

NJPN North West Justice & Peace E-Bulletin – August 2015

The monthly e-bulletin for the North West, linked to the National Justice and Peace Network (NJPN), is produced jointly by the dioceses of Lancaster, Liverpool, Salford, Shrewsbury and Wrexham. Please send diary dates to anneoc980@hotmail.com
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NJPN NATIONAL CONFERENCE – ‘THE THINGS THAT MAKE FOR PEACE’

Joe Burns of Leeds J&P Commission reports:

This year's conference was co-organised with Pax Christi UK on the theme 'The things that make for Peace'. It was attended by 300 J&P activists from around the country. As the conference logo illustrates, peace will only come about through active engagement in working for social justice. There were two keynote addresses, and a panel session with three women telling their stories about working on the things that make for peace. On Saturday Mass was celebrated with Bishop John Rawsthorne. There was a huge range of workshops for participants to get into more detail about particular aspects of peace-making.

Key note address: Professor Paul Rogers, Peace Studies Department, University of Bradford

Paul has worked in the field of international security, arms control and political violence for over 30 years. He lectures at universities and defence colleges in several countries and has written or edited 26 books, including *Global Security and the War on Terror: Elite Power and the Illusion of Control* (Routledge, 2008) and *Why We're Losing the War on Terror* (Polity, 2008). Since October 2001 he has written ORG monthly Briefing Papers on international security and the "war on terror". He is also a regular commentator on global security issues in both the national and international media, and is Open Democracy's International Security Editor. [Check out weekly articles by Paul here: <https://www.opendemocracy.net/author/paul-rogers> - Ed.]

Sometimes 'Justice and Peace people' can seem a bit downbeat (the planet is doomed, look at all the wars and conflict in the world etc.). The 'Good News' of the Gospel can sometimes get lost. So Paul Rogers coming in with a strong dose of hope and optimism made everyone sit up and take note. His talk was very wide-ranging and is difficult to sum up in some respects, but here goes anyway!

There are many negative aspects to the way in which people view the world. 'Militarisation' is deeply embedded in many countries. Militarisation is partly about the way in which the military, and what they do, is viewed within a society. But there is also a narrative that military answers are the ones that work. In the economic sphere there has been a neo-liberal consensus in existence since the break-up of the Soviet Union: Capitalism has 'won' and is the only economic game in town.

However, 40 years ago there were between 60,000 and 70,000 nuclear weapons in the world. Today, that number is between 6,000 and 7,000. Paul argued that one prominent Tory from the 1980's was right when he maintained that 'CND have won'. What he meant was that nuclear weapons are seen as a 'bad thing'. If this is the case then the only arguments can be about how we can get rid of them safely. That is not the case with economics – as recent events in Greece have shown the neo-liberal view is very strong in the attitudes of countries like Germany. As one of its cornerstones, neo-liberalism espouses the view that Government action should be limited to the bare minimum necessary to maintain a functioning state. So, neo-liberals have a real problem with Climate Change. To combat Climate Change action needs to be taken not only at national level but at a global level (maybe that's why so many of the climate deniers are neo-liberals?).

Is it 'pie in the sky' to hope that such global action can be taken? No! In the 1980's it became irrefutably clear that the hole discovered in the ozone layer was caused by the use of CFC's in fridges and suchlike. From this becoming clear, to getting to the Montreal agreement in 1987 - which banned their use - took four years. This might seem like a long time to you and me but was an incredible achievement at the time. In the face of a crisis the Governments of the world not only took note but took action. It might have taken 30 years, but the ozone layer is now repairing itself.

There are signs of hope in the world and there is the possibility of change. However, a lot of it just does not get widely reported. Across the world there are 950 million people involved in co-operatives. The use of off-grid photovoltaic panels and their rapid spread across sub-Saharan Africa is rapidly changing both the lives of many people and the ways in which increased energy needs are being delivered in many developing countries. Alternative voices and models to the dominant neo-liberal narrative do exist. Perhaps what is at the root of prophecy today is seeing what is possible and putting that across. Climate Change is a pressing problem affecting the whole world – it is happening now. There are resolutions to the problems but it needs a lot of action in a relatively short timeframe (15-20 years).

A key role for people engaged in Justice and Peace work is to ensure that those alternative views get a proper airing and that the more fundamental questions are asked. Perhaps this is what is meant by 'prophecy' in today's world. Paul used the phrase 'Lidism' – keeping the lid on things – to describe the current military approach that many politicians seem to favour in relation to many of the world's problems. The problems in the Mediterranean with so many people attempting to get to Europe are not going to go away because we put more patrols out to stop them. We (all of us) need to be asking what is driving those people to such desperate actions and asking our Governments to address the root causes of such problems. That will do far more for the security of our borders in the longer term. Pope Francis is certainly asking those fundamental questions – as is demonstrated in abundance in *Laudato Si'*. It will be interesting to see how it plays out in the next few years.

Key note address: Fr.Edu Gariguez – Environmental Campaigner from the Philippines

Fr.Edu is Executive Secretary of the National Secretariat for Social Action (NASSA, a development office under the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP). NASSA acts as a secretariat to the social action centres of the different dioceses all over the country. In 2012 he was a recipient of the Goldman Environmental Prize for his work in protecting the rights of indigenous peoples against the interests of mining companies.

Fr.Edu was a guest of CAFOD and had spent the previous week on a whirlwind tour – including an evening speaking at Wheeler Hall in Leeds on July 15. At the conference he had more time to expand on his work and to answer people's questions. He described some of the horrendous effects of Typhoon Haiyan, which devastated areas of the Philippines in November 2013. It killed over 6,000 people and left 4,000,000 people displaced. Fr.Edu thanked everyone for the support that they had received from CAFOD and other agencies to re-build lives and livelihoods after this terrible event. The fear is that such extraordinary events are becoming more common as Climate Change impacts.

Fr.Edu describes himself as an 'accidental environmentalist'. After ordination he asked to be transferred to a poorer diocese and was sent to the island of Mindoro. Here he worked with indigenous people to try and establish land rights for them. However, through working with them he came into conflict with multinational corporations who were seeking licenses to develop large mining operations on the island – particularly the Norwegian Intex Corporation who had plans to develop a large scale open pit nickel mine.

By 2005 the Government was branding him a 'terrorist' because of his advocacy of the rights of indigenous people and his opposition to the mining companies. He was in real danger of being killed by death squads because of what he was doing. On the advice of his bishop he took the opportunity leave the island, go to Manila and undertake a PhD!

The work continued in his absence. In 2006 the Philippine Bishops' Conference came out with a strong statement supporting the fight of indigenous peoples against the mining companies. They said 'the right to life is inseparable from the right to access food and livelihoods'. Intex had proposed to use an acid leaching process to extract the nickel ore and this would have devastated large areas of tropical forest, contaminated water resources as well as producing large quantities of toxic waste material. In so doing it really would have denied indigenous peoples of access to food and livelihoods

But his campaigning continued after his return. In November 2009, Fr.Edu, together with 25 activists launched a hunger strike before the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to protest the flawed and questionable Environmental Compliance Certificate (ECC) given to the Norwegian mining company Intex Resources in relation to their proposal for a large nickel mining operation. After 11 days this effort to pressure the national government was successful and further investigation of the anomalous ECC was ordered to be conducted on the ground.

"If we are pro-life, we must be pro-environment", said Fr.Edu. He called for "concerted, collaborative action, working together in building the common home." Fr Edu shared a great idea for both building awareness and taking action on climate change. On the island of Mindano the local government has enacted a law that no couples can get married, or no burial can take place, until the couple or the family have planted a tree.

There is a really good video summarising why he won the Goldman environmental prize. Go to Youtube: <https://youtu.be/ibXQjiau3II>

Women working for Peace:

'Peacemakers' in this country are often associated with people who go on demonstrations or break into air bases. 'The Things that Make for Peace' are much more wide-ranging – and this is what was explored in this session.

Lorraine Dinnegan's 14 year old son was stabbed to death by a gang of young people in 2007. In a very moving testimony she revealed how she would feel if she did not forgive: "I'd just be left with misery and depression. I needed to just remember the nice and good things about Martin. Lorraine told how her parish church of St.Melitus in Finsbury Park and the local police had helped her through 'this terrible time'.

One of Martin's friends had tried to get help from a shop but was told to just go away. A more positive development since then is Lorraine's involvement, along with her parish, in setting up a 'safe havens' scheme. Local shops willing to help people in trouble display a sticker to say that they offer 'safe haven' for victims of street crime. With the parish and the police, they have set up havens in 45 local shops. Since then Lorraine has undertaken workshops about the scheme with the police so that they understand the importance of safe havens as a response to potentially violent situations. In 2013, Lorraine won the London Citizens 'Leader of the Year' award.

Fiona Mwashita is a Progressio regional manager in Zimbabwe. She told of her work empowering women by making sure that they know their rights and get the support they need to stand up for those rights. Alongside this is work to ensure that the women have stable livelihoods so that they have money for education and other needs. This financial aspect is key to enabling women to make and take ownership of their own demands.

Sr.Maire Hayes, a sister of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit, told the conference about how faith groups are working together in Luton to build and maintain social harmony in the community. Luton's population is currently 55% Afro-Asian. In the 1950's many Irish moved into the town because of booming industry. Now there is a lot of unemployment, tension and some violence. However, sustained work by the LCOF (Luton Council of Faiths) is having an impact.

One simple story was of a rabbi who was harassed by some Asian youths one Saturday whilst walking to the synagogue. He came to the LCOF with this situation. So, for the next 18 months, other faith communities took it in turns to provide two people to accompany him on his walk every week.

Pat Gaffney was not part of the panel, although she did chair this session - and most of the conference sessions. However, she does deserve a special mention for her own contribution to the 'things that make for peace'. For the last 25 years Pat has been General Secretary of Pax Christi UK. During that time she has worked tirelessly to promote peace work within the Catholic community in the UK. This has involved Pat in lobbying and campaigning within the church and political networks on peace and security-related issues; support and facilitation for church-related groups on Christian peacemaking as well as co-ordinating the day to day running of Pax Christi in the UK. In 2005 Pat was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize and in 2012 she appeared in the Independent on Sunday's 'Happy List' (in contrast to the Sunday Times' Rich List) of people who make useful contributions to society. If you have never seen Pat then, if you get the chance, do not pass it up. Her lifelong experiences of peace-making and working with peacemakers across the globe gives an authenticity to everything she says. On top of that she has a very analytical mind that cuts through so much of the rubbish that gets talked about peace.

For more information contact: Ann Kelly, National Justice & Peace Network, admin@justice-and-peace.org.uk, Tel 020 7901 4864

CSAN RESPONDS TO FURTHER WELFARE REFORM

Speaking on 8 July after the Chancellor of the Exchequer, George Osborne's July Budget, Helen O'Brien, Chief Executive of Caritas Social Action Network (CSAN) made the following comments:

On the Benefit Cap: "The further capping of benefits will have severe consequences. The impact of the benefit cap has been felt harder by households in London than elsewhere due to the crippling high cost of housing. The further lowering of the cap is only going to push families deeper into poverty or force them to move away from their families and their communities. Families outside the capital are set to lose almost a quarter of their welfare support; it is inconceivable to think this will not lead to a further increase of people visiting foodbanks and relying on charities just to get by."

On tax credits: "The number of working households in poverty has been rising over recent years, and for these people working tax credits have proved a vital lifeline. Therefore, whilst the announcement to increase the minimum wage is welcome, these changes to tax credits will mean people on low-incomes are still set to suffer. For many low-income working families, tax credits have been an important part in helping to shoulder the burden of the everyday costs of raising a family. Limiting child tax credits to two children means that larger families are going to feel a triple whammy from reduced tax credits, the freezing of working-age benefits for a further four years and the lowering of the benefit cap."

On Employment Support Allowance (ESA): "It is very disappointing that the support given to disabled people on Employment Support Allowance to find employment is to be scrapped. This move fails to recognise that many disabled people are on an active journey towards the workplace. Specific financial assistance and tailored support is extremely important in helping them into work, to provide for themselves and to build a sense of dignity and independence. In a labour market which has not proved the most accommodating, targeting this group will sadly only leave them further isolated and at risk of poverty."

On action from CSAN: "Next week, CSAN will launch our latest report on the impact of existing welfare reform on our member charities, their clients and staff. These new reforms further exacerbate the fears of CSAN and our member charities that the most vulnerable and poorest people are being put at greater risk."

<http://www.indcatholicnews.com/news.php?viewStory=27876> or go to: www.csan.org.uk

CLOSE THE GAP PRAYER COMMUNITY

Sign up to pray with others for Church Action on Poverty's campaign to **Close the Gap** between rich and poor. You'll be joining in prayerful support with many others across the UK, supporting our campaigns and building solidarity with people in poverty.

- We'll email you once every couple of months with prayer ideas and requests.
- If you're on Facebook, you can join our Close the Gap prayer community and pray alongside other people.
- If you have prayer requests of your own, email them to closethegapprayer@groups.facebook.com and we'll share them with all the other people in the community.

<http://action.church-poverty.org.uk/ea-action/action?ea.client.id=128&ea.campaign.id=9139&ea.url.id=429056&forwarded=true>

AN OPEN LETTER FROM CATHOLICS TO IAIN DUNCAN SMITH

By *Virginia Moffatt*, 2 July 2015 on behalf of Ekklesia and The Centre for Welfare Reform:

Dear Mr Duncan Smith, We are fellow Catholics and people who were brought up in the Catholic faith. We are writing to express our concern at the impact on our communities of your welfare reform policies. We understand that your Catholic faith is important to you, and your approach is driven by a desire to improve the quality of individual lives. However, we believe that they are in fact doing the reverse. We would urge you to rethink and to abandon further cuts which are likely to cause more damage. Of particular concern are benefit sanctions. We were shocked to learn that your Department recognises sanctions can lead to a deterioration in the health of a claimant. Yet sanctions continued to be imposed. This, as a punishment for what may be a clerical or timekeeping error, seems excessive. We would not expect prisoners in our jails to be punished in this way, and would be grateful if you would consider whether it is an appropriate way to treat people who are unemployed, sick, or disabled.

We are also very concerned at the way the Work Capability Assessment is currently managed and the change from Disability Living Allowance to Personal Independence Payments. Both these systems are causing great harm to sick and disabled people as are the enormous delays in administering disability and sickness benefits. To become seriously ill or disabled is bad enough. To then have to wait months for help whilst unpaid bills mount up, perhaps fearing eviction or needing to use a foodbank, is distressing and damaging. The recent suggestion to reduce Employment Support Allowance – currently funded at a level that recognises the additional costs of illness or disability – to the rate of Jobseeker's Allowance will cause further hardship

We appreciate that you believe the benefits cap encourages people to take control of their lives and find work. However the evidence suggests that it is in fact driving families into poverty and homelessness. The main reason families exceed the benefit cap is that they require high levels of Housing Benefit in order to pay excessive rents. As a result, thousands of people have been forced to leave their homes, which is disruptive to families and damaging to local communities.

We know you place great faith in Universal Credit to restore fairness to the system, but would ask you to reconsider many aspects of it, including the halving of the disabled child's allowance. Disabled people, and families with disabled children, are already more likely to be living in poverty – it does not seem fair that they should lose more.

We are aware of your wish to promote personal responsibility and self-reliance, and we too believe these qualities are to be encouraged. However, we feel that for large numbers of people, policies aimed at promoting these qualities are having the opposite effect, pushing them further into poverty, and worse.

We would ask you to consider these words from *Quadragesimo Anno*, the Papal Encyclical written in 1931, as the world dealt with the Great Recession: *To each, therefore, must be given his own share of goods; and the distribution of created goods, which, as every discerning person knows, is labouring today under the gravest evils due to the huge disparity between the few exceedingly rich and the unnumbered property-less, must be effectively called back to and brought into conformity with the norms of the common good, that is, social justice.* (para 57/58) The Encyclical went on to stress that this entitlement to a share of the wealth of the community was not dependent on work. In other words, when people are unable to work through ill health or disability, or unable to find a job, it is our duty to make sure that they receive the basic requirements of a dignified life; adequate food, shelter, warmth and security.

We believe that a supportive welfare state is an expression of Christian justice and compassion. When this support is removed, we may think we are saving money, but the consequential problems, like poorer mental and physical health, and educational underachievement, all bear a human and financial cost, and will have to be paid for in some way.

We accept that your reforms have been undertaken in accordance with your conscience, but we would ask you to accept in return that our concerns are genuine, and our experiences of increasing social distress are real. Our consciences, informed by our faith and experience in our communities, leave us with no alternative but to speak out when we see some of the most disadvantaged people in society being harmed.

We would like to enter into a dialogue with you, to explore how as citizens we can best support and enable our less fortunate neighbours, whilst treating them with dignity and respect. We have constructive proposals on how to make our welfare system work better, and in a way that is more compatible with Catholic and Christian values. We would not wish to find ourselves reliant on charity to survive, and are saddened that so many of our neighbours have become so in recent years. As Saint Augustine said, 'Charity is no substitute for justice withheld.'

We would like to thank you for taking the time to read this letter. We remain your sisters and brothers in Christ,

Signed by leading UK J&P activists including (among many others) the following NW representatives: Steve Atherton, Justice and Peace Fieldworker, Archdiocese of Liverpool; Phil Barrett, Liverpool Archdiocese Justice and Peace Commission; Bernadette Meaden, writer and Ekklesia associate; Tony McNicholl, Co-ordinator, Wrexham Diocese Faith, Justice & Peace Network; Anne O'Connor, Editor, North West National Justice and Peace Network E Bulletin; Fr Hugh Pollock, Chair, Lancaster Diocese Justice and Peace Commission; Jean Raymond (Salford); and Marian Thompson, Editor of *MouthPeace*, Justice and Peace Newsletter, Liverpool and Shrewsbury Dioceses. **Full list of signatories at:** <http://www.ekkleisia.co.uk/node/21853>

• Iain Duncan Smith replied to this letter on 14 July. The Centre for Welfare Reform responded on 24 July countering some of the statements made and offering their services and experience to be 'a source of nationwide grassroots feedback', to help 'identify problems' to 'alleviate the considerable suffering and hardships we are seeing on our communities.' Watch this space!

www.centreforwelfarereform.org www.ekkleisia.co.uk

MPS LAUNCH INQUIRY INTO THE HOLES IN OUR BENEFITS SAFETY NET

Church Action on Poverty report:

Great news! We learned today (22 July) that MPs are to explore many of the concerns we've been raising about the holes that have been created in our benefits safety net. The Work and Pensions Committee - a cross-party group of MPs - is launching a new inquiry into "the timeliness and accuracy of benefit delivery". They'll be addressing many of the holes in the safety net which we talked about in our report *Restoring Faith in the Safety Net* - including:

- People needing food aid because of benefit delays
- Benefit delays and mistakes made by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)
- The impact of errors and delays and how people are protected from negative effects
- Ways of monitoring and improving the DWP's performance

Frank Field MP, Chair of the Committee, said: "My own Hunger inquiry found that the Department could straight away cut by a third the numbers of people having to rely on food banks, if it could ensure all legitimate benefit claims were paid promptly and correctly. It has made some progress in speeding up the delivery of new claims, but the five or six week wait for a first payment under Universal Credit could turn out to be a nightmare for some claimants. Even under the existing system there are too many mind-blowing instances in which people on their uppers are left with little or even no money for weeks on end. We will seek, therefore, to come up with a package of reforms which helps the Department build on its early progress towards a more effective system."

New Committee Member Mhairi Black MP said: "Local welfare rights officers have highlighted to me the issues they face with the speed of cases being process by the department. They are particularly concerned when no priority is given to clients who they have identified as vulnerable, especially when all of the information required by the DWP has been supplied. Vulnerable people are often left in a position where they have no money to heat their homes or feed themselves for several days or weeks."

Church Action on Poverty will submit evidence to the inquiry, and keep on working to reinstate the safety net principle in our benefits system. We're grateful to the hundreds of supporters who emailed their MPs to call for action on this issue.

Source: Church Action on Poverty, 2015 www.church-poverty.org.uk

BUDGET: UK GOVERNMENT PROMISES FUNDING FOR MORE CADETS IN SCHOOLS

The number of cadet units in state schools is to increase five-fold by 2020, George Osborne announced in the July Budget. The Chancellor said the government will pledge £50 million to create cadet forces in 500 state schools and said these would be prioritised in "less affluent areas."

Currently there are about 275 cadet units in the UK. Of these, only a third are in state schools. According to the Ministry of Defence (MoD), as of April 1 last year there were approximately 131,000 cadets in the UK. The number is almost evenly divided between the Combined Cadet Force (42,950), a scheme run through schools, and the Army Cadet Force (41,000). The Department for Education has confirmed that a request for the extra funding was made by the MoD. There are roughly 170 'community' Army, Sea and Air Cadet units based in schools, something that the MoD is encouraging; (source: draft of MoD Youth Engagement Review 2011, obtained by ForcesWatch, Freedom of Information request July 2012).

<http://forceswatch.net/news/cadet-units-state-schools-increase-five-fold-%C2%A350-million-budget-boost>

Criticisms of the funding decision have come from the National Youth Agency: "It's a real missed opportunity not to have invested some of it in good quality youth work which delivers 'character' and a whole lot more besides for young people," and the Quakers: "Ultimately, militarism in schools leads to two kinds of recruitment: the recruitment of teenagers into the armed forces, and the recruitment of wider society to be war ready. Both go undebated. Why can't we invest in education for peace, not war?"

<http://www.cypnow.co.uk/cyp/news/1152461/budget-2015-osborne-announces-drive-to-create-more-cadet-units-in-schools#sthash.V1YrWy0L.dpuf>

Read a blog by a former CCF member here: <http://forceswatch.net/blog/former-cadet%E2%80%99s-experience-ccf>

The following letter is taken from the Forces Watch Facebook page from "a gentle, angry primary school teacher":

Dear George Osborne,

I work in a less affluent area of the UK. I am hereby committing some of my time to work free in different schools to teach Peace Education and provide an alternative view to war and militarisation. Our children deserve hope, pride, and good careers and they deserve to know the full picture before they commit to anything in the military. I am disgusted by your targeting of the poor and vulnerable. I will not stand by and watch it happen. I will fight your strategy on any level I can and I am sure I am not alone.

ForcesWatch says: "We are very concerned by the spread of the visibility and influence of the military and military approaches in so many areas of society in recent years, and the implications of this, including the fact that other, non-violent methods of problem solving are receiving less attention and funding." <http://www.forceswatch.net>

WAR VETERANS DISCARD MEDALS IN REJECTION OF MILITARISM AND WAR

On Friday 10 July 2015, three members of **Veterans for Peace UK** met in Trafalgar Square, London and walked down Whitehall towards the residence of the Prime Minister. Once at Downing Street the veterans lined up, faced the police barricades and made the following statements. "We are members of Veterans For Peace UK, an ex-services organisation of men and women who have served this country in every conflict since the second world war. We exist in the hope of convincing you that war is not the solution to the problems of the 21st century. We have come here today to hand back things, given to us as soldiers, that we no longer require or want," said Ben Griffin.

"This is my Oath of Allegiance. It is something I had to recite in order to get the job as a soldier. At 15 years old I had little understanding of its true meaning. Now I fully understand the words, they have no meaning at all." said John Boulton who then discarded his Oath of Allegiance. "This is my Oath of Allegiance. This was a contract between the Monarchy, the British Government and a fifteen year old child. I am no longer loyal to the Government or the Monarchy," said Kieran Devlin who then discarded his Oath of Allegiance. "This is my Oath of Allegiance. I made this oath when I was 19 years old. It required me to obey orders without question. I am no longer bound by this contract," said Ben Griffin who then discarded his Oath of Allegiance.

"This is my Army hat. It defined me as a soldier and a cog in the military machine. I reject militarism," said John Boulton who then discarded his beret. "This is my Army hat. This was given to me as a sixteen year old boy. I reject militarism, I reject war. And it means nothing to me," said Kieran Devlin who then discarded his beret. "I used to wear this hat as a soldier. It used to have great significance to me. I no longer want to keep hold of this symbol of militarism," said Ben Griffin who then discarded his beret.

"These are the medals given to me for the sick dichotomy of keeping the peace and waging war. They are trinkets, pseudo payments. But really all they represent is the self interest of those in there, who hold power," said John Boulton who then discarded his medals. "These are my medals, these were given to me were given to me as a reward for invading other peoples countries and murdering their civilians. I'm now handing them back," said Kieran Devlin who then discarded his medals. "I was given these medals for service on operations with the British Army. This particular medal was given to me for my part in the occupation of Iraq. Whilst I was over there, I attacked civilians in their homes and took away their men, off to be tortured in prison. I no longer want these despicable things," said Ben Griffin who then discarded his medals.

The three veterans then walked away from Downing Street leaving the oaths, berets and medals lying scattered on the floor.

<http://veteransforpeace.org.uk/2015/war-veterans-discard-medals-in-rejection-of-militarism-and-war/>

LETTER WRITING ON BEHALF OF CAMPAIGN AGAINST ARMS TRADE'S LATEST INITIATIVE

John Dowling writes: On 2 or 3 occasions every year supporters write to the Prime Minister or the minister responsible for UK arms exports in support of CAAT campaigns. (www.caat.org.uk) The latest letter follows. It deals with the upcoming DESI conference in London in September. The minister in question is currently Anna Soubry. The procedure for these letters is that they should be sent to your MP at the House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA and s/he should be asked to pass it on to Ms. Soubry. The letter is based on information from the CAAT website. Please feel free to send it as it is but if you can personalise it, all the better. After sending the letter you will get a response from Ms. Soubry. This will include the phrase "The UK operates one of the most rigorous and transparent arms export regimes in the world". I have been writing letters on this subject for over 10 years and that sentence has appeared in every response. Don't be discouraged. These letters are not going to change the world but they are part of the constant pressure that will hopefully eventually bring about incremental change. Please pass the sample letter to anyone else that you know who may be interested.

The Rt Hon Anna Soubry MP,
Minister of State for Business, Enterprise and Energy, Dept. for Business, Innovation and Skills
1 Victoria Street, London SW1H 0ET

Dear Ms. Soubry,

In September of this year, the bi-annual Defence & Security Equipment International (DSEI) will take place at the ExCel Centre in London. The UK government helps to organise this arms fair, invites military buyers from around the world, and assists arms companies to network and make deals.

The recent Human Rights and Democracy Report produced by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office lists twenty seven countries of concern. In 2013, nine of those countries were asked officially to send delegates to the fair by the UK Government. In 2104, the UK approved arms exports licenses to eighteen of the countries on the FCO list.

This is indefensible. One arm of the UK Government is condemning repressive states for human rights violations and another arm of the same Government is encouraging closer ties with the same states so that it can sell arms to them which may well then be used to assist that repression. I ask you therefore to do your best to ensure that:

- The DESI exhibition is closed in perpetuity.
- That the UK automatically prohibits all export licenses to countries on the FCO list.

Yours Sincerely

STOP SLIDE TO MILITARY ACTION IN SYRIA

Pat Gaffney, General Secretary, Pax Christi writes: It seems we are on the 'slide' into further military action in Syria following the news at the weekend (18/19 July) of the involvement of UK military with US-led bombing missions. In recent years Pax Christi members have responded to proposals to make air-attacks on Syria and Iraq, we urge you to do the same now!

Below, three links the first, the statement made this morning (20 July) to MPs by Michael Fallon. Then, very good item from Paul Rogers on Not Bombing Syria, the third, from our partners PAX Netherlands. These may help you in writing to your MP/local Bishop to urge that they speak up now to prevent this 'slide' and the terrible consequences it would bring. The final weblink is to help you find your MP if you do not already have contact. You could also write letters to local/national papers, respond to letters that are in support of military action to offer another voice: that military intervention/violence will not solve the issue of ISIS but will further deepen suspicion and hatred for us (the West) and expose vulnerable communities to more violent horrors.

- Michael Fallon's statement this morning on UK Embedded Forces
<http://www.parliament.uk/documents/commons-vote-office/July%202015/20%20July/7-Defence-Embedded.pdf>
- Article from Prof Paul Rogers on Not Bombing Syria
<https://www.opendemocracy.net/paul-rogers/on-not-bombing-syria>
- A sustainable Response to ISIS from our partner, PAX Netherlands
<http://www.paxforpeace.nl/stay-informed/news/a-sustainable-response-to-isis>
- Find your MP <http://www.ukpolitical.info/Finder.htm>
www.paxchristi.org.uk <https://twitter.com/paxchristiuk> <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Pax-Christi/852100728212915>

FEARLESS: STANDING WITH WOMEN AND GIRLS TO END VIOLENCE

After decades of international agreements and commitments, violence against women and girls (VAWG) remains a daily reality everywhere in the world. Women and girls face the possibility of violence in the home, on the street, at school and at work. For many, violence and poverty reinforce each other, undermining women's potential to realise economic opportunities. Courageous women and girls speak out and demand change, sometimes risking their lives in doing so. But their opportunities for resistance are constrained by shrinking civil society space, widening inequalities and rising religious fundamentalisms – alarming global threats that hit women and girls hardest.

A third of all women and girls face violence in their lifetime. It's one of the most widespread violations of human rights, and it robs women of control over their bodies and lives. This doesn't just hold back the women it affects - it holds back their families and communities too. In September, governments will agree a target on eliminating violence against women at the UN General Assembly. But a target alone isn't enough. It's vital that governments around the world put proper resources behind it, and that women's groups are involved from the start. Help us make sure the UK government put some real force behind this target. Stand with women around the world and ask David Cameron to act now.

http://www.actionaid.org.uk/campaign/fearless?utm_source=dotmailer.com&utm_source=EnewsFundraising&utm_medium=email&utm_medium=Email&utm_campaign=pac_vawgcampaign&utm_campaign=5882896_ACT1506WR3_A&utm_term=1/7/2015_2&utm_content=Action+2&dm_i=2105,3I39S,JMKMYF,CJPGA,1#sign-the-petition

Read more in Action Aid's report *Standing with women and girls to end violence* at: http://www.actionaid.org.uk/sites/default/files/publications/fearless-standing_with_women_and_girls_to_end_violence_actionaiduk.pdf

PRAYER WRITTEN BY THÉRÈSE VANIER

May oppressed people and those who oppress them, free each other.
May those who are handicapped, and those who think they are not, help each other.
May those who need someone to listen to touch the hearts of those who are too busy.
May the homeless bring joy to those who open their doors reluctantly.
May the lonely heal those who think they are self sufficient.
May the poor melt the hearts of the rich.
May seekers for truth give life to those who are satisfied that they have found it.
May the dying who do not wish to die be comforted by those who find it hard to live.
May the unloved be allowed to unlock the hearts of those who cannot love.
May prisoners find true freedom and liberate others from fear.
May those who sleep on the streets share their gentleness with those who cannot understand them.
May the hungry tear the veil from the eyes of those who do not hunger after justice.
May those who live without hope, cleanse the hearts of their brothers and sisters who are afraid to live.
May the weak confound the strong and save them.
May violence be overcome by compassion.
May violence be absorbed by men and women of peace.
May violence succumb to those who are totally vulnerable, that we may be healed.
These things, good Lord, that we pray for, give us the grace to work for. Amen.

LIVERPOOL ANNUAL ASSEMBLY REPORT - MAIN POINTS FROM 'REFLECTIONS FROM THE TABLES'

- In order to fulfil the Gospel we need:
 - an encounter with God
 - an encounter with ourselves
 - an encounter with others
- How do we engage creatively with the institutional church?
- Encourage personally the Parish Priest so that encouragement and info gets to all parishioners.
- How do we encourage charismatic priests to promote J&P?
- Can we encourage a joint letter to parishes & all priests from the bishops calling for Action & Awareness on **Poverty, Environment & Social Justice?**
- Strategy for Christian Radicalisation
- Join an established group to campaign for issues of social justice
- Where's the opportunity for people to have a conversation of what they are feeling/faith?
- Post formal education. Adult /Formation - Where is this happening?
- The formative value of See – Judge – Act linked with *Laudato Si'* and sustainable development goals
- Questions of growth and support in parishes - how can we help this happen?
- Inclusion of J&P bidding prayer (for Sundays)
- 'Bitesize chunk on social issue' for bulletins. Monthly? Weekly?
- Helpful to share links to resources, short films, etc
- Work ecumenically, if possible - study themes
- Out media the Media!
- Training at grass-roots level to use social media to shout out the Social Justice Message
- Hold a prayer vigil during the **World Week of Peace in Palestine & Israel**, on their theme of "Bridges not Walls" incorporating **Faisal Al Husseini's** Prayer
- Hold a Pastoral Area **"Fair"** inviting as many parish groups as possible to set up their stalls in the most central parish centre and inviting some of today's contributors, such as **Shared Interest, Church Credit Champions, Nugent Care, MRANG**
- How do we engage with people who seem to walk away when we try to promote J&P issues in parishes?
- Ecumenical meetings re issues of J&P, supported by the Commission.
- Fairtrade/Shared Interest/Credit Unions are a practical way of involving parishes in J&P activities
- Promote Credit Unions in our parishes
- Move outside parish rooms and into a local hall so people who don't attend Church would maybe engage with issues
- Reach out and become involved in community projects – find out what's out there.
- Building community through an open door which can be a meeting place for all faiths offering refreshment, a listening ear and signposting to other services
- Educate/Inform ourselves on issues eg Mental Health issues to remove stigma and promote positive awareness
- Merseycare NHS: - provide Speakers
- Looking at local and family issues
- The importance of sustainable development
- Education
 - Young persons involved in some issues? (Youth Educating Adults)
 - Justice in schools. Contact with Schools
 - Offer to conduct Assemblies in schools, contact Lower VI re J&P Issues
 - Where's the space in the curriculum?
- Intergenerational opportunities
- Worrying more about values than issues
- Ideas events exploring/linking *Laudato Si'* and UN Development goals
- Book group and discussion – use films?
- Write letters
- LOAF (Local, Organic, Animal Friendly and Fairly Traded)
- Ethical Consumerism and Fairtrade shopping

LAUDATO SI'

Liverpool J&P Worker Steve Atherton has put together a study guide to *Laudato Si'* with an introduction and a session for each of the six chapters – each with a sheet of excerpts and a sheet summarising the contents plus a powerpoint for use with the worksheets. Steve would be happy to organise a leader for groups. Contact him on 0151 522 1080 s.atherton@rcaol.co.uk

KEVIN MAYHEW WAIVES COPYRIGHT ON LAUDATO SI' HYMN

Kevin Mayhew has invited NJPN to circulate this PDF of the hymn *Laudato Si'* and has waived any copyright fee plus a link to play it. <http://www.kevinmayhew.com/hymn-of-the-week.html> Get a free copy of the music and an audio file by following the link, setting up an account and placing an order. The check-out price is zero (ignore June cut-off date). Items are placed in the "My Downloads" area on the Mayhew website. Contact Ann Kelly for a PDF copy of the words and sheet music: admin@justice-and-peace.org.uk

FAIRTRADE NEWS

Thanks from the Justice & Peace Group for all the four churches in Ellesmere Port and Hooton to everyone who has purchased fairly traded goods over the last year. Nearly £2000 worth of goods has been bought from Traidcraft for sale in the four churches since September 2014. We hope to improve on this figure next year. All profits go directly to farmers' co-operatives and workshops in the poorer parts of the world - this is not Aid or something that involves governments but ensures that producers receive a fair price for their work and can support their families. <http://www.traidcraftshop.co.uk/>

DID YOU KNOW TRAIDCRAFT CAN HELP YOU REACH NEW LEVELS WITH YOUR FAIR TRADE ACTIVITY?

They have a free Speaker Network of Traidcraft Volunteers all over the UK, ready to deliver an assembly, hold an activity, or do whatever you need to do to introduce young people to fair trade. Go to: <http://www.traidcraftschools.co.uk/request-a-speaker>
They also offer discounts and invoicing facilities to schools setting up tuck shops and healthy stalls and stock a huge range of sweets, treats, healthy snacks, pocket money items, toys, and cute stationery to stock your stall. They can even send you lots of free posters, leaflets, and promotional materials to jazz it all up. Go to: <http://www.traidcraftschools.co.uk/run-a-fair-trade-stall>

GET FAIRTRADE FORTNIGHT 2016 IN YOUR DIARY...

The dates for Fairtrade Fortnight next year are 29 February to 13 March 2016. We will be focusing on food and how we can make our food system more sustainable for people and the planet. More info from the Fairtrade Foundation www.fairtrade.org.uk

FRACKING: BRINGING A CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE TO THE DEBATE

On 29 June Lancashire Councillors turned down, by 10 votes to 4, an application to commence fracking for shale gas test drilling at a site on the Fylde coast. Among those following developments closely were members of the Lancaster Diocese Faith and Justice Commission whose members have worked hard to raise awareness locally of the issues involved, and nationally through the National Justice and Peace Network Environment Working Group. ***Stephen Garsed of the Lancaster Commission writes:***

Fracking has been a hot topic in Lancashire for the last four years. The Environment Groups of the Anglican Blackburn Diocese and the Lancaster Catholic Diocese's Faith and Justice Commission looked independently at the issues a couple of years ago and produced guidance for their communities. The main aim was to help Christians ask the right questions in a sea of claims and counter claims by the proponents and opponents of fracking. The two papers were considered and endorsed by the church leaders in Lancashire.

We then received an invitation to present a Christian view at a public meeting in Preston Minster organised by Friends of the Earth. We used these two papers as our reference and set out the principles of love of God/love of creation and the consequent imperative for environmental stewardship from the First Commandment and for Social Justice from the Second. We stated that fracking itself was neither right nor wrong, but it was the context in which it was carried out that created the moral issues. We posed a number of questions about how the current proposals fitted with the concepts of stewardship and justice. The presentation was extremely well received. A number of people who evidently had little connection with faith commented that it gave them a framework within which to consider the complex and interacting issues.

One thing led to another and we were invited to give presentations to Lancashire County Council's Development Control Committee, which were listened to very attentively - concepts of environmental stewardship and social justice clearly resonated with Committee members. We also discussed the term "social licence" which is used by the industry to imply local acceptance of its activities. We pointed out that what was needed was actually "informed consent" (a much more positive acceptance by the community and one that had to be founded on "the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth". To proceed without informed consent might be considered to be oppression. Other speakers had already brought to the Committee's attention areas where the industry had been very reticent on the true nature of the proposals and the environmental consequences. We ended with these words of Pope Francis: *"Brothers and sisters: creation is not a property, which we can dispose of at will; much less so is it the property of some, of a few: creation is a gift, it is a present, a wonderful gift that has given us to take care of and to use for the benefit of all, always with respect and gratitude."*

We believe that the councillors fully understood the Pope's message in the context of the tussle between those who wanted to exploit the Bowland shale gas and those who wanted to protect the environment from industrial-scale exploitation.

Some may question the churches becoming involved in this debate. However, it is very clear that decisions about the use and control of natural resources, particularly energy, are now moral issues and it is right that Christians have the opportunity to raise those questions. Furthermore, the fact that different denominations demonstrably worked together to bring a prophetic voice to the debate showed many non-believers that Christian concepts and values really are relevant to life in the 21st century.

For more information see: <http://www.lancasterfaithandjustice.co.uk/environment-group/>
<http://www.indcatholicnews.com/news.php?viewStory=27810>

NEW REPORT CALLS FOR EU BAN HIGHLIGHTING 'SIGNIFICANT' HUMAN RISK OF FRACKING

A major new scientific study has concluded that the controversial gas extraction technique known as fracking poses a "significant" risk to human health and British wildlife, and that an EU-wide moratorium should be implemented until widespread regulatory reform is undertaken.

The damning report by the CHEM Trust, the British charity that investigates the harm chemicals cause humans and wildlife, highlights serious shortcomings in the UK's regulatory regime, which the report says will only get worse as the Government makes further budget cuts. It also warns of severe risks to human health if the new Conservative government tries to fast-track fracking of shale gas across the UK. The "scale of commercial fracking" unleashed by the Government's eagerness to exploit the technique "should not be underestimated", it cautions.

The report is due to be published on 14 July – in the week that Lancashire County Council votes on two highly contentious planning applications to frack in the county by the company Cuadrilla. If approved, they will be the first commercial fracking sites in the UK. The charity says it will send copies of the report to the Lancashire councillors before they vote. Council planning officers have recommended approval of fracking at one site, Preston New Road, but opposed a second site, Roseacre Wood, but only on traffic concerns, not due to concerns of pollution from fracking itself.

Late last year, New York became the first US state with significant shale gas reserves to ban fracking for health reasons. Howard Zucker, New York's acting health commissioner, said he had identified "significant" public health risks and the state's governor, Andrew Cuomo, compared fracking to passive smoking, a practice that wasn't understood as a health risk for many years.

The CHEM Trust report highlights the potential health effects of the hundreds of chemicals, along with sand and water, which fracking companies use to prise open rocks. It warns of "significant" pollution to air, groundwater and surface waters and threats to wildlife. Some of these toxic chemicals have been linked to breast, prostate and testicular cancer in humans as well as coronary heart disease, the report says. It outlines how 38 fracking chemicals are "acutely toxic for humans" and a further 20 are mutagenic, or known or possible carcinogens.

The report gives specific examples of hazardous materials used in fracking, including chemicals "associated with leukaemia in humans" and "toxic to sperm production in males". The trust warns it is "particularly concerned about the use of hormone-disrupting chemicals". It is also asking for full disclosure of the chemicals that will be used in the fracking process. Many of the chemicals used in the process remain secret. In the US, nearly 300 products used in fracking fluids contain at least one secret chemical.

The report also mentions concerns about "the current regulation of fracking" in the UK, which has "weak points". Since the passage of the Infrastructure Bill last year, "it is no longer clear how well groundwaters will be protected". It is particularly concerned that "ongoing cuts in regulatory authorities" will only make matters worse, especially any cuts to the regulator, the Environment Agency, which lost 15 per cent of its staff last year.

Specific issues about fracking in Lancashire are raised, including the suggestion that fracking could harm wildlife in the Wyre estuary, which is a Site of Special Scientific Interest, home to 11 wading bird species of international importance and three of national importance, as well as important orchids and insects. "There is clear potential for fracking to cause serious pollution incidents with major impacts on the UK especially areas of recognised wildlife interest" the study concludes.

The report makes numerous recommendations to protect health, groundwater and the British countryside. These include no fracking operations near drinking water aquifers, the undertaking of environmental impact assessments for all fracking sites, and effective monitoring even after fracking operations have stopped.

Dr Michael Warhurst, the executive director of CHEM Trust, said: "Our investigation has identified key problems with the way fracking is regulated and monitored. Given the potential for pollution and damage to ecosystems, CHEM Trust is calling for a moratorium on fracking in Europe until our recommendations are in place".

A spokesperson for the Environment Agency said: "We take the environmental risks associated with oil and gas exploration and production very seriously, including hydraulic fracturing for shale gas, and are committed to ensuring that people and the environment are protected. Our regulatory controls are in place to protect people and the environment."

<http://www.independent.co.uk/environment/fracking-poses-significant-risk-to-humans-and-should-be-temporarily-banned-across-eu-says-new-report-10334080.html>

Read more: "Lancashire fracking in doubt following critical report"

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/lancashire-fracking-in-doubt-following-critical-report-9992724.html>

CLIMATE CHANGE THREAT MUST BE TAKEN AS SERIOUSLY AS NUCLEAR WAR – UK MINISTER

The threat of climate change needs to be assessed in the same comprehensive way as nuclear weapons proliferation, according to a UK foreign minister. Baroness Joyce Anelay, minister of state at the Commonwealth and Foreign Office, said the indirect impacts of global warming, such as deteriorating international security, could be far greater than the direct effects, such as flooding. She issued the warning in a foreword to a new report on the risks of climate change led by the UK's climate change envoy, Prof Sir David King. The report, commissioned by the Foreign Office, and written by experts from the UK, US, China and India, is stark in its assessment of the wide-ranging dangers posed by unchecked global warming, including:

- very large risks to global food security, including a tripling of food prices
- unprecedented migration overwhelming international assistance
- increased risk of terrorism as states fail
- lethal heat even for people resting in shade

The world's nations are preparing for a crunch UN summit in Paris in December, at which they must agree a deal to combat climate change. Monday's report states that existing plans to curb carbon emissions would heighten the chances of the climate passing tipping points "beyond which the inconvenient may become intolerable". In 2004, King, then the government's chief scientific adviser, warned that climate change is a more serious threat to the world than terrorism.

"Assessing the risk around [nuclear weapon proliferation] depends on understanding inter-dependent elements, including: what the science tells us is possible; what our political analysis tells us a country may intend; and what the systemic factors are, such as regional power dynamics," said Anelay. "The risk of climate change demands a similarly holistic assessment."

The report sets out the direct risks of climate change. "Humans have limited tolerance for heat stress," it states. "In the current climate, safe climatic conditions for work are already exceeded frequently for short periods in hot countries, and heatwaves already cause fatalities. In future, climatic conditions could exceed potentially lethal limits of heat stress even for individuals resting in the shade." It notes that "the number of people exposed to extreme water shortage is projected to double, globally, by mid century due to population growth alone. Climate change could increase the risk in some regions." In the worst case, what is today a once-in-30-year flood could happen every three years in the highly populated river basins of the Yellow, Ganges and Indus rivers, the report said. Without dramatic cuts to carbon emissions, extreme drought affecting farmland could double around the world, with impacts in southern Africa, the US and south Asia.

Areas affected by the knock-on or systemic risks of global warming include global security with extreme droughts and competition for farmland causing conflicts. "Migration from some regions may become more a necessity than a choice, and could take place on a historically unprecedented scale," the report says. It seems likely that the capacity of the international community for humanitarian assistance would be overwhelmed.

"The risks of state failure could rise significantly, affecting many countries simultaneously, and even threatening those that are currently considered developed and stable," says the report. "The expansion of ungoverned territories would in turn increase the risks of terrorism." The report also assesses the systemic risk to global food supply, saying that rising extreme weather events could mean shocks to global food prices previously expected once a century could come every 30 years. "A plausible worst-case scenario could produce unprecedented price spikes on the global market, with a trebling of the prices of the worst-affected grains," it says.

The greatest risks are tipping points, the report finds, where the climate shifts rapidly into a new, dangerous phase state. But the report also states that political leadership, technology and investment patterns can also change abruptly too. The report concludes: "The risks of climate change may be greater than is commonly realised, but so is our capacity to confront them. An honest assessment of risk is no reason for fatalism."

http://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/jul/13/climate-change-threat-serious-as-nuclear-war-uk-minister?CMP=fb_qu

NEW CARTOON JESUS BOOK 4 BY FR JOHN MEDCALF, ILLUSTRATED BY MAGGIE ORGAN

Book 4 of the cartoon *Jesus, Five Loaves and Two Fishes* by Fr John Medcalf, and illustrated by Maggie Organ, is being published on 1st August 2015. Copies and further details from www.cartoonjesus.co.uk or from margaretorgan@btinternet.com
Books 1,2 & 3 are also available.

STUDY COURSES

Places still available on the Diploma in Pastoral Leadership at Hope University - info downloadable from their website www.hope.ac.uk - a 3 year course requiring one evening a week for each of the 12 modules. Each module has 6 sessions. Liverpool J&P Worker Steve Atherton leads Module 9: *The Church in the World*.

Plus *Faith for Life* course in Widnes and in Longton, dates available from the LACE office 0151 522 1040 s.atherton@rcaol.co.uk

FEET FIRST

Don't forget the Leprosy Mission's Feet First appeal - before the 31st August, the government will match every penny. So, your gift goes twice as far. Twice as many people helped, twice as many lives changed. Twice as many vulnerable feet get proper protective sandals, meaning that open wounds and sores are safe and able to heal. In Mozambique, if you can't move around, there is no hope of a job. So having healthy feet means work - a new start with dignity. An income. A brighter future. Feet First provides training to people affected by leprosy and disability. They learn how to improve the yield of their crops and set up small businesses. This means they can hold their heads high as successful businesspeople. So by doing all this, your gift destroys the shame that leprosy brings! A small amount of money goes a long, long way to changing someone's life. Read more about the Feet First project, and see a short film from Mozambique here: <http://www.leprosymission.org.uk/get-involved/feet-first.aspx>

VIEWPOINT: WE NEED A CHURCH OF MISSION NOT MAINTENANCE

Paul Donovan writes: Brentwood has become the latest diocese to announce dramatic restructuring proposals due to budget shortfalls. The present language of deficits and devolution abounds in the announcement from the diocese, including the news of a number of redundancies resulting from the process. Localism seems to be another in vogue concept with Brentwood diocese, with many of the functions previously undertaken by diocesan commissions now to be devolved to parish level. The Commissions are to be replaced by three vicariates for education, formation and evangelisation.

It is strange that in an organisation that professes to be so concerned with humanity, it is people that always seem to be the first casualties of these restructuring processes.

The Church has to face it is an institution in decline in Britain and most parts of Europe. Numbers attending Mass are down, so income is also reduced. Too many are just walking away finding Church limited to buildings as opposed to people. The leaders of the Church seem for the most part to be content to be managers of decline, yet there can be another way. The choice is between a Church of maintenance or mission.

The publication of *Laudato Si'* offers a real opportunity for the Church to play an active role in combating climate change. The Church can be an advocate for sustainable living, whilst practicing that approach itself. Why not become beacons of good practice, bringing in sustainable energy systems like solar panels and wind turbines. Parishes could grow food organically, work with others in the local communities on things like recycling and bee conservation projects.

Such moves would see the Church fulfilling its prophetic role of witness and mission. It would also make the Church relevant and vital to all those younger generations who presently walk away at, or not long after, confirmation. They return only when they are seeking to get their own children into a Catholic school.

The seeds of the resurrection of the Church can be seen in some of the present physical and fiscal elements of decline. Take the buildings that are becoming redundant due to falling Mass attendances. Why not turn these over to be converted to affordable housing. This would be really contributing to society in a visible way.

It is the way that Church tackles what could be seen as physical decline that also indicates the nature of the Church. All too often it is the accountants holed up in the finance departments of the diocese who make such decisions, believing it is much better to hold onto property until the best price can be attained in the market from a property developer. This is the approach of an asset manager, not the followers of Jesus Christ. Turning property over for affordable housing would be another way in which the Church could be making an act of witness in the world.

A Church truly alive in the spirit of social justice, as outlined by Pope Francis, could make these moves in environment, housing and other social justice areas to become truly relevant and prophetic to our world today. This should be the way forward.

Indeed, we already see this type of thing happening across the country with the central role that churches are playing in the foodbank network. Many foodbanks are based in churches with a disproportionate number of the faithful involved in this work. Indeed, in some instances church buildings that have become redundant have been redeployed to do this valuable work of charity ministering to the hungry.

There can be real change to make the Church relevant and real for the 21st century. Given such changes, no doubt those numbers leaving would return and there could be a new flowering of Church at the centre of our society. The alternative of course is to continue to manage decline, letting the bean counters set the terms and conditions of change, continuing to oversee what remains a very large portfolio of real estate. I know which path I would like to see us following.

<http://www.indcatholicnews.com/news.php?viewStory=27804>

See also: www.paulfdonovan.blogspot.com

ACTA SURVEY CALLS FOR 'KINDER, MORE OPEN CHURCH'

The results of a three-month study have been delivered to the Bishops' Conference office in London, and will be sent to each bishop, as part of feedback from the Catholic movement ACTA ('A Call To Action') in preparation for the Synod of Bishops to be held in Rome in October this year. The Synod's task is to review how the Church relates to families in the modern world. The survey calls for 'a kinder, more open Church and an end to rule-book driven policies on the family and sex.'

The ACTA study found that there was strong support for lifelong marriage. But most respondents do not accept the Church's rules on contraception, divorce and remarriage, or cohabiting. They call for a more welcoming, family-friendly Church, less clerical and more open to lay involvement. These findings are backed by the survey results of 342 Catholics from all the dioceses in England and Wales. This is a small sample, and the respondents were mainly white and older Catholics. But ACTA says: "We consider their views to be informed and valuable. Each respondent was committed enough to spend at least an hour completing the detailed questionnaire. Ten per cent who did this were priests or religious." The findings are consistent with other survey results such as a 2013 YouGov survey, conducted by Lancaster University, which used a larger random sample, and the 2004 report for the Bishops' Conference, *Not Easy But Full of Meaning*. As already noted in the introduction, they are also consistent with a separate survey initiated by parishioners in Birmingham diocese which drew 376 responses. The main findings were:

- There is a need for development in church policies.
- 85% of respondents rejected the Church's ban on contraception. They saw it as a major obstacle that has caused a great deal of hurt and anger.
- 88% rejected the Church's policy of refusing access to the sacraments for the divorced and remarried.
- A small majority (55%) disagreed with the Church's doctrine that same-sex marriage should be opposed. A surprisingly large 84% agreed with the statement that 'Love is love, whether it is heterosexual or homosexual. We could learn a lot from homosexual couples.'
- The institutional Church should be more welcoming, listen harder and be more humble.
- An overwhelming number (94%) agreed that the Church needed to be more welcoming to those in 'irregular' relationships (e.g., single parents, the divorced and remarried, and same-sex couples).
- 93% felt the Church should be more tolerant of couples who cohabit before marriage.
- Sermons about family life were singled out as not being very helpful (recorded by 174 respondents).
- There needs to be a step change in the attitude of many clergy towards lay participation
- 77% felt that the clergy were not sufficiently in touch with the laity. Many mentioned that they favoured abolishing the celibacy rule for priests.
- Too often, the laity are not participating when they have skills to offer. For example, 95% support the idea that married couples should or should in some circumstances be involved in marriage preparation courses, but 39% of respondents reported there was no lay participation at all, with a further 26% not sure whether there was or not, and 13% who said there was little lay involvement.
- There were some excellent examples of good services being offered by parishes (for instance bereavement care, HCPT, parent and toddler groups, abortion and miscarriage counselling) but these were relatively few and far between. Of only 220 responses to this question, 42% said there was no lay involvement, or didn't know.
- The Church needs to take more account of the realities of modern family life.
- The most useful sources of family support came through shared meals (215 responses selected this choice), support from families and friends (190) and days out or holidays spent together (132). Family groups and prayer groups also scored highly (73), followed by prayer at home (59). With fast declining numbers of male celibate priests, new ways of supporting families on their faith journey need to be devised.
- There are many obstacles that hinder families from taking part in church activities. Work patterns, with both partners working, were cited by 85 respondents, lack of time and the pace of life (83), and other family commitments (56). The lack of support from non-Catholic partners (30) and the diversions of social media, TV and the internet (20) were also significant.
- The church needs to find its voice in working with other partners to take on issues of social justice such as work-life balance, lack of childcare, respite care and poverty. Only a minority of respondents (27%) offered suggestions about how to work with partner organisations to tackle these challenges.

Andrew Hornsby-Smith, lead author of the report, adds: 'These issues are strangling the future of the Church at a time when the clergy is ageing and numbers are falling. There are some real opportunities, but the church leadership needs to modernise its policies, become more family friendly, and encourage lay involvement.' Acknowledging that the study is small, ACTA calls for follow-up research, and presents its findings to, and prays for the success of, the Family Synod. <http://www.acalltoaction.org.uk>

ACTA mission statement: *'We are a group of Catholics, some of whom are ordained brought together by our love of Christ's church and our anxiety about its future. Still inspired by the Second Vatican Council we want to contribute fully to the life of the church so that we may be a more effective sign of the Kingdom of God. To do this, we believe that an atmosphere of openness and dialogue both with each other and with our bishops needs developing. We desire to help create a climate of trust and respect for all, where this dialogue may be fostered.'*

NEW BOOK - *IT'S ABOUT TIME: THE (UNFINISHED) STORY OF KAIROS BRITAIN*

One of the founding members of Kairos Britain and a leading light in the struggle for justice in Palestine and Israel has just launched his new book about the history of the Kairos movement here in Britain. Warren Bardsley has spent the last few months putting the final touches to this story, and challenging us all on the role the UK Church and Christians can, and must play, in bringing about a just peace in Palestine. *It's About Time* has been published by Church in the Market Place publications, and costs £8.50.

Ordering copies: Ideally, we would love to encourage churches to buy in bulk. We will be able to send out single copies, but please consider whether you could sell more and make it cost effective for us. There are three distributors of the book:

Warren Bardsley (Midlands) Please email w.bardsley39@btinternet.com
Kairos Britain (London and South) Please email info@kairosbritain.org.uk
Jan Davies (North and West) Please email janet@christianaid.plus.com

PALESTINIAN PRAYER

This prayer was written by a Palestinian Christian. It is psalm-like in the way that it struggles with God for justice in the face of extreme danger. 'Intifada' means 'awakening or uprising'. A 'White Intifada' is peaceful, non-violent resistance.

Stay human by Faisal Al-Husseini

Oh God, the chest is replete with bitterness ... do not turn that into spite.
Oh God, the heart is replete with pain ... do not turn that into vengeance.
Oh God, the spirit is replete with fear ... do not turn that into hatred.
Oh God, my body is weak ... do not turn my weakness into despair.
Oh God, I your servant am holding the embers ... so help me maintain my steadfastness.
Oh God, faith is love ... Oh God faith is forgiveness ... Oh God, faith is conviction ...
Oh God, do not put out the flame of faith in my chest.
Oh God, we wanted a white Intifada, so please protect it.
Oh God, we wanted freedom for our people, we did not want slavery to others.
Oh God, we wanted a homeland for our people to gather them,
we do not want to destroy the state of others, nor to demolish their homes.
Oh God, our people are stripped of all things, except their belief in their right.
Oh God, our people are weak except in their faith and in their victory.
Oh God, grant us conviction, grant us mercy and tolerance in our ranks, and not make us war against ourselves.
Oh God, turn the blood that was shed into light that will guide us and strengthen our arms,
do not let it turn into fuel of hatred and vengeance.
Oh God, help us over our enemy so that we can help him deal with himself.
Oh God, this is my prayer to you ... my invocation.
Oh God, listen to our prayer.
Grant us our supplication and guide us to the right path.

WAR ON WANT CAMPAIGN

Ten years ago last week, over 170 Palestinian civil society organisations called upon people of conscience to build a movement for boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) against Israel until it ends its Apartheid policies. War on Want is proud to be a leading voice in building the international BDS movement. Through your continued support and commitment we have been able to run hard-hitting campaigns like our **Stop G4S campaign*** <http://www.waronwant.org/G4S> and our newest **Stop Arming Israel campaign** <http://www.waronwant.org/stop-arming-israel> which calls for an immediate two-way arms embargo on the arms trade with Israel.

* In 2007, the British security company G4S signed a contract with the Israeli Prison Authority to provide security systems and other services for major Israeli prisons. G4S also provides equipment and services to Israeli checkpoints in the West Bank that form part of the route of Israel's illegal Wall and to the terminals isolating the occupied and besieged territory of Gaza. G4S signed contracts for equipment and services for the West Bank Israeli Police headquarters and to private businesses based in illegal Israeli settlements. A panel of legal experts concluded that G4S may be criminally liable for its activities in support of Israel's illegal Wall and other violations of international law.

WAR ON WANT'S NEW NORTH WEST ORGANISER INTRODUCES HERSELF

Rowan Mataram writes: Hello, I'm War on Want's North West Organiser based in Manchester. I'm excited to have taken on this new role at a time when so much great activism is taking place in the North West. I'll be working with local campaigners as well as the London office in my spare time (I have a full-time job too!) to set up and support some great events in the region. I'm also involved in Stop TTIP Manchester (find us on Facebook or email us at stopttip.mcr@gmail.com) plus other campaigns. War on Want and friends will be putting on a free skill-share day in Manchester on Saturday 17 October, so please save the date. If you've ideas for collaborating on any of War on Want's areas of work or just want to say hello, please email me. Together we are stronger. Let's keep Manchester and the North West in the forefront of the movement. Rowan Mataram, North West Organiser, War on Want, NWOrganiser@waronwant.org

JUSTICE AND PEACE CALENDAR

6&9 August Anniversaries of the first use of atomic weapons at Hiroshima and Nagasaki

paxchristi.org.uk ccnd.gn.apc.org

9 August International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples

The UN organises International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples annually. The theme of the 2015 event is 'Indigenous Peoples as Custodians of the Land and its Ecosystems'.

<http://www.un.org/en/events/indigenousday/>

23 August International Day for Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition

Materials from the Human Rights Education Association <http://www.hrea.org/> and Stop the Traffik <http://www.stophetraffik.org/>

30 August International Day of the Disappeared

The International Day of the Disappeared is a reminder that a great number of people are missing as a result of conflicts around the world. Each year, the Red Cross marks the day by commemorating those who have gone missing in armed conflicts or other situations of violence – and remembers the plight of their families.

<http://www.redcross.org.uk/What-we-do/Finding-missing-family/International-Day-of-the-Disappeared>

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

AUGUST

6&9 70th Anniversaries of the first use of atomic weapons at Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Prayer resources available from Pax Christi <http://paxchristi.org.uk/resources/prayer-and-seasonal/>

You can find a variety of Hiroshima and Nagasaki events here <http://www.networkforpeace.org.uk/calendar/2015-08>

28-31 Greenbelt Festival Kettering www.greenbelt.org.uk

SEPTEMBER

8 A look at "Sustainable Development Goals" 6.45 pm - 9pm The Unity Centre, Cuppin Street Chester, CH1 2BN. At this Chester World Development Forum meeting we aim to "get a handle" on what might be happening at the UN Summit taking place in New York in late September. This is looking at "the Post-2015 Development Agenda", with the adoption of a series of Sustainable Development Goals taking over from the earlier Millennium Development Goals which expire at the end of this year. Gill Miller aims to bring some illumination! 01244 350323.

13 Racial Justice Sunday This year's theme is *Dignity of the Person* ctbi.org.uk/racial-justice-Sunday-2015

13 CAAT Christian Network Day of Prayer www.caat.org.uk 020 7281 0297

15-18 DSEi Arms Fair London www.caat.org.uk 020 7281 0297

19 NJPN Open Networking Day Warwick Rd URC, 10 Warwick Row, Coventry, CV1 1EX. Speaker: Paul Bodenham (Green Christian) *'Francisconomics: The Saint, the Pope and the Economy of Enough.'* admin@justice-and-peace.org.uk 020 7901 4864

20-26 World Week for Peace in Palestine Israel www.pief.oikoumene.org/en/world-week-for-peace/

21 Peace One Day 020 7456 9180 www.peaceoneday.org This year's main event will be in Kigali, Rwanda and focuses on young people, empowering a new generation of peacemakers <http://www.peaceoneday.org/2015-celebration>

26 Caritas Social Action Network Roadshow Ellesmere Port Catholic High School, CH65 7AQ. 10.30-15.30. Shrewsbury Commission for Justice, Peace and Social Responsibility will have a stall. Social action workshops plus marketplace hosted by MP John Battle. To confirm your place or book a stall please contact Pauline.McCulloch@dioceseofshrewsbury 0151 652 9855

29 St Monica's and Warrington J&P have invited Marie Reynolds from **Nugent Care** in Liverpool to speak. 7.30pm St Monica's church, Dingleway, Appleton, WA4 3AB. Nugent Care is involved in all kinds of Social Work supporting the poor and needy in society – an opportunity to discover the full extent of that work and appreciate the vital role they fulfill. All warmly welcome.

OCTOBER

3-4 COME & SEE 2015 Conference at Southport. Keynote speaker **Sr Helen Prejean**. Sunday Mass with Archbishop Malcolm McMahon OP. Booking forms with sae: Irenaeus, 32 Great Georges Rd, Liverpool L22 1RD. 0151 949 1199 jenny@irenaeus.co.uk

18 'Singing for the World' - songs of justice and songs from around the world - music and worship event to celebrate Christian Aid's 70th Birthday led by Alison Adam of the Iona Community at Wigan Baptist Church, Scarisbrick Street, Swinley, Wigan, WN1 2BS. Workshop 2-5pm (must book). 'Celebration' 6.30-8pm with CA video and short talk by Alasdair Roxburgh, Christian Aid's Head of Campaigns. Workshop and disabled access Charles St entrance. Parking on local streets or Mab's Cross School car park across Wigan Lane. Please contact for disabled access/special parking facilities. Booking forms John Logan logan-j@btconnect.com 01942 214656.

24 A Columban led day at LACE *Faith in Creation: a Call to Mission* hosted by Archbishop Malcolm McMahon and led by Ellen Teague. More info: 0151 522 1040 s.atherton@rcaol.co.uk

• Many items taken from the daily e-bulletin Independent Catholic News www.indcatholicnews.com an invaluable free resource for up-to-date J&P news and events. Sign up too for weekly e-bulletins from National J&P Network 020 7901 4864 admin@justice-and-peace.org.uk

The views expressed in this bulletin are not necessarily those of NJPN