

DISARMING TIMES

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FROM MILITARY SECURITY TO HUMAN SECURITY: PAX CHRISTI'S TIMELY CALL

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For too long, the dominant security narrative in this country has revolved around seldom acknowledged but deep-seated anxieties.

Our response to these anxieties has been mired in blood, whether in the Frontier Wars and deaths in custody at home, or an endless succession of military expeditions abroad.

It is time to rethink Australia's past and reimagine its future. The objective is nothing less than the reframing of the nation's dominant narrative. Hardly a simple or easy task, but one we dare not shirk.

With this in mind, Pax Christi Victoria is set to embark in the New Year on a project which will focus explicitly on this objective. It will involve much reflection, extensive education, skilling and consultation, and innovative forms of communication and advocacy. It is a project which we are confident will gather momentum over time in close collaboration with others.

Pax Christi comes to this task with a wealth of experience and continuing engagement with other groups over close to half a century. Apart from countless agapes, forums and actions for peace on many fronts, recent milestones include our key role in the *Earth at Peace* Conference and related activities and publications (2019-20) and last year's online Conference

Where Does Australia's Security Lie? (February 2022).

To explain what is envisaged, it is useful to revisit our history as a colonial settler society. More than 200 years after the arrival of the first colonists in 1788, we are still struggling to recognise the Indigenous dispossession and colonial violence that gave birth to the Australian nation. Every so often, our reluctance to come to terms with our history rears its ugly head, most recently and distressingly in the outcome of the Voice to Parliament referendum.

There is, of course, more to this history than the unresolved relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australia. From the earliest days of European settlement Australia's sense of place has come to rest on certain widely accepted articles of faith.

'Whiteness' and attachment to Western (primarily British) traditions and values were long considered to form the basis of this country's identity. Even with the setting aside of the White Australia policy in the 1960s and 1970s, much of this worldview remains alive in our asylum seeker and refugee policies, in our treatment of migrants of colour as well as in our military alignments and our diplomacy.

To this day, our fixation on exter-

nal threats is focussed on Asia where unfamiliar civilisations and huge populations are thought to look with envy upon our economic prosperity and attractive lifestyle.

And so, with a small population and a vast territory to defend, Australia has come to view security as dependent on protection by the imperial power, first Britain and now the United States.

As we have discovered, and keep on discovering, such protection does not come cheap. To ensure protection is forthcoming in the hour of need, Australia has had to demonstrate its loyalty to the protector. This it has done by repeatedly going to war in support of the imperial power, be it Britain or the United States:

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

PAX CHRISTI AUSTRALIA

is an Australia-wide

Christian Peace Movement, affiliated with Pax Christi International.

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

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

As an ecumenical Christian movement

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

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In the current context, support for the United States has involved a good deal more. Apart from a rapidly expanding security budget, we have felt obliged to align ourselves with US strategic plans and diplomatic priorities, most dangerously in relation to China. We have also had to forge ever closer links with NATO, and toe the line on Ukraine, Israel-Palestine, and other major conflicts.

At the same time, we are seeing increasingly high levels of interoperability with the US military, rapidly expanding joint military exercises, the establishment of the AUKUS security partnership, a sprawling US military footprint across northern Australia, and frenetic efforts to ensure the Pacific Islands remain firmly within the US/Australian strategic orbit.

Australia's security is at the crossroads. One option is to persist with past habits and mindsets, accept the primacy of the 'great and powerful friend', and continue to rely on military alliances and give pride of place to military solutions.

A more promising option beckons: a shift from the security interests as defined by military establishments to the security needs of people. Simply put, we can opt for a new set of policies attentive to the cries of the poor and marginalised and the cries of the Earth.

A human security approach would enable us to integrate physical security with economic and social needs, as well as with human rights and environmental values.

UN Secretary-General António Guterres has made clear on more than one occasion the core meaning of human security. To quote him:

The pandemic, climate disruption, pollution and biodiversity loss, protracted conflicts, skyrocketing inequalities, the dark side of technological advancement, and large-scale displacement all pose pressing risks. . . This is our moment to change course. . . We must put people at the centre of our actions . . . We must break down silos across sectors and institutions . . . We must boost inclusive partnerships that bene-

fit from the perspectives of youth, women, and those whose voices are rarely heard, such as indigenous peoples.

Human security is an idea whose time has come. In a period of unprecedented transition, we can keep moving towards societal breakdown and nuclear Armageddon, or we can redirect our energies away from militarised security and towards human security.

In Australia's case, a human security approach requires us to develop a new narrative. This would be a narrative that recognises the sovereignty, wisdom and resilience of our First Nations, and helps us shed the fears that have prompted our toxic attachment to imperial power. It would be a narrative that values Australia's own cultural diversity and enables us to communicate and work closely with neighbouring societies with vastly different cultural and civilisational backgrounds.

Early in the New Year, Pax Christi will release a discussion paper that sets out in some detail the institutional, cultural and policy implications of a human security approach for Australia. The paper will also suggest a series of small and larger steps designed to shift the focus and raise the quality of the public conversation.

The discussion paper will be accompanied by glossy 4-page leaflet intended for much wider distribution. It will reflect the thrust of the discussion paper, but with a much abbreviated and simpler text, more charts/tables and graphics, use of dot points, and a list of suggested actions for groups and individuals. Other resources, both print and audio-visual will follow, not least exploring the spiritual dimension of societal renewal.

In the coming months, we hope to make contact with diverse groups and organisations working in such areas as the rights of our Indigenous people, climate change and environment more generally, social and economic justice, civil liberties and human rights, violence against women, refugees and asylum seekers.

Of course, we will also need to reach out to religious bodies in the

Christian and other traditions, and over time to trade unions, professional and media networks, think tanks, research centres and philanthropic organisations. They all have much to contribute to and gain from the desired institutional and cultural shift.

Once we have laid out some of the necessary groundwork, we should be in a position to hold a public launch of the project. This will be a unique

opportunity to generate further momentum and set in motion concrete activities that can engage and energise a growing number of groups and individuals, young and not so young, highly skilled and not so skilled.

The road ahead is uncertain. Much has yet to be worked out. Tasks and teams are yet to take shape. One thing, however, is clear. In the land we call Australia, the need to create

healing spaces for reflection and dialogue and connect people and issues has never been greater. We approach the journey with trepidation, while alive to the power of the spirit to uplift and transform.

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WHAT HEALING DO WHITEFELLAS NEED?

Exploring the contribution of collective trauma? What might be the role of the Churches.

Dr David Tutty

This paper explores what healing Whitefellas need. What is the contribution of collective trauma? How might the Churches contribute to this healing process?

I focus on the perpetrators of colonisation of this land now called Australia. This is not only a historical issue as the dynamics of colonisation continue. First Nations Peoples are not free to determine their own futures and to manage their own Countries.

Four quotes to set the scene.

Bidjara / Kari Kari theologian, Anne Pattel-Gray, sees that,

"They invaded the country on the lie of terra nullius, waged untold wars, committed unrecorded massacres, enslaved the Indigenous People, forced segregation and more. Yet, today, Australians will not even face the historical research that uncovers these facts; nor will they acknowledge their own continuing denial of the human rights of the Indigenous People of Australia" (1998:1).

Pulitzer Prize winning, Harvard University Professor of History, Caroline Elkins states that:

The British Empire was born from conflict ... Violence was not just the British Empire's midwife, it was endemic in the structures and systems of British rule. It was not just an occasional means to liberal imperialism's end; it was a means and an end for as long as the British Empire remained alive. Without it, Britain could not have maintained its sovereign claims to its colonies" (2022:8).

Goenpul Quandamooka academic, Aileen Moreton-Robinson, says



"The British Imperial Project was predicated on taking possession of other peoples' lands and resources for the benefit of Empire. ... The right to take possession was embedded in British and international common law and rationalized through a discourse of civilization that supported war, physical occupation, and the will and desire to possess" (2015:19f).

Finally, historian Henry Reynolds reports that:

"My extensive research into frontier conflict led me on inevitably into a series of confrontations with many deeply embedded, and often dearly cherished, assumptions about Aborigines, about the settlers, about the process of colonisation, about Australian history as a whole. ... These assumptions are difficult to grapple with because they have been around for such a long time and are part of the image which very many people had of Australia. They were also appealing proposals which the community could not be expected to relinquish without a struggle" (1999:135).

Reflecting on these quotes, we hear words and phrases like *invaded, war, conflict, violence, enslaved, massacres, forced, take possession, desire to possess, deeply embedded, struc-*

tures and systems, assumptions and denial.

We need to ask – what underpins these behaviours and ways of seeing the world? Why would a nation want to invade and colonise another? Why would a nation seek to enslave and massacre people they had just met? Why is there this desire to possess and control? What are the underlying needs of the perpetrators of colonisation? Why do their descendants have difficulty facing the violence in their history? Why is there this desire to possess and control? What are the underlying needs of the perpetrators of colonisation? Why do their descendants have difficulty facing the violence in their history?

Many commentators focus on ideological justifications. Some even explore fear or greed in trying to name what formed the coloniser mindset. I wish to go below these types of analyses and see unhealed collective wounds, unprocessed collective pain, unresolved, ongoing collective trauma as formative of the culture, world view and dynamics that led to colonial invasions and exploitations. I also suggest that *collective trauma* continues to shape the Whitefella culture and their institutional dynamics.

Many of us know something about the reality of trauma. Bessel van der Kolk, Professor of Psychiatry at the Boston University Medical School, names trauma as a response mechanism to highly stressful events. It is an evolutionary protective process. It is part of our anatomy for survival. When trauma occurs our automatic

danger signals are disturbed and we become hyper- or hypoactive, aroused or numbed out. Because of this, we can regress into more primal states of fear or aggression, or we could freeze and become paralysed, unable to work out what is happening and what best to do. Trauma changes us. It distorts our ability to process memories clearly and it makes us more reactive to future stress (see Kolk 2014:ch2). Ken Wilber (quoted in Hübl 2020:204) sees that it is even possible for an individual to unintentionally harm or oppress others without being aware of it.

The ideal is that after the triggering event has passed we need to find ways of facing the trauma pain that we carry, to find ways of healing ourselves. For most of us, this does not happen easily. We are often unwilling to face our pain, our trauma, if we recognize that it is there in the first place. So if we do not seek healing, we are doomed to carry our trauma pain into the future. We are then shaped and limited by our unresolved, unhealed pain and we can only see things through this pain. Our choices are inevitably bound and restricted by trauma, by what we conceive of as "the past" – all that we have denied, disowned, dissociated and suppressed (Hübl 2020:6).

We know that we hold this trauma response in our entire bodies but I suspect few will be aware that we also hold our trauma in our cultures and social institutions. Trauma is never purely an individual problem. In fact, there is increasing research into the nature and dynamics of collective trauma. Practitioners like Thomas Hübl and Gabor Maté even argue that it is impossible to separate personal trauma from collective trauma. This is what we see in what we call intergenerational trauma. This is trauma that is passed on through familial, cultural, social and even epigenetic dynamics.

Thomas Hübl sees that *"The symptoms of collective trauma appear to reveal themselves in the condition of collective bodies of all kinds – our communities, schools, organisations, institutions, governments,*

and environments – revealing where we are injured, fractured or imbalanced" (2020:xxv).

Hübl describes the symptoms of collective trauma as *"growing like mould spores in the dark and fragmented underground of the human psyche, trauma's seeds are evidenced all around us: widespread isolation, endemic depression, violent divisions, systemic injustice, and countless other destructive forms, including our burgeoning climate crisis"* (2020:xxv).

Within this context that I want to suggest that those from Britain who invaded and colonised this land did so because they were acting out of their own collective trauma. I want to explore what contributed to the formation of the British colonial perpetrator and what continues to shape the Whitefella beneficiaries of ongoing colonisation.

Britain was a very harsh place in the centuries before and during the colonial invasion and settlement of what is now called Australia. The people had been formed by the so-called enlightened worldview, by an ideology and experience of empire, by a growing self-identity based on a sense of superiority to those who were not white, and by punitive dominant Christian theologies. I see these four factors as interconnected and intertwined. Not only did they impact on First Nations peoples around the world but they also contributed to so many poorer British people, seen as expendable.

The colonisers were profoundly impacted by the Enlightenment way of thinking and organizing life. They were formed by the *"conviction that [they] now knew the secret of knowledge and therefore the secret of mastery of the world"* (Newbiggin 1986:23). Key to this was the belief in the rational objectification of the natural world and the elimination of God from the public arena. The human mind was seen as limitless and the whole earth could be occupied and subdued with bold confidence.

This thinking also contributed to the legitimization of capitalism and its being freed from the *"requirements of justice and the*

dangers of covetousness" (Newbiggin 1986:31). In Britain, this contributed to the enclosure of the commons, the Scottish Highland clearances and the Irish plantation system. The poor were pushed into squalid, polluted, newly industrialised towns and forced to work long hours for little money. At that time, you could be imprisoned for stealing a loaf of bread and then transported to the other side of the world as punishment.

Because of this new way of thinking and organising life, Britain, like other Western European nations, adopted the technology and inclination to colonise many distant lands. For colonial critic, Albert Memmi, to colonise *"always involved the use of force"* for *"economic and political exploitation"* (1990:72). For Memmi, the coloniser was an illegitimate, privileged usurper, who took not only indigenous lands and their bounty but also Indigenous identity, well-being, and labour.

In order to do this, the British, like other colonisers, legitimated their invasion and theft by arguing that it was part of the white man's burden, the universal mission to civilize the barbarians. This required that those who were not European were named as different and inferior. Thus racism became consubstantial with the colonial dynamic.

"Skin colour became the mark of difference" (Elkins 2022:12). Yet it was a constructed skin colour as Irish and Afrikaners were also seen as "backward" populations that needed to be civilized. The British sought to render their colonial subjects rational, respectful of British law and order and prepared to participate in the then international capitalist world order.

To understand the power dynamic behind racism, modern social scientists speak of whiteness as racism's patriarchy. The British sense of whiteness is about a powerful legitimising master narrative that sought to maintain white privilege and advantage through the use of force. Like patriarchy, whiteness was not seen by its beneficiaries and was presented as normative and universal.

And the fourth interconnected factor is punitive dominant Christian theologies. Not only are these theologies dualistic, hierarchical, strong on legalism, and focused on the individual. They are based on a descending theology that is future focused so that the world and its history is ultimately unimportant.

What is most important is the God-imaging the theology offers. Yochai Ataria, an Israeli academic, claims that Western Culture is shaped by the story of Abraham binding Isaac in order to sacrifice him. He claims that the dominant theologies of the West have been based on the need to appease a blood-thirsty God who keeps count and punishes wrong doers.

I am part of generations of Christians who grew up with a strong awareness of hell and of the fear that God will send us to hell if we commit mortal sin. This means that if God can send God's enemies to hell then it must be acceptable for us to also punish our enemies. We can even invade and massacre those who are not like us and take their lands. We become like the God we adore.

Each of the four interconnected formative factors has contributed to the collective trauma of the coloniser and shaped subsequent Whitefella culture.

The so called enlightened paradigm has disconnected us from land and place, from community and ancestors, from God and healthy spiritualities, from our own bodies and from our interconnectedness with the rest of creation.

The acceptance of imperial violence has disconnected us from our ability to empathise and from our willingness to face the truth of history. It has disconnected our basic moral compass, leaving the majority of Whitefellas willing to continue to colonise and subjugate First Nations peoples.

The Whitefella sense of superiority fails to see the ongoing institutional racism that exists in this country. It fails to see that the institutions that shape Whitefella society are designed to maintain Whitefella dominance and Whitefella narrative. And most basically it fails to see First

Nations Peoples' rights to their Country.

The dominant Christian theologies reinforce our disconnection from land and the rest of creation, from community and from historical injustices. Theologies that focus on individual sin and punishment fail to point us to the God of love and justice. Theologies that use imperial images fail to present God who suffers alongside those who are poor and oppressed. These theologies fail to name the God who calls us to justice through healing of all that burdens us.

In all of this, there is a vital role for the churches. Thomas Hübl sees that all trauma has a spiritual element whether it is recognised or not. But the churches only have a role if they are willing to face that they also have been shaped and moulded by the same factors that have shaped the perpetrators of colonisation. The churches' complicity with empire and continued colonisation is because the churches, like the society, carry unresolved collective trauma.

Our best witness will be shaped by how we face our collective trauma. This is a difficult journey as so much of the trauma response acts to prevent the pain coming to the surface. But we need to be courageous and find safe and honest spaces so that this can occur.

The first step must be a journey of becoming trauma informed and trauma sensitive. This is where we connect our pastoral care skills with working for justice. To learn the dynamics of perpetrator collective trauma and to see it within ourselves is an important step.

Deep listening to First Nations Peoples and to liberative theologians can help us become more deeply aware of the harm we have caused. Deep listening to First Nations' experiences of invasion, colonisation and ongoing institutional racism is needed. As is deep listening to the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor.

In particular I want to highlight the need to be open to new ways of imaging God, ways that challenge anthropocentric patriarchy and whiteness, ways that challenge em-

pire and the need to have power over others, ways that name God as suffering alongside those who suffer from injustice and ways that seek to name God as the one who heals us from our individual and collective trauma so that we can become all that God intends for us.

Whitefellas need healing. It is only through this healing that true holistic conversion is possible. It is only through this healing that First Nations peoples can be free to direct and manage themselves and their countries.

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KAIROS SOUTHERN AFRICA AND KAIROS PALESTINE

Joint Open Letter to Church leaders and Christians in the USA, Europe and the Ecumenical Family

1 November 2023

Dindicate me in your righteousness, LORD my God (Ps. 35:24)

Sisters and brothers:

We are witnessing genocide against Palestinians in Gaza unfolding in front of our eyes, not dissimilar to what happened less than 30 years ago in Rwanda and 80 years ago in Europe. Many in the West were complicit in those genocides. We cannot and dare not let it happen again. It must be stopped.

Failure to act to stop this genocide, which is being supported by many in your countries, and encouraged by the supply of arms to Israel to carry it out, will make you complicit in this genocide. Those whose governments support this genocide have a greater responsibility to ensure that their governments stop this genocide.

While we condemn all violence against civilians and non-civilians, this war did not emerge out of a vacuum. Its genesis can be traced back to the illegal occupation of Palestinian territories, the expansion of illegal Jewish settlements in Occupied Palestine, the violation of the rights of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes and the siege of Gaza for the last 17 years. And most recently, the rising of the ultra-national and ultra-religious fascist groups to power in Israel and the denial of the current rightwing national and religious coalition to recognize the inalienable right of the Palestinians to freedom and self-determination. The entire world witnessed the continuing violations and attacks against Muslim and Christian Holy sites and worshippers in Jerusalem and other places carried out by Jewish extremists, settlers, Knesset members, and ministers, discounting the religious sensibilities of not only Palestinians but also millions of Christians and Muslims around the world; to name a few of the reasons behind the suffering of the Palestinians under Israel's settler colonialism regime.

In 2022, the Israeli Occupation Forces have killed 230 Palestinians;



171 in the West Bank, 53 in Gaza, 6 in Israel and 44 of which are Child fatalities. Moreover, since the beginning of the year and until Oct. 7th, 2023, the Israeli Occupation Forces have killed a total of 243 Palestinians. We hope that this provides you with a macroscopic view of the situation of the Palestinian people. This is simply to underline the point that pain, grief and sorrow did not start on Oct 7th, 2023.

We all know that all of these atrocities against all human beings are against God's intentions for God's world. They are also against international law and in breach of the Geneva Conventions. These Laws and conventions were put in place mainly by Western powers after the Second World War and no state was precluded from it or given exceptional status. Combine all which have been described above with the total siege imposed upon Gaza by Israel and the dangerous blocking of almost all non-violent avenues, then any reasonable human being will understand that things will explode. If Americans or Europeans were placed in a similar situation to what the people of Gaza have been exposed to, how they would have reacted? History teaches us that they would not have reacted non-violently and therefore we find some of the labels being placed on Palestinians (and previously on South Africans) as extremely hypocritical. South Africans know what it means to be labelled as "terrorist" or "communist". Worse labels have been put on Palestinians by those who are guilty of the worst kind of anti-Semitism, a burden and responsibility that they have placed on the

Palestinian people. In practice, we see how the Palestinians are being terrorized daily by Israeli settlers and by the Occupation forces and other Zionist militia. And therefore, we call out the hypocrisy of these labels being imposed only upon one group of people.

Most of the churches in Europe and the USA seems not to have repudiated their colonial and racist history. Because of this, the lens through which our lives are being viewed is still coloured by their sins of colonialism and racism. Now and once again, we need to hold this before you and make you aware of this. This is a projection of the worst kind and is inconsistent with the Jesus we know from our Scriptures. We therefore call you to deep repentance. The Jesus we know and have experienced - and whose birth in Bethlehem we will soon celebrate - is best encapsulated by the words of the young South African Christian poet, Thandi Gamedze, when she writes:

*"If Jesus were alive today –
And I do mean the brown Jesus
The one who grew up in occupied Palestine
The Roman empire a constant threat
Its military weaponised against anyone stepping out of line
The Jesus whose welcome into the world was tainted by violence
Air resounding with Roman ally King Herod's order
For the genocide of all boy children in Bethlehem
If that Jesus were alive today
It's clear where he would be
Likely making his way South
Dodging bombs and white phosphorous rain
Mourning family and friends
whose homes had been turned to rubble
While they were sleeping inside
Healing powers compromised in the face of all the casualties
Lament the only plausible response to the devastation
That Jesus would have no water to turn into wine
Because the present empire has poured cement into the supply*

VIEW FROM THE PEW, ADVENT 2023

The Rocky Road to Bethlehem in 2023

Salters Sterling.

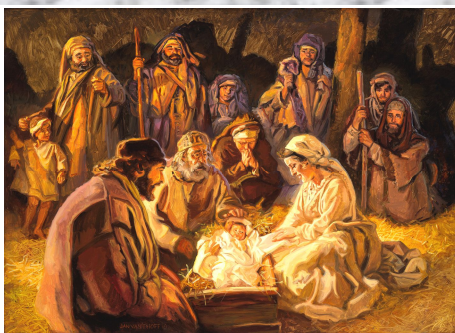
This piece will be appearing as we celebrate the First Sunday in Advent preparing ourselves for the journey that happens as we respond to the invitation to 'go even unto Bethlehem and see this thing which has come to pass, a baby lying in a manger'. Except, of course, what will confront us on our arrival will be a West Bank population whose nerves are jangling, whose teeth are on edge, whose world is increasingly less secure unless a miracle has happened. Images connected with the Holy Land have been part of my life for almost eighty years beginning with the reports from the Nuremburg trials in 1945/46. What I heard then on the crackling sound waves of my crystal set caused my hair to stand on end especially when I could persuade my mother or father to explain to me what was happening.

Just over a decade later when I was reading Runciman's *History of the Crusades* as part of my degree course I began to understand the prejudice with which the Jews had to contend in Europe and the Near East and it seemed to make sense that they should have a homeland with its sovereignty respected. That still does make sense.

Yet again a decade later I was happy to make the chapel of my London home, stripped of its Christian symbolism, available as a safe space for some of the Jews in Golders Green in which to meet to reflect on the Six Days War which Israel was conducting with some of the neighbouring states in the Near East Region.

Since then, as Israel has moved from uneasy peace to uneasy peace, concern for the dispossessed people of Palestine has come to feature increasingly in how I think about the matter. Now, as a constant day and night rain of bombing and rocketing terror constitutes the Israeli response to a once-off Hamas act of terrorism I am confronted with the need to put meaning on the situation that confronts us.

To try to do so takes me back to my



early schooldays when I was learning 'joined-up' writing by the copy-book method and *Two wrongs can never make a right* appears at the head of the page. It is a simple moral lesson and I cannot dispute it from experience. Does it apply in today's Holy Land? I think it does. However that is too simplistic a conclusion. Why is Israel there in the first place? Answer, because of centuries of prejudice in their European homelands ending in the Holocaust. Am I satisfied with that answer....only partly. I have to deal with the root cause of that European prejudice which lies in the interpretation of elements of our bible over centuries of the practice of our Christian faith. When I add that in, do I now have a satisfying sense of meaning? The answer is not yet!

I still have to deal with the circumstances of those who became dispossessed when the State of Israel was created and their descendants. No arrangements that have ever proven satisfactory have been made for them. That's what the Secretary-General of the United Nations meant when he so rightfully referred to context in respect of the current situation in Gaza. The history of the last 75 years cannot be undone. We have to start with the question - what kind of just solution would make sense today? A two nation model - Israel and Palestine - has been proposed and canvassed. Whatever about in the beginning, on its own it hasn't a chance of being successful now without some form of support for the two nations who are being asked to live beside each other. And what would that support look like?

That support at its heart needs to involve Europe and the Churches of Europe in a continuing act of repentance to both Israel and Palestine. It will be a costly repentance requiring resources to rebuild homes, roads and facilities and costly too in patience, understanding and respectfulness to both nations in equal measure. In parallel it will require that the neighbouring states to Israel and Palestine constitute themselves a league of neighbourly support so that there are in place structures to mitigate the occasions of suspicion and hostility that are likely to continue to occur between Israel and Palestine. Further there needs to be agreement between the totality of nations in the region and the three great Faiths whose ancestral roots are in the region as to how best the sacred places of those Faiths are to be governed and organised. Finally, because of the universality of those Faiths, the United Nations requires to be recognised as the presiding genius, with power to require that justice is done, peace maintained and agreements honoured, thereby according to the United Nations the authority which it was originally intended it should have, to hold and to exercise.

If such conditions could come to pass, then the rocky road of this advent pilgrimage to Bethlehem might be worth all the unnecessary pain and suffering that is currently being experienced in both Israel and Gaza, and in the long and torturous history of evolving faith understanding, the Song of the Angels serenading God to an audience of humble shepherds will have more completely come to pass than we, in this moment of bewilderment, could dare to have either hoped for or imagined. *Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel.....*

Salters Sterling's career is into its seventh decade covering work with Student Christian Movement, World Student Christian Federation, the Irish School of Ecumenics Trust, Trinity College Dublin and the Peace Process in Ireland.

A STATEMENT FOR OUR PEOPLE AND OUR COUNTRY

By The Uluru Dialogue

Oct 24, 2023

Australia is our country. We accept that the majority of non-Indigenous voting Australians have rejected recognition in the Australian Constitution. We do not for one moment accept that this country is not ours. Always was. Always will be. It is the legitimacy of the non-Indigenous occupation in this country that requires recognition, not the other way around. Our sovereignty has never been ceded.

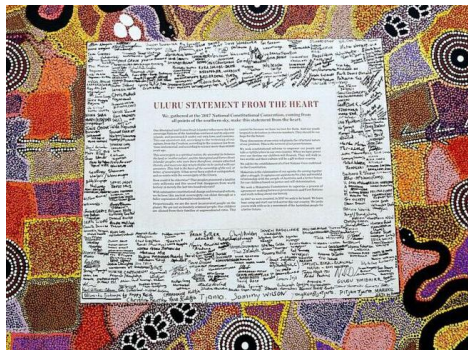
To the Prime Minister and every Member of the House of Representatives and the Senate of the Commonwealth Parliament

This is an open letter which will be circulated to the Australian public and media.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have observed a week of silence across Australia since the outcome of the Referendum last Saturday 14 October 2023. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags have flown half-mast and we have refrained from media commentary, even as politicians, governments, media commentators and analysts have spent a week exonerating – and indeed, lauding – the nobility of the 60.8 per cent of Australians who voted to reject Constitutional Recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the First Peoples of Australia.

These are the collective insights and views of a group of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders, community members and organisations who supported Yes:

1. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are in shock and are grieving the result. We feel acutely the repudiation of our peoples and the rejection of our efforts to pursue reconciliation in good faith. That people who came to our country in only the last 235 years would reject the recognition of this continent's First Peoples – on our sacred land which we have cared for and nurtured for more than 65,000 years – is so appalling and mean-spirited as to be utterly unbelievable a week following. It will remain un-



believable and appalling for decades to come.

2. We thank the 5.51 million Australians who voted Yes to recognition. This represents approximately 39.2 per cent of Australian voters on 14 October 2023. At the 2022 Federal Election the Australian Labor Party received support from 32.58 per cent of voters, the Liberal Party 23.89 per cent, the National Party 3.6 per cent and One Nation 4.96 per cent. We thank those Australians who gave Yes more support at this Referendum than they did to any political party.

3. We acknowledge the resounding Yes vote in discrete and remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. The high levels of support for Yes in our communities exposes the No Campaign's lies, taken up by the media even in the last week of the campaign. The situation of these communities needs to be addressed sooner rather than later.

4. Australia is our country. We accept that the majority of non-Indigenous voting Australians have rejected recognition in the Australian Constitution. We do not for one moment accept that this country is not ours. Always was. Always will be. It is the legitimacy of the non-Indigenous occupation in this country that requires recognition, not the other way around. Our sovereignty has never been ceded.

5. The Constitution still belongs to those who the founding fathers originally intended it for and remains unchanged in our exclusion. We were asked to be recognised over a decade ago; we sought to be included in a meaningful way

and that has been rejected. In refusing our peoples' right to be heard on matters that affect us, Australia chose to make itself less liberal and less democratic. Our right to be heard continues to exist both as a democratic imperative for this nation, and as our inherent right to self-determination. The country can deny the former but not the latter. A 'founding document' without recognition of First Peoples of this country continues the process of colonisation. It is clear no reform of the Constitution that includes our peoples will ever succeed. This is the bitter lesson from 14 October.

6. The support for the referendum collapsed from the moment Liberal and National Party leaders, Mr Dutton and Mr Littleproud, chose to oppose the Voice to Parliament proposal after more than a decade of bipartisan support. The proposal was tracking 60 per cent support compared to 40 per cent opposition for several years until the National and Liberal parties preferred wanton political damage over support for some of this country's most disadvantaged people. There was little the Yes campaign could do to countervail this.

7. Lies in political advertising and communication were a primary feature of this campaign. We know that the No campaign was funded and resourced by conservative and international interests who have no stake or genuine interest in the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. We know this funding supported multiple No campaigns that intentionally argued in varying directions to create doubt and fear in both non-Indigenous and Indigenous communities. This included resurrecting scare campaigns seen during the 1990s against land rights, but the scale of deliberate disinformation and misinformation was unprecedented, and it proliferated, unchecked, on social media, repeated in mainstream media and unleashed a tsunami of racism against our people. We know that the mainstream media failed our people, favouring 'a

'a false sense of balance' over facts.

8. There has always been racism against First Nations people in Australia. It increased with multiple daily instances during the campaign and was a powerful driver for the No campaign. But this campaign went beyond just racism. 'If you don't know – Vote No' gave expression to ignorance and licensed the abandonment of civic responsibility on the part of many voters who voted No. This shameful victory belongs to the Institute of Public Affairs, the Centre for Independent Studies and mainstream media.

9. Post-referendum commentaries that exculpate those who voted No were expected as the usual kind of post-election approbation of the electorate. The truth is that the majority of Australians have committed a shameful act whether knowingly or not, and there is nothing positive to be interpreted from it. We needed truth to be told to the Australian people.

10. We will maintain the vision of the Uluru Statement from the Heart. We will continue to uphold the outcomes of the Uluru Dialogues to which more than 1,200 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people from across the country contributed – culminating in the Uluru Statement signed by 250 people on 26 May 2017. It is evident that many Australians are unaware of our cultures, our histories, or the racism imbued in the Australian Constitution. That so many Australian people believe there is no race or division on race in the current Australian Constitution speaks to the need for better education on Australian history and better civics education. We have faith that the upswelling of support through this Referendum has ignited a fire for many to walk with us on our journey towards justice. Our truths have been silenced for too long.

11. We want to talk with our people and our supporters about establishing – independ-

ent of the Constitution or legislation – an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice to take up the cause of justice for our people. Rejection of constitutional recognition will not deter us from speaking up to governments, parliaments and to the Australian people. We have an agenda for justice in pursuit of our First Nations rights that sorely need a Voice – we will continue to follow our law and our ways, as our Elders and Ancestors have done.

12. We will regather in due course and develop a plan for our future direction. While this moment will be etched into Australia's history forever, today we think of our children, and our children's children. Our work continues as it has always done. We will continue to fight to seek justice for our peoples. We are three per cent of the population, and you are 97 per cent. *This article first appeared in "Pearls and Irritations"*

UPDATE ON "CHARTING OUR OWN COURSE"

Rita Camilleri

Some months ago, Rev Harry Kerr edited book which is the report of a public dialogue, and pressure for foreign policy for Australia". The Independent <https://ipan.org.au> is a national organization whose individual members and affiliated organizations can be found in every state. Pax Christi, among many others is an affiliating. The work of IPAN can be linked to rights (in the past nuclear waste dumps consultation); Australia's foreign policy (US), the Environment (as war is the greatest that should be spent on internal needs is These are just a few aspects where the health of Australians.

The latest campaign has branched out into an independent body, the Australia Anti-AUKUS Coalition or AAAC <https://antiaukuscoalition.org> currently runs webinars; some local groups have been established; members hold meetings with MPS and strongly oppose the introduction of 'defence/military' education in schools and weapons research at universities.

Returning to the initial report, it is available online. You can read and download an electronic copy <https://ipan.org.au/read-or-order-the-report-of-peoples-inquiry/> But there is nothing like holding a copy in your hand
Rita Camilleri camrita44@gmail.com

As most libraries respond to a request by a library user for the purchase of a book they need to access, if you go to your local library and they do not have a copy, ask them to order one: "Charting our own Course" they can order it from IPAN, PO Box 573 Coorparoo, Queensland 4151. Then others can make use of it as well. A good idea? Let us know how you get on.

CHARTING OUR OWN COURSE

Questioning Australia's
Involvement in US-led
Wars and the Australia-
United States alliance
A People's Inquiry



Findings of the
Independent and Peaceful
Australia Network
(IPAN) People's Inquiry
to explore the case for
an independent and
peaceful Australia
What are the costs
and consequences of
Australia's involvement
in US-led wars and the
Australia-US alliance?
What are the alternatives?

wrote in *Disarming Times*, a review of this inquiry whose primary aim is/was "to build change to develop a truly independent for-ent and Peaceful Australia Network or IPAN tion whose individual members and affiliated and territory.

ate and representatives attend IPAN meet-not only the military, but also Aboriginal land have been on Aboriginal land, without prior (which seems to be run at the behest of the est polluter of all) and our economy. (money allocated to supporting the US war machine). 'defence' industry impinges on the rights and

HYPOCRISY SOURS COP28

By Robert Hunziker

02/12/2023

Hypocrisy runs rampant at COP28 even before the doors swung open to 70,000 delegates on Thursday, November 30th. This is the 2023 UN Climate Change Conference or Conference of the Parties ("COP") held at Expo City, Dubai. It's the big annual event for scientists to meet to decide on the fate of anthropogenic climate change, assuming that's even possible.

This year's big climate summit is headed by Sultan Ahmed Al-Jaber, CEO of Abu Dhabi National Oil Company ("ADNOC") of the United Arab Emirates. Leaked documents show Emirati officials using their leadership position at the climate summit to "lobby for oil and gas deals around the world." That's disgusting and an international scandal of the highest order. Although, November 29th Ahmed Al-Jaber vociferously denied the allegations, according to Bloomberg News.

Nevertheless, the [Centre for Climate Reporting](#) as of November 27th reported *COP28 President Secretly Used Climate Summit Role to Push Oil Trade with Foreign Government Official*: "Leaked documents reveal COP28 president and UAE national oil company boss Sultan Al Jaber's plans to discuss boosting fossil fuel business in bilateral meetings about the climate summit."

Also, according to a BBC report, November 28th: "Al Jaber... has held scores of meetings with senior government officials, royalty, and business leaders from around the world in recent months. The COP28 team has quietly planned to use this access as an opportunity to increase exports of ADNOC's oil and gas."

Leaked briefings show Al-Jaber planned to use his new-found international leadership role as president of COP28 to raise commercial interests with almost 30 countries. A whistleblower came forward on condition of anonymity, confirming follow up discussions with at least one commercial party.

Professor Michael Jacobs of Sheffield

University, commenting to the BBC: "As a COP president you should not represent any national or commercial interest, it is your job to lead the world... The UAE at the moment is the custodian of a United Nations process aimed at reducing global emissions. And yet, in the very same meetings where it's apparently trying to pursue that goal, it's actually trying to do side deals that will increase global emissions."

Internal emails and meeting records obtained by the Centre for Climate Reporting raise serious questions about the COP28 leadership team's independence from the national oil company ADNOC. Moreover, whistleblowers claim COP28 staff were in regular contact with the national oil company over talking points for ADNOC targeting specific country oil deals.

The New York Times further reported *Using Climate Talks to Sell Fossil Fuels*, November 28th: UAE officials used their position of influence at the climate conference behind the scenes to influence Brazil's environment minister to help with a local petrochemical deal by ADNOC. And Emirati officials, using their position at COP28, influenced Chinese counterparts about working on a joint international LNG opportunity. The article goes on to say that diplomats and climate experts from around the world have expressed shock at the leaked documents.

According to Christiana Figueres, former UN diplomat: "The U.A.E. has been caught red-handed."

Early supporters of Al-Jaber for president of COP28 claim he was well positioned to convince oil producers of the world to tackle climate change. According to the IEA, the world's oil and gas industry accounts for only one percent of all global investment in clean energy. Supporters claimed Al-Jaber would substantially increase that number.

However, COP28 has now turned into a scandalous deception undermining hope for mutual trust amongst members, as well as deflating hopes for significant progress,

even before the summit began.

All of which begs the provocative question of how in the world did the UAE become host to a climate change conference in the first instance? And even more perplexing yet, how did Al-Jaber become president of COP28? Is COP a Cabal of Producers or a Conference of the Parties for climate change purposes?

"They went too far in naming the C.E.O. of one of the largest — and by many measures one of the dirtiest — oil companies on the planet as the president of the U.N. Conference on Climate this year," former vice president Al Gore." (Source: *Fossil Fuels and Frustration at COP28*, The New York Times, November 30, 2023)

The hypocrisy runs even deeper than Al-Jaber and the UAE. Although, it's nearly impossible to match the alleged duplicity, chicanery of Al-Jaber/UAE using the UN Climate Conference as an easily manipulated stooge to promote their own oil and gas deals.

A recent UN Environment Programme in collaboration with academic institutions studied plans for the 20 largest fossil fuel producing countries that account for 84% of global carbon emissions: "The findings paint a grim picture: Governments' plans show they intend to produce, in total, 110% more fossil fuels in 2030 than are compatible with the 1.5°C limit set out in the Paris Agreement, and 69% more than is consistent with 2°C of warming." (Source: [The Production Gap](#))

Expected Oil & Gas Commitments at COP28

According to the World Resources Institute: "It's essential that this UN climate summit not become a platform for pledges by the oil and gas industry that fail to tackle the core issue at stake. At COP28, the UAE is expected to announce a commitment from at least 20 major oil and gas companies to reduce methane leakage and reach net-zero emissions by 2050 — but only for their own operations, not for the fuel they sell. By not addressing the so-called

"Scope 3" emissions of the fuel produced from their oil and gas extraction and then sold, the oil and gas industry is sidestepping the emissions that account for [up to 95%](#) of its contribution to the climate crisis." Meantime, alarming data about forthcoming global warming and ecosystem degradation across the globe is far beyond the mindset and scope of intellect of host country UAE to handle a major UN Climate Change Conference. It simply does not fit. It's embarrassing!

The focus of COP28 should be on relevant science: Earth's energy imbalance or "sunlight in" versus "sunlight out" is currently running at a frightful rate @ 1.36 W/m² as of the 2020s decade. This is beyond troubling. It's double the 2005-2015 rate @ 0.71 W/m² (Source: James Hansen, *Global Warming is Accelerating. Why? Will We Fly Blind?* September 14, 2023). W/

m² is watts per square meter. Accordingly, there's more energy coming in (absorbed sunlight) than energy going out (heat radiated to space) doubling within only one decade, which is beyond belief, assuring very challenging bad news down the line. This is an enormously dangerous climate event that's already in process with potentially devastating earmarks.

It's not surprising that Dr. James Hansen, Earth Institute, Columbia University expects an early arrival of the dreaded 2.0°C above pre-industrial by the late 2030s, far ahead of IPCC expectations, which will crush many life support ecosystems; meanwhile, according to the International Energy Agency (IEA) fossil fuel producers plan on cranking up production to record levels. Thus, both global warming and oil production can join hands simultaneously setting new records.

All the above adds up to disturbing levels of an indescribable insanity; furthermore, more insanity is expected as climate analysts expect an avalanche of greenwashing at COP28, already identified by the World Resources Institute in the preceding fourth paragraph.

Speaking of which, Al-Jaber informed Bloomberg News, November 29th, "all of his meetings have been focused on how the world can collectively keep global temperature rise below 1.5C from pre-industrial levels." Al-Jaber also previously said that emissions must be cut by 43% by 2030 because that's what the science says must be done. Yet, ADNOC, his oil company, has plans to increase oil production by 600,000 barrels per day by 2030, spending \$150B for more oil production.

Go figure!

Robert Hunziker is a writer from Los Angeles

Book Review THE QUEEN IS DEAD by Stan Grant

Reviewed by Harry Kerr

The White Queen is dead. Stan Grant is a Wiradjuri and Kamilaroi man. He is a journalist who has worked for the ABC, SBS, the Seven Network and Skynews. For eleven years he worked for CNN as an anchor and senior correspondent in Asia and the Middle East. He is now chair of Indigenous/Australian Belonging at Charles Sturt University.

This description seems to locate him as a professional man of the world who happens to be indigenous. In this book he seeks to tell us who he really is and from where he comes. He uses as a focus the death of Queen Elizabeth II and how he is unable to be part of the grief and celebration of her 70 year reign.

Grant is careful to point out that he intends no disrespect to the person of Queen Elizabeth. He has met her and respects the person she is and what she has come to mean for so many. He sees the White Queen as the symbol of whiteness, what whiteness means in the world and in particular what whiteness represents to indigenous peoples in Australia and throughout the world.

Grant attempts to show us by telling his own story and that of his family what whiteness looks like through the eyes of First Nations peoples. He introduces us and invites us into the feel and experience of whiteness as it is lived and experienced by his people.

Whiteness is about Domination, and Entitlement. It is about claiming as one's own that which belongs to others. It is about *might is right*. Whiteness is spiritual. It defines what it means to be human on its own terms. It claims God as the power behind its own right to dominate. It pictures Jesus, the apostles and saints as white which they clearly were not. Peoples of colour experience it as being pushed out of



the way, marginalised, losing their lands and means of livelihood. But it is much more. Whiteness dehumanises indigenous peoples. It excludes them from humanity as they know and recognise it. It does not hear or take seriously their cultures, their relationships, their languages and their relationship to the land. Whiteness seeks to exploit land. It exploits indigenous peoples where it can not disappear them completely. Grant talks movingly of love and how God is love in indigenous communities. Whiteness is unable to see it.

White liberals talk glibly of reconciliation but often it is implicitly on white terms and in the white language. It will never move forward without painful truth telling and patient listening if we are ever to take up the gracious invitation in the Uluru Statement from the Heart.

The Queen is Dead is published by Fourth Estate, Sydney 2023

It can be ordered from www.Booktopia.com.au \$28.50 Dymocks \$34.99, Readings, \$24.99 or from local libraries.

NOTICE BOARD

NEW SOUTH WALES Pax Christi Meetings

We normally meet on the First Monday of each month at 6.00pm for shared meal that members bring and the meeting follows at 6.30 pm.

**Contact: Claude Mostowik
(02) 9550 3845 or 0411 450 953**

The venue: 209A Edgeware Road, Enmore.

QUEENSLAND Pax Christi Meetings Pax Christi Queensland

Contact:

Pam Nair (Secretary):
07 3711 3273

pamnair@hotmail.com

VICTORIA

Contact:

Sister Catriona Devlin OSB
catriona3171@gmail.com

Pax Christi National Council Meets on Zoom for national issues

Contact:

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0411 450 953**

NIGHT FALLS IN THE EVENING LANDS THE ASSANGE EPIC

Ceaseless hounding, unscrupulous lies and malicious persecution over 13 years reveal a wilful and destructive disregard of some of the noblest civic accomplishments in the human story:

- Charter of the United Nations.
- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
- The crucial Conventions of Asylum.
- And the Due Process of Law



**Fighting for Julian's freedom is a clarion call
to assert and**

- defend the inalienable rights of each human being;
- to speak truth to power and
- hold governments accountable for their actions;
- to uphold the principles of civilised conduct in international relations;
- and to strive for a just and peaceful world.

**A one day conference on
Saturday 9 March 2024 at Storey Hall, RMIT**

Speakers: Mary Kostakidis as moderator,
Yanis Varoufakis, John Pilger, Emma Shortis, Binoy Kampmark,
Michael West, Joseph Camilleri,
Con Pakavakis, and John Shipton.

The opening address will be delivered by
Craig Mokhiber former Director at the New York Office of
the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).

Details of the program and ticketing will be available on 9 December at a
dedicated website under construction Website: <https://www.nightfalls.info/> /
For all enquiries: Email: admin@nightfalls.info

Organised by Assange Campaign, PEN, Stop AUKUS, SHAPE

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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/renewal to ☐ PO Box A 681
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All others: please return your membership application/ renewal to 13 Mascoma St, Strathmore, Vic 3041
. Direct transfer to Pax Christi Victoria Inc BSB 063-161 **Account number** 00900935

Please Advise Terry Byrne t.byrne15@optusnet.com.au

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