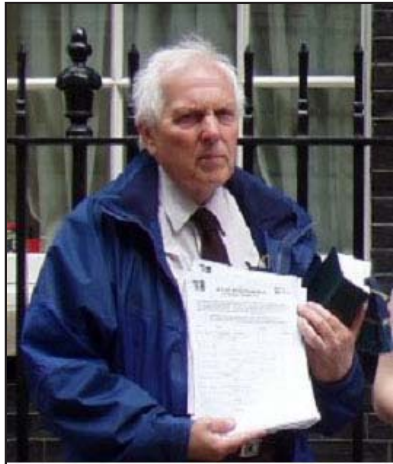




## Prayers and Hopes for Abducted Peace workers in Iraq



Norman Kember (photo courtesy of FOR England)

Norman Kember  
Tom Fox  
Harmeet Singh Sooden  
James Loney

These four are in Iraq as peacemakers with the Christian Peacemaker Teams, a movement based in Iraq since 2002 to provide first-hand, independent reports from the region and offer training in nonviolent intervention and human rights documentation.

The **International Fellowship of Reconciliation** has joined with its member organizations in asking for the release of the four people who were taken and held in Iraq. Norman Kember is a board member of FOR England. IFOR fully supports the work of the Christian Peacemaker Teams and has asked prayerful support for Tom, Norman, Jim and Harmeet.

IFOR members have posted messages on the al-Jazeera website. Muslim and Palestinian IFOR members have testified to the work done by Christian Peacemaker Teams in the occupied areas of Palestine. We know they are all people committed to peace, non-violence and reconciliation.

We hope and pray for their safe release.

We pray too for those who are holding them and that all people may choose the way of non-violence.





## New Video Released

The release of a new video showing Norman Kember, Tom Fox, Harmeet Singh Sooden and James Loney, working in Iraq with Christian Peacemaker Teams, is cause for relief as well as anxiety. Relief that the long silence with no news of their well-being has been broken, is mixed with apprehension at the continued threat to their lives.

Since their abduction on 26<sup>th</sup> November 2005 religious leaders and religious groups throughout the world have spoken in their support – acknowledging that they are men of nonviolence and urging that they may be released to continue their work for peace and human rights on behalf of the people of Iraq. At this urgent moment in time we wish to reaffirm this support and invite those who hold them to return them to their families.

At the same time we know that thousands of Iraqis have been held without charge and detained since the war in Iraq began almost three years ago. The practice of detention without charge, sometimes exacerbated by torture and abuse, cannot be allowed to continue as it heightens the level of fear and feeds into a terrible cycle of violence. Just as we are concerned for our brothers with Christian Peacemaker Teams we are also concerned for Iraqi detainees and for their families.

We long for true peace to be restored to the people of Iraq and we ask our government to do all it can to secure this peace. This must include:

-  Clear condemnation of detention without charge and the abuse of prisoners
-  Accountability on the part of all UK military personnel for their treatment of prisoners and of the Iraqi people
-  Work with the Iraqi authorities to ensure that the highest United Nations human rights standards of treatment and due process for detainees are met
-  Praying with people of faith throughout the world that we may be united and steadfast in our work for peace for the people of Iraq

*An appeal for the release of the four Christian Peacemaker Team workers has been made by a number of prominent peace and human rights activists. The appeal is online and you can join the call. To sign the appeal, go to [www.for.org.uk](http://www.for.org.uk), and click on the link under the heading "Sign Appeal"*

**For more information:**

**Christian Peacemaker Teams:** [www.cpt.org](http://www.cpt.org)

**Fellowship of Reconciliation England:** [www.for.org.uk](http://www.for.org.uk)

**Pax Christi UK:** [www.paxchristi.org.uk](http://www.paxchristi.org.uk)

# A Legacy of Her Own: Coretta Scott King

Coretta Scott King, who died on the 30th of January at the age of 78, is best known as the driving force behind the memorialization of her late husband, slain civil rights leader Martin Luther King, Jr. She was the chief architect of the King Center for Nonviolent Social Change in Atlanta, Georgia and was instrumental in getting a federal holiday to honor him.



But Mrs. King was not just the guardian of her husband's legacy. She was a committed activist in her own right - a forceful, courageous, and visionary woman who was determined not just that her husband's achievements be remembered, but that his philosophy of nonviolence continue to be taught.

The Fellowship of Reconciliation, of which Mrs. King was a member, honors the woman who always maintained, despite efforts to tone down the radical implications of Dr. King's message, that the root cause of misery in the world was the "triple evil" of racism, poverty, and violence.

She once said of the Fellowship that its "courageous dedication to the liberation of humanity" from these three evils was what put FOR "in the forefront of the nonviolent struggle for peace with justice."

Mrs. King's strength and resolve were apparent early in her life. She was only the second black person in history to attend Antioch College in Ohio, USA - the first being her sister. "That took courage and character," said Lili Baxter, who worked at the King Center and is a past chair of FOR's National Council and current member of the IFOR International Committee. "But it also took a vision that people of different races could live and work together."

Her deep and steadfast commitment to nonviolence in the face of some efforts to downplay its importance, led her to resist the original name proposed for the 1968 center established in honor of Mrs. King's husband: The King Center for Social Change. She insisted on the insertion of the word "nonviolent" in the official title.

She spearheaded a national petition campaign for a federal holiday to honor her late husband - achieved in 1983. Richard Deats, former editor of Fellowship magazine and Martin Luther King biographer, served with her on the commission that brought this about. "The hallmarks of her leadership were unfailing grace, good humor, and a firm resolve," he said. "She never wavered in her nonviolent vision."

Indeed, who will ever forget Mrs. King's consummate dignity and graciousness, even in the midst of conflict or controversy? "She was a composed, accomplished, and deliberative person," said Lili Baxter.

"But in private, she could also be funny, irreverent, and a shrewd mimic."

Like her husband, Coretta Scott King was a visionary. The most fitting tribute we can make to her is to lift up that prophetic vision of the Beloved Community - a vision for which her husband died, and which she ensured would not be lost.

*Tribute courtesy of FOR USA: [www.forusa.org](http://www.forusa.org)*

## Decade to Overcome Violence (DOV) Website Revamped

Easier access to updated resources and information as well as lots more news and stories are some of the bonuses you'll find on the newly re-designed DOV website. Pay us a visit today!

[www.overcomingviolence.org](http://www.overcomingviolence.org)

*World Military Expenditures*

Find the report of a recent study by intern Abigail Pound on World Military Expenditures on the website:

In 2004, world military expenditures reached nearly \$1 trillion - an average of \$162 per person, with the United States accounting for nearly half, 47%, of the total. There was a reduction in military spending following the Cold



OVERCOMING  
VIOLENCE

World Council of Churches

CHURCHES SEEKING RECONCILIATION AND PEACE

War, and the total downward trend culminated in 1998. Since then, however, there has been an increasing trend.

Also available on the website is the latest version of the Overcoming Violence newsletter:

This issue of the Overcoming Violence newsletter will highlight just a few of the many stories we are hearing as we learn of struggles for reconciliation and peace. Stories of communities addressing crime and punishment as well as violence in economics have been contributed by persons directly involved in this work.

A recent inter-religious conference in the Philippines and an upcoming event on economic justice in Hong Kong are examples of initiatives by churches to engage groups in dialogue that you will find on the site.

## Book Review

by Steffen Post, IFOR/ASF Volunteer

*'Zeitenwende' (Change of Times)*  
by Ernst Schwarcz

Muenster 2005, 240 pages: 17.80 Euro

ISBN 3-89688-264-3

*"Today we have come to a moment in human history in which (...) the destruction of parts of the world and the killing of millions of humans by nuclear weapons has become possible."* This extreme danger we face today is what Ernst Schwarcz describes in his new book 'Change of Times'.

Ernst Schwarcz is the Honorary President of the Austrian Branch of IFOR and has dedicated much of his life to work for peace and non-violence. He was born in Vienna in 1923 and emigrated to Sweden in 1939. However, he came back to his native country Austria in 1946 after the end of the Second World War.

In the beginning of his book, Ernst Schwarcz describes the wars and conflicts in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Alongside these examples of war, he tells the story of other movements of people working for peace and non-violence. An example he gives of these are the historic peace churches in Pennsylvania, USA.

He then goes on to describe further the development of nuclear bombs and the nuclear attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945. In regards to nuclear weapon development he pays special attention to the attempts of scientists (e.g. the Pugwash conference) and peace movements to work against the terrible destruction that nuclear weapons cause. He strongly emphasizes that nuclear weapons in any nation's hands always present a great danger for human civilization. This danger becomes very clear as he describes the many conflicts in which nuclear war was very close. He uses specific examples such as the conflict between China and Taiwan as well as the conflict between the former USSR and the USA. Ernst Schwarcz has collected an impressive amount of research on the fragile situation of world politics.

In closing, the author gives us a powerful warning for 21<sup>st</sup> century that reads: *"Either humans will succeed in abolishing wars or wars will extinguish all humans."*

The book gives the reader a very good overview of the dangers of nuclear weapons and it shows us that after the Cold War we have little reason for feeling safer. The danger of a nuclear attack still exists as long as nuclear bombs continue to exist in this world. Ernst Schwarcz has done an

impressive job in his research and the reader is left captivated. The facts that the author presents to the reader are sometimes shocking yet other facts are well-known.

I would strongly recommend this book, written from a peace perspective, to any person who is interested in the development of conflicts in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and specifically the danger of nuclear weapons.

Currently, *Change of Times* is only available in German and can be found at book stores and at FOR Austria (Lederergasse 23/3/27, 1080 Wien, Austria / <http://www.versoehnungsbund.at>)

### Israel Must Review Case, Whistleblower Facing Jail for Talking to Press

*International Federation of Journalists of Independent News Media, says Israel must review case of whistleblower facing jail for talking to press*

The International Federation of Journalists has called for an end to official harassment of Mordechai Vanunu - the man who told the world that Israel possessed nuclear weapons - as Israeli judges moved to send him back to jail for speaking to journalists.

Vanunu will appear in court later this month charged with violating restrictions that prevent him leaving the country and ban him from speaking to foreigners. If found guilty he could be jailed for nine months on a total of 21 criminal counts.

"This man has served his time for revealing what everyone has known for many years," said Aidan White, IFJ General Secretary. "Now he is being harassed simply for talking to journalists. He is being intimidated by absurd and unjust restrictions that have no place in a democracy. This case must be reviewed, and the legal restrictions on him should be lifted."

Vanunu has challenged limitations imposed upon him in April 2004 upon his release from jail in which he served 18 years, most of it in isolation. He was prohibited from leaving Israel or speaking to non-Israeli citizens. Earlier this month his lawyers failed to get the restrictions lifted by the Supreme Court.

Since leaving jail Vanunu has lived at the pilgrims' hostel of the Anglican cathedral in Jerusalem. He says he has a right to speak out and he has no additional information that would compromise state security. He has given up to 50 unauthorized interviews to the press since 2004 and says everything he has said is already in the public arena.

The IFJ says that as well as lifting restrictions on Vanunu Israel should "face up to the truth about its place in the democratic world." The protection of whistle-blowers like Vanunu is vital to free expression says the IFJ, which is campaigning for greater protection for journalists' sources of information.

## Clingendael Institute: Faith-based Peacemaking

Meeting attended by Rabia Terri Harris (Muslim Peace Fellowship), Jan Schaake (Kerk en Vrede) and David Mumford (IFOR International Coordinator).

November 2005 - Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs

According to the meeting's 150-page Clingendael report, policymakers are no longer able to get around religion's role in conflict and peace, and in particular conflict prevention and peace-building. The key findings of the report, which were derived from the meeting, indicate that faith-based actors—to different extents, and with varying levels of success—have contributed positively to peacemaking. For instance, they have provided emotional and spiritual support to war-affected communities, have mobilized their communities and others for peace, have mediated between conflicting parties, and have promoted reconciliation, dialogue, and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration.

Apart from its findings, the report makes a number of important observations. A first observation is that Muslim peace-building organizations are relatively difficult to identify, which is primarily a result of a lack of institutionalization. Peace building activities are mostly undertaken by individual actors (such as imams and sheikhs in their personal capacity, often in an ad hoc and informal manner). As a result, the report 'only' identified six internationally operating Muslim peace-building organizations.

A second observation is that faith-based peace building does not necessarily take place in isolation from secular peace building. The study suggests that the two can be interrelated and complementary in particular conflict settings.

A third observation in the report is that faith-based peace-building efforts tend to focus on 'religious moderates' and not on 'religious conservatives'. However, the report also shows that both groups can be drivers of change and can contribute to peace-building in their own special manner.

For more information, or to obtain a copy of the report please email: [infocru@clingendael.nl](mailto:infocru@clingendael.nl) or visit their website, [www.clingendael.nl/cru](http://www.clingendael.nl/cru)

## People Building Peace: Standing up for a Culture of Peace

The Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC) is a worldwide network of organizations working in conflict prevention and peacebuilding. Initiated in 2002 in response to a call from the UN Secretary-General, the Global Partnership has embarked upon a worldwide civil society-led process to mobilize a shift from reaction to prevention in the way violent conflict is dealt with, particularly focusing on the role of civil society and its interaction with local, regional, and international organizations. In July 2005 the book *People Building Peace II: Successful Stories of Civil Society* was launched during a conference at the United Nations Headquarters in New York. The book details specific examples of local level peacemaking.

As a follow-up to the November conference, the European Centre for Conflict Prevention (ECCP) organized a symposium on the role of civil society in peacebuilding in Utrecht, the Netherlands. Emmanuel Bombande, Executive Director of the IFOR Affiliate West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP), spoke at the symposium.

WANEP, based in Accra, Ghana, is connected with twelve offices throughout West Africa. In his talk, Mr. Bombande mentioned WANEP's Women in Peacebuilding Network (WIPNET) as an example of women peacebuilding in West Africa.

The focus of Bombande's presentation was WANEP's 'WARN' program: West Africa Early Warning and Early Response Network, which was established in 2002. The function of early warning is to enhance three goals: prevention, mitigation and preparedness. Bombande demonstrated that in the case of West Africa early warning is beginning to be effective at the regional level.

The European Centre for Conflict Prevention is a nongovernmental organization, based in the Netherlands, that promotes effective conflict prevention and peacebuilding strategies, and actively supports and connects people working for peace worldwide. It currently holds the secretariat for the European Platform for Conflict Prevention and Transformation and for the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict.

**For more information:**

**Email:** [info@conflict-prevention.net](mailto:info@conflict-prevention.net)

**Web:** [www.conflict-prevention.net](http://www.conflict-prevention.net); [www.gppac.net](http://www.gppac.net)

## FOR AFRICA

### West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP)

The West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP) held its 8<sup>th</sup> annual general meeting from January 23 – 27 in Accra, Ghana, under the theme, “Consolidating and Sustaining WANEP Institutional Structures.” The meeting brought together over forty delegates from more than 12 countries of the West African sub-region.

One of the highlights of the meeting was the election of a 7-member board of directors for the next 2 years. The new professional board replaces a 12-member representative board, of which a 2-year term just ended.

The new Regional Board is comprised of 3 women and 4 men, with Ms. Etweda Cooper as the new Board Chairperson. Ms Cooper took over from Rev. Pr. Emmanuel Anyambod, who is now the Vice Chairperson. WANEP’s first Executive Director, Sam Doe, was also elected as a member of the Board.

In the post-election euphoria, Ms. Cooper said, *“I am particularly honoured to stand before you as the first female chairperson of WANEP’s Board. I thank you all on behalf of my colleagues and myself for having elected us as members of this professional board... We accept this mantle of leadership that you have given to us. We promise you that we will faithfully serve you all, in ensuring that WANEP reaches its peak.”*

Etweda Cooper is the first woman to chair this leading sub-regional network of over 430 member organizations.

The new board pledged to continue working with and supporting the Executive Director to further strengthen WANEP’s structures and ensure that it continues to effectively carry out its mandate.

Welcoming the new regional board, the Executive Director, Mr. Emmanuel Bombande congratulated them and equally assured them of the cooperation of his team both at the regional and national secretariats.

Mr. Bombande recapitulated the successes and challenges of 2005 and wished for WANEP *“renewed energy and strength in 2006 to work even harder for peace in West Africa.”*

Closing the five day meeting, the Vice Chairperson of the outgoing board, Mr. Zewuze Abotsi recalled the journey of the staff, both at the national and regional secretariats in 2005. He reminded us that WANEP’s place in West Africa is undeniable in sustaining peace. He emphasized that the distinguishing awards conferred on WANEP’s Executive

Director, M. Emmanuel Bombande is a testimony of their commitment and dedication to our beloved sub-region.

The election of the new board and the adoption and internalization of the Strategic Plan for 2006-2008, completed WANEP’s restructuring process. A donor’s meeting to fundraise for the implementation of the Strategic Plan is scheduled for February 24 in The Hague, The Netherlands.

*You can find WANEP on the Internet on [www.wanep.org](http://www.wanep.org). Contact them via e-mail: [wanep@wanep.org](mailto:wanep@wanep.org)*

## FOR Asia

### FOR Palestine (MEND)

Middle East Nonviolence and Democracy (MEND) continues to actively engage Palestinians in the work of nonviolence, democracy, human rights and capacity building. While MEND has many activities to report from the last few months, there are several key areas in which we believe our work is having a strong impact:

MEND now has 8 centers throughout the West Bank in Hebron, Ezzarieh, Jenin, Jericho, Nablus, Qalqilya, Ramallah and Tulkarem. These centers are all staffed by volunteers, with a voluntary steering committee that provides oversight to each of the centers. While these centers all engage in a variety of activities, one of the most prominent and successful has been the MENDERS program. The MENDERS program challenges youth between the ages of 13-17 to commit to the work of nonviolence and community building. To aid in this development, MEND continues to provide these young people with workshops on subjects that range from nonviolence, to democracy, human rights, leadership, computers, the Internet and participatory video. The expectation is that the MENDERS will take their newly acquired skills and work actively in their communities, supporting the work of change through nonviolent means.

Below is a list of recent highlights within MEND’s centers:

- *Participatory Video (PV)*. Through PV, MENDERS have the opportunity to create their own documentary regarding the issues that are important to them. From start to finish, the MENDERS work together to decide the script, learn to use the equipment and then film and produce their own movie. To date, filming has finished at three community centers, and the hope is that the editing and production for at least two of these films will be completed by March 2006, with the third to follow shortly thereafter.

During the recent elections, many of MEND’s centers were also active in providing information to voters and encouraging them to take part in Palestine’s democratic process.

- *Distributing toys to children in hospitals.*
- *Offering training/workshops* in everything from yoga, to computers, to English.

*Story continues on page 6...*

- *Radio Soap Opera.* Partnering with Search for Common Ground, MEND has completed three seasons of a radio soap opera dealing with important issues to the Palestinian people. These issues include everything from nonviolence to gender equality. MEND is now in the process of meeting with members of the community centers to continue brainstorming issues that are important in the day to day life of the Palestinian people. Once complete, we will be looking to add more seasons to the program.

- *Summer Camp* programs for the MENDERS.

- Research for a project entitled: “*Educating for Human Rights, Democracy and Non-Violence.*” The project aims to raise awareness to the values of human rights, democracy, nonviolence, human dignity and the acceptance of the “other”. Research was gathered through a survey of the attitudes in the West Bank to determine the main issues that should be addressed in the teaching programs.

Over the coming months, it is obvious MEND will have many more opportunities for work, including:

- The establishment of a MEND Center in Gaza, to promote the work of nonviolence and democracy to these newly liberated people.

- A strategic campaign to promote nonviolence throughout the West Bank and Gaza Strip, aimed at unifying the Palestinian people behind the idea of nonviolence, while changing the perceptions of the international community regarding Palestinians all being “terrorists” who are not interested in peace.

- Incorporating the results of the research collected for “*Educating for Human Rights, Democracy and Non-Violence*” into a pilot project with special education models and materials on the associated theme. The target group for training includes Palestinian teachers and outstanding young leaders, recognizing that these individuals have the capacity to promote these values among their constituencies and through this, become agents of change. Based on the pilot project, the training will be evaluated, refined and published.

Recently MEND was approached by NGOs in other countries around the region about the possibility of broadcasting the radio soap opera in other Arabic speaking countries. As of now, discussions are underway about broadcasting both in Jordan and Lebanon.

Finally, in July all the MENDERS from each center will be brought together in the Summer Camp 2006. This will be the first opportunity for all of the MENDERS to be together and share their experiences with each other.

Visit the MEND website, [www.mend-pal.org](http://www.mend-pal.org)

## Milijuli Nepal

A women’s network for peace called ‘Shantimalika’ has been staging a series of demonstrations to protest Nepal’s 10-year long war. A weekly silent vigil is held in Kathmandu, Nepal, and in early February a peace rally was organized where, “we decided to wear clothes and blue arm bands as a protest against human rights violations, and for democracy, justice, equality and a peace dialogue.” Shantimalika includes groups such as the South Asia Indigenous Women’s Forum and the National Indigenous Women Federation. (For background into the conflict see the recently published swisspeace working paper *Social Exclusion and Conflict Transformation in Nepal: Women, Dalit and Ethnic Groups* by Alexandra Geiser (Available on: [www.swisspeace.org](http://www.swisspeace.org)).



Women demonstrators take to the streets of Kathmandu (photo courtesy of Milijuli Nepal)

One Nepali activist wrote:

“Thanks for the solidarity. The Peace March was a success. I am happy because it was appreciated in almost all the major newspapers and on television networks. The march was with traditional music and ended without criticising anyone. We are planning to organise more peace marches. I just want to update you with the situation here. Local election is taking place soon amidst a series of protests and demonstration against the election. [...] Explosions and killings are increasing in Kathmandu. Yesterday one bomb exploded in my locality. No one was killed but it damaged buildings and vehicles. We have been at home for the last five days. It is difficult to go far since there are very few buses and it is not safe to use bus and vehicles too. The worst thing is many schools have been used for election booths. Hope situation will improve. At the moment, I am very much involved with organising women through many forum. It is the time that women are united and clear with our agenda.”

Contact Milijuli Nepal: [ps@tamang.wlink.com.np](mailto:ps@tamang.wlink.com.np)

## FOR Austria

*10th to 13th of May 2006: Gathering of Civil Society from the EU, Latin America and the Caribbean in Vienna: Call for IFOR and SERPAJ participation*

In May 2006 the fourth summit of the Heads of State and Government of Latin America, the Caribbean (LAC) and the European Union (EU) will take place in Vienna. This is one of the major events during the Austrian EU-Presidency.

Parallel to this summit social movements and actors from both regions will join in a gathering called “*Linking Alternatives 2*” (*Enlazando Alternativas 2*) in order to make clear that relations between both continents should not be dominated by inequality, exploitation, preference for free trade and the power of transnational corporations (TNCs), but should be based on peace, participative democracy, social justice and human rights.

One day of the gathering will be dedicated to the opening of a popular tribunal against some European corporations, which are involved in human rights violations in Latin America or the Caribbean. Furthermore, there will be a series of workshops and public forums with a broad number of participants from both areas.

According to our possibilities FOR Austria has been participating in the preparation process here in Vienna, and we feel that this large event could also be an opportunity to bring together people from branches of IFOR and representatives from our Latin American sister organization Servicio Paz y Justicia (Service for Peace and Justice/SERPAJ).

As FOR Austria is also preparing the next joint issue of *International Reconciliation/Spinnrad* due to come out in March, we are planning to publish a longer article on this event there. We also would like to get in touch with people from IFOR branches, groups and affiliates who wish to participate in the Vienna meeting in May.

More information on the meeting in English, German and Spanish: can be found at [www.alternativas.at](http://www.alternativas.at)

There you can also find AND SIGN the “Call to Vienna – May 10-13”, and further background information.

**Contact FOR Austria: [office@versoehnungsbund.at](mailto:office@versoehnungsbund.at) or visit their website: [www.versoehnungsbund.at](http://www.versoehnungsbund.at)**



## FOR/MIR France

France was on the sad, even worrying side of the headlines in October and November. You heard or read about violent confrontations in the suburban areas of Paris, about cars burning like torches, etc. Rather than going into social analysis, we rather want to describe how these uprisings challenge us on a very deep level as Christians and members of the Fellowship of Reconciliation in particular. The majority of the members of our local group in Paris live in these sensitive areas. What we write is based on a sharing we had just a few days after the situation started to calm down. True, they did not have their cars burnt, they were not directly pursued, but they had shared the tension, the insecurity, the fear, the curfews, the sleeplessness as police helicopters hovered night after night over their residential buildings. Most important of all, they shared, and still share, the concern about friends and acquaintances living in the neighborhood.

Who are amidst all this? What could or should our message have been in this situation? We did not publish a statement as others did. Of course we condemn violence and the injustice that led, and still leads, up to it. We did not for we could not propose a magic action that would bring back “peace, love and brotherhood” to troubled minds. We were just as powerless, as little as all the others. But there was an awareness, a desire. An awareness that it was important to be there with open eyes and ears, a desire to be ready at the right moment that would allow us to recreate a sense of belonging through a gesture, a look, perhaps a word one day. This is to be our message, “rock-bottom-nonviolence”: be friends, be neighbors, believe in communion and live it when there is not a lot of visible proof for it around.

And the moment came. Some Christian churches spontaneously changed their year’s programs and replaced them by themes like “Becoming artisans of peace” or “Living together”; other churches known as ethnical assemblies decided to have common services with different congregations in the area. Some people woke up to the fact that violence has not come upon them in some magic way, nor will it change in some magic way. The only way is now to overcome fear and reach out for something else which they have sometimes difficulty to name. So we are being called in, time has come to speak up, to share a message. A large parish in the greater Paris region challenged us. Every Sunday during Lent and perhaps beyond Eastertime there will be exhibitions, workshops, sharing groups for children, teenagers and adults. The parish together with the surrounding Christian churches chooses to go back to the “school of the gospel”. We shall be the first pupils there, for we were asked to take on board the animation of two Sundays and to write a leaflet for every week presenting the Biblical texts together with concrete experiences in the light of the non-violent and peace-building message of Jesus. Our hope is to raise awareness, help to build places of belonging, encourage people to overcome fear and to reach out, eventually beyond the Christian communities.

We are happy to share these leaflets with you. They will be available from the 25<sup>th</sup> February onwards. You can ask for them in our office [mirfr@club-internet.fr](mailto:mirfr@club-internet.fr)

## Peace People, Northern Ireland

*Written by Mairead Corrigan Maguire, Nobel Peace Laureate, Belfast*

On 23<sup>rd</sup> November, 2005, I had the privilege of meeting in St. Peter's Square, Rome, with Pope Benedict XVI. After his public address, he greeted a delegation of Nobel Peace Laureates present in Rome to attend the Sixth Nobel Peace Summit.

In his address to the St. Peter's Square audience, the Pope spoke of unconditional love. I could not help asking myself, 'Why, if the Catholic Church speaks so much about unconditional love do so many Christians facilitate and participate in violence, armed struggles, and war?' The answer might be that the message is too vague, there is too much ambiguity about violence, and many Christians are confused by the old Just War theory. In truth, as we are each the 'temple of the Holy spirit', and in the words of Vatican II, 'grace lives in the hearts of all men and women' how can we hurt or kill the spirit of God living in another person? How can we hurt or kill our brothers and sisters and say we love them?

When I met the Pope, I took the chance to ask him to 'abolish the Just War theory and proclaim the nonviolent gospel of Jesus'. He smiled. (Four years ago Pope Benedict, then Cardinal Ratzinger, made a statement saying the time is coming when we will have to get rid of the Just War theory). I told him I was from Northern Ireland, and invited him to visit us. The moment's encounter was brief and intense and I was moved by his quiet, peaceful, and listening persona. Understanding that I would not get to speak much to him, I wrote him a letter. In this letter I asked the Pope, as this was the year of the Eucharist, the sacrament of nonviolence, to consider calling a Council to declare 'No Just War and proclaim the Nonviolence of Jesus'. I stated my belief of how much the world needs the message of active nonviolence, and that it would truly be a Pentecostal moment if the Church proclaimed Jesus' nonviolence to a world in need of renewal and healing.

The Catholic Church officials will argue that they are for peace, and always have been. But tragically the practical Gospel message of 'no killing, and loving your enemy' is often, for the church, a step too far and hence since the third century and the time of Constantine, Christians have been amongst the most war-like and violent people on Earth. Even today, in the recent war and invasion of Iraq carried out mostly by the USA, UK Christians, the justification of invasion, torture, and use of phosphorus chemical weapons on people is described by some as 'Just War', or justifiable to stop terrorism. They seem blind to the fact that war is terrorism! To all our shame only a handful of Bishops in the USA actually opposed the war in Afghanistan, and very many American people from Christian backgrounds supported war and the invasion of Iraq.

And in Ireland, how many continued to support paramilitaries and the 'armed struggle'? How many put aside the message of love of enemy and nonkilling? How many regarded it as a non issue, a non thought? I believe, if there is to be any future for humanity then we must transform our violent cultures into nonviolent ones and begin to build nonkilling societies where we live.

In developing such a new culture, all faith traditions have a role to play by bringing peace and nonviolence to the centre of their theology. The human family faces violence on many fronts: war, nuclear weapons, poverty, environmental, human rights, women's rights. We await with hope, what His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI and our world's spiritual leaders have to say to us on such issues of our time.

Visit Peace People on the web: [www.peacepeople.com](http://www.peacepeople.com)

## FOR North America

### Jewish Peace Fellowship

(Taken from newsletter "Shalom", Autumn 2005)

#### *Tribute to Naomi Goodman (1920 – 2005)*

Goodman, longtime President and Secretary of the Jewish Peace Fellowship (JPF), recently passed away. Below is a sampling of the tributes received, which were originally printed in the JPF autumn 2005 newsletter, "Shalom".

*Liliane Kshensky Baxter*, IFOR International Committee Member & former FOR USA Chair:

Naomi was a pioneer for Jewish women within FOR USA and IFOR. I will miss her gracious, articulate and freethinking presence. She was the first Jewish woman to serve on the international steering committee of IFOR. Ever poised, Naomi must have been a conciliating presence on a board composed of people from a range of countries, cultures and religions. I cannot imagine Naomi ever yelling or cursing. She was cultivated, in the full meaning of that term. [...]

I am grateful to Naomi for opening the door to Jewish women within the governing bodies of FOR USA and IFOR. Today I serve as FOR USA representative on the seven-member IFOR steering committee. I am honored to be following in Naomi Goodman's footsteps.



*Diana Francis*, FOR England & former IFOR President:

I first met Naomi in Kerala, at the southern-most tip of India, at a Council meeting of IFOR, 25 years ago. She was made an Executive Committee member and I, living only one country away from the secretariat, became a member of the Steering Committee. From then on we met at least once a year, often sharing a room and many good laughs when sessions were done.

*continued on next page...*

## ...Naomi Goodman, continued from page 8

At the next IFOR Council meeting in Bonnetcombe, Southern France, and four years later, Naomi was one of those who persuaded me to accept nomination as IFOR President. That followed much hard work and not a little heartache and through it all Naomi was a constant support and encouragement. When I finally retired from office eight years later our friendship was such that there was no question of our losing touch.

When we first became friends I did not realize what a remarkable person she was. I only knew the ease and comfort of a natural friendship, based on shared values, similar ways of thinking and a common tendency to laugh at things that were supposed to be taken seriously. But as time went on and Nico (my husband) and I met her friends, family and colleagues, we saw what a power and an anchor she was to so many. We learned more about her life, her work and her extraordinary and subtle range of gifts: her incisiveness and wit; her power and range as a writer; her ability to generate respect and trust; her ability to lead without seeming to do so; her moral clarity and enduring commitment to the causes and beliefs that defined her; her capacity to hold realism together with vision; her love of life and her artistic flair; her firm, quiet feminism.

Contact Jewish Peace Fellowship: [jpf@forusa.org](mailto:jpf@forusa.org) or visit their website: [www.jewishpeacefellowship.org](http://www.jewishpeacefellowship.org)



## May 24: International Women's Day for Peace and Disarmament Pack 2006

### *Peace East and West*

Some two million people around the world are victims of trafficking, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Louise Arbour said recently. She noted, "Reports today suggest that more people are being trafficked than ever before."

We begin this issue with an article on trafficking by Annelise Ebbe. Trafficking may not seem at first glance an obvious issue for peace activists. But it is. Profits from the illegal trade in guns, people (mostly but not exclusively women and girls) and drugs fuel many armed conflicts. In too many makeshift camps of refugees fleeing war, the first outsiders to arrive are not medical personnel or humanitarian aid workers-but traffickers with promises of desperately needed jobs.

In economies that have been destroyed by war, human trafficking and the smuggling of guns and drugs may be growth industries, and the best paid jobs available. They help sustain the culture of violence that created them.

Any effort to interfere with these money makers— including organizing for peace and justice-is dangerous.

Because of this danger it can be difficult to get facts and figures on trafficking. It is known that in the US alone trafficking is a USD 9.5 billion business, with some 20,000 people trafficked into the United States each year.

80% of those trafficked are women and girls. Many of those trafficked come from Eastern Europe and the Newly Independent States of the former USSR.

Both Ebbe and the article of Sandra Ljubinkovic point out an even deeper connection between war and the trafficking of women and girls for sexual exploitation. Both war and trafficking are about domination and control by men, over other men and over women-key values of the mindset they label patriarchy. Promoting equality between men and women will undermine patriarchy and militarism, they argue, and free both women and men. Patriarchy, as the articles by the Russian Soldiers' Mothers show, hurts men also.

Building a culture of peace does mean confronting violence. It also means confronting even those who are supposed to be protecting war survivors, such as United Nations peacekeepers. A recent report by Refugees International claims that "A 'boys will be boys' attitude in peacekeeping missions breeds tolerance for exploiting and abusing local women." It is not only local women and girls who may face abuse, but women and girls specifically brought into the country to cater to foreign peacekeepers. In one 20-month period, the United Nations peacekeeping department completed investigations on 221 peacekeepers accused of sexual misconduct.

The women whose work you will read about in the following pages are building a culture of peace. They, and their male allies, are confronting trafficking, teaching peace, opposing the spread of militarism. They are making a link between respect for women's rights and peace.

Women's equality is being recognized as a cornerstone of any sustainable peace. Two indications of this recognition are mentioned in this issue: the 1,000 Women for the Nobel Peace Prize and the new 1325 Award from the Netherlands.

May 24 International Women's Day for Peace and Disarmament began in Europe in the early 1980s, when hundreds of thousands of women organized against nuclear weapons and the arms race. Since the 1995 UN World Conference on Women in Beijing, the International Fellowship of Reconciliation and the International Peace Bureau have published this pack to raise awareness of and increase support for women's peace initiatives.

