What is the Real Cost of War?
Peace Deacon Maria Biedrawa explains: pages 4 - 5

also inside ...

New Partnership with the Student Christian Movement
page 3

Day Conference
Are you called to be a Prophet or Reconciler?
page 8

Hymn Writers
The legacy of Graham Maule and Shirley Erena Murray
page 7
The last few months have been a fascinating time to be part of the Fellowship. The unending political drama, with both a General Election and then Brexit (part 1) occurring has to lead to a significant shift in the politics of the UK. As a movement, the beginnings of Brexit should present us with some big questions. The European Union was often promoted as a major peace project of many European Powers, so how do we (as a nation) imagine peace to be built today if we are no longer tied into the same institutions? Our changing government will always bring with it a new focus on law and order. With non-violent groups like Extinction Rebellion and Campaign Against the Arms Trade being included in ‘extremist groups’ literature by the UK Police do we need to once again get active and defend the right to peaceful non-violent protest? I don’t know the answers to either question but I know as a Fellowship we need to keep active in listening and responding to the world around, to help nudge and reshape it closer to the purpose for which God created it.

Outside of the philosophical and political conversations, it is often the telephone that can bring the greatest surprise and interest. A recent phone call has lead to me having to clear my diary. I was invited to join a delegation, on behalf of the World Council of Churches, to visit the Kiribati Islands. You may not have heard of them, but in Colonial Times, under their colonial name of Christmas islands, they endured multiple nuclear bomb tests for both the UK and USA Governments. As I travel and meet survivors I know I’ll be challenged not just by the history of our nation but also what truth-telling means. We can be so often caught up in everyday activity that we can forget our testament to Peace is a lifelong one. Through the eyes of a nation that can mean recognising in our history where our Imperial past has lead to the exploitation of others, in this case, to create further hideous weapons of war.

Finally, I have always worked by the principle that it's important to take time and open the mail that comes into the Fellowship. This is not just to share the administrative workload, but also to give me a sense of the thoughts of the Fellowship. Over the last few months we have been cheered by some very generous cheques coming in. We face some serious (as many charities do) questions about how to make the most with the resources we have, however, we couldn’t achieve anything without those generous cheques. So thank you to all those who donate, with your prayers and your gifts we are given power and support to continue to speak for peace. John Cooper
SCM and FoR Enter Partnership

The Student Christian Movement (SCM) and FoR have signed a two year partnership seeking to engage a new generation of students in opposing war and creating peace.

Over the two years of the partnership it is envisaged that students will shape FoR’s conferences, be offered workshops on peace and climate change for delivery in university, that SCM will dedicate an issue of their magazine ‘Movement’ to peace. The action orientated nature of the partnership will be found in it’s conclusion, out on the streets the next time we set out to disrupt the setting up of DSEI.

The partnership was welcomed by Rev Naomi Dixon, newly appointed CEO of SCM (pictured) who said: “The Fellowship of Reconciliation are natural partners for SCM, especially this year as our campaign focus is all about working for Peace. We are excited to work together, learn together and see what we can achieve.”

This is not the first time SCM and FoR have worked together. The very first meeting of the FoR was heavily influenced by founder Henry Hodgkin’s time creating faith statements and reinvigorating a movement for mission through the SCM. Since then the two organisations have collaborated on campaigns, training and events.

URCPF invites its members to join FoR

The United Reformed Church Peace Fellowship has long been a friend of the Fellowship of Reconciliation. We have often co-organised conferences and they have been sending an observer to the FoR board for many years.

A year ago the URC Peace Fellowship took a long hard look at where it’s future lay. After prayer, consultation and consideration they decided to invite existing members to become part of the Fellowship of Reconciliation where a future URC network of peacemakers would be encouraged to emerge.

Andrew Jack, convener of the URC Peace Fellowship commented “The future for the URC Peace Fellowship within FoR raises exciting opportunities for a more effective witness for peace in the present challenging political climate. I pray that these new arrangements will be a step forward in bringing God’s peace on earth.”

URCPF member Rev Barry Parker leads communion at the 2019 Pathways to Peace conference.

Generous members match Big Give total

Christmas time is a key moment in any charity calendar. It’s when the majority of the public dig and discover their philanthropic hearts. For the last few years members of the Fellowship, and beyond, have been invited to donate online and support a ‘big give’ for our International Peacemakers Fund.

2019 saw an increased focus on raising funds and generous supporters and new donors ensured we raised over £2000 to support practical peacemaking in areas of conflict around the globe.

Angela Stacey, a FoR Member who pledges funds to help encourage donating said she was pleased to support the appeal because “When I heard about the International Peacemakers’ Fund I was very keen to support it and have done so for the past two years. Committed to enabling local peacemakers bring local solutions to communities affected by conflict, I saw it as a natural extension of my Quaker practice”.

Angela Stacey, a FoR Member who pledges funds to help encourage donating said she was pleased to support the appeal because “When I heard about the International Peacemakers’ Fund I was very keen to support it and have done so for the past two years. Committed to enabling local peacemakers bring local solutions to communities affected by conflict, I saw it as a natural extension of my Quaker practice”.

Angela Stacey, a FoR Member who pledges funds to help encourage donating said she was pleased to support the appeal because “When I heard about the International Peacemakers’ Fund I was very keen to support it and have done so for the past two years. Committed to enabling local peacemakers bring local solutions to communities affected by conflict, I saw it as a natural extension of my Quaker practice”.

Angela Stacey, a FoR Member who pledges funds to help encourage donating said she was pleased to support the appeal because “When I heard about the International Peacemakers’ Fund I was very keen to support it and have done so for the past two years. Committed to enabling local peacemakers bring local solutions to communities affected by conflict, I saw it as a natural extension of my Quaker practice”.

Angela Stacey, a FoR Member who pledges funds to help encourage donating said she was pleased to support the appeal because “When I heard about the International Peacemakers’ Fund I was very keen to support it and have done so for the past two years. Committed to enabling local peacemakers bring local solutions to communities affected by conflict, I saw it as a natural extension of my Quaker practice”.

Angela Stacey, a FoR Member who pledges funds to help encourage donating said she was pleased to support the appeal because “When I heard about the International Peacemakers’ Fund I was very keen to support it and have done so for the past two years. Committed to enabling local peacemakers bring local solutions to communities affected by conflict, I saw it as a natural extension of my Quaker practice”.

Angela Stacey, a FoR Member who pledges funds to help encourage donating said she was pleased to support the appeal because “When I heard about the International Peacemakers’ Fund I was very keen to support it and have done so for the past two years. Committed to enabling local peacemakers bring local solutions to communities affected by conflict, I saw it as a natural extension of my Quaker practice.”
The Real Cost of War

“The layers of conflict are like layers of lasagne, which start to penetrate each other as soon as you put them into the oven.”

This striking description is only one of the memorable moments of Maria Biedrawa’s keynote talk at the February day conference “The Real Cost of War”. This was both a Church and Peace regional gathering and Fellowship of Reconciliation regional members day. This partnership working was also represented in Maria who bridges both these organisations, as a member of both FoR [Movement International de la Réconciliation] and the board of Church & Peace. She has worked in Congo (DRC), Togo, South Sudan and the Central African Republic.

Maria started the day by telling us about her experiences in the Central African Republic. Her detailed account of the situation there was a master-class in political analysis. The French post-colonial power described the violence which erupted in 2013 as “inter-religious “genocide” – in the French tradition of seeing religion as something dangerous - and sent in more military troops “to protect civilians”. Another layer was the response of leading religious figures (Catholic, Protestant and Muslim) walking into the fighting unarmed (based on their conviction that only nonviolence would bring peace) – after which the fighting stopped, locally. No longer able to describe it as a religious conflict, the French media had to admit that it was political. The president had completely ignored the country and had enriched himself, making an agreement with the French regarding their military base. People from different religious communities (Christians, Muslims, traditional religions) marched in large numbers to talk to the president, who responded with military oppression. Supported by the French government, the African Union sent in UN troops – again “for civilian protection” – but fighting continued. There were thousands of refugees, reports of child prostitution in the refugee camps, recruitment of child soldiers. The CAR is rich in oil and minerals; the journalist responsible for revealing that the French army were digging for diamonds was found dead the day after her report was published. Geographically, the region is needed by Saudi Arabia to export oil on a route which will avoid Libya. The United Nations comes, and brings with it NGOs and money, so that life becomes very expensive; food becomes scarce and unaffordable as people become unable to work on their fields. Cattle-keepers, whose traditional routes are now blocked or destroyed by climate change, arm themselves and go in search of new areas where other people already live and farm. In an example from South Sudan, Maria told us about a woman from a village whose markets had collapsed, and who was delighted to find presents for her children in a town with a market – two cabbages and a kilo of potatoes. This, said Maria, is “the real cost of war”.

The conflict in the Central African Republic, as elsewhere, is a conflict with religious, economic and political layers. Human rights and freedom of speech are vanishing, the education system has broken down. The “ordinary people” are both victims and perpetrators. The effects of war become the causes of new conflict and, as always, it is the “ordinary people” who bear the biggest burden.

So why should this concern us? We feel helpless, but we are part of the tradition of religions who can broker peace because they know the local situation intimately and they are trusted. Maria is part of the network of peace trainers who spend days and weeks working with local groups to bring about reconciliation – a long and arduous task, not lightly done, demanding skill, stamina and dedication.

(continued on next page)
The Real Cost of War

Alongside the keynote, 3 different workshops ran. The first was an invitation to a more personal conversation with Maria, where people had the chance to ask tricky or challenging questions and hear more about Maria’s inspiring work.

The second workshop, run by Bridget Walker, from the Quaker Asylum and Refugee Network, examined the way borders around the world are being militarised to stop refugees from seeking safety; Europe’s borders are being “protected” by arms-trading corporations with EU contracts. She challenged us to resist the discourse of fear and containment and to protect people not borders - reminding us of the injunction in Numbers 15: v. 15, 16.

The final workshop was run by Stuart Parkinson of Scientists for Global Responsibility. He shocked us with the statistics of the carbon footprint of the military – the UK produces an estimated 13 million tonnes of CO2e annually and the USA 340 million tonnes, while the “War on Terror” produced an estimated 3 billion tonnes. This is without taking into account the CO2 emissions of digital technology and cyber-warfare. Stuart also reminded us that campaigning to reduce the military’s carbon footprint could accelerate the move towards remote warfare.

So what did we take from this day filled with images, stories, facts and figures?

Participants variously commented that there is a spiritual benefit to being part of a minority, and that looking into dark corners of the system can bring light. We must make a commitment not to collude by being silent. Great energy can be produced by being “intentionally religious” - we are activists because we are people of faith. And above all, through our networks and webs of friends and contacts, we are part of something much, much bigger.

Barbara Forbes

Barbara is a Board Member of Church & Peace.

The conference was held on Saturday 22nd February in Bull Street Quaker Meeting House, Birmingham. It was organised by Church and Peace and the Fellowship of Reconciliation and attended by 38 people.
Peacecast launches into Nation’s Ear

Friends, Members, Peace Lovers, lend us your ear! Supporters of last year’s Annual Appeal laid the groundwork for FoR to launch into the nations ears via a Podcast. These portable radio-style programs have increased in popularity and FoR wants to break the mould and become the first one supported by a Christian Peacemaking movement.

We’ve planned to sit down with some fascinating guests. This includes so far Prof Anthony Reddie, Director of the Oxford Centre for Religion and Culture, for a conversation about Brexit and Race. Legendary folk singer Peggy Seeger, for a conversation about peace, music and change, and war photographer Alison Baskerville to discover why photographing war changed her understanding on oppression and the military.

This podcast will evolve over time so tune in and let us know who you’d like to hear us speak with next.

www.for.org.uk/thepeacecast

Do You Remember Larzac?

Were you around in the 1970s/80s? Can you remember our campaign in the UK run by FoR staff member Roger Rawlinson to support non-violent opposition to the French Government’s plan to expand its military base at Larzac?

The FoR office recently had a fascinating enquiry from Dr Andrew W. M. Smith, Senior Lecturer in Contemporary History and Politics at the University of Chichester. He is currently researching the non-violent campaign to stop the expansion of the base and the global solidarity movement that sprung up in support of the French peasants seeking to defend their farmlands.

He is looking for individuals who took part in the campaign, either in its entirety of have memories or photographs from being part of one of the many solidarity actions. This included in 1978 in London at the vigil (pictured) at the French Embassy in South Kensington or the Solidarity March from Tavistock Square to Westminster Cathedral.

If you have any memories, stories or photographs we’d encourage you to contact Dr Andrew Smith via email a.smith@chi.ac.uk. If that isn’t possible then send any memories or material you have to the FoR Office, at our usual address, and we’ll pass them on.

DIARY

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
Every Wednesday: Women in Black vigil, 7pm Edith Cavell statue, St.Martin’s Place, London WC2, http://london.womeninblack.org/
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
April 10 - May 9: Global Days of Action on Military Spending [GDAMS], http://demilitarize.org/
April 25: Prophets and Reconcilers, NCPO Day Conference, 10am - 4pm Maria Fidelis School, London, see back page
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/
June 19-21: The Great Get Together www.greatgettogether.org
June 20: FoR Members’ Day & Annual Council see back page
August 6: Hiroshima Day
August 9: Nagasaki Day
Graham Maule, a member of the Iona Community, has written hymns and songs with John Bell. Their writing rooted in Glasgow, had a wider significance. As well as their own compositions they collected and interpreted material from other cultures.

Shirley Erena Murray from Aotearoa (New Zealand) wrote hymns, often with Colin Gibson. Though English speaking, she had a concern for the faith and writing of indigenous people. This led her to use Maori idioms and words to highlight their culture in her writing.

Both Maule and Murray have had a worldwide influence on Christian hymn singing. Their significance cannot be underestimated. How far hymns will be useful in the future we cannot tell, but corporate song binds people together, enables us to express thoughts, emotions and convictions that are more difficult to communicate in prose. We remember songs and they can motivate and reinforce communal action. Murray and Maule have both written in a way that underlines peace and justice.

Murray wrote: ‘For everyone born, a place at the table’ with the chorus, ‘And God will delight when we are creators of justice and joy…’

Promoting justice, as Eleanor Roosevelt stated, cannot be for one side alone. It must be for both, and that is not always popular. One verse of this hymn has resulted in it being rejected from the most recent Methodist hymn book Singing the Faith (though it is included in other books):

For just and unjust a place at the table,
abuser, abused, with need to forgive,
in anger, in hurt, a mind-set of mercy,
for just and unjust, a new way to live. 1

Justice is not easy. It can cut to the quick. Its pursuit can lead to controversy.

Graham Maule was equally willing to tread this path. Together with John Bell, in ‘Inspired by love and anger’, he asks:

‘How long must some folk suffer?
How long can few folk mind?
How long dare vain self interest
turn prayer and pity blind?’

The text is intentionally political and subversive. The fourth verse asks, ‘When will the world be generous to all instead of some?’ The fifth verse imagines the voice of God:

[…] ‘Who will go for me?[…]
And who, when few dare follow,
will walk the road I show?’ 2

This is a challenge to sing, but still greater to live!

Graham Maule and Shirley Erena Murray have written words to inspire and challenge. Will we ‘walk the road’ that Christ has shown, to which they have pointed in writing and in life? Are we willing to sit at table with all people? Our answer matters and is, perhaps, even a test of the veracity of our Christianity.

Andrew Pratt

Prophets and Reconcilers
Who are we called to be to transform our world?

a joint conference with
the Network of Christian Peace Organisations

Saturday, 25 April
10 am - 4 pm

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

Speakers and Panel:
Fr. Martin Newell,
Maz Saleem, Diana Francis, Andrew Bradstock

Major themes of the conference:
• Structural and Cultural Violence
• Militarism and the Path of Jesus
• Nonviolence in Times of Climate Emergency
• United Societies in Divided Times.

Booking: Tickets £15, £8 concessions
https://prophetsandreconcilers.eventbrite.co.uk/
or email: contactncpo@gmail.com
Vegan lunch

Fellowship of Reconciliation
Annual Council
including
AGM & Members’ Day
Saturday, 20 June*

Peace House
19 Paradise Street Oxford OX1 1LD

Hear FoR's story from 2019, and help shape the future at our Annual Council. The full day will include elections for trustees, a keynote speaker and your chance to further influence the future direction of the Fellowship.

Come and share in Fellowship. Start 11am (arrivals from 10.30). Finish at 3.30pm
* please save the date
Booking: office@for.org.uk / 01865 250 781

I would like:

[ ] to update my contact details
[ ] to receive our short regular email newsletter
[ ] to receive information about becoming a member of the Fellowship of Reconciliation
[ ] information about the International Peacemakers' Fund
[ ] to receive a direct debit form so I can give regularly to support the Fellowship

Name: ________________________________
Address: ___________________________________________
_________________________________________
_________________________________________
Postcode __________________
Email ________________________________
Telephone ________________________________
Signature ___________________________ Date ______

Please return this form to
Fellowship of Reconciliation:
FREEPOST PEACEMAKER FPN 3264
19 Paradise Street, Oxford, OX1 1LD

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

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) £……………………
Total value of cheque enclosed: £……………………

I enclose a donation in support of the International Peacemakers’ Fund
[ ] (please write) £........................

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.

Vegan lunch

www.for.org.uk/donate 01865 250 781 Registered Charity 207822 PLK0320