



# PEACELINKS

News from the Fellowship of Reconciliation

*nonviolence in action*

Winter 2019-2020



## Support Peace and Transform the World



### Double your donation!!

It's back! For the third year running, we are raising funds for our International Peacemakers' Fund through the Big Give Christmas Challenge. If you give online between Tuesday 3 December and Tuesday 10 December then the first £1,300 of donations will be doubled, thanks to generous individual supporters of FoR. Last year, our Big Give campaign raised an extra £4,000 for grassroots peacemaking, meaning we could support two groups rather than one. With your help we can do the same in 2019.

Go to <http://tiny.cc/IPFBIGGIVE> between midday 3 December and midday 10 December.

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# Director's Diary

Six months have now passed since I started as Director of the Fellowship. It's an exciting and varied role in which no two days are the same. There have, however, been a few standout moments that show the power of our faith, the importance of our community and the real prophetic difference our work can bring about.

Particular highlights have included attending some of the Picturing Peace Tour. It was great to get out and meet with members, supporters and people who liked the look of the event in a local listing. The diversity of questions and focus of the answers showed a real public appetite for engaging with big questions about war and peace.

I was impressed by the work and witness shown by the Quakers and all involved in declaring 'No Faith in War' outside the DSEI arms fair in September. Standing and singing as people were carried off by police, I had a real sense of what it meant to be a community of peacemakers. We were all there with one purpose, to stop the arms fair, but each person had their own role to play. It's tempting to assume that the high profile and well photographed activities are the only part of a protest that matters. I saw practical love and support in action that highlighted for me the value that everyone can bring, whatever their skills or circumstances.

In October I took time out of a busy week to speak with one of our permanent representatives at the United Nations in Geneva. It was a privilege to hear about the varied work, holding governments to account and advocating for peace, that is done in our name. I'll be spending more time building these global links to enable us as a fellowship to feel more connected with other peacemakers around the world.

Finally, I've been reminded constantly that nobody is in this journey to peace alone. We've celebrated getting a full board of Trustees, yet also said a sad farewell to Diko Blackings, our campaigns officer as she took a more locally based job in Oxford. Reading through the archives, I've been inspired by the determination that early FoR Members showed in their witness for peace, whilst also feeling sad reading recent obituaries of inspiring peacemakers who have gone to glory.

There have been some great successes over the last year and some lessons learnt. What I am constantly finding is more potential and a greater appetite in the wider church for our work and witness. The challenge is utilising the resources we have to make the biggest impact. But more on that another time. *John Cooper*



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***"We are one in Christ  
and can never be at war."***

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We are always looking for news and events for Peacelinks and our website. Please send your articles and images to [peacelinks@for.org.uk](mailto:peacelinks@for.org.uk)

Members and supporters have received this edition either through the post or via email. If you would rather receive it the opposite way to which you have done please write to, call or email the office, and we will change it for the next time.

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# Hundreds Flock to Picturing Peace

FoR hit the road in Autumn 2019 to help churches, radical book fairs and special lectures with 'Picturing Peace'. Estimates now suggest over 200 people encountered FoR member and author Tim Gee as he spoke about the need to create intersectional pacifism.

A real strength of the tour was the varied questions that came at each stop. Everywhere had a different focus and explored different challenges to picture peace. This diversity showed

the strength and clarity of Tim's argument, as it invited further exploration.

It was the first time we've been out on a tour for a while and are grateful for Tim's words and organising, for the many stops that hosted us or Tim and for everyone who turned out. We've discovered a winning approach – so watch out autumn 2020 for our next Peace Tour and maybe it could come near you.

(Interview & photo on page 6)

## Molesworth Peace Garden - new sign

A new commemorative sign was dedicated at the peace garden outside the former nuclear missile base at Molesworth in Cambridgeshire on June 29th.

The unveiling included a picnic was held during which people spoke about their memories of peace activities at the base. Prayers were said at the wooden cross in Peace Lane.

Fundraising to replace the sign began after Roger Sawtell visited the garden and saw the previous sign in need of repair. Representatives from various peace organisations were present together with former peace camper Ian Hartley,



and Bridie Wallis, who had been involved in building the Eirene Peace Chapel.

## Dunbar Remembers Hiroshima

In August it was 74 years since the first atom bombs were dropped on Hiroshima, and Nagasaki. A vigil service held at the Peace Pole in the grounds of St. Anne's Episcopal/Methodist Church, Dunbar, commemorated those who died and witnessed to the continuing need for peace, disarmament and reconciliation.

The vigil on August 9th was led by FoR member Revd David Mumford and supported by members of other churches in Dunbar.

The words of Pope Francis were read, calling on humanity to reject war for ever and to ban nuclear weapons.

Thanks were given for the recent United Nations



Members of Dunbar churches remember Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Treaty countries outlawing nuclear weapons and prayers were said that our nation would sign up to the Treaty.

The vigil ended with prayers for peace between countries.

# Pause for Peacebuilding

When the future of your nation looks troubled and you sense violence could break out what do you do? You plan up a programme of nonviolence training which supports people who take part in mass demonstrations, help bring down a President and pave the way for civilian rule.

Heavily involved in the protests and attempts to de-escalate tensions, the Sudanese Organization for Nonviolence and Development (SONAD) was supported by our International Peacemakers Fund to train people to bring about change. However they had to bide their time. They were already heavily involved in protest and attempts to de-escalate tensions. Then a banking shutdown provided a challenge to us transferring the funds. It seemed at points we might never be able to support them. But then September came and all was calm and stable and the work of building peace could begin.

SONAD's first training brought together Muslims, Christians, and non-believers, and with the focus on education, cooperation, understanding and nonviolence practice, the project will bring together political leaders and young activists, students, youth more broadly, and religious leaders.

This first workshop was dedicated to religious communities and those of no faith. Led by both men and women, the 'basic' training gave the 26 participants essential knowledge of nonviolence, and especially how the tools of nonviolence found in their religion can enhance and embed a culture of peacemaking in wider society.

Participants were able to see clearly how such principles were of fundamental relevance to Sudan's current political changes and pledged to sustain peace to support the transition mapped out in July. Pleased and somewhat relieved by the occurrence of this first workshop, Mamound Abdallah, SONAD's Executive Director, is keen now to follow through with advanced training, in which participants can become themselves trainers in peacemaking for their communities, and further basic level training.

It's worth remembering that this work, essential to these communities triumphing through peace over the all too real tendencies to violence, is funded by people like you. Help us continue to support our friends in peacemaking by donating to our International Peacemakers' Fund. You can do this via our website, phoning the office, by cheque, cash, or bank transfer. Our friends need your help, and each donation will support them.



Workshop leaders in consultation.

SONAD



Christian participants discuss the peacemaking message of their religion.

SONAD

# 2020 Conferences

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## The True Cost of War

A joint conference from  
Church and Peace  
and Fellowship of Reconciliation

**Saturday, 22 February**

10 am - 4.30 pm

Quaker Meeting House  
40 Bull Street, Birmingham B4 6AF

A day featuring workshops, talks and worship helping you explore why people, planet and community are paying the price of our addiction to war and what we can each do to change that. The main speaker will be Maria Biedrawa, who represents FoR France on the Church & Peace Board.

To book your place for £10 today, email your name and contact details, to Barbara Forbes (forbesbarbarae@yahoo.co.uk) before 10 February.

## Prophets and Reconcilers

a joint conference with the Network of  
Christian Peace Organisations

**Saturday, 25 April**

Maria Fidelis School  
Drummond Crescent, London, NW1 1LY  
(near Euston Station)

- Provisional major themes of the conference:
- Militarism and the Path of Jesus
  - Nonviolence in Times of Climate Emergency
  - United Societies in Divided Times.

The exact conference title, timing and programme are to be confirmed.

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## Reconciliation Round-up

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### Stop the Arms Fair Week - No Faith in War Day

On 3 September Methodist Peace Fellowship and FoR members were amongst hundreds of others from different faith groups and organisations at a 'No Faith in War' protest alongside the Excel Centre in London's Docklands, where a biennial international arms fair, was to take place the following week. The protesters gathered along the route taken by the delivery trucks delivering the weaponry and hardware, including key parts for the Trident nuclear weapons system, in readiness for the exhibition. The peaceful protest consisted of periods of singing, meditation, silence, prayer, readings and nonviolent direct action to block the route. Over 400 people attended and 60 people were arrested as the crowds kept the East Gate shut for 7 hours.



### Peace Sunday

Our resource for 22 September was taken up by over 150 congregations in the UK.

### Congratulations, Inderjit!

We were thrilled to hear that Rev Inderjit Bhogal, president of the Methodist Peace Fellowship, has been awarded the 2018 World Methodist Peace Award. His extensive lifetime commitment to living out a witness to peace has been a challenge and inspiration to us all.

Inderjit said "It is humbling to be listed alongside other remarkable recipients of the award. My whole life has been inspired by people around the world who have held up the witness to peace making, challenging war, violence and killing. I am more persuaded than ever that non-violent resolution of conflict is the way forward at all levels and in all human relationships.

It is important to strengthen peace-making, and nonviolence as the way to resolve conflict, and it is important to uphold the witness of peace-making and of nonviolence led by people like Mahatma Gandhi, the Rev Dr Martin Luther King, the recipients of the World Methodist Peace Award, and numerous less well-known people."



# Interview with author Tim Gee

**Tim Gee talked with Trustee Geraldine Bridges.**

**GB:** Hi, Tim, many thanks for coming to Peace House to talk about your new book, 'Why I Am a Pacifist'. I'll begin my questions with one about gender that goes back to Jesus' teachings. Do you think he had an enlightened view of women in the culture of his time?

**Tim:** The Jesus movement was set in a patriarchal country. It was a liberation movement in a macho and violent Roman culture. This unarmed preacher gives us a lot of lessons that have been missed over the centuries. Certain parts of the church and leaders have been carriers of the patriarchal violence toward women. One example is Constantine who killed his wife, and another is Henry VIII who killed two of his wives. So much violence in institutional Christianity has been carried through Imperialism and Empire.

**GB:** You mention in the section about racism and war that many victims of war are people of colour. Statistics show that more women and children are victims of war than any other group.

**Tim:** In my first book tour I said I thought war wouldn't be possible without racism but I was challenged about that because race has only really existed as a construct for a few centuries and we've had war a lot longer than that. What I'm trying to say is that racism and things like racism teach us that some people are more important than others and some people can be killed which is modern racism and the immediate predecessor of that was religious discrimination that justified slavery by saying the enslaved people weren't Christian.

Modern racism would include anti-semitism and islamophobia and you can certainly find these aspects of religious discrimination a few centuries ago that morphed into racism and that's what I'm trying to say. In the book I'm promoting an inter-sectional understanding of pacifism which isn't only looking at gender and pacifism, race and pacifism, disability and pacifism but tries to bring them together to find the ways that they cross with each other.

**GB:** Can you say something about how social media and war games are affecting malleable minds?



**Tim:** Yes, boys especially, but not exclusively are fed a diet of playing with war games, toy guns and watching war films, some of which are supported by the military and US military and they wouldn't be doing that unless they got something out of it. There have been army recruiters saying that children going to air shows when they are 7 years old is part of a recruitment strategy that encourages boys to join up in their late teens. We're coming up to remembrance season and in order to remember we first have to learn, and what we learn about the past shapes what we remember. Having thought a lot about this I'm now trying to think of how I can unlearn some of the things I've learned as a man about violence.

**GB:** You mention that there is only one fee-paying school in the UK that has a peace studies programme. Why are peace studies important in your view?

**Tim:** It's important because it gets people thinking about racism, sexism and the seeds of war in our society and I consider that to be part of peace education. The other part is about giving people the tools to resolve conflicts that don't involve fighting or warring. Envisioning that globally, if there's a group that has a just cause and decides to take up arms it can be very difficult for someone from a richer country to condone that. However, if

*(continued on next page)*

# FoR Members' Day

"I may not be able to fully understand you, but my Christian road towards you is to say to you; 'welcome'"

One couldn't fail to be arrested by Revd Dr Jongikaya Zihle (Jongi's) story. The unwitting victim of an attack by police on leaving school he became a violent proponent of anti-Apartheid South Africa. Yet deep down, he knew he had a peaceful heart. Acting on that, he trained in reconciliation, worked to promote it throughout Southern Africa, before finding the most apposite expression of his heart within God's grace. It was inspiring to us all.



Members, Trustees, and staff met at Hinde Street Methodist Church on 13 July. For many years the Church of Donald Soper, former FoR President, and its apse emblazoned with 'Glory' and 'Peace', this London sanctuary proved a blessing to review 2018's activities. Members heard how FoR has been active supporting individuals, working together in the inspiration of Christ, bringing peace, justice, and hope.



We all gave witness to the death and ascent into eternal life of Members over the past year, in silence and prayer. We were summoned to further witness via an exhibition that encircled the gathering with stories from '12 Faces of Hope', a World Council of Churches exhibition featuring peacemakers from Israel-Palestine.



The meeting also had a business agenda, and we were delighted to see as part of this the election of Trustees to a near maximum 8, along with a further 3 co-opted. Extending the breadth of our skills and experience, this bodes well for a future FoR's ability to maintain the call for a Kingdom of Love to be established in our hearts, our families, our communities, our world.

The names of the Trustees are Denis Beaumont, Diana Beaumont, Richard Bickle, David Mumford, Anne Parker, Carys Underdown, Phil Wood, Simone Ramacci, Geraldine Bridges, Christopher Collins, and Jonathan Price.

*(continued from previous page)*

everybody from the start knows about the tactics for alternative, non-violent ways to resolve the situation then it can contribute to both less war and more justice.

**GB:** Gandhi said that one must not co-operate with evil or evil structures in society ...

**Tim:** I'm a big admirer of Gandhi but it's important to remember that though the end of colonialism was a liberation from it, it was not a liberation for women from the oppression of men on an individual level.

One last thing is that although pacifism is active

it is also about refusing to go to war, refusing to write code that will be used for war and refusing to bless guns; the two must be linked. I noticed when protesting outside the DSEI arms fair that inside were the Labour Party, the Department of Education and the Government of Wales; institutions who ostensibly say they exist to promote peace and understanding but they are participating in the largest profiteering market from killing in the world. There are ways that we can object today but refusal needs to be linked to this intersectional critique.

**GB:** Thank you, Tim

## Some useful websites

<https://for.org.uk> - our main website

[facebook.com/forepeace](https://facebook.com/forepeace) - our Facebook page.

[twitter.com/forpeacemaker](https://twitter.com/forpeacemaker) - FoR on Twitter.

[for.org.uk/peacesunday](https://for.org.uk/peacesunday) - Peace Sunday resources.

[for.org.uk/ipf/](https://for.org.uk/ipf/) - International Peacemakers' Fund.

[flickr.com/photos/forengland/with/13875423525/](https://flickr.com/photos/forengland/with/13875423525/)  
- FoR's photographs web pages.

[ifor.org](https://ifor.org) - International Fellowship of Reconciliation and links to other branches around the world.

[cymdeithasycymod.org.uk](https://cymdeithasycymod.org.uk) - Cymdeithas y Cymod.

[mpf.org.uk](https://mpf.org.uk) - Methodist Peace Fellowship.

[baptist-peace.org.uk](https://baptist-peace.org.uk) - Baptist Peace Fellowship.

[urc.org.uk/our-work/peace-fellowship](https://urc.org.uk/our-work/peace-fellowship) - United Reformed Church Peace Fellowship.

[quaker.org.uk/our-work/peace](https://quaker.org.uk/our-work/peace) - Quaker Peace & Disarmament.

[anglicanpeacemaker.org.uk](https://anglicanpeacemaker.org.uk) - Anglican Pacifist Fellowship.

[ncpo.org.uk](https://ncpo.org.uk) - Network of Christian Peace Organisations.

**Every Tuesday: Witness and protest at NSA Menwith Hill**, by the A59 near Harrogate, 6-8pm, 01765-600928, <https://www.themhac.uk/>

**Every Wednesday: Vigil outside HM nuclear base Faslane, Scotland**, north gate on Maidstone Road, near Helensburgh 4-5pm. [banthebomb.org](https://banthebomb.org)

**Every Wednesday: Women in Black vigil**, 7pm Edith Cavell statue, St.Martin's Place, London WC2, <http://london.womeninblack.org/>

**Second Saturday of month: 140,000 Origami Peace Cranes workshop**, Edinburgh Peace & Justice Centre, <http://peaceandjustice.org.uk/>

**December 1: Prisoners for Peace Day**, [www.wri-irg.org/](http://www.wri-irg.org/)

**December 3: No to Trump, No to NATO demonstration**, London

**January 18: Peace Proms**, Liverpool, details: <https://www.mandsbankarena.com/whats-on/peace-proms-2020/#main>

**February 22: Church & Peace conference**, Birmingham - see page 5

**February 26: Ash Wednesday witness at MoD**. <http://paxchristi.org.uk/>

**March 7: Renewal and Rebellion: faith, economy and climate** conference, Riverside Centre, Derby. Contact: [enquiries@jointpublicissues.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@jointpublicissues.org.uk)

**March 19: Sit down next to me: Does nonviolent protest work?** with John Cooper (FoR) & Maggie Moss (Extinction Rebellion), 6pm at The New Room, 36 The Horsefair, Bristol BS1 3JE, £5. [newroombristol.org.uk/events](https://newroombristol.org.uk/events)

**April 25: NCPO Day Conference**, Maria Fidelis School, London, see page 5

**April 26: Chernobyl Day**

**May 15: International Conscientious Objectors' Day.**

**May 24: International Women's Day for Peace & Disarmament.**

**June 4: International Day for Children as victims of war** - more details at [www.unicef.org/gmfc/](http://www.unicef.org/gmfc/)

**June 19-21: The Great Get Together** [www.greatgettogether.org](http://www.greatgettogether.org)

**July: FoR Members' Day & Annual Council** (to be confirmed)



**I enclose a donation in support of the Fellowship's work (General Funds)**

[ ] (please write) £.....

**I enclose a donation in support of the International Peacemakers' Fund**

[ ] (please write) £.....

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**Make Your Gift Go Further: 25p more to FoR for every £1 at no extra cost to you.**

I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year it is my responsibility to pay any difference. FoR is charity number 207822.

*giftaid it*

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Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

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