



# Unitarian Peace Fellowship Newsletter

*For all within our denomination who witness to the  
belief that war and preparation for war are sins  
against God and failures of humanity*

**Issue 2, Autumn 2010**

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## Words from the Chair



Well here we are another issue of the newsletter and I want to take this opportunity to thank everyone for their support of our annual appeal and for the special support given to our extra appeal for the victims of the Pakistan floods (see report on page 9).

Although we don't have a meeting of the committee until February we would love to hear from members of the Fellowship with any ideas for recipients of our 2011 annual appeal. Any ideas can be sent to any member of the committee for discussion (contact details on back cover).

As usual our AGM will be held during the General Assembly Meetings in April next year in Swansea and I look forward to seeing many of you there.

Autumn comes around again and we look forward to darker nights, darker mornings, hot food instead of the summer salad, hot chocolate, Bonfire Night, Halloween and Christmas.

Animals in hibernation crisp walks and frosty breath in the air, all lovely things that we know and things we look forward to.

Let us now remember those in other lands torn by war, ravaged by natural disaster and all those affected who have nothing to look forward to except another day exactly like the day before.

The Unitarian Peace Fellowship tries very hard with its annual appeals to help such people and we try very hard to help not only war victims

but those who need help to make their lives more bearable whilst suffering in a way that we will never be able to understand.

Being a part of the Fellowship is much understated but rewarding because we do make a difference, maybe in a small way but nevertheless everything that we do helps someone somewhere and that is what I feel we should be doing.

I know that all of you reading this newsletter are members of the Fellowship but I would take this opportunity to ask you all to encourage others that you know to join us, the more members we have the more we can help those who need it.

**Joan Norton**



## **The Hague Agenda for Peace & Justice**

In 1999 I was fortunate to be able to attend the Hague Appeal for Peace Conference; it was an inspiring event attended by thousands of people from across the world including Desmond Tutu, and largely unreported in this country. Below is the agenda for action that came from that conference, I thought it might be a useful tool to enable individuals and groups to consider how far we have travelled, if at all, down the path toward Peace in the last 10+ years.

**Rev Chris Goacher**

The Hague Agenda for Peace and Justice for the 21st Century has emerged from an intensive democratic process of consultation among the members of the Hague Appeal for Peace Organizing and

Coordinating Committees, and the hundreds of organizations and individuals that have actively participated in the Hague Appeal process. The Agenda represents what these civil society organizations and citizens consider to be some of the most important challenges facing humankind as it embarks upon a new millennium.

**The Agenda reflects the four major strands of the Hague Appeal:**

1. Root Causes of War/Culture of Peace
2. International Humanitarian and Human Rights Law and Institutions
3. Prevention, Resolution and Transformation of Violent Conflict
4. Disarmament and Human Security

***Preamble***

The world is emerging from the bloodiest, most war-ridden century in history. On the eve of the new century, it is time to create the conditions in which the primary aim of the United Nations, "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war", can be realized. This is the goal of The Hague Appeal for Peace.

Sceptics will say that it cannot be done. The Hague Appeal challenges this assumption. This century has seen unimagined changes. Society now has the means to cure disease and eliminate poverty and starvation. The twentieth century has also seen the creation of a set of universal norms which, if implemented, would go a long way toward making war unnecessary and impossible. We have witnessed inspiring and successful experiments with active nonviolence in struggles for independence and civil rights by unarmed peoples' movements. And this century has seen the replacement of authoritarian forms of government by democratic governance and the increasing role of civil society in the affairs of humanity.

Recent years have seen outbreaks of genocide in Cambodia, Bosnia, Rwanda and Kosovo, brutal attacks against civilians and the spread of horrendous weapons of mass destruction capable of ending life on much

or all of the planet. Indigenous populations continue to be denied their rights to self determination. In a great many cases, the world's governments have manifestly failed to fulfill their responsibility to prevent conflict, protect civilians, end war, eradicate colonialism, guarantee human rights and create the conditions of permanent peace.

Therefore, this historic mission and responsibility cannot be entrusted solely to governments. The Hague Appeal proposes a citizens' Agenda for Peace and Justice for the 21st Century. This will entail a fundamentally new approach, building on the recent model of New Diplomacy in which citizen advocates, progressive governments and international organizations have worked together for common goals. We will embrace the moral imagination and courage necessary to create a 21st century culture of peace and to develop national and supranational institutions which ultimately must be the guarantors of peace and justice in this world.

There is already much to choose from. Civil society has flourished since the end of the Cold War and launched campaigns aimed at eradicating landmines, reducing the traffic in small arms, alleviating third world debt, ending violence against women, abolishing nuclear weapons, protecting the rights of children, stopping the use of child soldiers and building an independent International Criminal Court. These grassroots efforts are having a major impact. They are succeeding because they mobilize ordinary people, because they integrate different sectors (human rights, the environment, humanitarian assistance, disarmament, sustainable development, etc.) and because they invite the full participation of women, youth, indigenous peoples, minorities, the disabled and other affected groups.

These campaigns have generated unity and cohesion and demonstrate what can be done when people are listened to instead of talked at. The Hague Appeal for Peace intends to listen, learn and then to build. Out of this process will emerge a new citizens' Agenda for Peace and Justice for the 21st Century. It is a vital and realizable goal.

Components of the Hague Appeal, from the conference program to the campaigns, are motivated by the following main themes:

## **Traditional Failure**

Traditional approaches to preventing war and building peace have by and large failed disastrously. This is evidenced by the growing brutality of warfare, and the callous disregard for civilian life in such conflicts as the Congo, Sierra Leone and Kosovo. Impunity for ethnic cleansing and for crimes against humanity is not compatible with international law. Big-power bullying tactics are not diplomacy. Sanctions that starve the poor are not solidarity. Firebrigade peacekeeping efforts are no substitute for sophisticated early warning and conflict prevention.

## **Human Security**

It is time to redefine security in terms of human and ecological needs instead of national sovereignty and national borders. Redirecting funding from armaments to human security and sustainable development will establish new priorities leading to the construction of a new social order which ensures the equal participation of marginalized groups, including women and indigenous people, restricts use of military force, and moves towards collective global security.

## **Soft Power**

We are profoundly encouraged that civil society and progressive governments are choosing 'soft power' paths, utilising negotiation, coalition building and new diplomacy methods of settling disputes, while rejecting the 'hard power' dictates of major powers, militaries and economic conglomerates.

## **All Human Rights for All**

The violation of human rights is one of the root causes of war. These violations include the denial of economic, social and cultural rights, as well as political and civil rights. The artificial distinction between these two sets of rights can no longer be tolerated. We affirm the universality and indivisibility of human rights and call for stronger mechanisms to implement and enforce human rights treaties and to afford redress to victims for the violation of their rights.

## **Replacing the Law of Force with the Force of Law**

The rule of law has been contemptuously ignored in contemporary conflicts. The Hague Appeal seeks to develop and promote universal adherence to and implementing of international law. It also seeks to invigorate existing institutions of international law like the International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Court. Knowledge of and recourse to international law must also be made more accessible to individuals.

## **Taking the Initiative**

It is time for people to assert their commitment to peace and- if necessary- to wrest peace-making away from the exclusive control of politicians and military establishments. Too often, peace initiatives are proposed as a last resort, with negotiations restricted to the warmongers, and imposed on those most affected, particularly women and children. Those who have suffered the most must have a place at the table when peace agreements are drawn up, with equal representation for women. If necessary, civil society should also convene peace initiatives before crises get out of control and lives are lost. This can help to turn early warning from a slogan into a reality.

## **Bottom-Up Globalisation**

The alarming concentration of economic power and the irresponsible imposition of neo-liberal, macro-economic policies are destroying the environment, generating poverty and desperation, widening divisions and fomenting war. The Hague Appeal encourages efforts to challenge this destructive model of globalisation through community-based coalitions such as the Jubilee 2000 call for debt forgiveness and through campaigns to eradicate poverty and economically empower women.

## **Democratic International Decision-Making**

The United Nations system and other multilateral institutions have the capacity to be a unique and universal force for peace. Too often, however, they have been treated with cynicism, politicised, and under-funded. The international system must be revived, democratised and

provided with resources if it is realise its potential in peace-building. In particular, we call for a Security Council that can serve human security rather than Great Power interests, and for a radical reorientation of international financial institutions to make them more transparent and accountable and to serve human rather than corporate needs.

## **Humanitarian Interventions**

The Hague Appeal demands the speedy and effective intervention of humanitarian forces, subject to the prescriptions of the United Nations Charter, when civilians are threatened by genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and extreme national disasters. It is extraordinary that so little attention has been paid to the idea of establishing a standing intervention force. Civil society should consider new forms of civilian intervention as a matter of urgency.

## **Finding the Money for Peace and Starving the Funds for War**

The allocation of resources is seriously distorted. Many of today's conflicts are fuelled by economic greed and the grab for raw materials, while billions are spent on the arms trade and other forms of militarisation. At the same time, many worthwhile peace initiatives and programs for human security suffer from a lack of funds even though governments have adopted an extraordinary series of global action plans at the historic world conferences convened during the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. These priorities must be reversed. In addition to eliminating weapons of mass destruction and drastically curbing the arms trade, military budgets must be progressively reduced.

For further information see following link: [www.haguepeace.org](http://www.haguepeace.org)

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# **Pakistan Floods Children's Emergency Appeal: £3026.17 raised so far**

On behalf of UNICEF and the Unitarian Peace Fellowship committee, I would like to express our warm thanks to all those who have generously donated to the emergency appeal launched by UNICEF for the child victims of the recent Pakistan floods. Thanks to your generosity **£3026.17** has already been raised and sent to UNICEF UK.

UNICEF is appealing for emergency assistance to give humanitarian assistance to the six million children immediately affected. Funds are urgently needed to provide clean water and sanitation systems to safeguard against the threat of disease and to ensure that essential medical supplies and other items are available where they are most needed.

Nationwide serious damage has been caused to the country's public infrastructure, including power stations, hospitals, water irrigation systems, drinking water, sanitation facilities, communications networks and more than 400 schools. There is an urgent need to sustain the ongoing relief effort and plan for early recovery interventions. UNICEF is already on the ground in the worst affected areas, has set up medical camps and is urgently distributing medicines, oral rehydration salts, clean drinking water and food.

Your donations have helped UNICEF with its life saving work for these vulnerable children in need of such urgent humanitarian help.

If anyone would like to send a donation, please make your cheque payable to UNICEF and write 'Pakistan Children's Emergency Appeal' on the reverse and send it c/o Rev. Feargus O'Connor, 11 Claremont Square, London N1 9LY. Thank you.

**Rev. Feargus O'Connor (for Unitarian Peace Fellowship committee)**

# Housman's Peace Diary 2011

It's that time of year, when we have to think about buying a new diary. The diary below has been brought to our attention, and we think it could be a good way of being organised and supporting peace at the same time:

**Housmans Peace Diary** is a non-profit service to movements around the world working for peace, social justice and the environment.

This 58th edition includes a **World Peace Directory** listing almost 2000 national and international peace, environmental and human rights organisations in 150 countries.



Pocket format, with a week to a view, giving notable dates and anniversaries and a weekly quotation. Includes calendars, a forward planner for 2012, space for notes. This year the diary also has a special feature celebrating the first 75 years of *Peace News*, sister publication of Housmans.

**Orders sent direct from Housmans are £8.95 per copy + postage & packing as follows:**

Inland post - £1 per Diary (maximum £5 for any number to the same address)

Overseas post - £2 per Diary (maximum £10 for any number to the same address)

If you're ordering multiple copies for resale, enquire about discounts. To place an order please visit <http://www.housmans.com/diary.php> or call the shop on 020 7837 4473.

# **A Prayer for Remembrance Sunday: A Prayer for Peace**

Spirit of life and love,  
known by many names and none.  
We gather in thankful remembrance of those who have sacrificed their  
lives for the freedom and safety of others;  
but also in shame at the wars we have failed to stop and the actions  
taken in our name.

Bless those who mourn, and those whose lives are blighted by such  
terrible memories, be they military or civilian.  
Bless those who carry the scars of war with them for the rest of their  
lives and those who care for them.

Bless those whose safety is currently compromised through war and  
violence at this time, no matter where in the world.

May forgiveness be found, personally and nationally, that all can learn  
to live in peace.

We acknowledge that death recognizes not the colour of uniform, nor  
the age or gender of victim. That death and destruction comes because  
of our failure - our greed - our indifference.

Let us dedicate ourselves to the greatest remembrance of all – that war  
should be no more.

For a future to be possible; May our prayers be heard.

Amen.

**Rev Chris Goacher**



# Unitarian Peace Fellowship Vision

Founded in 1916, the Unitarian Peace Fellowship is for all those within our denomination who witness to the belief that war and preparation for war are sins against God and failures of Humanity. We believe that right relationships can only be established through understanding and love. We therefore pledge ourselves to the promotion of goodwill, justice and peace between people and nations.



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