

# The Way of Peace

ISSUE 8

## The Power of Active Nonviolence

This is the final in a series of eight pamphlets offered by the Columban Centre for Peace, Ecology and Justice focusing on peace and active non-violence.

Building a culture of peace demands the rejection of violence. We need to change the prevailing culture of retaliation or defensiveness to a culture of acknowledgement of pain and a willingness to deal with it using the principles of non-violence.

Our own feelings of hurt lie at the roots of violence in ourselves, in others, and in our culture. Active non-violence comes face to face with this sense of injury. This includes identifying and gradually transforming our personal and social reactions that keep us in the rut of violence. But even more profoundly, active non-violence makes contact with the sacredness that is the deepest part of ourselves. This sacredness is the presence of God who longs for the wholeness of all creation.

That there is a need to change the culture of violence in which we live has been recognised. We see bullying being committed on a grand scale by governments and large corporations and on a smaller scale in families, schools and workplaces.

Active nonviolence that confronts bullying and intimidation is the way to peace that can be practiced by one person or a whole nation. It is part of a way of living and being which was modelled for us by Jesus.

"This requires a change of mind and heart. It requires a new sense of global interdependence and universal responsibility. We must imaginatively develop and apply the vision of a sustainable way of life locally, nationally, regionally and globally" (From The Earth Charter).

Source: "From Violence to Wholeness"  
by Ken Butigan & Patricia Bruno of the Peace e Bene Franciscan Nonviolence Centre.

*"You have learnt how it was said: You must love your neighbour and hate your enemy. But I say this to you: love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you." Matthew 5: 43 – 45*

**"Darkness cannot overcome darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that."**

Martin Luther King Jr (1929 – 1968)

### Principles of Nonviolence:

- Using active nonviolence to resolve conflict is a deeply religious act.
- Human beings are meant to love and be loved.
- Nonviolence is a way to restore balance.
- Nonviolence is a choice for a different vision for the world.
- Nonviolence is a process of repentance & transformation.
- Christian nonviolence requires an authentic spirituality.
- **Violence is not automatic. It is a choice.**

(Source: From Violence to Wholeness)

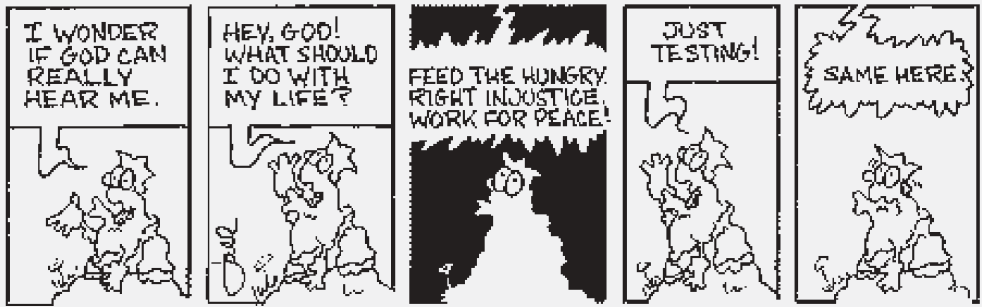
**To pray for peace is to open the human heart to the inroads of God's power to renew all things... To pray for peace is to pray for justice, for a right ordering of relations within and among nations and peoples.**

Pope John Paul II, World Peace Day Message, 2002, #14.

**Gestures of peace spring from the lives of people who foster peace first in their own hearts. They are the work of the heart and of reason of those who are peacemakers.**

Pope John Paul II, World Peace Day Message 2003, #9.

### **Ponius' Puddle**



# FACT FILE

## Some results of experiments with nonviolent actions:

- ✚ 1930-31, Ghandi led a campaign in India of peaceful civil disobedience against the British salt tax.
- ✚ In Afghanistan, Badshah Khan (1890-1988), a devout Muslim, raised the first nonviolent army in history to free his people from British imperial rule.
- ✚ During the Second World War, Danish civilians resisted Nazi occupation through labour strikes and sabotage, thus diminishing German exploitation of their country.
- ✚ In 1966, Vincent Lingiari led Aboriginal stockmen and their families in a walk off from Wave Hill Station NT, eventually gaining the Gurindji people title to their own land.
- ✚ In the 1980s, Chileans staged nonviolent demonstrations for months on end, eventually culminating in a vote which led to the end of the military rule of Pinochet.
- ✚ In 1986, using 'people power', millions of unarmed Filipinos overthrew the dictator, Ferdinand Marcos.
- ✚ In 1998, Bishop Carlos Belo and Jose Ramos-Horta were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for their nonviolent leadership of the East Timor freedom movement.

## What can you do?

- ✚ Examine your own reactions to violence.
- ✚ Practice Compassionate Listening – Listen actively, empathically and non-judgementally to explanations of conflict from all sides. Then seek to tell the stories of each side to the other, conveying the perspective of the opponents.
- ✚ Support the work of Pax Christi by becoming a member: email [pax@paxchristi.org.au](mailto:pax@paxchristi.org.au) Phone 03 9379 3889 (Vic); 02 9517 1711 (NSW); 07 3315 6919 (Qld).
- ✚ Research grassroots nonviolent social movements of 'people power' which have successfully challenged the immoral and unjust conditions and policies of entrenched power-holders, eg., in the Philippines.
- ✚ Find out about the Bill to establish a Department of Peace which was put to the United States Congress recently, [www.dopcampaign.org/read\\_bill.htm](http://www.dopcampaign.org/read_bill.htm)
- ✚ Discuss ways of promoting the idea of a Department of Peace in Australia. We have a Department of Defence. Let's learn ways of waging peace instead of war.

# PROFILE OF A PEACE MAKER

Pax Christi Australia is a Christian peace movement, affiliated with Pax Christi International. It takes a stand against militarism and the arms race. Human rights, justice and integrity of all creation are central to its work. As an ecumenical Christian movement, Pax Christi fosters the spiritual and scriptural dimensions of peacemaking. Members live by the biblically inspired values of peace, reconciliation and nonviolence. These values are supported by the witness of peacemakers down the ages and the experience of the Pax Christi community. Pax Christi is rooted in Catholic Christianity but it is open to all who are in sympathy with its values and work.

[www.paxchristi.org.au](http://www.paxchristi.org.au)

## USEFUL WEBSITES:

[www.peacelink.topcities.com/index.htm](http://www.peacelink.topcities.com/index.htm)

People for Peace

[www.avpusa.org](http://www.avpusa.org)

Alternatives to Violence Project (USA)

[www.wagingpeace.org](http://www.wagingpeace.org)

Waging Peace

[www.sojo.net](http://www.sojo.net)

Sojourners Community

[www.nonviolentpeaceforce.org](http://www.nonviolentpeaceforce.org)

The Nonviolent Peace Force

[www.paceebene.org](http://www.paceebene.org)

Pace e Bene Centre



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