnic ways. Let us build powerful community teams that will ensure peace and harmony, within and outside the community. It has to be our resolve to be powerful by being united. We need such inter-faith and inter-ethnic peace maker teams, in every community, and in every village in Sri Lanka. It is only then that we will be able to face and defeat the evil powers in our midst.

Let us genuinely learn to respect each other, shedding all our differences and private agendas. This has been a weakness that we need to acknowledge and discard. For long years our private and partisan agendas have taken precedence, over the common good of all people. It is not enough to express our solidarity only during periods of crisis, as is happening today.

It is a time for us to reflect back upon our own selves and examine our conscience as well as our actions guided by such conscience, and to see how much we have been truthful or how much we have been drifting away from our neighbours, due to our own selfish agendas. Such a period of repentance is necessary for us to be honest in our resolve. It is then and only then, that we will be able to forgive each other, which is not just an option but something that is necessary for our ongoing journey, as a sensible and a united nation.

In solidarity and prayer.

BRISBANE PRAYS FOR VICTIMS OF BOMB ATTACKS IN SRI LANKA

A series of prayer services were conducted in Brisbane to support the grieving local Sri Lankan community as well as to pray for those deceased and injured in the Easter Sunday bombings. A multi-faith prayer service was held at the Brigidine College where Fr Pan Jordan OP, as school Chaplain together with Pam Nair (both Pax Christi Queensland members) and others helped to organise the coming together of faith leaders from the Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, Sikh and Christian traditions as each faith leader led the prayers for Sri Lanka. They prayed that our common humanity may be a

source of unity in what is an ever violent global situation.

Fr Pan, a Dominican Catholic priest, who is originally from northern Sri Lanka expressed that the deadly Easter bombing attacks has "shocked and devastated" Sri Lankan Catholics across the world. Such a blast has never been seen in Sri Lanka – even during the civil war times. "It will take weeks, months, and years for the people of Sri Lanka to rebuild their lives after this."

Amongst those who are grieving include a 20-year-old student studying in Australia, who lost her parents in the bombings. An Australian

woman, Manik Suriaaratchi and her 10-year-old daughter Alexendria were also among the dead, killed when a bomb exploded inside a church in Negombo. Ms Suriaaratchi's husband was uninjured in the blast as he was parking the family car when the bomb went off.

The co-ordinated bombings were carried out by seven suicide bombers, and their targets were apparently picked for maximum symbolic value.

St Anthony's, in the heart of Colombo, is a national shrine, attended by multi-faith worshippers. Fr Pan knows the church well.

“There is great devotion to St Anthony. Every Tuesday the church is packed with people from many religions,” he said. “It is close to the harbour in the old town and the cross of St Anthony’s is the very first sign any traveller sees, coming into the port.”

The second prominent church attacked was St Sebastian’s, in Negombo, a fishing town north of the capital. Negombo is nicknamed “Little Rome” because of its strong Catholic culture, which dates back to the 16th-century Portuguese colonialism.

Fr Pan said he had been present at horrific bombing scenes during Sri Lanka’s three decades of civil war.

“When I see these latest attacks it brings my mind back to those times,” he said.

“As a nation we are shocked, devastated by these attacks. “The Catholic community is really affected. It is like a funeral right across the country.”

Fr Pan also organised a Mass at St Stephen’s Catholic Cathedral, Brisbane and con-celebrated together with Archbishop Mark Coleridge. Archbishop Coleridge described death becoming “new life” as he spoke strongly about the plight of Sri Lankans during his Divine Mercy Sunday homily. “It can seem almost perverse to speak of mercy at a time when we’ve seen how merciless the

world can be, as merciless as young people walking among the innocent with a backpack full of bombs, as merciless as the demonic schemers who send them to their death.”

Pam Nair who is also a Counselling practitioner said that there was an overwhelming sense of cohesion amongst those who had never met before, demonstrated people’s shared intentions and hope for a better world. “Fundamentally, we are all striving for a more just and peaceful world and we came together in solidarity, as we are one humanity born into a fabric of relationships.”

Submitted by Pam Nair

IN MEMORY OF TONY NEWMAN John Butcher

This is a long overdue recognition of Tony Newman, a long time member of Pax Christi and occasional contributor to “Disarming Times”. Tony died in September 2017.

I first met Tony in 1967 when we were both part of a group of catholic priests who, following Vatican 2, were trying to develop new forms of ministry to enable us to better meet our own spiritual and pastoral needs and also to better serve people in a changing society. The church authorities resisted our request. Most of the members of the group eventually left the priesthood but the efforts of our group eventually led to the team ministry at St Vincent’s parish Redfern.

Prior to 1967 and well before the Vatican Council, Tony had been a major driver of liturgical reform within the Catholic Church as part of the Living Parish group. This group promoted reforms which were subsequently to be endorsed by the Vatican Council: initiatives such as liturgy in the vernacular, the altar facing the people and more relevant church hymns. Tony was also responsible for producing the “Living Parish” hymnbook. Later Tony with Peter Stone produced the “Travelling to Freedom” songbook: a songbook which with songs, quotations and illustrations united social justice and spirituality.

Tony was an advocate for non-violent social change. He was greatly influenced by the radical Catholic pacifist Dorothy Day. His property on the Central Coast he named “the Whole Earth Farm and Dorothy Day School of Non-violence.” In the 1970’s Tony conducted non-violent workshops at his property and other venues. Tony was a key figure in the Catholic peace movement which op-



posed Australia’s involvement in the Vietnam War and supported conscientious objectors and draft resisters. Tony was an early member of Pax Christi in Australia. He initiated a Pax Christi group in Sydney and also led a Pax Christi contingent as part of a larger convoy which in the mid-1970’s travelled to Pine Gap to de-

mand that the lease not be renewed. This contingent took part in public meetings en route to Alice Springs and at a demonstration at the base as a Pax Christi representative he poured blood on an American flag.

Over the years Tony took this same non-violent perspective into other struggles for social justice against apartheid in South Africa, for rights for Aboriginal people in Australia, for equal rights for homosexual people and other contemporary struggles.

Tony initiated other groups which met in his chapel of the Black Sun dedicated to the interior life. Some of these groups were based on the writings of Carl Jung and James Hillman. He also developed a meditation group which met in the chapel.

After leaving the priesthood Tony retained an abiding deep interest in spirituality and liturgical celebration and art.

Tony had his flaws which resulted in suffering for some people who were close to him. However he remained throughout his life a mentor and guide to many people whose lives were the better for their association with Tony. The “Whole Earth Farm” was witness to a different way of being in the world and many people visited it as a retreat and opportunity for reflection.

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: 209A Edgeware Road, Enmore.

QUEENSLAND Pax Christi Meetings Pax Christi Queensland

Contact:

Pancras Jordan OP

0415 461 620

pancrasjordan@gmail.com

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VICTORIA

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*You are invited
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**Further info, Caesar D’Mello,
caesarmdm@gmail.com**

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)

New South Wales Members please return your membership application/membership renewal to PO Box A 681 Sydney South 1235 NSW

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