



Japanese School Children made thousands of peace cranes for the 70th commemoration of the bombing of Hiroshima.
WCC/P Jeffrey

Peace Sunday Resources 2017

“Hear a Just Cause, O Lord” Psalm 17:1a

New Zealand churches remember the victims of nuclear bombs and renew their commitment to peacemaking. On 6 August 1945 the bomb “Little Boy” was dropped on the centre of Hiroshima leaving 100,000-180,000 people dead and 63% of buildings destroyed. Three days later on 9 August a larger bomb “Fat Man” was dropped on the city of Nagasaki leaving 50,000-100,000 dead and 22.7% of its buildings consumed by fire.

On 2 July Moruroa e Tatou commemorated the 51st anniversary of the atomic bomb test on Moruroa Atoll, Maohi Nui (French Polynesia). After 193 tests (ending in 1996), few workers and families who have developed cancers and other illnesses have received compensation.

During negotiations at the UN on the treaty to ban nuclear weapons, Roland Oldham from Moruroa e Tatou spoke of the intergenerational harm they cause, “I would say that the story of nuclear will never end. We know when it started but we don't know when it's going to end.” Last year the Maohi Protestant Church decided to take France to the International Criminal Court alleging crimes against humanity.

The Justice Plea

In July, a treaty to ban nuclear weapons was passed at the United Nations. After five years of negotiations, 122 nations agreed to this ground breaking international legislation, which was opposed by nuclear powers. New Zealand played a leading role in advocating for the treaty. It is one sign of hope at a time when many more people are speaking about war and spending more on armaments.

This year's resources invite churches to read the lectionary readings through the lens of peace—you can find alternative commentary for the special readings designated for Peace Sunday here.

Underlying most conflicts are people experiencing injustice. Let us listen for their cries so we can work together for a just peace.



Call to Worship

Loving God

We come together this day

Seeking hope for our world

And healing in our lives.

Let us worship the God of Peace

In Jesus' Name

Amen.

Children's Time

You will need five loaves of bread and two fishes—real or cut out shapes—place them in an appropriate container or on a tray.

Welcome the children as you normally would. Then show them the bread and fishes. Depending on the age, ask the group if they can tell you what Bible story might go with the bread and fish. You could invite someone to tell the story, or continue by asking questions like: Where did Jesus tell this story? When it was getting late, what did the disciples ask Jesus? How much food did the disciples have? What did Jesus do with the food? What happened when the disciples shared the food?

Jesus did not want anyone to go hungry. Has anyone shared food with you when you were hungry? Can you think of people who might need food? If your church collects food for a foodbank, you could talk about that. Sharing food is a way of making peace.



Japanese school children displayed thousands of paper cranes at the 70th commemoration of the bombing of Hiroshima. Photo: WCC/Paul Jeffrey

Maybe you can make a poster asking for help for hungry people in New Zealand or South Sudan OR you could make food or a peace message to share with the group.

**Loving God,
We pray for children who are hungry and scared. May they find food and safety. In Jesus' Name. Amen**

If you want to focus on the Hiroshima story you could tell the story of Sadako and make paper cranes or peace symbols.



South Sudan

Rima is selling peanuts outside the tent where she has lived with her family since last year. At the camp in Wau, ACT Alliance distributes food.

One in three South Sudanese have been displaced by conflict which started in December 2013. People are unable to plant crops. Six million people are living close to starvation. You can help by donating to South Sudan Appeal.

Lectionary Readings

Genesis 32:22-31

Jacob came into the world grasping his twin Esau's ankle. Having tricked Esau out of his birth right, Jacob had to escape when Esau threatened revenge. With the help of his mother Rebekah, he fled and found shelter with her family. Taken by Laban's younger daughter, Jacob worked 7 years for Rachel's hand in marriage, only to be tricked by Laban into marrying Leah. Seven years later he earned the right to marry Rachel. After seven more years labour and with sizable herds of animals and considerable wealth, Jacob had to leave again after a confrontation with Laban. They made a peace agreement and Jacob headed back to his home. He sent his messengers to meet Esau. They returned, warning that Esau was advancing with 400 men. In response, Jacob sent gifts to appease Esau. On the way he spent a night alone with God in which he faces up to what he has done, and is able to grow into a new identity, Israel. Names in the Bible speak a lot about character and so Jacob leaves behind his past. Dealing with conflict and facing up to history is a very real part of peacemaking for Jacob and for us.

Psalms 17: 1-7, 15

Surrounded by enemies, the psalmist cries out for help. It is also the prayer of innocent people caught up in wars and violence that they have not started. In v1 the psalmist states his 'just cause' and in v15 he speaks of righteousness.

Romans 9:1-5

In chapters 9-11 Paul returns to the topic of Israel. He struggles because the Israelites do not recognise Jesus in the way he does. In verses 4-5, Paul distinguishes the Israelites from their Greek neighbours. He wrote primarily to Israelites living within a larger Hellenist community.

Matthew 14: 13-21

Immediately after Matthew tells the story of the beheading of John the Baptist (v10), he says that Jesus withdrew (v13). The political context is important to the story. By carrying out Herodias's wishes as transmitted through her daughter, Herod had been forced into an action that he was reluctant to take. He knew the political consequences of murdering John would send a clear signal to Jesus and the many peasants and fishermen who followed him. Not wanting to provoke further trouble in the villages and towns and grieving for his friend, Jesus withdrew into a deserted area. The crowds uncertain of what might happen,



Three years after the war, large areas of Gaza have not been rebuilt.

followed him. Jesus 'had compassion for them'. It is a very human feeling. People did not usually eat in the wilderness, but 'the hour was now late'. Somehow in the middle of this lonely place, the community finds more than enough food to share. There are two central aspects to this good fortune: Jesus and the sharing community. Both are central to our faith.

Prayer for Peace

God of Peace

We remember Hiroshima and Nagasaki - those who lost everything. We remember people damaged by nuclear testing in the Pacific and elsewhere. We remember the people of Iraq, South Sudan and Syria who are living in the midst of war. We pray for those who threaten terror and inflict harm on others. When our world echoes with the sound of war, violence and pain, **we dare to pray for peace.**

We pray for our country and community, for those places where poverty, greed and injustice foster violence. We pray for those who live in fear for their lives. We pray for people who need homes and healing. May we find the strength and the faith to do the hard and painful work that makes the peace that comes with justice and care. When our world echoes with the sound of war, violence and pain, **we dare to pray for peace. Amen**

Closing Prayer

Loving God

We have drawn strength from your word and our worship together.

We hear the cries of pain and seek justice. We go in the name of Jesus, the Prince of Peace,

Prepared to take action for justice and love, To bring hope to our broken world. Amen.



Aotearoa New Zealand

UN Treaty Banning Nuclear Bombs

On July 7 a new treaty banning the manufacture, possession and use of nuclear weapons was passed by 122 nations. The Netherlands opposed it. It recognises the responsibility of all states to work to abolish nuclear weapons. The nine countries with nuclear weapons did not support it.

Unlike the 1968 Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons Treaty which allowed five countries to possess nuclear weapons, it prohibits the direct or indirect use, threat of use, possession, acquisition and development of nuclear weapons.

Negotiations focused around the immense harm that would be done to people and the environment if nuclear weapons were used. Effectively it recognises the human suffering caused by the dropping of nuclear bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki and through testing on Bikini, Moruroa and Faungatafa atolls in the Pacific.

The treaty requires states to provide assistance to victims of nuclear weapons use and testing, and requires environmental remediation for areas contaminated by radiation.

Nations will be able to sign on to the treaty from September 20 and it will enter into force after 50 countries have ratified it. The New

Zealand government made the negotiations a high priority.

Christian World Service has long supported Moruroa E Tatou in its campaign for compensation for workers and families affected by nuclear testing in Tahiti. The late John Doom and the Protestant Church have taken a leading role in the campaign for compensation.

More resources

There are **events** to commemorate Hiroshima and Nagasaki and **resources** on the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. More on **nuclear testing in the Pacific** can be found from Moruroa E Tatou.

Global military expenditure in 2016 was US \$1686 billion, an increase of 0.4% in real terms and equivalent to 2.2% of the global gross domestic product.

New Zealand military expenditure will increase. Peace Movement Aotearoa produced a poster comparing military expenditure of \$3,678,940,000 with other government spending at the time of this year's budget. Download their leaflet on military spending.



CWS has an appeal to help South Sudanese with food, water, sanitation and protection, Syrian refugees with education, medical care and emergency support in Lebanon and Jordan, and displaced Iraqis with relief supplies. If you can, please help: www.cws.org.nz



Christian World Service
PO Box 22652,
Christchurch 8140
Tel 0800 74 73 72 or 03 366 9274
cws@cws.org.nz
www.cws.org.nz