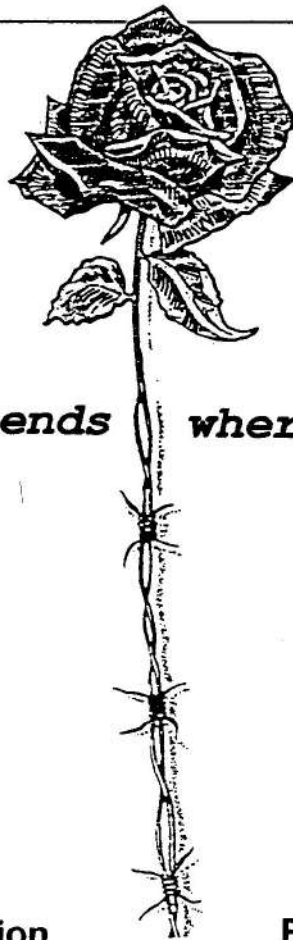


# CHRISTIAN NONVIOLENCE

- A study pack

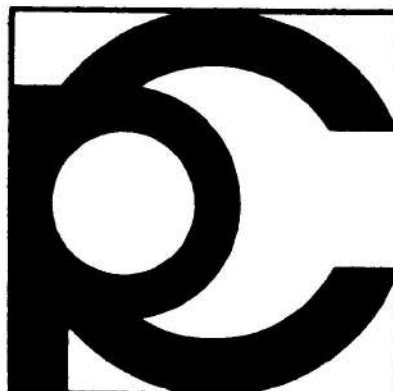


*violence ends where love begins*

Produced jointly by;

Fellowship of Reconciliation  
(Northern Ireland)

Pax Christi Ireland  
(Belfast branch)



**This pack is dedicated to the memory of**

**DENIS BARRITT,**

**Christian peacemaker.**



## WELCOME TO THIS PACK ON CHRISTIAN NONVIOLENCE

While this pack is designed primarily for group use - and sections can be photocopied as needed for group members - it can also be used for individual study.

The Christian calling is a radical one. Yet it can be difficult to know what the calling of a Christian is in today's world and particularly the role of the Christian in a world of ever increasing violence.

This pack is designed to help people think through what it means to be a Christian peacemaker;

- (1) What, if anything, should distinguish a Christian peacemaker?
- (2) What implications does the nonviolent approach have for Christians?
- (3) What does Jesus call us to do through his teaching and the teaching of the Christian church?

The aim of this pack is to help you in your search for the answers.



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Material suitable for photocopying to give to groups is marked with numerals in the right hand top corner.

Other material for group leaders/facilitators is marked with letters and appears on coloured paper.

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### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The New Revised Standard version of the bible is used throughout.  
 Thanks to Jörn Röpke whose Bible study was adapted for the one on Cain and Abel.  
 The 'Trapped' and 'Attackers and victims' exercises are adapted by the Nonviolent Action Training project from training by De Expeditie, Amersfoort, Netherlands.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Publication date; October 1993.

This pack is produced by the Fellowship of Reconciliation in Northern Ireland and Pax Christi Ireland, Belfast Branch.

Additional copies can be obtained from;

- FOR, 224 Lisburn Road, Belfast BT9 6GE, phone Belfast 660194 (most afternoons), or from;
- Pax Christi, 52 Lower Rathmines Road, Dublin 6, phone Dublin 965293.

**PLEASE NOTE** that while the pack is designed principally for group study, it is not the intention to supply groups with bulk copies; group leaders are at liberty to make their own additional copies by photocopying. So generally only one copy will be sent out.

To people in Ireland, the pack is available at £1 while stocks last. People in the North should send UK£1 (payable to FOR) to the Belfast address; in the Republic send IR£1 (payable to Pax Christi) to the Dublin address. This is a basic charge to help cover costs and additional donations are welcome. People outside Ireland who want a copy should send UK£2.00 to the FOR address (cheques made out to the FOR) for surface mail delivery.

You are invited to make comments about this pack to the publishers, and a form is provided at the back of the pack which you may find convenient to use, or just write or phone as you wish. We would value your comments.

# USING THE PACK

## SOME BRIEF GUIDELINES FOR GROUP LEADERS/FACILITATORS

While we make some suggestions here for the use of the pack we would encourage you to adapt and use the material to suit your own particular needs. We would suggest a minimum of five sessions of between one and a half to two hours to allow a group to get to grips fully with the material; however, there is material here for eight or even more sessions (some individual questions posed could easily provoke an hour's debate!). Individual sections can also be used in other programmes or on their own.

Material which you may want to photocopy and use as handouts to groups has been numbered in large numerals for easy reference (and deliberately appears on white paper to avoid making photocopying difficult); other material is labelled with letters.

## STARTING OFF

One of the two introductory activities in Exploring violence and nonviolence (Item B; 'Trapped' or 'Attackers and victims') is a good lively way to start. These are not specifically Christian but you can allow and encourage reflection from a Christian point of view. The Cain and Abel or Beatitude studies provide an alternative starting point.

In addition, or alternatively, the following quotations could be used as the starting point for group discussion;

A. "If our friends are on good terms with us and are close to us, there is nothing that can make us aware of our negative thoughts. It is only when we are attacked and criticised that we can get to know ourselves and that we can judge the quality of our love. Our enemies are also our greatest masters. They allow us to test our strength, our tolerance, our respect for others." (Dalai Lama).

B. In a world riddled with violence, we have to take initiatives for peace. The world's response is to meet violence with violence, fight fire with fire. But Jesus taught us a different way: "You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' But I say to you.....if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also..... You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbour and hate your enemy. But I say to you, 'Love your enemies.....' (Matthew 5: 38-39, 43-44).

C. "But ours is a world filled with violence. No one can disagree with that. Its reality is too obvious. It is evident at all levels of our experience: personal, institutional, national and international. We see violence abroad and we see violence in our own country. And when we look within ourselves, we find that same demon not far beneath the surface in our own hearts." ("Way of peace - a Guide to Nonviolence", Pax Christi USA)

## OTHER SECTIONS

### THE BIBLE STUDIES (Items 1, 2, and 3)

(Cain and Abel, The Beatitudes, Jesus and his teaching)

These are important in providing a grounded Christian approach.

### PERSONAL NONVIOLENCE (Item 4)

We may need to stress that nonviolence is not something 'out there' but something which should relate to our whole lives, and this needs to be included in any look at Christian nonviolence. If we are to follow the example of Jesus how should this influence our relationship with others?

### CHRISTIANS AND WAR (Item 5)

This section is important in providing an historical view of the development of Christian thinking. As a facilitator you may need to do some reading and thinking on this one for yourself! You need to allow people time to work through this and raise questions and comments as they go. The questions at the end of this section are important and if possible should be discussed in detail; those on Christian responses to armed action could be given a whole session if desired.

### RESOURCES SECTION (Item 6)

If we are committed to Christian belief, and we are committed to nonviolence, there is no end to our journeying: we have always to be open to new insights. In using this material perhaps certain topics will have arisen which people might like to look at in greater detail, either individually or collectively. The Resource Section gives some brief pointers on where to look - both in terms of material and groups. If you are looking for something you cannot find - please ask us and we will try to help.

### LITURGY (Item 7)

We have included a liturgy which you may wish to use.

- We wish you God's blessing with your study! ✨



*We have to repeat  
continuously,  
although it is a  
voice crying in  
the desert,  
No to violence,  
Yes to peace.*

*- Archbishop  
Oscar Romero*

Introductory exercises;

# EXPLORING VIOLENCE AND NONVIOLENCE

B

Christian nonviolence - a study pack



## Introduction

These two exercises could both be used as part of a series but in a shorter time period could best be thought of as alternatives (since both culminate with 'nonviolent' alternatives to violence). They can be used with any age group but older people, or disabled people, may find it impossible to participate. There is however plenty of need for observers - as people who are not directly involved in a situation tend to see things that others do not, and the importance of this role should be stated. People should be given the option of being observers, i.e. not forced to participate. If working indoors you may need to be careful with the second exercise.

If desired, the Nonviolent Action Training project (NAT) is willing to facilitate either of these exercises and subsequent discussion.

## Exercise 1; 'Trapped' (closed circle)

This can easily be done inside. You will need at least ten or twelve people for the circle, plus a couple of people to go in the middle; fewer than ten for the circle may make it too small. Others should be observers. Those in the circle stand as close as they can together, feet together, and arms around each other; two volunteers are placed in the centre and are 'trapped' there. The two in the centre are then told to get out; the people in the circle move to prevent the 'trapped' getting out. There is to be no talking, so it is a non-verbal exercise.

Once the first two have tried it, and either failed or succeeded in getting out, another two people may be allowed to try (they can be people in the circle who swap places with the previous two 'trapped' people).

This exercise is tried one final time, with another two volunteers to be 'trapped'. Only this time the two volunteers for the centre are told to try to use imaginative, creative, and nonviolent ways of getting out (again non-verbally).

The exercise should be concluded by sharing of perceptions by participants.

## Exercise 2; 'Attackers and victims'

(exploring violence and third party intervention)

This is best done outside, on grass, in a clearly defined area; one 30 metres by 20 metres is probably large enough for up to twenty people, but use whatever is available (the larger the area the more energetic it can become. Obstacles such as a few trees are fine). It can be done inside in a large classroom or similar situation but runs a greater risk of someone being

hurt. In an indoors situation you also need to set guidelines, e.g. it is/is not all right to walk on/jump over desks, tables etc.). It is a non-verbal exercise except towards the end (stage e).

It sounds a bit complicated but gets quite clear once you've tried it!

Those who want to are paired off; one person in each pair becomes the 'attacker' and one the 'victim'. Others become observers (observers can be invited to join in the process at c) below if they have been reluctant to join in initially). It needs to be explained that roles will be reversed so that everyone gets a fair 'crack of the whip!' The attackers then make for themselves fairly stout newspaper batons by rolling up perhaps a couple of newspapers (you need to bring sufficient newspaper for this task).

**Role play a)** You get 'attackers' together and tell them that on 'go' they are to chase and hit their partner (no one else). You then call 'victims' aside and tell them on the word 'go' they are to run away as fast as they can from their 'attacker' (both keeping within the defined area). Call 'go' and see what happens! You can call a halt after a minute or so when it is clear how everyone is reacting, or immediately if someone is being hurt beyond what people are happy with as part of the exercise.

**Role play b)** You then get 'attacker' and 'victim' to change role (and newspaper baton). Again 'attackers' are to hit the 'victims'. This time you call 'victims' aside and tell them (without others hearing) that instead of running away they are to stand where they find themselves on 'go', and try to make open, non-verbal, friendly and non-physical contact with their 'attacker'. Just let it run long enough to get the point.

**Role play c)** At this stage people need to form into groups of three (the facilitator can make up a number if needed and any observers who wish to join in can do so (or any participants who wish may become observers). This time the three roles are of 'attacker', 'victim' and 'intervener'. 'Victims' when called aside are told to run away from their 'attacker' on the word 'go'. 'Interveners' are called aside and asked to intervene 'politely' but not physically, the kind of "Excuse me, do you really think you should be doing that?" kind of thing. Again, let it run just long enough for people to find out what happens.

**Role play d)** Switch roles. 'Victims' are again to run away. When you call 'interveners' aside, this time tell them they are to intervene physically, to try to physically prevent and restrain the attack.

**Role play e)** Switch roles. 'Victims' are still to run away. This time when you call 'interveners' aside, tell them they are to try to prevent the attack by imaginative, creative and nonviolent methods (which could range from offering to buy them a pint, telling them their granny is mortally ill, that they've had a big win in a free draw and they've to come immediately, that their victim has a bad heart and is likely to die at any minute etc, or some imaginative non-verbal action). Don't start the exercise until interveners have had a minute to think what they're going to do.

When this exercise is finished, call everyone back together and discuss the exercise, starting with role play a), and if necessary asking "how did the attackers feel?", "how did the victims feel?", "what did the observers think?" and, with the later role plays "what did the interveners feel?".

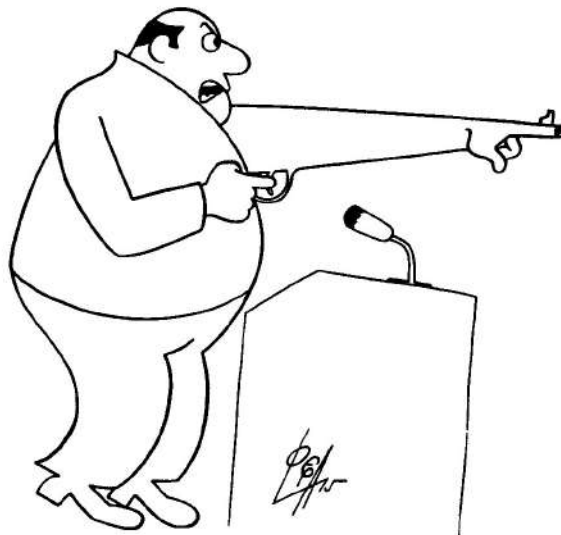
Any general points not already raised should be invited once you have discussed e).

## FURTHER DISCUSSION ON EXPERIENCES OF VIOLENCE

B.3

This can be a good starting point for discussing physical attacks, and violence and oppression in general, which individuals have experienced. However this should only be undertaken by an experienced facilitator who is confident in allowing anything that comes up to be dealt with. Some brief points here;

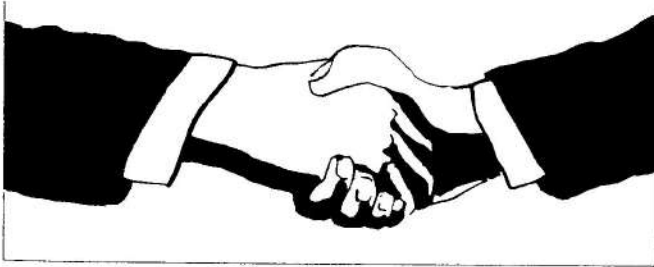
- 1) Before starting such discussion there has to be agreement in the group about  
a) confidentiality ('what is shared here of a personal nature should not be repeated outside') and  
b) people only volunteer information about themselves, not about other people. It is a good idea to ensure that everyone is agreed.
- 2) A possible starting point is breaking up the group into pairs (possibly with two people who don't know each other well), and having one person speak to the other for about 5 minutes (with no interruptions except for clarification) about their own experiences of violence and oppression at home, in school or at work, in the neighbourhood and elsewhere. It is important in Northern Ireland to stress that this is not simply to do with experiences of 'the troubles' (although this can come into it) but a more general exploration of violence and oppression, including experiences of being put down or humiliated. Once the time is up for one person, then switch to allow the other person to speak for the same length of time.
- 3) After the sharing in pairs, people can share what they want in the larger group, taking note of the ground rule only to share about themselves (and not from what their partner in the paired discussion has shared). Pick up any points worth following and a discussion can be developed.
- 4) A suitable way of ending this kind of session on a positive note is to use a brainstorm (see definition below), listing ideas such as "Christian responses to the kinds of violence we have been thinking about..." This ends the session on a note of "There are things which we can do about these kinds of violence..."
- 5) It can also be taken further by role-playing certain situations, perhaps based loosely on incidents shared by people (with the agreement of the person who mentioned it). The aim is to explore possible alternative responses.



**Brainstorm;** where a list is made of everyone's thoughts and ideas on a topic without any initial comment; single words or short phrases are written down, usually on a large chart or sheet of paper. We are all inhibited in expressing ideas where we worry about what other people will think. In a brainstorm it can be fun because zany and way out ideas are invited, along with serious and conventional ones, liberating us from the fear of being put down for suggesting something too 'silly' or too 'serious'. The facilitator needs to be strict that no comments are allowed during the brainstorm itself; this can be allowed to run until ideas dry up, or for a specified time. Afterwards, the ideas can be assessed, or people who suggested something interesting asked to explain in further detail what they were thinking about.







This portion of scripture is worth studying - probably the prime reason is that it evokes emotions which have an echo in our own lives.

A member of the group should read the story aloud. Then allow a few minutes for each person to read the text again and to think about it in silence.

Give information about the context of the story. It is the first text after the 'fall into sin' and being thrown out of paradise. The author wants to tell more than just a story. The act of violence that happens in this story can be seen as a paradigm for every other act of violence. One can say the author wants to portray 'world history'.

As Cain saw it;

- (a) Abel was favoured by the Lord;
- (b) He was a threat to his future;
- (c) He had to be 'got rid of' to eliminate the threat.
- (d) His younger brother had succeeded where he had failed. What a disgrace!

The questions arise:

1. Why was Cain's offering unacceptable?
2. Should he have accepted the seeming 'censure' from the Lord and determined to learn from it?
3. We are not told in verse 8 what form the conversation between the two brothers took. This is an opportunity for two members of the group to role-play this situation.
4. Then there is the conversation between Cain and the Lord.
  - (i) The Lord knew what had happened to Abel, so why did he ask?
  - (ii) Cain answered with a lie. Was the lie
    - (a) justifiable?
    - (b) wrong?
    - (c) stupid?
5. And then he said "Am I my brother's keeper?". Question: Was he?  
Two members might each take a different viewpoint and discuss it, with the group summing up afterwards.
6. It would seem from verses 10 - 12 that the Lord was saying "Your punishment will fit the crime". Cain immediately sees his future very clearly and responds. It is very bleak. He doesn't voice any regrets or any excuses for what he has done.

(i) Could he have blamed the Lord for not accepting his sacrifice and so turning him against his brother?

(ii) Could he have looked further back to when his parents, Adam and Eve, were expelled from Eden? (How often do we blame 'history', individual and national, for our own conduct?)

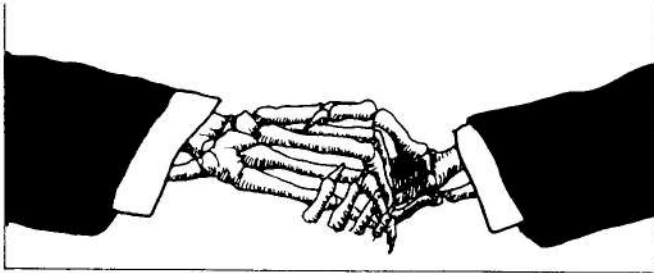
(iii) Could he have expressed regret and thrown himself on God's mercy, asking for forgiveness?

7. Note verse 15. The Lord says that, despite what Cain has done, he will protect him. Comment on this.

8. Use brainstorming to tell the story differently, and with a different ending (perhaps substituting love for jealousy and violence). You can ask the question "How could the story have gone differently?".

9. Can the Cain and Abel story be applied to personal and group experiences?

10. What are your responses when confronted with problems similar to those experienced by Cain?



The dictionary defines 'blessed' as 'consecrated, revered, fortunate'.

Verse 3; *"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."*

To know one's need of God, i.e. one's poverty, is the first step in satisfying that need. This verse would seem to say that to know oneself in the kingdom of heaven is a fulfilment of that need. It however implies three things;

- (i) The awareness of the need.
- (ii) The action required to fill the need. (The group can be asked what steps could be taken)
- (iii) The awareness of one's being included in the "kingdom of heaven". The word 'kingdom' implies a king at its head, and to be in that kingdom implies that one is a son or daughter of that king, and all that that means - not only the joy but the responsibility as well.

Verse 4; *"Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted."*

Question: Could the real interpretation of what Jesus said be - 'How blessed are those who mourn when they shall be comforted'? It may also have been deliberate to make the statement in verse 3 first, i.e. the consolation comes from being children of the kingdom.

Verse 5; *"Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth."*

A modern parable (by Anthony de Mello) reads -  
"A monkey on a tree hurled a coconut at the head of a Sufi. The man picked it up, drank the milk, ate the flesh and made a bowl from the shell"  
So - 'thank you for your criticism of me'.

Verse 6; *"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled."*

"Who hunger and thirst" may mean fasting (but note that fasting doesn't always mean from food only). Or it might imply simply a deep yearning.

Does this mean 'those who sacrifice'?

This may mean letting go of our 'power', our prejudices and 'standing in the other person's shoes'. "They will be filled" - filled because they have their need fulfilled?

Verse 7; *"Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy."*

Note that this verse does not say "they will receive mercy from the person to whom mercy was shown", but the question arises whether one is more likely to receive mercy from the recipient. It is because God has shown mercy to us that we must shown mercy to others (cf. The ungrateful servant, Matthew 18; 23 - 35).

Could it be that we ourselves, having shown mercy, will be more merciful to ourselves, knowing that we have acted with Christian love?

Verse 8; *"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God"*.

This seems to say that if we have uncluttered spiritual vision, free from greed, jealousy, love of power etc., that we shall see God.

- Does "see God" mean;
- See God in nature?
  - See God in other people?
  - See God in our hearts?
  - See God in an after-life?

Verse 9; *"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God."*

Question; Where does peace start?  
 Answer; In your own heart?  
 Do you agree?

Recall perhaps how often 'your heart' was unpeaceful, and your day was filled with argument and stress.

Recall perhaps how often you were aware of being peaceful and all your contacts that day were happy.

In the latter case 'The world was your family'. Perhaps another way to say it is (verse 3) you were 'part of the kingdom'.

But who, in general, are 'the peacemakers'? You can brainstorm some answers.

Verse 10; *"Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."*

One immediately thinks of prisoners of conscience, but there are many people who follow their conscience and suffer derision, scorn and often violence. They may lose friends, praise and suffer hurt, but the kingdom of heaven (which is within) cannot be taken from them.

A free discussion could follow working through this Bible passage. ✨



A person who knew nothing about Christ but who decided to discover what Christ taught by observing the way Christians live might decide that Christ taught as follows:

Blessed are the rich for theirs is the kingdom of God.  
 Blessed are the violent for they shall possess the land.  
 Blessed are those who afflict others, they shall be comforted.  
 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for power: they shall be filled.  
 Blessed are the merciless: they will get ahead.  
 Blessed are the war-makers: they are God's children.  
 Blessed are you when men honour you and say all manner of praise about you for your reward is also great in heaven.

- Richard McSorley in "The New Testament Basis of Peacemaking".

Compare this with the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew chapter 5).

# JESUS AND HIS TEACHING

Christian nonviolence - a study pack



The Celtic version of  
"The wolf shall also dwell with the lamb"  
Isaiah, Chap.11, ver 6 - 9; chap. 65, verse 25.  
Christ monogram page, Book of Kells.

The image of Jesus wielding a sword - or a modern rifle, machine gun or missile launcher - is an impossible one. Yet there are many who believe Christian teaching as such permits warfare. There are many who wish to claim that mantle of Christian respectability for a particular war or armed struggle; the fact that a particular struggle is just, does not imply that it is 'just' to use force in pursuit of that struggle.

The Jewish prophetic tradition looked to an era of universal peace and love in which;

"He shall judge between the nations,  
and shall arbitrate for many peoples;  
and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares  
and their spears into pruning hooks;  
nation shall not lift up sword against nation,  
neither shall they learn war any more." (Isaiah 2: 4)

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus, the Prince of Peace, gave humanity a blueprint for this new era and said "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God" (Matthew 5: 9).

He reminded his followers that the Ten Commandments forbade murder but he was also concerned not only with acts of deadly violence but also with the psychological events that precede killing and violence.

Jesus sees worship as being totally incompatible with enmity, so fundamental is respect for the lives of others in his teaching:

"So when you are offering your gift at the altar, if you remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother or sister, and then come and offer your gift." (Matthew 5: 23, 24)

Jesus also states; "But I say to you that if you are angry with a brother or sister, you will be liable to judgement;.....and if you say, 'You fool', you will be liable to the hell of fire." (Matthew 5: 22)

Jesus told his followers that they were no longer to apply the principle of "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth" but were to repay evil with good. They were to love their enemies and pray for their persecutors:

"But I say to you,  
Love your enemies and pray for those who  
persecute you, so that you may be children  
of your father in heaven;  
for he makes his sun rise of the evil and on the good,  
and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous."  
(Matthew 5: 44- 45)

(See also Luke 6:27 - 31 and Romans 12: 14- 21).

This law of love includes all people, not only our own families and friends or our own country. "Love your enemy" clearly makes it universal. We cannot love our enemies by killing them.

Jesus clearly and emphatically told Peter that "all who take the sword will perish by the sword." (Matthew 26: 52).

The message of Jesus is one of love and reconciliation. As Christians we are urged to live peacefully with others, no matter how unpeaceful those others may be, and in no way to seek revenge. We are charged with changing the minds of enemies and to bring them to another way of thinking rather than to kill them.

## Topics for discussion

1. What did Jesus mean by this statement: "Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth; I have not come to bring peace but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and one's foes will be members of one's own household" (Matthew 10: 34 - 36). Is he in fact authorising hatred and division? What kind of peace is the peace of Christ? How does it differ from the peace the world offers?
2. Reflecting on the word and example of Jesus, we can identify seven disciplines of active love that are essential aspects of personal and group response to enmity:
  - Praying for enemies
  - Doing good to enemies
  - Turning the other cheek
  - Offering forgiveness
  - Breaking down the dividing wall of enmity
  - Offering nonviolent resistance to evil
  - Recognising Jesus in others
 (from "Making enemies friends" by Jim Forest)
3. "You have to prefer to be killed yourself rather than kill another." (Hildegard Goss-Mayr)
4. What implications has Jesus' teaching for us in our daily lives?
5. "The teaching to do good to enemies is idealistic and totally unrealistic. Trying to love one's enemies is trying to love where love is impossible."
6. In the novel "Crime and punishment" a brilliant student, in debt to a moneylender, spends long hours imagining how, through one act of violence, he might obtain a miserly old woman's fortune. In examining the intellectual and spiritual life of the student in the months preceding the actual killing, the reader is invited to realise that he is a murderer even when his victim is still alive and well.

Has this story any relationship with the teachings of Jesus? Does it contain any implications for Christians?



"If we are enjoined, then, to love our enemies.....whom have we to hate?"  
- Tertullian

Let us reflect on the words of the hymn "Peace will come. Let it begin with me." Jesus clearly calls on each one of us to be nonviolent in our personal relationships with others. "But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven." (Matthew 5: 44 - 45)

How can we love people who criticise us, hate us, defraud us, attack us? Are we to allow them to walk all over us? Are we not to defend ourselves? Should we always give in and thus encourage the aggressor?

The world around us is full of fear, distrust, hatred, anger and violence. The church - which is us - will only be able to contribute to the lessening of these evils when we, its members, have found true peace in our own hearts. We have to accept Christ's peace for ourselves before we can offer it to others. To be a peacemaker, a reconciler, we must ourselves be 'at peace'.

How then do we seek to reconcile?

1. Always take the initiative. Jesus asks us always to take the initiative in the matter of reconciliation, even when we are in the right and the other person is at fault: "So when you are offering your gift at the altar, if you remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar; first be reconciled to your brother or sister, and then come and offer your gift." (Matthew 5: 23 - 24).


How can we take the initiative in situations between husband and wife, parents and children, friends, colleagues at work? Is it seen as giving in? Showing weakness? Surrendering our values and principles? Anything for an easy time? What do we do if our efforts at reconciliation are rejected?

2. In any encounter with another person, the Christian should always be prepared to listen, have an open mind, give the benefit of the doubt, be forgiving. When this is so, it encourages the other person to be more open, more forthcoming, more prepared to move from a defensive position, more ready to be reconciled, to accept and offer forgiveness.

A development of this approach is the search for effective methods of helping individuals and groups to re-establish contact. This includes discussion techniques, the search for real compromise and/or consensus, and the more formal avenues of negotiation, arbitration and mediation.

3. Do not stress being right. What is really important is that we live in a positive and 'constructive' fashion within the human and Christian community - not the consciousness of knowing that we are in the right or in a position to crush the other person by arguments. "Let us therefore no longer pass judgement on one another, but resolve instead never to put a stumbling block or hindrance in the way of another.....Let us then pursue what makes for peace and mutual upbuilding." (Romans 14: 13, 19)

It would be useful at this point to consider situations where we as individuals or as a society have stood on our rights and waited for the other person to apologise first, wanted our way or 'stuck to our guns' (sometimes literally) because we were convinced that we were right.

We can be violent in so many ways in our personal life: we can be violent and aggressive in our language. We can drive aggressively. We can be sarcastic and insulting. We can 'put down', ignore or snub people. We can pressurise others. We can refuse to co-operate, to listen to others. We can try to force our opinions on others. Is this the Christian attitude? 

## Some Symptoms of Inner Peace

1. Tendency to think and act spontaneously rather than from fear based on past experiences.
2. An unmistakable ability to enjoy each moment.
3. Loss of interest in judging other people.
4. Loss of interest in judging self.
5. Loss of interest in interpreting the actions of others.
6. Loss of interest in conflict.
7. Loss of ability to worry (A very serious symptom).
8. Frequent, overwhelming episodes of appreciation.
9. Contented feelings of connectedness with others and nature.
10. Frequent attacks of smiling through the eyes from the heart.
11. Increasing tendency to let things happen rather than make them happen.
12. Increased susceptibility to kindness extended by others as well as the uncontrollable urge to extend it.

- The Peace Pilgrim.



## Whatever you do...

I was hungry and you fed the arms race to protect my 'freedom',  
 I was thirsty and you built armoured tanks instead of clean water tanks,  
 I was homeless and you built fall-out shelters in your back gardens,  
 I was naked and you clothed and trained the armed forces,  
 I was sick but scientists were too busy perfecting new weapon systems,  
 I was a prisoner of poverty but you argued that it was because of laziness or a necessary atonement for the sins of humanity.

Then it will be the turn of the president, and the generals, and all their supporters and all those who were indifferent to ask, "Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty, homeless or naked, sick or in prison, and did not come to your help?" then he will answer, "I tell you solemnly, in so far as you neglected to do this to one of the least of these, you neglected to do it to me." (Adapted from Mathew 25).

## What you can do with \$25 billion

The 1993 'State of the world's children' report from UNICEF says that for an extra \$25 billion a year it would be possible to halve child malnutrition in the world, control the major childhood diseases, eradicate polio, bring clean water to all communities, provide a basic education for all children, and make family planning available to all couples.

\$25 billion! That's -

- Less than the USA spends on cigarettes every 6 months and Western Europe spends on alcohol every three months
- About as much as the developing world spends every six months to pay the wages of its soldiers
- A little less than the 1992 support package for Russia agreed by the 'Group of 7' rich nations
- A little more than the estimated cost of Hong Kong's new airport.
- Less than the government of Japan has allocated, in 1992, for building a new road from Tokyo to Kobe.

How impossible can you get!





Christians have always agonised over the questions of war and peace and at different times throughout their histories the churches have espoused three main viewpoints;

- (1) Christians as pacifists or believers in nonviolence
- (2) followers of the 'just war' theory
- (3) crusaders.

It might be useful to look briefly at Christian approaches to the issues of war and peace in order to help form a right conscience on this all-important matter.

### The early church

The early church was very radical by contemporary standards including the communal sharing of their possessions. Initially it was certainly out of the question to be a Christian and a soldier; there are no records of Christian soldiers for the first 150 years. St Justin Martyr (165 AD) said; "We who formerly murdered one another, now not only do not make war upon our enemies, but, that we may not lie or deceive our judges, we gladly die confessing Christ."

And the martyred Maximilian, executed in 295 because he refused to be a soldier, told the court "I am not allowed to be a soldier. I am a Christian."

St Clement of Alexandria (220) observed "Various peoples incite the passions of war by martial music; Christians employ only the Word of god, the instrument of peace."

St Cyprian (258) lamented that, although homicide when committed by individuals was a crime, it was considered a virtue by the pagans when carried on publicly.

After 170 AD there are isolated reports of Christians in the Roman army, but it appears that they acted as police rather than as soldiers. St Martin of Tours (397) remained in the Roman army for two years after his conversion. But when he was called upon to participate in battle, he resigned from the service stating "I am a soldier of Christ, I cannot fight."

One difficulty there is in transferring the nonviolence of the early church to today is the argument that the early church was expecting an imminent 'second coming' of Christ and therefore did not fully get involved in the affairs of the world; and because they could not participate in emperor worship this anyway ruled out serving the Roman emperor as a soldier. A further confusing factor is that in many instances the role of soldiers was a policing role rather than engaging in warfare. When Christians did get to grips with issues of power and authority as they became more numerous, the argument goes, violence and war became necessary evils or evil necessities in certain cases.

But this argument, while reflecting what actually happened, is not fully true to Jesus' teaching. Are Christians meant to live any differently whether or not the world is about to end? If Jesus established a radical new morality of loving enemies, by which his followers were invited to live, then this applies today in just the same way as when he shared his teachings with his followers. If we are to be followers of Jesus then we need to try to follow his teachings; obviously this implies applying them to end of twentieth century Europe where we live rather than 1st century Palestine. But it is the application rather than the core teaching that changes.



ST. AUGUSTINE

## The 'Just War' theory

A significant change began when the Roman Emperor Constantine in 313 recognised Christianity as the official religion of the empire. The church became an institution closely linked with the civil authority. As such, Christianity attempted to develop an application of the law of love that permitted legitimate defence of the innocent against unjust aggression. Ever since, the greatest thinkers in Christendom have wrestled - with something less than success - to reconcile the fundamental dilemma between love and violence.

In a few generations Christianity went from being an oppressed body to being the official religion and an ally of the state.

Christians discovered a way of embracing both war and the Gospel. They did this by the 'just war theory' first developed by St Augustine in the fourth century. It says that, under certain conditions - strictly adhered to - a particular war might be an exception to the Gospel rather than a violation of it.

There are different formulations of the 'just war' principles which in the main were not new thinking but adopted from contemporary Roman and Jewish thought.

Richard McSorley's summary of the Augustinian conditions is as follows;

- 1) there must be a declaration of war by the king
- 2) it must be the last resort
- 3) there must be a good intention on the side declaring war
- 4) there must be protection of the innocent and
- 5) a proportion of good over evil must be kept.

Once this 'just war' formulation was established there were further developments of thinking regarding war within the Christian world. One was the 'crusade' (the origin of the word comes from 'cross') or holy war. While 'the crusades' are associated with a particular period in the middle ages in reality the concept of a crusade comes right down to the current day; the concept continues of a morally-justified war 'because we are right' without any attention to the 'just war' conditions mentioned above.

## The continuation of a Christian nonviolent tradition

There was nevertheless the continuation of a nonviolent tradition within Christianity through religious communities of priests, monks and nuns who as part of their vocation would never take up arms. The most famous person in this category is probably Francis of Assisi, born in the 1180's; he renounced riches to follow a life of poverty and dedication to others through service and preaching the Christian message.

The Reformation of the 16th and 17th centuries produced whole bodies of Christians who believed in a nonviolent response and that Christians should not engage in warfare. The Quakers, or Society of Friends, are the best known in this part of the world but there are others such as the Mennonites and the Church of the Brethren. These are sometimes called the three 'peace churches' or 'historic peace churches' and their influence continues to this day. Like the early Christians, these churches have been a committed minority providing an extremely valuable witness to the love ethic of the Gospel which is too easily overlooked by majorities both in church and state.

With the evolution of the nation state and modern nationalism from around the time of the French revolution in the latter part of the 18th century, national churches tended to back national wars. Many churches, as in Britain, were already 'established', that is, the recognised religion of the state. Protestant theology tended to back a particular understanding of the necessary role of state power. In both world wars most churches backed their respective governments and war efforts.

But with the coming of the nuclear age and the threat of mass annihilation - either through the use of nuclear weapons or blanket use of conventional weapons (as with the bombing of Dresden in the Second World War) - church and theological thinking began a reassessment. If a condition of 'just war' was protection of the innocent, how could the innocent be protected in modern warfare? The proportion of civilians to combatants killed in wars had been increasing all the time. Attention was also drawn to the fact that expenditure on armaments, even if never used, killed people by diverting resources away from tackling poverty and disease. Many church people, including bishops, became at least 'nuclear pacifists' (that is, people believing the use of weapons of mass destruction such as nuclear weapons was always wrong).

It is too early to say that many in the church are returning to the original Christian practice of the early church regarding violence and killing. What it would be true to say is that many more people today are questioning what the role of the Christian should be in relation to this area.

Those who believe in nonviolence - for whatever religious, philosophical or pragmatic principles - are often accused of naivety. But if this is the case then Jesus Christ was naive. However, just as there have been developments in modern warfare there have been developments in nonviolent thought and in the practice of many peoples - using nonviolent action as an automatic response against oppressors (e.g. Eastern Europe, the Philippines, South Africa, Russia and the former Soviet Union) - which perhaps show that the real naivety may rest with those who still believe killing is compatible with Christian faith.

## Questions

1. Gandhi once said; "The only people on earth who do not see Christ and his teachings as nonviolent are Christians." What did Gandhi mean? Does the life of Jesus offer an alternative to the violence that surrounds us? And if so, what does that demand of those of us who call ourselves followers of Christ?
2. Martin Luther King stated; "You don't practise nonviolence by attending conferences - you practise it on the picket lines." How can Christians apply the Sermon on the Mount in a practical way as advocated by Martin Luther King?
3. "Peace I leave with you.....I do not give to you as the world gives." (John 14: 27). "Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth: I have not come to bring peace, but a sword" (Matthew 10: 34). What kind of peace is the peace of Christ? How does it differ from the peace the world gives?
4. How should Christians respond to an act of violence such as the terrorisation of a district by a gang, sectarian violence or the invasion of their country by a foreign power?
5. If the security of the state was threatened by armed insurrection against the expressed wishes of the majority of the people, what should the Christian response be?

6. Can Christians legitimately be members of the armed forces in a purely defensive role to defend the state?

7. While "Give to an emperor the things that are the emperor's and to God the things that are God's" (Mark 12: 17) can certainly be interpreted as conditional acceptance of some of the role of the state, there is a clear balance here. The emperor is not to be paid what is God's. Thus if God's law contradicts the state it is the duty of the Christian to obey God's law. There is no mention here of the military role of the state so this is a matter of interpretation in relation to this passage. And surely if love and respect for the human person (made in God's image) are essential ingredients of the Christian gospel, then nonviolence is the appropriate response to involvement in the world.

8. St Augustine taught that only a man who loves his enemy might kill him: "No one indeed is fit to inflict punishment save the one who has first overcome hate in his heart. The love of enemies admits of no dispensation, but love does not exclude wars of mercy waged by the good."

9. "Force is used in police action, but police action is not killing in war. Police action is different from war action. Police ordinarily do not try to kill but to arrest. Police usually are limited to their own territory and work under the framework of their country's laws. They do not ordinarily attack groups or use weapons of massive destruction. A police force can develop to resemble the military especially in time of war. Generally police are different enough from the military that you can separate them both physically and mentally." (Jim Forest in "Making enemies friends")



Illustration from 'Spending for Peace' (CWDE Cartoon Sheet)



**Or we could buy 1,000 classrooms  
for 30,000 children!**

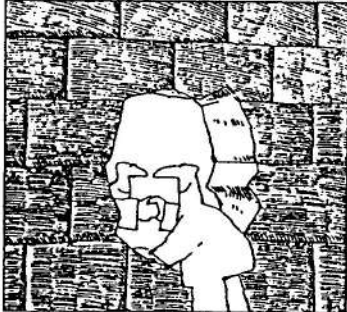
"What can be said of this theory of the "just war"? Above all, one must recognise that it did not intend to "justify" war, rather it intended to limit its frequency and ferocity, assigning very precise and severe conditions and rules in terms of which a war could be called "just". the intention of Catholic theologians and canonists in elaborating the theory of the "just war" was therefore praiseworthy. But the theory had the grave defect of being infeasible, in the sense that a war could not be conducted according to the criteria for a just war.....these conditions of a "just war" were and are unobtainable...." - 'Christian conscience and modern war' in the Vatican paper 'Civiltà Cattolica' 6/7/91

"Jesus, through his death and resurrection, has already won the victory over all evil. He made evident that self-giving love, obedience to the way of the Cross, is the way to reconciliation in all relationships and conflicts. therefore the use of violence is ultimately contradictory to the Gospel." - from Lambeth Conference Declaration.

# RESOURCES ON CHRISTIAN NONVIOLENCE

6

Christian nonviolence - a study pack



## GROUPS

### - **Fellowship of Reconciliation** (Northern Ireland) (FOR);

This is a Christian peace movement, affiliated to the International Fellowship of Reconciliation. It is committed to the transformation of society through the reconciling power of love, as revealed and interpreted in the life and death of Jesus Christ. The Fellowship rejects the use of violence and war to resolve conflicts in society and believes that Christ's Way of the Cross calls us to the work of reconciliation in personal, community, national and international life.

This commitment has led FOR to initiate War on Want in Ireland, organise north-south/Protestant-Catholic conferences (as far back as the 1950s), to campaign against nuclear weapons, to run cross-community playschemes in areas of conflict in Londonderry, Lurgan and Belfast, and to join whenever possible with other church, school, community and peace groups in the never-ending task of peacemaking.

- FOR, 224 Lisburn Road, Belfast BT9 6GE, phone Belfast 660194 (most weekday afternoons).

### - **Pax Christi** Ireland (PCI);

Its aims include -

- (a) Propagation of Christian teaching on peace and justice; the establishment of peace through justice.
- (b) The promotion of reconciliation in society;
- (c) The exposition of the futility of violence and the ultimate efficacy of non-violence;
- (d) The provision of a meeting place for Christians who are willing to commit themselves to the promotion of peace and justice;
- (e) The education and training of peace leaders in dealing with conflict through non-violent alternatives, and the changing of unjust structures of society through non-violent means;
- (f) Collaboration with other peace organisations and individuals in the task of establishing peace and justice in Ireland and in the world.

- Pax Christi, 52 Lower Rathmines Road, Dublin 6, phone Dublin 965293.  
Belfast branch; c/o 26 Wheatfield Gardens, Belfast 14, phone 716925.

### - **Nonviolent Action Training project** (NAT);

As well as providing resources on nonviolence in general, NAT is willing to help people explore the religious, spiritual, moral and philosophical bases of nonviolence. Will help you track down any resources you're looking for! Closely linked with INNATE, the nonviolence network, of which FOR and Pax Christi are also members (an introductory leaflet about INNATE, available on request, lists other groups.) NAT, 16 Ravensdene Park, Belfast BT6 0DA, phone Belfast 647106.

### - **Peace Education Resource Centre** (PERC);

The stock carried by PERC (at 48 Elmwood Avenue, Belfast BT9 6AZ, phone Belfast 662992) includes much on religion and conflict as well as more general materials on peace, conflict and international understanding. They produce an excellent catalogue.

Queries/orders in the Republic should go to; Irish Commission for Justice and Peace, 169 Booterstown Avenue, Blackrock, Co Dublin (phone Dublin 2885021).



## INTERNATIONAL NETWORKS

### - International Fellowship of Reconciliation (IFOR)

Principally Christian in Europe, the IFOR is a worldwide inter-faith network of people who approach nonviolence with a spiritual dimension. It offers resources in terms of contact with other groups and regular publications.

IFOR, Spoorstraat 38, 1815 BK Alkmaar, Netherlands, phone 31-72-123014.

### - Pax Christi International

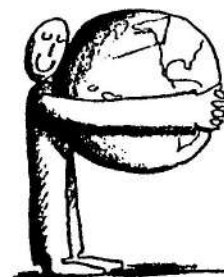
Pax Christi is an international Catholic peace movement with national sections in four continents. Its concerns internationally include; security and disarmament, human rights, East-West contacts, North-South (hemisphere) relations, peace education, peace spirituality, nonviolence, faith, dialogue and reconciliation.

Pax Christi International, Oude Graanmarkt 21, 1000 Brussels, Belgium, phone 32-2-502 55 50.

### - Church and peace

'Church and peace' is a European network of 'historic peace church' groups and others committed to Christian nonviolence. Corrymeela (8 Upper Crescent, Belfast BT7 1NT, phone 325008) and the Dublin Mennonite Community (101 Annadale Drive, Drumcondra, Dublin 9, phone 370953) are the two Irish members; contact them or the office address of Church and Peace is;

Ringstrasse 14, D-35641 Schoeffengrund, Germany, phone 49-6445-5588.



## PRINTED and other RESOURCES

Please check prices before ordering from stockists listed; prices are given only to provide an indication of cost and may have altered recently; postage may be extra.

### THE FUNDAMENTALS OF CHRISTIAN TEACHING ON NONVIOLENCE

- "New Testament Basis of Peacemaking" by Richard McSorley, Herald Press, 1985. A very clear and precise examination of the biblical basis and of arguments in relation to it. 165 pages. Available; Dublin Mennonite Community, PERC or NAT.
- "Nonviolence in Christian Tradition" by Gerard Vanderhaar, Pax Christi Britain and USA, 16 pages. Excellent introduction or overview on the subject.
- "Peace" action pack, ECONI (Evangelical Contribution on Northern Ireland); excellent 34-page (A4), biblically based study pack on peace (with loads of biblical references), including bible studies, discussion material and suggested programme. £3.99 plus 30p postage from; City of Belfast YMCA, 12 Wellington Place, Belfast BT1 6BR.
- "Pathways to peace - Pax Christi International Retreats", 23 pages, Pax Christi International, 1989. Reflections on Christian spirituality and nonviolence.
- "The politics of love: The New Testament and Non-Violent Revolution" by John Ferguson. James Clarke and Co, Cambridge, 1973.
- British FOR has produced some excellent short 'Briefing' papers including ones on "Pacifism and the Early Church" by Alan Litherland, "The Just war in the Christian Tradition" by Hamish Walker, "The Spirituality of Nonviolence" by Bede Smith, and on "The Historical Peace Churches". Available; FOR.
- "The Christians and Peace pack - resources for study, worship and commitment" includes "What the bible says about....." series on peace, violence, justice, reconciliation, poverty, plus other materials. Published by Joint Peace Education Programme. £2 from PERC.

### APPLYING CHRISTIAN NONVIOLENCE

- "Peacemaking day by day", daily readings produced by Pax Christi Ireland and Pax Christi Britain. Available; Pax Christi, £3.50.
- "The gospel and the struggle for peace; training seminar in evangelical nonviolence and methods of engaging in it" by Jean and Hildegard Goss-Mayr, IFOR, 1990, 54 pages. Available from IFOR or for £2.90 plus postage from Nonviolent Action Training project. Information on the kind of Christian nonviolence seminars run by the world's best known Christian nonviolence educators and trainers.
- "Making enemies friends; Reflections on the teachings of Jesus about the love of enemies" by Jim Forest, Marshall Pickering, 1987, 120 pages.

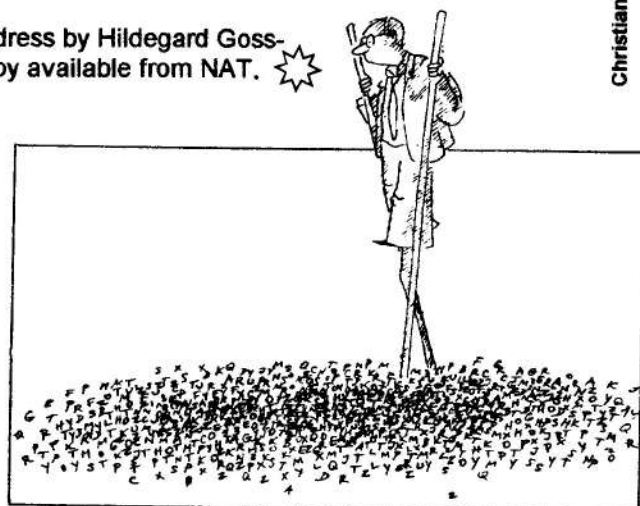
- "Violence and nonviolence in South Africa: Jesus' Third Way" by Walter Wink. New Society Publishers, 1987; available on loan from NAT. UK price about £4. A detailed report on a workshop run by June and Walter Wink at the Corrymeela Centre, Ballycastle, appeared in Dawn Train No.10 (available from NAT). See also Walter Wink's book "Engaging the powers: Discernment and Resistance in a World of Domination", Fortress Press, Minneapolis, 1992, 424 pages.
- "Guide to the members and friends of Church and Peace". 77 pages, 1987. Includes useful introduction to the 'historic peace churches'. Available; Church and Peace
- "Repairing the breach; Ministering in Community Conflict" by Ronald Kraybill. Explores different ways of being involved in conflict resolution. Herald Press, 1980, 95 pages. Available; Dublin Mennonite Community, or NAT on loan.
- Video - "A conversation on Christian nonviolence" with Fr George Zabelka, Fr Emmanuel Charles McCarthy, and Mairead Corrigan Maguire. One hour video discussion. Also audio and video tapes of talks by McCarthy. Available from; Peter and Vera McGuinness, 8 Moneynoe Park, Enniskillen, Co Fermanagh.
- The disarmament movement of the 'eighties produced much material on nuclear and other weapons, including some from a Christian perspective, e.g. "What are they saying about peace and war?" by Thomas A. Shannon, Paulist Press, 1983, 131 pages; this is an American Catholic view, including a chapter on the development of the 'just war' theory.
- "Pilgrims for peace - a discussion book for church and other groups" by John Johansen-Berg, published by the Community for Reconciliation in England, is a similar publication in a British ecumenical context (Community for Reconciliation, Barnes Close, Chadwick, off Malthouse Lane, Nr Bromsgrove, Worcs B61 0RA, England). £2.50 plus postage.

#### CHRISTIAN APPROACHES TO THE CONFLICT IN NORTHERN IRELAND

- "Violence in Ireland". 1976, the first such report from an inter-church viewpoint following 'the troubles' in 1969.
- "Breaking Down the Enmity - Faith and Politics in the Northern Ireland Conflict" by An Interchurch Group on Faith and Politics. This is a compendium of different documents issued by the group 1985-92 (187 pages) and is available from them at 8 Upper Crescent, Belfast BT7 1NT. Price £2.95 plus postage.
- See also the ECONI 'Peace' pack above.

#### NONVIOLENCE AND OTHER RELIGIONS

- "Absolute respect for the human being", Niwano Peace Prize address by Hildegard Goss-Mayr, 1991. From Peace Media Service No.25, 6 pages; photocopy available from NAT. ✨

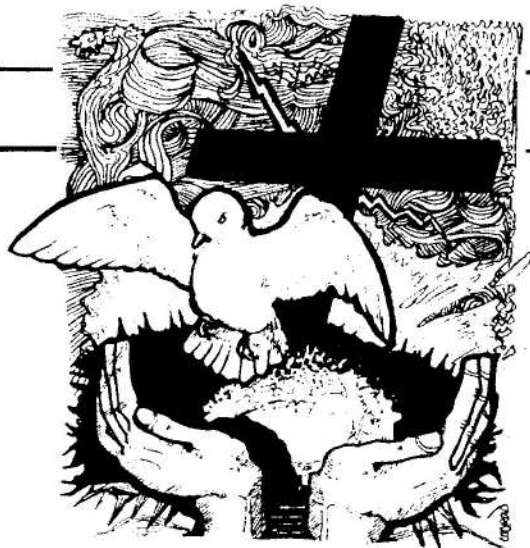


"We conclude that we are not condemned to war and violence because of our biology. Instead it is possible for us to end war and the suffering it causes. We cannot do it by working alone, but only by working together. However, it makes a big difference whether or not each one of us believes that we can do it. Otherwise, we may not even try. War was invented in ancient times, and in the same way we can invent peace in our time. It is up to each of us to do our part." - Seville Statement on Violence (UNESCO).

# A NONVIOLENCE LITURGY

7

Christian nonviolence - a study pack



*Opening hymn:* Music/Taizé chant, or  
Here I am Lord, or  
How Lovely On The Mountains

## HERE I AM LORD

1. I, the Lord of sea and sky,  
I have heard my people cry.  
All who dwell in dark and sin  
My hand will save.  
I who made the stars of night,  
I will make their darkness bright.  
Who will bring my light to them?  
Whom shall I send?

### REFRAIN;

Here I am Lord.  
Is it I Lord?  
I have heard you calling  
In the night.  
I will go Lord,  
If you lead me  
I will hold your people  
In my heart.

2. I, the Lord of snow and rain,  
I have borne my people's pain.  
I have wept for love of them.  
They turn away.  
I will break their hearts of stone,  
Give them hearts for love alone.  
I will speak my word to them.  
Whom shall I send?

### REFRAIN

3. I, the Lord of wind and flame,  
I will tend the poor and lame,  
I will set a feast for them.  
My hand will save.  
Finest bread I will provide  
Till their hearts be satisfied,  
I will give my life to them,  
Whom shall I send?

### REFRAIN

## HOW LOVELY ON THE MOUNTAINS

1. How lovely on the mountains  
are the feet of him  
who brings good news, good news,  
announcing peace,  
proclaiming news of happiness:  
Our God reigns. (6 times)

2. You watchmen, lift your voices  
joyfully as one  
shout for your king, your king  
See eye to eye  
the Lord restoring Sion:  
Our God reigns. (6)

3. Waterplaces of Jerusalem,  
break forth with joy!  
We are redeemed, redeemed.  
The Lord has saved  
and comforted his people.  
Our God reigns. (6)

4. Ends of the earth, see  
the salvation of our God!  
Jesus is Lord, is Lord  
Before the nations,  
he has bared his holy arm.  
Our God reigns. (6)



## Opening prayer

O Risen Christ,  
 you breathe your Holy Spirit on us  
 like a gentle breeze  
 and you tell us: 'Peace be yours'.  
 Opening ourselves to your peace,  
 letting it penetrate  
 the harsh and rocky ground  
 of our hearts,  
 means preparing ourselves to be  
 bearers of reconciliation  
 wherever you may place us.  
 But you know that at times  
 we are at a loss.  
 So come and lead us  
 to wait in silence,  
 to let a ray of hope shine forth  
 in our world.  
 - Brother Roger, Taizé

## Silence

**Reading;** Deuteronomy 30: 15 - 20

## Prayer of Confession (from "Celebrating Together", Corrymeela)

*Leader:* Lord we have failed as your peacemakers; we have continued to live by violence, in our homes, our country and our world.

*Response:* LORD HAVE MERCY

*Leader:* Lord, we have refused your freedom; we have remained trapped within our narrow prejudices, we have not learned to trust one another or reached out to those who are different.

*Response:* LORD HAVE MERCY

*Leader:* Lord, we have failed to love; we have turned from those who love us and hurt them, we have chosen not to see those who need us.

*Response:* LORD HAVE MERCY.

*Leader:* God, we confess these and all the ways by which we have turned from you and from each other.

*Response:* FOR THE SAKE OF CHRIST OUR LORD, FORGIVE US AND BRING US BACK TO YOU AND TO LIFE.

AMEN.

**Meditation** (from 'Violence, Nonviolence and the Struggle for Social Justice', WCC August 1973, par. 17-20)

We do agree, however, that Jesus' commandment to love all human beings must be the strong basis for all our actions. It means love for enemies as well as friends. It excludes all hatred against persons, groups, classes, peoples or races. "But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you." (Matthew 5: 44)

This is a social as well as a personal commandment. Liberation of human beings is both an internal and external task. They may not be separated, neither may either be absorbed into the other. Inner freedom from hate and fear is a preparation for the work of social liberation, never a substitute for it. The destruction of structures of injustice and violence in a society prepares the way for covenants of peace among people, but these covenants must be sealed by individuals inwardly free of violence toward the neighbour.

We agree that all struggle against the misuse of power must include the concern to realise justice and freedom according to God's purpose for all people even our enemies, in the present and in the future. (Romans 12: 19 - 21)

We agree, furthermore, in our confidence that God will realise this purpose for all people. God's work will be complete when this victory over all the powers of the world is made manifest. This confidence prevents us standing aside and seeking peace only for ourselves. It leads us into the world and into the battle for justice and freedom for all people in order to have a humble part in God's work.

**Hymn; Be Not Afraid** (based on Isaiah 43 and Luke 6)

1. You shall cross the barren desert,  
but you shall not die of thirst.  
You shall wander far in safety  
though you do not know the way.  
You shall speak your words to foreign ones  
and they will understand.  
You will see the face of God and live.

**REFRAIN**

Be not afraid.  
I go before you always.  
Come follow me,  
and I will give you rest.

2. If you pass through raging waters in the sea,  
you shall not drown.  
If you walk amid the burning flames,  
you shall not be harmed.  
If you stand before the pow'r of hell  
and death is at your side,  
know that I am with you through it all.  
**REFRAIN**

3. Blessed are you poor,  
for the kingdom shall be theirs.  
Blest are you that weep and mourn,  
For one day you shall laugh.  
And if wicked ones insult and hate you  
all because of me,  
blessed, blessed are you!  
**REFRAIN**

**Reading:** Isaiah 2: 1 - 5 (Swords into ploughshares)



**Prayer**

(Select from the following)

**A disarming exercise** (From "Journey for a soul" by G. Appleton);

Let me hold quietly in my mind before God the names of people I find difficult, who have been critical of me, of whom I am apprehensive or jealous or envious, any who may have done me a bad turn, all whom I find it difficult to love, praying that God's goodwill may be done for them as for myself. We are both then within the circle of God's forgiveness and love.

**The Prayer of St Francis;**

Lord, make us instruments of your peace:

Where there is hatred, let us sow love:

Where there is injury, pardon:

Where there is doubt, faith:

Where there is despair, hope:

Where there is darkness, light:

Where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master, grant that we might not so much seek

to be consoled as to console,

to be understood as to understand,

to be loved as to love,

For it is in giving that we receive, in pardoning that we are pardoned, and in dying that we are born to eternal life. **AMEN**

**For Nonviolence** (from "The fire of peace" by John Dear, PC-USA)

God, thank you for your great love  
and all that you give to me.  
Give me the grace and the courage  
to live a life of nonviolence  
so that I may be faithful to Jesus.  
Send me your Spirit that I may love everyone  
as my sister and my brother and not fear anyone.  
Help me to be an instrument of your peace;  
to respond with love  
and not to retaliate with violence;  
to accept suffering rather than inflict it;

to live more simply;  
to resist death and to choose life  
for all your children.  
Guide me along the way of nonviolence.  
Disarm my heart  
and I shall be your instrument  
to disarm other hearts.  
Lead me, God of nonviolence,  
into your reign of love and peace,  
where there is no fear and no violence.  
In the name of Jesus. Amen.

**Go Forth in Peace** (from "Celebrating together", Corrymeela)

Go forth into the world in peace, have courage, hold fast what is good, return no one evil for evil; strengthen the faint-hearted, support the weak, help the suffering; honour all men and women; love and serve the Lord, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit. AMEN.

**A Celtic Blessing**

Deep peace of the running wave to you.  
Deep peace of the flowing air to you.  
Deep peace of the quiet earth to you.  
Deep peace of the shining stars to you.  
Deep peace of the Son of peace to you.



**Closing hymn;** He sent me to bring the good news to the poor, or  
Let us spread the pollen of peace, or  
Let us pray for peace (below)

**Let us pray for peace** (by Alan Gaunt, No.413 in "Hymns and Psalms; a Methodist and Ecumenical Hymn Book)

1. We pray for peace.  
But not the easy peace  
Built on complacency  
And not the truth of God;  
We pray for real peace,  
The peace God's love alone can seal.

2. We pray for peace,  
But not the cruel peace  
Leaving God's poor bereft  
And dying in distress;  
We pray for real peace,  
Enriching all humanity.

3. We pray for peace,  
And not the evil peace  
Defending unjust laws  
And nursing prejudice,  
But for the real peace  
Of justice, truth and brotherhood.

4. We pray for peace:  
Holy communion  
With Christ our risen Lord  
And all humanity;  
God's will fulfilled on earth.  
And all his creatures reconciled.

5. We pray for peace,  
And, for the sake of peace,  
Look to the risen Christ,  
Who gives the grace we need  
To serve the cause of peace  
And make our own self-sacrifice.

6. God, give us peace;  
If you withdraw your love  
There is no peace for us,  
Nor any hope of it.  
With you to lead us on,  
Through death or tumult, peace will come. ✨

