



The ANGLICAN PACIFIST of Aotearoa/New Zealand

Newsletter of the New Zealand Branch of the Anglican Pacifist Fellowship

From the Chairman

Our annual retreat was held at the Titoki Healing Centre, Whakatane, a beautiful and comfortable venue. We had moved the weekend from its usual time so as to avoid the increased ills and travel problems of winter. However, our numbers were severely down and it would be instructive to find out the reason for the small numbers before planning next year's meeting. A short questionnaire will be sent out to members. We spend much of the year surrounded by people who do not agree with our 'No to War', so a weekend with like-minded people gives personal encouragement and the opportunity to learn more about peacemaking and peacemakers. I would be sorry to see the retreat weekend fall by the wayside. My thanks to Chris and Geoffrey for organizing the weekend so well.

One of our sessions was led by Sande Ramage who is helping us to market our Fellowship and its aims more effectively. In the Western World societies and clubs are not in vogue and many are struggling to survive. Many Christian pacifist groups have disappeared over the last decades and few are now on the Peace Movement Aoteroa network. It is important that we survive and grow for we have an important message for the Church and the world. With the technology of war increasingly destructive, and civilian casualties escalating, the alternatives to armed conflict become more and more essential. I think it a common attitude for people to think pacifists well meaning, (which is kind), but naive and totally, maybe dangerously, unworldly. The 'real world' needs its drones and nuclear warheads, they say. For them the bottom line is that aggression and violence will only respond to

superior violence. Our society is given very little to counter this idea. Our major instructors on national and world affairs remain vested in television and the press. Violent conflict always tops the TV news – which I presume reflects the current ratings. The 'average Kiwi's' daily viewing contains a great deal of violence so people can well think that 'war' is the normal and only solution available when there is major aggression, injustice and disagreement. The prioritising of violence by the media is sad, dishonest and unproductive because there have been some very notable achievements using non-violent methods in situations of major conflict. I don't think we hear or see nearly enough about these alternatives.

The pacifist position is neither naive nor unrealistic. The 'real world' has been dramatically changed in our time by civil resistance. The fall of the Berlin Wall has influenced us all. It fell because of changes in Russia and the Eastern Bloc countries. It was achieved, not by an armed force, but by a disarming one. In the recently published book 'Civil Resistance and Power Politics' edited by Adam Roberts and Timothy Garton Ash (OUP 2009) 19 countries are covered from Gandhi to The Monks of Burma 2007 (not all civil resistance is successful, nor is the armed variety either). Gandhi would be the best known example of non-violent methods. Detractors sometimes say he was only successful because the British were so nice. However, the totalitarian regimes of Poland, East Germany, Portugal and



Enjoying the sunshine at Titoki (l-r): Chris & Pat Barfoot, Jonathan & Meg Hartfield, Geoffrey Neilson, Mary Davies.

Iran under the Shah, were well armed, brutal, and determined to stay in power, yet they were toppled without the use of arms and very little loss of life and property. The brilliant German film, 'The Lives of Others' provides a biopsy of the former East German regime. It was not nice, nor were the other regimes.

I think it is important for people to hear and reflect on our message, hence our need to survive as a Fellowship, hence our need for better marketing.

However, in the present structure of our Church we already have opportunities: one is Hiroshima day, World Peace day, which falls on August 6th. I hope that all our members will encourage their parishes to recognize this event in their Sunday services and I hope that they themselves can be involved in these services and so bring the APF and its vision to their congregations.

Jonathan. June 7th 2010.

Retreat and AGM

Chris Barfoot

The AGM and Retreat were held this year at Titoki Healing Centre from April 9th to 11th. Unfortunately, only nine people attended; hence the enclosed questionnaire to enable us to assess more accurately your future requirements.

At the AGM the Chairman and several members spoke in appreciation of the life of Margaret Mander who died on December 8th last year. We also expressed gratitude for the work of Trish Nicolas who has retired after seventeen years as Treasurer. We are grateful to Mary Davies, our new treasurer. Apart from this, the officers remain the same and the committee will continue to consist of the Auckland members.

It was decided to set the annual subscription at \$20 or whatever members could afford, and that a donation above this amount would be appreciated

The retreat began with a Eucharist sensitively celebrated by Geoffrey. Jonathan then gave a Bible exposition on Romans 13 (see p 3). In the afternoon the Venerable Joe Huta, Vicar of Te Ngae, Rotorua and Archdeacon of Rotorua, Taupo and Bay of Plenty told us about the structure of the Tikanga Maori and spoke of the saints and martyrs of the early New Zealand Church who had witnessed to the Christian message of pacifism and non-violence and rejection of utu. These included Tarore and Ngakuku, Tamihana Te Rauparaha, Manihera and Kereopa, martyrs at Turangi, Te Whiti of Parihaka and Heni Te Kuri Karamu of Gate Pa. This was our first meeting with the Tikanga Maori and it was good that we could celebrate this common ground of the Gospel together.

New Life for the APF?

According to APF member the Revd Sande Ramage we have a "hot potato of a cause" but few in the church have heard about us. Acknowledging the

truth of this, we asked Sande to do an appraisal for us and make some recommendations for the future. At the Retreat Sande got us examining our strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, then we were asked to describe our product, purpose and target market – which we considered to be the Anglican Church. We then needed to answer the question: "What is the problem/issue in the Anglican Church that APF wants to address? What is the answer?". To this we responded at our committee meeting a month later:

1. Traditionally the Anglican Church is a quasi-state church with a tendency to give religious legitimacy to state military values.
2. The Anglican Church shows theological fuzziness about belief in the saving power of military violence. It supports military intervention and the militarisation of society. It participates in Anzac commemorations in a way that may be interpreted as glorifying war.
3. The Peace movement in the church is greying.

Lastly, we considered an objective for the APF:

By the end of 2012, to have every person in the institutional structure of the Anglican Church (Aotearoa and New Zealand and Polynesia) aware of and challenged by the pacifist message of the APF so that they are able to consider Christian pacifism as the only credible Christian path for the church.

The next stage is to form a brain-storming group to examine this object and a marketing mix with appropriate methods and targets which we will again evaluate. This will probably need to be done by the committee in Auckland, but the committee would welcome anyone who would like to contribute either by their presence or by email. Sande has agreed to provide mentoring to this group as the ideas and plans evolve. Many thanks, Sande.

SUBMIT OR WHAT ELSE?

Bible Study on Romans 13 1-7

A friend in our Bible Study Group expressed concern over the verdict of the Waihopai Trio trial, citing Romans 13 as the basis of his concern. The subject of the passage continues to be topical in many walks of life, though I rarely hear the passage quoted, let alone preached about.

Paul's letter to the Churches in Rome was written about 55 A.D. This was a time of rapid change in the churches as well as in Rome itself. The Emperor Claudius had died in 54 and Nero had succeeded him. Claudius had expelled all Jews from Rome in the 40's as they had been rioting, possibly because of Jewish Christians preaching in their midst. Nero had allowed the Jews to return. 'Gentile' churches were experiencing an influx of 'Jewish' Christians. There must also have been tensions amongst all Jews of the time as revolt was again being considered in Palestine. Masada A.D. 70 was not far away and many Jews believed that God would give them certain victory. Although Christians had been warned not to take part in such uprisings, family links must have brought controversy, divided loyalties, and accusations of ethnic betrayal.

Paul had not visited Rome but he hoped to visit on his way to Spain. 15.24. However he would have known some of the expelled Jews who were now returning to the capital. He recognized the very different cultural traditions that would now be living together in the same Christian family. A few scholars have considered Chapter 13 so out of place in the letter that they have suggested it to be a later addition. However, when viewed against the historical background the chapter fits logically into the life of the Roman churches of the time.

The original letter did not have chapter and verse so 13.1-7 needs to be seen in a wider continuous context. I shall start at 12.14 which considers the Church facing the outside world. The earlier part of chapter 12 considers living together and unity within the church as Jew and Gentile adjust to each other.

12.14. Paul moves from relationships within the church to relationships with those outside. There is no evidence of persecution at the time but Paul assumes that it will come. Jesus, Paul and the early church are unique in blessing rather than cursing their persecutors. Matt 5.38-48; Luke 6. 27-35; Luke 23.34; Acts 7.60; I Cor 4.12; I Peter 2 20-23.

12. 15,16. Christians must not have a ghetto mentality and be exclusive. 'No snobbishness, mix with your neighbours. Make friends with nobodies, don't be the

great somebody' (The Message, Eugene Peterson).

12.17.18 Repeats the basic command of the section: do not repay evil with evil. Take part in society as much as possible but there will be times when Christian standards differ from 'The ways of the world' Eph 5.11-17.

12 19. Paul is not forbidding justice but he is forbidding individuals to take the law into their own hands and to take personal revenge, vengeance. In the light of 13.4. 'don't be a loose cannon but allow God to provide justice which may well be through the law enforcement agencies. I will avenge Deut 32.35-36. 'I'll do the judging says God, I'll take care of it' (The Message).

12.20 Instead of private vengeance Paul recommends a very positive and shocking course of action. Do good to your enemy. Proverbs 25.21-22 2 Kings 6 20-23

12.21 Reflects the Sermon on the Mount and the theology of the Cross. Revenge keeps evil in circulation, sacrificial love absorbs the evil and replaces it with goodness. Do not use evil means to overcome evil (or good !) Mt 5.39 'don't use violence to resist evil.' N.T. Wright trans.

13.1-7 Overall this is a statement about the need for ruling authorities. Arising out of 12.14 onwards, with its call for unity amongst diverse people, 12.19 is particularly relevant where it forbids individuals taking the law into their own hands. God wants an orderly society. Anarchy is against God's plan because where law breaks down the bullies and looters have it all their own way. Nor should there be anarchy in the economic sphere where unrestrained individualism makes a minority very rich, powerful and often arrogant. Of course authorities can be corrupt but Paul states that they too are under authority, whether they know it or not. Three times, in vv.4 and 6, Paul calls them God's servants/stewards. Acts 23 1-5. Jesus before Pilate. John 19.11. Authorities are not divine as the Caesars thought themselves to be. All people will eventually face God's judgement. One task for the Church is to remind authorities of their servanthood and their responsibility to rule justly. God worked through Cyrus. Isaiah 45.

In these verses Paul does not specifically mention relations between communities or nations nor does he legitimise violence or using evil means to promote good. Hence a 'just war' theory had to be invented to regulate and legitimise the use of power and

competition between nations. Despite being used to legitimise compliance with war these verses are silent on the matter.

13.1. Every person, no exceptions, including the many people involved in the authority.

Translations give 'submit', 'be subject to', 'obey', the latter in the Jerusalem Bible and The Good News Bible. To submit does not mean total obedience although it often leads to obedience. The authorities do have a rightful claim upon us. However only Jesus has a total claim upon our lives Acts 4.18-20. 5.29. Phil 2 10-11. Some have suggested that 'authorities' also includes principalities and powers but I think v 4, sword symbol of earthly rulers and v.6. the IRD, anchor the authorities to earthly government.

Authorities that exist are established by God, is a general statement. Paul is neither providing a detailed statement of Church and State relationships, nor is he saying who should be the ruling authority nor what system of order is used. However the system should be compatible with the preceding verses and verses 2-4. Paul would know, as we know, that ruling authorities can be far from ideal and may well reverse the sentiments of verses 2 and 3. Was he only thinking of the Roman Empire at that time? 30 years later we have Revelation 13.

13.2. He who resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God. Anarchists and anarchy are not what God wants for the running of society. But this verse does not say that the individual must obey specific laws or orders from an authority. It is just saying there must be an authority, God does not desire a free-for-all. There is, of course, a tension between obedience and dissent, order and anarchy. In the former the person disobeys but is prepared to suffer the consequences of dissent meted out by the authority, eg. The Waihopai Trio; with the latter there is acceptance of neither the authority nor its punishments.

13. 2-4. An ideal situation where the authorities realize themselves to be true servants of God. Paul and the Church have benefited from the Pax Romana but they would be aware of the ethics of the system and its brutal use of force, not least its crucifixions. The sword here is the symbol of civil authority. This

cannot be a mandate for capital punishment or war otherwise 12. 20-21 become a nonsense. Christians did not join the armed forces. They left if converted because they refused to kill people. Maintaining order through a 'police force' was acceptable 1.Peter 2.14.

13.5. People submit not only out of fear but significantly, through conscience. Conscience can work both ways, so when the authority or law is evil, then our submission is to the ideal v.2-4. 'God's agents for your good', v.4 RNEB, not the actual reality of an authority which more than likely thinks itself 'God'. If fear and conscience are in conflict, as they must often be in some countries, then one hopes conscience will win. But 12.14-18. Do not withdraw from society, encourage what is good, and don't seek unnecessary martyrdom.

13.6-7. Paying taxes and debts is part of social responsibility. Rome had two taxes, direct and indirect; the latter was unpopular and had led to riots. Taxes supported Caesar, the armed forces and maintenance of Empire. We are fortunate in that some of our tax goes to Health etc. 'Respect those to whom honour is due.' In the context of order rather than anarchy this includes respect for office even though respect for its holder is well-nigh impossible. 13. 8-10 reflects Jesus. Mat 22.37-39. and is about love fulfilling the law quoting four of the last five of the ten commandments.

13. 11-14. The world's new day dawned with Jesus and our world is now two overlapping worlds. It is the dawn and we are to be up and dressed, not found in our pyjamas.

13.14. Clothed in Christ. This is the famous verse that led to the conversion of St. Augustine when he opened the New Testament at random in a Milanese garden.

V.J.Hartfield May 2010

References. *The Daily Study Bible; Romans* W. Barclay; *A New Commentary on Holy Scripture* C.Gore, H.L.Leighton, A. Guillaume; *The New Testament Basis of Pacifism* G.H.C. Macgregor; *The Message of Romans* J.R.W.Stott.; *The New Interpreters Bible; Romans*. N.T.Wright; *Paul for everyone; The epistle to the Romans* Vincent Taylor.

Anglican Pacifist Fellowship New Zealand Branch

www.converge.org.nz/pma/apf or www.anglicanpeacemaker.org.uk

Chairman: The Revd Dr Jonathan Hartfield, email <ilesha@xtra.co.nz>

Secretary: Chris Barfoot, email <barfoots@xtra.co.nz>

Treasurer: Revd Mary Davies, email <maryad@paradise.net.nz>

Librarian, Resources Manager: Hugh Tollemache, email <nadjatollemache@slingshot.co.nz>

Newsletter Editors: Meg Hartfield, email <ilesha@xtra.co.nz>, Pat Barfoot, email <barfoots@xtra.co.nz>

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