

Reflections Inspired by Thomas Berry's "Evening Thoughts" *

Since the early 1960's I have been involved in various ways with activities for development (CAFOD/ CIIR), with peace (Pax Christi) and the environment (Christian Ecology Link/The John Ray Initiative.)

For much of this time the three groups appeared to see little connection between their activities. Often in fact they were rather suspicious of the other groups (especially "green" groups), sensing that a focus elsewhere on what they considered most important would dilute action. This state of affairs is thankfully being resolved. Common ground is starting to emerge which is to be welcomed.

But the absolutely fundamental importance of halting the destruction of the earth's life support systems - which is occurring on an unimaginable scale - is even now not fully appreciated or incorporated into the basic thinking of many in the J & P movements. Already we are seeing that environmental pressures are a major contributory factor in conflicts (Darfur, the Middle East). Development work is being lost due to habitat destruction, drought and flooding caused by climate change.

Why have we embarked on this path of suicidal disregard for the future not only of mankind but also for the rich and complex web of inter-related life on earth? How in Thomas Berry's words has this "deep cultural pathology" arisen?

What modern industrial society denies is that the universe is "a communion of subjects", and not a collection of objects to be exploited for man's benefit. A forest is not just so much timber or land available for short term growing of cash crops; it is a rich, incredibly diverse place of beauty and majesty and is capable of filling us with awe for our bountiful Creator. And if harvested in a sustainable manner it can provide not only spiritual nourishment but also food, shelter and medical products for future generations.

Our starting point for the essential reversal of this tragically mistaken path is to acknowledge that creation in all its wondrous diversity and beauty, the culmination of a truly

astonishing process of evolution, is the primary source of revelation of the sacred.

It is one of the two books of revelation - the other being the Scriptures; failure to draw on both has led to our continuing disastrous over-exploitation of the planet. Perhaps misreading of Genesis started the rot. As Thomas Berry notes the first commandment might read "Thou shalt not have an Earth Mother". This certainly was how it came to be interpreted with a consequent loss of respect and care for the created world. Perhaps a further reason for our failure to act to protect all life has been the belief amongst religious people that our real destiny is not in this world, so that the churches have been largely silent as human kind has brought about the biggest extinction of species for some 65 million years in an incredibly short period of time.

We have developed laws about homicide and genocide, and however much we have failed to implement them, they are nevertheless widely accepted as being an essential element of preserving a civilised society. But is there not an equally compelling case for laws about "bio-cide"? - the killing of life systems of the earth? and even for "geo-cide"-the killing of the earth itself? The current industrial/military age cannot be sustained and can never be repeated. The earth simply cannot support it. Though application of sustainable technology must contribute, technology alone will not solve all our problems. Above all we need first to accept the basic call of the UN Earth Charter "The protection of the Earth's vitality, diversity and beauty is a sacred trust". With this as our guiding principle every step we take to implement it, however small, is a contribution not just to ecology but to promoting the peace and sustainable development of this beautiful world we have on trust for our own and future generations.

Mike Monaghan

"Evening Thoughts -T Berry, Sierra Book Clubs 2006. An American Passionist priest now 92 years old, Thomas Berry is one of the world's leading environmental thinkers. His writings have awoken many to the depth of the ecological crisis and especially its spiritual dimensions"

Office Report

Margot Hutchison, a former member of Pax Christi Exec and long-standing member of Pax Christi died in Birmingham on 14th June.

Margot, a passionate supporter of peace and justice work, was a recipient of the Pax Christi Peace Award in 2005. This was in recognition of her commitment to issues of racial justice, the role of women in the church, the arms trade, peace and nonviolence. With Pax Christi Margot had made visits to the United States, Russia and Austria and kept Pax Christi's work high on the agenda of Birmingham Archdiocese. Margot's funeral was in Birmingham on 27th June. We offer our thoughts and prayers to James, Margot's husband and to all members of her family.

Robert (Bob) Wicks a member and faithful volunteer in the Pax Christi office died in London on 14th June. Bob was a valued member of the Justpeace mailing team, giving time each month to ensure that our members received the

newsletter. Following our move from Manor House to Hendon, Bob continued to make the journey across London to support us in the office, sharing conversations with other volunteers about his enjoyment of music and memories of London past, and enjoying the odd glass of wine at office celebrations! We offer our condolences and prayers to Bob's wife, Kathy and to their family.

Franz Jägerstätter, - Martyr for Peace

It is with great joy that we hear of the plans for the beatification of Franz, the Austrian farmer who was beheaded in Brandenburg, Germany, on 9 August 1943, for refusing to fight in Hitler's army. (Announcement from Congregation for the Causes of Saints, 1 June 2007). His cause has been long promoted by Pax Christi. In the press notice we sent out, Bishop Malcolm McMahon, our President said, "The extraordinary courage of Franz Jägerstätter, a faithful Catholic, has been an inspiration to many and a powerful

witness to peace and nonviolence. In an age of war and violence we urgently need the example of those who use their consciences to make judgements about what is evil - and refuse to take part in it. The recognition of this man's holiness by the Church should encourage us all to stand up for peace, justice and human dignity."

Greenbelt Festival Friday 24th - Monday 27th August
Greenbelt is an all-age Christian music and arts festival held over the August bank holiday at Cheltenham Racecourse in Gloucestershire. Pax Christi will be there helping to run the 'Peace Zone' with the Network of Christian Peace Organisations. There is a great line up of speakers, including Mark Ellis, Ann Pettifor and John Bell, music, workshops and seminars. Discounted tickets are available for Youth and Church leaders and over 60s. You need to bring your own tent although there are some B&Bs in Cheltenham! For more details see the Greenbelt website at www.greenbelt.org.uk or speak to Hilary at the office.

Keep peace alive. Remember Pax Christi when making or up-dating your will

Please send me information on

Membership Publications Legacy

I enclose a donation of £_____ to support your work

Name: _____

Address: _____

Tel: _____

Return to Pax Christi, St Joseph's, Watford Way, Hendon, London, NW4 4TY
Tel: 020 8203 4884 email: info@paxchristi.org.uk www.paxchristi.org.uk

Pax Christi - Our Values

Pax Christi members live by the biblically inspired values of **Peace, Reconciliation, Nonviolence.**

These values are supported by the witness of peacemakers down the ages and the experience of the Pax Christi community. Pax Christi is rooted in Catholic Christianity but is open to all who are in sympathy with its values and work.

Pax Christi, St Joseph's, Watford Way, Hendon, London, NW4 4TY
Tel: 020 8203 4884 email: info@paxchristi.org.uk www.paxchristi.org.uk

Justpeace

PAX CHRISTI

International Catholic Movement for Peace

Newsletter No 260 July - August 2007 ISSN0306-7645

Climate Change and Security

When climate change first became an issue, around 25 years ago, most of the early research indicated that the main regions of the world to be affected would be the north and south temperate latitudes. In one respect this was reassuring in that these were, for the most part, the richer regions of the world. Britain might get wetter, windier and warmer, but the economy would be robust enough to cope. At that time, many climate change researchers believed that the tropics and sub-tropics would not be greatly affected. This was because the very long-term climate record suggested that natural climate change in the past, like the European ice age of 11,000 years ago, had had little effect on Africa.

New work in the early 1990s contradicted this and suggested that human-induced climate change would be different from natural processes and would have three major effects on the poorer parts of the world. One would be an increased severity of tropical storms and a second would be rising sea levels affecting some of the world's most densely populated cities as well as highly productive croplands in the world's great river deltas. The worst effect, though, would be a tendency for world rainfall distribution patterns to change, with more rain falling on the oceans and the polar-regions, and less on the tropical and sub-tropical land masses.

This "drying-out" of the tropics will affect many of the key farming areas that support the majority of all the world's people. Moreover, this includes most of the world's poorest people who will find it particularly difficult to cope. As well as the great increase in direct human suffering, one of the most substantial effects will be a greatly increased pressure on migration as desperate people try to move to countries where they might better be able to survive.

This issue is one of the main reasons why climate change is now being linked to security - a trend with very dangerous implications. It is all too easy for the world's elite countries to see climate change as an indirect but powerful threat to their own interests. A deep-seated attitude of "close the castle gates" is already evident in the way in which the United States is progressively fencing off the border with Mexico, and many European states see migration from Africa as a security issue.

What makes climate change so salient is that we already have a global environment in which the divide between an elite of around a billion people and the marginalised majority of over five billion is growing rapidly.



Franz Jägerstätter whose anniversary we commemorate on 9th August. On 1 June the Vatican announced that Franz is to be recognised as a martyr. See back page.

Because of welcome improvements in education, literacy and communications, far more of that majority are much more aware of their predicament than a couple of decades ago, and with that comes increased frustration and potential radicalisation.

In these circumstances, the attitude of western elite states is all too easily a matter of "liddism", keeping the lid on things rather than addressing underlying causes, with a readiness to use force when necessary. If the attempt is made to maintain the status quo for elite societies it will surely fail. Climate change is a security issue but has to be seen in the context of the need for sustainable security, rooted in the well-being of all people.

The dangers of climate change mean that controlling carbon emissions is possibly the most important single political issue for the next decade. Some progress is now being made, but it has to be at a much more intense and sustained level than has so far been achieved.

Paul Rogers

Professor of Peace Studies and co-author of *Beyond Terror*, published by Rider books, 2007, at £4.99

Actions for the Environment in the name of Peace. An approach from Pax Christi France

The link between Peace and the Environment sometimes seems surprising, especially to Christians. However, Francis of Assisi, well-known as the Patron Saint of the Ecologists, showed us how living peacefully means living in peace in all aspects of our life :

- with God,
- with ourselves
- with our brothers and sisters
- with the creation, the environment

The Biblical word "Shalom" has a much wider meaning than the French word "Paix". We cannot live the "Shalom" if we spoil God's creation, if we maltreat animals, if we steal/plunder natural resources.

Pax Christi France has been working on the environment for several years now. First, it has initiated an Ecumenical network "*Peace, the Environment and our way of life*". This network gathers Christians and non-Christians, associations and individuals. By now, about 20 groups have joined the network. The network gathers together a great diversity of local actions such as :

- In Annecy, near Geneva, Pax Christi is taking part in protests aiming at saving the shore from constructions.
- In Bure, in the North of France, Pax Christi members are fighting against a project of hiding nuclear waste underground.
- In the South of France, the Protestant association "A Rocha" is developing Ecological/Green Studies, especially about birds.
- In Bordeaux, a group representing 7 different Churches/Communities is preparing its 5th Ecumenical Forum on creation. This year's topic is "Energy - user or consumer?".

Peacemaking Resources

A good place to start looking for resources concerning the Christian response to the issue of global warming and the environment is the **Christian Ecology Link web site**. It is multi denominational with other faith links as well. It provides informed views on current environmental issues, is a guide to campaigns and offers guidance for daily prayer. There are educational resources on offer including an excellent video called 'Operation Noah,' and good links to other web sites. The web address is: <http://www.christian-ecology.org.uk/index.htm>

An excellent booklet which has just arrived in my post is **One Planet Agriculture** - the case for action. It is published by the Soil Association, and they don't come any more sober than this. It is 23 pages long, can be speed read in about 10 minutes but is worth more than that. It presents a compelling case for urgent action now with regard to our consumption of oil and the re-localisation of food production. It appears that oil production is near to peaking and then going into decline, in fact, of the 65 largest oil producing countries in the world 54 have passed their peak of production. The implications of this are far from encouraging across the whole gamut of modern societies. This booklet is an excellent resource to place in the hands of anyone who

For the last two years Pax Christi has initiated national campaigns to raise awareness of the environment during Christmas and Summer time. About 15 well-known French organisations and movements have joined the initiative. The campaign is called "*Vivre autrement*" - "*Live differently*" and has been very successful. First, the campaign "*Live Christmas differently*" aims at encouraging people to go back to the true meaning of Christmas; there is no need to consume a lot to make people happy. Then, "*Live Summer differently*" has focused on the pollution linked to transport, giving examples of good initiatives. The leaflet is amusing with a snail, and a text inspired by the Beatitudes : "Happy those who travel differently, they will give the Earth in heritage"... In Autumn, a *Time for the Creation* is being organised locally to thank God for his gifts. Different celebrations and parties are taking place to encourage Christians to get involved.

Last but not least, individual actions are about changing our way of life, on a day-to-day basis. Preserve natural resources, like water; well-manage the waste; buy fair-trade products... There is a lot we can do! It is about getting converted... Such a tremendous challenge.

http://paxchristi.cef.fr/section.php?section=04_08
www.ete-autrement.org

Jean-Pierre Ribaut, Pax Christi France

regards the environmental crisis as something that is a long way off or as a questionable issue. The web address, from which you may obtain a copy of this booklet as well as downloading podcasts, finding both primary and secondary educational resources and much more is: <http://soilassociation.org/web/sa/saweb.nsf/home/index.html>

As far as reading is concerned if I could only recommend one book unquestionably it would be **A Greener Faith - Religious Environmentalism and Our Planet's Future** by Roger S. Gottlieb, published by OUP, ISBN No. 0-19-517648-0. It has endorsements from the General Sec. National council of Churches USA and Secretary General of the Alliance of Religions and Conservation. Gottlieb is Professor of Philosophy at Worcester Polytechnic Institute, Massachusetts USA. It is a book that above all is accessible and wide ranging with full notes and a useful index (essential if any book is to be of real use) and it concludes with a chapter on 'Obstacles, Prospects, Hope.' Hope is something we must maintain not least because as Christian people we are 'Relying on his promise (and) we look forward to new heavens and a new earth, in which justice will be established.' 2 Peter 3:13 REB.

Stewart Hemsley

Celebrating Peacemaking - Pax Christi Peace Awards 2007

At a packed AGM in Central London, Pax Christi members and supporters honoured and acknowledged six peacemakers of our time whose work extends from Northern Ireland to Iraq and UK. In 2001 Pax Christi instituted the award, given every two years, to acknowledge the steadfast commitment to grass-roots peace work. Those receiving the award from Bishop Malcolm McMahon, President of Pax Christi, were Brian Wicker, Sr Lelia Newman op, Patricia and Michael Pulham, Tom Mallon and Milan Rai.

Brian Wicker's involvement in Catholic peacemaking, with a particular focus on security and disarmament, goes back 50 years. Brian is an active member of the Christian Council on Approaches to Defence and Disarmament and served for years on the Committee for International Justice and Peace of the Bishops' Conference. Most recently Brian initiated dialogue between Muslims and Christians, leading to a book entitled *Witnesses to Faith? Martyrdom in Christianity and Islam* (Ashgate, 2006).

Sister Lelia Newman O.P, a retired teacher, has lived and worked in Belfast for the past 17 years where she has promoted understanding between different communities. She became involved with the regeneration of three communities in the Falls Road area of Belfast (Beechmount, Iveagh and Springfield), which led to the building of a community centre in the Beechmount area. Most recently, Lelia took part in protests with others from Belfast at the nuclear submarine base in Faslane, Scotland.

Patricia and Michael Pulham have over thirty years involvement with both Pax Christi and Christian CND - recently playing an important role in the CCND executive committee. Their peacework has ranged from the production of education resources for churches on nuclear issues to organising acts of Christian witness at various nuclear sites such as Aldermaston and Faslane to encouraging others in peace and justice work at parish and diocesan level.

Diary

10-13 July (Tues-Fri) Hoddesden

'Violence: a stubborn pandemic'. Conference organised by Modern Churchpeople's Union at High Leigh Centre. Speakers include Paul Rogers, Dorothy Rowe, Brian Wicker, and scholars from Jewish, Muslim and Christian perspectives. Details: www.modchurchunion.org Contact: Mrs E Darlington 0161 633 3132

20-22 July (Fri-Sun) Swanwick

Justice and Peace Conference: 'Called to be peacemakers - who me?'. Keynote speakers John Dear SJ and Zoughbi Zoughbi, Palestinian Christian. Workshops, peace market, children's programme. Get your parish to sponsor someone. Details from Pax Christi.

24 July, London

"Persistent Peacemaking: Keeping faith with nonviolence in a time of war." An evening meeting with two peace activists, one from the USA and one from Palestine. John Dear sj is a peace activist, author and editor of 25 books on nonviolence and peacemaking from the United States. Zoughbi Zoughbi is a Palestinian Christian, Director of the Palestinian Centre for Conflict Resolution in Bethlehem. 6.30 pm St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation & Peace, 78 Bishopsgate, EC2N 4AG

21 - 27 July (Sat-Fri) Ushaw

Living Theology Summer School on theme of 'Catholic Social teaching'. Speakers include Austen Ivereigh, Francis Davis (Von Hugel Institute) on migration, John Joseet (Bishops' Conference) on refugees and asylum-seekers, and Francis Campbell, Ambassador to the Holy See. Details: www.livingtheology.org.uk

28 July - 4 August, (Sat-Sat) N Wales

Catholic People's Week at Nodfa Spirituality Centre. Theme: "What Price Progress?" with Mary Colwell, Fr Tom Cullinan, Mike Monaghan and Rosemary Read. Contact: Frank Monteiro 0121 354 9811 email: frater@monteiro.it

7-9 September (Fri-Sun) Crawley

Retreat at Worth Abbey "May justice flourish and peace abound..." led by Fr Paul Fleetwood and Jane Ozanne. Contact: Rosemary Sanders 01342 710318 email: TOC@worthabbey.net

9 September (Sun)

Racial Justice Sunday on theme of "Go to a land I will show you" (Gen.12:1) Details: Catholic Association for Racial Justice, CARJ, 020 8802 8080 email: carj@btconnect.com

23 September (Sun) London

Mystery Walk for Children round the London Peace Trail. Contact: Movement for the Abolition of War: 020 8347 6162, or MAW Mystery Walk, 11 Venetia Road London N4 1EJ



Award recipients with Bishop Malcolm McMahon

Tom Mallon, another peacemaker from Northern Ireland, initiated summer play schemes for children from the mid 1970s and helped to co-ordinate hospitality for many Pax Christi volunteers from around the world to work on these projects. This all happened during the most bloody and vicious period in Northern Ireland's 'troubles'. Thanks to Tom Mallon and others, bridges were built between the communities.

Milan Rai's work is a powerful witness to active nonviolence. As a co-founder of Voices in the Wilderness UK, he was instrumental in putting the impact of the sanctions on Iraq before the peace movement and on the political agenda. His visit to Iraq, during the time of the sanctions, provided evidence of the madness of UK and US policies. Following the September 11th 2001 attack Mil helped establish the organisation 'Justice not Vengeance', taking on the causes of Afghanistan, Iraq and recently Iran. His writings include 'War Plan Iraq' and more recently 'July Bombings'. Mil is currently co-editor of Peacenews

14 October (Sun) Bury

"A Faith that does Justice" Salford Faith and Justice Commission annual assembly. Speaker: Chris Allen (Progressio) Workshops include Pax Christi. 1 pm onwards, Holy Cross College, Manchester Road, BL9 9BB. Details: Faith and Justice: 0161 832 1363 email: faithandjustice@salforddiocese.org.uk

20 October (Sat) London

Southwark JPIC Assembly, Amigo Hall. Details from Southwark Justice and Peace Office, 020 7928 9742 email: office@southwarkjandp.co.uk

3 November (Sat) Lancaster

Christian Ecology Link and Lancaster Justice and Peace day conference at Lancaster University Chaplaincy. Details: CEL: 01524 33858 email: info@christian-ecology.org.uk

11 November (Sun) London

"Law not war" - Remembrance Day lecture by Baroness Helena Kennedy 2 pm at the Imperial War Museum. Tickets from: IWM lecture, Movement for the Abolition of War, 11 Venetia Road London N4 1EJ or tel: 020 8347 6162