



The ANGLICAN PACIFIST of Aotearoa/New Zealand

Newsletter of the New Zealand Branch of the Anglican Pacifist Fellowship

From the Chairman

The A.P.F's annual retreat weekend is coming fast upon us. Less of an annual this year than usual.

Traditionally it has been in winter when travelling

is at its most difficult and disease most prevalent. Last year swine flu was rearing its ugly snout. So the committee decided to have the retreat at a more clement time in the year in the hope that more members would be able to attend. We also hope that with better weather some will bring family and stay for a few days' holiday.

We also wanted to get out of the main centres from time to time and go to smaller places and support local members. Whanganui was pipped by a single vote last year but Whakatane has us this year. Hopefully it will recruit more members as we will be taking part in the Sunday morning service at the parish church and there is also no reason why interested friends could not be invited to some of the sessions.

It could all help to spread awareness of the APF. Our invisibility, and hence our smallness, has been a major concern for me since becoming your chairman 18 months ago. That is why we are looking forward to member Sande Ramage's proposals to make our message more compelling and vital to the church and community today.

The afternoon session on Saturday is another new departure, for this is the first time we have reached out to the Tikanga Maori. And we are doing so through our combined honouring of the missionary saints, many of whom were both Maori and pacifist.

So I hope you will do your best to attend this stimulating and forward-looking Retreat and AGM.

APFNZ

Retreat & AGM

TITOKI HEALING CENTRE
WHAKATANE

April 9-11

addresses • reflection • worship • fellowship

Details and programme page 2.

I have encouraged members to contribute to our newsletter: articles, quotes cartoons, reviews of books and films, anything large or small, (and editors always like some small fill-ins) that helps to make the Newsletter an interesting and stimulating read so that it can be confidently passed on to a friend and not consigned to a delete key or wastepaper basket. The Rev. Sande Ramage has recently made good comment on a dilemma for our riflebearers so I am delighted she has allowed us to print her thoughts here.

Shalom
Jonathan

APF 2010 Annual Retreat and Conference

TITOKI HEALING CENTRE, WHAKATANE

71 Titoki Road, Poroporo, Bay Of Plenty 3192; (07) 308 6503

APRIL 9 TO 11

PROGRAMME

Friday 9th April

5.30-6 pm Gather
6.15 pm Dinner
7.00 pm AGM
9 pm Evening Prayer

Saturday 10th April

7.30 am Eucharist
8.15 am Breakfast
9.00 am Bible Study by Revd Dr Jonathan Hartfield
10.15 am Morning tea
10.45 am. *Proposals for Development of APF*: Revd Sande Ramage
12.30 Lunch

2 pm *Peacemakers in our Calendar*: Reverend Jo Huta, Vicar of Te Ngae, Rotorua assisted by Revd Geoffrey Neilson

3.30 pm Afternoon tea
Relaxation

6.30 pm Dinner

7.30 pm Continuation of AGM Future Policy (if required). Singing Peace Songs

9 pm Evening prayer

Sunday 11th April

8.15 am Breakfast

10 am Sharing in Eucharist at St George and St John, Whakatane

12.30 Lunch

1.30-2 pm Leave

Peace and Conflict Studies Centre

Breaking News

Dorothy Brown

We started collecting money and ideas for a national centre for peace and conflict studies in 2005. Now the first students have started their courses.

There are four students at PhD level, three students at Masters level and twelve students enrolled for Postgraduate Diploma. One of these is on a Maori scholarship given by the Trust.

I have just been to Dunedin to meet the students. We spent a whole day at the Araiteuru Marae. After the powhiri there was an introduction to the Treaty of Waitangi from Otago University, then the students introduced each other. A very interesting group they are, with very varied backgrounds. I talked about the Trust and mentioned that its first three members were APF people.

The students then shared their reasons for coming to the course and what burning questions each had brought with them, hoping to find help with the answers.

For details of the staff, courses and scholarships at the Centre see

<http://www.otago.ac.nz/humanities/ncpacs/index.html> and www.otago.ac.nz/study/scholarships/postgraduate_scholarships.html

EXPLOITED BY THE INSATIABLE WAR MACHINE

Sande Ramage, 24 January 2010

Pursed lips were the order of the day for Prime Minister John Key and the New Zealand Defence Force when Willie Apiata hit the front pages striding from a fiery engagement in Afghanistan. Nestled in his arms was a biblically referenced weapon, another international political aggravation this week.



presumably, get sorted out back in the arena of conflict. Thinking about them too much only makes the whole process more difficult than it needs to be.

While it seems crazy to be marking weapons with biblical references, and this could surely only happen in the Bible belt of America, our military's pious anxiety is not that believable when we remember it's been hand in glove with the Christian church since its inception.

Padres in the New Zealand Defence Force, like many of our allies, wear uniforms and carry officer rank. Through this embedding they become domesticated and are unable to openly challenge the philosophy of the hand that feeds them. But let's not blame them individually, because the institutional church through its unquestioning involvement with the military is tacitly supporting whatever it does, including killing. I imagine this open support of America's war activities is the reason Trijicon had engraved the biblical references on their products in the first place.

All this hit New Zealand's news as we were waking from our annual post Christmas slumber to a rescreening of the Spielberg classic, Band of Brothers, the story of Easy Company and its motley collection of fascinating characters. This is to be followed by the new Pacific version, which should bleed us right on into ANZAC Day when we will be nicely warmed up to the idea that militarism and force are the only real options to combat the evil that we imagine lurks anywhere but here.

Hiroshima, despite its devastation was meant to bring an end to all this fighting. The idealists never meant the world to now be spending nearly \$2,000 on military force for every dollar spent on conflict prevention. Someone, somewhere has to justify that financial priority because, at heart, we're all peace loving people, aren't we?

A million Britons marched through London to oppose their government's invasion of Iraq in 2003, the largest demonstration in British history. As peace loving as they wanted to be, it didn't change much and now the British dead come home in a ritualised death march through Wootton Bassett, while the rest,

In New Zealand we take a more saintly approach to our involvement in these wars. We consider ourselves

to be peacemakers, apart from Willie and his dashing SAS group who pop in and out of Afghanistan on forays that we were, before the latest photo shoot, not allowed to know much about in case security was compromised. If we thought about these things a bit more, we might even realise that the exotic looking weapons these blokes carry are not fashion accessories like Barbie's Ken, but deadly tools of trade. Perhaps that's the reason for the secrecy, so that we remain ignorant of what is being done in our name.

Timing has its own quirky humour. As Willie settles down with a beer when he's safely home from this deployment, three other bearded characters will take the stand in what is coming to be called the Ploughshares trial, due to begin in Wellington on 8th March. Adrian Leason, Sam Land and Fr Peter Murnane will stand trial for breaking into the Waihopi spy base to 'dismantle an unjust weapon which leads to torture and invasions.'

Peace groups will take to Wellington streets before and during the trial, though it is doubtful that we can muster a million Kiwis to support this peaceful action when the Monday night brainwashing will be in full swing, promoting the value of mainly male mateship through militarism.

They say that when one mythology starts to wane, another will rise to take its place, for we are all, despite our sophistication, frightened people adrift in a hostile world looking for salvation from whatever ails us. The Christian story of the man who let go his hold on life, so that others could see a way to find theirs through non-violently challenging unjust regimes and religious systems, has lost its purchase in Western culture. Tragically, the one that appears to be rising to replace it lauds violent acts against humanity and the Earth, calls that leadership and makes heroes of its actors; the idealistic young, exploited by the insatiable war machine and called mercenaries if they were employed by anyone other than the government. - <http://www.spiritedcrone.com/?sid=40>

THE VICAR OF BAGHDAD

FIGHTING FOR PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST by Andrew White



Reviewed by Pat Barfoot

The Revd Andrew White is an extraordinary vicar. Early in life he became passionately interested in the relationships between Christians and Jews. He qualified as an 'operating department practitioner' at St Thomas' Hospital, London, but soon became aware of a call to the ordained ministry in the Anglican Church. As part of his Cambridge theological studies he paid two visits to Jerusalem to study Judaism; there he met some Islamic leaders and began to study Islam as well. In Jerusalem he also underwent some deep spiritual experiences, encountering the glory of God, which were to provide the inspiration and strength for his future peacemaking work.

After about six years after his ordination he was appointed canon in charge of international ministry at Coventry Cathedral, succeeding Paul Oestreicher. A diagnosis of multiple sclerosis soon after this appointment did not daunt his spirit.

In the next two years Andrew travelled frequently between Coventry and Jerusalem, trying to get different groups together, especially Israelis and Palestinians and opposing (on the subject of Israel-Palestine) groups of Christians. "At the heart of Jesus' teaching is the command to love your enemy, and yet so many of his followers today seemed readier to take sides than to seek reconciliation."

Towards the end of 2000, when the Oslo Accords were beginning to break down, Andrew had the opportunity to bring some of the religious leaders together, with the help of Dr George Carey, then Archbishop of Canterbury. After a mind-boggling series of meetings, on a roller-coaster of hope and disappointment, the First Alexandria Declaration of the Religious leaders of the Holy Land was signed "and signed with joy".

Andrew was later involved in the resolution of the siege of the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem.

Meanwhile, he had achieved a visit to Iraq and was soon meeting with leaders of the Sunni and Shia factions as well as Christians there. After 9/11 he felt that the Iraq war was inevitable and "was no longer opposed to the very idea of war". Returning to Iraq after the war he was appalled, first by stories from Iraqis of the atrocities they

or their families had suffered under Saddam Hussein and then at the chaos and increasing violence as opposing groups poured in from neighbouring countries and terrorist attacks became part of everyday life.

Andrew's efforts to get the different religious leaders together and to secure the release of hostages has never slackened, although he is always in danger and has often received death threats. His comments on the difficulties he faces include:

I am involved with both religious and political leaders and I find they often fail to understand each other. Western politicians do not appreciate that religious extremists need to be addressed in religious language. On the other hand, most religious leaders have little insight into the nature of Western politics and are unaware that most of our politicians find violence in the name of God incomprehensible. Often, a further obstacle to mutual understanding is the belief shared by both kinds of leader that the only way to deal with the other kind is by force. Both of them tend to assume that if you hurt someone enough they will submit to your will. The problem with this assumption is that usually it results only in an escalation of violence.

Andrew has the care of two congregations in Baghdad: the Anglican church of St George of Mesopotamia and the chapel in the American Embassy. He describes the former as "the most wonderful church in the world". Starting with a handful of expatriates, the congregation now numbers nearly 2000, mostly Iraqis.

Andrew does not claim to be a pacifist, but has been where all but a few pacifists fear to tread. At the end of his introductory chapter he writes:

As my work has become ever more complex and difficult, it is only the presence of the glory of God that has enabled me to do what I have to do. With God, all things are possible.

The Vicar of Baghdad, Fighting for Peace in the Middle East, by Andrew White. Monarch Books, Oxford, 2009. (Chris & Pat have a copy which they are happy to lend to members.)

Anglican Pacifist Fellowship New Zealand Branch

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

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