

Christian CND Annual Report 2019

Introduction

It has been an exciting and challenging year for Christian CND. Around the world tensions between nuclear-armed states have continued to increase, with conflict being close on a number of occasions. In the UK we have seen a new Prime Minister take office, with one of his first roles being to write the letters to the submarine commanders with the order of what to do in the event of a nuclear strike.

The year hasn't been without positives. The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons is now more than half-way towards entering into force, meaning nuclear weapons could be banned under international law in the next 12 months.

Against this backdrop Christian CND has had another busy year of campaigning as we continue our efforts towards a nuclear weapons-free world. We have had many opportunities to share our vision throughout the year, from the Thanksgiving Service at Westminster Abbey to our visits to Christian festivals and events.

During this year we have seen our membership increase to over 400. While we're still a small organisation it's

gratifying to see that we continue to grow as more people come into our movement. In 2019 we have also launched our Partnership scheme for churches and organisations, something we pray will continue to grow in the coming year.

We have been proud to work alongside many fantastic organisations this year. Our continued partnership with the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons means we are part of a worldwide push for change, something coming ever closer as more states join the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. Through the Network of Christian Peace Organisations we have been able to work together on a range of issues, amplifying the voices of our organisations and demonstrating the unity of the body of Christ. As always we continue to work closely with, and support, the work of our friends at National CND.

We are thankful for all our members and supporters, it is great to serve God alongside you. As we look forward to Christian CND's 60th anniversary in 2020 we look forward to working alongside our members, whether you've been with us since the start or joined this year. We hope you will enjoy reading this year's Annual Report.

Westminster Abbey

In May Westminster Abbey held a "National Service of Thanksgiving" to celebrate 50 years of Britain having nuclear weapons at sea. Christian CND played a vital role in mobilising Christians against the service, including a statement of opposition signed by more than 200 Anglican clergy from around the world and a petition signed by thousands.

As the event took place, we gathered outside (photo below) for a moving service of repentance for British possession of nuclear weapons and prayers for peace with around 200 in attendance.

It was a hugely successful event, with the Christian and secular peace movement uniting alongside us, but one we hope we never have to repeat.



Molesworth

Many of you will remember the significance of RAF Molesworth, the site of Christian witness against nuclear weapons in the 1980s.

Working with local volunteers, many of whom had been involved at the time, Christian CND organised a special event in June where the Peace Garden was rededicated. Photo, right.



It was incredibly moving to hear the stories of those who had been there at the height of the nuclear tensions between Russia and the United States, as well as gathering at the cross from the old Eirene Chapel to pray for an end to nuclear weapons

and a world where bases like Molesworth are no longer needed.

International work

As ever our international work has been important during the past year. In March we braved the appalling weather for our annual Embassies Walk . We focussed on NATO states, telling them how they can sign the Ban Treaty without having to leave the alliance. Despite the lashing rain we were able to have some good conversations and develop contacts.

In New York we took part in the Non-Proliferation Treaty Preparatory Committee as part of the civil society delegation. Working alongside colleagues in ICAN we had many great conversations with African delegates about their

progress towards joining the Ban Treaty. We took part in the daily interfaith vigil opposite the main entrance to the building and Patricia Pulham was honoured to present the International Interfaith Statement to the Chair of the proceedings.

While the outcome from the main sessions were not positive, with no agreement on a way forward for nuclear disarmament, many states were still fully supportive of the Ban Treaty. 2020 will see the NPT Review Conference, we pray for the deadlock to be broken.



Interfaith Public Statement being presented to NPT Chair, Ambassador Hadid , by Patricia Pulham of Christian CND and Kimiaki Kawai

Events

The Christian CND year started in Coventry with our AGM and Conference. We heard from Ben Niblett of Tearfund on campaigning and the lessons for our movement from the successes of those working on climate change, as well as Janet Fenton on progress of the Ban Treaty. A message of warm support was received from the Bishop of Coventry.

Christian CND members supported the annual Ash Wednesday Witness outside the Ministry of Defence (below). Despite the rain, a good crowd gathered to pray for peace, to repent of our nuclear weapons and tie purple ribbons to the fence outside the building as a symbol of hope for a more peaceful future.



During our Embassies Walk we handed in our petition calling on the Government to engage with the Ban Treaty to Downing Street. So far none of the nuclear-armed states have engaged and the UK continues to stand foursquare behind the position of Donald Trump. Despite nearly eight months, and one Prime Minister, passing, we have yet to receive a response to that petition. Photo below taken at the the pre-walk prayer service in St Martin-in-the-Fields.



In June we held the first Barbara Eggleston memorial event in Brighton (photo below), remembering our dear friend and energetic campaigning colleague. Bruce Kent and Valerie Flessati gave the addresses on the history of the Christian peace movement and the prospects for change on nuclear weapons issues within the churches. There were also memories of Barbara from friends and family as well as great fellowship over a shared lunch.



Over the summer months we were once again able to get out and about to spread the Christian CND message. At Big Church Day Out we spoke to some of the 20,000 Christians in attendance, some signed up to become members while many were engaging in conversations, often the first step on the journey (photo below). We also had a stall and fringe event at the Church of England General Synod in York and the National Justice and Peace Network gathering in Swanwick, both regular fixtures on the Christian CND calendar.



In August we remembered the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki on the 74th anniversary.

Christian CND Co-Chair Martin Tiller took part in the remembrance service at Coventry Cathedral while other services were organised and supported by members and supporters across the country. In Essex a candle from Hiroshima was lit as part of the commemorations.

One of our last campaigning efforts of the year was the DSEI Arms Fair in London (below). Joining hundreds of Quakers and many from other denominations, we blockaded the gates at the ExCeL arena in Docklands for more than eight hours. With peaceful prayers, reading Psalms and singing joyful songs of hope and peace, it was an uplifting way to end the campaigning year.



Our interfaith work has continued throughout the year, with Michael Pulham speaking at the Battersea Peace Pagoda anniversary celebration in June.

Christian CND in the media

The National Service of Thanksgiving for 50 years of nuclear weapons at sea attracted a huge amount of media interested from the Christian and mainstream press, with Christian CND often being at the forefront of the coverage.

Our Development Manager Russell Whiting was interviewed twice on Premier Christian Radio and our statements and press releases were picked up by Church Times, Catholic Herald, Catholic Universe, Independent Catholic News, The Times and others. Working with clergy including the Bishop of Colchester opinion pieces were covered in the New Statesman and the service was covered both by BBC Radio Four and the BBC website.

Russell was also interviewed on Premier Radio when the Russian Orthodox Church announced plans to stop blessing weapons, including weapons systems. An interview with the Evangelical Alliance magazine will introduce new people to Christian CND and our issues.

Michael and Patricia Pulham have continued to write their regular column for the Catholic Universe, having the opportunity to raise issues on our agenda. Michael has also been interviewed by Islam TV on elements of our interfaith work. Other Christian CND members have had letters printed in various publications.

Our own media has continued to be of a high standard and have an impact. Our journal *Ploughshare* and newssheet *Ploughshare Plus* have been published throughout the year and have featured articles and contributions from members and experts from the UK and further afield. Meanwhile our social media presence goes from strength to strength. In the past 12 months nearly 650,000 people have heard from Christian CND from Twitter and Facebook, and this year we also launched an Instagram page. We have also continued to publish our monthly Prayer Diaries and update emails with the latest campaigning, news and prayer points.

Executive Committee and staff

Thank you to the following members of the Christian CND Executive Committee who served for the past year:

Caroline Gilbert (Co-Chair)

Martin Tiller (Co-Chair)

Neil Berry (Treasurer)

Martin Birdseye

Geraldine Ellis

Mike Gilbert

Rachel Leather

David Maxwell

Michael Pulham

Patricia Pulham

Staff members:

Claire Poyner – Officer Worker

Russell Whiting – Development Manager

Special thanks to Neil Berry who is stepping down from the CCND Exec and as Treasurer after over 20 years in the role. Thanks for all you have done for Christian CND and for peace Neil.

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<https://www.facebook.com/ChristianCND>
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