

# DISARMING Pax Christi TIMES

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## TRUMP'S DEFINITION OF PEACE IN ISRAEL

George Browning.

**4 February 2020**

***The strong prevail – the rest submit***

The so called 'peace plan' now made public from the White House is no peace plan at all. There has been no attempt to camouflage its support for Israel's most ambitious, expansionist plans. It lauds Israel and blames Palestine for aggression, indeed making it clear than any part of the plan that accedes anything to Palestine will be contingent upon Israel judging that Palestine is compliant and servile. In other words there is no guarantee that even the crumbs on offer to Palestine would ever be delivered. It is improbable that a Palestinian State would ever be granted, even under these Swiss cheese conditions. It is a plan for Israel to take as much of the West Bank that it can with as few Palestinian residents as possible. It is, as many commentators have said, a plan for permanently entrenched apartheid.

The Australian government has 'welcomed' the plan. What was in its head in doing so? It is inconceivable that Australia, which fought so hard for the abolition of apartheid in South Africa,

would now endorse apartheid in Palestine/Israel.

Let me try for a moment to put the best (if it is possible) interpretation on this unfortunate message. Clearly the prevailing situation, which enables Israel to incrementally take over the West Bank in a thousand cuts, is unacceptable, cruel, humiliating, a source of continuing violence and the cause of on-going security problems. This status quo, enabling Israeli aggression and colonisation has prevailed for far too long. Every year less and less Palestinian land remains while more and more Palestinians are imprisoned for objecting to this outrage. Hope is progressively snuffed out.

**So, what is the alternative?**

There must be a circuit breaker. Perhaps the best light that can be put on the government's response is not that it is welcoming the details of the plan, for any government interested in peace and justice could not welcome them, but what is being welcomed is an intervention which calls for a different way forward.

The problem is that the way forward being offered is totally unacceptable, it is known to be unacceptable, Netanyahu and

Gantz are almost certainly relying on it being rejected by Palestinian authorities, in order that they can continue their slow strangulation of the Palestinian people and in the process claim they offered a way forward which was rejected.

**So what can be put on the table?**

Palestinians and Israelis have one unpleasant reality in common, they are both badly let down by their political leaders: the racist, extreme right-wing government in Israel and the fractured and ineffective Palestinian Authority in Palestine. These politicians serve their own political interests and power rather than the peaceful future of their people. It is my contention that if an independent, non-political, anonymous, poll was taken about the future of this much torn corner of the planet, a considerable majority of Palestinians and a not

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# DISARMING TIMES

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

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insignificant minority of Israelis would vote for one state with equal rights for all. Any sane person should agree that this is the most desirable outcome for all, given facts that now prevail on the ground. The problem with such a plan is that it faces hurdles that are as high externally as they are internally. The external hurdle is the rise and rise of dangerous nationalism that threatens the peace of the world. This nationalism crosses all political, religious, and ethnic boundaries. Its frightening face is Benjamin Netanyahu, Donald Trump, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Janos Ader, Jair Bolsonaro, Xi Jinping, Mohammad Bin Salman, Ayatollah Khomeini, Vladimir Putin etc. all of whom interfere in one way or another, on either side of the Israel/Palestine impasse. Palestine is the pawn of other's agendas as well as Israel's ambition. Even more insidiously, the Christian evangelical right of the US to which audience Trump constantly plays, is opposed to such a plan, willing the dominance of a Jewish theocracy that simply does not exist.

What needs to be agreed by the free world is that when human rights prevail, when justice is given prominent place, when diversity is seen as strength not weakness, then peace will prevail, and prosperity will replace conflict.

As a first step the Palestinian community, on their own, or with the help of Jordan, (Jordan has as much right as the US to put forward a 'peace plan') should put forward a version of such a bold plan, or another plan which the international community can support, as a counter to the Trump takes over proposal.

This could include:

- Equal rights under law for all residents Freedom of religious practice;
- Freedom of movement;
- Equal and complimentary rights of cultural expression;
- Equal rights of return;
- Equal value at the ballot box;
- Re naming of the country as Israel/Palestine or some

equivalent;

- Demolition of separation walls.

If such a plan were to be presented by the Palestinians then it should be welcomed by the Australian government in the same way, in the same spirit, and for the same reason that the present plan has been welcomed – but more honestly and vigorously.

What cannot be allowed to happen is for the current status quo to roll on year after year, decade after decade, for this will simply corral Palestinians in Bantustans and cement

### **Israel's place as a pariah state.**

This fate is as serious for Israel as it is for Palestine.

In the meantime the most able young Palestinians and Israelis should be given the fullest possible exposure to each other and to their peers in the global community. Restrictions should be lifted for travel, and opportunity given, especially to the most able young on the Gaza strip, for overseas education and opportunity.

People who have been exposed to and communed with those who had previously been thought of as foes, can never turn back. What had been assumed to be true is proved to be false through dialogue and friendship.

The current and prospective leadership of Israel, who have stated there will never be a Palestinian state on their watch, will never agree to such a proposal, but that is not a reason for withholding it.

The Trump proposal is shameless. Israel must choose. It must either choose a magnanimous future with Palestinians as equal partners in a prosperous and harmonious future, or it will have chosen a path that necessitates its children and their children maintaining an apartheid regime by military might in perpetuity. Not to choose is always to choose.

*George Browning is retired Anglican Bishop of Canberra and Goulburn and President of the Australia Palestine Advocacy Network.*

## EXPANSIVE LOVE IN A BORDERLESS WORLD:

Nuclear Disarmament in Fraught Times.

Professor Emily Welty

### Responding to The Pope and the Bomb

February 6, 2020

Working on nuclear disarmament feels like the intersection of two ventricles of the human heart awash in equal amounts of despair and progress. The whirl of panic about the dangers of nuclear weapons and the encouraging movement towards a nuclear-free world both feel accelerated during these first weeks of 2020. Nuclear sabre-rattling and a political assassination that escalates violence both latent and overt between the United States and Iran. The Bulletin of Atomic Scientists moved the Doomsday Clock forward to one hundred seconds before midnight. Nuclear states show little introspection or shame about their stockpiles of horrific weaponry.

Nonetheless, rousing symbols of prophetic hope of a more generous, interdependent, trusting, and creative world abound. New York City, one of the largest cities in the world, had a hearing on January 29 to consider divestment from nuclear weapons and reaffirm the city as a nuclear weapon-free zone, joining other major cities taking local action on nuclear disarmament such as Toronto, Los Angeles, and Melbourne. The majority of millennials support banning nuclear weapons entirely according to the the latest poll from the International Committee of the Red Cross. Some days it feels difficult to hold both of these truths in one human heart—the devastating risks and the courageous progress made by ordinary citizens to ameliorate these threats. For religious people, holding these tensions together in our souls and addressing them with our work is fundamental to our identity as people of faith who manage to live amidst suffering while not losing sight of the ultimate expectation that the world is beloved and meant for sublime goodness. Pope Francis' visit to Hiroshima and Nagasaki embodied the delicacy and skill of addressing

both impulses. The pope's de-



nouncement that the use as well as the possession of nuclear weapons is a "crime not only against the dignity of human beings but against any possible future for our common home" acknowledges the serious moral violation of these weapons. The most terrifying threats to human existence do not respect the borders of nation-states, and the most promising movements to address these dangers are also transnational. While some instrumentalise religion to promote division, at its core, religion remains a global reservoir of justice, selflessness, humility, and liberation.

Religious people always maintain loyalties that supersede our allegiance to country. We are called to be faithful not to the ideology of any particular political party but to an ethos of compassion, generosity, and service. The vision of religious leaders, whether ordained or laypeople, should exceed national boundaries. Our obligation to love our neighbour does not end at any human-made border.

In the face of the unimaginable destruction of everything we love, it feels like any individual action is meaningless. I felt overwhelming despair when I first learned about how widespread and dangerous nuclear weapons continue to be. Encountering religious organizations like the World Council of Churches, which have advocated against the testing, development, and use of nuclear weapons since their inception, offered me hope. Joining the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) and working on our Nobel Peace

Prize-winning movement to establish the 2017 Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons convinced me there is always another alternative to resignation.

I attended the 2017 Vatican conference on nuclear disarmament which included an audience with Pope Francis. I was surprised by how meaningful I found meeting the pope, despite my Mennonite/Presbyterian religious background which eschews hierarchy. The pope inspires people beyond the borders of Catholicism with the humility and sincerity with which he approaches each person. This depth of presence embodies love in a borderless world. Religious leaders like Pope Francis can change the global conversation on nuclear disarmament because their reach supersedes national and ecumenical borders.

Borderless threats also offer new openings to partner across denominational and religious lines to speak with one voice about the world we desire. Last spring at the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty Preparatory Committee at the United Nations, I delivered a statement on behalf of 53 faith groups from Christian, Muslim, Hindu, and Buddhist organizations, representing the voices of millions of people of faith worldwide. The statement highlighted the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons, denounced their production, development, stockpiling; called for recognition of the suffering of victims of nuclear testing; and urged diplomats to engage in constructive dialogue on nuclear disarmament. The diversity of groups including the World Evangelical Alliance, Pax Christi, the Islamic Society of North America, World Council of Churches, and Soka Gakkai International demonstrated that despite theological differences, common ground can be found in our obligation to act against threats to our shared humanity.

People of faith can—and must—take every action they can for nuclear disarmament on every level.

We can neither defer nor delay our moral responsibility to end one of the most devastating threats of our lifetime. The good news is there have never been so many opportunities to work for a nuclear-free world. Individuals can work at the most basic level to ensure their own finances and investments (and those of their congregations) reflect their values using resources like *Don't Back on the Bomb*. Local mayors or political leaders can commit themselves to promoting the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons by signing ICAN'S Parliamentary Pledge. Courageous acts of protest and civil disobedience are avenues to prick the conscience of our fellow neighbours, friends, and family into a greater commitment to a nuclear-free planet. Teaching and listening to young people restores intergenerational solidarity and

offers opportunities to imagine new expressions of love and resistance. I am currently on sabbatical, backpacking around the world for a year. Even as I carry a passport stamped at the border of each new country, I am reminded of the increasingly borderless threats we face. Right now, I am in Australia and have shared the panic of breathing the charred reality of climate catastrophe revealed in the bushfires. The borderless nature of our collective drive towards consumption wreaks havoc on our planet. But I also see the fundamental goodness of the human spirit as Australians open their homes to those who lost everything. Spending time in Maohi Nui/French Polynesia was a reminder of French nuclear testing and the devastating impacts on people, animals, and plants far beyond their own borders. Visiting Hi-

roshima and Nagasaki just a few weeks before the pope's historic visit was a sobering reminder of the responsibility I bear as a citizen of the only country to use nuclear weapons in war. But beyond my obligation as an American, my time in Japan reinforced my human responsibility to work for good, to acknowledge atrocity, and to ensure no one ever again has to endure the horror of nuclear detonations.

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## THE CONDITION OF WOMEN IN INDIA

Fr. Victor Ferrao

The condition of women in our country is complex and cannot be described with a singular monopolistic category. Although a woman is honoured as Goddess in our culture, the way we relate to women in practice may be aptly described as cultural fascism. Our society is not merely patriarchal, it is deeply patri-focal. This is why half of us Indians who are our mothers, wives, sisters, and daughters are victims of worst oppressions in our families, workplaces as well as spaces of worship. Women in our country seem to live in an intermediate space between death and life. It seems to be a journey from harassment to invisibility. Even at birth, the girl child is unwelcome. She is born with a cancelled identity. Several among them suffer an infliction of violent death at birth. Even before she is born, she is made to enter the tomb. She is made to die in silence without a name and identity. No one cries for the aborted daughters of India. They just pass into invisibility and

remain forgotten. But those that are lucky to survive the intensely violent cultural fascism are compelled to live a losing fight in an imposed chains of isolations and politico-moral policing as survivors in a man's world till they too are relegated to silence and invisibility through their death.

The subjection of women to several indignities exhibits the will to power of a male chauvinist society. This will to power is ultimately and intimately grounded in the will to purity that is afflicting our caste laden society. The quest for purity is everywhere in our society. It has put us in a perpetual cleansing drive. It is getting uglier by the day. Women like other impure ones are considered unclean and hence, suffer sexual abuse as children, domestic violence, rapes, confinement to homes, made object of sex and met with denial of repression as adults. We have naturalised and desensitized us of all guilt of violence to our women. It is this will to purity that generates the cultural fascism that is afflicting our society today.

Indeed, we are taken captive by our will to purity.

This enslavement is most visible today in the way we treat our tribals, Dalits, religious minorities and women. Violence against all these sections of our people is growing by the day. It will continue unless we find ways of coming to terms with our insatiable thirst for purity which is forever elusive. It seems that this vicious will to purity is at the root of violence against women in our society.

The will to purity intensifies from a sense of loss that is haunting a society that is on a decline. It is a defence against decline and decomposition. In fact, a society afflicted by a sense of decay looks for out for victims that our powerless and enact the ritual of purity on them. In some way, women like others that are deemed as impure in society suffer what may be called sacrificial violence. This is why perhaps the twenty-first century India looms ahead of us as a spectral scene of mean violence of all shades and colour. We seem to be struck by

the fear of contamination and are in search of a pure nation. At the same time, we enjoy a libidinal drive for the pleasure of inflicting pain, humiliation and death on those that are considered the impure ones. Women are the worst victims of this cultural fascism that is afflicting us all. We have the challenge to trace emancipative responses to our imagined dirty world. We have the ethical imperative to reassert the in-between zone where we all Indians belong and have our life and being. We have to find and befriend the Indian in us. We are either Goans, Punjabis, Telingus, Tamils or Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas But not Indians. We exist fragmented. It is hard to find an Indian in India. May be we find them abroad. We need to let the Indian in us blossom again. The Indian is always in an in-between condition along with other Indians. There are multiple and divergent ways of being Indians. This rebellion against the will to purity has to be natural for Christian. This does not mean that Christians are free from their enslavement to the will to purity. The condition of Indian Christian women is

far from being any different from our society. Therefore, Christians like other Indians also have the common challenge to seek emancipative response to the cult of purity that is collectively afflicting us. We are all worshipping at the altar of imagined purities of all shades and colours. Jesus who rebelled against the excesses of will to purity in Judaism can become a great inspiration to Indian Christians to generate an emancipative response that will not just bring dignity and freedom to Indian Christian women but all other women as well as other victims of our enslavement to will to purity. Indeed, we Christians have to respond to the prophetic call from our context today and work to generate a Gospel-centric response to the condition of women and those deemed impure in our country. Although Indian Christians are best placed to bring a theologico-moral response to condition of women in our country, it would not be possible without other Indians of Good will. This is why Indian Christians have to not just avail of the resources from their Christian tradition but align with other Indians

and traditions in India to bring about a Gospel-culture encounter that will open ways of breaking the enslaving shackles of will to purity. In this effort, great Indian traditions like Buddhism, Jainism, Vedanta etc., might be of great assistance. This means Indian Christians have the challenge to read the signs of the times and trace the seed of Gospels already germinating in cultures and traditions of India. This will open us to the in-between zone that is central to the triune God of Christianity. Perhaps, it will enable us to work to actualize the salubrious perichoretic space of the Holy Trinity in our society. The violence against women cannot be countered with violence. such violence will intensify the spiral of violence. What we need is a prophetic affirmation of our deepest being as being in-between that in the image and likeness of God. It will only lead to the living our inter-being.

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## A CRY THAT RISES UP TO HEAVEN' POPE FRANCIS AND THE AMAZON SYNOD

### Brian Roewe

Francis frames his reflections in *Querida Amazonia* through "four great dreams" inspired in him by one of Earth's great biomes: one social, one cultural, one ecclesial and one ecological. Describing his ecological hopes for the region he writes, "I dream of an Amazon region that can jealously preserve its overwhelming natural beauty and the super-abundant life teeming in its rivers and forests." But the present reality, he concedes, is one wrought with exploitation and exclusion, as ever-expanding logging and mining activities extract resources from the land while expelling indigenous people, its African descendants and others reliant on the Amazon River from their ancestral homes. Such colonizing interests, both legal and illegal, Francis said, are "provoking a cry that rises up to heaven."

"The inescapable truth is that, as things stand, this way of treating the Amazon territory spells the end for so much life, for so much beauty, even though people would like to keep thinking that nothing is happening," Francis writes near the beginning of chapter three, which focuses on ecology. "The interest of a few powerful industries should not be considered more important than the good of the Amazon region and of humanity as a whole," he adds. John Paul II's assertion nearly two decades ago that "we cannot allow globalization to become 'a new version of colonialism.'" "The inescapable truth is that, as things stand, this way of treating the Amazon territory spells the end for so much life, for so much beauty, even though people would like to keep thinking that nothing is

happening." John Paul II's assertion nearly two decades ago that "we cannot allow globalization to become 'a new version of colonialism.'" "The inescapable truth is that, as things stand, this way of treating the Amazon territory spells the end for so much life, for so much beauty, even though people would like to keep thinking that nothing is happening." Returning to the theme of integral ecology from *Laudato Si'*, Francis stresses that environmental and social issues are interrelated, and because of that "a true ecological approach always becomes a social approach." "We do not need an environmentalism 'that is concerned for the biome but ignores the Amazonian peoples,' " he says, citing the synod's preparatory *instrumentum laboris*. CIDSE, the network of predominantly Europe-based Catholic devel-

development agencies, welcomed Francis' exhortation, calling it "an invitation to reacquaint ourselves with the fundamental messages of *Laudato Si'*." It added the pope's conclusions, as well as those from the synod participants, underpinned its decades of work in the Amazon region "listening to the voices and demands of local communities."

Likewise, Susan Gunn, director of the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns said "The Holy Father is speaking the Maryknoll language" when he urges all people of God and good will to pursue a culture of encounter and dialogue in working for justice for the Amazon and its people. The Maryknoll public policy arm added that two groups Francis references, pastoral workers and Christian base communities, are well positioned to preach the Gospel and work for dignity and justice.

"As Pope Francis stated, ecology and social justice are intrinsically linked and the Amazonian region is a clear example of how fragile such a balance can be," CIDSE said in its statement. "But it is also true beyond the Pan-Amazonian region: it's an entire world system that allows multinational corporations to exploit land and resources without paying enough attention to the consequences on the people and on the environment."

Throughout *Querida Amazonia*, the pope assails industrial development, both foreign and domestic, ripping lands from indigenous people, who then migrate from the Amazon's great forests and riverbanks into the cities where they experience "enslavement, subjection and poverty." He notes that with the loss of ancestral homes often comes the loss of culture and identity.

"The original peoples often witnessed helplessly the destruction of the natural surroundings that enabled them to be nourished and kept healthy, to survive and to preserve a way of life in a culture which gave them identity and meaning," he writes, adding that "The cry of the Amazon region does not rise up from the depths of the forests alone, but from the streets of its cities as well."

Francis calls for the Amazon's in-

igenous people to be empowered through education and the right to a deciding voice in development decisions on their land.

"The original peoples," he wrote, "have a right to receive — in addition to basic education — thorough and straightforward information about projects, their extent and their consequences and risks, in order to be able to relate that information to their own interests and their own knowledge of the place, and thus to give or withhold their consent, or to propose alternatives."

In a statement, the Global Catholic Climate Movement said the pope's exhortation, and particularly his backing of indigenous peoples, "has special resonance" at a time when Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro last week proposed permitting commercial mining and industrial projects like hydroelectric dams on protected indigenous lands.

With *Querida Amazonia*, "Pope Francis strongly endorses the role of indigenous people as the guardians of creation," said Rome-based Global Catholic Climate Movement, which represents a network of 900 Catholic groups worldwide.

Added Dom Roque Paloschi, president of the Indigenous Missionary Council of the Brazilian Bishops' Conference, "It is imperative that the Church have a prophetic voice and an unconditional commitment to the defence of the poorest and most vulnerable."

### **No to distractions from destruction**

The pope's depictions in *Querida Amazonia* build on and reflect those from the synod itself, both in its final document and the personal testimonies of indigenous leaders who travelled to Rome to tell them directly to the church, as well as the 260 listening sessions conducted by the Pan Amazon Ecclesial Network. In his exhortation, Francis refrains from endorsing or even citing specific actions introduced by the synod bishops in their final document.

Left unmentioned is ecological sin, which the synod bishops proposed to define as "an action or omission against God, against others, the community and the environment." Still, the pope has referred to eco-

logical sin several times since the synod's conclusion and has indicated its eventual inclusion into the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

Other recommendations of the synod bishops that Francis leaves untouched include the development of "common home" training programs and the creation of special environmental care ministers. He also refrains from commenting on the call of the synod bishops, many of whom hail from the Amazon, for the church in the region to join and support divestment campaigns from companies engaged in what they labeled socio-ecological destruction. And while the pope called for immediate steps to address climate change in messages to the United Nations and energy executives, he limits his comments in *Querida Amazonia*, referring only at separate points to the need to seek out alternative, non-polluting energy sources and the Amazon's important role as "a great filter of carbon dioxide, which helps avoid the warming of the earth."

One appeal Francis does make is renewing his call in *Laudato Si'* for all people to "insist on the urgent need" to establish clear boundaries and ensure the protection of ecosystems power- and economic-seeking forces. He adds that it's important for Christians to encounter the Amazon region from a theological focus, "a space where God himself reveals himself and summons his sons and daughters."

The pope also calls on people to not "let our consciences be deadened" or distracted to the serious destruction facing the planet, which he says "dull our realization of just how limited and finite our world really is." He says a true integral ecology encourages new habits to counter the consumerism and culture of waste prevalent in the cities of the Amazon and elsewhere.

"A sound and sustainable ecology, one capable of bringing about change, will not develop unless people are changed, unless they are encouraged to opt for another style of life, one less greedy and more serene, more respectful and less anxious, more fraternal," Francis declares.

At several points, Francis refers to the concept of "good living," or *buen vivir*, common among indigenous people in the Amazon. He describes it as a communal approach to life that finds harmony, joy and fulfillment simple living and "God's little gifts" while responsibly caring for nature to preserve it for future generations.

Gauthier, the CIDSE secretary general, said that Francis' exhortation asks all people to not only listen to the cries of the Amazon's indigenous people and biodiversity, but to also examine their own lives and the way personal choices can contribute to the suffering of others. During the synod, CIDSE promoted its sustain-



able lifestyles program "Change for the Planet-Care for the People," which it began in 2015.

"This is not just about the Amazon, it is about all of us, our way of life, our responsibilities, our colonial mindsets, and how we justify ourselves instead of questioning our own consumerist behaviour," Gauthier said.

"From the original peoples," Francis writes, "we can learn to *contemplate* the Amazon region and not simply analyze it, and thus appreciate this precious mystery that transcends us. We can *love* it, not simply use it, with the result that love can awaken a deep and sincere interest. Even more, we can *feel intimately a part of it* and not only defend it; then the Amazon region will once more become like a mother to us."

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## REFLECTIONS ON JAPAN'S 74 YEARS WITHOUT WAGING WAR.

John McMahon

The Japanese Emperor, Hirohito wanted a woman to teach his eleven-year-old son after Japan's unconditional surrender in 1945, to bring some feminine influence into Akihito's life. He required a Christian tutor, but not a fanatic. At her appointment, Elizabeth Gray Vining an American Quaker teacher said her instructions were: to open windows to a foreign way of life for the crown prince. She said that she did not want to view the job as "selling America" to Japan's future leader but saw the need to "set him free-to teach him how to have fun." She tutored him privately, and at the elite school he attended. She read with him, discussed Gandhi's philosophy of nonviolence, they shared hopes for world peace, while also becoming friends. In these ways Vining as a peace activist helped Akihito to free himself from the shackles of cruel Shinto support for Japanese war ideologies and their violence. During his thirty years as emperor, Akihito followed Vining's peaceful advocacy and became a loving and peaceful activist for his country. He got away from the palace to help Japanese people in distress. Vining's interest in setting Akihito free happened when he married Michiko Shodo, following a love affair between the crown prince and a commoner.

Another peace maker was his father, Emperor, Hirohito. In early

1945, listening to debates between Japanese peace and war factions in the protective Bunker attached to his Palace, Hirohito made an historic and peaceful decision: to agree to the Allies' request for unconditional surrender. At this time Tokyo was one of six major Japanese cities, devastated by firestorms, that American napalm bombings had created. Historian Paul Hams recorded that 'most of the inhabitants of these cities were either dead, wounded, or forced to flee to the countryside, and Japan was utterly defeated but had not yet surrendered.' In these circumstances, Hirohito, although hampered by a coup, and the Atomic bomb on Hiroshima, constructed his peace-seeking message. Speaking to his people through radio tapes, in the upper-class Japanese language, he claimed that unconditional surrender would take place, and prove to be difficult for his people. Japanese were surprised at Hirohito's peaceful decision, because it was different to what they expected from their Government's combative ideology, and weapons hidden in Japan, to repel fighting invaders.

Other peace advocates were the Allied Powers. Prior to 1945 they had met at Potsdam and decided on terms for the proposed Japanese surrender. Their Proclamation included peaceful pathways for a Japanese unconditional surrender, with some

restrictions. For example, 'we insist that the new order of peace, security, and justice will be impossible until irresponsible militarism is driven from the world,' 'Japanese military forces, after being completely disarmed, shall be permitted to return to their homes with the opportunity of leading peaceful and productive lives, with freedom of speech, religion and thought.' The Proclamation implied that the traditional, hierarchical social system would, under the Proclamation survive.

Following Japan's unconditional surrender, an American General, Douglas MacArthur, became Supreme Commander of Allied Powers (SCAP), for the Occupation of Japan. Some Japanese found the task of accepting an occupied Japan difficult, but many embraced MacArthur's emerging peace proposals with enthusiasm. Kazuo Kawai, a Japanese scholar, in August 1945 wrote about why most people in war-torn Japan, the 'hungry, homeless, and shame-laden Japanese' were eager for peace: *They were disillusioned, demoralised, and paralysed.....war had reduced many of the Japanese to an inner state bordering on panic. Surrender came to them as a heaven-sent relief; a welcome ... deliverance from annihilation.'*

Kawai further claimed that the character and presence of MacArthur influenced the Japanese to ac-

accept the Occupation fully. He believed that MacArthur's 'dedicated sense of mission, the sincerity ...of his vision resonated with the Japanese people.' MacArthur insisted that the Occupation be used to reform Japanese social and political life, to accord with democratic and Christian principles. As SCAP he organised the repatriation of three million Japanese who were fighting abroad at the end of the war. MacArthur promoted the development of democratic reform for Japan. Taking other strong steps towards a peaceful Occupation, SCAP used the existing national political legislature, to exercise control. This was the traditional way in which Japan had previously been governed. He ordered the release of all Japanese political prisoners. SCAP forced the Emperor to renounce his divinity but supported him remaining as the symbolic leader (promoting peace) for his people. The new Showa Constitution, in which MacArthur played an advocate role, guaranteed that the Japanese military forces were only to be raised for the defence of Japan, rather than renewal of their global military expansion. In such ways SCAP's demands enabled Japan to embrace more peaceful pathways for many following generations.

In addition, MacArthur decided to supervise humane and peaceful social ways for Japan. In 1946, noticing that the Japanese people were dying of starvation, he did something about it. As SCAP he stated, 'lack of food for the defeated people was the main problem, making all other problems seem trifles.' So SCAP demanded that food be sent from America. Shunsuke Tsurumi, a Japanese historian wrote: 'tons of flour were released by the Occupation: flour, corn and milk were the main items.' This generated peaceful friendships in the seven years of the Occupation, still felt by Japanese living today.

MacArthur's intervention for health improvement resulted in Japan experiencing the most rapid eradication of deaths from preventable diseases for any country in history. The SCAP team, headed by Brigadier General Crawford Sams organised 8000 Japanese to staff 800 district health centres, where Ameri-

can doctors organised the mass immunisation of the entire population. 'Thirty-five million people were vaccinated by 1950: a 40% reduction from tuberculosis deaths. There were reductions ranging from 76% to 90% for diphtheria, dysentery, typhoid and paratyphoid death rate and reduced cases of Japanese encephalitis and endemic typhus diseases.'

Mc Arthur didn't wish to see the Japanese nation suffer loss of self-respect and self-confidence evident in the conquered Germany people he had seen. It predisposed him to proclaim more positive outcomes for the Japanese. Manchester, a historian of the General's motivation in all his peaceful actions quoted MacArthur: 'I was brought up a Christian and adhere entirely to its teachings.'

Another American, the lone Quaker, Floyd W. Schmoe, professor of dendrology, promoted peaceful reconciliation. He decided an apology to the Japanese people for dropping the bomb on Hiroshima was insufficient. Schmoe, driven by deep urges for expiation and reconciliation, in 1949, against the wishes of his Quaker Meeting, came to Hiroshima, and with carpenters assembled with his own hands and theirs, 212 Japanese-style houses for victims of the bomb

In January 1946 soldiers of the Australia led contingent, together with Great Britain, New Zealand, and India, formed the British Commonwealth Occupation Force, (BCOF), to join the American occupying force. Australia occupied the Chugoku region of Honshu Island. It included the Prefecture of Hiroshima, and Ita Jima Island, where they established the 130<sup>th</sup> Australian General Hospital (130 AGH), with my late Aunt Monica McMahon as its matron. The wrecked city of Hiroshima with its high levels of radioactivity made it a dangerous BCOF location for Australia's contingent.

Australian contingent and American occupation commanders had opposed views about their country's fraternisation with the Japanese. Lord Louis Mountbatten wanted Australian personnel to adopt a stern attitude towards Japanese people. He demanded that Northcott,

the Australian commander draw up a non-fraternisation policy to be implemented by troops and the 130<sup>th</sup> AGH staff. Northcott demanded that the Australian BCOF conduct something like a cold war against the Japanese. He wrote 'you must be formal and correct' and 'you must not enter their homes or take part in family life.' Northcott's negative views limited financial and social support that Australians could provide for the demoralised, starving Japanese. Non-fraternisation became a policy too strict for some Australian soldiers and nursing staff to peacefully obey.

Female members of the 130<sup>th</sup> AGH decided to act in a more loving and peaceful manner. Nurse Lorna Weir wrote about meeting Japanese women, some of whom had never seen a white woman before, when buying souvenirs: *At first, they looked sad; but somehow, with gestures and chatter, we always left them smiling... We visited several places and the second time around were greeted with bright smiles and happy chatter...On these occasions our limited supply of sweets was never enough.*

The Australian Army provided an opportunity for nursing Sisters to make peaceful friendships with Japanese women. Using reparation funds, the Army paid Japanese women to do the laundry for the Australian nurses and perform other menial tasks at the 130 AGH. They were poor widows, grateful, working hard, and with excellent relationships with sisters, and service men. Australian women's peace-making friendship meant providing them with food that was left over, such as porridge for breakfast and discarded newspapers these impoverished women used to line the walls of their homes.

Some soldiers of the Australian Army also showed compassion for Japanese children. Colonel Michael Connors wrote about his encounters with homeless children. He wrote: 'the kids of Hiroshima were always courteous, they appreciated small luxuries (which he gave them) more than in other areas, probably because they had less.' one unnamed British soldier wrote that abandoned children of Kure found it



found it necessary to form vital survival relationships with Australian soldiers, soldiers who had become activists for peace, about food:

*I have only respect and admiration for the Australians. They always made sure that part of their meal was left untouched to give to the kids. Men did it as naturally as breathing...Mascots in the form of animals showed more emotion (gratitude) than these children...We had blokes with us who were good linguists. Every attempt to talk to these kids was left with some blank stare. The consensus was that these children were shell-shocked and terrified to the stage of muteness from the bombing and strafing that occurred at Kure and its environs.*

Sisters and nurses became aware of the carnage caused by the atomic bomb and its lethal radiation effects. Encouraged by matron

McMahon, sisters ignored the non-fraternisation rules and volunteered to visit Hiroshima where they offered friendly help and professional nursing skills to Japanese nursing sisters, working with Dr. Sasaki at the Red Cross hospital. In 1946, nurse Jean Waddell, a constant volunteer, was shocked by the partial destruction of the hospital and the smell of burnt human beings she experienced. L. Lacey in *An Unofficial History of the BCOF* claimed that the percentage of these women who later died of cancer in Australia was a horrendous figure.

Akihito was on the Japanese throne for only the last 30 of Japan's 74 peaceful years. But he and peace activists helped to verify Mari Yamaguchi's report as: 'the first modern emperor whose reign had not seen a war'. Inspired by Christianity, the Quaker peace testimony, love, and

friendship achieved this great miracle. Authors Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett's book, *The Spirit Level*, claimed that Japan in the twenty-first century became one of the most economically developed countries, which had the best longevity, with a greater capacity than other highly developed countries, for healing of social and political predicaments, such as teenage pregnancy, obesity, poverty, homicide, but with the exception of the status of women. They ranked Japan as arguably the happiest country in the world. These were the fruits of peace in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, following Japan's seventy-four years without waging war.

*John MacMahon is a member of the Society of Friends and of Pax Christi Victoria*

## THE CLIMATE CRISIS AND THE NEED FOR PEACE.

Nick Deane

12 February 2020

**T**he climate crisis increases the likelihood of war and refugee flows.

War will make the impacts of the crisis, and the suffering it will bring, very much worse. The need for peace must be brought into discussion about the crisis.

Professor Jem Bendell, a British academic, has concluded *"that climate-induced societal collapse is now inevitable in the near term"*. He invites us to explore the implications of this and prepare for it. His position may be extreme. But whether he is prescient or not, with the fires of this summer, it must be acknowledged that the crisis is upon us and that it is likely to get more intense as the years go by.

Thus far, most of the attention has been focussed on the physical aspects of a warming planet – how much temperatures will rise, how far the sea level will rise, the risk of drought, flood, storms and fire. Bendell writes, *"We might pray for time. But the evidence before us suggests that we are set for disrupt-*

*ive and uncontrollable levels of climate change, bringing starvation, destruction, migration, disease and war"*. If humanity is to come through this impending catastrophe with any semblance of what we like to call "civilisation", it needs to confront the implications of all of these impacts. However, it is the last one, war, that is the focus of what follows.

The uncontrollable nature of the physical aspects lie at the base of the matter. War, on the other hand, being an entirely human creation, should be controllable. Its theoretical ability to be controlled separates it from the other components of the crisis. It is something that we can do something about.

Reporter, Murtaza Hussain, invokes the thoughts of Indian author Rabindranath Tagore. Tagore lived under British colonial rule in India in the early 20th century and had a clear appreciation of the destructiveness of colonialism, militarism and industrialised warfare (exemplified in WW1). Taking up his theme, Hussain writes *"In the era of climate crisis, the relationship between envi-*

*ronmental destruction and the destruction of human life that Tagore decried in his writings has become perhaps the central issue of our time."*

As was the case with climate change itself, no academic consensus has been reached on the question of whether or not it is a direct cause of war. It will be some time (probably too long) before a consensus emerges. All parties in this debate (including military thinkers) do, though, tend to agree that the climate crisis is a "threat multiplier". If there are existing tensions that threaten an outbreak of violence, the crisis makes such an outbreak more likely. In just one example, reports from Lake Chad in Central Africa indicate that violence in the area has increased as the lake has diminished in size due to the changing climate. On balance, it is fair to conclude that climate change contributes to the risk of war.

As we experience unprecedented fires in Australia, the incidence elsewhere of flooding, drought, insect plagues, storms etc. is climbing. All

of these tend to cause reduction in agricultural production. Scarcity of resources, the basic necessities of food and water in particular, is, without question, de-stabilising. Failure of crops means famine. The impacts of the climate crisis are going to cause extreme distress, particularly in the poorer nations of Earth. There will be suffering on a grand scale. When facing such dire situations, how are populations likely to respond?

Whenever people find that their lives are no longer sustainable in one location, they will move to another. Humankind has done this as long as it has been able to walk. We know that the war in Syria produced a refugee crisis in Europe, and refugees from war are definitely one part of the picture. Add to that refugees from famine or resource shortages, and then a third category – those forced to move as a result of their homes being inundated or their land becoming unproductive as sea levels rise. Migrations of people are very likely outcomes of the effects of the impending crisis. With it, the numbers of people on the move could rise to millions. Mass migrations will become an enormous problem.

As the poor nations of the Earth feel the full brunt of the crisis, the gap between rich and poor is wide and widening. Migrants from poor, impacted areas will be drawn towards lands that appear to have resources in abundance – i.e. the rich nations of the West. So the next question to ask is this;- How will nations on the receiving end of mass migrations respond?

Here, we can already see signs of the likely response. Think of President Trump's wall along the Mexican border and the establishment of 'Border Force' in Australia. (Note use of the word 'force' in the title.) The uncomfortable truth is that the rich nations of the West are likely to respond to mass migrations by closing borders, trying to prevent the arrival of people who might want a share of their wealth, using force 'where appropriate'.

In this scenario, the likely result will be violence in one form or another. The rich are always unwilling to share their wealth and the evident reluctance of the rich to accommo-

date the poor could well result in the poor taking up arms in resentment and desperation. The West's xenophobia could become entirely self-fulfilling. War between nations might result. Indeed, it is hard to imagine any other outcome in the scenario described.

In this connection, one should recognise that the inequality we see today is the consequence of four centuries of colonialism, underpinned by the military might of the rich and ruthless nations of the West. The privileged position of the rich nations and the ongoing poverty of most of the world's population is perpetuated by a (capitalist) system of exploitation that, ultimately, relies on militarism to maintain itself. If poor countries challenge the power that lies beneath the inequality and the forces that prevents them from sharing of the West's abundance, military conflicts become more likely.

Political and military leaders of the West are definitely not blind to the coming impacts of climate change. On the contrary, what they correctly foresee (and fear) is a dynamic situation and increased instability on a global scale. Instability represents a threat in their eyes; the possibility that they might lose control. It should be no surprise that the likely response could be a military one. For example, a recent report from the US Army War College recommends the allocation of more military resources to the Arctic, as ice retreats (and exploitation of resources increases).

The same leaders probably also experience fear of losing control of events within their own borders. They know that, in the last analysis, their control depends on their monopoly over the exercise of organised violence. A hardening of the authorities' control over internal opposition to developments is evident. Consider the governmental response to the Standing Rock protests in the USA – and the impending response to protests about the Adani coal mine.

The point to be made is that those in power are displaying an instinctive, reflexive reaction – to arm up, and be prepared for war, just in case matters get out of their control. What we are witnessing in plain

view, right now, is a general increase in the level of military preparedness, within our region and throughout the world. We can see it in the SIPRI figures for expenditure on armaments. We can see it locally in an increasing Defence Budget; the militarisation of Border Force; the presence of US marines in Darwin, and discussion about events in the South China Sea. It is reflected in the rise of right-wing political organisations, calling for tougher action against would-be immigrants.

As the crisis intensifies, the quantity and availability of weaponry rises in parallel. Those in power are not imagining that they can fight off climate change through force of arms – but they might just as well! If this aspect is not addressed, the likelihood of war as an adjunct to climate change is greatly increased.

In this scenario, humanity could, might and probably will make the bad effects of the climate crisis worse by orders of magnitude. Uncontrollable aspects of climate change are going to bring suffering and misery to millions of people in any case. The societal collapse that Bendell foresees could well be a global phenomenon that includes a collapse of any restraint on warfare, as the privileged sectors of the global community try to maintain wealth and dominance. If the response to the crisis is a military one, as is suggested here, and war is a consequence of the climate crisis, the sum total of human suffering will be amplified beyond imagining.

These considerations make it necessary to urgently bring the need for peace into the debate about the climate crisis. There will be no resolution of the crisis, no sustainable future, unless we resist the drift into violence and war. There will be no sustainability without peace and no peace without sustainability. The people of the world should cry out to tell their leaders to "Bring us Peace!"

*Nick Deane is an ex-public servant with a degree in Sociology. He is a member of the co-ordinating committee of the Independent and Peaceful Australia Network (IPAN) and convenor of the Marrickville Peace Group.*

## BOOK REVIEW: RUSSIA AND THE WEST 2017-2019

Allan Patience

***Russia and the West: The Last Two Action-Packed Years, 2017-2019* by Tony Kevin (Canberra: 2019). ISBN: 9780987319029.**

It is remarkable how Cold War ideological influences have persisted so robustly and still shape the confined imaginations of Western political leaders, policy makers and security experts, even as the Cold War as we once knew it recedes historically. Those blinkered souls remain intellectually frozen in the wake of rapidly changing global developments, seemingly unable to grasp the fact that radical new thinking is urgently needed as the world teeters on the brink of climate catastrophe, nuclear weapons proliferation, grotesquely mounting human rights violations, and the raging of regional and global conflicts that were largely unimaginable prior to 1989. Nowhere is this more evident than in the West's paranoid, confused and counterproductive relations with post-Soviet Russia.

In Australia, where Cold War imagining still rules the minds of far too many politicians, and way too many in the defence and foreign policy establishment, this is especially problematic. However, Tony Kevin is a welcome exception. As a former Australian diplomat in Moscow, and a widely read writer on Australian diplomacy and security policy, he brings a passionate intelligence to the huge problem of why relations between Russia and the West remain so tense and counterproductive for all sides.

In this self-published essay, Kevin rages against the West's one-dimensional thinking. It is thinking, he states, that is replete with what he describes as "Russophobia". This is a security policy pathology that distorts public opinion about Russia, inducing fear and loathing among the general public, while enabling vested interests to profit vastly from the production of all the grim paraphernalia of war in their infamous laboratories and factories that make up the West's "military-industrial

complex".

Kevin offers an interesting counter-narrative to the West's take on the Ukraine crisis, suggesting that the Poroshenko government is as much sinning as sinned against, despite its Western backers' strong ideological, economic and military support. He writes that Poroshenko initiated what was effectively a civil war which is now at a stalemate. He draws attention to United Nations official observers who have reported that the Ukrainian army is still conducting random attacks and that the "ongoing war has affected 5.2 million people, leaving 3.5 million of them in need of relief, including 500,000 children." This account contradicts much Western propaganda about the on-going sadness of the contemporary Ukraine situation.

Kevin is similarly unconvinced that the orthodox Western critique of Russia's involvement in the war in Syria is as open and shut as its advocates would have us believe. Western (especially American) propaganda argues that by backing the Syrian regime, the Russians are complicit in some horrendous war crimes and crimes against humanity. This overlooks the fact that: "With Russian air and ground support, the tide of war turned [against ISIS]." Nor is Kevin convinced that NATO's movements of "ground forces and battlefield missiles up to the Baltic states' borders with Russia", as well as the deployment of American short-range, non-nuclear-armed anti-ballistic missiles in Poland and Romania have been based on sound security advice. Instead of "balancing" Russia, these moves have provoked it to respond aggressively.

Nor is Kevin convinced that Vladimir Putin is the monster that Western politicians and media make him out to be. He largely blames Democrat Party leaders in the USA whose bile has been directed at Putin because of his covert support for Trump and opposition to Hillary Clinton during the 2016 presidential election. The Putin who appears from Kevin's

analysis seems no worse (if no better) than any number of recalcitrant, mendacious, and ruthless political leaders around the world today.

Kevin draws on three personal and independent recent visits he has made to Russia, between 2015 and 2019. His descriptions of the Russian people he met while there – seeing them in the context of their cultural achievements and everyday comings and goings – is a timely reminder that Russian has bequeathed to world civilisation a rich heritage in art, music, architecture, philosophy and theology, and literature. He mourns the loss in the West of a sense of "the tragedy and grandeur and inspiration of Russian history."

So what Tony Kevin is inviting us to do in this very interesting essay is to rethink our attitude to Russia today – to view it not through the conventionally confected lens of "Russophobia", but to look at its beauty and historical sophistication, as well as its warts and all. There is something very noble in this desire on Kevin's part and that part of his argument deserves considerable and sympathetic consideration. To approach contemporary Russia one-dimensionally will lead to an isolated, put-upon state victimised by punishing sanctions, threatened militarily – one that will be understandably increasingly resentful and vengeful.

It is therefore unfortunate that the essay wanders from this reasonable and important thesis into a distracting, overly-defensive argument that borders on paranoia. Kevin spends too much time and energy complaining about how his views about Russia, Putin and the West's pathological "Russophobia" have become a target for political correctness and intellectual rejection by his contemporaries, especially in Australia. This leads him to some rather embarrassing hyperbole – for example: "*We are now in the thick of a ruthless and mostly covert Anglo-American alliance information war against Russia. In this war,*

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*individuals who speak up publicly in the cause of détente with Russia will be discouraged from public discourse*" (italics in the original). Meanwhile he spent more space than necessary in his slim volume quoting edited support from people who are sympathetic with his views. They appear to be on board with his claims about his being excluded from the small, self-indulgent, self-congratulatory circles of would-be opinion-makers that are characteristic of events such as the Melbourne Writers' Festival. If this deliberate exclusion is true, it is outrageous; however, the irony is that he could – indeed should – be proud of his apparent rejection by such people.

So, in this essay, Tony Kevin has opened the door just a crack to a new way of observing and analysing contemporary Russia. Reading between its lines may help us open that door a bit more widely. In that respect, the essay is a most timely and interesting read. *Allan Patience is a Principal Fellow in the School of Social and Political Sciences at Melbourne University*

## 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](mailto:pancrasjordan@gmail.com)

## PALM SUNDAY RALLY FOR REFUGEES



Australia's treatment of  
refugees remains punitive  
and unfair

**Join the Walk for Justice for  
Refugees on Palm Sunday to  
help end the cruelty offshore  
and onshore.**

**Melbourne** (Corner Swanston &  
La Trobe Streets) at 2.00pm.  
**Sydney** 2 pm Belmore Park

## IPAN Public Forum Killer Robots and Wars

Wednesday 18 March, 7 pm.  
46-54 Ireland Street, West Mel-  
bourne

Dr. Joseph Camilleri will  
facilitate the Public Forum.

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**10–12 July 2020**

**Queen's College, Melbourne**

*Faith - Climate Change -  
Anxiety - Ethics -  
Posthumanism - Hope -  
Energy - Gene Editing -  
Artificial Intelligence -  
Sustainability - Love*

What does it mean to be a Christian in the 21st century? What does it mean to be faithful to Christ in a time of "eco-anxiety" when patterns of consumption seem unsustainable and damaging to the creation? What does it mean to be a Christian in a time when many people look forward optimistically to "the singularity" and the transhuman possibilities of overcoming the limitations of the human body? What does it mean to live in a time of climate change and CRISPR, of animal extinction and AI?

**Call for papers still open.**

**Contact Chris Mulherin**  
[ChrisMulherin@ISCAST.org](mailto:ChrisMulherin@ISCAST.org) 0431  
330 380.

## 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. Direct transfer to Pax Christi Victoria Inc **BSB 063-161 Account number 00900935**

**Please Advise Ally Pender** [penderally@gmail.com](mailto:penderally@gmail.com)

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