

Behind the news: Visions for peace – Voices of faith

Issue no. 14

14 February 2002

A monthly bulletin providing church, ecumenical and interfaith information, resources, and analysis on issues of current global concern

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1. Statements and actions of the global church and ecumenical family

a) Under the sponsorship of the Interfaith Coalition for a Peaceful End to Terrorism, four US religious leaders held a press conference by telephone on 23 January 2002 where they called for a change in the way that the war on terrorism is being prosecuted. Specifically they called for an approach to terrorism that is better equated to criminal justice than to military means; one that would use mechanisms that would be within an international criminal court context. They also called upon the US and allies to work towards long-term political and economic development in Central Asia and the Middle East and for a reassessment of the use of the “just war” theory in judging the use of military force. The Right Reverend Richard Shimpfky (Episcopal Church), Bishop C. Joseph Sprague (Methodist Church), Sister Kathleen Pruitt, CSJP (Leadership Conference for Women Religious), and Rabbi Arthur Waskow (Director, Shalom Center). <http://umns.umc.org/02/jan/wd0125.htm#020> and <http://www.wcc-coe.org/wcc/behindthenews/us137.html>

b) The National Council of the Federation of Italian Protestant Youth issued a statement saying “we cannot believe that justice entails bombing civilians, causing the political and material desertification of a whole nation and country... We condemn terrorism and war – both acts are equally guilty of injustice, and both exclude dialogue and armed conflicts with the aim of eliminating the adversary.” <http://www.wcc-coe.org/wcc/behindthenews/us138.html>

c) In a report from ENI on 9 January, Indian church leaders have warned that “war hysteria” is gripping their country and have called for dialogue to resolve differences between India and Pakistan. <http://eni.ch/highlights/news.shtml?2002/01>

d) Rowan Williams, Archbishop of Wales, says that the “conflict begins to become embarrassed. It is just possible to deplore civilian casualties and retain moral credibility when an action is clearly focused and its goals are on the way to evident achievement. It is not possible when the strategy appears confused and political leaders talk about a 'war' that may last years... A good deal of the moral capital accumulated during the first days and weeks was soon squandered... Part of the problem is the fateful word 'war'... So can we stop talking so much about 'war', and reconcile ourselves to the fact that the punishment of terrorist crime and the gradual reduction of its threat cannot be translated into the satisfying language of decisive and dramatic conquest?” <http://www.guardian.co.uk/Archive/Article/0,4273,4339426,00.html>

e) To help Australian Catholics to support the Assisi prayer gathering held on 24 January, the Australian Catholic Social Justice Council prepared a discussion guide to the World Day of Peace Message. The theme of the message for 2002 is “No peace without justice, no justice

without forgiveness" and addressed the relationship between justice, forgiveness and peace in the light of international terrorism. The ACSJC's discussion guide provides a brief summary of the World Day of Peace Message, some questions for discussion, and resources to promote prayer for peace. www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au

f) The annual meeting of the Joint Committee of the Conference of European Churches (CEC) and the Council of European Bishops' Conferences (CCEE) took place 24-26 January, and included a report on the activities of the "Islam in Europe" Committee and discussions on possible developments after the Muslim-Christian meeting which took place in Sarajevo from 12 to 16 September 2001 (Final release on Sarajevo conference at <http://www.ccek.org/News/cq0117e.htm>).

2. Responses from other faith communities

A reflection on "A Human Approach to World Peace" by His Holiness Tenzin Gyatso, The Fourteenth Dalai Lama and "Religions of India-Together for Peace" by Ayesha D Singh, printed in the Indian journal, The Axe, are now available on-line (www.wcc-coe.org/wcc/behindthenews/us147.html and www.wcc-coe.org/wcc/behindthenews/us139.html respectfully). The "Religions of India" document includes peace prayers from different religious traditions.

3. Humanitarian concerns

a) World Health Organization: "After 23 years of conflict and political instability, a collapsed economy, and three years of severe drought, Afghanistan's health system is among the very poorest in the world. Obtaining the most basic of necessities – food, shelter and clothing – is a constant struggle. Such exposure intensifies an already poor health situation, with acute respiratory illnesses, diarrhoeal diseases, and malnutrition killing and weakening the children of Afghanistan. There is a critical shortage of health care workers at every level. Healthcare facilities are in urgent need of restoration. There are inadequate supplies of medicines, vaccines, equipment and fuel. An estimated 6 million people have no access, or insufficient access to health care." For this report and others focusing on health related issues in Afghanistan, click on the following link:

<http://www.who.int/disasters/country.cfm?countryID=1&DocType=2>

b) Bombing blunders and misleading information on the ground keep the civilian toll rising in Afghanistan. In the first of a three-part investigation Guardian (<http://www.guardian.co.uk/>) writer Ian Traynor writes from Kabul: "Fardin's world caved in on a bright Sunday morning last October when an American bomb came through the roof of the room where he was sleeping. He was spared physically. But the six-year-old has not uttered a word nor taken a step since."

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/afghanistan/story/0,1284,648784,00.html>

c) The United Nation High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reports that a final convoy of Afghans left the makeshift Jalozai refugee camp in Pakistan on February 12, 2002, ending a three-month UNHCR-government operation to empty the squalid site in north-west Pakistan. In all, some 45,000 Afghans were transferred from Jalozai since late November to five new UNHCR camps where refugees can get adequate help and shelter. "For much of the past year, Jalozai was tragic and visible evidence of the miserable plight of Afghans fleeing decades of war, abuse, drought and deprivation," High Commissioner for Refugees Ruud Lubbers said in Geneva. Lubbers has worked to close the unofficial site since first visiting it in early 2001. For more on the story, click on:

<http://www.reliefweb.int/w/rwb.nsf/480fa8736b88bbc3c12564f6004c8ad5/f3960781b353bbdd49256b5e002d6ad7?OpenDocument>

- d) The UNHCR reports that Iran is to open ten repatriation centers for Afghan refugees. Three special exit points along its border with Afghanistan are to be built to facilitate the crossing of the uprooted people. Meanwhile, the Pakistani government and UNHCR plan to survey Afghan refugees living in newly established camps in the country's Baluchistan Province to determine where they want to go and when they may want to return. The refugee agency, however, is not encouraging Afghans to repatriate until the spring, although it plans to distribute assistance packages to those now going home. For more on this report, please click on: <http://www.unhcr.ch/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/home/+NwwBmehXCOSwwwwwwwwwwhFqnN0bItFqnDni5AFqnN0bIDzmmwwwwww/opensdoc.html>
- e) For a comprehensive list of reports and stories focussing on relief work in Afghanistan, visit ReliefWeb's site at: <http://www.reliefweb.int/w/rwb.nsf/vLCE/Afghanistan?OpenDocument&StartKey=Afghanistan&Expandview>
- f) Imagine 20,000 people camping on the moon. High in the forbidding mountains of northwest Pakistan, the world's newest Afghan refugee camp is nearly full. The unlikely setting is a stony slope near the legendary Khyber Pass. For more on this photo essay written and compiled by Jonathan Frerichs of Lutheran World Relief for ACT International, please go to: http://act-intl.org/news/dt_nr_2002/dtafghan0402.html
- g) For other stories on Afghanistan by ACT communicators, visit ACT's website at: http://act-intl.org/act_news_title.html
- h) Agence France Presse reports that the International Red Cross has uncovered scenes of 'shocking poverty' in remote valleys in western Afghanistan which have been bypassed by aid for years. "We saw children digging in the fields for roots to eat and use as firewood, leaves from the trees were also being eaten," John Watt, operations manager at the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies said on February 8, 2002. <http://www.unhcr.ch/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/home/+iwwBmemi8SswwwMwwwwwwmFqnN0bIhFqnN0bItFqnDni5AFqnN0bIDzmqwwwwwwwGFq6fGwDaBdadpnDaBnDaGnpwBGowBodDaqnDBGn5ahdGaEhtrwDaGnh1tnn5/opensdoc.htm>
- i) Agence France Presse also reports that the UN High Commissioner for Refugees Ruud Lubbers has told the Security Council that the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) should stay on in Afghanistan to help protect citizens. Lubbers is reported as saying that he shared the hope expressed by Lakhdar Brahimi, the top UN official for Afghanistan, that the Security Council "will give favorable and urgent consideration to the possibility of extending the mandate of the International Security Assistance Force beyond Kabul, as requested by the Afghan interim administration and large segments of the Afghan population." <http://www.unhcr.ch/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/home/+QwwBmeEdtpwww2wwwwwwmFqnN0bIhFqnN0bItFqnDni5AFqnN0bIDzmrwwwwwwGFqewSQoZTaxntoD5aqnD515adha+XXCXXXamo5pcwqnmampndpcnaoDain5BnGDaeHtrwDo5BwDeD7nw/opensdoc.htm>
- j) Human Rights Watch (<http://www.hrw.org>) issued a press release earlier this year, urging the UN Security Council to work with Afghanistan to find a way of developing justice mechanisms so that past abusers can be held accountable. Click on <http://hrw.org/press/2002/01/karzai012902.htm> for the full news release.
- j) Lutheran World Relief Communication Director, Jonathan Frerichs, reporting for ACT International, writes in an essay titled *Three days in Kabul: A Reflection*, that from afar many people in aid agencies, churches and governments have struggled for an accurate

overview of the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan. "Once here, however, your attention turns to individual persons and their circumstances. After a while your mind begins to process both perspectives, like a mental camera trying to keep both a close-up and a panorama in focus. After three days here it is clear that you have not really seen much of Kabul, that Afghanistan is much more than Kabul, and that, as the saying goes, the more you learn the more you know how much there is to learn. All these are givens. But you take stock anyway, perhaps because so many people in the ACT network and beyond have been working or worried for Afghanistan for so long and the picture needs filling in." Full essay at: <http://www.lwr.org/action/news/02/020102.html>

- k) Several recent resources have looked at the civilian bombing casualties in Afghanistan. A briefing report from the Project on Defense Alternatives claims that the rate of civilians killed per bomb is about four times higher in Afghanistan than in the 1999 Balkans war and looks at the mission and operation objectives that factor in this. <http://www.comw.org/pda/0201oef.html>. Another resource for this type of article is http://www.cursor.org/stories/civilian_deaths.htm.

4. Editorial analysis

(Each month "Behind the News" invites editorials from individuals that reflect on current debates and global actions from different theological, ethical, political or regional perspectives.)

To Act is to React by K.C. Abraham

"Empowerment" is a term that frequently appears in our discussions on human development. It is taken for granted that people, especially the marginalized, need power in their struggle against the forces that subjugate them and for gaining control over their destiny. But when power erupts in an uncontrollable manner as was witnessed on September 11 in USA, we are puzzled. We call the perpetrators terrorists, and what else can we call them, for our penchant for smooth, orderly transition makes it difficult to understand this phenomenon. The irony, however, is that we promote the state-sponsored terrorism, the military action to root out terrorism. There is an exuberant confidence about the success of military action.

No one wants to justify the action of the so-called terrorists. Massive destruction of the lives of people and property caused by terrorist attack is a matter of great concern to peace-loving people everywhere. But in our eagerness to condemn them we fail to recognize the harsh realities of the power in the world.

Terrorist attacks are painful reminders that we live in an unjust world. The increasing gap between the rich and the poor is the breeding ground for angry, inexplicable reaction of the powerless. For them to act is a matter of reacting. The luxury and wastful living of the rich is an insult to the poor. The violence nurtured by injustice, poverty, extreme denial of rights, and the hurt and the pain caused by the insensitivity of the dominant suddenly erupts. Yes, it is irrational and seemingly futile, and we are confounded by such passion mingled with fanaticism. "But within it lay many readily predictable features of the human psyche expressed in the religious collective (p. 195, Kenneth Cragg, *The Call of the Minerat* (2nd ed. Orbis, Mariknoll, NY 1985). We are witnessing the intense clash between the arrogance of the powerful and the desperate action/reaction of the powerless. How easy it is to condemn the violence made overtly visible by the "irrational" act of the powerless without recognizing violence embedded in the system.

Given the complex reality of the power situation in the relationship between peoples and the nations, the question we need to raise is what response the churches can make? Are we on the side of the powerful who use power rationally(?) and in an orderly way? Or are we on the side of the powerless whose use of power is ambiguous? Do we listen to the cry of the powerless for justice? Can we renew our commitment to build a just and equitable world? Do

we raise a question to our governments and rulers when they triumphantly embark on their mission to destroy all empires of evil: What is their commitment to build a just world?

One more issue to be raised in this context. It is fallacious to link terrorism to a particular religion. Nevertheless militant fundamentalism in all religions is coopted by the powerful and powerless alike to project their vested interests. How power is used or abused by religion is another question that has come with some urgency. This and many other issues relating to different manifestations of power need further discussion.

Rev. Dr K.C. Abraham, a presbyter of the Church of South India, is presently Professor of World Christianity at San Francisco Theological Seminary. He was formerly the Director of the South Asia Theological Research Institute(SATHRI), and Professor of Theology and Ethics at the United Theological College, Bangalore. Dr. Abraham is actively involved in the ecumenical movement.

5. Editorial analysis: The cultural dimension of the current crisis by Reda Benkirane

Among the many reflections on the events related to September 11, two of the most profound insights come from Christian thinkers who have focused their analyses essentially on the cultural aspect of the crisis.

René Girard, a French anthropologist from Stanford University, known for his Scapegoat Theory and his anthropology of violence and religion, sees in these events a "mimetic (mirror image) rivalry" of an unprecedented scale. According to Girard, the resistance to the current globalization process emerging from different parts of the world and the various Islamist armed actions against the US and the West are motivated not because of their intrinsic differences but because they are similar to what they fight against. "They fight us because they look more and more like us" René Girard would say. According to Girard, Bush and Bin Laden are "mimetic twins" who both want to have a global impact and reach a global audience. Both use the same religious terminology based on binary logic (Crusades/Jihad, Good against Evil, etc.). Yet even the profile of the terrorists who perpetrated the attacks against New York and Washington attests that they were totally assimilated into Western culture. Girard's insights, as an anthropologist influenced by Christian eschatology, alert us to the risk of uniformity and homogeneity rather than the risk of differences and divergence. The world is in danger of uniformity not of diversity... The same simplistic and Manichean logic is used by both Bush and Bin Laden in order to attract the attention and the support of Christians and Muslims worldwide. But humanity deserves a real alternative vision which reflects its plurality and which can overcome the current polarization of religions, civilizations and cultures.

Konrad Raiser provides a complementary analysis of the same events. In his presentation at the WCC meeting on "Beyond 11 September: Assessing Global Implications" (29 November-2 December 2001), he argues that a "symbolic conflict" of a new nature has emerged. What we are seeing is a confrontation over "symbolic power," rather than a struggle for natural resources, trade routes or territories. The particular nature of this conflict is especially reflected in the very symbols used and destroyed on September 11. The way in which the conflict has been presented and justified, and the fact that it is happening in an Information Age, amplified and distorted by the mass media, explain partly why "our traditional analytical models are inadequate to understand the conflict and why theology and religious insights are needed". Raiser concluded his presentation by highlighting the need to develop "new tools" for a better understanding of the religious dimension of the present confrontation and also "to resist the tendency to turn religion into an ideology for struggle."

On the war of civilizations

In order to address the crucial question of cultural diversity and the need to integrate "non-Euro-centric" models of "creative thinking," the success and the relevance of the concept of "war of civilizations" should be questioned. One of the most quoted theories proposed during

the last decade to explain the current cultural challenge is Samuel Huntington's Clash of Civilizations, first introduced in his *Foreign Affairs'* article (1993) and later published in a book (1996). While many have heard about this theory of war of civilizations, very few observers know that the concept did not originate with American political scientist Samuel Huntington. He is not even the person who first coined the term "war of civilizations". The first explicit mention of this concept came from Mahdi Elmandjra, a former Assistant Director General of UNESCO, President of the World Future Studies Federation and of Futuribles International (Paris), and member of the Club of Rome. Elmandjra, who teaches International Relations at the University of Rabat, published "the First Civilizational War" in 1991 referring to the Gulf war and the new "post-colonial" situation created after the end of the Cold War. The book was published in Arabic (1991), English and French (1992), and Japanese (2001). During the Gulf war, Elmandjra gave a seminal interview to the German newspaper *Der Spiegel* (allusively quoted in Huntington's book) where he introduced his own theory of the war of civilizations. In this interview, Elmandjra essentially stigmatized the Western fear of Islam, population growth in the South, and the growing importance of Confucianist societies. All these ingredients of Elmandjra's theory of "war of civilizations" were later included as basic assumptions in Huntington's thesis. It is instructive to know that this theory of "war of civilizations" initially was formulated as a "non-Euro-centric" point of view which denounced the bellicose perception of cultures and civilizations and which advocated increased recognition of the world's cultural diversity.

The problem with the application of Huntington's theory is that cultures and civilizations are now portrayed as playing the roles that nation-states played during the Cold War. Cultures and civilizations are seen as monolithic blocs acting on the geopolitical scene rather than as living and evolving organisms that need constantly to exchange and interact with their environment. A related concern is the political perception of religions, civilizations and cultures: even Islamist as well as Christian and Jewish "neo-fundamentalist" movements see themselves primarily as political actors rather than as spiritual movements. This brings to mind Girard's mimetic rivalry which is also denounced by Raiser in his concluding remarks on the "symbolic hegemony." Religions, civilizations and cultures should not be reduced to political entities and confrontations. Instead of "policing civilizations" as implied in Huntington's thesis, the world needs to "civilize politics". Political and economic analyses are not sufficient to comprehend the complexity of the world. Better understanding of the cultural and religious components could more adequately address the problem of present international disorder.

Furthermore, the fear of the Other is often based on the ignorance of the Other. Perhaps it is time in the West to learn more about Islam, about its spirituality, its arts, its poets, writers and scientists, and about its tolerance which has been demonstrated so many times - for example in Spain for 700 years and in the Ottoman empire until the beginning of the 20th century. There are also some universal issues - on political violence, arms race, poverty, illiteracy, pollution, pandemics, etc. - that transcend cultural differences and national borders and which must now be taught, learnt, discussed and shared by every citizen of the world. As stated by the Spanish writer Rodrigo de Zayas: "We must teach humanity to humanity".

Reda Benkirane

Communications Officer, Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance

Further readings :

Konrad Raiser, *Beyond 11 September: Implications for the Churches*, Beyond 11 September. Assessing Global Implications, Geneva, 29 November-2 December 2001.

<http://wcc-coe.org/wcc/what/international/symbolic.html>

René Girard, *What Is Occurring Today Is a Mimetic Rivalry on a Planetary Scale*, Interview by Henri Tincq, *Le Monde*, 6 November 2001, translation Jim Williams

http://theol.uibk.ac.at/cover/girard_le_monde_interview.html

Mahdi Elmandjra, *Der erste Weltkrieg der Kulturen* (This is the first civilizational war), in: "Der Spiegel", Hamburg, 11 February 1991.

<http://www.elmandjra.org/der110291.jpg>

Mahdi Elmandjra, *Première guerre civilisationnelle*, Casablanca, Toubkal, 1992.

<http://www.elmandjra.org/livre1/Tablematiere.html>

Samuel P. Huntington, *The clash of civilizations*, in: Foreign Affairs, Summer 1993, v72, n3.

<http://www.alamut.com/subj/economics/misc/clash.html>

Samuel P. Huntington, *The clash of civilizations and the remaking of world order*, New York, Simon & Schuster, 1996.

"The conflict which broke out in August 1990 announced the advent of the post-colonial era. The beginning of hostilities set the stage for the first civilizational war. The Gulf war is but the first episode of a North-South conflict where the fundamental issue is basically of a cultural nature.

(...) I have said and written on many an occasion since September 12th, 1990 that what is taking place in the Gulf was not only a political, economic or military conflict, but above all, a cultural confrontation. Being a researcher in the prospective field, I have never ceased, for 15 years now, to warn the West against its socio-cultural ethnocentrism and the dangers it involved on the eve of the 21st century."

Mahdi Elmandjra, Futurist, *The First Civilizational War* (1992)

Book available on the Web at: <http://www.elmandjra.org/Contents.htm>

6. Resources for further reflection

a) WCC International Relations staff member, Clement John, recently visited Pakistan and offers some reflections on the present political situation and concerns of the churches in his trip report. <http://www.wcc-coe.org/wcc/behindthenews/analysis19.html> .

b) The Central Asia project at the Harvard Program on Humanitarian Policy and Conflict Research has recently updated its policy briefs on critical issues concerning Afghanistan. The policy briefs "Key Challenges for Recovery in Afghanistan", "The Role of Islam in Shaping the Future of Afghanistan", and "Internal Displacement in Afghanistan: New Challenges" can be viewed on the program's Central Asia Internet portal at <http://www.preventconflict.org/portal/centralasia>.

c) At a time when world leaders are calling for vengeance, Jesus' parables offer life-giving alternatives. "The One who Showed Mercy" is a new study guide that examines heroes, victims and villains in the parable of the Good Samaritan. Intended for use by congregations, Sunday school classes and other small groups, the guide highlights Jesus' call to move beyond predictable actions. The booklet for group leaders provides background to the biblical text and guides for five study and reflection sessions. Each session offers insight from various sources, including stories of Anabaptist martyrs and a letter from a couple whose son died in the Sept. 11 attacks in New York. "The One who Showed Mercy" also includes handouts that can be copied and distributed to participants. Guidelines to help discussion leaders provide a welcoming atmosphere are given, as well as suggestions for the process of determining post-study action. A full description is available on www.mcc.org/pr/2002/01_january/011102h.html. To request a copy, send email to stt@mcc.org, or telephone +1 717 859-1151.

d) An Open Public Discussion of Conflict Prevention, "The Future of Conflict Prevention in the Post September World" was held on line at http://www.dwcw.org/e-symposium/session_3.htm .

This was a global dialogue aimed to prevent conflict, where the public dialogued with experts and each other. Although closed on 12 February, you can view the submissions at the above link. Presented by The Japan Center for Preventive Diplomacy (www.jcpd.gr.jp) and the Japan Times (www.japantimes.co.jp).

e) 'The Politics of Terrorism and "Civilization": How to Respond As a Human Being' by Sakamoto Yoshikazu, Professor Emeritus, The University of Tokyo, looks at terrorism from the perspective of humanity, not of the hegemonic power or the alliance of democratic and anti-democratic regimes under the name of "anti-terrorism", and points out that the structural root causes of "anti-civilizational" terrorism raise the question whether the North, including Japan, is really "civilized". The Japanese original was published in the monthly journal SEKAI in December 2001 and available in English through "Japan in the World". <http://www.iwanami.co.jp/jpworld/top.html>

f) The Other Side, an ecumenical Christian magazine based in the US committed to social justice, spirituality, and the arts dedicated its January-February 2002 issue to the events and issues of September 11 and its aftermath. A free study guide is also available from The Other Side to aid individual or group reflection. <http://www.theotherside.org/>

g) President George W. Bush's State of the Union address on January 29, 2002 was the first in many years to focus primarily on foreign policy. Foreign Policy in Focus analyst Stephen Zunes highlights many of the key points and phrases of the foreign policy portions of the speech, and offers critical annotations. He notes that despite widespread accolades in the media and strong bipartisan support in Congress, a careful examination of the language and assumptions in the address raise disturbing questions about the direction of U.S. foreign policy under the current administration. <http://www.fpif.org/commentary/2002/0201sou.html>

h) In Onward Christian Soldiers, Tom Barry, co-director of Foreign Policy in Focus, also reflects on Bush's State of the Union address and the seemingly wide-spread support in the US for taking military action against countries like Iraq and Somalia. <http://www.fpif.org/commentary/2002/0201onward.html>

i) In "The Finest Investment" Nathan Wilson, director of public policy and manager of the Campaign to Overcome Poverty for Call to Renewal, says that At its best, the US president's State of the Union address is a time to assess the year past and cast a vision for the year ahead. What if assessing and visioning was done in light of Psalm 72 with an eye to defending the cause of the poor and delivering the needy? Call to Renewal is a network of organizations working to overcome poverty, dismantle racism and build healthier families and communities <http://www.calltorenewal.com/commentary013102.html>

j) In January, the Lutheran Peace Fellowship in the US lifted up the writings and thinking of Martin Luther King, Jr. on peace and global justice. Texts highlighted include:

- "The World House" chapter of Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos or Community? In it, King describes the great dangers of poverty, racism, materialism, and militarism and spells out remedies. He warns that the situation is urgent and that "This may well be mankind's [sic] last chance to choose between chaos and community."
- On April 4, 1967, exactly a year before his assassination, King gave a speech "A Time to Break Silence: Declaration of Independence from the War in Vietnam" at Riverside Church in New York City.
- "Where do we go from here?" King's last, and most radical Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) presidential address: "And one day we must ask the question, 'Why are there forty million poor people in America?' And when you begin to ask that question, you are raising questions about the economic system, about a broader distribution of wealth...."

Many texts of King's speeches can be found through <http://www.mlkonline.com/> or in the collection *A Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings and Speeches of Martin Luther King, Jr.*, James. M. Washington, ed., Harper Collins, 1986, and at the Martin Luther King, Jr. Papers Project, www.stanford.edu/group/King/home.htm.

k) Analyst Stephen Zunes examines the challenges and conundrums of the U.S. peace movement, particularly with respect to U.S. policy in the Middle East and the war on terrorism. <http://www.fpif.org/commentary/2002/0202peace.html>

l) In "Where antiterror doctrine leads", the Christian Science Monitor reports that in a controversial expansion of the Bush doctrine - the unilateralist "with us or with the terrorists" foreign policy that followed Sept. 11 - the US administration is making a stark argument for striking first. <http://www.csmonitor.com/2002/0207/p01s03-usmi.html>

m) The Transnational Foundation for Peace and Future Research (TFF) provides peace-related news, articles and links at <http://www.transnational.org>

n) The Life & Peace Institute in Uppsala, Sweden is planning for an international study in order to take account of what is happening in the world in relation to the "new war on terror." For more information or to forward your experiences and suggestions, contact Dr. Sigbert Axelson regarding the study at sigbert.axelson@teol.uu.se.

Behind the news: Visions for Peace – Voices of Faith is a joint initiative of:

World Council of Churches (WCC) - a fellowship of 342 churches, in more than 100 countries in all continents from virtually all Christian traditions. The Roman Catholic Church is not a member church but works cooperatively with the WCC. The highest governing body is the Assembly, which meets approximately every seven years. The WCC was formally inaugurated in 1948 in Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance - a global action network of 62 churches and church-related organizations who have pledged themselves to change unjust policies and practices related to global trade and HIV/AIDS, and to take up as a special concern work on peace and conflict resolution by forging strategic partnership. Alliance participants come from every corner of the globe and varied traditions within the ecumenical family – Roman Catholic, Protestant, Orthodox, and Anglican, as well as church-related organizations who themselves represent and serve many Christian faith traditions. Alliance participants are committed to speak out with one voice against injustice and structures which deprive human beings of dignity, and for alternative visions based on the Gospel.

Action by Churches Together (ACT) - an international alliance of churches and relief agencies assisting thousands of people recovering from emergencies in more than 50 countries worldwide.

This bulletin/website is intended to provide an ecumenical space for visions for peace and voices of faith; these materials do not necessarily reflect official policy of WCC, ACT, or EAA.

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Behind the news: Visions for peace – Voices of faith

Web: <http://www.wcc-coe.org/wcc/behindthenews>