

ploughshare plus



news update from Christian CND

December 2006

Christians working and praying for a nuclear weapons-free world

Clergy at Faslane

All Saintsday 2006

A party from Clergy Against Nuclear Arms, consisting of: Andrew Shanks, Ali Marshall, Bernard Randall, David Paterson, David Platt and David Partridge. We were joined by around 10 members of the Scottish Clergy Action Group for most of the Watch at Faslane's north gate. On All Saint's Day, 50 or so Iona Community members came along for the liturgies.

The arrest

Scottish Clergy Action Group Faslane Watch practice, by now fairly well-tuned, encourages those offering themselves for arrest to sit down outside the main gate immediately following the Eucharist. After some fairly hesitant constabulary rituals, nine present were taken to Clydebank police station for 20 hours. All present agreed that the good-humoured manner of the constabulary was exemplary. Of the 200 arrestees since the early October start of the Faslane 365 project, no charges have yet been taken to court.

CANA Faslane two?

Angie Zelter, the project's founder, joined us for a picnic lunch on the second day's Watch - after and excellent bible study held near the north gate on the theme of the gospel bringing peace to the world. 'Jesus was a direct activist' (Angie Zelter). Among her other points:

- She and other members of the 365 committee have regular meetings with the police 'to agree on the rules of the game'.
- Some groups have organised confrontational activities. Fine, so long as everyone realises that the enemy is not the police and that the real illegality is Trident itself.
- Faslane was off the media's charts. Which left some of us wondering whether a Vicars and Tarts turn-out might be one way of bringing the issue back

into circulation. (A subsequent comment from independent diplomat Carne Ross during his address at the AGM of 'Abolish War', to the effect that direct actions should avoid making themselves look flip-pant or silly; far better to look serious by involving the Archbishop!)

Resolve for another CANA Trident Watch

As a result of Angie Zelter's gentle questioning (with no hint of bullying), the six English Clergy members resolved to write to Rowan, asking him to encourage the episcopate and other church leaders to come to another Clergy Faslane Watch, outside the north gate under his Eucharistic presidency.

If nothing else was achieved, apart from the good company's enrichment, All Saintsday 06 felt like an exploratory forerunner for a more significant occasion in the spring or summer of 07.

And last, if definitely not least, our Manchester Theologian gave those gathered at the north gate for CANA's liturgy a trial-run for his Cathedral sermon on Remembrance Sunday.

David Partridge

2006 has been a year of statement against Trident from all our major church leaders, right up to the response in December from Rowan Williams to the Government's dismal White Paper. All no doubt partly due to the efforts of members!

The NEW PACK for the churches (Trident Edition) was sent to all church leaders for them to promote. Send for a copy if you can make good use of it.



Happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year to all our members



'RAF' Croughton (USAF) rally

CCND's David Platt was one of the speakers at the 'No Bases for War' rally at RAF Croughton on 7 October 2006. This is his speech.

It hurts me to agree with President George W Bush. But in one respect I do agree with him. There is an evil empire. There is an axis of evil and it is represented by this base here at Croughton. It is manifested at Fylingdales in the middle of the glorious North Yorkshire moors. It is clearly revealed at Menwith Hill, where at this very moment, Lindis Percy and other friends are campaigning. It is obvious at Faslane where the beautiful loch, the heather clad hills, the glory of Scotland, is defaced by the RN base on the Clyde. There we keep what the government calls 'our minimum required independent nuclear deterrent'. But it is not independent: it cannot be deployed without US control, US manufacture, US satellite technology, to target the Trident warheads: on whom? On what? No-one can tell us.

And this web of wickedness, this conspiracy of world domination, is before us today. It is credibly said that, if the President of the USA presses the nuclear button on the nuclear briefcase, always within his reach, the signal would pass through these domes, these aerials before us now.

For me, as a Christian priest, the evil is compounded by being proclaimed as the bringer of democracy, freedom and Christian civilisation. The fundamentalist Christian Right justifies this axis of evil by calling it good. Orwell's '1984' is pale in comparison. Doublespeak is now the language of democracy. Lies are the politician's stock in trade. And of course I am not forgetting the arch villain of our nation, the liar with the messianic eyes, the 'trust me I'm Tony' PM of this green and pleasant land. It is a land, a people, betrayed by repeated assaults on the Truth, degradation of the environment, the distortion of law, the destruction of centuries of civil rights, and of democratic government, a land where people since Magna Carta, since Wat Tyler, - pick whatever event in our history you please that proclaims the justice, the equality, the freedom, that should be ours by right.

Forgive me, my friends, if I see this as a deeply spiritual problem. How can we elect such a government? Only, I think, because as a nation, still exhausted after 'winning' two great European Wars - and we have only just paid off the vast debt of World War II, exacted with interest to our 'allies', the USA, whereas Germany was rebuilt

by Marshall Aid - as an exhausted nation depleted of so much brilliance, so many of our young people (mainly men), so much of our industrial base - as a people, I believe, my friends, that we are victims of a psychic depression, an illness of the human spirit, an incapacity to see through garbage piled into our eyes, our ears, our minds, our spirits, by the toxic environment to which we are daily exposed.

But you and I do not say 'stop the planet, I want to get off'. We are here today because we know we have been betrayed. But we are not afraid to denounce our betrayers. Without claiming any moral high ground, we know deep inside ourselves, that we must do what is right. We must not succumb to the axis of evil in which our New Labour Government is totally complicit. There is a 'special relationship' indeed. But Bush's poodle is too polite a description of our PM's lack of benign influence on anyone, especially his alleged 'pal' George W Bush. The person who left the microphones on a the dinner table did us all a service: even the right-wing press of this country went to town on Tony's sycophancy and total helplessness before the President of the USA!

But you or I are not helpless. We are as free as we can be in a controlled society. We still have a land where Brian Haw; constantly harassed, is in Parliament Square for five years and five months. He does it for the Iraqi children. He does it for his own grandchildren. What sort of world do Bush and Blair imagine their grandchildren will inherit? Unless they think money and their power will ensure they survive in their personal luxury nuclear bunker? But, even there, the flood-waters of global warming will pour in and drown the war makers, just like the story of 'the flood' in the myths of so many ancient cultures. So take heart my friends. Bunyan's 'Pilgrim's Progress' tells us of someone called 'Valiant for Truth'. That is why we are here, in the company of our police. They, like our military forces, took their job to help make our society more safe, more just. But they are equally betrayed. The forces are sent to fight immoral wars. The police are asked to protect evil military bases, part of the US empire. They protect them not merely from alleged terrorist threat. They protect them from peace makers. From the compassionate and merciful. From the truth seekers and speakers. From people of a spiritual faith. Yes, my friends, from you and me. Looking around today I can see how really scary we are! And, of course to Blair and Bush we are scary. Because we have the courage, the vision, the faith, to nail their lies, to resist their injustice, in short, to speak Truth to Power!

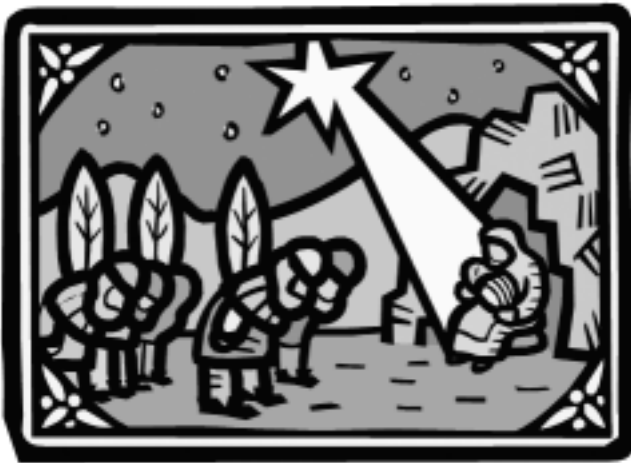
I am privileged to share the platform today with Felicity and John. Their work and witness is an inspiration to me and I'm sure to us all.

I grieve that our brothers and sisters are paid to work behind this fence, under the delusion they are doing what is right. I grieve that members of our police force have to waste valuable time protecting wickedness from our peaceful protest. In affirming what we are doing as witnesses for sane politics and a safer world, let me quote to you the Thirteenth Century Sufi poet and mystic, Rumi. Over the centuries, he speaks today to you and me.

'You are all guardians of God's light
You are the talisman
You were born of the rays of God's majesty.'

I believe that is our calling. That is our status. That is our destiny. I end with the words of Desmond Tutu.

'GOODNESS is STRONGER than EVIL
LOVE is STRONGER than HATE
LIGHT is STRONGER than DARKNESS
TRUTH is STRONGER than LIES'



No Trident Replacement Petition on Downing Street Website

The Prime Minister's website now has a petition facility you can sign, as highlighted on the BBC News website.

One of the top petitions argues the PM should champion the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and not replace Trident, so let's keep it at the top of the agenda.

If you can access the internet please sign it today and circulate details to everyone you know.
<http://petitions.pm.gov.uk/trident/>

Books

Some of the People all the Time By Alastair Mackie

A new autobiography of a former Air Commodore and bomber pilot who is now Vice-President of CND.

Air Commodore (Ret'd) Alastair Mackie, CBE, DFC and Bar served in the Royal Air Force from 1940 to 1968. He left his RAF career because he disagreed with British and NATO defence policy - in particular what he described as 'Britain's idiotic nuclear so-called deterrent.'

The book is available from all good booksellers or it can be ordered with a credit/debit card by telephoning 01825 873133. RRP £17.99. 1-84624-056-5.

CCND has a review copy in the office. If you would like to read it and write a review for the next copy of *Ploughshare* (due out sometime in January/February) please get in touch.

Also in the office awaiting reviews:

Britannia's Sceptre: Scotland and the Trident System
by Brian P Jamison.

A Pilgrimage Towards Peace by Joan Simkins. (an autobiography discussing the author's pacifism and the church's teaching on war)

If you would like to read either of these and write a review for *Ploughshare*, please ask.

Obituaries

CCND member Bobby Harrison of Dumbarton, Scotland died on 3rd July 2006. He was 91 and became a Quaker in his later years. Bobby campaigned tirelessly for justice and peace, fundraising for CND and Amnesty International. He was a regular at demonstrations against nuclear weapons, was arrested several times and was instrumental in setting up the peace camp at Faslane. He was a pacifist who lived out his beliefs. Bobby and his wife Margaret have been described as 'veteran campaigners' in the local paper. We know he will be sadly missed. Our condolences to Margaret.

Our condolences go to Doris Simpson of Sheffield. Doris's husband Arthur died in July aged 82.

Dates for your diary

21 December: CCND Advent Vigil, 2.30-3.30 at Aldermaston AWE, Tadley Gate. Bring candles; all Faiths and none welcome. Contact Caroline on 01865 241290 or 07752308355 for details/directions.

Thursday 28th December: The annual Holy Innocents' Day service, organised by the Network of Christian Peace Organisations, held at 11.00 at St Martin-in-the-Fields. This year's focus is the global environment and degradation of natural resources as affected by wars and as a cause of future wars: 'I am not yet born, o hear me". At 2.00, a short witness will be held at the Memorial to Innocent Victims of Oppression, Violence and War in the courtyard of Westminster Abbey. Info: ajkempster@aol.com

30 Dec 2006 - 1 Jan 2007: A new(ish) monthly peace and protest camp is being held outside the Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE) Aldermaston, Britain's nuclear bomb factory. All are welcome, to monitor the place where Trident weapons are manufactured, and where work is ongoing to develop the next generation of nuclear weapons. Aldermaston Watch will introduce you to the work of the AWE, and encourages non-violent disarmament actions to rid us of the threat of WMD. Camp combined with New Year's Eve at (or inside?) the base. For more information, including travel information, maps and a flyer for printing, see <http://www.aldermastonwatch.pwp.blueyonder.co.uk> Contacts 0845 4588 368 Email: aldermastonwatch@blueyonder.co.uk mobile (during camp weekends) 07804 640643.

Sunday 14 January: Peace Sunday. Theme: The Human Person: Heart of Peace. Parish resource packs will be available Pax Christi UK 020 8203 4884.

Sunday 14 January: Meeting to discuss setting up a Peace House in Reading. 2.30 at Reading International Solidarity Centre, 33-35 London Street, Reading RG1 4PS 0118 958 6692. This proposal is to establish a Disarmament Project based in the Aldermaston area that will provide up-to-date information on developments at AWE Aldermaston to provide support facilities that will enable more and more people to witness and protest at the continuing nuclear arms race. Contact NIS, 30 Westwood Road, Southampton SO17 1 DN di@nuclearinfo.org 02380 554434.

26 January: "Swinging Against the Bomb" Oxford CND Jazz band benefit on 26th January at the Holywell Music Room. Contact nick@classicjazz.freereserve.com or 01865 798600 or 01865 242919.

26 - 28 January: Annual Weekend of Peace Services. Sponsored by World Disarmament Campaign. Information from Peace Services, WDC, PO Box 28209, Edinburgh EH9 1ZR.

Saturday 27 January: No Trident Replacement public meeting with speaker Bruce Kent. St John's Methodist Centre, Llandudno. 2 - 4pm. Conwy Peace Group. 01492 544353.

Wednesday 7 February: CADU Lobby of Parliament. House of Commons, SW1. The Government is to make a decision on whether to phase out the MoD's depleted uranium tank ammunition and replace it with a tungsten alternative. CADU's lobby hopes to put pressure on the Government to make the right choice. Called by the Campaign Against Depleted Uranium and the International Coalition to Ban Uranium Weapons. www.cadu.org.uk / CADU, Bridge 5 Mill, 22a Beswick Street, Ancoats, Manchester, M4 7HR 0161 273 8293 / 8283 info@cadu.org.uk

Saturday 10 February: 'Guns and Global Warming; War, Peace and the Environment'. Network for Peace Annual General Meeting. Special guest speaker: Dr Stuart Parkinson of Scientists for Global Responsibility. 2 - 3pm AGM, 3-5pm speaker and discussion. Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London. Nearest tube: Holborn (Piccadilly line) Network for Peace, 5 Caledonian Road, London N1 9DX 020 7278 3267

Saturday 10 February Evening: Musicians Against Nuclear Arms Concert for Peace with the Fitzwilliam String Quartet. St Cyprian's Church, Clarence Gate, Glentworth Street, London NW1 6AX. Contact MANA Administration, 71 Greenfield Gardens, London NW2 1HU.

The Second CCND Theology Day School will take place in March, hopefully at Westminster Central Hall in London. We are aiming at the 17th or 24th March. More details will follow in the next issue of *Ploughshare*.

Peace Camps & Regular Events

Regular Meeting for Worship outside Menwith Hill and Fylingdales US bases in Yorkshire Outside Menwith Hill US spy base and 'star wars' station at 2.00pm-3.00pm at the Main Entrance on **First Saturday of even months** (Feb, April). Contact Anni on 01943 466405 or Lindis on 01482 702033 or email Campaign for the Accountability of American Bases at <mailto:caab@btlick.com> for more information.

Outside Fylingdales joint UK-US 'star wars' station at 12.00pm-1.00pm at the approach road entrance on the **first Saturday of odd months (Jan, March, May)**. This witness has been almost continuous since the 1980s. Contact Anni on 01943 466405 or Lindis on 01482 702033 or email Campaign for the Accountability of American Bases at <mailto:caab@btlick.com> for more information.

Every Tuesday: Menwith Hill Peace Camp, 6-8pm, protest vigil. Contact: Anni 01943 466 405.

4th Saturday each month: Quaker Meeting for Worship at USAF Fairford. 2pm.

Christian Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament

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