

Peace By Peace

Issue 1
January 2007





What is FoR?

The Fellowship of Reconciliation began as a response to the challenge of First World War. While opposing war and militarism it strives to promote those things which make for peace and justice, to build – in the words of our founders – ‘a world order based on love’.

Today FoR:

- Undertakes education work within the Christian and wider community on peace, war and nonviolence;
- Seeks to identify the causes of violent conflict and raises public awareness of them, encouraging supporters and the public to challenge the structures, policies and attitudes that lead to violent conflict
- Supports and affirms all those with a commitment to peace and nonviolence;
- Is committed to developing a spirituality of peace, justice and nonviolence in witness to Christian faith and gospel values.

The Fellowship of Reconciliation,
England
St. James Church Centre
Beauchamp Lane
Oxford OX4 3LF
Tel: 01865 748 796
Email: office@for.org.uk
Website: www.for.org.uk

Charity no. 207822

In this issue

Editorial	3
Norman Kember interview	4
West Papua initiative	5
Build Peace – photo essay	6
IFoR peacemakers	7
News/short items	8
Guest commentator	9
Christian/Muslim Peace & nonviolence	10
A reflection on security and vulnerability	11
20 year prayer vigil	12
Reconciliation in Peru	13
IPF appeal	14
FoR resources/reviews	15
Young peacemaker thing?	16

Editorial

Welcome to the first issue of our new bi-annual magazine, *Peace by Peace*. Whether you have been a member of the Fellowship of Reconciliation (FoR) for many years or this is the first time that you have come across us, we hope that you will find something inspiring, helpful and thought provoking within its pages. As the title of our magazine implies, it - and FoR as a whole - is committed to building peace and reconciliation in our conflict torn world by nonviolent means. Our title refers in part to the statement by the great American peacemaker, AJ Muste, that "there is no way to peace, peace is the way" and partly to Gandhi's philosophy that "we all have a piece of the truth". As part of our work we asked a number of people to write on a board how they would suggest we build peace and then took their photographs. We had some fantastic ideas and suggestions and you can see some of the results in a photo-essay in our centre pages. Together with Quaker Peace & Social Witness (QPSW), we have produced a poster highlighting the need for us all to work together to build peace - see our resources page for more details.

Stimulating new ideas for peacemaking is only part of our vision however. We also want to inform and educate about the work of those who are dedicated to nonviolent peacemaking both in the UK and overseas. In this issue we have an exclusive interview with long time FoR members Norman & Pat Kember; we talk to West Papua independence activist Benny Wenda and look at the work of Zoughbi Zoughbi, Director of the Wi'am Centre for nonviolence in Bethlehem. We also plan to highlight areas of reconciliation work that you may not be familiar with - in this issue we look at how the recommendations of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission in peru have been combined with marathon running!

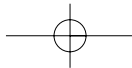
In the first of our regular 'comment' pieces, Ray Gaston Vicar of All Hallows Church in Leeds talks of the need for Christians peacemakers to be committed their faith position as well as their nonviolent principles. 'Study War No More' is a new report co-authored by FoR's Education and Campaigns officer, Martha Beale which looks at the involvement of military companies and institutes in university research. Martha previews the report on p12.

Right from its foundation at the beginning of the First World War, FoR has always been committed to being a



Picture

faith-based community of peacemakers, committed to building peace in the world and in our day-to-day lives. We hope that through this new *Peace by Peace Magazine* more people are resourced and inspired to build peace where they are and right around the world. Please do contact us!



A lot has obviously happened to you since you originally left for Iraq. Can you remember what you were trying to achieve and what your thoughts were at the time?

Norman: I've always said I had three reasons for going. One was to meet ordinary Iraqis – to reassure them that all westerners weren't their enemies; one was to see how Christian Peacemaker Teams works and the third was to show that at seventy-four I wasn't quite past it!

Pat: I didn't really think anything serious would happen. I certainly didn't think he would be taken hostage. We didn't hear much about hostage taking at the time – its got worse and worse and worse, now of course. In fact we said goodbye at Heathrow Airport rather quickly because we couldn't park the car – I really thought – 'It won't be long, he'll be back soon'.

Tell us how the abduction took place?

Norman: CPT arranged various visits for us including a visit to a Shia cleric and then we went to visit Shiite clerics and we went to a rather isolated Mosque. After we had finished the visit we were driving away and a large car stopped in front of us and that was it. We were kept in one house for a week and then Tom and I were moved to another house. We were told the Canadians were going to be released first and then us later. But after a week in walked Jim and Harmeet and that's where we stayed for the next three months.

Can you say what it was like?

We spent most of our time in a small room – no larger than 10 feet by 5 feet – handcuffed to each other. Tom was on the end and was chained to the door. At night the plastic chairs that we sat on were stacked up and a sort of futon thing was laid on the ground. We were again handcuffed to each other all night and poor Tom was chained to the door. Our feet were also chained together. In the mornings were released to go to the bathroom and allowed 20 minutes of exercise – probably more than I do at home (laughs). Then we were chained up again and left to amuse ourselves.

What did you do?

We had a period of worship most days about midday and also Bible study, which was quite difficult without a bible but we could remember passages. In the mornings I would turn my mind off and more-or less refuse to talk until midday. We spend the day talking and sharing stories about our past. And we made some games from odd bits of rubbish.

Your have spoken about how you used the room itself as a prayer aid.

Norman: There were four walls that we use as kind of aids to prayer. The wall to our left we thought of as other captives, other prisoners in Baghdad, in Iraq and around the world. The wall in front of us had a covered window and so that represented the world, God's creation and so on. The wall to our right represented people working for peace in Iraq and the world, including FoR of course. The wall behind us, against which we sat represented people praying for us, backing us as you might say. We knew that



and Pat Kember

Long time peace activist Professor Norman Kember went to Iraq in November 2005 as part of a 10-day Christian Peacemaker Teams delegation where he and his three colleagues were abducted by an armed group calling itself “the Swords of Righteousness Brigade’. He was held captive along with his companions, Jim Loney, Harmeet Singh Sooden and Tom Fox. On March 10th (check) Tom Fox was found murdered. Almost two weeks later Norman, Jim and Harmeet were released by Coalition Forces who found the building that they had been held in deserted. FoR Director Chris Cole interviewed Norman and his wife, Pat at the FoR offices in Oxford.

there would be people praying for us but we had no idea until we got out the enormous volume and scope of the support.

Pat: I had, I don’t know, maybe a thousand cards and letters. I had support from everybody: Quakers, Catholics, Anglicans and Muslims – simply hundreds of letters from people from all walks of life. People who I’d taught years ago even. One day two reporters turned up at the house with flowers – I wouldn’t let them in but I accepted the flowers and they asked me if I was being supported and I told them I was being supported wonderfully and had hundreds of letters of support. Stupidly I mentioned that I had received one or two pieces of hate mail and of course the headlines the next day were ‘Hostages Wife receives hate Mail’. I think I received maybe 10 pieces of hate mail amongst the 1000s of sup portative letters.

Pat, how did you cope in the hardest times?

Pat: First thing it was just such a shock. Quite quickly our eldest daughter arrived with her husband and then my younger daughter got three weeks compassionate leave (she’s a teacher at an Anglican school). So I had my family and our Church (Harrow Baptist Church) immediate helping and supporting me. The worst point, of course, was when Tom Fox was killed. I thought ‘that’s the American gone, next must be Norman’. Our three year old grandson was also a big help – he was quite distracting and you can’t breakdown into tears too much with a youngster of that age around. In fact he opened all my letters for me. Opening each one and passing them to me. I wish we could thank everyone individually but we just can’t, but we do thank everyone enormously.

You’ve said that you didn’t want to take part in the trial of three men who have been arrested for kidnapping you. Why is that?

Norman: Well the trial may well go on whether we give evidence or not. My understanding is that the legal system in Iraq is not up to much. And I have no feelings of revenge or anything like that. On the other hand I said I would be prepared to take part if I thought it would help the people get a degree of clemency. I personally don’t mind if the kidnappers go free because there has been so much injustice and mayhem in Iraq. Why should they be on trial and Blair and Bush not? Who is the murderer, the person who fires the gun or the person who tell someone to fire the gun.

Pat: Or the people who provide the guns? We do a lot of that.

Norman: I think the man who was in charge is more culpable than the three minders, though I knew they were all capable of killing.

In many ways you are a remarkable couple - not only the way that you both seem to have gone through this awful experience without being crushed by it, but the fact that you have been so committed to peace work for so many years. At the same time you are, if I can put it this way, such ordinary people. What is it that has made you carry on with this work for so long? What started it off?

Pat: Norman and I first met at our church, in the Sunday school, in about 1935. We were aged four and three!

Obviously we didn't get together till much much later. I got converted by a radical minister. He was very clear that you can't be a Christian without being a pacifist. That the cross was essential to Christianity and the cross was about loving and forgiving. I accepted this – I was about 16 at the time.

Norman: My conversion to pacifism and nonviolence came at college, when I was part of the Student Christian Movement (SCM) and we discussed all manner of things.

But a lot of people are fired by idealism if you like when they are sixteen or at University, but something seems to have kept you at it. Can you put your finger on why that is?

Norman: I don't know really. I suppose I have always felt that Christianity is supposed to effect your life (laughs).

Were there any people in particular that inspired you or books that you read...

Norman: Bonhoeffer. I read his 'Cost of Discipleship' at college and I still have my original copy.

Pat: Yes but, many years later when we were in America in 1960, we were in a church study group studying that book once a week. After a few weeks we had to give up it. We all said it was too radical, too difficult for us to do...

Norman: Yes that's right. I guess in much the same way I couldn't quite commit myself to the FoR Basis [the founding statement of the Fellowship of Reconciliation] – its almost too difficult – it's a very high standard to live up to. I gave up FoR for a number of years, partly because we were having family and doing other things but I don't like saying or doing something that I know I won't do because its too hard. Really the FoR Basis is very, very challenging – who can live up to it? But then I said to myself 'You call yourself a Christian and that's something you can't conceivably live up to that'. So I would think in most of the 1970s we weren't really involved in much – we still believed it but we didn't live it.

Well I think there are times in our lives when we are doing different things. And that brings me on to my next question. One of the things that the commentators in the press stressed was your age – 74 as though that was a silly age to be doing this work.

Norman: Well, there's no set age for doing peace work. I know for example that people have been to Palestine with CPT who are in the 80s. And obviously it is people who are young or people who are old who are most free to do this work – you can't really do this with young children.



You have always seem to had a 'mission' (if I can put it that way) to get young people involved in peace work – the work you have done at Greenbelt; your 'Rough Guide to Peacemaking etc. Why is that?

Norman: Yes, well I see that as useful work. I think many books on peace, nonviolence and pacifism are too complicated. I don't think I'm being patronizing to young people its just that its quite a simple message really. Certainly many people don't want to sit down and wade there way through Walter Wink's three volumes, tremendous though they are. I've just been reading Jean Paul Lederach's book on reconciliation which is excellent but perhaps overly complicated. I think we need to put the case simply, basic case and challenge people.

Pat: Pacifism – nonviolence – of course is a real challenge. Norman's witness has been a real challenge to people who have never heard what pacifism and nonviolence is about.

The manner of your release by the military - many people have said that its something of an irony, given why you were there, your commitment to nonviolence and rejections of military methods. What do you think about that? I'm sure it hasn't made you change your mind but I suppose one could see parallels with Bonhoeffer...

Norman: Yes, perhaps... Well I wasn't going to sit there and say "I'm not going to come with you until you put your guns down" (laughs). I just wanted to get the hell out of there. I'd have gone home in Airforce One if they had offered it (laughs).

It was said at the time that you refused to come home in a military jet...

Norman: That was sheer nonsense. Obviously anyone can see that there are inconsistencies here but I'm only human. What I've said – and I said this before I went to Iraq – is that there are some parts of the military that are doing good work. Not what's going on in Iraq of course, but the fact that there are some military officers who go to Bradford School of Peace Studies is very interesting step. I didn't go to Iraq to be kidnapped, that wasn't my aim. What the military did to release me was not my decision, though I'm very glad that they did it.

Pat: If you were the parent or the wife of a soldier who has been killed in Iraq, we can understand that people would be cross that Norman has been rescued, has come home. I'm sure they must feel that this old man has got free why did our loved one not get rescued? I don't blame them if they feel angry.

There was obviously lots and lots of media interest when you came back and you were offered lots of money for your story yet you chose to give your first newspaper interview to The Baptist Times which I know many people admired. You still do now have this celebrity status, this notoriety which could be useful in some ways. Do you think its something you can use or do you want to reject all that?

Norman: Well its difficult because you have to be very skilful to handle the media and to get the message that you want put across and not the message that they want you to say. I'm not sure that I have made such a clear case as I would like to have done. For example I get asked to comment on a lot of things and don't, but was asked to comment on Sadaam Hussein being executed which I am clearly against so I thought I would say that clearly. Having said that on camera I was asked some other questions and in the end they didn't broadcast my comments about the death penalty. That's why I much prefer to talk to groups and public meetings because I can say what I want to say whether they like it or not and then they can ask me questions at the end. But when you are interviewed, with the exception of Lucy Winkett at Greenbelt and Fergal Keane who was very good and really wanted to hear about my motivations, the other just seem to want to get something 'unusual' or 'controversial, a headline.

So has it been helpful or difficult to write your book – come on plug the book!

Norman (laughs) Its called 'A Hostage in Iraq', published by Dartman, Longman and Todd. The hardback will be out

in March, one year after my release, followed later by paperback. I've asked that they put in some of the drawings that I did in the notebook that I had in captivity and pictures from before we were abducted.

Has it been traumatic to write?

Norman: No not really. There were one of two difficult bits that have been difficult to write and I don't like dwelling on some bits too much. Of course those are the bits that the publisher is interested in (laughs) . You know, 'How did you feel when Tom Fox was taken away?' and those are not the bits that I particularly want to remember. But I suppose it probably has been cathartic to write it. There has been talk of a TV documentary as well but who knows.

What was it like to go back to Greenbelt Festival, something that you have been involved with for many years? Several of us found it very emotional to see you up on stage at the communion and being interviewed. You seemed to disappear quite quickly after.

Norman: Yes I did that was a bit naughty of me really but I did find that interview quite emotional and the standing ovation at the end was very emotional for me and I couldn't hang around and talk to people which was perhaps naughty of me and I wanted to get back to Pat as well.

What are the positive things for you that have come out of the whole experience?

Norman: Well there are three things for me. One is the realisation of the fellowship of the worldwide church and the support we had. Second, the links that were made between Christian and Muslims. And the third one is the opportunity that it gave people to talk about Christian peacemaking – sometimes I even get to speak as well (laughs). So those are three things that have come out of it at least.

Norman and Pat thank you.

Can we finish by saying a big thank you to all members and supporters of FoR who prayed for us and supported us though the kidnapping. We really appreciated it.

Resources

Forgiveness and Reconciliation, Footsteps 68, Tearfund. September 06

In Forgiveness & Reconciliation, Tearfund have produced a wonderful resource which can be used to explore peace and conflict issues with a wide range of people. The publication approaches the subject from an international perspective and provides new, active and challenging articles, which can be used with all ages, to draw out issues surrounding forgiveness and reconciliation. Providing a number of case studies, such as the work of Club Deportivo in Colombia, who have utilised football as a way to teach young people about negotiation, cooperation and resolving conflict, the publication provides ideas and inspiration, and best of all, can be downloaded absolutely free!

See <http://tinyurl.com/yewstg>

Peace School, a year long course exploring 'shalom activism'

Peace School is a year-long course designed to give participants the resources to be peace and justice activists within their own spheres of influence. Rooted in a Christian understanding of peace, the course creates a "community of learning" in which participants can explore their own beliefs of peace and justice and how to apply it within their own lives. Taught through a combination of outside speakers, group discussions and witness to shalom activism, it provides a forum for people to bring their own experiences and learn from the experiences of others. The course is challenging, supportive, thought provoking and fun.

See www.peaceschool.org.uk or contact 0113 257 4572

Peace Doves Computer Game: Nobelprize.org

This is a very funny and clever computer game for those who want to test their knowledge of nuclear weapons. Aimed at adults who have some previous knowledge of nuclear weapon states, the game is simply fun! During the game peace doves dish out criticism of your mistakes and facts about the reality of our limited knowledge of nuclear weapons. The game is an unusual and informative resource, despite very difficult questions and slow progression. It is

wonderful to see peaceful computer games being used as a mechanism to reach out to new audiences.

See <http://tinyurl.com/yl8d94>

National Justice & Peace Network Annual Conference: Called to be Peacemakers - Who us? 20-22nd July, Swanick, Derbyshire.

The Roman Catholic Justice and Peace Network conference attended by around 300 people and 50 children takes place each year to explore issue of peace and justice. This year for the first time the conference will be ecumenical, being co-facilitated by the Fellowship of Reconciliation and Pax Christi, and will be looking at issues of peace making. Speakers include Zoughbi Zoughbi from Palestine, John Dear from the USA, with excellent workshops and a just fair. This is an excellent opportunity to meet with others exploring social justice from a faith perspective – book early as it regular sells out. More details at www.justice-and-peace.org.uk or www.for.org.uk.

Build Peace Poster

FoR and Quaker Peace & Social Witness (QPSW) have collaborated to produce a colourful and thought-provoking poster for churches, schools and other public places. The poster pointedly ask the question 'What can you do to build peace' and shows ideas and suggestions from a range of individuals. For a free copy of the poster email your name and address to buildpeace@for.org.uk

Jesus and Nonviolence: A Third Way, Fortress Press, Fortress Press, 96pp

Walter Wink's epic three volume series on the principalities and powers and nonviolence is a genuine classic of our time. But without doubt it heavy going! In this small summary book Walter Wink himself offers a précis of his thinking about the issue, including the relation of Jesus and his message to politics and nonviolence, the history of nonviolent efforts, and how nonviolence can win the day when others don't hesitate to resort to violence or terror to achieve their aims. Highly recommended.

Available from the FoR Office for £5 + £1.50 p+p.

Journeying in Hope: Zoughbi Zoughbi

Zoughbi Zoughbi is Director of Wi'am, The Palestinian Conflict Resolution Centre which uses the traditional Arab form of mediation, called Sulha, with western models of conflict resolution. Wi'am is a branch of the International Fellowship of Reconciliation. Zoughbi was born in 1963 in Bethlehem, the second youngest of eight children, just two minutes from the Church of the Nativity. His family has lived in the area for almost 600 years as a Palestinian Christian family. He is married with four children.

Can you tell us a little about how you got involved in this work?

I was 13 years old when I discovered who I am in the sense of being an Arab Palestinian Christian, and from that point of discovering my identity I became an activist. I was going to the Good Friday procession in Jerusalem, when I was stopped at a checkpoint. I was asked for my ID but being under 16 I didn't have one but they wouldn't believe me. So they slammed me against the wall and raised my hands. I was being searched, beaten and so on. I tried to ask how I could prove it to them when I remembered that I had my birth certificate. I tried to get it from my pocket but the captain hit me with a stick. Finally I was able to get it to give it to him.

I went back to my mother – my father had died by this time – very angry but she said, “No don't, be angry you are a Christian, remember where you are going”. So since then, I became active, active in three spheres; social, religious and nonviolence. From my elders I learnt mediation and how to resolve conflict. From early on I was doing peer mediation. While I was doing other jobs, people called and asked for mediation, so we became mediators. I studied conflict resolution and undertook a Peace Studies MA and graduated from Notre Dame in the US in 1989. After I finished the studying I came back. I worked in different things. But still the mediation work was needed. I decided to leave my job, and establish a centre.

Tell us a little about the work of Wi'am.

At the beginning we had a small room, a telephone line and a computer. Eventually Wi' am became one of the main centres, locally and regionally. We have good connections with the world, we invest a lot in relationships. We try to

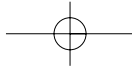
'walk the walk and talk the talk' of nonviolence. Wi'am focuses on nonviolent conflict resolution. We have programmes for women and children. For women we have programmes try to help them be part of society on an equal footing, to be equal citizens. In our society which is very patriarchal, a conservative traditional society, it's not easy.

We also work with children and that is really the enjoyable work because children will be the youth of tomorrow and they will be the leaders of the coming years. We work with the children focusing on trauma coping. We don't have trauma 'healing', this is not post traumatic stress disorder because its layer over layer – it is not post – it continues. So we work to help them cope together, play together and provide them with an environment to air their feelings, to vent their problems and to create. They write poetry, they do art, and they have drama, sport and so on. FoR and other organisations have supported us and we really appreciate all the prayers and support and partnership because without you, I don't think we could do it. Your involvement gives more depth and meaning to our work. So we are working with children on all levels and more children are asking to join us.

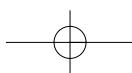
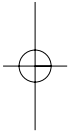
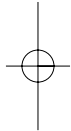
We also work with youths which is an important issue because youths in Palestine are the pride of everything. The things that young people in the West take for granted, our youth die for. There is a theft sort of spontaneity. We don't move from place to place freely, we cannot say, 'OK, lets have a cup of coffee in Jerusalem'. Jerusalem is five miles away but its easier for us to go to England than Jerusalem. So we work with youths, helping them to see that they don't have the monopoly on pain and oppression. People are oppressed here and there. There is poverty in the south, there is poverty in the north. We are part of this global village which they should try to look at and we try to help them see.

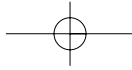
You say you have been an activist from thirteen. When you were growing up was there a temptation to get into violence?

I mentioned about the time when I was 13 years old. I was really angry – you can imagine – I was full of anger, but not hatred. My mother always taught us to be kind to others; to Christians, to Muslims, to Jews or any other faith. She

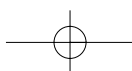
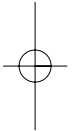
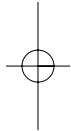


Build Peace





Build Peace



Fellowship, Faith and St. Francis

The founding story of FoR is of two Christians, one German and one English, refusing to take up arms against each other at the beginning of the First World War, saying 'We are one in Christ, and we shall never be at war.' In terms of the climate of European conflict this was a radical statement at the time. Over 90 years later this powerful simplicity has lost some of its import in a world in which warmongers claim that there is a 'clash of civilisations' between a supposed 'western Christian culture' and the religion and culture of the 'Islamic world'. This dating of the fellowship's banner-call however should not take us away from the power of the fellowship's basis that is firmly rooted in the true Christian understanding of the God of love and nonviolence. This I would maintain is not an exclusivism that needs changing by turning FOR into an 'interfaith' fellowship but is an important distinctiveness that needs to be maintained in order to counter Christian fundamentalist heresies and secularist attacks on religion through a confident proclamation in word and action of the radical gospel of Jesus Christ.

Part of this proclamation is, as Christians, opening our hearts and minds to dialogue and partnership with Muslims in the contemporary struggle against empire and its violent consequences; speaking out against Islamophobia and offering solidarity to our Muslim brothers and sisters as Christians. In so doing we can discover and bring to the fore stories from our tradition that challenge and enlighten ourselves and others to the value and power of dialogue and action that maintains a particular faith based integrity for both Christians and Muslims.

One such story is the story of St Francis and the 'crusades'. Having failed to convince the Pope not to support another crusade Francis set out in 1219 for Egypt and went to Damietta to try to persuade the crusaders who were besieging the city to stop fighting. Francis argued that Christians fighting to proclaim the gospel was a contradiction in terms. Failing to persuade the crusaders and disgusted by their attitudes, Francis set out to go directly to the Muslims and to stop the war by converting them to Christ and showing the crusaders the true way. He managed to get an audience with the Sultan Malik-al-Kamil. Francis was welcomed by the Sultan and an interesting dialogue took place between the two. Needless

to say Francis failed to convert the Sultan, who was nevertheless impressed by Francis' holiness. The saint eventually returned to Europe. Numerous sources report on what an impact the Damietta experience had on Francis, who on his return to Italy, found his order institutionalising in his absence. Struggling against this Francis also responded to his experience in Egypt, by stipulating ways in which Franciscans should operate in mission to Muslim lands. He advocated a 'presence' mission that sought not so much to proclaim the gospel through words and disputation (which Francis proscribed) but through loving action to counter the damage to the gospel done by the crusades.

In our different context but similar predicament, with a triumphalist adulteration of the Christian faith being propagated by the powerful, groups like FoR need to maintain a Christian integrity in the spirit of St Francis to proclaim a different way. Maintaining a Christian integrity means participating in a particular type of creative exploration with other faith traditions, in this case Muslims, that becoming an 'interfaith' fellowship does not necessarily allow. There is always the danger that such an organisation simply becomes liberal Christians proclaiming themselves 'interfaith' with little real substance being given to that label, and the unique contribution to faith based activism and reconciliation of a particular Christian witness is lost. We need to seek partners for action in existing groups set up within other faith traditions whose basis will be different from ours but whose immediate goals may be similar. We are, in such an engagement, challenged to articulate in partnership our own basis and to hear others' possibly very different basis for their action. In the process we are both enriched and perhaps new coalitions are created, and God willing a new 'inter-faith' banner call may at some point in the future be discovered.

Ray Gaston is an Anglican priest and has been the Vicar of All Hallows Church in Leeds since 1999. He has a long history of being involved in faith based action against militarism and war. He believes the truths of one's own tradition can be more deeply discovered in dialogue with other faith traditions and has been particularly involved over the last 10 years in interfaith dialogue with Buddhists and Muslims.

Papua: Land of Peace

West Papua is the other half of the island of Papua New Guinea, about 250Km north of Australia. Over 40 years ago West Papua was annexed to Indonesia following a sham referendum overseen by the United Nations. Today there is a growing independence movement which is gaining international support. Within Papua, religious leaders have come together to initiate 'Papua, land of peace' and several faith-based organisations, including the Fellowship of Reconciliation, have formed a solidarity network to support this initiative. Maud Grainger went to interview Benny Wenda, co-ordinator of the Free West Papua campaign.

Benny Wenda, a tribal leader from West Papua was arrested by the Indonesian military in 2002. He was locked up and tortured for months before he escaped and fled to Britain with his wife and daughter and has been granted asylum. He still bears the scars (literally) of the brutal occupation of his country. When I arrived to interview him at his house he struggled to the door with a metal brace screwed through his leg. He looked like a man with a huge burden on his shoulders but one with hope in his eyes.

Benny, why were you arrested in West Papua, can you explain what happened?

In 2000 we had a national congress and lots of elders came from all over West Papua. The first congress had been held in 1961 and had been organised by the Dutch. Following the fall of General Suharto, the Indonesian President, we were able to hold a second national congress. In that short period we were able to raise our flag, the Morning Star, and call West Papua by its name. [West Papua had been renamed Irian Jaya by the Indonesians.] When the Suharto regime fell it opened the door for a short time for the independence movement in West Papua.

I was arrested as I led my people to raise the flag. The Indonesia military were suspicious of me because I was encouraging the people. For raising the flag at a peaceful presentation they sentenced me to 25 years in prison. They beat me and tortured me; and I was held in a small room with no light.

However when people from all over the world contacted the head of the police about my detention, the guards came and

took me to him and he said " "Hey, Benny why these people telephone from far away for you?" I just told him that people were watching him. After one week they gave me light, not much else but at least they gave me light.

When you escaped you made your way to England. Why did you come so far?

Britain is the mother of democracy. I believe Britain will understand the suffering of my people. I sought asylum and found support and help from British people.

What was it like when you arrived? Do you like living in England?

When I escaped and came to Heathrow airport no-one had told me it was so cold here! I just had one T-shirt and long trousers, when I was outside I was so cold I moaned a little. Someone asked me what was wrong and when I said it was cold they gave me their jacket. I was also surprised that there were no trees. Because I come from the jungle I thought how could I hide if Indonesians come looking for me!

Here I can say Papua Merdeka, Free Papua and carry my flag and this is freedom. The British people and the British government gave me freedom and welcomed me. Lots of people listened to me and I felt like I wasn't alone, that people were supporting me. I feel in my heart British people will help me and I can go back and be with my people. I have a lot of friends now; local people, politicians and the church have welcomed me. They pray for me and support me. All my friends are around me and I feel more confident.

What do you believe the future holds for West Papua?

Politically I want West Papua to be free; free from other colonisers and completely free from Indonesia. I want to see my people free to walk, to gather, to hunt to garden, to be free from intimidation and free from the military. Where I come from - in the highlands - my people are not free to even go to church - they have to report to the military so they can go. There are also people hiding in the jungle. This is not freedom for us and in West Papua my people

Papua contd

are crying. But hope is here now I want to see my people free, that's all. Like other human beings.

How can faith communities help in the UK?

The Christian community in West Papua is praying for help from around the world. I really hope the Christian community will pray for us and support pressure on the Indonesian government. There are also British companies that work in West Papua: Rio Tinto and BP. Indonesia receives a lot of money from these companies and it helps than to afford to buy guns and military equipment to kill my people. These companies because they work with Indonesia, to me it is like they are supporting the illegal occupation of our land. I hope the Christian community will help me help my people.

How do you feel about the sales of arms from Britain to Indonesia?

Indonesia says they are being used for protection. What I want is for the British government to know these weapons are being used to kill people – this is like supporting crimes against humanity committed by Indonesia. Indonesian nationalism is very strong they don't care about the human. They believe they have the power to kill.

Papua, the land of peace commits the struggle to one of nonviolence. Do you believe in nonviolence?

West Papua wants nonviolence and dialogue with the Indonesian Government but Indonesia refuse. They declared war in West Papua. We don't have any guns. In Indonesia they have heavy weapons. They manipulate all situations because they worry we will be free, In West Papua there is copper and timber and gold. They care about that. They don't care about the people.

Are West Papuans ready for self rule?

Yes, Yes, Yes a 100%. People ask how we can run our country. We can build our own country, we have lots of experience and we can learn we are ready! Indonesia says we are not ready but we are!

What or who is your inspiration to carry on?

My people they cry, they cry everyday I can't sleep, 24 hrs I can't sleep, I think and I advise my people. We have no justice and no peace. I work for that I just always think who can help my people!

For more information on West Papua see www.freewestpapua.org or visit www.for.org.uk

'Memoriathon' for Reconciliation in

Twenty years of "Shining Path" terrorism and its repression by the police and armed forces of Peru came to a halt in 2000. Shortly after the dismissal of President Fujimori that year, an interim president and then democratically elected President Toledo set up a Commission for Truth and Reconciliation.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission

Twelve well qualified and respected citizens were commissioned to investigate in depth the years of internal armed conflict from 1980 to 2000. Peruvians needed to know the full truth about the causes and consequences of the conflict in order to embark on the path to reconciliation. During two years of tireless field work, the commissioners, with the aid of 500 collaborators, interviewed some 17,000 victims of those violent years.

In August 2003 the Commission presented its "Final Report" to President Toledo. The nation was shocked to find out that an estimated 69,280 people had been killed during those 20 years. The vast majority (85%) of those killed were humble country people, and 75% spoke Quechua or other indigenous languages rather than Spanish. Of the deaths reported to the Commission, 55% were inflicted by Shining Path militants, while the armed forces and police were responsible for 35%.

Official Reaction to Report

The Commission pinpointed the conditions which gave rise to the armed conflict, and made many excellent recommendations to remedy the enormous damage done to mostly innocent people. It also insisted on sweeping reforms of the State authorities and armed forces to prevent the same tragedy being repeated in the future.

Instead of galvanising the present government into implementing those recommendations, the Final Report has been badly neglected by most of the politicians and military. On the other hand, many Peruvian groups are doing their best to ensure that the Report not be buried and ignored in practice. This is what inspired social justice officers of the diocese of Carabayllo and of the Columban missionaries to collaborate in organising a "Memoriathon".

"Memoriathon"

The title compresses "memory" and "marathon", because what we planned was a small marathon in the morning, leading the participants to a 'festival of memory' in the afternoon. The mayor himself was there to greet the marathon joggers/walkers, as well as many other interested people who joined them in the municipal square. Likewise Mgr. Lino Panizza, Bishop of Carabayllo, spoke of the need to keep alive the memory and lessons of those twenty most deadly years in all of Peru's history since independence.

Our short marathon was linked with the long marathon of 2,200 kilometres then being jogged and walked by four "chasquis". They were following the old Inca road from Pierre to Puny, in the footsteps of the Inca "chassis". Those were running couriers who carried official messages in the form of "quip's", cords with a varying arrangement of knots. The four modern "chassis", including two youths orphaned by the conflict, were volunteers who wanted to collect "quip's" from representatives of every city, town and hamlet all along their route. That old Inca road took them from top to bottom of Peru, through and over towering Andes mountains. It was chosen because it passes through practically all the areas where the vast majority of victims came from.

Every Knot A Victim

This time each knot was to represent a person killed or otherwise damaged by the armed conflict in that area. At the end of their marathon, the four modern couriers were to bring all those quipus to the newly designated "Memorial Grove" near the middle of Lima. There they are to be enshrined permanently, surrounded by 69,280 stones bearing the actual name of each person killed.

During the afternoon of our Memoriathon, we had several good bands including the internationally acclaimed singer, Martina Portocarrero. She voluntarily sang many moving Peruvian songs and explained their importance for our theme. The audience also went into a municipal hall to see films and an exhibition of photographs again relating to our theme. Everybody was encouraged to make a large quipu. It will be added to those carried in by the four hardy couriers.

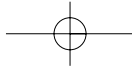
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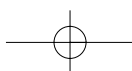
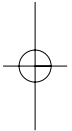
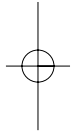
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Youth page?



Overspill (W'iam)

always reminded her children that one my our father's best friends was a Jew. We are not against Jews - we are against this oppression, this occupation. For me Jesus was our example of how to face oppression and frustration, and anger. Many times we were tempted, especially when you are a young chap and you are confronted with occupation forces, teargas, bullets etc. You want to change the world. However if I have the choice between being oppressed or being the oppressor, I would chose to be the oppressed rather than the oppressor. For me the choice is nonviolence as activism not passivism. Later I was exposed to the American civil rights movement, to Gandhi, to Bishop Helda Camara in Brazil, to Mother Theresa, Thich Nhat Hanh...

I have been in prison several times, been tortured several times, denied access permits. Even now I am not allowed to go to Jerusalem and I don't have a permit to visit Tel Aviv. My wife has no right to live with me. She is a tourist in my home after 16 years. Recently an Israeli captain said to me 'You married an American - your wife and children have American passports, still you are here. Why do you not go?' I told him 'I'm here for the same reason you are here, this is my land as well as your land, and this is a land where I was born, and I like to keep'. He was annoyed. I feel I am called to be here and to work here. I hope and pray that I can continue with the message that I have to give and continue to live that and witness to that - I feel that is my mission.

You mentioned you have been in prison a few times, do you want to say something about that?

We are not prisoners because we commit crimes but because we are calling for justice and nonviolent action. The earliest time I was in prison was when I was a teenager. Several times I've been taken to prison without trial under the emergency regulation laws which, I'm sorry to say, the British introduced in 1945. It gives Israeli's the 'right' to imprison under the umbrella of administrative detention. In a way that law says that every Palestinian is guilty until proven innocent. So they take me from time to time, and they call it, in the modern political terminology, 'preventative detention'. One time I was taken to prison because I was taking two Americans to visit a refugee camp.

Prison was a good experience for me. It was also part of the temptation that you talk about. It helped me to really examine my value system and examine the route that I want to be on. I was at one time the only Christian in that prison and my fellow Palestinians didn't believe that I'm a Christian. 'You don't have blue eyes, you are not a white person' etc. I said our family have been Christian six hundred years in this land - there was real interfaith dialogue inside the prison! Prison isn't easy. I was in solitary confinement, which is really the most difficult situation, standing all night, not able to sit, not to shower, not to eat, not to drink. You have a sack on your face, plastic handcuffs which if you move they will be tightened, name calling and psychological warfare against you. The family don't know where you are and you don't know what's happening to your family. It was really a very tough situation, but it has enhanced my knowledge and empowered me in my work.

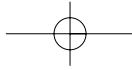
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What is it about FoR that makes you want to be part of it? Is there something special about it for you?

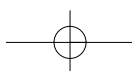
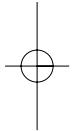
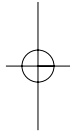
We talk about the 21st century global village. For me the Fellowship of Reconciliation brings the global village to be in front of us. Through FoR we are connected with people from all the corners of the world who are working for peace and nonviolence. As Martin Luther King says, 'an injustice anywhere, is an injustice everywhere', and as Christ says, 'whatever you do for the least of my brothers, you are doing it for me'. I am compelled to be part of this global village, to try to understanding the situation and to be in solidarity with those who are oppressed and those who are marginalised. So FoR is one of those groups that give us a window to the world and help us to be active.

How do you keep going? What keeps you energised?

Life is a matter of choices and when you choose hope you are not the same. Hope by itself is a journey that you take, a journey of risk and a journey of promise. We take risks with our lives in the hope that we will have the promise of peace. I do what I do also because my children would like to see things change. I can't live in peace probably in my time. I



Falklands? Overspill?



What you can do

Join FoR

As FoR member Margaret Mead said, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has." To build real change for peace and justice in our world we need to work together. The Fellowship of Reconciliation has always recognized the importance of working with others. Why not join us? For more details on becoming a Member or a supporter of FoR, please use the reply slip below.

Donate to International Peacemakers

Through our international contacts we are able to directly help small grassroots groups who are working nonviolently for peace and justice in regions of conflict. Our International Peacemakers Fund (IPF) makes grants to such groups. In addition, because administration is covered by a Trust every penny you donate will go directly to grassroots nonviolence projects. Please send your donation to 'Fellowship of Reconciliation (IPF)'. For more details see www.for.org.uk/ipf

Support FoR's Campaigns

FoR seeks to challenge the causes and structures that lead to violent conflict. In addition we aim to be advocates for the victims of war and conflict by enabling their voices to

be heard. Currently we are campaigning on the arms trade through our 'Living by the Sword campaign'; we are supporting the people of West Papua in their struggle for independence through the 'Papua: Land of Peace campaign'; and we shall shortly be launching a new campaign called 'Study War No More' which is looking at military research being undertaken in British universities. For more details on these campaigns see our www.for.org.uk/campaigns or contact us at the office.

Email News

About once a month FoR sends out an email newsletter with details of coming events, publications, resources and other information in relation to building peace in our world. You can see a copy of the latest FoR email news on our website www.for.org.uk, where you can sign up for further issues.

Join FoR Young Peacemakers Network

FoR is committed to supporting young peacemakers and one way we do this is through our Young Peacemakers Network. YPN is an association of young people (18- 30ish) interested in peace and conflict issues. If you are interested, please use the reply slip below to receive more information and an invite to a YPN gathering.

- I would like to join FoR as a Member/Supporter/Group affiliate (please delete)
- I enclose a donation towards the work of the Fellowship of Reconciliation
- I enclose a donation towards the International Peacemakers Fund - payable to 'FoR (ipf)' please
- I am a UK tax payer. Please treat my donation as Gift Aid and reclaim tax on all donations until I notify you otherwise (please sign and date below)
- I would like to make a regular donation. Please send us a standing order form
- I would like to subscribe to FoR's monthly Email News

- Please send me more details about the Young Peacemakers Network

- We are interested in a speaker for our church/group/school. Please contact me.

- Please send me future issues of 'Peace by Peace' magazine

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Give peace a fighting chance

If peacemaking were given a real chance, it could transform our global society, relieve human suffering and make our communities more secure.

This is why we established the International Peacemakers Fund

FoR's International Peacemakers Fund provides essential support to war-torn communities who dare to realise their own potential to end conflict. Often local people are already working hard to build peace in their own communities and simply need our support. The projects, in Colombia, Palestine, Zimbabwe and West Africa use nonviolent methods to address the causes of conflict, promote dialogue and build reconciliation. Often these peacemakers are putting their lives on the line to disseminate peacebuilding skills amongst their communities.

In Palestine for example, where the community has been severely weakened by thirty eight years of Israeli military occupation, International Peacemakers Fund partner 'Wi'am' helps to resolve disputes by complementing the traditional Arab form of mediation, called Sulha, with Western models of conflict resolution. Wi'am challenges violence in the region on many levels. Wi'am mediates Israeli-Palestinian disputes, issues relating to Israeli military, youth delinquency as well as domestic conflicts.

Because they work against the odds, amidst political and social upheaval, with extremely limited financial resources, the International Peacemakers Fund is a crucial lifeline.

Please support our International Peacemakers by giving today.

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