



The Way of Peace

Anzac Centenary Edition 1915-2015

#8 The Power of Active Non-Violence

Growing a culture of peace requires the rejection of violence. We need to take seriously the way of Jesus: *“But to you who are listening I say: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.”* Lk 6: 27, 28.

Nature teaches us that struggle, including the struggle to develop one’s self, is part of the life cycle. We need to work at solutions to conflict that are an alternative to the futile cycle of war. This demands a much stronger set of other strategies.

Feelings of hurt lie at the roots of violence in ourselves, in others, and in our culture. Being committed to non-violence comes face to face with this sense of injury. This includes identifying and gradually transforming our personal and social reactions that say retaliate. It includes acknowledging that men and women act differently.

Even more profoundly, a commitment to non-violence makes contact with the sacred. This sacredness is the deepest part of ourselves that is the presence of God who longs for the wholeness of all creation.

The need to change is urgent. We see the bullying committed on a grand scale by governments, military and large corporations and on a smaller scale in families, schools, churches 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. This requires a change of mind and heart. It requires a new sense of global interdependence and universal responsibility.

Source: *“From Violence to Wholeness”, Pace e Bene Franciscan Nonviolence Centre.*

‘Somehow we must be able to stand up before our most bitter opponents and say: ‘We shall match your capacity to inflict suffering by our capacity to endure suffering. We will meet your physical force with soul force. Do to us what you will and we will still love you.

Martin Luther King Jr from ‘A Christmas Sermon on Peace’ (1967)

Principles of Nonviolence:

- Violence is not automatic. It is a choice.
- 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.

What violence do you want -
Sporting, military or
random-psychotic?



Cartoon source: Michael Leunig; www.leunig.com.au

Leunig

Alternatives to war must answer the questions that war promises to answer — but in a better way. Jim Wallis

Fact File

- 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 1998, Bishop Carlos Belo and Jose Ramos-Horta were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for their nonviolent leadership of the East Timor freedom movement.
- A group of organisations are working to establish an Australian living peace museum. Their aim is to document stories of people who have worked for peace.
- In Australia, the Alternative Anzac Day began with a group of Essendon and Collingwood supporters opposing the militarisation of the Anzac Day football match to: a) Remember those who died in WWI, b) Remember the Australian peace movement of those years c) Promote peace in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Profile of a Peacemaker



'Pace e Bene Nonviolence Service' was begun in the U.S. by a small group of Franciscans and others and has now grown into a worldwide community of people from diverse religious traditions. The name 'Pace e Bene' (peace and good) comes from the greeting of St. Francis and St. Clare to people in the 13th century. Today, Pace e Bene's mission is to develop and sustain a spirituality and practice of active nonviolence in our ways of living and being. They hope to change the current violence-dominated culture of our society.

Pace e Bene in Australia provides educational materials, study and action programs as well as community workshop facilitators in helping people learn new ways. One successful program is the Nonviolent Interfaith Leadership program which involves young people. A successful non-violent direct action partnership has been the Love Makes a Way initiative which is challenging asylum seekers policies in Australia.

Discuss:

Peacemaking is not an optional commitment but a requirement of our faith.

I do not believe we have even begun to plumb the depths of the possibilities of nonviolence.

Niall O'Brien, Columban Missionary Priest.

Useful Links

Waging Peace
www.wagingpeace.org

Conflict Resolution Network:
www.crnhq.org

Sojourners Community:
www.sojo.net

The Nonviolent Peace Force:
www.nonviolentpeaceforce.org

Pace e Bene Centre:
www.paceebene.org.au

Australian Christians who seek lasting peace for the people of Palestine and Israel:
www.pien.org.au