

THE Anglican PEACEMAKER

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Welcome to the latest issue of TAP. Azariah France-Williams opens with a challenging piece about his experience of the Church of England. You can read about a creative project at CCN Partner Southwark Cathedral. Three perspectives are shared about responses to the coronavirus. Another focus is the 75th anniversaries of the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and campaigning against nuclear weapons. Finally, Arthur Champion writes on synergies between peacemaking and caring for creation.

PIE IN THE SKY FROM APF MEMBER REVD AZARIAH FRANCE-WILLIAMS

Azariah is a pioneer priest at The Ascension, Hulme Hub Church, in the Diocese of Manchester, UK. His new book, *Ghost Ship*, addresses institutional racism in the Church of England.



The preacher at my church used to say, “Heaven is pie in the sky, when you die!” I grew up in an area of urban deprivation called Chapeltown in Leeds. It was like a skateboarder’s halfpipe. By this I mean successive waves of immigrants to the UK slid into it, skated across the bottom, then emerged up and out the other side. This was due to the process of assimilation: the Irish, the Polish, and the Jewish all picked up their metaphorical skateboards and skated into a fuller British experience, where they could vanish out of sight in public and maintain their customs and culture in their personal and private lives. They could own homes, take root, whilst maintaining links with the part of the world their heritage arose from.

When people of the West Indies arrived in the 1950s and ’60s, they experienced the downward slide into the halfpipe, but no amount of hard work could get them up and over the opposite side. They were black in private and in public. Their customs and culture were seen as alien. They were treated as visitors from another planet, not belonging to this one. They were rare and uncommon guests. It was difficult for them to put down roots, own homes and become a part of the national story. Stewardship of the earth beneath their feet was not requested or expected.

My mother arrived from the village of Cotton Ground in Nevis in 1955 armed with British qualifications, but neither she nor her certificates were valued. She was a rare novelty. The reception she received was as harsh as winter. The halfpipe had frozen over: she and others could get no traction. No amount of effort got them any closer to accessing the full package of life in the UK. England’s green and pleasant land was not for the likes of her. The environment was inhospitable and polluted with racism. Black people struggled to flourish. But she did have some land, a place to

call home, many miles away beyond the oceans. She was not a part of this national story but at least she was part of the international story. Having land there in Nevis meant it was easier to be landless here in the UK. She could look, but not touch the life that was rightfully hers as a British citizen. It is hard to fight for a climate where you have been treated as its primary source of pollution by the white society you were invited to serve.

My mother had been sold the promise of a warm welcome and the possibility of full integration. Now down in the valley she was between the worlds. She was no longer visible to the world she had left, and not able to access the world she thought she had entered. It was a state of perpetual quarantine. When I came along in the mid-1970s, my mother helped me realise that this world of the halfpipe was not the home she had hoped for, for herself or her offspring. My mother was a person of faith and she convinced me that heaven was where I would eventually belong, not here in the UK. Pie in the sky. So, thoughts of heaven and an escape into Marvel comics made life in the halfpipe a little more bearable. It was a disembodied existence. My mind was tuned into the spiritual not the material. I would visualise the rivers and countryside of heaven accessed by its streets of gold, but not the green havens of Leeds or the surrounding areas. There were school holiday play schemes where local children would be taken to the seaside, but rarely the countryside. Somehow, we knew it wasn’t for us. The times that we did go as black and brown kids we felt very conspicuous, unsure of ourselves as we saw white people striding around as if they owned the place, and perhaps they did.

The lack of welcome dulled my senses to nature. As a street preacher in the making, I remember once speaking with a white homeless man and

CONTENTS

- 1 Pie in the Sky
- 3 Broken Beauty
- 3 The UN’s 75 years with the bomb
- 4 The ‘Fight’ against COVID-19
- 6 Book Look
- 7 APF News
- 8 Anglican Communion Movement for Peace
- 10 Notices and Diary of Events
- 11 Obituaries
- 12 Peacemaking and Creation



Azariah speaking outside Westminster Abbey, London.

telling him of the wonders of heaven, and him saying: “The day I meet black farmers and landowners in Yorkshire is the day I will believe in God”. I had no rejoinder for him. The manual on proselytising did not cover that response. I could not imagine the vision he was describing.

Where was home? Where was hope? On trips back to Nevis I was deemed English and rejected, whilst growing up in Leeds I was seen as black and defective. We did not have a place to stand. But as I said, my mother had a couple acres of land in the village of Cotton Ground in Nevis. This was her share in the island of her birth. This was her legacy connecting her to that part of the world. When there were hurricanes and natural disasters, we cared about what happened there, and had no inclination that decisions made here by the West contributed to conditions in the West Indies. The suppressed abundance of my neighbourhood, the lack of support from my school, the over-spiritualisation of my church for real world issues, meant as a single parent she needed more than she could earn to help her son. She sold her land in Nevis, and used the proceeds to buy me a computer and pay for tuition, as my school lacked the will or imagination to support my learning. She cut ties with her past, to enable a future for me.

She was now without a place to call home. Only friendships and faith sustained us. Her world shrank and she began to put all her hope in heaven because that was all she had left. Well, almost all she had. In England she had a garden. In fact she had two, front and back. In the back-yard Mum grew what she could in the two strips of soil, and at the front she kept a neat lawn framed with red, pink, and white roses. That was what she owned and that was what she loved; she was proud of what her hands had nurtured. You love what is yours. You protect what you love. It was her little home from home and provided a stepladder, just high enough for her to peer back over the rim of the halfpipe to the land she had left, whilst contemplating the land upon which she lived, that had left her.

I am an Anglican priest. When I began to explore ministry with the church, I remember the recruitment officer sitting me down with other, white, hopefuls. He did his best to put us off. He shared how tough ministry would be to weed out the faint-hearted; he was convincing. He broke with the ‘bad cop, bad cop’ persona only when he gazed through the window mid-speech and declared: “Look, a chaffinch! You hardly ever see those around here.” There was a twitcher’s zeal in his voice. He reverted back to his mask of grim determination to frighten off the thrill seekers. I was convinced, and happy to hang up the sense of calling on the coat rack near his front door. Once his speech was over, our collective morale had sunk, and one by one we began to rethink our life choices whilst exiting his front room.

When I got up to leave, he asked me to stay behind. Why, I wondered. He kept up his stern priest act until the last of the white potentials had left. He returned to me with the twitcher’s zeal lighting up the room. He was positively giddy. I had no idea that like the chaffinch I was a rare occurrence in his world. He began to map out my vocation for me, stating the church needed people of colour in its ranks, I knew not why, but he convinced me that I would do well. He sold the church as if he were on a huge commission, and I bought it. His encouragement buoyed me as I unwittingly stood on the rim of the halfpipe looking beyond it, not seeing the chasm below or hearing the cries of those trapped down there.

That was ten years ago, and I am now in the belly of the Church of England halfpipe. I can neither go back nor much farther forward. I wrote my book *Ghost Ship* to have a story that belonged to me, a story of the others also stuck in the halfpipe. This book is our strip of soil; this is our bed of roses. There are many thorns, but we live on and hope for a better future where the Church of England’s green and pleasant land is thriving, cared for by black and brown Anglicans as well as white ones, committed to a place for all to flourish. The preacher used to say, heaven was “pie in the sky when you die, but we also want steak on the plate while we wait.” We black and brown Anglicans have had little ‘steak’ in this world or this church, but we cannot wait any longer. We have to make a new world where we can all live, under the same sky, eating vegan sustainable pies.

DID YOU KNOW THAT APF IS FUNDED ENTIRELY THROUGH DONATIONS AND LEGACIES?

Over recent years the work of APF has expanded. We have joined networks, built new partnerships, produced resources, increased our online presence, joined campaigns, hosted conferences, and funded many peacemaking projects. As we look to the future, we want to continue and expand our work. And we cannot do this without your support. Here are some ways you can join us on this journey:

BECOME A REGULAR GIVER

Regular giving is the simplest and most reliable way to support APF. As we look to the future, we are increasingly aware of the need for growing financial support and this generous group of supporters will help us to plan for the future. Please consider becoming a regular giver today: Register and donate via our website: www.anglicanpeacemaker.org.uk/ways-to-give-form

Bank details for a standing order: Anglican Pacifist Fellowship, Sort Code: ' #) " - ' ' , Acc no: 79531199. To Gift Aid your standing order contact the APF Office for a form.

LEAVE A LEGACY

When you make a gift to APF in your will, you will be investing in the future. Your support will help us to continue to pursue peace and promote nonviolence. A previous legacy enabled APF to open an office and employ staff for the first time in decades, enabling a flourishing of APF activity.

We need investment, not just now, but for the years ahead. Are you able to help us achieve this?

When making or updating your Will, we recommend getting professional advice from a solicitor to decide which legacy is most appropriate. *If you decide to include us you will need these details:* Anglican Pacifist Fellowship, Peace House, 19 Paradise St, Oxford, OX##>6. Charity no 209610 (England & Wales).

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Thank you for considering APF. We are incredibly grateful for every single gift that we receive. If you have any queries, please contact the APF Office.

BROKEN BEAUTY FROM ARTIST ALISON CLARK, SOUTHWARK CATHEDRAL

We regularly publish pieces from partners in the Community of the Cross of Nails. Earlier this year Southwark Cathedral joined the CCN. Alison Clark writes about a creative project developed during her art residency at Southwark Cathedral, London, UK.

Cathedrals can be places of memorial and also of art, sometimes bringing the two together. Southwark Cathedral chose to combine art and memorial in response to the London Bridge attack in June 2017. The cathedral found itself at the centre of the violence, close to Borough Market where part of the terrorist attack took place. The cathedral itself was damaged in the events of that night, including the sacristy door. The Dean, Andrew Nunn, decided that the door would be made safe but not replaced as a symbol of this significant event in the life of the cathedral and the wider community.

As a member of the congregation and an artist I was given the opportunity to take up an artist residency, 'Broken Beauty', in May and June 2018 to mark the first anniversary of the attack. The title is a reference to the Japanese art of *kintsugi*, in which a treasured piece of ceramics can be repaired, mending cracks in gold and so not hiding but acknowledging the damage. This metaphor ran through the artworks I produced. This included a series of original relief prints made on bible paper tracing the damage on the sacristy door. The traces from the battering ram marks on the door were gilded in gold. This was accompanied by an installation of circular broken shells, painted in black Japanese ink with gilded edges. The prints and shells were displayed in the cathedral alongside an installation called 'Quilt' made in response to my own father's death a few years earlier. Alongside the artwork I held two 'Mending circles', inviting people to come together bringing an item of clothing to repair whilst meeting strangers.



Top left: Broken Beauty. Detail from artist residency by Alison Clark to mark the first anniversary of the London Bridge attack 2017

Bottom left: Preparation for the Mending Circle in Southwark Cathedral, June 2018

Right: Broken Beauty. Detail from artist residency. Southwark Cathedral, June 2018

Photos: Alison Clark

Cathedrals can be places that hold memories, both personal and communal, and where there is time for mourning. The next part of this ongoing process took place in June 2020 when Southwark Cathedral held a memorial service for the third anniversary of the London Bridge attack, this year online due to the pandemic, but also enabling the families of some of the bereaved to take part from abroad.

Find out more: www.alisonclark.co.uk/gallery#/broken-beauty

THE UN'S 75 YEARS WITH THE BOMB: UNFINISHED BUSINESS FROM DAVID WARDROP, CHAIR OF WESTMINSTER UNA

"147 days after the close of the war that cost more than 25 million casualties and left countless millions homeless, the nations met this afternoon in Central Hall Westminster for the first meeting of the UN General Assembly". So wrote the New York Times in January 1946, also quoting the US delegate, "We entered this race on atomic energy not to destroy but, on the contrary, to save civilisation, but if the race continues uncontrolled, the civilisation we hoped to save may be destroyed".

On course for peace? The first test of the UN's Charter was the Security Council's failure to confront aggression in Korea. With the Council stuck in cold-war politics, the larger General Assembly passed [Resolution 377](#) (Uniting for Peace, 1950), effectively taking leadership in tackling North Korean aggression. It invoked GA377 on four other occasions when urgent humanitarian demands failed to unite the Security Council. A fifth attempt to invoke this, on the Syrian tragedy, never materialised, and its debates on delivery of sufficient humanitarian relief to North East Syria (July 2020) emphasise its current weakened state.

During the Security Council's extended stalemate, the General Assembly has not been afraid to face up to the nuclear powers. Its success in June 2017 when 83 member states agreed to sign

up for the [Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons](#) – the nuclear powers and NATO members were absent – gave added profile to this issue, one which much of the public worldwide sees as peripheral. As I write, only six ratifications are needed to trigger the Treaty into force. We hope these will precede the planned high-level meeting to promote the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons on 2 October.

In this its 75th year, the UN is preparing for an online high-level meeting on 21 September titled 'The Future We Want, the UN We Need: Reaffirming our Collective Commitment to Multilateralism'. Thankfully, that is not all. Vaulting over the heads of governments, António Guterres, UN Secretary-General, has generated a global dialogue initiative attracting input from millions. Their commentary will be heard at the same time, a breath of fresh air!

What changes can we hope for? For me, a self-confident General Assembly, prepared to challenge the Security Council as it did in 1950, and to pursue the nuclear weapons issues with the vigour it did in London in 1946 and New York in 2017. We will see, as we recall Dag Hammarskjöld's reminder "the United Nations was not created to bring us to heaven, but in order to save us from hell".

REFLECTIONS ON THE ‘FIGHT’ AGAINST COVID-19

A CRISIS IS AN OPPORTUNITY

FROM WON SHIN, MEMBER OF BARGN NURI

When you are sick, you can't help trying to get rid of the ailment that bothers you and that limits your daily functions. In the Korean traditional philosophy, however, you do not focus on addressing the external factor such as a virus. Instead, it is recommended that you look at the root cause: the break in your body's circulation and balance. Hence, being sick is not something unwelcome; it presents a sign that your body wants to restore the balance that has been broken. You do not rush to do away with the external factor. Although it may take longer, you reflect on the fundamentals of your everyday life. Have you been eating and resting properly? How is your mind? What is your attitude toward your life today?

I live in an intentional community called Bargn Nuri (meaning “the bright world”).

This spring a group of us in the community went on a raw-diet programme for one hundred days. Our diet was made up of fresh vegetables, from our own gardens for many of us who have been growing our own food, and grounded raw grains. We also foraged wild plants from the mountains to which we applied minimal cooking before eating.

My calorie intake was significantly reduced but I had no difficulty in my daily functions. After the excessive nutrients were shed from my body, I felt delightfully lighter and was able to wake up totally refreshed in the wee hours. The chronic skin problem that had been bothering me disappeared. My taste buds felt more acute to the diversity of flavours presented on my plate.

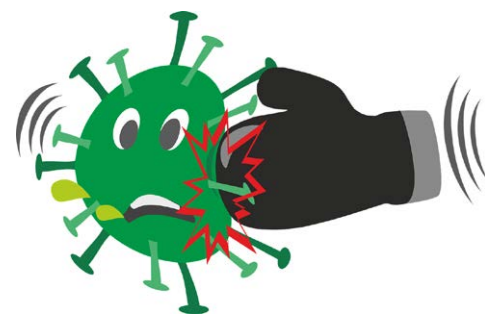
When we were getting ready to start the raw food diet, the COVID-19 pandemic broke out. For the first time in a decade, I stopped travelling more than a walking distance in our village. I started working from home and was freed from my frequent business travels overseas. Then I started a small garden near my home. Instead of commuting in the early morning, I started taking a walk. I spent more time with my 2-year old child. The joy of living with my feet firmly on the ground started registering.

Many people are suffering from the coronavirus, and even more people are working beyond their limits to keep others safe. There's no question that we need to control the pandemic as soon as possible. However, I also see the other side of the crisis. COVID-19 could be an external trigger that reveals a fundamental break in the balance of our civilization. Most working parents in Korea are too busy to spend enough time with their children; now their children are bound at home needing more of their time. No peace protest could keep the Korea-US joint military exercises from happening but COVID-19 did.

I am inclined to believe that there is a reason that COVID-19 is taking it slow to retreat and that the crisis persists beyond what we couldn't begin to imagine.



Bargn Nuri (meaning “bright world”) is an intentional living community based in South Korea. Photo by Bargn Nuri



For a long time, flying thousands of miles looked more natural to me than getting to know my neighbours. I should

not wish to go back to travelling so much while keeping a fragile footing on my ground. That would be foolish.

The words ‘crisis’ and ‘opportunity’ derive from the same etymology in the Korean language. Similarly, Winston Churchill said “never waste a crisis.” How can we respond wisely to this

pandemic? It would be too costly for us to only hope to get back to our normal life as quickly as possible. This is a precious opportunity to look back on where the balance was broken in our lives. We are given a chance to begin dreaming and start experimentation for a new way of life. A life that is joyously sustainable, and yet does not exploit other lives.

THE MINISTRY OF PACIFISTS DURING A PANDEMIC

FROM THE REV. NATHANIEL W. PIERCE, AN EPISCOPAL PRIEST AND APF TRUSTEE WHO LIVES IN THE USA

The Black Plague originated in China in the early 1300s. By mid-century it had travelled to England and Europe. It flourished in rats and was transmitted to humans by the oriental rat flea. One of the symptoms was gangrene which affected a person's nose, fingers, and toes — thus its name, Black Plague. Victims would be fine in the morning and dead by nightfall.

When the plague erupted in 1348 in Strasbourg, France, the local Jews were accused of poisoning the wells. Pope Clement VI issued papal bulls pointing out that Jews were also dying from this plague; it made no sense that they would in effect poison themselves. His pleas were ignored. The Jews were given a choice: convert to Christianity or die. Half opted for the former, some fled, and the rest were killed.¹

Fast forward to 1918 when a deadly H1N1 coronavirus swept the world. Somehow the virus jumped from birds to humans. It infected an estimated 500 million people (including my father at the age of four) and killed approximately 7% of those infected. The first known case emerged at Camp Funston, an army base in Fort Riley, Kansas (USA), on March 11, 1918. American soldiers, who were dispatched to Europe, spread the flu.

Both Britain and France censored any news of this pandemic because of the war. Spanish authorities, however, reported it openly. That is why we call it the Spanish Flu even though it should have been remembered as the Kansas Flu or the American Flu. But, as reported on April 12, 2020, by the Baltimore Sun, if you lived in Baltimore (Maryland, USA) in

1918, you believed that this pandemic was part of a campaign of germ warfare initiated by the hated Germans.

Aeschylus (525 BC–456 BC), the Greek tragic dramatist, noted: “In war, truth is the first casualty.” As pacifists we know this all too well. Every government lies during a war, and many have suggested that we are now engaged in a war against COVID-19. In the midst of a pandemic almost everybody lies except the scientists. We Americans lied about the Kansas Flu of 1918. Our ministry, as pacifists, is to speak the truth as best as we can discern it.

We have learned a lot since 1918. The cause of most such pandemics is a zoonosis virus from an animal that somehow leaps over the boundaries between species and infects a human being who then infects others who then infect others. The recent coronaviruses, SARS (2003), MERS (2012), and now COVID-19 were transmitted from bats to an intermediate host and then to humans. In SARS it was a cat, in MERS it was a camel, and for COVID-19 it is probably a pangolin, which in China is prized for its meat and used for traditional medicine.

Like the good citizens of Strasbourg almost seven hundred years ago, people have a need to blame someone. That is why some insist on calling COVID-19 the Chinese Flu, or a plot hatched by the Democratic Party in the USA or, worst of all, a hoax perpetrated by those opposed to President Donald Trump.

The Rev. Franklin Graham, son of the famous evangelist, will tell you that God has sent COVID-19 in order to get our attention and help us return to a life of faith. I disagree. There was a snake in the Garden of Eden; there are destructive organisms in God’s creation as the “Spanish” Flu, SARS, MERS, and now COVID-19 remind us.

Today we are learning in a very painful way the hard truth that your problem is my problem, your pandemic will soon be my pandemic. It was always silly to think that we could build a wall to keep the unwanted out, as President Trump has done and the advocates of Brexit promised to do virtually. But walls, whether real or virtual, are useless against the virus which causes COVID-19.

Which bring us to the second important ministry for pacifists in the midst of a pandemic: avoid blaming. In a military war everyone blames everyone else. We know that the roots of all war are systemic, which is to say embedded in the DNA of almost every culture. Rather than wasting time in blaming others, we would do better to take note of the problems and issues exposed by the pandemic and endeavour to resolve them with charity and love for all.

This has always been the ministry of pacifists: tell the truth and avoid blaming. Those gifts of ministry are just as important today as they have always been.

¹ *Epidemics and Society: From the Black Plague to the Present*, by Frank M. Snowden, Yale

COVID-19 AND THE LANGUAGE OF WAR FROM THE VEN. DAVID SELZER, ANGLICAN PRIEST OF THE DIOCESE OF OTTAWA AND APF COUNSELLOR

“Generals often talk about the fog of war.’ It speaks to the uncertainties in the thick of battle, when decisions need to be made yet essential information is not at hand, from the position of the enemy to the weaknesses of one’s own forces. Each bit of new intelligence is a step on the road to victory ... As the battle goes on, ...”¹

This Globe and Mail editorial refers to the response to COVID-19 as a war, a term frequently used to respond to

this pandemic. The language of war as a way to respond to COVID-19 is false and misleading.

Jacob Hagstrom, in an editorial for the Washington Post, states, “*However familiar to Americans, war is the wrong metaphor for our response to this pandemic. The comparison advances a misunderstanding of what war entails. Moreover, the use of military rhetoric may change the course of our response to this crisis in profoundly unhelpful ways. Because not only does war lead us to look for enemies and scapegoats, war solutions are directed from the top rather than resources from local communities.*

*“War requires targeting and then vanquishing an enemy through killing. But overcoming pandemic disease must be driven by saving lives and recognizing our shared humanity. The risks of COVID-19 are too great, and the challenges too distinct from the wars we wage, to embrace war metaphors now.”*²

Our societies have struggled to respond to the COVID-19 virus. The pandemic has significantly transformed the ways we live, work, play, travel, and our interactions with others, both families and neighbours, and our communities. As the death tolls rise, and as testing and social distancing and wearing masks become the health norm, we find ourselves daily challenged not only to treat this pandemic but to keep ourselves safe from transmission and contagion. Our economic livelihood and vitality are especially challenged as unemployment soars, shops and businesses are shut down, schools closed, and crowds of most sizes are extremely limited.

Worse, given the political dynamics of our societies, the pandemic has become extraordinarily politicised. For some, wearing a mask and maintaining social distance are a political statement and an infringement on human rights rather than a public health issue. The safety and well-being of a community becomes secondary to an individualistic understanding of our privileges and human rights.

Adina Wise, MD, a neurology resident at Mount Sinai Beth Israel Hospital in New York City writes concerning health care workers that they are “*not at war. We are certainly not enlisted. We are doctors. What we are doing is working extraordinarily hard to keep our patients alive.*

*“To adopt a wartime mentality is fundamentally to allow for an all-bets-are-off, anything goes approach to emerging victorious. Of course, we all want to contain the virus, posthaste, and to treat as many patients as we possibly can. But to do so under the banner of war implies the necessity of a heedless approach that leave both doctors and patients open to an indefensible level of risk. . . . Wartime rhetoric, the kind that pervades nearly every news article about those of us who are involved in the care of COVID-19 patients, calls this logic into question. It makes a desperate appeal to the necessity of chaos. It argues for the inevitability of abandoning the rule of law in exchange from the promise of a swift resolution. . . . A wartime mindset demands death, suffering and sacrifice in the service of one’s country. But a global pandemic should not demand the same of its medical workforce.”*³

Dr. Wise cautions that we must be extremely careful about the words we and others use to do the jobs we do. To militarise the language about responding to COVID-19 is to do damage to the dedication of medical providers in their work of saving lives of their patients. They do fight – fight for proper care for those in long-term care homes, fight for medical coverage, fight



for adequate testing for COVID-19, fight for Proper Protective Equipment, fight with hospital and medical administrators, and fight with lawmakers to get what they need to care for their patients. And they fight for recognition of their work, not only with signs and words, but with adequate compensation and time and benefits for their labours.

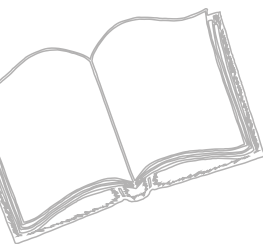
This fight is not ‘war,’ the language of this struggle for health and dignity is not a ‘battle.’ When we use the

language of medical practice, public health guidelines, and the dignity and treatment of patients and health care workers, we all become partners in dealing with COVID-19 and its treatment and cure.

¹ *The Globe and Mail*, 18 June 2020, “It’s time to make masks mandatory,” Toronto, Canada, page A12.

² “Stop calling covid-19 a war,” Editorial by Jacob Hagstrom, *The Washington Post*, 20 April 2020.

³ “Military Metaphors Distort the Reality of COVID-19,” *Scientific American*, 23 April 2020.



BOOK LOOK

A.D.A FRANCE-WILLIAMS (2020)
GHOST SHIP: Institutional Racism and the Church of England

“Although the subtitle of France-Williams’s new book is ‘Institutional Racism and the Church of England’, make no mistake: here is a powerful and provocative word to people on both sides of the ocean, wherever racial injustice is found. It’s impossible to turn the pages of *Ghost Ship* and not find yourself challenged to turn the nightmare around us into God’s dream of a better world.” The Most Rev Michael B. Curry, Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church.

“Searing, truthful, devastating, prophetic. I hope this book reaches a wide and worldwide audience. And for those who are white Anglicans, it should cause us to weep in recognition of our complicity, then resolve to be part of the change that must come.” Lucy Winkett, Rector of St James’ Church, Piccadilly, London.

“Intelligence and passion fuel Azariah France-Williams’ dissection of the leadership ‘club’ – people like me – at the heart of the Church of England’s failure to own and address its racism. The reader need not accept all his arguments uncritically, to recognise this authentic black voice needs to be heard.” The Right Reverend Dr David Walker, Bishop of Manchester.

Publisher SCM Press, ISBN: 9780334059356

RUTGER BREGMAN (2020)
HUMANKIND: A Hopeful History

Rutger Bregman has emerged as the youthful leader of the rebellion against the doomsters and gloomsters. In this book he challenges the common belief that we are, by nature, governed by self-interest, and it is only the veneer of civilised society that keeps our greed and aggressiveness towards others in check. This belief tends to drive the headlines that surround us and the laws that touch our lives.

Thinking the worst of others often affects our politics; critically, how we deal with those we see as competitors for resources, and those who might affect our personal safety.

Bregman scrutinises human history and relevant studies on human psychology, reframing them, to provide a new perspective. He takes down the veneer theory to show

that the most pessimistic views of human nature are not backed up by facts. While not attempting to make the impossible case that the human heart is all sweetness and light, he concludes that we have a powerful preference for good.

This book is timely. It has special significance for how we view the emerging world post COVID-19, and in a wider sense, our attitude to hostility and the use of violence in its many forms. Crucially, it shows that our instinct to cooperate rather than compete, trust rather than distrust, has an evolutionary basis

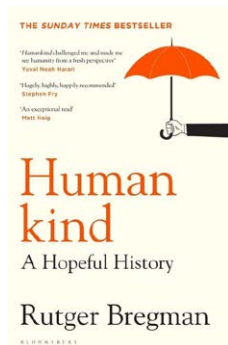
On the whole, reviews of the book have been very favourable, although some commentators are not entirely convinced by what they see as a rather breathless enthusiasm for a particular viewpoint.

Whatever the balance of truth, there is no doubt that the book does work as a much-needed corrective to excessive pessimism. Crucially, in these difficult times, a reaffirmation of the values of mutuality (pluralist kindness which channels both competition and co-operation to achieve complex goals of general benefit) could refresh and restore politics and the environments in which people live. Politics could also be more committed to reversing the trends to extremism and tribalism.

As an epilogue, Bregman gives some rules to live by:

- When in doubt, assume the best
- Think in win-win scenarios
- Ask more questions
- Temper your empathy, train your compassion
- Try to understand the other, even if you don’t get where they are coming from. Use reason and intellect
- Love your own as others love their own
- Avoid the news and media platforms on the internet
- Don’t punch Nazis. This can be highly counterproductive in our video age
- Come out of the closet: don’t be ashamed to do good. No excuses
- And most important: *be realistic*, be courageous and be true to your nature and offer your trust. In truth, it is the cynic who is out of touch.

Publisher Bloomsbury Publishing.
ISBN-13: 978-1408898932



APF NEWS AND UPDATES

NOTES FROM THE CHAIR FROM SUE CLAYDON, APF CHAIR

When I last wrote in March, the world was beginning to reel from the pandemic that seemed to be reaching everywhere. We were learning to live with lockdowns, shortages and lack of contact, even with family members. The months since then have seen all adjust to a 'different world'. That world, while bringing pressures to many, has also in other ways 'shrunk' this planet. The 'new' world of zoom (other systems available) has been able to bring many of us to learning, worship and more effective ways of working.

The APF Hiroshima 'virtual' vigil brought this home to me. A team working together and drawing from individual strengths was able to bring together a vigil that was moving and hopeful. I want to take this opportunity to thank

everyone for their contributions. It also showed the world wide nature of our Anglican Communion.

Back in March, we also had no idea that the world would again be challenged to confront the evil of racism. Black Lives Matter has raised an issue we cannot ignore. While he had no idea that BLM would emerge, APF member Azariah France-Williams had written a book that would look institutional racism and the Church of England right in the eye. His book, *Ghost Ship*, had this endorsement from Bishop David Walker:

Intelligence and passion fuel Azariah France-Williams' dissection of the leadership 'club' – people like me – at the heart of the Church of England's failure to own and address its racism. The reader need not accept all his arguments uncritically, to recognise this authentic black voice needs to be heard.

The phrase "there cannot be peace without justice or justice without peace" seems to speak to us again. Surely confronting the injustice of racism is part of our work as peacemakers. I highly recommend this book.

Having mentioned the role the internet has played in bringing people together, I do hope you will all join us for the APF AGM in October. This will be an opportunity to meet many members for the first time. It will also be a chance for you to contribute to the ongoing development of our Fellowship.

This very 'full' Anglican Peacemaker reflects so much of what APF is doing, and to me is another sign that together we can bring about a move to a more peaceful world.

APF ZIMBABWE

As with many parts of the world, the coronavirus pandemic has had an impact on Zimbabwe. However, APF is continuing with work to encourage community-based peacemakers. Cloud Mabaudi has been joined by his wife, Accucilia (pictured). They are holding small groups to look at how nonviolence can be promoted. Accucilia is setting up groups for women. APF has recently sent resources for peace education to be used with these groups and those of young people. They ask for our prayers for their work at this time of anxiety for so many.



Cloud and Accucilia Mabaudi, APF Zimbabwe.



INTERFAITH STATEMENT ON THE 75TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ATOMIC BOMBINGS OF HIROSHIMA AND NAGASAKI

APF signed a statement commemorating the horror of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and condemning any use or maintenance of nuclear weapons as antithetical to the core values and beliefs about the worth of human life and that of our planet that are held in common by the world's religions. We are honoured to be co-signatories alongside a number of faith and peace organisations from around the world.

The full statement can be read at www.anglicanpeacemaker.org.uk.

75 YEARS SINCE HIROSHIMA AND NAGASAKI: APF ONLINE VIGIL

On 6th August APF hosted an online vigil to commemorate 75 years since the dropping of the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The international event included songs, readings, prayers and reflections shared by a number of APF members and friends. It was a powerful and moving occasion with space for reflection and time to remember all those affected by nuclear weapons from 1945 to the present day. If you were unable to attend, the vigil can be viewed online: <https://youtu.be/HUJlu6BNQMg>

APF JOINS ICAN

In June APF became a partner in the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN). ICAN is a campaign in constant growth, currently counting more than 570 partner organizations in more than 100 countries around the world. We would also like to draw your attention to ICAN's public awareness-raising website, aimed at educating and inspiring new people to understand the horrors of nuclear weapons and what we can do about it www.nuclearban.org. We encourage you to share this website your churches and networks.



THE ANGLICAN COMMUNION'S MOVEMENT FOR PEACE

EDITED AND ADAPTED BY TILLY MARTIN, APF MEMBER

APF has a rich history including many committed and dynamic individuals acting and speaking out prophetically against war and violence. Pacifism is at the heart of APF's history. To celebrate APF's roots we have written a brief history of the first decades of the organisation and a description of APF's current activities and partnerships.

THE BIRTH OF APF



Dick Sheppard in Oxford Street, London.

The 1930s were heady days for the peace movement, with Anglican pacifists taking the lead, encouraged by a bishops' resolution of 1930 that "War, as a means of settling international disputes is incompatible with the teaching and example of our Lord Jesus Christ". The foremost figure was Dick Sheppard, a Canon of St Paul's, who started the Peace Pledge Union (PPU), an organisation which grew to over 100,000 members, all of whom signed a pledge that they would refuse to fight in war.

In February 1937, after building activity amongst the UK peace movement, there was huge disappointment when the national Church Assembly (a forerunner of General Synod) refused to support the peace movement's position. In response, Sheppard gathered pacifist friends together and they agreed to hold an April rally at Westminster Central Hall, what the author

Vera Brittain called "the first pacifist meeting ever held by the Church of England." After stirring speeches, not least by Percy Hartill (Archdeacon of Stoke and later APF Chairman) and Paul Gliddon (later APF secretary), they formed a half-mile-long torch-lit procession to Lambeth Palace, to take their resolution to the Archbishop of Canterbury.

Building on the success of the rally, Gliddon and Sheppard drew on supporters in local groups, and organised a meeting for St Barnabas Day, 11 June 1937. On this day, the Anglican Pacifist Fellowship was founded. APF members signed a pledge, "We, communicant members of the Church of England, believe that our membership involves the complete repudiation of modern war. We pledge ourselves to take no part in war, but to work for the construction of Christian peace in the world."

Besides many priests and bishops, notable early members of the Fellowship included Labour Leader George Lansbury and the spiritual writer and guide, Evelyn Underhill.

WORLD WAR II

The young APF was immediately faced with the reality of war in 1939. A number of APF members were conscripted and became conscientious objectors (COs), and some like Michael Segal were imprisoned. Throughout the war, the Fellowship gave support to many COs who refused to take up arms because it contravened their beliefs. There are many stories of individuals, for example that of Bernard Nichols, who appealed when his application for exemption from war service was dismissed. He worked in the APF's open-all-hours drop-in centre near Trafalgar Square. The Westminster Council's chief shelter warden

soon spotted his ability and asked him to set up and run a shelter especially for street dwellers, alcoholics and the mentally ill. And so began the Hungerford Club under the arches of Charing Cross Station, run by Bernard's team. Bernard was later granted that rare thing, unconditional exemption.

Even in wartime APF proclaimed the better way of peace. A deputation to The Archbishop of Canterbury in 1941 drew the promise (later broken) that the Church would oppose the deliberate bombing of civilians. This continued as the saturation bombing of cities and later, of course, the destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki with nuclear weapons.

WITNESSING TO THE CHURCH

The most fundamental of the APF's witness has been to fellow Anglicans: by letters to church magazines and newspapers, by displaying APF literature in churches and by informally discussing peace issues with other Christians.

Over the years there have been a series of delegations to talk with Church leaders. The Lambeth Conferences, usually held every 10 years, have been a major focus of APF's witness within the Anglican Communion. This has often involved a pilgrimage from London to Canterbury following the Pilgrims' Way.



Archbishop Rowan Williams with APF members, Lambeth Conference 2008.

A key aspect of the Anglican Communion's attitude to war is the various resolutions made at the Lambeth Conference. These follow on from Resolution 25 which reads "The Conference affirms that war as a method of settling international disputes is incompatible with the teaching and example of our Lord Jesus Christ". A set of briefing papers published by APF for the 2008 conference gives the subsequent resolutions and commentary together with two papers: *The ethics of pacifism and Just War in today's world* and *Peacemaking – heart of the gospel: an urgent call to the Lambeth Bishops of 2008*.

WORKING TOGETHER TODAY

APF is an international organisation with a history of working with faith-based and secular peace activists and organisations around the world. Partnerships and collaborations with individuals, networks and organisations continue to develop today. Few of the organisations that APF works with are explicitly pacifist, and they are committed to responding creatively to the challenges that create war and armed conflict and finding the better way of peace.

Partner organisations APF New Zealand (APF NZ) and the Episcopal Peace Fellowship (EPF) in the USA both have members who are trustees of APF. APF is also an active contributor to the Anglican Peace and Justice Network (APJN), which connects Anglicans around the world who share a passion for conflict transformation, peacebuilding, and seeking Christ-centred justice for all people.



CCN Partners supporting a Christian Aid campaign.

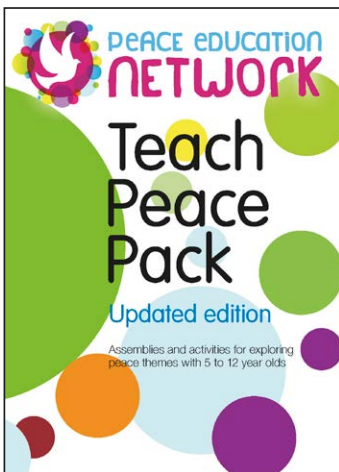
In 2017, APF joined the Community of the Cross of Nails (CCN). This worldwide network is committed to reconciliation by adhering to the three guiding principles: Healing the wounds of history, Learning to live with difference and celebrate diversity, and Building a culture of peace.

This summer in 2020,

APF became a partner in the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN). ICAN is a campaign that is constantly growing, with almost 600 partner organisations in more than 100 countries around the world. APF is also a member of several other international organisations: Church and Peace, the International Peace Bureau and the International Fellowship of Reconciliation.

In the UK, APF was a founding member of the Campaign Against the Arms Trade (CAAT) and continues to campaign alongside Stop the Arms Fair. APF members have regularly been involved with demonstrations, particularly at the DSEi arms fair held in London's Dockland. APF members have demonstrated alongside other faith groups as part of the No Faith in War day.

As a part of the Peace Education Network (PEN), APF concerns itself with curriculum development and education in schools and actively distributes Teach Peace Packs to schools and individuals. These packs include ten primary school assemblies and activities on peace and peacemaking. APF also enjoys close Christian partnerships through being a member of the ecumenical Network of Christian Peace Organisations (NCPO). In recent years, the Network has been focussed on raising awareness on the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and on preparing for the impact of Brexit on relationships, both within the UK and across Europe.



A resource provided by the Peace Education Network, of which APF is a member.

SUPPORTING AND FUNDING PEACEMAKING

An important aspect of the work of the APF is funding peacemaking projects around the Anglican Communion. Many grass-roots peacebuilding and peacemaking projects have received grants from APF over the years. Projects include providing footballs with peace messages for peace education work with

young people in Kenya, Zimbabwe and South Sudan; peacekeeping training in Burundi; peacebuilding training in Cueibet, South Sudan; women's community peace training delivered by South Sudan Community Change Agency (SOSUCCA); peacebuilding games in Scottish Primary Schools, delivered by the Edinburgh Peace and Justice Centre, UK; and the Faith and Peace Project delivered by the Bradford Peace Museum, from which a travelling exhibition has been developed celebrating the role of peace and peacemakers in the three Abrahamic faiths.



Peace footballs funded by APF.

and Disarmament (CCADD), organising meetings and attending its annual international conference. In 2019, APF Trustee Tony Kempster attended the annual CCADD international conference held in Belfast. Thirty CCADD members from twelve countries gathered to discuss the work and progress made in peace and reconciliation since The Troubles, and lessons for the future.

From the start APF has produced leaflets and magazines advocating the way of peace, and its members have made their own publications. One such publication is the book 'Subversive Peacemakers' which charts the history of the peace movement during the First World War and is written by former APF Chair and APF Counsellor Rev Dr Clive Barrett.

APF is an organisation whose foundations are built upon the commitment and courage of men and women opposing war and refusing to fight. Pacifism continues to define a range of responses to mankind's urge to engage in armed conflict when security or sovereignty are threatened. APF offers a place of fellowship, education and encouragement to Christian pacifists and peacemakers concerned with Gospel nonviolence, peacebuilding and reconciliation.



Bishop Eraste helping prevent COVID-19, Bujumbura, Burundi.

The Week of Prayer for World Peace has always been committed to furthering interfaith dialogue with shared concern for peace and justice matters. The Week is marked by an annual interfaith service in the UK, and the presentation of the Wilson/Hinkes Peace Award named after two former APF members, Revd Gordon Wilson, and Revd Sidney Hinkes. As part of APF's grant making activity APF has sponsored the award.

APF members have made a significant contribution to the work of Council on Christian Approaches to Defence



At the No Faith in War day, London.

NOTICES AND DIARY OF EVENTS

MEMBERS BALLOT ON NAME CHANGE OF APF

Each member of APF has been sent a ballot paper, by post or email. There is one vote per APF member.

Postal and online voting closes on 19th October.

The results of the ballot will be announced at the APF AGM on 24th October.

If you have not received information about how to vote and believe you are eligible, please contact Tilly at the APF Office.

20 September Peace Sunday. Join with Churches and organisations around the nation to mark the Sunday closest to the UN Day of Peace. CHIPS are hosting an online event at 6.30pm. To register: www.chipspeace.org

21 September International Day of Peace. www.un.org/en/events/peaceday

26 September The International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, a day for public awareness and education: www.un.org/en/events/nuclearweaponelimination

27 September Cross of Nails Sunday. Join CCN partners around the world. For more info and to download a liturgy to use in your own church: www.coventrycathedral.org.uk/ccn/cross-of-nails-sunday

2 October International Day of Nonviolence. www.un.org/en/events/nonviolenceday

3 October Christian CND AGM and Annual Conference. Online. Guest speakers will include Nick Megoran, lecturer in political geography at the University of Newcastle.

christians@cnduk.org
christiancnd.org.uk/conference2020

10 & 18 October CND UK Annual Conference dates. Online. cnduk.org/cnd-conference-2020

11 – 17 October Week of Prayer for World Peace. 30 min online prayer. 8pm daily. Annual Service. Online at 3.30pm 11th October. For links & info: www.apf.org.uk

14 – 16 October Community of the Cross of Nails online Pilgrimage. www.coventrycathedral.org.uk/ccn/pilgrimage

24 October 2.30pm (BST) Join APF Members and friends for the APF AGM & Online Event. Email tilly@apf.org.uk or visit the APF website to register. <https://zoom.us/join/register/tjUuf-6opzorGNZW10U5Yo2fMqb9I2v6FC5e>

24 October United Nations Day. www.un.org/en/events/unday

24 – 30 October Disarmament Week. www.un.org/en/events/disarmamentweek

14 November 80th Anniversary of the bombing of Coventry. See the Community of the Cross of Nails website for more details of an online event: www.coventrycathedral.org.uk/ccn

White Poppies The Peace Pledge Union shop is open: www.shop.ppu.org.uk or call 020 7424 9444.

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Disclaimer: This newsletter does not necessarily express the official views of APF but provides a place for people associated with APF to express their own personal views and opinions on issues relating to peacemaking and pacifism.

Copies of TAP are available on our website apf.org.uk

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ANGLICAN PEACEMAKERS PRAYING, EQUIPPING AND INFLUENCING FOR PEACE

Find out more about becoming part of the Anglican Peacemakers:

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APF is a member of Community of the Cross of Nails, International Campaign Against Nuclear Weapons and Network of Christian Peace Organisations.

REMEMBERING ELSIE HINKES FROM SUE CLAYDON, APF CHAIR

“For me she was always the incarnation of the Gospel’s message of peace and love.” These words from an APF member on hearing of the death of Elsie Hinkes sums up what so many over decades have thought of this truly amazing presence in the Fellowship.

At the age of thirteen, in September 1939, Elsie was evacuated with her school to Somerset. It was on the train to Somerset that Elsie first met her husband-to-be, Sidney, who was being evacuated on the same train but with a different school. In 1944 they became engaged while he was in the Sixth Airborne Division and Elsie enlisted in the Auxiliary Territorial Service (ATS). They married in 1945 while still both serving.

Their family started to grow while Sidney was studying for ordination and ‘family’ became the focus for Elsie. Their home was filled with not only their own five children but with many foster children who found themselves surrounded by Elsie’s love – and good cooking.

Her hospitality at the vicarage has been mentioned in many of the memories sent in by APF members. It seems that many a young peacemaker was sustained in both spirit and stomach by this indomitable couple.

It was the Suez Crisis that made Sidney and Elsie think about ‘loving your enemies’. With typical vigour they then committed themselves to pacifism and APF in particular.

In February 1991, upon ‘retirement’, Elsie and Sidney left for New Zealand. They had been invited by APF New Zealand to undertake a ‘Mission’ in the country. They spent ten months travelling throughout New Zealand and Fiji and building many

lifelong friendships along the way. An APF member remembers “Sidney was big and physically imposing and spoke out boldly, and Elsie was a small bundle of warmth and vivacity who quickly got alongside everyone they met.”

On returning, Sidney resumed his role as APF General Secretary and later Chair, and Elsie’s typewriter was back in full action along with her organisational support.

Elsie always kept her zeal for life and interest in everything and everyone around her. She moved into grandmotherhood for the next generation of her family, including the children of foster children. For those of us who came to know Elsie at this stage of her life, she was also the quiet presence at so many APF events, including joining demonstrations. Many came to know her as part of the logistics team for the Lambeth Pilgrimages.

Every APF AGM would find Elsie sitting taking in and contributing to the development of APF into the 21st Century.

In later years, one of the things Elsie took pleasure in was presenting the Wilson/Hinkes Peace Award during the Week of Prayer for World Peace. She enjoyed meeting the recipients and hearing about their work for peace at grassroots level.

One APF member described Elsie and Sidney this way: “The pair of them were inspirational. But Elsie was more than half of that team. She was a powerful force herself. It was a privilege to know her.” And she will be sorely missed by all in APF.

Elsie passed away peacefully and without pain on 11th April 2020. A private cremation was held on 15th May. At a future date, there will be a service of remembrance at St. Peter and St. Paul’s Church, Botley.



Elsie aged 90, at a CND demo in London (2015)

REMEMBERING JOHN HUME FROM TONY KEMPSTER, APF TRUSTEE



As the leader of the Social Democratic and Labour Party John Hume was a leading force in creating the climate that brought an end to violence in Northern Ireland. He said that “Politics is the alternative to war.”

John Hume’s involvement in the cauldron of Northern Ireland politics began on the streets of his home city, Londonderry, where he was born in 1937. As the situation in the province deteriorated

and violence increased, he joined with other constitutional nationalists, including Gerry Fit, in founding the SDLP.

In the years that followed, his influence grew. Initiatives such as the Sunningdale Agreement, which established a short-lived power-sharing assembly involving unionists and nationalists, were a tribute to his campaigning. In 1985, he played a key role in negotiations over the Anglo-Irish Agreement which for the first time gave Dublin a limited say in the affairs of Northern Ireland. He had enormous influence in the United States, where he rubbed shoulders with Teddy Kennedy and Bill Clinton (who became a close friend).

But it was in direct talks with Sinn Féin President Gerry Adams, which reached a new intensity in 1994, that he took

his biggest risk in the search for peace, provoking unionist fury. The Hume-Adams talks helped pave the way for the historic Downing Street declaration, and the IRA ceasefire months later.

John Hume never lost the conviction that negotiations would in the end provide the solution, and he saw the 1998 Good Friday Agreement as proof of all he had argued for over the years. It was his crowning political moment; the agreement would not have happened without him.

His contribution was recognised with the award of the Nobel Peace Prize which he received jointly with Ulster Unionist leader David Trimble. He was also a recipient of the Gandhi Peace Prize and the Martin Luther King Award. In 2010 a poll by Irish broadcaster RTÉ named him ‘Ireland’s Greatest Person.’

In February 2014, I was delighted to be in Derry’s Guildhall Square when Bill Clinton launched a new book on Peacemaking in the twenty-first century (edited by Hume and others). In his tribute to the man and addressing the gathering, he said “I implore you, for the sake of the young people and all of those who did so much for so long, like John Hume – finish the job!”

John Hume died on 3rd August 2020.

PEACEMAKING AND CARING FOR CREATION

FROM REVD ARTHUR CHAMPION, APF MEMBER, COTSWOLDS VICAR AND DIOCESAN ENVIRONMENTAL OFFICER

The 75th anniversary of the US atom bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki has been a sombre reminder that the human race has the power to destroy life on Earth. If the 6th August can be regarded as the birth of the anti-nuclear movement then perhaps Christmas Eve 1968 was when a global environmental movement first came into being.

This “Earthrise” picture was taken by the Apollo astronauts and broadcast all around the world. It clearly shows our beautiful yet vulnerable planet alone in the vast and empty darkness of space. In the foreground is a lunar landscape that is barren and inhospitable, yet by contrast the Earth is known to be teeming with life and diversity. Suddenly millions of people recognised what a special planet we are living on. Our home in the galaxy is orbiting at a comfortable distance away from the Sun whilst the Moon produces daily tides that help promote the wellbeing of life in the oceans. The irony is that the birth of our global environmental movement came about in the context of militarism! The Apollo project was motivated by political one-upmanship during the Cold War.

There are many synergies between peacemaking and caring for creation. About 10 years ago Christian CND pointed out that a single UK Trident nuclear submarine has enough fire power to bring on a global “nuclear winter” resulting in mass starvation and environmental destruction. However, a nuclear winter lasting a few years isn’t necessarily the same as climate change which can only be detected at global level over a time span of at least 50 years.

Geologists have identified that over the Earth’s 4.5 billion years there have been several mass extinctions triggered by volcanic eruptions, asteroid impacts and plate tectonics. Nevertheless, the nuclear weapons dropped on Japan in 1945 as well as subsequent atmospheric nuclear testing have made a lasting impression on the Earth. A layer of radiation, along with soot and plastics, has become embedded on the surface, defining what some geologists argue to be the start of a new epoch – the Anthropocene.

Furthermore, our addiction to fossil fuels and consumer lifestyles is putting a tremendous strain on the Earth. Last year a United Nations study estimated that up to one million species of plants and animals are at risk of extinction; mostly due to activities such as deforestation, hunting, and overfishing.

According to a recent study from Brown University’s “Cost of War” project: “... the US Department of Defence has a larger annual carbon footprint than most countries on Earth. With a sprawling network of bases and logistics networks, the US military is the single biggest emitter of carbon dioxide in the world aside from whole nation-states themselves.” I’m reminded of a quotation by Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (1881–1955), the famous Jesuit theologian, philosopher and palaeontologist: “The day is not far distant when humanity will realize that biologically it is faced with a choice between suicide and adoration.” Several decades later, people of good will all around the world are still hoping and praying that humanity will turn away from death and instead choose life.

Last year Greta Thunberg and Extinction Rebellion (XR) certainly managed to grab the news headlines with their fear-inducing predictions combined with direct action. Greta and



XR claim “the science is settled” meaning human activity since the Industrial Revolution is causing catastrophic climate change. Many Christians sincerely believe this and some are even willing to get arrested, in the same way as Quakers have campaigned for decades against militarism.

At the start of 2020 the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists moved the hands of the Doomsday Clock forward to less than two minutes to midnight. Decades of activism have not brought about military disarmament or reversed the global environmental crisis. Perhaps those of us who are Christians need to think again along the lines of Gus Speth, US Environmental lawyer and former Dean of Forestry at Yale: “I used to think the top environmental problems facing the world were global warming, environmental degradation and ecosystem collapse and that we scientists could fix those problems with enough science. But I was wrong. The real problem is not those three items but greed, selfishness and apathy. And for that we need a spiritual and cultural transformation.”

We may wonder what form a distinctively Christian and more hopeful form of action might take. After considering various possibilities I feel inspiration can be drawn from an award scheme developed by a Christian charity to help churches in caring for creation. In the past four years the “EcoChurch Award Scheme” has been adopted by over 2,600 churches in the UK. Surely, a peacemaker’s version of this scheme would be really helpful for the global church, not least the 85 million Anglicans in 165 countries!

Let me briefly describe how it works. Each parochial church council identifies a congregation member who is keen and able to complete the online survey. The survey covers five key areas of church life: worship and teaching; community and global engagement; and lifestyle. The more a church is doing to care for creation the more points are scored towards an award. The online survey records progress and shows what further actions are necessary. It allows responses to be saved and you can return to update them as the church completes additional actions.

A Rocha’s website has free resources giving lots of support. There are three levels of award: bronze, silver and gold; each requiring a number of points in each of the key areas. Once an award is confirmed, the church receives a certificate and optional wall plaque; then they can start working towards the next level.

There are many synergies between peacemaking and caring for creation. A peacemakers’ version of the EcoChurch Award Scheme would give parish churches a great way of contributing to the anti-nuclear movement. The big challenge is finding a Christian charity that has the funds and skills to make it happen.

Find out more: A Rocha UK: www.arocha.org/en/a-rocha-uk; Christian Climate Action: christianclimateaction.org and XR Peace: xrpeace.org