Caring for Creation

All Faiths for Peace,

Justice, Sustainability

Saturday 29th March
10.30-5pm
Oxford Town Hall

In this issue:
Caring for Creation
Nuclear Power
CND 50th Anniversary

Plus news, reviews, events and prayer diary
What on Earth?

What’s the idea behind our big meeting, ‘Caring for Creation’? What is Christian CND hoping to achieve? Why have we so generously offered equal space to other organisations?

✧ We value developing relationships and understanding between organisations concerned about threats to life on the planet.

✧ This kind of meeting helps people see the links between the threats.

✧ Joint meetings of campaigners, whether working for peace, justice or sustainability, can reinforce efforts on all fronts and give rise to greater hope. (Christian CND and Christian Ecology Link will be issuing a joint statement.)

The meeting is going to be positive. It is not going to be allowed to be a session bemoaning the situation the world is in. Instead, the speakers and workshop leaders are being asked to concentrate on enabling us all to discover what we can do.

Our country is enriched by people from many different traditions. Therefore the event is multi-faith. We welcome the members of our interfaith panel.

National CND will have celebrated its 50th birthday (see page 6). Christians were prominent in its foundation. Christian CND is the section which liaises with the Christian denominations. Recently, we have also worked to develop dialogue with other believers on the moral case against nuclear weapons. We know that members of other faiths are concerned about justice and sustainability too.

As well as people from other faiths (and none), our welcome cannot but include workers from the aid agencies. We are very aware of the poverty and suffering caused by injustice and inequality, as well as by environmental damage, armaments and the lack of peace.

Our children will inherit this planet from us. Their creative work representing their wishes for it will be on display.

To sum up then, although the event will be opened by the Lord Mayor of Oxford who is a Mayor for Peace, this is an occasion when Christian CND will refrain from blowing its own trumpet too hard. That’s because we believe that by providing an event where everyone can be present on equal terms, there is much to be gained by all. May fresh hope be engendered for our precious world!

Michael Pulham
Christian CND held a Vigil 1-2pm the four Thursdays of Advent, on the same pattern as in 2006. I went to the first one thinking I would be the only one there, but just as I was coming round the roundabout there was someone in a bright jacket, and I thought, a Peace Person - Chris from Islington, quite a way to come. We were between 10 and 20 for the 4 Vigils. Faithful people came from Oxford, Reading, Didcot, Wallingford, Wokingham, Heathfield, London, Mere, and a group from a theology college in Birmingham. We had a 'skeleton' liturgy which worked particularly well as people said their names and where they came from and why they were there. We had a moving testimony from the Birmingham theologians, including, 'My name is David and I am training for the Methodist ministry at the Queen's Foundation in Birmingham. From next September I shall be standing in a pulpit as a representative of God's people. I do not believe that I can preach the Word of God with integrity without also standing up for what is right in God's world. That is why I am here.' Professor John Hull gave a brief homily on that occasion.

Compared with last year, we had no press interest, probably because it was the second time round and the Trident Replacement decision has now been taken. My main purpose was to make an event to which ordinary local people, not heavily involved in the peace movement, was not much fulfilled. Vigillers were mostly people very heavily involved indeed. It was quite a bit of work and commitment from me, which I will not be able to give again. It was marvellous how it all came together on the days; David Partridge from CANA with a megaphone, Ruth from Wokingham with a useful banner; there's a useful web of people there and it's a useful thing to do, so here I think is a nice little project for someone. And we got to figure in the MoD Police and Guarding Agency annual report!

Caroline Gilbert

Holy Innocents 2007

Patricia Pulham met Brian Haw (left) at the Holy Innocents commemoration on 27 December 2007.
And now for something completely different ...

You will have seen the cover of this issue of Ploughshare, so what is it all about? We wanted to put the issue of nuclear disarmament firmly in the centre of issues concerned with the future of the earth. We wanted to link Peace with Justice and Sustainability - to keep our relationships with other faiths strong - to create a vision of the Kingdom of God. In addition, it was to be a celebration of our world, an opportunity to find ways individuals could be part of the solution to the earth's problems and an opportunity for children and young people to let us know their hopes for the future. It was to be an event that would be attractive to people with many different concerns - a day for us all.

After a welcome from the Lord Mayor, a Mayor for Peace, Ellen Teague, who is well known to members of the National Justice and Peace Network, will facilitate the programme. The speakers are Dr Edward Echlin, an ecological theologian and writer on Earth Spirituality who is particularly interested in relating peace, justice and the earth community which we all share, Mark Dowd, the newly appointed Campaign Strategist of Operation Noah, - Mark is an award-winning documentary-maker and the Churches' Media Council's choice as the 2006 Religious Broadcaster of the Year - and our good friend, Carol Naughton, past Chair of CND from Come Clean, the WMD Awareness Programme. A panel of speakers from other Faiths will comment and add their faith insights. Michael Meacher MP will also be present.

So that we can be encouraged by ways in which we can make a difference, we can choose one of a variety of workshops. Oxford CND will be showing the new Nukewatch film, Pat Gaffney from Pax Christi on Palestine, Ruth Jarman from CEL on 'Living Hopefully on a Planet under Threat', the Peace Tax Seven, and more.

To make the day a celebration, there will be a singing workshop, a Peace Tent, music including a group singing West Papuan songs, crafts from different cultures, and lots of stalls from many different agencies. Local schools have been invited to submit art-work, essays or poetry on their vision for the future. We hope to produce a booklet of their contributions.

The new CND Nuclear Education Trust has given us a generous grant and we are pleased to have as co-sponsors, CEL, FOR and Pax Christi, but we would still welcome donations to help cover the cost. We think it is important to have free admission so that no-one is discouraged from coming. Neither is there any need to register in advance.

So what can you do? If you are within easy travelling distance, please COME. (Contact the office for details of transport, car-parking and map). If you are near enough and intend to come, consider offering help on the day. Can you distribute fliers or put up A4 posters at the back of your church? Let us know.

Updates and details of the timetable will be available on our website.
Mark Dowd (left) is a writer and television broadcaster. After pursuing a vocation as a Dominican friar in the Catholic Church, Mark was tempted out of religious life by a postgraduate degree in International Relations at St Antony’s College Oxford. This proved a useful base for twelve years in the BBC on Newsnight and Panorama.

In 2001, Mark became a national figure in front of the camera, fronting a number of award-winning documentaries on Channel Four, including Children of Abraham: a post 9/11 journey through the monotheistic faiths and Tsunami: Where was God? He was awarded the prestigious “Religious Broadcaster of the Year” by the Churches, Media Council, in June 2006.

His most recent film, GOD IS GREEN, which challenged the world’s faiths over Climate Change, aired in February 2007.

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Three Prayers for Peace

Lord God,

We bring you our deep concern for the fragile beauty of your world and for the vulnerable lives of your children threatened by the existence of nuclear weapons. Help governments and people to trust each other and to move away from reliance on a terror that blights the lives of the young. We pray for all-round nuclear disarmament that could be a step towards a world that is truly brave and new.

Amen.

Jesus, Son of God, we have heard your words, “Peace I give to you.”

Make us witnesses to your truth, the truth of justice born of right relationships with all nations, the truth that will set us free to live under your reign as sisters and brothers of the God of life.

Instil in us the confidence that all will be well if we dare to disarm and follow the path of peace.

Amen.

Lord, help us in our desire to be peacemakers. You tell us not to be afraid and assure us of the Father’s love. In that love you came to us, passionate about how things should and will be. Grant us your grace and remind us we are never alone in what we try to do, even should we need to burn as stars in the dark.

Amen.
In 1952 Britain started its own atomic tests and in 1955 the government announced that Britain would make its own hydrogen bomb (more powerful than the original atom bombs). All over the country new peace groups started to spring up in spontaneous protest.

Gertrudge Fishwick, Christian pacifist, former suffragette and retired civil servant, was one of the people who protested. Concerned about the radiation risks of H-bomb tests, she started the Golders Green Committee for the Abolition of Nuclear Weapon Tests. In 1957 a National Committee for the Abolition of Nuclear Weapon Tests (NCANWT) was formed to link together more than a hundred local groups like hers. In May of that year two thousand women with banners and black sashes held a march and rally in Trafalgar Square to demonstrate their opposition to the tests.

Two Quakers, Sheila and Harold Steele, took a different approach. They decided to protest by sailing a boat into the testing zone in the Pacific Ocean. Their attempt was unsuccessful, but the Direct Action Committee (DAC), formed in 1957 to support them, began to plan a new project: a four-day Easter march from London to the Aldermaston Atomic Weapons’ Research Establishment in Berkshire.

The Conservative Government by now made it clear that future British defence policy would rely chiefly on nuclear weapons as a deterrent against possible attack. Any hope that the Labour Party would adopt a different position was dashed at the 1957 Labour Party conference when a resolution calling for British unilateral renunciation of nuclear weapons was heavily defeated by the Labour leaders and delegates.

Soon after this, the writer, J.B. Priestley, published an article in the New Statesman in which he captured the feelings of many people who were fearful about the threat of nuclear war. The magazine’s editor, Kingsley Martin, was so overwhelmed by the massive public response to this article that he proposed a meeting to plan a nationwide campaign against nuclear weapons.

In January 1958 about fifty people - well-known novelists and professors, clergymen and journalists - met in the home of Canon John Collins of St Paul’s Cathedral. They included the sponsors and organisers of the National Committee for the Abolition of Nuclear Weapons Tests who agreed to transfer their energies, funds, staff and local groups to a new Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. Its aims would be broader than simply opposition to nuclear tests. Bertrand Russell was chosen as President; Canon Collins as chair; and Peggy Duff, an experienced campaigner, became organising secretary.

CND was launched at a public meeting on 17 February 1958 in the Central Hall, Westminster. Several overflow halls were filled with an enthusiastic audience.

Despite these numbers and the impressive platform of speakers (who included the historian A.J.P. Taylor) the meeting was ignored by the press. But the Easter march organised by the DAC received wide press coverage and proved to be an important demonstration of popular opinion. Several thousand people took part in the final day’s march to Aldermaston. The following year CND took over the organisation of the march (from Aldermaston to London this time) and numbers grew. In 1960 there were approximately 100,000 at the final rally. The annual Aldermaston March became the best known of all CND activities. With its symbol, spirit, songs and varied assortment of determined marchers, the ‘ban the bomb’ protests have become part of British folklore.

Valerie Flessati
From ‘Waking the Sleeping Giant’
16-17 February 2008

Global Summit for a Nuclear Weapon-Free World: Laying the Practical, Technical and Political Groundwork at City Hall, London.

This is a delegate Conference and will be a big event in the UK disarmament calendar. It commemorates the 50th anniversary of the founding of CND and will bring together experts and activists from a number of different arenas, nationally and internationally, to discuss how nuclear disarmament can be achieved.

For more information: CND 020 7700 2393

The Bomb Stops Here: Surround the Base at Aldermaston on Easter Monday, 24 March, at 12 noon.

CND is commemorating the 50th Anniversary of the first Aldermaston March with a big event at Aldermaston. The idea is for each gate to have a theme which reflects one of the decades of protest. This could be reflected by the music and entertainment at the gate and having people dressing in the appropriate clothing of that era.

During the day there should be enough people to surround the base. This will take about 5,000 people who can be linked with arms, banners, ribbons or other props.

A number of speakers have been confirmed; faith leaders, activists, international campaigners, trade unionists, parliamentarians and more. About 20 - 30 people from Japan, including a few Hibakusha will also be attending. If you know any entertainers who may be interested in coming along please let CND know.

For more information: CND 020 7700 2393.

Quakers plan to be present as a block - all faiths welcome to join them. No details as yet, for more info: quakers@aldermaston2008.org.uk
Our ‘Caring for Creation’ day in Oxford makes links between peace, justice and sustainability.

The quotes from the press releases below relating to the recent government announcement of the approval of a new generation of nuclear power stations illustrates one way these issues are connected.

Ruth Jarman of C.E.L. (and one of our workshop leaders at our Oxford event) writes:

“There is no scientific consensus about the safety of nuclear power. Ethical questions concerning radiation risks and the transportation and disposal of nuclear waste are major causes of concern which have not been fully addressed. As Christians, we seek an energy strategy which reflects love of the Creator, expresses care for the whole Creation, and is informed by Christian principles of care, peacemaking, justice and love for our neighbours”.

C.E.L. maintains that a new generation of nuclear power stations will not significantly reduce CO2 emissions, and yet will cost (including development and decontamination) at least £100 billion and deliver too late. Investment in energy reduction and conservation, and renewable forms of energy (solar, wind and wave power) would deliver far greater reductions in CO2 emissions, far sooner.

The Green Party states:

“It simply isn’t true that nuclear power is the answer to the so-called energy gap we face over the next 10 years, since the earliest that a new nuclear power station could come on stream is around 2017. And even if Britain built ten new reactors, it’s been estimated that nuclear power can only deliver a 4 per cent cut in carbon emissions some time after 2025.”

Green Principal Speaker Dr Derek Wall added:

“What the British people demand is cheap, clean and green energy - not an expensive, carbon emitting, dirty energy that does nothing for the UK’s energy insecurity and will leave a disgraceful legacy of nuclear waste for our children. Taxpayers will be picking up the bill for decades and the radioactive waste will be polluting Britain for millions of years.

“Nuclear energy will not begin to tackle the problems in the next decade - the most critical period for global warming action. It just provides a climate change fig-leaf for the Government to hide behind.

“The existing nuclear programme cost £50 billion to build and produced 20% of our power in the UK. The whole of Europe could be run on wind power for that amount.”

And Kate Hudson from CND also draws attention to the effect the decision could have on the proliferation of nuclear weapons:

“Embarking on the creation of a new generation of nuclear plants also sends the wrong message internationally, where building a nuclear reactor is a necessary step in the creation of a nuclear weapon. If we want any credibility in discouraging the proliferation of nuclear weapons, we cannot discourage others from building reactors whilst we construct many more of our own.”


**Lambeth Conference 2008**

In 1998, Caroline instigated the collection of over 100 signatures from bishops in the Anglican Communion around the world for the abolition of nuclear weapons. Archbishop Desmond Tutu was one. He also sent us an encouraging message.

Building on this, and also on the great result of the vote last February by the Church of England Synod rejecting the replacement of Trident, we have worked to keep the momentum going. All 38 provinces of the Anglican Communion have been contacted seeking the possibility of a Resolution against nuclear weapons from the 2008 Lambeth Conference. The more moral pressure that accumulates, the more chance there is that effective disarmament steps will be taken by the nuclear weapon states.

Most provinces of the Anglican Communion were where no nuclear weapons exist - and where there is no wish for them. This, and the lead now demonstrated by the Church of England, may, we hope, make asking for a Resolution from the whole Communion resemble pushing at an open door.

Please pray for success!

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**New Edition of Churches' Pack**

The latest edition of the Churches’ Pack is now ready for anyone who wants the latest update! The big thing about it this time is how it capitalises on the flood of Statements from the churches against nuclear weapons. No ‘sleeping giant’ nowadays!

These excerpts from the statements make the Pack superb for anyone trying to convince people about the official views of the churches on nuclear weapons. Informing those in the pews has often been hard work, but now there is a tool available that can effectively challenge disbelief.

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**February Synod**

Once again we will have our regular stall at Church House, Westminster, where we will be advertising ‘Caring for Creation’ day and our Lambeth Conference work to encourage an anti-nuclear weapons resolution.

Michael Pulham

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**The current situation regarding Trident**

In Spring 2007, our government held a vote on replacing Trident. It became clear that many Labour and Liberal MPs would not support this. In an effort to make it more acceptable, the Prime Minister said the vote was merely about work on the concept or design of a replacement. Even so, he was embarrassed by having to rely on the votes of the opposition! The ‘full decision’, if it is allowed (?) in a year or so, will mean more decades of the UK holding nuclear weapons. Perhaps the UK still has a ‘window of opportunity’ not to replace Trident and to give up its nuclear weapons altogether.

This means we must not diminish our efforts to see that Trident does not become replaced and, indeed, that it is got rid of altogether.

This January, NATO strategists argued for the ability to swiftly use nuclear weapons in a first strike ‘to make the world safer for the west’. They want as little use of vetoes against such an action as possible. They stated their disbelief in a nuclear free world.

Should NATO be allowed to commit a war crime? Must we have a world governed by threat? The people who think in this way have to be reminded of the obligations of the nuclear weapons states under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. Our diplomats have to be persuaded to intensify their efforts for a just and nuclear free world.
Prayer Diary

February
For persistence in witness
11 - 15 Feb: Church of England Synod
17 Feb: CND 50th Anniversary

March
For God's Kingdom
21 - 24 March: Easter Hope
29 March: Our ‘Caring for Creation’ event

April
For Proper use of the earth’s resources
Anniversary of UN foundation
26 April: Memorial of Chernobyl Children
28 April - 9 May: PrepCom in Geneva

May
15 May: International Conscientious Objector's Day
24 May: International Women's Day for Disarmament

Prayer is essential for everything we do.
Thank you

Book Review

Pilgrimage Towards Peace
By Joan Simkins
ISBN: 1 85072 343 5

Joan Simkins has been a teacher, lecturer, author, poet, dramatist, preacher, broadcaster and liturgist. She is a lifelong pacifist.

Dr Simkin's book is in the form of an autobiography. She begins with her father (a Christian Socialist) and his reminiscences of World War I, and her mother, a quiet and devout Christian. Through them, she was taught to understand other people's points of view and, in particular, to cultivate respect and politeness. She became a conscientious objector in World War II, was confirmed as an Anglican, read English Literature and Philosophy at Birmingham, and became Secretary of the University Pacifist Society. After graduation she moved to London to become a teacher. By doing an external London BD she learned the discipline of Critical Analysis both of Christian Texts and Doctrine.

It is roundabout this stage that, to this reviewer at least, her Spiritual Journey seems to lose its focus: she gets premonitionary ‘hunches’ about her BD exam, she experiences increasing difficulty in coping with human imperfection/sin, her story becomes more and more anecdotal, which, although it makes things more readable, has a tendency to become more lightweight. However, she began her Ph.D thesis on Christianity and War at Edinburgh, where she explored the conviction that peace was not simply the absence of war, but the deep Peace of Jesus. She underwent a TB scare (which affected her many times) and was forced to postpone further research.

During a lecture tour of the US, some amazing developments took place in Dr Simkins' thinking: 'War is always evil but sometimes it may be the lesser of two evils' for instance, or when asked whether she would shoot someone with their finger on the button to annihilate the world, she replied 'Yes'. She also began to describe herself as a Catalyst, but it is difficult to understand how these examples square with the absolute pacifism she still claimed. Chapter IX opens with some extended quotations from her reviews following the final publication of her Ph.D and then the book slowly begins to unravel. We read less and less about peace and more and more about her own spiritual pilgrimage.

Most of the rest of the book is a long series of discursive essays on various theological topics which are nothing really to do with peace. The quality of the writing sharply declines and the number of typos and grammatical errors increases. Subjects include the Virgin Birth, the Eucharist, the Roman Catholic Church, the Resurrection and the Creeds (her analysis of which is full of mistakes). The reader is left solely with a Creation-based Universalism and the Sermon on the Mount. We can know nothing of God but happily 'Science comes to our rescue, bringing meticulous honesty and the fruits of devoted research' (it must be comforting to be so confident in the objective integrity of any academic discipline!). So we arrive at the ultimate position of absolute Humanism, where religion equals war, and where proof is demanded for everything. But two questions remain in this reviewer's mind - How do you prove Love? And has the author really found peace in her heart?

© The Very Reverend John Methuen, formerly Dean of Ripon
30 January: The Gandhi Foundation in collaboration with West London Synagogue Multi-faith Celebration in honour of Gandhi - 60 years since his assassination to be held at West London Synagogue, 34 Upper Berkeley Street, London W1H 5AU (disabled access). 7:15 pm. Contact: Secretary, Gandhi Foundation: 01932 343614

Friday 1 February: Swingin’ against the Bomb; Holywell Music Room, 7.30 pm. £10/£8. Oxford CND: 01865 242919 or nickgill@classicjazz.freeserve.co.uk or www.wegotickets.com

Wednesday 6 February: Ash Wednesday. Annual liturgy of Repentance and Resistance to nuclear war preparations at Ministry of Defence, London. Gathering prayer: Embankment Gardens (turn right out of Embankment Station - facing the river). Time: 3.00 pm – 4.30 pm. Those who wish to take part in nonviolent civil disobedience on the day must contact the Pax Christi office for briefings and guidelines. Contact: coordinator@paxchristi.org.uk or telephone 020 8203 4884. Supported by Catholic Peace Action, Christian CND and Pax Christi. www.paxchristi.org.uk

8 - 10 February: Peace: Celebration & Continuing Challenge. Weekend of Services for Peace, Contact World Disarmament Campaign Churches & Inter-Faith Peace Secretary, WDC, PO Box 28209, Edinburgh EH9 1ZG. Tel 0131 447 4004. www.world-disarm.org.uk editor.worlddisarm@ntlworld.com

Saturday 9 February: “Human Rights 1948-2008 – Promotion & Protection” with guest speaker, Stefanie Grant, 3.00 pm at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, nearest tube Holborn. Network for Peace AGM at 2pm. All welcome. Network for Peace, 5 Caledonian Road, London N1 9DX Tel: 020 7278 3267 mail@networkforpeace.org.uk www.networkforpeace.org.uk

12 February: The Fellowship of Reconciliation and Pax Christi Seminar. The Iraq War - 5 years on, A continuing challenge to Christians - what is our response today? Venue: St Vincent’s Centre, Carlisle Place, London SW1. Tickets £10, £8 concessions from MANA Administration, 71 Greenfield Gardens, London NW2 1HU. 020 8455 1030.

Saturday 16 February: Musicians Against Nuclear Arms Concert for Peace. 7.30 pm at Hinde Street Methodist Church, Thayer Street, London W1. Tickets £10, £8 concessions from MANA Administration, 71 Greenfield Gardens, London NW2 1HU. 020 8455 1030.

16-17 February: Global Summit for a Nuclear Weapon-Free World: Laying the Practical, Technical and Political Groundwork at City Hall, London. For more information: CND 020 7700 2393. www.cnduk.org


Saturday 29 March: ‘Caring for Creation’. All Faiths for Peace, Justice and Sustainability. An Inter-Faith conference with workshops, discussions, fun! Oxford Town Hall. 10.30-5pm.

24 March: The Bomb Stops Here: Surround the Base at Aldermaston on Easter Monday at 12pm. For more information: CND 020 7700 2393. www.cnduk.org

Saturday 19 April: Nuclear Power and Nuclear Proliferation; World Disarmament Campaign AGM and Spring Conference. With Dr Frank Barnaby. Wesley's Chapel, 49 City Road, London EC1Y 1AU, 10.30am - 4.30pm. editor.worlddisarm@ntlworld.com


CCND goods

T-Shirts £12 each.
Cotton bags £3 each.
Picasso Greetings Cards. £2.50 for six.
Other CCND items available: badges, window stickers, pens and a history of CCND.

See your membership insert for details and an order form.

Send orders to: Christian Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament 162 Holloway Road, London N7 8DQ Tel: 020 7700 4200 Fax: 020 7700 2357 Email: christians@cnduk.org Web: http://ccnd.gn.apc.org/
How to join CCND

Annual membership subscriptions are:

- Waged, individual: £12 (£15 household)
- Unwaged individual: £6 (£8 household)
- Group affiliation: from £10
- I/ we wish to be a member of CCND
- Please send a standing order form
- I enclose a cheque/PO (payable to CCND) to include the following:
  - membership: £
  - donation: £
  - TOTAL: £

Name: ..................................................
Address: ..............................................................Postcode: ..................
Telephone: .....................................................Email: ..................................

Denomination/ church position: .................................................................
(Optional)

☐ To help with local campaigning, I agree that my contact details can be passed on to other CCND members.

CCND will never pass members' details to anyone who is not a CCND member.

Please return form to: Christian CND 162 Holloway Rd, London, N7 8DQ