



# DISARMING Pax Christi TIMES

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## TRUMP'S VICTORY SPELLS TROUBLE

but also exciting, unimagined opportunities, Joseph Camilleri

A Donald Trump presidency is as unpredictable as it was unexpected. While some have welcomed the result, for many Americans, as for America's friends and allies, there is a deep sense of unease about the future. Yet, strange as it may sound, the outcome of this election may depend more on what we make of it than on what Trump and his advisers intend. Though daunting, the challenge is pregnant with possibilities.

Some observers have argued that the Trump victory is a reaction to economic hardship, job insecurity, casualisation and an out-of-touch political elite. But that's only half the story.

People in the US and around the globe are feeling disconcerted by a rapidly changing world and a bewildering, often frightening, set of problems: terrorism, refugees, climate change, a global arms trade, and heightened racial tensions to name but a few.

That opens the way for people with simple solutions. Enter Donald Trump. For all his anti-establishment bravado, Trump's underlying message is nevertheless a rather familiar: defence of "national interests" (never defined) through strength. He offers a deeply ingrained sense of American exceptionalism, which justifies unilateral action – even when US power is in steady decline.

### The Trump approach

Contrary to simplistic reports, Trump seems unlikely to ditch alliances. In a major foreign policy speech he bluntly stated: "America is going to be a reliable friend and ally." But alliances will

be approached from a position of strength. This means substantially higher US military spending and rapidly upgraded nuclear and conventional forces.

To achieve the "unquestioned military dominance" he seeks, Trump requires America's allies to carry a greater share of the political, financial and human costs involved. To this end, he has flagged two summits after he assumes office: one with NATO allies and the other with allies in the Asia-Pacific, at which he may well read the riot act.

A similar strategy from strength is foreshadowed in relations with China and Iran. When it comes to the Middle East, he will be looking for reliable friends, notably Israel. Arab regimes will be supported if they are prepared to contribute generously to the defence effort. Human rights and reform in these countries will not be part of America's strategic calculation.

To this dubious policy mix Trump has added his own eccentricities: abandoning climate change as a priority and giving fossil fuel industries a new lease of life; building an "impenetrable, physical, tall, powerful, beautiful" wall on the Mexican border, imposing a ban on Muslims entering the country (later rebadged as "extreme vetting"); opposition to marriage equality; and support for waterboarding.

### America's friends and allies

Little of this agenda will find favour with America's friends or allies, most of whom still appear committed to the Paris climate change agreement. Many Europeans are intent on strengthening

it. The German government has just announced an ambitious climate change action plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 80 to 95% by 2050.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel, the driving force behind the EU's acceptance of hundreds of thousands of refugees, has made it clear that relations with the United States have to rest on: *values of democracy, freedom, and respect for the law and the dignity of man, independent of origin, skin colour, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or political views.*

French president François Hollande has spoken of a greater need for a united Europe, able to wield influence on the international stage and promote its values and interests whenever they are challenged.

In even blunter terms, European Commission president Jean-Claude Juncker accused the new president elect of ignorance and said he must be taught "what Europe is and how it works".

The Iranian nuclear deal is enshrined in

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# DISARMING TIMES

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

## PAX CHRISTI AUSTRALIA

is an Australia-wide

Christian Peace Movement, affiliated with Pax Christi International.

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

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

As an ecumenical Christian movement

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

[www.paxchristi.org.au](http://www.paxchristi.org.au)

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a UN Security Council resolution, and no other negotiating party proposes to abandon it. Should a Trump administration be foolish enough to re-impose sanctions on Iran, it will not be followed by any of its European allies, let alone Russia or China. All of these countries want to take advantage of the investment and energy opportunities afforded by a stable relationship with Tehran.

To make headway in Washington, Trump may need to compromise with the security, foreign policy and financial establishments, while trying to reward his backers and meet the expectations of his core constituency. Such compromises are unlikely to escape sharp reactions either at home or abroad.

### **A unique moment**

This, then, is a unique moment for America's friends and allies to fashion a different course, one based on their nobler ethical and humanistic traditions.

Given the rapidly diminishing utility of military power so painfully evident in Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya, Syria and Ukraine, there is wisdom in disengaging from costly and often ineffectual military alliances, and opposing great power military interventions.

A more promising approach is to reorganise national security forces so they can effectively support internationally mandated peacekeeping missions, and develop the skills and infrastructure for collaborative conflict resolution and peacebuilding initiatives. This is also an

opportunity to move swiftly, as foreshadowed by the recent U.N. resolution a legally binding treaty outlawing the use and threat of nuclear weapons. These directions have greater public appeal than is often imagined.

Growing support now exists for a better regulated international financial system and a legally binding international climate change regime based on principles of equity and effective monitoring of national commitments. Globally and regionally negotiated agreements are needed to address the unprecedented numbers of people displaced by conflict.

Devising economic policies to reduce wealth and income inequalities is no longer considered an outlandish proposition. We need for social and cultural programs that foster dialogue and cooperation across the religious and ethnic divides, domestically and internationally. Here lies the key to a constructive and enduring relationship between the West and Islam.

This ambitious but commonsense agenda clearly exceeds the capacities and inclinations of many governments. However, it is being embraced with increasing energy by social movements, educational, cultural, religious and professional actors, and by the socially aware corporate and philanthropic sectors.

A new, more imaginative politics is beckoning

*This article first appeared in "The Conversation."*

## UN MOVES TOWARDS PROHIBITION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS Report from ICAN

Last week, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution that sets up negotiations of a new legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons.

This is a huge success for all of us, thank you for all of your tweets, emails, donations and any other actions you have taken to support our work! In this world of acronyms, resolution numbers, endless documents and paragraphs, it's not always easy to keep up to speed

with what it all actually means. Here are some of the questions we've received about the resolution:

**What did the resolution actually decide?**

The resolution "[Taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations](#)" was adopted on 27th October by the UN General Assembly. 123 states voted in favour, 38 voted against and 16 abstained. The resolution convenes a conference to negotiate a legally binding

instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, which will take place in 2017.

It does not outline the content of the treaty, but recognizes the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons and the risks related to the existence of nuclear weapons as a reason for moving forward with a prohibition.

#### **When will the negotiations take place?**

The resolution stipulates that the negotiating conference will convene twice in 2017. The first meeting will be held on 27-31 March and the second meeting will be held on 15 June-7 July.

The resolution calls on states participating in the conference to "make their best endeavours to conclude as soon as possible a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons."

ICAN believes it's possible and will work hard to ensure that a treaty prohibiting nuclear weapons can be adopted by the end of the negotiating conference in July.

#### **Can states that voted no participate in the negotiations?**

Yes! The resolution specifies that negotiations will be open to all states, international organizations and civil society. It also encourages all member states of the United Nations to participate in the negotiations.

Several states that decided to vote no have indicated that this decision does not rule out their eventual participation in the treaty negotiations.

ICAN will work hard to ensure that as many states that voted no as possible participate in good faith in the negotiations and we are confident that some will.

#### **What impact will this treaty really have if nuclear-armed states don't sign it?**

\* A ban on nuclear weapons will establish an international norm against the possession of nuclear weapons, which will help to reduce the perceived value of such weap-

ons. It will draw the line between those states that believe nuclear weapons are unacceptable and illegitimate, and those states that believe nuclear weapons are legitimate and able to provide security. If nuclear weapons continue to be portrayed as a legitimate and a useful means to provide security, non-nuclear weapon states might aim to develop such weapons themselves.

- \* Banning nuclear weapons is not the same as eliminating them. However, a ban will be a necessary starting point for disarmament to happen. While the dismantlement of all nuclear arsenals might be a long process, a clear international rejection of these weapons is going to be an essential component of future disarmament efforts.
- \* A ban on nuclear weapons will make the maintenance and development of nuclear weapons less attractive and more difficult, both for existing nuclear weapons possessors and potential new ones. It will create better conditions for effective disarmament measures.
- \* Previous experiences with for example biological and chemical weapons, landmines and cluster munitions, shows that prohibition precedes elimination, even if not all states sign the treaty.

#### **Does NATO membership prevent states from participating and signing this treaty?**

There are no legal grounds for why a NATO country would not be able to work for a ban on nuclear weapons.

NATO member states have reserved the right to adopt independent national policies on nuclear weapons as long as the Alliance has existed. Some of these national positions already restrict participation in the nuclear weapons activities of the Alliance, without restricting these states from participating in the work of the Alliance more generally. States can also change their role in various planning

groups, and have historically done so, including in the Nuclear Planning Group.

While NATO's strategic concept from 2010 says that as long as nuclear weapons exist, NATO will remain a nuclear alliance, the concept also declares that the alliance should work to create conditions for a world free of nuclear weapons. A ban on nuclear weapons will stigmatize and prohibit nuclear weapons, creating better conditions for nuclear disarmament. Working for nuclear disarmament is not just a reference in a strategic concept, this is also an obligation in the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, a treaty signed by all member states of NATO.

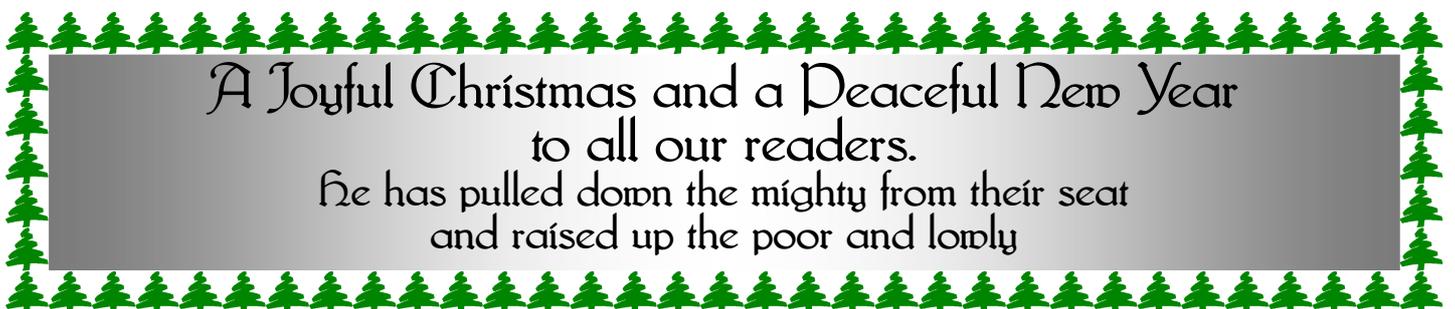
The 2010 NPT outcome document called for the reduction of reliance on nuclear weapons in security doctrines. By leading the work to stigmatize and prohibit nuclear weapons, NATO states can implement their national obligations by increasing the influence over NATO's next strategic concept and implement the commitments from 2010 to "reduce the reliance on nuclear weapons in security doctrines".

The facts that have emerged during the three humanitarian consequences, as well as the new discussion about the risks such weapons pose should be the start of a dialogue in all NATO states about what more NATO states can do to reach a world free of nuclear weapons.

#### **Will ICAN participate in the negotiations?**

You bet! We will work hard to make sure that the text of the treaty stays strong, that as many countries as possible participate and to ensure that people around the world can influence their governments.

**Got more questions? Check out our [frequently asked questions](#) or send us an email on [info@icanw.org](mailto:info@icanw.org)**



## THE MEANS TO ABOLISHING NUCLEAR WEAPONS: Reflections for Pax Christi.

Brian Johnstone

William J. Perry has written one of the most lucid and best informed books available on the dangers of nuclear war, *My Journey at the Nuclear Brink* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2015). Members of Pax Christi, on reading the book, would find that Perry would largely agree with them on the goal to be achieved, namely the abolition of nuclear weapons. However, he has very different ideas from theirs on the appropriate means of achieving that goal.

The word “journey” in the title is significant. Perry began his involvement with the nuclear issue as an arms expert. He realized from the beginning the danger to humanity posed by nuclear weapons, but his way of thinking about it has changed over the years.

Perry had witnessed the devastation wrought by bombing raids on Tokyo at the end of the second world war. This destruction had been brought about by thousands of bombers in hundreds of raids. But comparable devastation had been produced in Hiroshima and then on Nagasaki by just one bomb. Perry quotes Einstein: **“The unleashed power of the atom has changed everything, save our modes of thinking.”** The most important task facing humanity today is this: to change our mode of thinking. Perry would seem to have changed his own way of thinking over the years as his range of experience broadened.

In the early years of his involvement Perry devoted his efforts to obtaining technical knowledge of what nuclear weapons could do. The crucial issue at this time was that there was no available structure in which enlightened minds could engage in planning to reverse the growing capacity for “over kill.” Those who had the capacity to engage with the issue has only “the grim pragmatism of the doctrine of MAD (mutual assured destruction).” This, as described by Perry, was shared terror. To work, this presupposed that those in power on both sides, were always rational and always well informed; it also required “indefinite good luck.”

At this period, Perry saw the immediate solution as a technical one; better information had to be acquired; what was needed was “a revolution in reconnaissance technology.” But, while this was achieved, all that was accomplished was shoring up mutual assured destruction by making war too terrifying to contemplate. Enlightened reason, if it was engaged at all, could operate only within the boundaries set by irrational passion.

The stark reality is that if reason were to operate at all, it required not only extraordinarily accurate information, it had to grasp that information and reach decisions in minutes. This was, for Perry, the major concern.

In the space of a few minutes, leaders must make life and death decisions that will affect the whole planet. Even if such short decision times were considered to be necessary during the cold-war, when the U.S.A. and Russia believed that their opponents might engage in a first strike, they are no longer defensible. Of course, the enduring problem is that even if such short-time decisions could be considered “necessary,” it must surely be extremely doubtful whether such decisions could be rational. Perry’s awareness of the stark realities involved in political decisions was heightened by personal experience.

Perry was summoned to Washington for consultation at the onset of the Cuba missile crisis in 1962. He was a recognized expert on the effects of nuclear weapons and his knowledge was needed. He writes; “My study of nuclear effects told me that such an exchange could bring about the end of civilization.” He recalls that he went every day to the analysis centre thinking that this would be his last day on earth. After the experience of involvement in the intense discussions during the Cuban missile crisis, he concludes that, “we may have avoided a disaster through considerable luck.” From one who was personally involved in the policy discussion this is surely a very sobering reflection. We delude ourselves as we imagine that our political leaders are preserving us from destruction by

their carefully reasoned policies and planning.

Perry’s thinking at this stage would seem to be cast in terms of technical reason. Since rational decisions cannot be made under such time restrictions, the task is to extend the available time. This mode of reasoning is still evident in his final statement of purpose. This provides an illustration of the kind of step by step approach that that Perry and the co-members of his project favour. As an example, Perry writes: “It is time for the United States to make clear the goal of removing all nuclear weapons everywhere from the prompt-launch statutes in which nuclear-armed missiles are ready to be launched in minutes.” Just how difficult a change of thinking may be is illustrated by Perry’s account of an historic summit meeting between US president Ronald Reagan and general secretary Mikhail Gorbachev in Reykjavik, Iceland on 11-13 October 1986. It is astounding to read that these leaders discussed dismantling all their nuclear weapons. Both leaders genuinely wanted to reach agreement. But were unable to do so.

The obstacle was an issue that, on the face of it, concerned a technical issue. Gorbachev cited the link between offensive and defensive nuclear weapons. He wanted a provision in the agreement that the Americans would “limit the SDI program to the laboratory.” Reagan would not accept this. The talks ended without an agreement. Nevertheless, the encounter between the two leaders might be taken as an indication of what is possible if only leaders and their advisers could be guided by reason, rather than political calculation.

The Strategic Defence Initiative (SDI), also known as “Star Wars,” was a program first initiated on March 23, 1983 under President Ronald Reagan. The intention behind this program was to develop a sophisticated anti-ballistic missile system in order to prevent missile attacks from other countries, specifically the Soviet Union. Within the mind-set created during the tension of the Cold War

the Strategic Defence Initiative was conceived as the United States' response to possible nuclear attacks from the Soviet Union. There were objections brought against the proposal, namely that it could be seen as "contravening" the anti-ballistic missile (ABM) of the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks years before. For this reason, and also because of budgetary constraints, the Strategic Defence Initiative was ultimately abandoned. The nickname "Star Wars" may have been attached to the program for some of its abstract and far-fetched ideas, many of which included lasers. It is sobering to reflect that Reagan's unwillingness to limit the SDI program seems to have been the main reason why the agreement on abandoning nuclear weapons was not reached. Yet ultimately, the program was abandoned because it was impractical and would cost too much money. Economic reason ultimately prevails.

In 1994 Perry was appointed Secretary of Defence by President Clinton. This office required him to engage in the politics of nuclear arms control. His thinking developed further. In 2007 together with George Schultz, Sam Nunn, and Henry Kissinger, he

formed the "Nuclear Security Project." The aim of the project is "to call the world's attention to the great dangers posed by nuclear weapons, call for increased urgency in taking steps to reduce those dangers, and advocate that we begin moving towards a world without nuclear weapons." This is a political project, but it clearly has a strong ethical dimension. His book poses some questions for Pax Christi.

The members of Pax Christi would no doubt accept the goal of a world without nuclear weapons. However, they would support as a means to this end, achieving a world treaty banning nuclear weapons as proposed by ICAN, the [International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons](#). This movement has had some success. On October 27th 2016, the United Nations adopted a landmark resolution on a treaty outlawing nuclear weapons. This occurred after the publication of Perry's book: would he accept this as an acceptable step towards the goal of abolition?

While the members of the Nuclear Security Project agree with the end-goals of the abolition nuclear weapons, they have "vastly different ideas" about how to achieve that goal. They

differ regarding the means. They do not support the endeavour to achieve a treaty banning nuclear weapons. They advocate a step by step process, ensuring that each step makes the world safer. As Sam Nunn described the project strategy: "We were at base camp not even halfway up a mountain, which was obscured by haze. We could only proceed step by step, understanding that it would be a long difficult journey, but knowing that each step would make our world safer, even if we never reach the top." Thus a question for Pax Christi could be the following. Should we strongly support the project for an international treaty abolishing nuclear weapons, keeping abolition clearly before us as an achievable goal? Or should we follow the political realists, Perry and his associates, with their gradual step by step program, seeking with each step to make the world a safer place, while acknowledging the goal of abolition as a distant prospect?

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## PINE GAP 2016. by Peter Griffin

On Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> September three members of Pax Christi NSW, Clare Maguire, Frank Vavasour and Peter Griffin flew up to Alice to join in conference activities organized by IPAN (Independent and Peaceful Australia Network) and AABCC (Australian Anti-Bases Campaign Coalition). Anti-bases campaigns are something of a tradition in the Northern Territory. Spirit of Eureka ([www.spiritofeureka.org](http://www.spiritofeureka.org)) have a very full and informative online history of anti-bases campaigns extending from 1976, 1983 to 2003 and includes a note on information leaked by Edward Snowden in 2013.

The 2016 gathering included a public forum on Friday evening of 29<sup>th</sup> September, followed by an all-day conference on Saturday 30<sup>th</sup>. These events were both preceded and followed by demonstration/actions at the blockade on Hatt (unofficially re-

signed "Hate") Rd. This road houses the stopping point an extensively fenced blockade by both uniformed police and suited staff with cameras to all would be visitors to

IPAN Conference Sat 1<sup>st</sup> October, 2016  
Alice Springs



Pine Gap.

About a kilometre short of the blockade a makeshift camp of perhaps a hundred very conscientious alternative lifestyle protesters had been a colourful presence on the land for some weeks prior to the conference. Other events on Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> in-

cluded protest actions at the factory premises of Raytheon (manufacturer of drone and other devilishly clever killing hardware). Four protesters chained themselves to the gates of the premises of the US military contractor. Police presence was constant there, but with little interference.

Pax Christi (wearing their Anti-bases hats) also orchestrated a street theatre to good effect. That same day also saw the brief court appearance of five protesters who had penetrated the Pine Gap perimeter in the early hours. Charges were dismissed after an informed Magistrate noted that the police had failed to fully implement charges protocols related to the Defence (Special Undertakings) Act 1952. The possibility of a reapplication on correction of charges being made remains open. The more conventional proceedings began on the Friday evening with the public meet-

ing, at which conference attendees, numbering 120+ were joined by local audience bringing the numbers close 200. The speakers included two international visitors, Professor Lisa Natividad from the University of Guam – an indigenous citizen of the Chamorro people and tireless protester of the U.S. regime of virtually total militarization of Guam, and Professor Kosuzu Abe from the University of Ryukuyus, Okinawa, a deeply committed organizer against the increasing militarization her island home. Greens Senator Scott Ludlum and Professor Richard Tanter provided historical and deeply informed technical perspectives respectively.

A constant theme of the conference and repeated throughout all protests was the undeniable absence of any reference to the rights, much less permission sought, of the local custodians of the land, the Arrernte people. This theme of disregard for the rights and concerns of local and indigenous people was echoed by the visitors from Guam and Okinawa.

The Conference on Saturday canvassed a wide range of perspectives, including those speakers from the public forum the night before. Included were :research into drone warfare (Ms Alex Edney-Browne), the Medical Association for Prevention of War (Dr Margaret Beavis), the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) and its program Reaching Critical Will –the endeavour to stigmatise war and violence (Ray Acheson); Social Justice Advocacy (Rev Berlin Guerrero); Legal representation and defence in the context of charges laid against “arrestables” from protest actions in Alice Springs (Russell Goldflam), Union involvement in Social Justice issues (George Kyreakoe - Alice Springs delegate, Electrical Trades Union, the Australian Greens – Senator Lee Rhiannon (longtime in-

volvement in bringing public attention the secrecy of the US Base and Australia’s vulnerability as a nuclear target. And long/lifetime campaigner ex Senator Jo Valentine was MC for the Saturday Conference -

Having given an incomplete overview of the happenings related to the IPAN conference (I have not attempted to canvass, for instance, the very earthy contributions of Graeme Dunstan –but that and the man himself, deserve much more than passing reference). I would like to offer some personal reflections.

In a very real and comprehensive way, Pine Gap, both in what it represents symbolically and in what it actually does, is Australia’s very own Pandora’s box.

<http://myths.e2bn.org/mythsandlegends/textonly562-pandoras-box.html> The myth is, in my view, particularly apt as it is potent. Open that (box of secrets) and every demon is let loose –and it is by no means clear that Hope is to be found there, if ever it was. It is difficult to imagine a situation which so deeply “hard wires” (Tanter’s term) Australia into the U.S. hegemonic agenda.

Richard Tanter, Bill Robinson and (sadly, the late) Des Ball, give both detailed and up to date information about what the “joint facility” is capable of. Nautilus : <http://nautilus.org/briefing-books/australian-defence-facilities/pine-gap/the-pine-gap-project/> They acknowledge the debt to Edward Snowden for a whole vista of new information..

But no matter what way you cut it, Pine Gap is huge and many faceted story. And it implicates us all – as indeed other stories (cf. asylum seekers) do. To that end I would like to make specific reference to two contributions by Richard Tanter. The first is his list of 10 reasons for closing Pine Gap:

1. Facilitates US nuclear war first strike
2. Improves targetting for US nuclear second strike
3. Is a priority Russian and Chinese nuclear target
4. Contributes to US drone attack targeting
5. Critical for viability of destabilising US-Japan missile defence system
6. Deeply involved in battlefield activities in US global military operations
7. Situational Space Awareness role – the essential requirement for US space war
8. Key part of US global surveillance network
9. Australian uses of Pine Gap capabilities hard wire ADF into US military systems
10. Limits Australian autonomy foreign policy autonomy; default = US position.

This report is not meant to be definitive, but I would like to close off with yet another link to an article.

Richard Tanter has written a super article called “Our poisoned heart” <http://arena.org.au/our-poisoned-heart-by-richard-tanter/>. It summarises succinctly the history and functions of Pine Gap. But it does something more.

It finishes with this paragraph : “The technological requirement to host the Pine Gap base has passed. All the data downlinked from the now very large satellites is today encrypted and so could be downlinked elsewhere with no loss to US national security. Moreover, in another technological revolution, satellite data downlinked to Pine Gap is capable of being passed through relay satellites directly to the United States.”

Something to think about.

**F**iscopal and interfaith chaplains were about to raise a tent in the Oceti Sakowin Camp on Sunday (4 December) when a message runner approached and called them to join the crowd already gathering around the sacred fire in the camp’s centre. They left the tent, poles inserted, on the ground, and they went.

As they joined the hundreds of people around the fire, Standing Rock Sioux Tribal Chairman Dave Archambault II took to the microphone to announce that that federal government said it would not allow the Dakota Access Pipeline to cross under the Missouri River at Lake Oahe, the drinking water source for some 8,000 people living on the Standing Rock Reservation, which covers 2.3 million acres in North and South Dakota.

He called on those present to take the lessons learned from the “Water is Life” movement home with them to heal their families and communities, and to create a better future. Anglican News Service

## SPIRITUALITY OF PEACE

By members of Pax Christi

*We continue our series on the Spirituality of Peace by members and friends of Pax Christi. The invitation is still open*

### **MY EARTH BASED SPIRITUALITY** by John Butcher

*A*t an earlier Catholic Church based stage of my life my spirituality was strongly influenced by the writings of Teilhard de Chardin especially the evolutionary, incarnational vision outlined in "Le Milieu Divin". Other influences were the "church of the poor" theology lived out by the worker priests and the followers of Charles de Foucauld. It was also the time of Vatican 2 which adopted a different understanding of the Church in the modern world with a theology and spirituality of the "sign of the times". This thinking led to the endeavour to work to establish the Kingdom of God here on earth. I was also part of a generation of Catholics who were greatly influenced by the spirituality of non-violence as espoused by Dorothy Day, Peter Maurin and the Catholic Worker movement and which we tried to live out in our opposition to the Vietnam War and in our house of hospitality in Redfern. One of our activities at this time in the mid-1970's was to travel as representatives of Pax Christi in the protest against the Pine Gap base.

*In more recent times my spirituality has built on those earlier influences but has also developed along other lines into what I regard as an earth based spirituality resulting from the influence of the area in which I live and the community activities in which I am involved.*

*For the past 32 years I have lived in Sydney beside Cooks River, a much abused waterway which has suffered the ill treatment and misunderstanding with which modern humans have treated the planet. But there are many of us who are working to restore and heal the river and in the process heal ourselves and restore our connection to the earth. We call ourselves "Cooks River people caring for country in the Cooks River valley".*

*The river has taught me many life lessons.*

*the reality of constant change. As the ancient Greek philosopher put it "you can't step into the same river twice"*

*the interconnectedness of all reality. The river flows into Botany Bay and thence into the ocean. All reality on this planet is interconnected. We humans are one with each other and with all other reality. Hence there is no "them and us" which leads to the possibility of demonising other human beings of different race, language, religion, sexuality etc., an attitude of fear which makes war possible and acceptable.*

*The other lesson I learned as I walked over the golf course beside the river and saw the sandstone breaking through the grass was that beneath the surface level of the day to day reality of good and evil world events there is an underlying fundamental and enduring reality at which level the surface differences diminish and we realise that all reality is one.*

*Relating to the river and becoming aware of the intricacy and complexity of the natural world instils an appreciation that the human species is one among countless other species with whom we share this planet and we need to recognize our mutual connectedness. Such an understanding leads me to a spirituality based on searching for harmony within myself, with other people and peoples, and with all the other beings which inhabit this world.*

*One outcome of this spirituality was the formation of a local group "the Gallipoli Centenary Peace Campaign (GCPC)", which included Pax Christi representation. At our suggestion the local council nominated a reserve overlooking Cooks River as a Peace and Reconciliation Park. The Park has an association with the local Aboriginal people and has been the site of annual Sorry Day events. It was an artillery camp in WW1 and is now dedicated to realizing the vision of a world without war. For me the Peace Park reflects a spirit of reconciliation with the Land and with the People of the Land and looks forward to a time of reconciliation and peace between all people. The park now officially called "Richardson's Lookout - Marrickville Peace Park" will be the site for annual Sorry Day events and also will provide the setting for reflective gatherings each year to mark ANZAC Day and International Peace Day. John Butcher is a member of PXNSW*

## TRUTH AND SPIRITUALITY IN MY ACTIVISM Anita McKone

**B**orn in 1969 and brought up a strongly anti-religious atheist, I originally became a nonviolent activist for ostensibly 'humanist' reasons. But at the heart of my commitment to nonviolence was a deep desire to know (and admit) the truth – about myself, about the world and about the universe as I perceive it. The most important truth that I discovered in my mid-twenties was that I was largely ignoring my emotional and physical existence and during an extensive period focussing on and allowing my emotions to surface fully and 'exist', a transformation took place which I had not been expecting.

As I became conscious of my natural, active self (as opposed to my frightened and paralysed socialised self), and integrated my emotional and physical self with my intellectual processes, I became aware of a far greater Self that existed both within and beyond me. And it is my increasing consciousness of and trust in this Self that has given me power to take personally challenging nonviolent actions which were impossible for me in the past. In the mid-1990s I was arrested three times for trespass during creative nonviolent actions, once at Fort Queenscliff, which was training military officers from Papua New Guinea and Indonesia, and twice at the Australian Defence Industries factory in Benalla, which was producing bullets used in the war on Bougainville. I was a member of Australian Humanitarian Aid for Bougainville which campaigned to undermine Australian government and corporate support for the PNG military's war against the Bougainville Revolutionary Army, who had sabotaged and closed down the CRA-owned Panguna copper mine because of economic inequities and severe pollution of the Jaba River. I defended myself in court alongside other arrested activists, and was fined a total of \$150 dollars by relatively sympathetic magistrates. I wanted to not pay the fines and to serve time (maybe 3 days) in prison instead, but as the time came to decide what to do, I realised that despite having a clear sense of what was 'right', I was too afraid not to pay up. And this was for the most 'trivial' of reasons – I was afraid of having to use a toilet in a camera supervised cell! But it was this kind of observation that seemed important to me in trying to understand why so few people actively stand against injustice (particularly if they are given the choice to live a relatively comfortable life 'within the system'). Sometimes the fears raised by standing up for justice are 'primary' fears of being killed or physically injured, but often as not, the fears are more obscurely social/psychological in nature. Regardless of where they come from, however, the fears that are raised for people by exposing conflict and paying the price of resistance are deeply personal and very powerful, and while people can use many means to temporarily overcome their fears and act courageously, there is always the possibility that they will be overwhelmed by panic or pain and lose their sense of control over their life.

So, my personal journey has been one of progressive self-realisation, hunting for the truth amid contradictions, increasingly aware of my personal shortcomings, grappling with the internal conflict which (still) makes it difficult for me to focus on how I really feel and to trust my feelings and inner sense to guide me powerfully. As a child and teenager, I was assisted in developing libertarian and pacifist beliefs by my father's espousal of these ideas, and by my reaction to a violent and authoritarian mother. I was exhausted by her chronic anxiety and hated the way she treated her family, and wanted never to verbally terrorize, oppress and control people the way she did. I identified strongly with my father, believing his assertions that he was the appropriate person to 'defend' me against her violence. To my horror, I eventually realised I had copied far more of my mother's negative attitudes and behaviours than were comfortable to contemplate. And, as my paradoxically deep commitment to libertarian and nonviolent principles led me into real risk-taking nonviolent activism, my father's 'pacifism' was revealed as cowardly, a cover for collaboration with social violence – he would not support me to tell deep and painful truths about the wider political world, or about the reality of our family experience, if that meant risking my own (and his) emotional safety.

In 1996 my husband Robert J. Burrowes and I undertook an intensive process of deep psychological self reflection and emotional healing to try to understand the roots of human violence. We lived in seclusion for a period of 14 years (much longer than we expected), including six and a half years living in a tent in East Gippsland (a wonderful and educational experience in itself). The healing process was difficult, painful and at times, terrifying.

However, sometime in 2004 I had a dream which later led to me gaining a clear definition of God/Truth: "As I awoke, I was aware of losing consciousness of an extraordinary (and completely inexplicable) quality of feeling, but I could remember two aspects of the dream clearly: I was in a place which, physically, was an unbroken field of white light, and I had a sense of being both where I was (at my viewing point, although I had no body) and everywhere else at the same time" (*The Unbelievable Truth: The Paradoxical Nature of the Universal Mind*; <http://anitamckone.wordpress.com>).

This deeply emotional experience gave me a sense of power (the power to exist, rather than to destroy) that I had never previously known, and also gave me a sense of the positive that allowed me to take increasingly brave actions in relation to my mother's ongoing violence toward me, to more effectively defend myself and to regain my sense of self that had been destroyed by my terror of her violence. And, during my imprisonment related to a number of nonviolent actions I have undertaken in the past few years, I have been able to relax, 'be myself' and remain powerful with police, prison staff, prisoners and judges by allowing myself to connect. connect with this truly whole state of being. My emotional and spiritual growth have led to my deepening desire not to engage in acts of violence against myself, others or the Earth, and I have undertaken this as a public pledge by signing *The People's Charter to Create a Nonviolent World* \* launched around the world on November 11 2011. I am personally committed, for example, to not contributing my resources to

the killing of people through war – I will never pay taxes or fines to a government that kills and steals the resources of the poor in my name, and currently avoid doing so by having an income well below the taxable level. My commitment is to use all resources available to me to continue my search for consciousness of truth through self-realising action and the public promotion of nonviolence.

My search for truth has led me to define 'war' as the terror of awareness that I exist. I define 'peace' as the awareness that I exist, most completely as the Universal Self, or God. I know that I exist when I pay conscious attention to myself, including, paradoxically, when I pay attention to my terror: my absolute and overwhelming belief that I am about to die, that I am nothing, that I do not exist and am not worthy of existence. For me, the shooting, bombing and torture of war, and the greed and desire to destroy that lead to these behavioural outcomes are merely the external manifestation of people's unconsciousness of their own terror, and, beyond this, unconsciousness of their true Existent Self. The Self who *knows* it exists needs no weapons, no violence, no terrorising force with which to defend itself.

Using Christian terminology (which feels very apt, although I do not follow any specific religion), I see the universe as a system of communication embodying God (loving awareness of truth), Satan (terrified and insane self destruction) and Christ (the interface between both these states: the mind which is empowered to make conscious choices to achieve wholeness). Reassuringly, I have found that my most powerful, truthful and ultimately successful choices have always been extraordinarily challenging at the time, but joyfully liberating in the end.

\*(<http://thepeoplesnonviolencecharter.wordpress.com>). Contact Anita on <http://anitamckone.wordpress.com>

Anita McKone 15 March 2012

## GAME CHANGER?

### What if 1.2 billion Catholics embraced gospel nonviolence?

**J**UST WAR IS KILLING US!  
There is no just war.'

That proclamation by a Catholic sister from Iraq, and others like it, resounded at a Vatican gathering this spring and fell on surprisingly receptive ears.

Sister Nazik Matty, an Iraqi Dominican, joined others from around the world in Rome in April to wrestle with how the Catholic Church could 'recommit to the centrality of gospel nonviolence.' She has watched members of her religious community die for lack of medical care during war.

'Which of the wars we have been in is a just war?' asked Sister Matty, who was driven from her home in Mosul by ISIS, also known by the Arabic acronym Daesh. 'In my country, there was no just war. War is the mother of ignorance, isolation, and poverty. Please tell the world there is no such thing as a just war. I say this as a daughter of war.'

The Rome gathering on Nonviolence and Just Peace was unprecedented, bringing together members of the church hierarchy with social scientists, theologians, practitioners of nonviolence, diplomats, and unarmed civilian peacekeepers to discuss Catholic nonviolence and whether in the contemporary world armed force can ever be justified.

Of course, with such diverse participants, there was not a common mind on whether just war theory, a doctrine

of military ethics used by Catholic theologians, has outlived its usefulness as church teaching.

But Catholics who came to Rome from conflict zones—Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, Palestine, Colombia, Mexico, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi, and Uganda—brought a different perspective.

#### Just war theory isn't working

Popes preach peace. And yet Catholic teaching allows for the possibility of morally sanctified use of armed force. If preaching peace is to be more than righteous hand-wringing, then the church needs a viable alternative to war, one that doesn't leave Catholics in one part of the world justifying war on Catholics in another part of the world.

'After Daesh/ISIS [took over the town] ... the church took responsibility for all of us,' Matty said. 'It was encouraging to see such active presence of the church; not passive, but active. We can't respond to violence with worse violence. In order to kill five violent men, we have to create 10 violent men to kill them. This encourages the spiral of violence up and up. And the people are so exhausted because they don't know what's happening. It's like a dragon with seven heads. You cut one and two others come up.'

#### 7 Elements of Just Peace

Therein lies the conundrum. Catholic just war criteria assume that a strategi-

cally applied use of violence under the right conditions will end violence, creating the possibility of peace. But in an era of weapons of mass destruction and borderless, serial conflicts, the approach no longer works. At least not from the perspective of those on the receiving end of the actions of the one remaining superpower.

'You [Americans] ask, can we talk to terrorists, can we talk to ISIS in Iraq? The answer is yes!' said Matty. 'But our destiny as Christians in Iraq is not controlled by ISIS. It is controlled by the United States. ISIS in Iraq is a bunch of desperately hungry people who will kill for some bread. But if the rich people in the U.S., in Russia, in Europe stop arming them, then we will have life. We will live. Otherwise, we will die. If the rich want us to stay alive—as Christians in Iraq—then we will live. If the rich want us to die, then we will die.'

Hearing from people such as Sister Matty was a primary objective of the conference, according to Marie Dennis of Pax Christi International, co-convenor of the Vatican gathering, and great care was taken to ensure that the majority of those present were engaged in active peacemaking in circumstances of violence. 'We wanted to listen carefully to what people in those situations have to say,' said Dennis, a lead conference organizer, 'about the place of

non-violence in our church teaching.’ What they had to say was clear: Just war theory isn’t working. They want leadership from the church on strategic nonviolence when militants come to town. They want training in conflict resolution. They want to study the principles of active peacemaking. They want Catholics to be part of unarmed civilian protection teams. They want bishops and priests to stand publicly against violence, to preach on gospel nonviolence, and to stand shoulder to shoulder with laity in the streets. They want, as Pope Francis puts it, ‘shepherds who smell like their sheep.’

### **Creating a theology of peace.**

Those gathered in Rome were picking up a conversation about whether it is ever theologically permissible to justify war, a debate that hasn’t been engaged at this level since Vatican II. Two key documents from the era of the Vatican Council—‘The Church in the Modern World’ (Gaudium et Spes, 1965) and ‘Peace on Earth’ (Pacem in Terris, 1963)—repudiated war, especially given the development of nuclear weapons. They advocated for a more comprehensive peace than that provided by a policy of ‘mutual assured destruction.’ Every Christian must be a conscientious objector to total war.

The documents didn’t abolish just war teaching, but they succeeded in building a strong Catholic theology of peace. Italian Bishop Luigi Bettazzi was one of the youngest bishops present at the Council. ‘It was suggested during the Council that every war should be condemned,’ said Bettazzi at this year’s Rome gathering. ‘That is what Pope John [XXIII] did when he claimed that thinking that wars can bring justice and peace was silly [*alienum est a ratione*, or ‘alien to reason’]. It was only with the arrival of the Council that total war—that in which civil population is affected—was condemned.’

### **No Room for Fear**

Bishop Bettazzi added, ‘Now, every war is a total war, because they all

affect the civil population, and therefore is against God and against humanity. [In this situation] a Catholic, a Christian, could never become a soldier.’ Every Catholic, every Christian, he said, must be a conscientious objector to total war.

In the 50 years since the Council, two important things have happened.

One wing of the Catholic Church, startled by the strong peace message of Vatican II, pushed to embed just war criteria deeper into church teaching. Though just war theory had been a longstanding tradition for Catholics, it was not inserted into the catechism, the teaching principles of the church, until 1992.

Another wing of the church rose to embrace Pope Paul VI’s resounding call on the World Day of Peace in 1972: ‘If you want peace, work for justice!’ Thousands of priests, religious, and lay people threw themselves into the work for social justice, economic development, and the promotion of peace as an expression of their Catholic faith.

These same Catholics watched as a broad school of Christian thought developed—predominately in Protestant and Anabaptist traditions—that judged just war to be obsolete and embraced the theology, principles, and practices of what has become known as ‘just peace.’ This culminated in 2013 when the World Council of Churches, a body that represents more than 560 million Christians in Protestant, Orthodox, and other Christian denominations, announced that ‘by its calling and vocation the Christian church is to be a peace church.’

### **The tools of nonviolence**

What if the world’s 1.2 billion Catholics—half of Christians today—did the same?

In Pope Francis’ letter to the Rome gathering, he echoed his predecessors but went a step further. He wants to activate the church of the poor, the church of the people. ‘Humanity needs to refurbish all the best available tools to help the men and

women of today to fulfill their aspirations for justice and peace,’ the pope said. ‘Accordingly, your thoughts on revitalizing the tools of nonviolence, and of active nonviolence in particular, will be a needed and positive contribution.’

If preaching peace is to be more than righteous hand-wringing, then the church needs a viable alternative to war.

Cardinal Peter Turkson, president of the Vatican justice and peace office and co-sponsor of the Rome convocation, underscored Pope Francis’ message and noted some historical pitfalls: ‘It would be dangerous to identify the gospel message with this or that political program,’ with nationalism or ideologies. ‘The Christian contribution to peace must take a different path.’

Determining ‘a different path’ is the challenge. The answer lies in recommitting to the centrality of gospel nonviolence and developing practices of Catholic nonviolence and just peace. But what are the ‘tools of nonviolence, and of active nonviolence in particular?’

When Pope Francis refers to nonviolence, he is not referring to anything passive. Terrence Rynne, founder of the Center for Peacemaking at Marquette University in Milwaukee, put it this way: ‘The topic at issue here is proactive, positive, nonviolent, strategic peacemaking—an emerging body of data, theology, and praxis that goes well beyond the false choices of justifying war or refusing to confront it.’

Just peace is an ‘orientation toward conflict transformation characterized by approaches that reduce violence and destructive cycles of social interaction and at the same time increase justice in any human relationship,’ wrote sociologist John Paul Lederach. This is a new approach. A third way is emerging.

### **‘The weapon of the church is love’**

Bishop Paride Taban of South Sudan provides an example of what active nonviolence looks like. The Sudanese Catholic, an instrumental leader in the formation of the new country of South Sudan,

laughs easily, delighting that, as he approaches his 80th birthday, he can still dance and tell jokes. It could have been otherwise.

Bishop Taban has lived through Africa's longest-running civil war. 'From 1955, when I was a student, then from 1964 to 1972, when I was a priest, and from 1983 to 2005, when I was a bishop, and even now—war,' he says. And he's gone through it all as an unarmed Christian peacemaker.

Taban is quick to say that he never abandoned his people in war. 'I was in the middle of the people, with the people, for the people,' he says, 'because my motto as a priest was 'help your brothers and sisters in their difficulties.' I wanted to keep that motto myself.'

### **How the Catholic Church Can Re-Commit Itself to Gospel Non-violence**

As a result, the Sudanese People's Liberation Army, a militant group in the second Sudanese civil war, took him and three other priests captive for 100 days in 1999. They lived in the bush, eating dry maize and wild fruits. 'They mistreated me until my body produced lice,' he recalls. 'We carried water, cooked for the officers. But I forgave them and looked at them the way I used to gaze at my mother when I was a child. I forgave them.' Like so many of his people, he still suffers the trauma of his experience. In the midst of a brutal sectarian war, Taban founded the South Sudan Council of Churches, which was vital in bringing about the 2005 peace accord, and which even now he works to maintain. His priests were trusted by all sides in the conflict, and all sides—government forces as well as rebels—committed horrible atrocities, including extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances, and rape as a weapon of war.

'To be a person of nonviolence is to have impartiality,' Taban says. 'Be impartial! Not neutral, impartial. Have great love for the people. Be a shepherd. A shepherd is one who has love for all the sheep. That is what Jesus taught us.'

Taban founded the 2,500-acre Holy Trinity peace village near the banks of the Kuron River, 170 miles east

of Juba, South Sudan. 'I wanted to build a place where different tribes, with generations of animosity, could live together and provide for themselves,' he said in a 2013 interview. When he started the village, Bishop Taban lived in a tent alongside 81 families. Now he has a small room, and the village has more than 3,000 people working productive fields. The village is a no-gun haven in a highly armed society.

'The weapon of the church is love,' says Taban. 'The church is a mother and has a strong weapon: Love for everybody. In South Sudan, the church has been with all the people but never ever advocated for weapons. I destroyed all my guns that I used for hunting birds. The church has to be a place where there are no guns, and no fear.' Taban adds, 'Whenever I am asked to turn over my weapons [at a checkpoint], I say: 'My Lord has already come and taken them all away.''

**'We need a clear message'** Similar stories were shared by Catholics living between brutal militants in Colombia. 'We faced radical opposition when we were working in the Magdalena region for 14 years,' says Francisco De Roux, a Jesuit priest.

'Our purpose was to accompany the regional communities in a program of development and peace in the middle of the conflict,' says De Roux. 'But the paramilitaries assassinated 24 persons on our team, and the guerillas killed three of our companions.' Despite these violent attacks, De Roux says, 'I am certain that because of the generosity of my companions, women and men, and due to the way they devoted themselves to protect life and dignity in extreme difficulties, the Magdalena process became a reference [point] in the construction of structural peace.'

There are now 24 programs for development and peace across Colombia, says De Roux, all of which contributed to the recent peace negotiations, and which will monitor and maintain the Colombian accords in the future. In August, De Roux offered himself as a hostage in exchange for Odin Sanchez, a former Colombian congressperson held

captive by ELN guerilla forces.

Most of the participants who told these stories had little training in nonviolence, conflict resolution, or unarmed civilian peacekeeping; had not been taught a theology of nonviolence other than what they could glean from the gospels; and received scant support or protection from the institutional church.

### **An Abundance of cultural differences.**

'We need a clear message from the church—from the pope to the grassroots—that the church stands for nonviolence,' said South Sudan's Bishop Taban. 'We are the voice of the church, and we are coming here to say that this is the need of the church. We want an encyclical.' A major teaching document, along the lines of the Vatican's work on climate change, could have a significant impact across the breadth of the Catholic Church and beyond.

The conversation is no longer about justifying cases where armed force may be legitimized, nor is it about the pacifism of personal conscience. The focus is on marrying the vast amounts of peacemaking research, civil resistance tactics, and just peace principles with the deep, pervasive peace theology of the church.

Pope Francis named his agenda when he took the name of the saint from Assisi: a church of the poor, praise of creation, and gospel nonviolence.

The church stands at a watershed: Will it reject the necessity of armed force? Will it counsel the state strongly and clearly against the use of violence? Will it promote active, effective alternatives to armed force? Will it confront the evil so clearly at work in the world with the sword of peace?

Following the Rome conference, Pope Francis elevated the position of Cardinal Turkson's council, giving it greater power and responsibility. He also announced the theme for the 50th celebration of the World Day of Peace on Jan. 1: nonviolence.

***Rose Marie Brger is a contribution editor of Sojourners magazine. <https://sojo.net/magazine>***

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

The venue: MSC Justice and Peace Centre, 21 Swanson Street, Erskineville. 2 minutes walk from Erskineville Station

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The Conference will be *conversational* with a minimum of keynotes and plenary sessions; rather, the intention is to engage in deepening lying *behind* media and 'official' reporting and commenting

## *QUEENSLAND*

### **Pax Christi Meetings**

Pax Christi Queensland

**Pancras Jordan OP**

**0415 461 620**

pancrasjordan@gmail.com

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