



The ANGLICAN PACIFIST

of Aotearoa/New Zealand

Newsletter of the New Zealand Branch of the Anglican Pacifist Fellowship

Chairman's Letter

This is how you should think among yourselves – with the mind that you have because you belong to the Messiah, Jesus, Who, though in God's form, did not regard His equality with God as something He ought to exploit. Instead, He emptied Himself, and received the form of a slave, being born in the likeness of humans. Phillipians 2. 5-7.

When she emerged from the Lindo Wing less than 10 hours after giving birth, The Duchess of Cambridge looked as though she had done nothing more strenuous than walk around the block. (Weekly Telegraph 6th May 2015.)

As well as naming the hairdresser and dressmaker who helped to make the mother look “as fresh as a daisy” the newspaper also named two gynaecologists, a paediatric surgeon and a Professor of medicine as being present during the birth. Not mentioned but obviously present in the immediate vicinity were midwives, anaesthetists, nurses and a fully equipped



operating theatre ready for action. Her Royal Highness Princess Charlotte of Cambridge was fortunate enough to have a typical Royal Birth.

With a planned conception as important as that of ‘The Saviour of the World’, why didn’t God wait a fraction of time longer and arrange for something similar for Mary and Joseph and the baby Jesus? It would have been so much kinder, and “Lindo Wing” births are as readily available in Jerusalem as in London.

St. Paul’s answer was that Jesus did not want to exploit his power but instead he wished to empty himself of it. For our sakes God, the all-powerful, was divesting Himself of power, giving up His omnipotence and omniscience, reneging on the God mighty in battle. He was now showing Himself to be as vulnerable and as powerless as a baby born on the floor of a stable in Bethlehem.

But did God need to go to such extremes to show us what He is really like? To become a human, in itself, is to be divested of incomprehensible amounts of Godly power, so could He not have ‘appeared’ on earth as a young man? An epiphany with much

more immediate influence and charisma than being ‘the child we grew up with.’ It seems not.

The Christmas story tells us that God has become as vulnerable, dependent and deprived as any human can become, for God has identified with the weakest of the poor and powerless. This is not only revealed in the birth itself but God’s divesting of power, kenosis, began with conception’s choice. For a mother to be young, poor and single immediately raises the baby’s chances of foetal growth retardation, intrauterine death and stillbirth. It also raises the chances of the mother developing eclamptic fits, anaemia and obstructed labour. To choose to be first-born is to risk a long labour, infection, death of both mother and child and difficulties with establishing breast feeding. Add to the risks already embedded in the conception, a long journey, no social support and a birth-place seeped in tetanus spores, and one has

conditions even worse than most refugee camps. As an ex- obstetrician I doubt that Mary looked “as fresh as a daisy” ten hours after her Royal birth.

God has divested himself of power and privilege. In that stable he has levelled himself with the most vulnerable and underprivileged in our world. Jesus is not claiming or expecting the homage and privilege shown to King David his ancestor. The Christianity of Christmas is a reversal of Royal births. A religion conceived and nurtured by the God revealed in the birth of Jesus cannot be a religion of entitlement or worldly power. It cannot be a warrior religion seeking prestige and dominance. Christmas is disconcerting because God has revealed Himself as a fragile and defenceless baby only surviving through the devotion and resilience of his parents.

Happy Christmas.

Jonathan

LECTURE AND STUDY DAY

NOVEMBER 6 AND 7

WAR REMEMBRANCE AND RECONCILIATION AUCKLAND WAR MEMORIAL MUSEUM

We are most grateful to the Director and staff of the Auckland War Memorial Museum for supporting this initiative and allowing the use of the auditorium free of charge. The event was arranged by NZ Christian Network, Aotearoa New Zealand Peace and Conflict Studies Centre Trust, Pax Christi, Anglican Pacifist Fellowship and Auckland Labour History Group. The intention was to introduce another perspective into the act of war remembrance around Armistice Day, particularly in the year of the centenary of Gallipoli.

Three particular wars were selected: the Musket Wars, the New Zealand Wars and the First World War, all of which are commemorated at the Museum or on its site.

Church historian the Reverend Allan Davidson, in the Dorothy Brown Lecture, explained that in order to give comfort to the families of the vast numbers of soldiers who died in the First World War the Church and State spoke of the nobility of their sacrifice and thus tended to

glorify the participation in war. This attitude has continued to dominate in the language of war remembrance and has even persisted



in the theology of the church. Author Keith Newman spoke of the decimation of the Maori population through the Musket Wars and how the coming of the Christian Gospel of peace and reconciliation gradually led to the ending of the tribal wars. Margaret Kawharu and Bernard Makoare from Ngati Whatua showed how the siting of the Museum on Pukekawa, "the hill of bitter memories" where the peace treaty was signed between the Waikato and Ngapuhi tribes during the Musket Wars presented an opportunity to recall a history of conflict and peacemaking. The Reverend John Hebenton and Dr Cliff Simons from Gate Pa who had both been involved in the joint commemoration of the 150th anniversary of that battle saw this commemoration as an opportunity for reconciliation between the races, a process which included repentance and "making things right". Nejat Kavvas, formerly Turkish Consul-General in New Zealand, who had helped to organise the tripartite commemoration of the battle of Gallipoli, gave the Turkish side of the story. He could not understand how New Zealanders believed their soldiers had been fighting there for the freedom of their own country. Author and historian Jock Phillips looked at New Zealand war memorials analysing how far their motivation was to mourn the dead in

We intend to drip-feed the texts of the lectures into the APF newsletters next year. Editor.

sorrow and how far to promote the warrior tradition. Professor Richard Jackson, Deputy Director of the National Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies at Otago University, explored how narratives of necessity, threat, sacrifice, and duty normalised war as a permanent social institution. He showed instead that the evidence and arguments reveal pacifism as a credible and realistic alternative to the use of military violence. Tonga Karena from Taranaki, Ph.D student at the National Centre of Peace and Conflict Studies, asked how reconciliation with the history of Parihaka could contribute to a national conversation of peace and remembrance. In particular he asked how the white feather, the emblem of Parihaka signifying non-violence could be reconciled with the taiaha, a warrior symbol.

Over a hundred attended the Lecture and half that number the Study Day. We were grateful to those who presented such excellent papers which are available in full on the APF website <http://www.converge.org.nz/pma/apf/resource.htm>

War commemoration, we believe, if it truly respects those who died, impels the search for peace.

Chris Barfoot 9/12/15

APF AGM

The Annual General Meeting of the NZ branch of the Anglican Pacifist Fellowship was held on Sunday 8th November.

The report on the National Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies at Otago University from the Acting Director, Professor Richard Jackson, was presented. Salient points included:

- The Five year review was concluded last year and solid progress has been made in meeting its recommendations
- Kevin Clements left for his sabbatical in June last year and Richard Jackson is now acting Director.

- There are 21 in the Master's program, 18 of whom are doing one year Masters' and 3 Masters' by thesis. There are 25 active Ph. D students.
- There are six tenured faculty. Regrettably Charles Butcher has accepted a position at Oslo University in Norway, but it is hoped a suitable replacement will be found.
- The Archibald Baxter Memorial Trust is planning a sculpture and memorial garden near the Dunedin Museum. Richard is chairing the Trust while Kevin is on his sabbatical.

- The Centre continues to implement the recommendation of the Review concerning Treaty partnerships.

Reports were also received concerning Meg Hartfield's prayer booklet, cancellation of the APF June retreat at Vaughan Park, *The Anglican Pacifist* and *The Anglican Peacemaker*.

Chairman Jonathan Hartfield presented his report and Treasurer Mary Davies presented the financial report.

The following officers were elected.

Chairperson: Jonathan Hartfield

Secretary: Chris Barfoot
 Treasurer: Mary Davies
 Newsletter Editor: Pat Barfoot
 Committee: The above plus Meg Hartfield, Nicola Hoggard-Creegan and Margaret Bedgood.

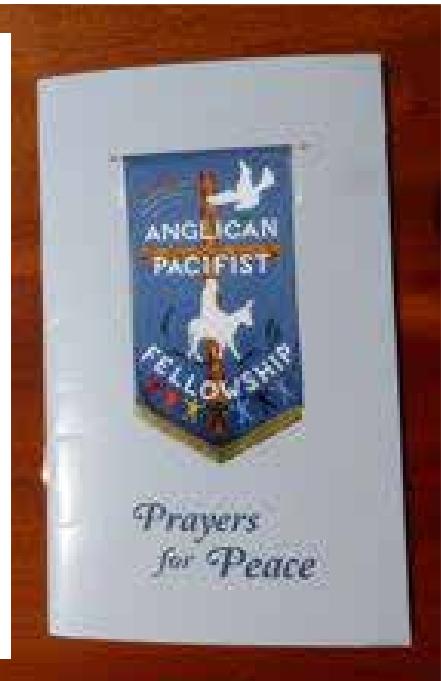
Under Any Other Business it was noted that The APF was one of the signatories to an open letter to Government Ministers and MPs opposing military deployment in Iraq on February 11th, 2015

PRAYERS-FOR-PEACE BOOKLET

Meg Hartfield has compiled and printed an amazing little collection of peace prayers. They are from many sources, some untraceable, but mostly from her own pen – and heart. Appropriately, she's used the APF banner she made so long ago in her cover design.

This booklet could be used as a prayer calendar for one's private devotions or as a resource for prayers in public worship.

Meg is happy to post complimentary copies to members and others who would like them. (May we suggest sending a stamped, self-addressed DL envelope.) Address: 6 Caversham Rd. Wanganui 4501. <ilesha@xtra.co.nz>



ANGLICAN PACIFIST FELLOWSHIP NEW ZEALAND BRANCH

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Members are invited to submit copy for publication in our newsletter. Please email it to the editor.