The “Queen’s Peace Party”

Alternative Garden Party at Aldermaston

3 June 2012

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‘The Queen’s Peace’ garden party at Aldermaston looks like being a well-attended, fun event! The Aldermaston bomb factory, we are told, exists to safeguard our security but Christians know the difference between God’s love and weapons of mass destruction. True security comes from Him alone. We can rejoice at what He has done for us and have a good time - yes, even by the very gate of that sad place. Bring your friends, your fancy hats, your food to share, your dancing, your games, your song! Like Her Majesty, we persist through thick and thin.

That it is taking a long time for nuclear weapons to be abolished could be a pointer in itself to the extent of their evil nature; a signal to us how necessary it is to stick to the task and a reminder that we need the help of the Prince of Peace. By ourselves we can do nothing but with Him all things are possible. Alleluia!

You will find in this issue a report on how the Alleluia! was resurrected at Aldermaston. Thanks to those who have already sent lovely squares for the peace quilt. We are hoping other peace organisations will join in this project. Spread it around!

A variety of leaflets have been produced on how our cause links with other serious issues (handy at their events) and our usual visits to Embassies have been made prior to attendance at the NPT PrepCom in Vienna. More free posters (A4 size for church porches) of statements against Trident by church leaders of all denominations are now available - just ring the office for them. Turn these pages to learn more about recent activities.

The foremost activity of course is prayer. Thank you for your prayers and your continuing support.
Christian CND joined Pax Christi and the London Catholic Worker for the traditional Witness at the Ministry of defence in London on Ash Wednesday, its 30th consecutive year.

As an additional liturgical event CCND prepared a symbolic liturgy “Burying the Alleluia” which took place on the previous Friday.

We met at the Imperial War Museum and carried a beautifully carved “Alleluia” plaque via St. Thomas’s Hospital and the Houses of Parliament to the MOD.

Although our prayers and hymns had included the word “Alleluia” this would be the last time until Easter.

Outside the MOD the “Alleluia” was symbolically buried by being placed in a small coffin to symbolise the death and burial of Christ. It would be “Resurrected” on Easter Monday during our Easter celebration.
On March 12th we gathered at the Dick Sheppard Chapel in St. Martin-in-the-Fields Church, Trafalgar Square. After being welcomed by Rev. Katherine Hedderley and a short service of prayers the walkers divided into three groups to visit the 16 Embassies and the FCO.

Seven of these Embassies had agreed to meet us either then or on another more suitable day to discuss the forthcoming NPT Preparatory Commission Meeting in Vienna. There was already a planned meeting at the Foreign Office at which CCND would be represented.

Discussions took place with representatives from the Embassies of Brazil, Sweden, South Africa, France, USA, Russia and Ireland. Appropriate questions had been prepared either to discuss then or to include in a letter which was handed in.

A full report of these meetings is available from the office on request, together with a set of questions, walk notes and even a map, if you would like to see how it all works. You might even like to come along next time! No special knowledge required - we can provide you with info sheets and questions to ask.

Photo:
L-R Patrica Pulham, Deirdre Lyster from the Irish Embassy, Peter Nicholls, chair of Abolition 2000 UK and Caroline Gilbert

Patricia Pulham joined men, women and children at the ‘Join me on the Bridge’ event on International Women’s Day in London. See http://www.womenforwomen.org.uk/ and http://joinmeonthebridge.org
On 9 April, around 10 Christian CND members and supporters gathered at Aldermaston, to ‘dig up the Alleluia’, which was buried on Ash Wednesday, and to pray and process around Aldermaston, where the UK’s nuclear weapons are researched and developed.

The event began at noon at West Gate, Tadley, AWE Aldermaston, where a liturgy and resurrection of the ‘Alleluia’ was held. A procession visited each gate in turn where prayers were said, bells were rung, and flowers or seeds planted.

The witness included an Agape (shared meal) at North Gate. We call for a conversion from works of death to working for life and releasing the funds and expertise used in the production of nuclear warheads at this site.
On the 12th of March 295 in Thevesta, North Africa a man called Maximilainus stood before a Roman proconsul for refusing to be a conscript in the army. He was ordered to be put under the foot rule as he was in fact fit for service in the army. However, he boldly proclaimed that because of his faith in Christ he could not be a soldier. After continued efforts by the proconsul to make him reconsider he was warned that the punishment for not joining up was death. His response to this displeased the proconsul as he proclaimed that they could behead him if they liked, but he would never choose to be a soldier of this world for he was a soldier of the Christ. The proconsul even attempted to get the young man’s father to convince him of his duty to take up arms, but his father pointed out that he was old enough to make his own decisions. Even after the proconsul pointed out that others who claimed to follow Jesus had joined the army, the young man stood firm on his convictions. After threats of a cruel death he pointed out that as a follower of Christ he would not truly die but go to be with Christ the Lord. Finally he was ordered to be led away to die by the sword at which he said ‘God be praised!’

The above story is one of the first ever recorded accounts of a conscientious objector being martyred from the Christian tradition. Throughout the long history of Christianity there has always been a Peace Testimony, the testimony of those who have denounced war and embraced non-violence. The aim of this project shall be to consider the roots of this Peace Testimony.

The Three Main Views

The Peace Testimony is not the only view adopted by Christians. It is useful to know there are three main views that have existed and continue to exist within the Church at large.

1. The Just War Theory:
This theory predates Christianity and was adapted by Augustine in the 4th Century. Later Thomas Aquinas developed it as a systematic theology in the 13th Century. He suggested that in order for a war to be just three things were needful: The authority of the sovereign, a just cause and a rightful intention. This idea was then developed further by Francisco Vitoria in the 16th Century and then accepted by many (though not all) of the Reformers. It continues to be a popular idea among both Protestant and Roman Catholic churches (though again not all).

The criteria given for a just war are:

a) it starts with an official declaration of war
b) is a last resort
c) is just and with good intentions
d) is defensive, its aim is justice
e) must be free of revenge or hate
f) targets should only be military
g) it should when all is done have saved more lives than it killed
h) only be fought if a clear victory and product of a just outcome can be met.

Therefore, most wars have not even lived up to this standard, let alone to the standard of any Peace Testimony.

2. Relative Pacifism:
This theory suggests that in some cases governments may choose war. However, Christians of such a state would not take up arms. They can work in weapons factories, but never use weapons. Those who hold to this theory also tend to believe that the use of Atomic or Biological weapons is sinful, but possessing them is needful in order to make nation states feel unthreatened by other nations.

3. Absolute Pacifism:
The term pacifist is misleading in a way, as it seems to indicate not taking action. However, many who hold to this Peace Testimony are active in politics and religion. This absolutist view teaches that all war is evil even ones said to be defensive. Verses where Jesus tells His followers to ‘Turn the other cheek’ or ‘Love your enemy’ are often taken to be applied not just to the individual, but also to nation states. Jesus is viewed as the perfect example of Peace in that He was led like a lamb to the slaughter without violent protest (Isa 53:7). The path of non-violence and non-resistance are seen in the life of Christ and sought to be imitated in the life of followers.
4. Complexity:
The debate is far more complex than it seems at first glance. There are more than three views and there are differences even within each of these schools. One example of this is that the pacifist school of thought has some who say war is never a resort, whilst people like Martin Luther King and Bonhoeffer suggested that in the case of people and situations like Hitler, war was the final inevitable resort.

However, these complexities aside, Waters summarizes the beliefs of the Christian Pacifists in this way:

“The Christian Pacifist says: To hate those who love us is the devil's way; To love those who love us and hate those who hate us is the way of the world; To love those who hate us is the way of Jesus.”

5. Ancient Roots:
The Christian Peace Testimony has its roots in the early church and is therefore the oldest tradition and in my opinion the best. Ringma writes of how there was a dangerous memory among the early church of how the Prince of Peace came proclaiming the kingdom of God and did much good before suffering a cruel death at the hands of the establishment. Also that He never tried to justify Himself or use force to protect Himself in retaliation. Ringma further points out that Christians have found it difficult to follow such an example and not justify, defend or retaliate. The pages of Church history are full of this retaliation. He writes, ‘It is the history of the sword wielded in the name of religion much more than the history of the peaceful dove.’ He goes on to quote the French Sociologist, Political activist and Theologian, Jacques Ellul, who says ‘violence seems to be the great temptation in the Church and among Christians.’ Ringma also reflects that, ‘To be a peacemaker requires more certainty and courage than to be a warmonger.’

Dymond argues that after Jesus’ death His followers did not believe in war, as they believed He had forbidden it. This is why so many of the early Christians chose to die and suffer persecution in the name of non-violence. This was not a minority view among the first followers, but a majority view.

Marcellus, a centurion in the Trajana legion, on being converted threw off his belt (that no doubt had his sword on it) and declared himself to be a Christian and no longer able to be involved in war. He was sent to jail for this uncompromising act, at which he stated that it was not lawful for Christians to bear arms. Such a witness is likely to have prompted Cassian from his own legion to also abandon the legion and face the death penalty. Another example of such dedication to Peace Testimony is that Sulpicius Severus spoke of a man called Martin who was taught in the ways of War, but on conversion to Christ gave it all up. He gave it up saying that he was a Christian and therefore could not fight. These are just a few examples of the roots of the Peace Testimony in early Christianity.

The question for us today is will we be faithful to the early roots of our faith? Will we follow the Prince of Peace? Will we consider the implications of applying the idea of peace to 21st Century earth? Jesus was betrayed with a kiss and in a way to this day is being betrayed, sometimes with swords too and in a sense he is being crucified afresh. Yet the Prince of Peace takes the cup of suffering, loving even enemies. It is time for us also to choose - The Kiss, The Sword or the Cup!

References and other useful resources:

Acta Martyrum (Ratisborn, 1859)
Constitution of the Oberlin Non-Resistance Society (www.nonresistance.org 17/01/09)
Dresser The Bible Against War (Oberlin: Ohio, 2006)
Dymond ‘The Early Christians on the subject of war’ (1821) An Inquiry into the Accordancy of War with the Principles of Christianity
Gillman A Light that is Shining: an introduction to the Quakers (Quaker Books: London, 2003)
Kurlansky Nonviolence (Jonathan Cape: London, 2006)
Lock ‘Transcribers’ notes’, Pacificus A Solemn Review of the Customs of War (Oberlin: Ohio, 2007)
Meyer The Pacifist Conscience (Rupert Hart - Davis Ltd: London, 1966)
Molnar A study of Peter Chelcicky's Life and Translation of from Czech of part one of his Net of Faith (Berkeley: California, 1947)
Pacificus A Solemn Review of the Customs of War (Oberlin: Ohio, 2007)
Penn Address to the American Indians (1682) cited in Meyer The Pacifist Conscience (Rupert Hart - Davis Ltd: London, 1966)
Ringma Resist the Powers (Albatross, 1995)
Water Moral Choices Made Simple (Hunt Ltd, 2002)
Whelpley Letters addressed to Caleb Strong ESQ (The Elm Street Printing Company, 1870)
The Queen’s Peace Aldermaston Alternative Jubilee Party, 3rd June

Plans for this fantastic event are well underway. It will take place at the Aldermaston Construction Gate on the A340. There is room to park cars but we may be able to run some transport from London if there is a demand. Your Invitation Card is enclosed. Feel free to photocopy and distribute it further.

There will be a short prayer service at 1.30pm (it is the annual CAAT Day of Prayer) and the main event will begin at 2.00pm. We hope it will be a real celebration of the peace we work for. Dress up, if you like. There will be a hat competition, fence decorating, children’s activities and a shared party tea. Bring your contributions to the entertainment, music, dancing and anything else you can think of.

Those who come by car might think folding chairs would be a good idea. Picnic tables would be useful too. There is plenty of grass but it might be damp. We are hoping to lay on portaloos, and it should be accessible to wheelchairs and buggies with plenty of willing hands to help with the pushing! There is a link to a map on the CCND website.

Quilting for Peace

We have received some amazing squares for the Peace Quilt, but we would like lots more. Perhaps this photo of some we have already will inspire more of you. No time constraint though the more we get soon, the sooner we can display it.

Link Leaflets

The 6 pictured leaflets are now available, see below. Each one is a different colour, has, as you see, a cartoon on the front, something about CCND on the back and facts and discussion points inside.

Why not take some along the next time you go to a meeting on one of these issues?

Further leaflets on International Law, Just War Theory, Security, Democracy & The Arms Trade are planned. Do you have any further ideas on what might be useful?
How to join CCND
Annual membership subscriptions are:

☐ Waged, individual: £12 (£15 household)
☐ Unwaged individual £6, (£8 household)
☐ Group affiliation: from £10

I/we wish to be a member of CCND
Please send a standing order form
I enclose a cheque/PO (payable to CCND) to include the following:
MEMBERSHIP: £..............
DONATION: £............... (Thank you!)
TOTAL: £................

Name: ........................................................................................................
Address: ........................................................................................................Postcode: ..............
Telephone: ................................................................................................. Email: .................................................................................................

Please return form to: Christian CND 162 Holloway Rd, London, N7 8DQ
Nuclear weapons are costly in many ways. They change our relationship to other nations, to the earth, to the future and to ourselves.

Many people, perhaps most, believe that the nuclear threat went away when the Cold War ended. But the threat remains. It is not only a threat to us, but a threat by us – a threat that puts civilization and the future at risk. Nuclear weapons put us at war with our inheritance from the past; and with the yet unborn people of the future who have no means of protection against us.

At the beginning of the Nuclear Age, Einstein warned: “The unleashed power of the atom has changed everything save our modes of thinking, and thus we drift toward unparalleled catastrophe.”

Beyond being very costly to maintain and improve, nuclear weapons have changed us and cost us in many other ways.

They have undermined our respect for the law. How can a country respect the law and be perpetually engaged in threatening mass murder?

These weapons have also undermined our sense of reason, balance and morality. They are designed to kill massively and indiscriminately - men, women and children.

They have increased our secrecy and undermined our democracy. Can you put a cost on losing our democracy?

Uranium mining, nuclear tests and nuclear waste storage for the next 240,000 years have incalculable costs. They are a measure of our hubris, as are the weapons themselves.

Nuclear weapons - perhaps better called instruments of annihilation - require us to play Russian Roulette with our common future. What is the cost of threatening to foreclose the future? What is the cost of actually doing so?

Our challenge is to change our modes of thinking, to adhere to the global rule of law, to lead the way in abolishing nuclear weapons and war. If we fail to lead the way toward peace and a world free of nuclear weapons, we will continue to be an obstacle to change.
When you get this issue of Ploughshare, it will still be the Easter Season but we will be looking forward to the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. Let us ask her for enlightenment, courage and strength to make Christ’s message of Peace alive in our World.

MAY
The NPT PrepCom takes place in Vienna until May 11th. Pray that the decisions taken there bear fruit, bringing nuclear disarmament closer and the contacts made between nations create a more peaceful world.

15th May: Conscientious Objectors Day. We remember all those courageous people who refused to take part in war, whatever the cost.

20th May: Ascension Day

27th May: Pentecost Sunday

JUNE
The nation will be celebrating the Queen’s Jubilee. We pray that all sections of our society will be included in the celebrations and that we value the contributions made by the varied cultures and races of those who have come to live here.

3rd June: The Queens Peace Party. We pray that we have a wonderful day, demonstrating the true meaning of peace.

JULY
That the original spirit of the Olympic Games is truly evident.

AUGUST
6th: Hiroshima Day
9th: Nagasaki Day
We remember all those still suffering as a result of these terrible events and the people of Chernobyl and Fukushima. May the world turn away from the evil of nuclear weapons and the dangers of nuclear energy.
15 May: Conscientious Objectors’ Day event in Tavistock Square London WC1 at 12noon. All welcome.

19 May: Pax Christi Annual General Meeting. Speaker, Oliver McTernan, co-founder and CEO of Forward Thinking, an organisation set up to promote a more inclusive peace process in the Middle East and to facilitate a global dialogue between the religious and secular worlds. 10:30 am at St Nicholas of Tolentino Church, Lawford’s Gate, Bristol BS5 0RE. Contact: Please RSVP to the office on 0208 203 4884.

21 May: Franz Jägerstatter, Martyr for Peace, Feast Day. Resource and prayer materials available from Pax Christi office and see more here http://www.paxchristi.org.uk/pubs.HTML


3 June: The Queen’s Peace Party at AWE Aldermaston, Construction Gate. Come and celebrate the Jubilee with a party for peace and disarmament! Come in fancy dress/posh frocks if you like. Best hat or crown competition. There will be a short service at 1.30pm - secular event starts at 2pm. There is room to park cars but we may be able to run some transport from London if there is a demand. All welcome!
For useful information in getting there and a map see http://www.aldermaston.net/camp/visit

17 June: “Sport in the service of peace”. Preliminary notification of a service to be held at Chelmsford Cathedral, New Street, Chelmsford CM1 1TY, on at 2.30 p.m. We hope you can attend. In ancient Greece the original Olympic Games were preceded by a fifty day holy truce and it was followed by a 50 day truce. This was not only to allow competitors to travel in safety to Olympia but because the Games were regarded as a sacred event. This is an invitation to celebrate One Hundred Days of Peace to promote a culture of peace in our communities. Further details: Jonathan Barker Tel: 0789 693 4881.

7-8 June: 100 Days for Peace - Olympic Peace Legacy. Launch of 100 Days for Peace. Overnight Vigil at St Martin-in-the-Fields starts at 11pm. On 28 October there will be Closing events for 100 Days of Peace - A lasting legacy of Peace for everyone. http://www.peacelegacy.org.uk/ 100 Days of Peace, 4 Vincent Road, London, N15 3QH 020 8888 4222 office@peacelegacy.org.uk

4 July: Annual ‘Independence FROM America’ day at MENWITH HILL. Organised for Campaign for the Accountability of American Bases (CAAB), 59 Swarcliffe Road, Harrogate, HG1 4QZ. Tel no: 01423 884076 http://www.caab.org.uk

15 July: Olympic Family Picnic & Fun Sports Day. 1pm in Finsbury Park, London. Events for everyone - celebrate the 2012 Games on your doorstep. Bring picnic, scooter, skipping rope, egg and spoon, best running shoes or your walking boots! 5-a-side football teams welcome (give us details by 1 July). Register for events from 12 - 1pm. Organised by Justice and Peace & Fun Picnic Planning Group, 4 Vincent Road, London N15 3QH. justiceandpeace@rcdow.org.uk 020 8888 4222.

19 July: Movement for the Abolition of War fundraising concert. With Vladimir Choi (violin) and Richard Black (piano). 7pm at Hinde Street Methodist Church London W1U 2QJ. Price: 15 (£8 concessions). Send cheques (payable to Movement for the Abolition of War) enclosing a SAE to: Ruth Underwood, 2 St John’s Grove, London N19 5RW. Info: 020 7272 8500.

20 July: “A New World Order? - China Today and our Response”. National Justice & Peace Network 34th Annual Conference organised in conjunction with Cultural Exchange with China (CEC) & Leeds Justice & Peace Commission. The Conference provides a unique opportunity to learn, explore contemporary issues, build bridges, plan action and reflect in the light of our faith. The Hayes Conference Centre, Swanwick, Derbyshire. For more information and booking forms contact The Administrator, NJPN, 39 Eccleston Square, London SW1V IBX Tel: 020 7901 4864 Email: admin@justice-and-peace.org.uk or go to the website.

Use our new transparent CCND stickers on your mail etc. Prices below.

**CCND goods**

Pack of 24 A4 sheets of Interfaith quotations on peace as used at the Creation Conference £1 a pack

CCND stickers New! 10 stickers for 50p, 50 stickers for £2

Legacy leaflet Free

Churches’ pack Free

T-Shirts £12 each.

Cotton bags £3 each.

Picasso Greetings Cards. £2.50 for six.

Christmas Cards, £2.50 for six.

Other CCND items available: Church Porch Poster, badges, enamel brooches, window stickers, pens and a history of CCND.

See your membership insert for details and an order form.

Send orders to: Christian Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament

162 Holloway Road, London N7 8DQ

Tel: 020 7700 4200 Fax: 020 7700 2357

Email: christians@cnduk.org Web: http://ccnd.gn.apc.org/