

Volume 78 Winter 2022

presbypeacefellowship.org @presbypeace

MRTI and PMA Recommend Divestment from Fossil Fuels

By abby mohaupt, McKinney TX
and Colleen Earp, Harrisonburg VA

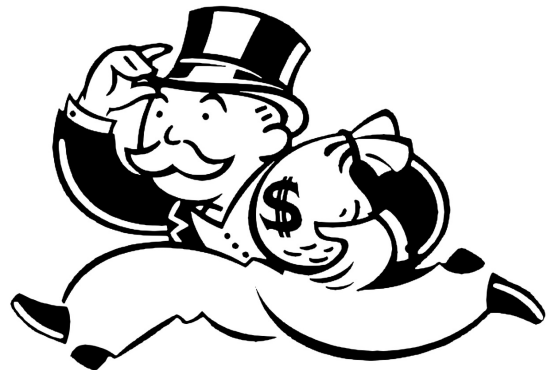
On January 19, 2022, the Committee on Mission Responsibility Through Investment (MRTI) voted to recommend divestment from five fossil fuel companies: Chevron, ExxonMobil, Marathon Petroleum, Phillips 66 and Valero Energy. The vote came after many years of shareholder engagement with these companies; in the last 6 years, that engagement has been in the context of criteria they drafted in consultation with frontline and local communities, as well as Fossil Free PCUSA (a project of PPF). The Presbyterian Mission Agency board (PMA) has approved this recommendation, which now will be presented to the 225th General Assembly for a final decision.

In 2014, PC(USA) first took up the question of investment in the fossil fuel industry. Back then, we could still reasonably argue that many people in our North American pews hadn't yet experienced the climate crisis firsthand. We who advocated for divestment as a bold and faithful strategy acknowledged that many of us had racial and economic privilege that would prevent us from feeling the brunt of climate change: rising temperatures, more frequent and less predictable storms, hotter summers, and destabilized winter weather, all with the social and infrastructural implications of our broken world. That first call to divest from companies engaging in fossil fuel extraction, production, and distribution was sent to MRTI, a committee tasked primarily with shareholder engagement, not climate justice or divestment. Not only has MRTI done the engagement it's tasked with doing, they have done the additional legwork to learn more about the climate crisis. We are grateful for that work. Now it's time for different and more comprehensive work.

Shareholder engagement is a slow and methodical process by design. Meanwhile, millions of people around the world participated in the Climate Strikes in 2019, demanding real and fast action to respond to climate change. Meanwhile, trillions of dollars have been divested from the fossil fuel industry by over a thousand religious, municipal, and educational institutions, and reinvested in a just climate transition. Meanwhile, more fossil free options have emerged for individual and institutional investments. There are now other processes with which the PC(USA) must engage.

Governments worldwide have missed critical benchmarks outlined in the Paris Accord to help limit global temperature rise to 1.5°C. United Nations summits have failed to adequately center the needs of communities that have faced the brunt of climate change. People around the world are feeling the effects of this crisis, regardless of social privilege. We are all already facing climate chaos, and all the while we continue to fall short of God's call to care for creation and love our neighbors.

The Fossil Free PCUSA steering committee remains committed



to providing resources and support to General Assembly commissioners and observers as they engage in the work of climate justice policies in our denomination. With this recommendation to divest from five fossil fuel companies, the PCUSA also has the opportunity to support a wide array of climate and environmental justice overtures and recommendations in our General Assembly. We must be willing as a denomination to boldly support these endeavors from a place of faith, remembering the gospel teaching, "For where your treasure is, there your heart will also be" (Matthew 6:21).

It's time to take on all the things possible to respond to climate change: to reduce our carbon footprint; to invest in reforestation and a green future; to affirm and uphold international conventions on cooperative efforts; to support divestment from fossil fuels. In faith, let us do all the things.

A Peacemaker's Calendar

March 10 - April 14 – Guns to Gardens Spring Action Circle

Bring your lunch or brunch to Zoom for one hour on six consecutive Thursdays to learn how to safely dismantle unwanted guns and turn them into garden tools. 12:30 pm ET/ 9:30 am PT. Register at presbypeacefellowship.org/events/ or email gvp@presbypeacefellowship.org for more information.

March 18 – Order Deadline for Eco-Palms

Purchase responsibly harvested Eco-Palm branches for Palm Sunday (April 10), and support communities in Mexico and Guatemala where workers are paid fairly and engage in sustainable harvesting in order to protect the local ecosystem. Order at ecopalms.org.

March 20 – A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood: Mr. Rogers Emphasis Day

Fred Rogers was an ordained minister of word and sacrament for the PC(USA) who was honored in 1994 as PPF's Peaceseeker and whose work around peace and reconciliation are worth remembering. March 20th was his birthday and the day that the PC(USA) has chosen to honor and learn from his work. Many resources are available at presbyterianmission.org/ministries/theology-formation-and-evangelism/office-of-christian-formation/mr-rogers-day-resources/

March 21 – Organizing for Peace at General Assembly, Part 1: You've Got the Power

Fossil Free PCUSA's Abby Mohaupt and Colleen Earp will brief participants in a bird's eye view of peacemaking concerns before GA225 and power analysis, with the goal of a shared vocabulary and understanding of who makes decisions and how. Commissioners, Advisory Delegates, Overture Advocates, Observers, and activists are all welcome. 8 pm EDT/5 pm PDT on Zoom. Visit presbypeacefellowship.org to register.

April 21 – Organizing for Peace at General Assembly, Part 2: Just the Two of Us

Liv Thomas will train us on 1:1 conversations, with the goal of building talking points for organizing. 8pm EDT/5 pm PDT on Zoom. Visit presbypeacefellowship.org to register.

April 22 – Earth Day. The 2022 Earth Day theme is Invest in Our Planet. Visit earthday.org to find activities in your community.

Suggestion for Presbyterian congregations: Observe Earth Sunday (April 17) by writing to your presbytery's G.A. commissioners to urge them to support fossil fuel divestment.

April 25 - 27 – Ecumenical Advocacy Days. (Virtual) EAD 2022 calls us into solidarity to restore, protect, and expand voting rights in the United States and to realize human rights around the world. As people of faith, we know each person to be created in God's image, imbued with dignity and having a voice that demands to be heard, heeded, and treated justly. We arise in unity, holding up a mirror to leaders of nations, putting injustice on display and tearing down the veil of oppression that obscures the beautiful, God-born light shining from within us all.

Rev. Dr. Otis Moss III from Trinity United Church of Christ in Chicago will be preaching and Rev. Liz Theoharis from the Poor People's Campaign will be one of our plenary speakers. Visit advocacydays.org to register and sign up for email updates.

May 9 – Organizing for Peace at General Assembly, Part 3: I Love to Tell the Story

Dexter Kearny and Mark Eakin will discuss particular overtures and prepare participants for storytelling and testifying. 8pm EDT/5 pm PDT on Zoom. Visit presbypeacefellowship.org to register.

June 3 - 5 – Wear Orange for Gun Violence Awareness Sabbath Weekend. See wearorange.org for information.

June 11 – Nationwide Day of Guns to Gardens safe surrender events. (See article on page 3)

June 18 – Poor People's Campaign March on Washington. Sign up for planning updates at poorpeoplescampaign.org.

June 18 - July 9 – 225th General Assembly of the PC(USA), Louisville, KY and online. Join our planning team to help bring peacemaking, social justice, and climate change issues to the top of the GA agenda. Contact PPF GA chair Timothy Wotring (timothywotring@gmail.com).



National Guns to Gardens Day Announced

By Jan Orr-Harter, Aledo TX

Guns to Gardens, the new movement to turn unwanted guns into garden tools, is going national! On Saturday, June 11, the Gun Violence Prevention Program of the Presbyterian Peace Fellowship will join RAWtools and a coalition of religious, community and non-profit groups for a nation-wide day of Guns to Gardens safe surrender events. We invite your congregation to join us in this historic witness – and to start getting ready now.

Imagine: Churches from coast to coast, hosting safe surrender events, dismantling guns and forging garden tools! The national event follows the traditional "Wear Orange for Gun Violence Awareness Sabbath" on June 3-5, so that congregations and other groups can use the Wear Orange activities to promote the June 11 gun give-back day. We are working hard to help Presbyterian congregations be ready to participate on June 11 from coast to coast. How about your church? To explore taking action, please join us for the Guns to Gardens Spring Action Circle Thursdays March 10- April 14 at 12:30 pm ET. Bring your lunch or brunch to Zoom for 1 hour on 6 consecutive Thursdays. Learn what Guns to Gardens is all about. Meet other Presbyterians and encourage one another. Email gvp@presbypeacefellowship.org for information.

Spring Action Circle Topics Covered:

March 10: Educating your session and congregation on the reasons that people need a way to safely dispose of unwanted guns without putting them back into the gun market; Gathering allies and getting started.

March 17: Logistics of the event and chop saw training, or how to find someone in your community who already uses a chop saw

March 24: Gift Card best practices and fundraising if you wish to thank gun donors

March 31: Getting the word out: Publicity & Press Releases

April 7: Race and Guns

April 14: Pastoral Care and Spiritual Reflection

Our Winter and Fall Action Circles included churches from state capitols to tiny mountain towns in WA, NY, OH, GA, MD, NC, CO, SC, KY, CA and UT. They are currently learning logistics and chop saw skills, as well as taking steps to gain session approval to host a Guns to Gardens event. Some have already started with events. We suggest that churches start small, even with one gun from a member of your community who no longer wants to have the gun in their home. Our goal is a nation-wide network of churches who learn how to provide a regular service of dismantling unwanted guns in their communities.

Meet Our G.A. Interns

By Colleen Earp, Harrisonburg VA

Three wonderful, enthusiastic volunteers have been chosen to help lead the Presbyterian Peace Fellowship witness to the General Assembly. They will be organizing advocacy efforts, facilitating special events, and communicating with PPF's wider network throughout the G.A. via social media, our website, and eNews.



Valerie Landis (she/her) is from North Texas but currently studying Political Science and Environmental Studies at the University of Kansas. She is a lifelong Presbyterian with some of her earliest memories being in her church's preschool wing or her mom's various committee meetings. She is passionate about fossil fuel divestment, impact investing, and all things environmental policy.

Keeran Woode (he/him) is from Grand Island, NE. His favorite things to do are serving others, trying new foods, language learning, and spending time with his family. You will most likely catch him playing music or chilling with his dog, Cookie!



Hannah Johnson (she/her) is currently located in Philadelphia, PA. She works for Old Pine Presbyterian Church as the Youth and Children Coordinator, and also as a nanny. She love chocolate chip cookies, hippos and ABBA. She is excited to work with PPF throughout our very unique 2022 GA!

Looking Ahead to the 225th General Assembly

By Marilyn White, Austin TX

General Assembly meets every two years to guide the operation of the PC(USA) at every level and make decisions about budgets, programs, and policies, including those responding to the challenges of racism, war, injustice, and environmental destruction. In 2020, The G.A. met virtually to address a small docket of essential business and deferred all other items to 2022, where they will be considered along with new overtures and revised reports from church agencies. The 225th G.A. will be a hybrid meeting of online plenary sessions and in-person committee meetings in Louisville, KY, beginning on June 18 and concluding on July 9. As items of business are finalized and received, they are posted at pc-biz.org and listed by committee. The full docket, minus commissioners' resolutions, will be available there after May 4, the final deadline for overtures and concurrences. Because of the large number of referrals, we can already anticipate many of the major decisions facing the G.A.'s committees.

Fossil Fuel Divestment: The urgency of the climate change crisis has led Mission Responsibility Through Divestment (MRTI) to join Fossil Free PCUSA and at least 28 presbyteries in calling for divestment from fossil fuels (See page 1). The Environmental Justice Committee can draw its response from the language of two different overtures and the MRTI report, deciding between significant or categorical divestment. There will also be an overture supported by Presbyterians for Earth Care urging an aggressive divestment schedule. In any case, the message should be a clear call to turn away from petroleum extraction as a source for energy and as a place to invest our treasure.



The report "Investing in a Green Future: A Vision for a Renewed Creation," from the Advisory Committee on Social Witness Policy (ACSWP) brings a comprehensive package of new environmental positions and policies to the church. The importance of linking environmental, racial, and economic justice is stressed throughout the recommendations. Advocacy positions include ending fracking and the building of pipelines, and requiring polluters to forego profits to pay for cleanup and remediation. A goal of 100% renewable energy by 2030 is set for congregations, denominational agencies, and presbyteries. MRTI is directed to engage with insurance companies and banks who provide new

funding for fossil fuel production. If there is a weakness in this report, it is that its approach to the fossil fuel industry is reformist instead of abolitionist. Even if nonpolluting extraction methods are practiced, the continued use of nonrenewable energy sources threatens the planet.

Other environmental overtures include one on Creating the Presbyterian Tree Fund, which would require denominational staff and encourage church members to donate a percentage of their travel budgets to reforestation efforts. Another asks all levels of the church, from the individual disciple to the national agencies, to reduce their carbon imprint by 25%. An overture written during the Trump administration about the Paris Climate Agreement should be updated to reflect President Biden's signing of the treaty on his first day in office, but can still serve as way for the G.A. to show its support for full compliance by all nations.

Foreign and Military Policy: The Overture On Affirming the Effectiveness of Nonmilitary, Collaborative International Approaches to Resolving Conflict asks that insights from the recent exploration of the Doctrine of Discovery also be applied to our understanding of U.S. foreign and military history and that we reject the principles of exceptionalism and unilateral power that have led to overuse of military force. It affirms the effectiveness of nonmilitary efforts such as diplomacy, and calls for consultation with church partners and impacted communities when developing foreign policy.

Israel-Palestine issues will be a large part of the docket for the International Concerns Committee. One overture makes the case for calling Palestinian reality "Apartheid." Another condemns the 15-year Israeli blockade of the Gaza strip. There is also an overture which would designate May 15 as Nakba Remembrance Day on the planning calendar. A report from ACSWP explores the current situation of Jerusalem, but fails to call for an end to military aid for Israel.

An overture on Korea sent to the 2020 G.A. has been augmented by a new one with important updates. Recent news reports calling Afghanistan our longest war fail to recognize that the Korean War has never officially ended. Presbyterians should join the Korea Peace Appeal at en.endthekoreanwar.net and join Korean Christians in advocating for a true Peace Agreement.

The report "Obstinate Hope," from ACSWP, is a remarkable overview of the realities in Central America that have led to increased migration, often at great risk, to the U.S. southern border. Prepared after visiting and carefully listening to many church partners in the region, it models an appropriate method for analysis and policy development. However, its viewpoint is from 2019 and it could benefit from careful review and possible updating. There is a disproportionate focus on Nicaraguan government responses to protests in 2018, while

specific mentions of human rights incidents in the other countries are absent. The recommendations for mission partnerships and solidarity are excellent and should be funded and mandated.

Gun Violence Prevention: The Overture On Re-Affirming Our Commitment to Gun Violence Prevention asks for a needed update to the existing 2010 policy resource. Although the 2020 G.A. did not consider this overture, it encouraged denominational entities to work on overture proposals from the docket wherever resources permitted, and the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program has begun this update. The G.A. will be able to review this work and authorize additional updates as needed. Another overture calls for advocacy to prevent gun violence with red flag laws, background checks, and an assault weapons ban. PPF's Gun Violence Prevention working group is supporting a new overture commending the Guns To Gardens program. For the first time, there will be a G.A. committee dedicated to addressing violence in the U.S., giving this issue a generous amount of time and attention.

Immigration: Immigration issues will also have a dedicated G.A. committee, along with some challenging business items to consider. The Racial Equity Advocacy Committee has submitted a resolution to create a sanctuary space at denominational headquarters for undocumented immigrants in danger of deportation and for unhoused people needing shelter. The Office of the General Assembly has issued a comment recommending disapproval. REAC has also proposed hiring a mission co-worker to serve on the southern Texas border. The decision to do this will be difficult because of financial impact, but a co-worker could facilitate meaningful interaction with, support for, and understanding of asylum-seeking migrants by U.S. Presbyterians. An overture from San Jose Presbytery deserving our strongest support asks the G.A. to "declare the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to be a 'Sanctuary and Accompaniment Church' that supports and encourages its congregations, mid councils, and members to support immigrants, refugees, asylum seekers, and their children, and to resist efforts by the government to separate families."

How you can help: Visit pc-biz.org to view the full text of these and many more items of business. If your presbytery is meeting before May 4, your session can ask that it concur with any of the overtures on the docket. Start planning to participate in the virtual open hearings that each committee will schedule. If you or someone you know is a commissioner or advisory delegate and will be supporting these and other peace initiatives, let us know at ga@presbypeacefellowship.org. Visit PPF's GA 2022 web page at presbypeacefellowship.org to stay up to date on trainings and special events. To join our GA planning team to help us prepare for a strong G.A. witness, contact the GA working group coordinator Timothy Wotring at timothywotring@gmail.com.

PPF to Honor Peaceseekers

By Timothy Wotring, Philadelphia PA

The Presbyterian Peace Fellowship 2021 Peaceseeker Award will be presented to Harry Eberts and Miranda Viscoli, co-presidents of New Mexicans to Prevent Gun Violence. Harry Eberts is pastor of First Presbyterian Church of Santa Fe. Miranda Viscoli is an art historian. For the past ten years, NMPGV has developed, implemented, and refined a multi-pronged approach to addressing gun violence. They partner with state and national legislators, schools, school boards, cities, counties, police departments, civic leaders, elected officials, interfaith and youth advocacy groups as well as national and local organizations to address and reduce gun violence. Their projects include the Student Pledge Against Gun Violence, which



NMPGV Artists create large gun violence prevention murals.

urges children and youth to abstain from the using guns, and Murals to End Gun Violence, which brings visibility to the issue of gun violence prevention. To date, they have completed 11 murals that lift the memory of victims, the pain of survivors and the hope for a less violent future. They are also the creators of the Guns to Gardens gun

buyback program. There have been thirteen gun buybacks since 2016 where 1,030 firearms, of which 38% have been semi-automatic handguns, rifles, and assault weapons, have been dismantled and made into garden tools and other items.

The 2022 Peaceseeker Award will go to Rev. Bart Smith, pastor of St. Mark's Presbyterian Church in Tucson, who has been advocating for passage of the Freedom to Vote Act and the John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act. He helped to plan and participated in a hunger strike with Faith for Black Lives, a national coalition of faith leaders practicing radical love in action. He is the only Presbyterian minister on their coordinating committee. The hunger strike began on January 6, anniversary of the 2021 capitol uprising, and continued until January 17, Martin Luther King Day. His advocacy efforts have also included two recent arrests in civil disobedience actions on behalf of civil rights.

The 2021 and 2022 Peaceseeker Awards will be presented at the 2022 General Assembly Peace Gathering during the 225th G.A. The event will be held virtually again this year, so that all PPF supporters will be able to attend. Information about how you can participate will be in the next issue of *Briefly*.

**A lot of harm has been done to the Earth,
so now it is time to kiss the ground with
our feet, with our love – Thich Nhat Hanh**

The continuation of Thich Nhat Hanh

By Mel Duncan, St. Paul MN

I was disconcerted to read the New York Times headline, “Thich Nhat Hanh, Zen Master and Political Reformer Dies at 95.” How can they announce the death of someone who teaches that birth and death are unreal notions? In “No Death, No Fear,” Thich Nhat Hanh wrote:

*Birth and death are only a door through which we go in and out.
Birth and death are only a game of hide-and-seek. So, smile to
me and take my hand and wave good-bye. Tomorrow we shall
meet again or even before. We shall always be meeting again at
the true source, Always meeting again on the myriad paths of life.*

Even the term “passed away” as included in the announcement from the International Plum Village Community of Engaged Buddhism doesn’t quite capture the event. Thich Nhat Hanh teaches that we are a continuation just as the cloud becomes rain. We cannot become nothing. We are always arriving and always departing.

Thich Nhat Hanh, or Thay as he is affectionately called, helped guide me to the vision of what was to become Nonviolent Peaceforce. While studying at the University of Creation Spirituality in Oakland, California in 1997-98, I was profoundly challenged about the adversarial way that I organized: us versus them, good versus evil, 50 percent plus 1 percent meant we kicked their ass. Instead, I was encouraged to understand my work and life from a basis of unity rather than duality. I was challenged to my very core. Yet, when the student is ready the teachers appear. I kept hearing about some Vietnamese monk who I had never heard of. Soon I was reading everything that Thich Nhat Hanh had written and attending a Buddhist sangha for activists in the San Francisco Bay area.

A year later I was sitting in Plum Village, his monastery in Southern France. Within minutes of my arrival, I knew that I was in way over my head. We had 12 hours of silence, and we didn’t talk much during the other 12 hours. I became painfully aware of how much I relied on verbal and nonverbal cues for affirmation. There were almost none from the monks. I was shocked at how infrequently I occupied the present moment. I was living with

monks who didn’t really seem to care what century we were in as I wondered if the Chicago Cubs had made the playoffs.

Thay’s message was clear. We could no longer afford to take sides. The stakes had become too high for all sentient beings on our planet. We had to proceed from a basis of our unity. How prescient he was in 1998.

I was on a bus leaving Plum Village when I wrote the vision for a nonviolent peaceforce. From my notes taken at the monastery, I quoted Thay:

*Take the situation of a country suffering war or another injustice.
Try to see that every person involved in the conflict is a victim.
See that no person including all those involved in the warring
parties or on what appear to be opposing sides, desire the
suffering to continue.*

This vision formed the spirit as well as the concept note I took to the Hague Appeal for Peace a few months later where we started to organize the Nonviolent Peaceforce.

His teachings as contained in the poem, “Call Me by My True Names,” helped shape our formulation of nonpartisanship and was used in our training. In this poem he describes that he is both the swimming frog and the snake who eats the frog; that he is the 12-year-old refugee girl raped by a sea pirate and he is the sea pirate.

*Please call me by my true names,
so, I can hear all my cries and laughter at once,
so I can see that my joy and pain are one.*

In our work in conflict zones we have developed, applied and refined a variety of methods that effectively protect people. Yet, we have learned that our presence is the most valuable resource we offer to civilians living in violent conflicts. This is a lesson that Thay already knew. As he wrote, “The most precious gift we can offer others is our presence.”

Thich Nhat Hanh continues to live in the Nonviolent Peaceforce and in the initiatives and hearts of thousands. So, my friend, I will meet you tomorrow if not before and again on the myriad paths of life.

*This story was produced by Metta Center for Nonviolence.
Mel Duncan is the Founding Director of Nonviolent Peaceforce
(nonviolentpeaceforce.org). For almost 20 years, he has been
successfully applying nonviolent protection methods in extremely
violent areas around the world. He was awarded PPF’s
Peaceseeker Award in 2010.*

Can War Be Just?

By Ben Daniel, Oakland CA

Ever since its inception, Reformed Protestantism – the movement that gave birth to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) – has paid attention to empirical data to learn about God and God's presence in the world around us. This was true in the 16th century when John Calvin appealed to the then cutting-edge science of astronomy to help him understand that the words of Genesis 1 do not communicate a literal account of how God created the universe. In a similar manner, contemporary biblical scholars and theologians make use of secular disciplines from archeology to neurobiology to help them understand Scripture and God's continued presence in the world. Empiricism allows us to embrace such ideas as a heliocentric solar system and racial equality, and to baptize them as "Christian," despite a certain amount of biblical ambiguity on both subjects.

This Reformed inheritance of empiricism comes to my mind when considering current events in Afghanistan. After two decades and trillions of dollars, America failed to secure peace and to establish a secular, democratic, Western-style government committed to human rights in Afghanistan. Given those facts, it might be time for American Presbyterians to make another appeal to empirical data as we reassess our commitment to the "just war theory" — the notion that military violence can be used to make peace or to vouchsafe human rights and the rule of law.

I believe that a sober assessment of human history shows us that war never leads to a just peace. Rather, the opposite is true: military violence always begets more violence. Warfare is an ineffective way of furthering the cause of human rights and the rule of law. Unfortunately, these empirical truths are evident in the history and current situation of Afghanistan.

The ongoing violence in Afghanistan is a remnant of Cold War violence between the occupying army of the Soviet Union and the U.S.-backed Mujahedeen — now known as the Taliban. The Cold War is a legacy of leftover violence from World War II, which was fought in the aftermath of the First World War, which, in part, was fought over unresolved issues from the Franco-Prussian War, and so forth. A capable historian could draw up a family tree of war connecting modern American military violence to the rise and fall of ancient empires. With each passing generation, military forces get bigger and more effective, but still, no military violence has ever established complete peace.

This year, the world re-learned this tragic lesson yet again as Afghanistan, once more, fell under Taliban control. The failure of war is also on full display as the United States continues to inflict violence in Iraq, Syria, Yemen, and in various parts of Africa. All told, the post-9/11 American War on Terror has killed nearly a

million people, many of them civilians. What we've gotten from the killing is not peace. In fact, if history is a guide on such matters, we can expect cycles of violence in the places where the United States is waging war to spin on for generations. It is therefore time for Presbyterians to revise the trust we place in military violence. But will we learn from the empirical data available to us, or will we continue to support the tragic futility of war? And how can we love and support those whom war affects — not only innocent citizens but our soldiers?

Here it probably is important to note that rejecting military violence is not the same as doing nothing. On its website, the Presbyterian Peace Fellowship has listed several actions individuals and congregations can do to work toward a more just and peaceable way forward in the aftermath of the American withdrawal from Afghanistan. These actions include political action, charitable opportunities, and spiritual resources for the work of building a future that is marked by peace.

My prayer is that we will embrace the better angels of our tradition, pay attention to the empirical data, reject violence, and live as actively engaged citizens belonging to the Prince of Peace.

Ben Daniel is the pastor of Montclair Presbyterian Church in Oakland, California, and is the author of three books: Neighbor: Christian Encounters with "Illegal" Immigration, The Search for Truth About Islam, and Thoughtful Christianity. He is a member of PPF's Peace Church Working Group. Reprinted with permission from The Presbyterian Outlook. Read more at pres-outlook.org.

...BRIEFLY is the newsletter of the

Presbyterian Peace Fellowship

17 Cricketown Road Stony Point, NY 10980

presbypeacefellowship.org info@presbypeacefellowship.org

Bob Ross and Abby Mohaupt, Co-Moderators

Len Bjorkman, Moderator Emeritus

Whitney Palmer, Treasurer

Emily Brewer, Executive Director 929-251-3277

emily@presbypeacefellowship.org

Art Hunt, Deputy Director art@presbypeacefellowship.org

Christa Galvin, Financial and Administrative Assistant

christa@presbypeacefellowship.org

Lucy Waechter Webb, Manager of Communications and Digital Organizing

lucy@presbypeacefellowship.org

Deanna Hollas, Gun Violence Prevention Ministries Coordinator

deanna@presbypeacefellowship.org

Alison Wood, Accompaniment Coordinator alison@presbypeacefellowship.org

Abby Mohaupt, Fossil Free PCUSA Co-Moderator awmohaupt@gmail.com

Liv Thomas, Fossil Free PCUSA Co-Moderator livthomas2512@gmail.com

...BRIEFLY is funded entirely by gifts from our readers, members & friends.

Send donations online or to our Stony Point office. Send address changes to christa@presbypeacefellowship.org or mail to the Stony Point office.

Contact the editors at:

Jan Orr-Harter JanOH4@aol.com & Marilyn White marwhite@igc.org

Presbyterian Peace Fellowship

17 Cricketown Road
Stony Point, NY 10980

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

www.presbypeacefellowship.org
@presbypeace



Winter 2022

MRTI recommends divestment! P.1

Let Us Work to be Peacemakers

Because there is global insecurity, nations are engaged in a mad arms race, spending billions of dollars wastefully on instruments of destruction, when millions are starving. And yet, just a fraction of what is expended so obscenely on defense budgets would make the difference in enabling God's children to fill their stomachs, be educated, and given the chance to lead fulfilled and happy lives. We have the capacity to feed ourselves several times over, but we are daily haunted by the spectacle of the gaunt dregs of humanity shuffling along in endless queues, with bowls to collect what the charity of the world has provided, too little too late. When will we learn, when will the people of the world get up and say, Enough is enough? God created us for fellowship. God created us so that we should form the human family, existing together because we were made for one another. We are not made for an exclusive self-sufficiency but for interdependence, and we break the law of our being at our peril. When will we learn that an escalated arms race merely escalates global insecurity? We are now much closer to a nuclear holocaust than when our technology and our spending were less.

Unless we work assiduously so that all of God's children,

our brothers and sisters, members of our one human family, all will enjoy basic human rights, the right to a fulfilled life, the right of movement, of work, the freedom to be fully human, with a humanity measured by nothing less than the humanity of Jesus Christ Himself, then we are on the road inexorably to self-destruction, we are not far from global suicide; and yet it could be so different.

When will we learn that human beings are of infinite value because they have been created in the image of God, and that it is a blasphemy to treat them as if they were less than this and to do so ultimately recoils on those who do this? In dehumanizing others, they are themselves dehumanized. Perhaps oppression dehumanizes the oppressor as much as, if not more than, the oppressed. They need each other to become truly free, to become human. We can be human only in fellowship, in community, in koinonia, in peace.

Let us work to be peacemakers, those given a wonderful share in Our Lord's ministry of reconciliation. If we want peace, so we have been told, let us work for justice. Let us beat our swords into ploughshares.

...Archbishop Desmond Tutu (October 7, 1931 – December 26, 2021); from his Nobel lecture, 1984.

FIRST CLASS PRSRT
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO. 6
VALLEY STREAM NY 11580