

WHO ARE THE UYGHURS
WHY IS THE CHINESE GOVERNMENT DETAINING THEM?

Anna Hayes

The Uyghurs are Turkic-speaking Muslims from the Central Asian region. The largest population live in China's autonomous Xinjiang region, in the country's north-west. The Uyghurs are one of a number of persecuted Muslim minorities in Xinjiang, including the Kazakhs, Uzbeks, Tajiks, Kyrgyz and Hui.

The region's name suggests the Uyghurs have autonomy and self-governance. But similar to Tibet, Xinjiang is a tightly controlled region of China.

Many Uyghur communities also live in countries neighbouring China, such as Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan. An estimated 3,000 Uyghurs live in Australia.

China's President Xi Jinping has overseen a hard-line approach towards Muslim minorities living in Xinjiang, especially the Uyghurs. In recent years, the government has installed sophisticated surveillance technology across the region, and there has been a surge in police numbers.

Muslim minorities are being arbitrarily arrested and imprisoned. It's estimated around one million Uyghurs have been detained in what China calls "vocational training centres".

These are purpose-built detention centres, some of which resemble high-security jails. A recent ABC investigation found 28 detention camps had expanded across Xinji-



ang as part of China's program of subjugation.

The Chinese government is intolerant of the religion and other traditions of minorities, particularly the Uyghurs.

There is growing evidence of human rights violations inside the centres as well as reports of deaths in custody and forced labour.

Members of the Uyghur diaspora have been reported as requesting "proof of life" from Beijing over disappeared family members back in Xinjiang. The Guardian recently reported an estimate that 80% of Uyghurs in Australia would have a relative who has disappeared into the camps.

History of discrimination

The People's Republic of China annexed Xinjiang in 1949. At this time, it was estimated the Uyghurs numbered around 76% of the region's population. Han Chinese - the country's majority ethnic group - accounted for just 6.2%, with other minority groups making up the remaining total.

Since 1949, Han migration to the region has diluted the ethnic ra-

tio. Official statistics show the population is now made up of 42% Uyghurs and 40% Han.

The largest population of Uyghurs live in China's Xinjiang province, in the country's north-west.

Beijing does not recognise the region as a colony. But the 1949 annexation represents colonisation to Xinjiang's Muslim minorities and segments of the population have resisted Beijing's rule. Many refuse to speak Mandarin, while others campaign for independence.

Beijing regards any discontent or criticism of the Chinese Communist Party to be threatening. Minority dissent is treated as a danger to state security. This is even if it involves moderate voices calling for improvements in health, education and employment.

To Beijing, territorial integrity is of utmost importance. It does not tolerate any expression contrary to the official position that Xinjiang has always been part of China.

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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

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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

In recent decades, Beijing has recast the Uyghur ethnic group as a terrorist collective. This has allowed Beijing to justify its transformation of Xinjiang into a surveillance state. There has also been a marked rise of Islamophobia across China.

Some Uyghurs have been employed by the state to spy on other Uyghurs, reporting any suspicious or illegal behaviour. This includes if someone has given up smoking, refuses to drink alcohol or even if a Uyghur refuses to watch Chinese news broadcasts. Beijing's surveillance includes face and voice recognition, iris scanners, DNA sampling and 3D identification imagery of Uyghurs. These were introduced following Xi's 2016 appointment of Chen Quanguo as Xinjiang Party Chief. Chen's previous appointment was in Tibet, where he implemented similar control measures over the Buddhist population. Beijing claims the detention centres across Xinjiang are for "vocational training", but a US Congressional hearing on the camps and subsequent report characterised them as "political re-education" centres. The education involves daily indoctrination into Communist ideology and attempts at eradicating minority culture, language and religion. Recent reports have identi-

fied more than 100 Uyghur intellectuals including writers, poets, journalists and university professors are now among those detained. The persecution of intellectuals, who speak out against oppression, and continue traditional practice, occurs even if they are moderate in their views and working towards reconciliation.

In 2014, Beijing arrested Ilham Tohti, an economics professor who rejected separatism and promoted intellectuals in Xinjiang. He is currently serving a life sentence after being falsely accused of being a separatist.

Pressuring the Chinese government

Xinjiang is geographically important to China's Belt and Road initiative – a development strategy involving infrastructure and investments in Europe, Asia and Africa. This could provide an avenue for the international community to apply diplomatic pressure in the way of sanctions. Another option is suspension of, or withdrawal from, existing Belt and Road agreements. Outside countries have a duty to intervene and force Beijing to comply with international human rights. [Anna Hayes](#) is Senior Lecturer in Politics and International Relations, James Cook University

ETHICAL KILLING

Australia has provided ninety million dollars

To insert ethics into killer robot's collars

As a guide, do no harm by stealth

Love your neighbour as yourself

Do to others as they would do to you, the same

Love your enemies beyond the rocket flame

It is difficult to see robots able to act aggressively if they are programmed by Ethical principles of a lover

concerned not to win
But caring protection
of the other

How can one be a killer
which chooses death not life
if guided by moral intention
seeking the earth's protection

I have been assured by
printed release

Ethical killing is the way to
peace.

(Denham Grierson)

Rev Dr Denham Grierson is a Uniting Church Minister and former Professor of Christian Education at the United Faculty of Theology

WHITE HAZE - RACISM IN MODERN AUSTRALIA

Rev. Glen Loughrey

First Nations people of Australia continue to live with racism and genocide in a country too white to see. Often in discussion on racism in our country we point directly to the statistical discrepancies between our people and those from the dominant culture – statistics on incarceration, health, stolen children, poverty and education – and use those as indicators of racism.

These are indeed important points to make and they are evidence of racism in policy making and unthinking commentary. They are human rights or social justice issues arguably underpinned by racists attitudes but they are not the whole story. They are the outward evidence of an inner and hidden neo-colonial wilful blindness on behalf of those in power and the wider Australian population – both those of European descent and those who have come here from other places in recent times.

Staying with issues as the evidence of racism allows people to get off the hook. They can talk about improvements against government targets, programmes to assist aboriginal people heroic and to tell heroic white bloke stories of themselves or family members as teachers or nurses in remote areas. They can do this without being challenged to see that they and theirs are part of a problem that didn't exist B.C (before Cook). Racism in Australia today is much more civilised and palatable than in previous years. No longer are we hunted down, poisoned or removed to missions where our language, culture and spirituality was replaced by English, the western canon or Christianity. We are still incarcerated at levels way beyond the rest of the population, our children are being removed from their families at rates greater than previously, our health and education lag far behind and our levels of poverty, particularly in remote communities remains deplorable.

Katherine Murphy, in an article entitled *"Australia entering 'second convict age' as imprisonment rates soar"* in today's Guardian online newspaper, quotes

research by Andrew Leigh which finds that:

"For Indigenous Australians, the incarceration trends are even more worrying. The research shows that over the past three decades, the share of Indigenous adults in prison has more than doubled, from 1,124 per 100,000 adults in 1990 to 2,481 per 100,000 adults in 2018. "Indigenous Australians are more likely to be in jail than African-Americans," the working paper says."

These things continue but under a polite haze of whiteness that nods respectfully and then says one or more of the following:

- "That was a long time ago and I wasn't involved."
- "That's sad. Yet bad things happened to (and they add the descriptor of their choice) women, LGBTIQI people, disabled people etc, etc"
- "What about.. (and they add names of high profile FNP Australians) they are doing well?" The implication is why can't all the rest of you?
- "Yes, I know, I spent time with FNP in Central Australia so I know about this."

The fact that the majority of FNP live (70+%) in the midst of the white haze in urban and major cities and not in Central Australia is overlooked because we don't necessarily look like the stereotypical aboriginal and our art contains few dots. The fact is that the majority of our people now look a little more like me than the stereotypical understanding that we all have dark skin!

Behind me is a self-portrait entitled *"Living in a White Haze - Being Black in Australia"*. It is a commentary on both my own experience, the experience of other individuals and our people as a whole.

We are not seen but we can see what is happening. We are not heard because we have no voice, our mouth has been painted over, and no one talks with us because our ears have been painted out, they don't want us to hear. This painting reflects the wilful blindness of Australia to the invitation by our people as articulated in the Statement of the Heart for Voice, Treaty, Truth-telling and Reconcilia-

tion (Makaratta) which was dismissed out of hand by our Prime Minister in 2017 and again in 2019 by the Federal Government.

The white haze is a much more difficult form of racism to address. It's nice, outwardly respectful and reflects the over whelming view mainstream Australians have of them selves; they are good people and good people can not and do not do bad things, especially to the underdog or down and out, a concept that underpins the Australian identity myth, myth of fairness and fair go. It allows people to view the world and those in it from a certain point of place in time and space - colonialism without the guilt. It prevents them from seeing others for who they are and for what they have and are experiencing. It is both an individual not seeing and a systemic not seeing. Each empowers the other to ensure white hegemony remains central to the forming of an acceptable understanding of Aboriginal identity.

It permeates how societies see aboriginal people – they can be successful sportsmen and women but they can not have a voice that challenges stereotypes (Nicky Winmar, Adam Goodes and others); they can be successful movie stars but are questioned when they choose to live a traditional life; they can be successful journalists, lawyers, professors but they will always have the prefix Aboriginal or similar attached to their name to show they are different, not the same; aboriginal art is identified as such by what white people like reducing artists to the exotic outsider and more.

The white haze covers up the authenticity and being-ness of Aboriginal people, individually and as a whole, in order to maintain power and control over the disputed and unresolved issues of sovereignty in this country. It is a continuation of the process of no one being here (Terra Nullius) when the land was stolen, and if there was some one here, then and now, we can't see them, except through a white haze that renders them out of view

and irrelevant. The white haze covers up the authenticity and beingness of Aboriginal people, individually and as a whole, in order to maintain power and control over the disputed and unresolved issues of sovereignty in this country. It is a continuation of the process of no one being here (Terra Nullius) when the land was stolen, and if there was some one here, then and now, we can't see them, except through a white haze that renders them out of

view and irrelevant. The white haze did not and does not value our languages, spiritualities, cultures and land use and has forcibly replaced them with English, Christianity, western culture and land use practices from other places, all with tragic results for our people. We are the replaced people and we continue to be replaced by identity politics, political manoeuvring and denial of both our existence and our place as the sovereign people

who have never ceded that sovereignty to whiteness.

The white haze covers up the potentiality of our people to be unless they become like the dominant culture in every way and disappear completely from sight. That seems to be the ongoing plan of white Australia.

Glenn Loughrey is a Wiradjuri man from New South Wales and priest at St. Oswald's Anglican Church in Glen Iris, Victoria

THE ECOLOGICAL AGE: Geoff Lacey

Jn the face of our environmental crisis, many people have come to a new awakening. They are beginning to learn the value of what we are losing.

In particular, many strongly support the shift to renewable sources of energy. This shift is necessary but, on its own, this is not an adequate response. Rather, a profound change in consciousness is necessary. It is a matter of looking at the natural world and experiencing it in a new way—developing a new relationship with it.

As Thomas Berry suggests, in *The dream of the earth* (1988), *we are moving into another historical period, 'the ecological age'—indicating the interdependence of all the living and nonliving systems of the earth. The human at the species level needs to fulfil its role within the broader life community:*

It is a radical change in our mode of consciousness. Our challenge is to create a new language, even a new sense of what it is to be human...

The ecological age fosters a deep awareness of the sacred presence within each reality of the universe.'

In this perspective, I argue that if we are to live sustainably on the earth and to deepen our love for it, then we need to know it intimately—in its landscapes and ecosystems, in its web of connections, and in its history—starting from our local place.

Banyule Swamp

Banyule Swamp is a place that I love to visit. It is part of the complex of wetlands along the Yarra in Heidelberg. The swamp was once drained

but the local council has restored it and Friends groups have replanted some of the indigenous vegetation. The swamp has an elongated shape, with a very shallow northern portion, full of bulrushes, and a deeper southern portion that consists of open water, with patches of floating vegetation.

Ecological function of wetlands

Wetlands are very productive ecosystems, carrying out a range of vital functions. They reduce overbank flooding after heavy rainfall. By storing water, wetlands delay and reduce peak flows.

Wetlands capture and cycle nutrients such as nitrogen and phosphorus from the inflowing water. They sequester carbon. They convert energy, nutrients, water and gases into living biomass.

Wetlands detoxify a variety of waste products. Water flowing through a wetland area may be considerably cleaner upon its exit.

The cycles of wetting and drying are an important factor in the productivity of a wetland. When a swamp dries out the water plants die off and decompose in the presence of oxygen, releasing nutrients into the soil.

When it floods again there are two effects. Firstly the nutrients stimulate a rapid growth of large water plants. These plants provide excellent habitat and some food for birds. Secondly there is an abundance of invertebrates (like worms and crustaceans) that feed on the decayed organic matter. Large numbers of waterbirds come to feed on these

invertebrates. The birds are enabled to build up their numbers and spread out over the land.

The indigenous ecosystems, such as the wetlands, provide the biodiversity in which sustainable production of food and everything else can take place.

The changing moods of the swamp

One day in March 2012 I was sitting on the east side of Banyule Swamp and I noted:

The swamp is full of water. It is mid afternoon. The sky has been clearing and is now mainly blue. There is a slight breeze. There is a lush band of tussock-grasses and mat-rush between me and the water and dense patches of broom rush further along at the water's edge.

Three white ibises are perched in the big dead trees over the water, preening their feathers. Two swans swim idly, separate. Then one speeds up, gliding gracefully over to some floating vegetation, and stops to feed there.

It is quiet. The breeze whispers. A few birds call. I can hear occasional shouts from a far cricket oval and the hum of distant traffic.

A wagtail alights on a branch of a young tree, then flits off towards the water. The swans glide over to this side. If we like, we can learn from the ibis, the swans and the wagtail. They are in no hurry to go anywhere. They are just here in the present, in our local place.

The swamp is always different. At the end of December 2012 it was still nearly full.

This time there is an eastern long-necked turtle on the muddy edge and another three of them on a fallen branch in the water. There is also a buff-banded rail, a beautiful and furtive creature, at the muddy edge. There are various species of ducks and grebes.

A white-faced heron lands in a dead tree. A great egret is perched on small tree in the water. A pair of swans glide to the near shore. Their three young come on land and feed on grasses.

Insects call in the shrubs. Tiny bees hover above the mat-rush. In the background a mosaic of textures—grey, brown and shades of green.

The egret is in the water now, moving slowly, stalking, bright in the sunlight—along the shore to the south.

A deeper engagement

An engagement with our landscape—a growing intimacy with nature—is vital if we are to gain the insights and experience that will lead to a sustainable culture, with a sustainable economy.

At the same time, the remnant ecosystems give a deeper meaning to our living in our urban environment. They empower us. At Banyule Swamp we experience a wildness—even in the midst of the suburbs. There is something majestic, even primeval, about these creatures and their movements—a sight that would have been witnessed again and again over the millennia of human habitation.

Returning to our own place Thomas Berry, in *The dream of the earth*, reflecting on his own place, the Hudson River Valley, writes:

We are returning to the world of life

and spontaneity, the world of dawn and sunset... of wildlife dwelling among us, of the river and its well-being... Here we experience the reality and the values that evoke in us our deepest moments of reflection, our revelatory experience of the ultimate mystery of things...

That the valley will be healed where it is damaged, preserved in its present integrity and renewed in its creative possibilities, is the hope that is before us... Just now we are, as it were, returning to the valley, finding our place once again after a long period of alienation

Geoff Lacey is an environmental engineer and long time member of Pax Christi. He has written several books on the Victorian environment, the most recent being: Sufficient for the Day, Towards a Sustainable culture.

HOPE, FIDELITY AND PERSISTENCE: JOHN DEAR'S SPEECH AT THE TWIN CITIES MARCH

Rev John Dear

September 26, 2019

We stand on the brink of global destruction, called to choose nonviolence, justice, disarmament and peace.

Fifty years ago, the night before he was killed, Martin Luther King Jr. said "The choice is no longer violence or nonviolence. It's nonviolence or nonexistence." That's where we stand today dear friends—on the brink of global destruction, called to choose nonviolence, justice, disarmament, and peace. This whole culture of violence, racism, corporate greed, permanent war, nuclear weapons and environmental destruction has got to go. Everything has to change and the only way that's going to happen is through a global bottom up people power grassroots movement of non-violence the likes of which the world has ever seen! That's what you are doing today!

So we have a choice: we can give up, say there's nothing that can be done and do nothing, OR we can rise to the occasion, redouble our efforts and become the people Dr. King imagined—the ones who help lead humanity back from the brink of



non-existence into something the world has never seen—a new culture of justice, nonviolence and peace. That's what I invite you to today—to rise to the occasion, to become people of active nonviolence now and for the rest of your lives.

The good news is that Dr. King says that we can do this, that we are not powerless, which is what the culture wants us to believe. He defined nonviolence as power. He said there's a way out, a way forward, a way toward a new future of peace through active, creative, organized, bottom up, people power, grassroots nonviolence. We can change the world if we organize in grassroots movements of resistance and social transformation.

Dr. King and Gandhi say

active nonviolence begins with the vision of a reconciled humanity, the truth that we are all equal sisters and brothers, all children of the God of peace, already reconciled, all one with creation. Nonviolence is not passive; in the face of global violence, nonviolence means active organized love that pursues the truth of this common unity and seeks justice, disarmament and peace for the whole human race and creation!

We resist systemic evil; persistently reconcile with everyone; disarm our hearts; practice unconditional, all-inclusive, all-encompassing, non-retaliatory, sacrificial, universal love—with one catch: there is no cause however noble for which we support the killing of a single human being. We do not kill people; we do not kill people who kill people to show that killing people is wrong; we work to end all the killings, and the root causes of war and injustice, and we will educate and train everyone in nonviolent conflict resolution and institutionalize nonviolence and create new cultures of nonviolence. That's the only sane way forward.

No, they say, there's nothing we can do. One of the casualties of our culture of violence is the loss of the imagination; people can't imagine St. Paul/Minneapolis without violence, or a world without war and violence. We have no vision; we can't see the way forward. Our violence has blinded us. We have to help people reclaim the imagination for peace; to help people see a way forward. We have to offer a new vision. That's what the Abolitionists did. They said, "Excuse me America, we are announcing the abolition of slavery." And they were told, "There's always been slavery. There's nothing you can do." And they said, "No. A new world of equality is coming." They lifted up a new vision of equality, a world without slavery, where everyone is equal and they built a movement to make that happen. Dear friends, we are their ancestors. So today we say, "Excuse me St. Paul/Minneapolis. Excuse me, America. Today, we are announcing the abolition of war, poverty, racism, nuclear weapons and environmental destruction and the coming of a new world of nonviolence."

Next week is the 150th anniversary of the birth of Mahatma Gandhi. Here's what he said:

Nonviolence is the greatest and most active force in the world. One person who can express nonviolence in life exercises a force superior to all the forces of brutality. My optimism rests on my belief in the infinite possibilities of the individual to develop nonviolence. The more you develop it in your own being, the more infectious it becomes, till it overwhelms your surroundings and by and by might oversweep the world.

We are constantly being astonished these days at the amazing discoveries in the field of violence. But I maintain that far more undreamt of and seemingly impossible discoveries will be made in the field of nonviolence.

Dear friends, two thirds of the world are now engaged in grass-roots movements of nonviolence. There have been 85 nonviolent revolutions in the past forty years. Research now proves that Gandhi was right, where nonviolence was tried over the last 100 years, it worked much better than violence and warfare in resolving conflict peacefully and bringing about nonviolent de-

mocracy.

This week Campaign Nonviolence.org organized its sixth national week of action, and we have over 3300 actions/marches/vigils and events around the country, connecting the dots between the issues of violence, and calling for a new culture of nonviolence. Even if we don't live to see the results of our actions, we will keep at it, knowing that Gandhi was right, that active nonviolence works, that a new culture of justice, disarmament and peace is coming. As Gandhi said, "Full effort is full victory!" Yesterday, the Climate Strike around the world brought out over 4 million people in 130 countries covering every continent, including 800 events across the U.S. The movement is moving. As we come here to the State Capitol, we say what 16 year old Swedish activist, Greta Thonberg, has been saying: "We have not come here to beg our leaders to care. You have ignored us in the past, and you will ignore us again. We have run out of excuses, and we are running out of time. We have come here to let you know that change is coming, whether you like it or not. The real power belongs to us the people."

Today, I invite you to pursue a new vision for St. Paul/Minneapolis, to work for a new non-violent St. Paul/Minneapolis, "Twin Cities Nonviolent," to connect the dots between every form of violence and seek a more holistic, city-wide, state-wide nonviolence, which means, we work to cut the roots of our culture of violence, to end racism, poverty, homelessness, child hunger, gun violence, as well as local support for war and environmental destruction; to end police violence and train and institutionalize police nonviolence; to end domestic violence and teach nonviolence between spouses, and nonviolence toward all children; to end gang violence and teach nonviolence to former gang members; to teach nonviolence in every school to every student in every grade; to reform our prisons and educate guards and prisoners in nonviolence and move toward restorative justice; to end environmental destruction and pursue alternative energy; and to get rid of our nuclear weapons and make sure every sector of the city advocates

nonviolence, that the police are non-violent; the religious communities preach nonviolence; the schools teach nonviolence; the killings stop, the guns are put away, the support of all war ends, and the city council institutionalizes citywide structures of nonviolence.

Your mission is to lift up this vision of nonviolence and work for a new nonviolent St. Paul/Minneapolis, a new nonviolent Minnesota and a nonviolent North America; to take this vision and make it possible and believable and probable, so that it becomes contagious and then, inevitable.

Dear friends, we can no longer afford the luxury of doing nothing despair. We can no longer leave it to someone else to stand up and speak out. We are the ones we've been waiting for. This is the new normal—Saturdays are for marching. As my friend Daniel Berrigan told me long ago, "If you want to be hopeful, you have to do hopeful things."

Just before he was killed Dr. King announced his definition of hope. Hope, he said, is the final refusal to give up. So like Dr. King, we're not going to give up. We're going to keep marching and walking for peace, keep resisting, keep speaking out, keep organizing, keep agitating, keep practicing and teaching nonviolence, and keep on working for a new culture of nonviolence here and everywhere. No matter what. That's what's going to make the difference. Our fidelity. Our persistence. Our refusal to go away.

That's what you are doing today. That's your job from now on, to be full time nonviolent agitators, activists, teachers, champions, prophets, pioneers, troublemakers and visionaries of nonviolence, to be peacemakers, God's beloved sons and daughters, heralds of a new nonviolent St. Paul/Minneapolis; heralds of a whole new world of peace and nonviolence! Thank you and God bless you.

Rev. John Dear is an internationally known voice for peace and nonviolence and is on the staff at Campaign Nonviolence. A priest, peacemaker, organizer, lecturer, and retreat leader, he is the author or editor of 30 books, including his autobiography, "A Persistent Peace."

TURNING TO FAITHS TO SAVE THE PLANET. HOW RELIGIONS SHAPE ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENT IN INDONESIA

Jonathan D Smith

Young environmental activist Greta Thunberg's famous quote "listen to the scientists", during her meeting with the US Congress is a clarion call for policy-makers to take steps to save the planet.

The scientific consensus on the climate crisis and the need to take immediate action is clear. New reports are being released regularly.

Yet the problems of climate change are not only problems of science and technology. They are also moral, ethical and spiritual problems about how we live our lives.

In addition to listening to scientists and young activists like Greta, another influential group that is speaking out more about the environment are religious groups. Though religious groups differ in their beliefs and practices, most agree about the shared need to care for our environment.

In the past 15 years, there has been a rapid rise in environmental activism from religious groups, globally.

My research in Indonesia shows that religious groups have played an important part in responding to climate change by participating in environmental campaigns and by translating scientific and policy language for a religious audience.

Religious environmental campaigns in Indonesia

Indonesia has the largest Muslim population in the world in the world. Muslims make up 82% of Indonesia's more than 240 million people.

Indonesia also recognises Buddhism, Christianity (Protestant and Catholic), Confucianism, Hinduism and Indigenous Religions as official religions.

Indonesia, with its thousands of islands, is also vulnerable to rising sea levels and other extreme weather events caused by human-made climate change. It is feeling the negative impacts of the climate crisis earlier than in many other countries due to its location.

In 2007, when Indonesia hosted the annual UN Climate Summit in Bali, ten Indonesian religious leaders from

six religious groups presented an interfaith statement on the responsibility of religious groups to address climate change.

This interfaith statement expressed the commitment of religious leaders to draw on "religious teachings and local wisdom" to "[inspire and motivate our people at the grassroots level] by" "teaching about the environment" and "initiating practical conservation projects"

As religion has an important social function in Indonesia, religious leaders are expected to contribute to public discussions and work together to solve common problems at the local and national level.

Consequently, religious groups also shape how environmental activism has developed in Indonesia. Religious environmental campaigns aim to change how local people think about the environment and how they live.

Since then there have been some good examples of this action in Indonesia. There is an increase of eco-friendly "Green Mosques" and "Green Churches". They use renewable energy and encourage conservation. A number of Hindu and Buddhist initiatives have planted trees and increased local recycling.

Religious groups have also joined with other activists to create strong and diverse coalitions for environmental campaigns. These campaigns are often led by indigenous people who try to protect their lands from being exploited.

Author provided

For example, the Save Aru Islands movement kept 5,000 square kilometres of land in Maluku province from being turned into a sugar plantation by a multinational corporation.

The leaders of the movement included Catholic and Protestant leaders working with indigenous groups who would have lost their land rights. In Central Java, local farmers in Kendang who practice Saminism, a Javanese religious tradition which was used as a tool to fight Dutch colonial-

ism in the late 19th and 20th centuries, are protesting against their sacred lands being given to a Dutch company for cement mining.

In Bali, a land reclamation project in Benoa Bay prompted strong protests from local Hindus as it threatened to destroy sacred sites on the island.

Global religious groups unite to tackle climate change

Climate deniers can be found in religious groups too.

Yet the growing recognition that the environmental crisis calls for solutions beyond the solely scientific or technological has prompted many religious leaders to act. In 2016, nine years after Indonesia's religious leaders made their interfaith statement on climate change, Catholic, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh, and other faith leaders urged political world leaders to act on climate change.

Hundreds of religious leaders signed the Interfaith Climate Change Statement To World Leaders (ICS). In the statement, they urged global leaders to sign and ratify the Paris Agreement, an international pact to limit Earth's temperature rise.

The statement contains policy recommendations on energy use and religious teachings on the interconnectedness of life and the importance of spiritual reflection.

It combines policy language (calling for states to reduce carbon emissions) and religious language ("Mother Earth", "spiritual dimension of our lives") in crafting a statement of global ethical values. This enables the statement to appeal to policymakers and to people of different religions.

This statement is an example of what the sociologist Peter Beyer calls "translation". Religious groups are interpreting scientific environmental concepts into "specifically religious idioms and symbolic clusters".

One example of the religious environmental translation is Pope Francis' 2015 encyclical on the environment entitled *Laudato Si': On care for our Com-*

Common Home. This influential document encourages Christians to protect the environment and calls on governments to take action to reduce carbon emissions.

In Indonesia, the Indonesian Council of Islamic Scholars (*Majelis Ulama Indonesia*) has developed many *fatwas* (religious edicts) on environmental conservation. This includes providing guidelines for environmentally friendly mining in 2011, which features rationales using Islamic language and arguments.

Although there's not sufficient re-

search on the effectiveness of these *fatwas* in changing logging practices in Indonesia, the religious edicts represent innovative efforts to translate environmental policy into religious languages to preserve forests and reduce global heating.

Working together for climate action

As more people feel the effect of climate change, people around the world are becoming more aware of their natural environment.

Religious environmental activists can play a part in increasing this awareness

at the global level, and in local communities affected most severely by climate change.

Global reforms to environmental policy and sustainable development will be determined ultimately by the actions of millions of local communities. Activists, scientists and leaders will need to listen carefully to local communities and work together with them to respond creatively and effectively to global changes at the local level.

Jonathan Smith is a PhD Researcher in Religious Studies, University of Leeds

POPE PUSHES FOR ABOLITION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS IN A-BOMBED CITIES

KYODO NEWS - Nov 24, 2019 -

Pope Francis called for the elimination of nuclear weapons during high-profile visits Sunday to Nagasaki and Hiroshima, the only cities in the world to have suffered atomic bombings, saying the use of such weapons is a "crime" against humanity and nature.

In an address at the Atomic Bomb Hypocenter Park in Nagasaki, the pope urged political leaders to ponder the "catastrophic impact" of nuclear weapons deployment, while stressing a world without nuclear weapons is "possible and necessary."

"A world of peace, free from nuclear weapons, is the aspiration of millions of men and women everywhere," the pope said, as he described the southwestern Japan city as having "witnessed the catastrophic humanitarian and environmental consequences" of a nuclear attack when it was hit by a U.S. atomic bomb on Aug. 9, 1945 -- three days after Hiroshima suffered a similar attack with greater damage.

"To make this ideal a reality calls for involvement on the part of all: individuals, religious communities and civil society, countries that possess nuclear weapons and those that do not, the military and private sectors, and international organizations," he said.

Later Sunday, the 82-year-old Argentine, speaking in Spanish, told a gathering in Hiroshima that the use of

atomic energy for war is "today, more than ever, a crime," and "immoral."

Calling his visit to the Peace Memorial Park in the western Japan city a duty as a "pilgrim of peace," he stressed that a true peace can only be an "unarmed peace."

The speeches, which lasted for about 13 minutes each, came as Washington and Moscow have been at odds over arms control since the expiration in August of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, a 1987 pact reached by the United States and the Soviet Union.

North Korea's nuclear weapons program and Iran's nuclear activities have also raised concerns about a new arms race.

The pope warned that a "climate of distrust" risks leading to a dismantling of the international arms control framework, saying the Catholic Church "must never grow weary of working" to support the legal instruments of nuclear disarmament and nonproliferation, including the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

The Holy See was quick to sign the treaty, which was passed at the United Nations in July 2017 with the support of 122 nations, but it has yet to take effect since it has not been ratified by the required 50 states.

Almost all the world's nuclear weapons states as well as Japan and other countries under the U.S. nuclear umbrella have opposed the

treaty. Speaking in Nagasaki, the pope asked political leaders "not to forget" that nuclear weapons "cannot protect us from current threats to national and international security."

"We need to ponder the catastrophic impact of their deployment, especially from a humanitarian and environmental standpoint, and reject heightening a climate of fear, mistrust and hostility fomented by nuclear doctrines," he added.

The possession of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction is "not the answer" to the human desire for security, peace and stability, he said.

The pope also urged the world to "speak out against the arms race," adding it "wastes precious resources" that should be used for human development and environmental preservation.

"In a world where millions of children and families live in inhumane conditions, the money that is squandered and the fortunes made through the manufacture, upgrading, maintenance and sale of ever more destructive weapons, are an affront crying out to heaven," the pope said.

The pope read out the message after offering flowers in front of the hypocenter cenotaph at the park in Nagasaki in rainy weather.

Shigemi Fukabori, an 88-year-old Catholic and survivor of the atomic bombing of Nagasaki, said after handing flowers to the pope, "Just meeting with him filled my heart with joy."

The Sacking Of Fallujah, A People's History
 Ross Caputi, Richard Hil and
 Donna Mulhearn
 University of Massachusetts Press
 2019.

This is a confronting book. It is a deeply disturbing book. It is a horrifying book. It confronts us with questions we would rather not face: what was done in our name during the Gulf war and what is being done now in Iraq and Syria. It is also a well written and well researched book written by people who have gone out of their way to see and experience what they describe and to engage with and listen to the people of Fallujah. It is a book to be read. As we read it we find that it is reading us and turning us inside out.

Donna Mulhearn is a former journalist and political adviser who is now an independent writer and speaker on non-violence, spirituality and politics. Many Disarming Times readers will be familiar with her earlier book: *Ordinary Courage - My Journey to Bagdad as a Human Shield* in which she describes her experience in Bagdad alongside ordinary families as a human shield during "Operation Shock and Awe." She later returned as a humanitarian aid worker to set up a shelter for street kids in Bagdad and assist homeless families. During this time she survived constant bombing, being kidnapped by fighters and shot at by American soldiers. Donna spent time in Fallujah during the siege alongside ordinary families who were being terrorised by the war. Richard Hil, an academic and activist, had long been interested in the U.S. occupation of Iraq and in 2010 co-authored *Erasing Iraq: The Human Costs of Carnage*. Ross Caputi, a former US marine veteran of the second siege, responded to the tragedy of Fallujah by establishing a small campaigning organisation called the Justice for Fallujah Project. He is a graduate student studying the role of information operations (militarized propaganda) in the US-led occupation of Iraq. They are all well qualified to

take us into the horrors of Fallujah and to introduce us to the people and their suffering and to explain the political and military maneuverings which surrounded it.

The book begins by placing the Iraq war and the siege of Fallujah in context. The authors have no doubt that the invasion of Iraq was premeditated. The ultimate motivation was oil. Behind that however is the philosophy of American exceptionalism, which the U.S.A. and its allies have the right and the duty to spread their influence, their values, their polity and their way of life wherever it can and to forcibly overcome all who stand in its way. The 9/11 events were seen to define a conflict between civilisation and barbarism. The sieges of Fallujah were used to justify a larger struggle of Good with Evil, of the Christian West with Islam.

This narrative was reinforced when four US military contractors were killed in Fallujah, their bodies burned and hanged from a bridge over the Euphrates. Instead of bringing the perpetrators to justice, this incident was used to portray the whole Fallujah community as evil and therefore to be destroyed and wiped out. This brings us to another theme of the book, the role played by right wing media and politicians to create a narrative of annihilation and to disguise the real war aims of the United States. This did not just affect the people of the US. US soldiers found themselves engaged in a particularly brutal struggle without knowing why they were there, what they were doing and what possible victory might look like. The effect of this was to lead to total confusion by many in the West who were led to believe that the Iraq war,



the so called war against terrorism and the Middle East in general were too difficult to understand. Many stopped trying.

The US military unleashed a war of unparalleled brutality waged on a whole population. Despite protesting that only targets of military significance would be attacked, hospitals schools railway stations and homes, we targeted. Men women and children were shot down in the streets. Brutal weapons such as white phosphorous which actually melts its victims, and depleted uranium which has devastating effects on unborn children were used on the people of Fallujah. One in four children in Fallujah are born with a disability or deformity. Women are being advised to avoid having children altogether. The way was opened for militias and other freedom fighters including Islamic State to organise what resistance they could. This opened the way for the conflict to be presented as part of the anti IS crusade. The book includes "People's Stories," heart wrenching accounts of the sufferings of real people in Fallujah. They tell of families watching loved ones shot down one by one. Old ladies were killed by a grenade when they responded to a knock on the door. A mentally disabled boy was shot down in the street. A young couple desperate to have children endured multiple miscarriages before having to accept that they would never bring a child to term. The authors have given us two new words to describe the reality of what happened in Fallujah: *urbanicide*, the wholesale destruction of a city and *sociocide* the destruction of a people, their relationships, their society and their culture.

The book confronts us with what was done in our name. Thousands of people throughout the West took to the streets to protest against invasion and destruction of Iraq. We never understood why these protests were ineffective. The book gives us the answer. The information was controlled and reformatted and the media ma-

manipulated to distort the reality of what was happening and constructing narratives that bore little relationship to reality. In the end they left us thoroughly confused, bewildered and despairing of ever knowing the truth. This book lifts the veil and exposes us to the truth. This is a book to be read, not en-

joyed. It is a book which restores to us an awful reality which has been denied us. Only when we look that reality in the face, can there be any hope of restoration and healing and for challenging the demonic powers behind it.

As Christmas comes we remember St John's words: *the Light shines in the*

darkness and the darkness has never put it out. Three brave people have gone into the darkness to shine some light upon it so that we can see clearly. We are in their debt.

“The Sacking of Fallujah is available from Readings and Dymocks Bookshops. Online from www.bookdepository.com,

MAKING CONNECTIONS:

Finding Common Cause Among Movements For Peace, Justice, Democracy, And An Ecologically Sustainable Society by Andrew Lichterman

The profound nature of the overlapping crises we face requires movements that are deep and broad enough to make structural changes in the order of things. Large scale social movements open up the possibility of a more expansive discourse about the kind of society we need and want. So it is time for a rethink. We need to re-evaluate the kinds of programs we have been pursuing for decades in the low-mobilization wilderness. Against this background, I will talk a bit first specifically about nuclear disarmament work and then offer some tentative thoughts about the relationship of peace and disarmament work to the kinds of movements that are emerging. It is not news that the social contexts in which we work affect the way we think, and the kind of language we use. In the long absence of peace movements that could sustain a discourse of their own, most discussion about nuclear weapons is from the perspective of governments, or those who advise governments, or those one someday would like to advise governments.

A starting point for discussion as we try to build a new peace movement should be to try to talk about nuclear weapons in ways that reflect the realities of power. Even disarmament activists who live in nuclear-armed countries often talk about “our” nuclear weapons, and talk about countries as if they were individuals that speak with a single voice. But the vast majority of people in nuclear armed countries have no role in decisions about “their” nuclear weapons. The decisions by governments to acquire

nuclear weapons are in every instance among their least democratic. They have been made by small numbers of powerful people, acting for the most part in secret.

Rulers who are willing to risk war among nuclear-armed countries must have an enormously inflated sense of their own significance. They must consider it worth risking the annihilation of the People to preserve the State, to defend the order of things in which they rule. It was no coincidence that the most intense moment of resistance to nuclear weapons during the Cold War was the Euro-missile crisis of the 1980's, the movement opposed to the missiles eventually banned by the INF treaty. The inhabitants of NATO countries hosting U.S. nuclear missiles faced the possibility that a nuclear war could be fought on their soil without even their own government's consent. This raises a question too seldom asked by inhabitants of nuclear-armed countries: Whose nuclear weapons are they, really? Whose interests do they protect? This question leads naturally to others. As E.P. Thompson, a founder of European Nuclear Disarmament, asked in 1981, “Is nuclear war preferable to being overcome by the enemy? Are the deaths of fifteen or twenty million and the utter destruction of the country preferable to an occupation which might offer the possibility, after some years, of resurgence and recuperation?” and finally, “Are we ourselves prepared to endorse the use of such weapons against the innocent, the children and the aged, of an “enemy?”” The people of every nuclear-armed country should

be asking these questions.

Some of the same dynamics are at work today on the Korean peninsula—and with the collapse of the INF treaty may come into play again in Europe. South Koreans find themselves trapped between nuclear-armed adversaries, one an ally. The mass media in the United States portray the crisis as a confrontation between North Korea and the United States, and the efforts to resolve it mainly as a matter of personalized negotiations between Trump and Kim. South Korea is virtually invisible in this media frame. But it has been the government of South Korea that has taken the lead in seeking a diplomatic breakthrough that could end the immediate crisis, and that might lead eventually to a more lasting peace on the peninsula. Even more important, the current government there was brought to power by a very large and determined democracy movement—one that rejected the long legacy of authoritarian governments closely tied to the United States. It likely will take movements of that magnitude or greater in many places if we are to reverse the slide into a dangerous new arms race. So we need to be thinking about both short term measures to avert disaster and long-term strategies to address the causes of arms racing and war. This time around, I think we must have more effective “inside-outside” strategies. Those who work for arms control in centres of power must remember that large, mobilized movements calling for fundamental change are needed to really move the boundaries of the politically possible.

Those working for deeper, broader change must recognize that it will take a long time, and that more limited measures that stave off disaster also will be needed. We must be discerning about when to focus our energies on interim measures in a time when we need our main efforts to be aimed at building the social power to make real change, the kind of change that might make elimination of nuclear weapons possible. In the near term, we will still need to push for the nuclear armed countries to attempt to negotiate arms control measures with their adversaries. Even when prospects for tangible progress seem grim, such negotiations have value. They allow the military and political leadership of the adversaries to better understand each other's intentions, and their fears. They build broader channels of communication between military and government bureaucracies that can be of tremendous value when tensions rise. Single-issue campaigning to eliminate nuclear weapons, however, is unlikely to have much success. Without a far broader basis of social support it is difficult to make significant disarmament progress in countries where nuclear weapons play a systemic role in military policies, national security ideologies, and the increasingly insular top tier of national economies. And because we once again are in a period where the first priority must be preventing wars among the countries that have nuclear weapons, we need an approach that goes beyond single issue disarmament advocacy. We need to focus more broadly on the forces driving high-tech militarism and war. A variety of movements are emerging as resistance grows in many places to authoritarian governments defending an order of things that is undemocratic, unjust, and unsustainable. We will find, I think, that the way to make issues of war, peace, and disarmament a significant strand in these movements is to explore the common causes of the dangers and injustices we are struggling against.

The most influential campaigns against nuclear weapons in the past arose in times and places where there were movements of this kind. And a significant characteristic of those

movements was reflection and discussion about the nature of the society that produced these terrible weapons, and that systematically generates the risk of wars in which they might be used. The time is ripe for broad movements joined in an effort to understand the common causes of the dangers and injustices we have been struggling against separately up to now. The questions of peace, democracy, economic equality, and the ecological requisites for human survival never have been as inextricably intertwined as they are today. The ecological and economic challenges we face are both a cause and effect of the deteriorating political conditions that drive international conflict. The loss of varied, human-scale organizations in the social and political world, combined with the concentration of economic power in organizations of ever greater scale and scope, has left us vulnerable to authoritarian politics. The dynamic that drives the global economy—endless competition for material wealth and power—is straining the limits of the ecosystems we all depend on. Yet the main solution offered to us by governments is to gird for more competition and more war. We must realize that we do not get to choose the terrain of struggle, and the focuses of conflict change from one historical moment to the next.

Today, everywhere, refugees, immigrants, and national minorities are on the front line. And the nationalist rhetoric of fear and hate that are employed to target them and to divide us from one another is the same kind that will be used to march our young people off to war, war that might well be the last. Defending the most vulnerable must be the first imperative. Hence much of the energy of the new emerging movements here in the United States has been focused on the immediate actions needed to do so, from the Muslim ban to the Trump administration's serial human rights abuses on the border to the latest wave in the long struggle against deeply entrenched racism. Trying to understand the resurgence of extreme, "blood and soil"-type nationalisms might be one place to start the conversation among our movements

about how the dangers and injustices we face are connected at the level of root causes.

Here in the United States, understanding the so-called "populism" central to Trump's rise to power as a variety of extreme, identity-based nationalism allows us to begin to understand its connection to similar developments elsewhere. Starting there, we can begin to explore the relationship between work against militarism and war and the resistance here and elsewhere emerging from the experiences of groups who are being directly targeted. This allows us to see the same root causes in the global economic and political system driving similar nationalist forces in different places, and to recognize that ultimately the struggle against those causes must be global. It allows us to see where nationalist ideologies are being deployed in ways that may increase the risk of war. Finally, calling blood and soil nationalism by its name when we see it at home helps us to identify allies in struggles against the rise of similar nationalisms elsewhere, and to begin to construct the renewed internationalism we need, specific to this moment. I want to close with a lesser-known passage from Martin Luther King, in which he brings many of these themes together. He said, "A nation that will keep people in slavery for 244 years will thingify them—make them things. Therefore they will exploit them, and poor people generally, economically. And a nation that will exploit economically will have foreign investments and everything else, and will have to use its military to protect them. All of these problems are tied together."

And this concept of thingification, of doing violence by objectifying, can be extended to our relationship to the natural world as well. If we are to have a humane future we must come to understand that we are all just stewards here, and not owners. And wherever we may live on planet Earth, we are all just passing through.

Andrew Lichterman is a policy analyst with the Oakland, California based Western States Legal Foundation. He also serves on the boards of the International Association of Lawyers against Nuclear Arms, Disarmament and Common

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
 209A Edgeware Road, Enmore.

QUEENSLAND

Pax Christi Meetings

Pax Christi Queensland

Contact:

Pancras Jordan OP 0415 461 620

pancrasjordan@gmail.com

PEACE BOAT

The Peace Boat is dropping anchor in five Australian cities this January. Come aboard for a tour of this floating university and participate in an action-based workshop on nuclear issues. Listen, learn, discuss and activate! Whether it's advocating to your local council, parliamentary representatives or super fund, now is the time to push for meaningful action.

Registration compulsory
by January 11

Contact ICAN

Gem Romuld gem@icanw.org

ALL ABOARD! PEACE BOAT WORK- SHOP SERIES

Peace Boat workshop in Fremantle

Fremantle Port, Fremantle,
 Thursday, January 9,
 9:00 AM- 11.30 AM

Peace Boat workshop in Port Adelaide

Monday, January 13,
 5:30 PM-8:00 PM
 Oliver Rogers Rd, Outer Harbour, Port Adelaide,

Peace Boat workshop in Melbourne

Wednesday, January 15,
 5:30 PM-8 PM
 Station Pier Cruise Ship Terminal, Port Melbourne,

Peace Boat workshop in Hobart

Friday, January 17, 2020
 5:30 PM -8:00 PM
 Macquarie Wharf No. 5, Hobart,

Peace Boat workshop in Sydney

Monday, January 20
 5:30 PM--8:00 PM
 White Bay Cruise Terminal,

Aunty Jean Philips in partnership with *Common Grace*, invites Australian Churches to hold services of acknowledgement, lament and prayer as we approached January 26th - a day of mourning for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander brothers and sisters.

Will you join us at a church service or host a service at your church?

Launceston

Thursday January 16, 2020 at 6pm
 City Baptist Church, 11 Frederick St

Adelaide

Friday January 17, 2020 at 7pm
 Richmond Baptist Church, 141 Richmond Rd

Brisbane

Sunday January 19, 2020 at 3pm
 Kenmore Church of Christ, 41 Brookfield Road Kenmore

Sydney

Tuesday January 21, 2020 at 6:30pm
 St Andrews Cathedral, corner of George and Bathurst Streets

Melbourne

Wednesday January 22, 2020 at 7pm
 St Paul's Anglican Cathedral, Cnr Flinders & Swanston Streets

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

All others: please return your membership application/membership renewal to P.O. Box 31 Carlton Sth Vic. 3053

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

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

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

ENCLOSED \$..... (Single \$35; Low income \$20; Family \$45)