



The ANGLICAN PACIFIST of Aotearoa/New Zealand

Newsletter of the New Zealand Branch of the Anglican Pacifist Fellowship

From the Chairman

For a long time I have been disappointed by the sixth commandment. For me it doesn't go nearly far enough to ensure the safety of the easily led, coerced and vulnerable. It requires lawyers to define it. However we can be grateful for it as it has forbidden lethal amateurs their desires and so helped to make local societies safer places.

We are beginning to think of the whole world as a local society; the UN and International Court of Justice are signs of hope in that direction, so making for a wider application of the commandment as it stands. Despite my disappointment I am grateful, as a common mistranslation was the starting point of my journey into pacifism.

It is not only pacifists who could feel let down by the restriction of this commandment. In the last two months I have been at a multidisciplinary conference on euthanasia and two medical conferences, both of which had a session on the same topic. (Maybe a move towards legality is in the wind?) Participants who were Jewish or Christian and against euthanasia had to find reasons for their opposition other than a simple ban on killing another person. 'There is no easy 'Thou shalt not kill' (Exodus 20.13) except in the King James Version.

Therefore I am greatly looking forward to Nick Frater's Retreat Bible study on killing. I shall also be interested in the reasons different people give for being APF members.

I think our pledge, 'No to war and all preparation for it' is wonderfully simple and practical. It could of course allow people to be totally against war solely on ecological or economic grounds, views that need more emphasis.

Eco-friendly people usually seem well aware of the devastating consequences of war on the environment and their campaigning is refreshingly creative and non-violent.

The economic argument against war and its preparation is more muddled. One would expect people's concern about money, the continuing recession and the election need to drop the tax rate for the affluent, to generate an urgent need to transfer funds from destructive to constructive enterprises. Even the unprecedented natural disasters of the last year which mimic in miniature the effects of total war have not diminished the amount the world spends on the military. Unfortunately the powerful global arms industry puts a strong case for sword manufacture being more lucrative for a nation than creating ploughshares. It certainly does create a lot of jobs and money for a country when its weapons are used on someone else's soil and someone else foots the bill for reconstruction. But that is a tunnel vision for disaster. Some aspects of the present Middle East revolutions must be very disappointing to the industry, although Libya is unhappily coming up trumps. It is not often suppliers have a legal opportunity to destroy their own wares.

In New Zealand we are to spend more on our armed services this coming year despite the need to rebuild part of Christchurch and strengthen many

APF Rescheduled Retreat & AGM

July 1 to 3, Houchen House, Hamilton. Programme second page

buildings throughout our quaky country. We are second in the Global Peace Index (Iceland is first, Japan third, and Sudan, Iraq and Somalia the last three). We have no natural enemies, so why not demilitarise significantly and place those efficient

and well trained people with their resources into a civil defence and reconstruction force for here and overseas? If nations were to follow our example the sixth commandment would probably do.

Jonathan.

Book Review

THE CHRISTIAN PACIFIST – A DEFENCE OF CHRISTIAN PACIFISM

by David Ramanauskas, member of APF UK and a Lay Reader

This very readable book starts with the early Christian fathers (when for the first 300 years of Christianity virtually all Christians were pacifists) through Constantine and his legacy, St. Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, Martin Luther, Calvin and others.

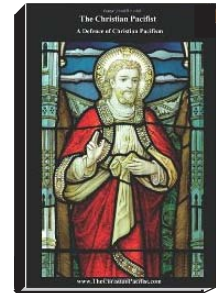
The book answers many of the objections some Christians have towards pacifism, and 27 are described, with appropriate Biblical texts. It suggests a way forward, a way that is obedient to God.

This is not an academic book, but it is an honest account of David's journey from a militarist, serving in the Navy, to his present pacifism. He looked for Biblical justification for his service life in the New Testament. The Iraq war initiated this search because he felt the war to be immoral. To his consternation he found that there was no justification for the 'just war' in the New Testament.

The book includes an impassioned address by Rev. Kenneth Rawlings on Armistice Day 1934, which I found very moving.

This book, published in 2011, can be obtained from Amazon, at \$US9.

Reviewed by Meg Hartfield



Condensed Programme of Retreat Weekend

Houchen House, 83 Houchen Road, Hamilton

(Full programme available on arrival)

Friday 1st July

Arrive from 4.30 pm

6 pm Dinner

7.30 pm AGM with special guest: our Protector,
Archbishop David Moxon

Saturday 2nd July

9.15 am Bible Study: *Why is it wrong to kill?*

11 am Members' stories about how they became pacifists

1.30 pm A representative of Tikanga Maori: *Parihaka and
Early Christian Maori Pacifists.*

Sunday July 3rd

10 am Eucharist at St Peter's Cathedral

Retreat finishes after lunch at Houchen House.

Fees: \$200 per person, residential for the whole weekend (subsidised)

If you have not already registered, please return the registration form as soon as possible.

Thank you to the following who have already registered and thus ensured that the Retreat can go ahead: Jonathan and Meg Hartfield, Virginia Shaw, Stephanie Owen, Dennis Howell, Janette Franks, Michael Bent, Nick Frater, Arthur Palmer, Chris and Pat Barfoot.

Anglican Pacifist Fellowship New Zealand Branch

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