



Co-ordinator's Comments

In the face of climate change, peak oil, loss of biodiversity and water and food shortages, a big question for our times should be "How are we going to live through these difficulties?" The answer should be non-violently, with fortitude and God's grace. Unfortunately violence abounds in our society at all levels, so we need to work at growing a Culture of Peace. This is a focus of our Centre in making the connections between peace, ecology and justice. In September there are some key peace activities which we are supporting, so this issue features them and others.

Anne Lanyon

What we've been up to

- Co-ordinating a very successful Diocese of Broken Bay Year 10 Social Justice Day with over 250 students participating in a choice of 8 different workshops.
- On behalf of FEN, accepting the inaugural ARCC World Environment Day Award for Ecology and Spirituality. www.arcc.org.au



- Planning a FEN Film Night: "Renewal." (See over)
- Proposing a motion that the Nature Conservation Council support the Sydney Food Fairness Alliance call for a NSW Food Policy.
- Welcoming Macquarie Uni Intern Jonathan Avis and ACU student Maurice Marquez to do research and community experience.
- Continuing to lobby the NSW Government on protecting NSW National Parks and Marine Parks.
- Giving presentations to Religious Education Co-ordinators, Social Justice Groups and St Vincent de Paul

members.

- Attending the Jewish, Christian, Muslim *Greening with God Conference* (Victoria) part of which was doing an interview with Rabbi Shamir Caplin and Mark Pederson (Islamic Council of Vic) on John Cleary's ABC Sunday Nights.
- Participating with FEN in the Sydney Walk Against Warming



Catholic Social Teaching and Structural Violence

British rock singer and activist Billy Bragg wrote a song called *North Sea Bubble* in which he has the line "as long as you're comfortable it feels like freedom". More than anything it is a reflection on the fact that we have long ceased being producers and are chained to a culture of consumerism – as long as we have what we want we can be armchair commentators on the rest of society. At the same time, while protecting our own patch of earth, we effectively disengage ourselves from any form of meaningful community - save for those who think like us. It is in a real sense a form of social violence at a more subtle and insidious level. In his 1897 encyclical *Solicitudo rei Socialis* (on Social Concerns) John Paul II used the term *superdevelopment* in regard to many wealthy countries. He was referring to the excessive availability of all kinds of material goods which turn people into slaves of possessions and immediate gratification and turn them away from the injustice and inequality such a slave mentality generates. The words of *Pacem in Terris* (1963) serve to remind us that "[T]he human individual, far from being an object ... a merely passive element in the social order ... must be and continue to be its subject, its foundation and its end" (#26).

Jack Evans

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International Day of Peace, September 21

This year's theme is "Peace, Youth and Development" under the slogan "Peace = Future". The UN Day of Peace Resolution **Declares** that the International Day of Peace shall henceforth be observed as a day of global ceasefire and non-violence, an invitation to all nations and people to honour a cessation of hostilities for the duration of the Day;

www.un.org/geninfo/faq/factsheets/ares55282peaceday.htm

International Day of Prayer for Peace, Sept 21

Churches and communities throughout the world are committing to the International Day of Prayer for Peace through prayer, meditation and other forms of spiritual observance as part of the final year of the WCC's Decade to Overcome Violence (DOV)

www.overcomingviolence.org/en/

Two Social Justice Sunday Statements for Sept 26:

1) In 'Violence in Australia: A message of peace' from the Australian Catholic Bishops, we hear: "Jesus was the victim of the worst that humanity could do. His response to violence was not more violence but an act of transcendence that set humanity on a new path forever."

www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au/

2) The National Council of Churches statement **Witnessing to Peace in a Violent World** points out "In countless conflicts across the globe, the shadow of violence continues to obscure a new horizon for peace. Nevertheless, as we reflect earnestly at the conclusion of the Decade to Overcome Violence we should draw inspiration from the continuing outward gaze of the ecumenical movement in Australia in standing in solidarity with the victims of violence across the world." www.ncca.org.au Both these statements are important tools for readers to help make parish communities aware and get some action happening.

Other Ways: Growing Alternatives to Violence *How are we nurturing a culture of peace in these, the best and worst of times?*

Afternoon symposium and evening dinner!

Friday 24th September, Santa Sabina College Hall
90 The Boulevard, Strathfield.

An invitation to Christians and all who are engaged in peace and justice to share together, build stronger networks for the future, celebrate achievements and mark the end of the Decade to Overcome Violence (2001–2010).

Speakers: Claudette Werleigh Secretary General, Pax Christi International, Former Prime Minister of Haiti
Sr Susan Connelly, RSJ, Mary MacKillop East Timor Mission, and **Azim Khamisa**, Teacher of 'Achieving Peace through Forgiveness'.

Organised by The NSW Ecumenical Council, the Columban Mission Institute, the Edmund Rice Oceania Province, Pace Bene Australia, the Franciscan Friars Province of the Holy Spirit and Pax Christi International.

Bookings to gill.burrows@ozburrows.com must be received by Friday September 17th

The Option for Non-Violence in Schools

(This article by John Williams from July/Aug Justpeace, Pax Christi, UK is applicable to Australian schools.)

Is "The Option for Nonviolence" a recognizable characteristic in our Catholic schools? Could it be? Should it be? If it is, what does it look like? The desire to challenge violence and create nonviolent responses in our schools is central to Government initiatives such as "Child Protection", "Safeguarding", "Every Child Matters", "Anti-Bullying", and "Risk Assessment". But what do we promote from our faith perspective? ...Our Catholic schools have a language, a liturgy and an iconograph of peace and nonviolence which we use daily...This is presented in the continual challenge to all not to repay evil with evil, to expose injustice and to assert one's own humanity and dignity.

The Option for Non-Violence might include "looking critically at the books, films and games in the school library/learning resource centre; reflecting on the kinds of partnerships and sponsorships the school develops with the business community; questioning why the Armed Forces are invited for career presentations; considering again how we celebrate Remembrance (and Anzac) Day; reviewing the kind of Work Experience placements that are offered, re-evaluating the Charities that are supported."

www.paxchristi.org.uk

2010 Youth Peace Parliament, September 20&21

At this fifth annual Youth Peace Parliament in Brisbane, young people will be evaluating the first 10 years of the Earth Charter, "What's it done and where is it going?"

They will be looking at these Earth Charter pillars:

1) *Respect and Care for the Community of Life*

2) *Ecological Sustainability*

3) *Social and Economic Justice*

4) *Democracy, Non-Violence and Peace*

www.idpa.org.au/Home_Page.php

The Garden at the End of the World

This Australian documentary by Gary Caganoff goes into Afghanistan with Mahboba Rawi, founder of Mahboba's promise, and Rosemary Morrow, an authority on permaculture and Quaker. Working with those most affected by the violence there, (the women and children) they offer alternatives (what Rosemary calls "social permaculture") to address what the military "reconstruction effort" has been unable to achieve. www.thegardenattheendoftheworld.info/Home.html

Let's Fight Violence Together

On the occasion of the beginning of Ramadan, the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue sent a message to Muslims, saying Christians and Muslims are "together in overcoming violence among followers of different religions". www.zenit.org 27th Aug 2010

Monthly Bulletin for School/Parish Newsletters

The "Growing a Culture of Peace" monthly bulletin continues. September's is on the theme of "Commitment is..." To subscribe, email pej.cmi@columban.org.au **Anne Lanyon**

Violence to Nature

Violence usually refers to human against human. However the evil wrought by humans against the natural world equally involves real acts of violence. All creation cries out to be freed *Rm. 8:22*. The oppression springs from our denial that humanity is part of all creation. Yet *God has made the cosmos and all within it as our kin*. If in human pride we deny this kinship we are stunting our human call to grow into God as both material and spiritual beings. Two recent books by Fr. Denis Edwards explain a theology of radical-incarnation: *How God Acts*, 2010; *Ecology at the Hearth of Faith*, 2005.

The limits of Human Rights

Has the emphasis on human rights in recent social teaching been too narrow a measure for testing good Catholic behaviour? Has concern for human well-being limited our imagination on how to experience God revealed ever new within the evolving universe? When debate on climate change is reduced to issues of eco-refugees and food security, have we fallen into the trap of a taking a merely rational managerial approach? Scientist and believer John Feehan, teaching with Fr Sean McDonagh as part of the Columban MA Environmental Theology course in Ireland, asks this question. *The Singing Hearth of the World*, Columban Press, Dublin, 2010.

Motivation

It is direct experience which motivates people to seek a new way of living within this world. The YCW method of direct involvement has shown this. When it comes to nature, it is contact with earth's evolutionary processes that leads to excitement and flows into caring action. Gumburu's education-for-the-environment centre near Townsville does this. Being active in a community garden has motivated many.
www.gumburu.tsv.catholic.edu.au/
<http://communitygarden.org.au/>

Junk Science and Junk Religion

Sadly, violence to nature can be sanctioned by preaching junk-religion based on junk-science. Such distortions can be aligned with vested interests and resort to the human violence of lies and ridicule prevailing in the PR industry. It would have us sacrifice the rich food producing and well watered Liverpool plains to the coal industry. Religious leaders need to recognize that many people in good conscience can *go green*.
www.ccag.org.au/
www.connectedwaters.unsw.edu.au/resources/articles/coalmininggroundwater.html

Junk Science and Junk Food

In the food industry, violence to human health is ongoing when better food labeling is delayed and genetically modified foods are entering the food chain.

www.madge.org.au

www.geneethics.org

www.bangmfood.org At another level, the lack of a proper government Food Policy does violence to the self respect of many farmers and food producers. Many take pride in their work and recognise the mystery revealed there. <http://sydneyfoodfairness.org.au>

Science opens new options

The campaign to reduce CFCs in the atmosphere and protect the ozone layer limped along until an alternative gas for refrigeration was found. Now a group of scientists have shown a technologically deliverable alternative energy source for Australia. Economists and business people say to begin by putting a price on carbon, then people will work out the technological winners. This can be delivered by 2020. Cost-wise it will not be greater than the increasing price of oil imports. It will provide more and cleaner jobs than the coal industry. It will reduce our carbon footprint thus giving future generations hope and God's evolutionary revelation a chance. www.beyondzeroemissions.org/

Feminist and Indigenous Insights

Three decades ago Carolyn Merchant wrote about the twin oppression of women and nature. Using a line of interpretation developed by feminists called the *hermeneutic of suspicion*, scholars in the Earth Bible project in Adelaide discovered the way in which the voices of women were suppressed in the Bible.

In a short film clip, Auntie Joan Hendricks reflecting on the intersections between her Indigenous and her Christian spirituality says "*The Land is our very life blood*" www.eurekastreet.com.au/article.aspx?aeid=23004

Mary-ellen Tucker co-ordinates *The Forum on Religion and Ecology* at Yale University, explores religious worldviews, texts and ethics and dialogues with other disciplines on environmental concerns.

<http://foresearch.yale.edu>

Charles Rue

FEN Date Claimer: Wednesday October 27

Film Night, Featuring "Renewal": a documentary which captures the vitality and diversity of people who from within their different faith traditions, are becoming caretakers of the Earth. With great courage, these women, men and children are re-examining what it means to be human and how we live on this planet. Their stories of addressing global warming and the devastation of mountaintop removal, of promoting food security, environmental justice, recycling, land preservation, and of teaching love and respect for life on Earth are the heart of RENEWAL.

Venue Christian Bros College, 68 The Boulevard, Lewisham

Enquires to PEJ Centre

Violence and Injustice: two sides of the same coin!

Telling the real story is an important part of responding to violence in a nonviolent manner.

Fuelling Injustice: Debt and Muslim countries

This report by Jubilee Debt Campaign and Islamic Relief UK: looks at Bangladesh, Indonesia, Lebanon and Pakistan – all countries with high levels of poverty and instability and subject to large-scale, often reckless lending from the West. It says ‘toxic debts’ have held back the fight against poverty while fuelling arms sales, dictatorships and environmental destruction. www.jubileedebtcampaign.org.uk/?lid=6302&bid=13

Floods in Pakistan mean more debt problems too!

The devastating floods require huge external financing to help the 6 million homeless and 20 million affected people. Jubilee Australia, of which PEJ is a board member, is joining with debt campaigners globally in highlighting the injustice of the IMF adding new loans to Pakistan’s debt burden. EURODAD says “Pakistan needs debt cancellation, not new IMF loans”:

“Before the flooding, debt interest payments already consumed about one third of budget revenues and it owed US \$50 billion. Instead, the international community should provide more grants, not loans, to help Pakistan withstand the disaster. In its turn, the IMF should revisit conditions attached to their current loans to Pakistan which civil society had already warned could exacerbate the economic downturn and poverty”. www.eurodad.org/whatsnew/articles.aspx?id=4220

ACTION: Sign the petition to the IMF /World Bank

www.avaaz.org/en/pakistan_cancel_the_debt/?v1

Poverty, Debt and Natural Disasters (Haiti)

The devastation of the Jan 12 Haiti earthquake compounded the suffering of the most impoverished country in the Americas. 80% of the population was already living in abject poverty, one out of twelve children were dying before reaching their fifth birthday, life expectancy was 59 years and nearly 50% were illiterate. The quake killed 230,000 people and destroyed much of the country’s infrastructure. Media images showed violence occurring, reinforcing stereotypical images of lawlessness to justify military muscle. Short term emergency assistance was greatly needed. Millions of dollars in aid were promised by governments. International donations to agencies were made by ordinary people from places such as Australia. Caritas donations went to local Caritas partners which helped more than 2.3 million people with shelter, food, healthcare and other emergency needs. Many people are still dependent on food aid and shelter in Port au Prince and the rural areas. 1.6 million Haitians remain homeless, and at the current rate, it will take 10 to 15 years just to clear the streets of Port-au-Prince of wreckage. www.caritas.org

Haiti needs help to rebuild but sadly, Haiti is seen by some global businesses as an opportunity for profits to be made. From Jo Barrett of Progressio www.progressio.org.uk *People are understandably frustrated. They talk of being forgotten and abandoned. As one man, Claude Douge, asked me: “Why*

don’t people just come and talk to us and ask us what we need?” Yet 6 months on, only 10% of promised assistance from the international community had been delivered to Haiti’s Interim Recovery Commission. \$5.3 billion was pledged. By July only 4 countries: Brazil, Norway, Estonia and Australia, had paid into the UN’s Haiti Reconstruction Fund. www.one.org

Haiti needs a clean financial slate to rebuild. Debt was a contributing factor to Haiti’s poverty prior to the earthquake. After the quake, intense pressure from debt campaigners, including Jubilee Australia, led to the IMF approving cancellation of Haiti’s \$268 million debt. Yet the IMF’s decision to provide \$60 million in financing support as a new loan raises serious concerns. Though it is the most concessional loan available and it is a victory that the IMF cancelled Haiti’s debt, “Now we must raise our voices again to make sure the Fund understands that a loan of any kind is completely inappropriate for a country in such desperate need,” says Eric LeCompte, Jubilee USA www.jubileeusa.org

ACTION: Write to the IMF- Fax: + 1 (202) 623-4661

Food Riots Again

In 2008 rising food prices caused riots in poor countries around the world. Drought, rising oil prices, and increased bio-fuel production were named as causes. What was not named was the current structure of trade and industrial food production as well as climate change.

Food prices have risen again. According to the FAO the world food price index has risen by 5 percent from July to August, the highest level in two years. In August, the global wheat price had its biggest monthly surge for 37 years, corn rose 59% in Zimbabwe and 57% in Mozambique. At the beginning of September, 3 days of violent protests occurred in Mozambique when the price of bread rose. 7 people, including 2 children were killed. There have been street protests in Egypt and Serbia. Prices of many food items in Pakistan have risen by 15 % or more following flood damage to 20% of its crops. A report by the FAO predicts that food prices will rise 40% in the next 10 years due to growing demand for biofuel and emerging markets. Inevitably the poor will continue to suffer and there will be social instability if the trade/food system does not change and climate change is not addressed.

According to humanitarian agencies, there is enough food. The problem is distribution and the global market. The UN will hold crisis talks on Sept 24th to try to prevent a repeat of 2008. It’s time they included Fair Trade and funding to keep subsistence farmers on their own land in the discussions. www.guardian.co.uk/business/2010/jun/15/food-prices-rise-un-report
www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/sep/03/un-mozambique-food-prices

Anne Lanyon