

PLOUGHSHARE

Christian hope in the nuclear age

July 2026



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- Rethinking Military Spending
- Join our Executive Committee!

Welcome back to Ploughshare!

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Christian CND Executive Committee:

Aisling Griffin, Kelvin Gascoyne, Martin Tiller (co-chair), Richard Wise (co-chair)

Staff Team: James Salt (Membership & Outreach Officer)

Contributions to this issue from: Martin Tiller, Richard Wise, James Salt.

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From our editor...

Earlier this year, Martin (Tiller) was researching Dag Hammarskjöld, the second Secretary-General of the UN, and I made the connection between that great Nobel Peace laureate and some familiar words. They were penned by him and are sometimes used as a prayer: “For all that has been – thanks! For all that shall be – yes!”

In this Ploughshare, there is much to give thanks for: the sculpture being displayed at Manchester Cathedral, Martin’s mosque visit, and Gerald Drewett’s foundation of The Peace Museum nearly 30 years ago – and his ninetieth birthday!

There are also articles which cause us to think about what ‘shall be’. You can’t be concerned about nuclear weapons without being concerned for the future, and there are always things to give us great concern – such as our government’s new Defence Investment Plan. We also consider the future of CCND and the value of leaving a legacy – a way of giving thanks and saying yes!

I’m struck that Dag Hammarskjöld was so positive about ‘all that shall be’. I hope this magazine helps us all to be more positive and hopeful about the future. How can our lives be a ‘yes’ for the world?



Richard Wise

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Opinions expressed in signed articles may not correspond to CCND’s official position.

Hope Blossoming from the Ashes: Our Peace Sculpture at Manchester Cathedral

From 17 May to 16 June, Manchester Cathedral played host to 'Hope Will Blossom From These Ashes', a deeply moving sculpture we commissioned to mark the upcoming 80th anniversary of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Following its successful launch at Coventry Cathedral last year, we are thrilled that this touring artwork is continuing its journey to inspire new communities.

Created by artist Leah Hislop, the sculpture draws profound inspiration from the testimony of Tomoko Watanabe, co-founder of Green Legacy Hiroshima. She recalled the colourless, charcoal-black world immediately after the 1945 bombing, where experts claimed nothing would grow for 75 years. Yet, against all odds, tiny green buds began to emerge from the charred trees, offering survivors the vital comfort and hope that they, too, could survive.



Leah has masterfully captured this transition from death to life. The dark, stark trunk of the sculpture is meticulously constructed from thousands of hand-folded triangles painted with crushed charcoal.

Blooming from these branches are the vibrant origami cranes folded by our dedicated volunteers during our 2024 1,000 Cranes Campaign. In Japanese tradition, the crane is a symbol of healing and hope. Arranged like fresh blossoms, each crane represents a physical prayer offered up by a member of our fellowship for global peace and a nuclear-free world.

For us, the sculpture is a powerful visual reminder of why we continue our work. Just as the green buds surprised the survivors of Hiroshima, we hold fast to the belief that God can bring peace and resurrection out of the darkest circumstances. Thank you to everyone who folded a crane, shared the campaign, or held this project in your prayers - your collective efforts have truly blossomed into a beautiful witness for peace.

A Field of Opportunity

In previous years Christian CND have often run a stall, and sometimes other events too, at Christian festivals such as Spring Harvest, Big Church Day Out / Festival, and Greenbelt. It takes a fair bit of preparation in advance, but is a great way of connecting with Christians and talking with them about the need for peace and nuclear disarmament. It is hard work but great fun, and sometimes very fruitful – we got a dozen new members at last year's Greenbelt. For every new member there will be hundreds more who 'clocked' that we were there and are now aware, consciously or subconsciously, that there is a thing called Christian CND trying to bring our faith to bear on the issue of nuclear weapons.

This year we are not attending any festivals. We are also not doing schools work, not actively seeking opportunities to speak in church groups, not organising an embassies' walk in London, and not organising a pilgrimage (as we did in 2023 and 2025). Why is this? Not primarily because of lack of funds – we still have a reasonable amount left from past legacies – but because of lack of people prepared to take the lead and organise things. Our constitution states we should have ten people on Exec – two Co-Chairs, one Treasurer, and up to seven others. At the moment we have just four on Exec – Richard and Martin (two white Cambridge-educated blokes in their fifties!) and two other members (Kelvin and Aisling). We have had no Treasurer since the last AGM.



In addition we have James, our paid part-time Membership and Outreach Officer who is on Exec ex-officio. He does fantastic work but there's only one of him.

This leaves us without the organisational capacity to do events like those listed above – most of our effort is spent 'keeping the lights on', looking after our current membership, doing the basics which every organisation has to do. In fact, without a Treasurer even that is a struggle. There is an urgent need for more people, with fresh energy and new ideas. We are not unusual – many volunteer-based organisations are in a similar position. But isn't nuclear disarmament a pretty high, often-neglected, priority?

I have quoted the phrase “the fields are white for harvest” before now and I still believe it. There is massive latent support for nuclear disarmament amongst UK Christians of all denominations and persuasions, but we are struggling to bring that harvest home. It is getting urgent. If we are going to continue as an independent organisation within the CND family, we need people to:

- Pray!
- Join Exec to be part of leading the organisation’s strategy
- Join Exec as Treasurer (I prefer the term “steward”)
- Join Exec to lead specific initiatives like festivals
- Take the lead for a specific initiative, accountable to Exec but without actually joining Exec

- Get keen new people to become members
- Give financially

Please note the order I have put these in. They are all important but without the ones higher up the list, the ones lower down will have little effect. Anyone who has been a member for at least ten months can put their name forward for Exec – please get in touch for a ‘no obligation’ chat if you are perhaps interested. Appointments would start at our AGM (17 October 2026) but don’t delay – pray today, and get in touch ASAP!

What future do you want Christian CND to have? Please help to make it so.

Martin Tiller
Co-Chair



The Munich Security Conference Showroom

Picture the scene. Your old car has become unreliable, and you are increasingly worried that it will leave you stranded and vulnerable when you need it most. You go along to your local second-hand showroom, but they only have four vehicles for sale. They are all very expensive, unattractive, and they actually look unsafe to you. What will you do? Soldier on with your existing model? Settle for one of the nasty ones on sale? Of course not. You will try another showroom. Or perhaps you'll reconsider whether you wanted a car at all – maybe a bike or public transport would be better all round.

A recent report by the influential Munich Security Conference (MSC) called *Mind the Deterrence Gap: Assessing Europe's Nuclear Options* puts Europeans in that position. It says that Europe can no longer rely on the USA for nuclear deterrence, and should stop 'outsourcing' its strategic thinking to the USA. So far so good. The USA has become highly unreliable and could well leave us high and dry in our hour of need. This statement, unthinkable a year or two ago, is now accepted widely among European leaders.

The report offers us five options:

- A. Continuing to rely on the USA (basically the current position)
- B. Increasing the French and British role in Europe's nuclear deterrence
- C. Developing a 'Eurodeterrent'
- D. European countries developing their own nuclear weapons independently
- E. Focusing on conventional (non-nuclear) deterrence.

It does not pretend that any of these options are good ones. By its own admission, Option A leaves Europe at the whim of the USA. Options B, C and E rely on implausible levels of co-operation and consensus across Europe. Options C and D would contravene (and potentially kill off) the 1970 Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty (NPT) which is currently seen as the bedrock of international stability. Option E might sound attractive because it reduces the need for nuclear weapons, but is seen as politically challenging, mainly due to the very high cost of building up conventional capabilities. All five are eye-wateringly expensive, and would become more so if, as expected, they led to an arms race. Yet the report insists that Europe has no other choices, and had better start deciding soon.



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The entire 74-page report only mentions the United Nations once, in a footnote. What happened to our commitment to all nations working together to overcome their differences and, in the words of Dag Hammarskjöld, if not to bring humanity to heaven, at least to save us from hell? The report's readiness to consider undermining and ignoring existing treaties shows how desperately short of ideas its authors must feel.

The report takes it as axiomatic that Russia represents an implacable threat to Europe. It refers to Russia's use of nuclear 'signalling' to deter its adversaries from getting directly involved in the Ukraine war, and states that Russia may yet resort to nuclear weapons in that conflict. It also describes a "plausible near-future scenario" where "sensing an opportunity, Moscow makes coercive demands of a NATO Ally and detonates a nuclear device at sea to demonstrate resolve and test the cohesion of the Alliance." There is no suggestion that Russia could ever respond positively to diplomacy or that this should even be attempted.

There is no recognition that nuclear deterrence, which relies on all parties acting rationally, looks an increasingly shaky concept. There is no recognition that we need to build trust internationally, not undermine it, to help humanity face up to climate change and other global risks. And there is no recognition that the imago dei extends to Russians – they are simply othered, a threat to be contained (militarily).

As Christians we believe that reasoning like this falls far short of the "life in all its fullness" Jesus promised (John 10:10). Romans chapter 6 speaks of humanity's natural enslavement to sin, and its inevitable outcome of death. But through Jesus' death and resurrection we enjoy freedom and life; we must never act as though we had no good choice. God offers us freedom, not a choice between forms of enslavement.

So next time a pushy salesman offers you a choice of four overpriced old bangers, don't be intimidated. Look elsewhere.

Christian CND visits a mosque!

For me it is important that we are Christian CND, not just Religious CND. We can only ever hope to speak for other Christians – at best – as we don't have the knowledge or convictions needed to speak for people of other faiths. And we have quite enough work to do, taking information about nuclear weapons to the Christians in the UK, and trying to bring a Christian perspective to the wider disarmament movement!

So we can't speak for other faiths, but we absolutely should speak **with** them, and work alongside them where we can. Back in May 2022, a UK-based radio station called Voice of Islam interviewed me about the work of Christian CND and the range of views within Christianity about nuclear weapons. They have also interviewed Russell Whiting (our former Development Manager) and Alyn Ware (a well-known anti-nuclear expert from New Zealand). Voice of Islam radio is based at the large Baitul Futuh Mosque in Morden, South London - UK headquarters of the Ahmadiyya Muslim community, a particularly peace-loving branch of Islam, whose motto is "Love for All, Hatred for None".

Voice of Islam Radio recently celebrated its tenth anniversary and to mark the event, previous contributors were invited to an event at the mosque on 7th June. About 250 people (my estimate) gathered at 5pm and were taken in small groups for a tour of the mosque and its associated buildings. It's a huge place with a capacity of 13,000 worshippers. After that we gathered for a conference, with keynote speeches and discussion panels, all on the theme of 'World Crisis and the Pathway to Peace'. One key message I took away was that peace requires partnership, not isolation. Nuclear disarmament was one major topic of the conference, and of course the USA's attacks on Iran also loomed large. The hospitality shown to us by the community was outstanding, and the evening ended with an excellent South Asian meal, after which I had to dash to catch the train home to the Midlands!

I learnt a lot and had a great time. It puts me in mind of the last verse a well-known hymn by Percy Dearmer:

Lord, in all our doings guide us; Pride and
hate shall ne'er divide us; We'll go on with
Thee beside us, And with joy we'll
persevere!

Martin Tiller
Co-Chair



Leaving a Lasting Legacy: How a Gift in Your Will Shapes the Future

When we think about leaving a gift to Christian CND in a will, we often think of it in terms of financial security for our campaigns. But the true value of a legacy is not found in a bank balance. Instead, it is found in the lives it changes and the new generations it reaches. There is perhaps no better example of this than the story of Liddy Buswell.

Back in 2021, we made the decision to use part of a generous legacy left to us by a supporter to fund new internship positions. Our goal was simple yet ambitious, as we wanted to take our message into new spaces, particularly targeting under-thirties and youth in Christian settings. Out of twenty six applicants, we appointed Liddy, an enthusiastic young Methodist from Newcastle.

The initial project went so well that when the internship ended, we were delighted to appoint Liddy as our Outreach Manager, a role she then dedicated herself to for three years. None of this would have been possible without that original legacy.

Through that single gift, Liddy was able to spend three years spreading the message of nuclear disarmament to people who had never encountered it before. She became a familiar face across the country, running workshops, speaking in schools, and organising our stalls at events and festivals like Greenbelt. She produced vital resources that we still use today, including school materials, speaker presentations, and a new Bible study guide.

Importantly, Liddy focused her energy on young people. When she left us last year to take the next steps in her career and faith, we reflected on her time with us by sharing the famous Latin inscription found in St Paul's Cathedral for its architect, Sir Christopher Wren: If you seek a memorial, look around you.

For Liddy, that memorial is found in the hundreds of young people she reached, engaged, and inspired. We will never truly know the full ripple effect of her work, or how many of those young minds will go on to campaign for a more peaceful, nuclear free world in the future.

Liddy's employment was entirely sowed, nurtured, and grown because one of our supporters decided to look to the future and leave a legacy. By remembering Christian CND in your will, you are not just funding day to day operations. You are directly investing in the people, the outreach, and the young minds who will carry our message of peace into a future none of us can yet imagine.

<https://christiancnd.org.uk/legacy/>
or email christians@cnduk.org for more information.



Member Spotlight: Gerald Drewett's 10-Year Peace Challenge

We want to share an incredible, inspiring story from within our own fellowship. Longtime CCND member, lifelong Quaker, and peace activist Gerald Drewett celebrated his 90th birthday on 19 May and has marked the milestone by launching a remarkable ten-year endurance challenge.

Dubbed his "Nineties Odyssey", Gerald is walking 4,000 steps a day for 90 consecutive days. Even more astounding is his plan to repeat this challenge every single year until he turns 100, adjusting his targets slightly each year to account for his age. His mission is to raise vital funds for the Give Peace a Chance Trust and The Peace Museum in Bradford, an incredible national institution dedicated to the history of non-violence and social harmony, which Gerald founded in 1998. Reflecting on his journey, Gerald shared a profound reminder for us all:

"Am I ever entitled to live my life purely for my benefit? To sit back and enjoy life while I wait for my end to come? I don't think anybody ever has that entitlement. We are social animals: we live in community. Community gives to us, and we need to give back."

Gerald's faith-led stamina has already caught the attention of the wider public, with his inspiring challenge being featured recently on both BBC News and in the Church Times.

Please join us in praying for Gerald's health, strength, and perseverance as he continues his daily walks over the coming months. If you would like to find out more about his odyssey or offer financial support to help the Peace Museum's vital educational work thrive for generations to come, you can visit the Give Peace A Chance Trust website at <https://gpactrust.uk/>



Prioritising Peacebuilding: We Call on the Prime Minister to Rethink Military Spending

Following the government's recently announced Defence Investment Plan, we have joined forces with over fifty organisations to co-sign a joint open letter to Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer. Standing alongside a broad coalition of humanitarian, faith, and peacebuilding groups, including Rethinking Security and Quakers in Britain, we are warning against the intensifying focus of UK public resources on military buildup.

The letter urges the Prime Minister to resist pressure to further accelerate military spending at the upcoming NATO Summit in Ankara, and to instead focus on peacebuilding, sustainability, and societal resilience.

Aisling Griffin, a member of our Executive Committee, commented on the importance of this collective action:

"At a time of increased military tensions, and with the associated pressure to increase military spending, it is important that we remind our Prime Minister and political leaders that true security is built on international cooperation and peacebuilding, rather than military might.

We join with our friends in other organisations to urge the Prime Minister to reconsider the current direction of UK security policy and highlight our particular concern around the increasing spending related to the UK's nuclear weapons programme. An increase in spending on nuclear defence ultimately puts us all in more danger from nuclear conflict, whilst also taking funding away from other essential areas such as welfare and education."

As a fellowship, we know that true security cannot be bought with weapons of mass destruction. By adding our voice to this coalition, we are keeping the pressure on our political leaders to choose a path of genuine diplomacy and ethical stewardship.

The full text of the letter and the complete list of co-signatories can be viewed on the Rethinking Security website.

<https://rethinkingsecurity.org.uk/open-letter-to-pm-on-military-spending/>

Noticeboard

2026 AGM & Conference

This years Christian CND AGM & Conference will be held online on the 17th October. Keep an eye out on our website for further details:

www.christiancnd.org.uk/

WEEKLY PEACE PRAYERS

Christian CND join with other peace organisations every Friday night, 19:30-20:00, to pray for peace in Russia, Ukraine and worldwide. Register here: <https://www.church-and-peace.org/en/2024/02/weekly-online-peace-prayer/>

Lunchtime Prayers

Join Kelvin Gascoyne, a longstanding Executive Committee member, for our online prayer meeting at 1pm on the third Thursday of every month. Register to receive the Zoom link on our events page. christiancnd.org.uk/events

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Got a story, event, or letter you want to share? Email christians@cnduk.org to see it featured on the noticeboard!

