



Resources for Services and Prayers on Hiroshima Day

Sunday 6th August 2017

Contents

- 1. Introduction**
- 2. How to use these Resources**
- 3. Information about the Nuclear Ban Treaty**
- 4. Hibashuka Testimonies**
- 5. Opening Prayers**
- 6. Litanies**
- 7. Readings**
- 8. Prayers**

1. Introduction

As Christians, we are called to work for peace. And so, we appeal for peace not as a political issue, but as a human one. Our awareness of this call is influenced by the horrors inflicted by nuclear weapons on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. These resources have been put together for use in services to remember those affected by nuclear weapons dropped on Japan, and to provide space to reflect on our own calling towards peace in the world today.

2. How to use these Resources

This pack contains a variety of prayers, readings and reflections to help you plan worship/liturgy around the anniversaries of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

You may be able to offer a whole service, drawing on several elements of the pack. You might be thinking of an out-door vigil or gathering. You may only be able to ensure that a prayer or set of intercessions are included in an existing service. Here, there are examples you can draw upon and use in the most appropriate way for the setting you are planning.

You can also find images and film recordings of Hibashuka Testimonies from an NCPO event earlier this year at: www.ncpo.org.uk/Hiroshima-day. You may like to use these in your events or for raising awareness within your communities.

3. Information about the Nuclear Ban Treaty

This year marks the 72nd anniversary of the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Speaking in August 2015 Pope Francis said, *“Hiroshima and Nagasaki became the symbol of boundless destructive power...it remains a permanent warning for humanity to reject war forever and to ban nuclear weapons and every weapon of mass destruction”*.

In June of this year 130 countries have come together at the UN in New York to attempt to do just this: ban nuclear weapons. They have been taking part in ground-breaking meetings to negotiate a nuclear weapon ban – similar to legally binding bans that have already been agreed on chemical weapons, landmines and cluster weapons. They have taken note of the unacceptable humanitarian and environmental costs of nuclear war and nuclear war preparations. They have taken note of the political hypocrisy of a small group of nations, the nine nuclear weapon states, refusing to live up to their commitments to nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. They have taken note of the desire and political will of the majority world, of faith groups, of civil society groups who clearly say ‘no’ to all nuclear weapons.

Sadly, the UK Government, a nuclear weapon state, chose not to participate in the process. Faith groups, including the Network of Christian Peace Organisations, have for many years been involved in awareness raising and lobbying on this issue with the Churches and with Government. We believe the abolition of all nuclear weapons is a matter of faith and spirituality that speaks of how we live together in the world.

4. Hibashuka Testimonies

a. Testimonies from 2nd April 2017

Earlier this year, two Hibashuka, Reiko Yamada and Midori Yamada, toured the UK giving their testimonies. One event was hosted by NCPO and took place in Oxford on Sunday 2nd April 2017. Midori Yamada shared a story about her brother via picture boards from a book she'd produced for children, and Reiko Yamada (no relation) told us about what happened to her and to members of her family.

This event was filmed and you can find a short video and longer film as well as images at: www.ncpo.org.uk/Hiroshima-day.

Yamada Reiko was an 11-year-old girl, 5th grader of a primary school on 6th August 1945 when the first atomic bomb was dropped. She is now Vice Chairperson of the Tokyo Federation of A-bomb sufferers Organisations.

“My father was inside a school building about 1km away from the centre of the explosion. He was rescued from under a fallen building and managed to make it back home. But he was bloodied all over his body due to wounds caused by pieces of broken glass. Even years later, fragments of glass would emerge from his skin and make him faint. Twenty years after the bombing, he developed lung cancer and leukaemia simultaneously. Despite blood transfusions and bone marrow transplants donated by my, my father died in a flurry of convulsions.”

“Almost every family in my family in my neighbourhood had victims of the bomb. They got injured or burned and many were missing. A good friend of mine in the neighbourhood was waiting for her mother to return home with 4 brothers and sisters. On the second day after the bombing, a moving black lump crawled in to the house; they first thought it was a big black dog, but soon realised it was their mother. She collapsed and died when she finally got home, leaving her 5 children behind.”

b. Additional testimonies

Mr. Akihiro Takahashi was 14 years old, when the bomb was dropped. He was standing in line with other students of his junior high school, waiting for the morning meeting 1.4 km away from the center. He was under medical treatment for about year and half. And even today black nail grows at his finger tip, where a piece of glass was stuck.

“The heat was tremendous. And I felt like my body was burning all over. For my burning body the cold water of the river was as precious as the treasure. Then I left the river, and I walked along the railroad tracks in the direction of my home. On the way, I ran into another friend of mine, Tokujiro Hatta. I wondered why the soles of his feet were badly burnt. It was unthinkable to get burned there. But it was undeniable fact the soles were peeling and red muscle was exposed. Even I myself was terribly burnt, I could not go home ignoring him. I made him crawl using his arms and knees. Next, I made him stand on his heels and I supported him. We walked heading toward my home repeating the two methods. When we were resting because we were so exhausted, I found my grandfather's brother and his wife, in other words, great uncle and great aunt, coming toward us. That was quite coincidence. As you know, we have a proverb about meeting Buddha in Hell. My encounter with my relatives at that time was just like that. They seem to be the Buddha to me wandering in the living hell.”

Eiko Taoka, then 21, was one of nearly 100 passengers said to have been on board a streetcar. At 8:15, as the streetcar approached Hatchobori Station, an intense flash and blast engulfed the car, instantly setting it on fire. Taoka's son died of radiation sickness on August 28. The survival of only ten people on the streetcar has been confirmed to date.

“When we were near in Hatchobori and since I had been holding my son in my arms, the young woman in front of me said, ‘I will be getting off here. Please take this seat.’ We were just changing places when there was a strange smell and sound. It suddenly became dark and before I knew it, I had jumped outside.... I held [my son] firmly and looked down on him. He had been standing by the window and I think fragments of glass had pierced his head. His face was a mess because of the blood flowing from his head. But he looked at my face and smiled. His smile has remained glued in my memory. He did not comprehend what had happened. And so he looked at me and smiled at my face which was all bloody. I had plenty of milk which he drank all throughout that day. I think my child sucked the poison right out of my body. And soon after that he died. Yes, I think that he died for me.”

Ms. Akiko Takakura was 20 years old when the bomb fell. She was in the Bank of Hiroshima, 300 meters away from the hypocentre. Ms. Takakura miraculously escaped death despite over 100 lacerated wounds on her back. She is one of the few survivors who was within 300 meters of the hypocentre. She now runs a kindergarten and she relates her experience of the atomic bombing to children.

“Many people on the street were killed almost instantly. The fingertips of those dead bodies caught fire and the fire gradually spread over their entire bodies from their fingers. A light gray liquid dripped down their hands, scorching their fingers. I, I was so shocked to know that fingers and bodies could be burned and deformed like that. I just couldn't believe it. It was horrible. And looking at it, it was more than painful for me to think how the fingers were burned, hands and fingers that would hold babies or turn pages, they just, they just burned away. For a few years after the A-bomb was dropped, I was terribly afraid of fire. I wasn't even able to get close to fire because all my senses remembered how fearful and horrible the fire was, how hot the blaze was, and how hard it was to breathe the hot air. It was really hard to breathe. Maybe because the fire burned all the oxygen, I don't know. I could not open my eyes enough because of the smoke, which was everywhere. Not only me but everyone felt the same. And my parts were covered with holes.”

5. Opening Prayers

a. *An Opening Prayer*

God our creator and sustainer, we gather to pray as a broken people who today remember the darkness and the shadow of death and destruction caused by nuclear weapons.

We know that we deal falsely with the world and with ourselves, healing wounds too lightly by saying “peace, peace” when there is no peace.

Let there be sown in us anew the unity, the light and the peace which passes all understanding. Be with us today and keep our minds and hearts in you and in your peace.

b. *An Opening Prayer said in two parts*

Side 1: O God, tender and just,
the names of Hiroshima and Nagasaki
cut through our denial that we are capable of destroying the earth and
all that dwell therein.
Forgive us - and help us to always remember.

Side 2: We must remember because this must never happen again.
We must remember because you would have us live in harmony with
each other,
seeing the joy of your creation in our sisters and brothers.

Side 1: Holy God, God of all the ages,
lead us from death to life,
to the stockpiling of hope, and of possibilities, and of love
rather than the stockpiling of weapons, and of hate.

Side 2: We pray for the healing of the earth and of its peoples,
especially for our sisters and brothers
upon whom a nuclear rain poured down.

Together: Help us to imagine that another world is possible
and guide our actions towards the peace you envision,
the peace you have already given us.
In the name of the One who came so that we might
have life, and have it abundantly, we pray.

Adapted: Rev. Loey Powell, United Church of Christ

6. Litanies

a. *A Litany of Repentance*

Leader: For questioning the authority of Jesus’ teaching on the Cross, we ask:

Response: Lord, Lead us to repentance

Leader: For placing human standards above divine compassion, we pray:

Response: Lord, Lead us to repentance

Leader: For the moral blindness of our nuclear intention, we beg you:

Response: Lord, Lead us to repentance

Leader: For trusting in instruments of death to save us rather than in the power of the Living God, we beseech you:

Response: Lord, Lead us to repentance

Leader: For betraying Christ's love by allowing hunger and violence that claim lives daily, we implore you:

Response: Lord, Lead us to repentance

b. A Litany of remembrance

The response may be sung or said:



This is our cry, this is our prayer: peace in the world. This is our cry.

Leader: We remember the 300,000 people in Hiroshima and Nagasaki who died as a result of the atomic bombs: May they rest in peace.

**Response: This is our cry, this is our prayer: peace in the world.
This is our cry.**

Leader: We remember all those who died in the war with Japan, especially those who perished in the prisoner of war camps.

**Response: This is our cry, this is our prayer: peace in the world.
This is our cry.**

Leader: We remember those who gave their lives to help those suffering after the bomb and who died of radiation sickness. May their faithful

**Response: This is our cry, this is our prayer: peace in the world.
This is our cry.**

Leader: We remember those living in places of war and conflict today.

We pray that you would raise up more peacemakers within those countries and communities. And we ask that nonviolent solutions may be found to heal wounds, and to bring justice and lasting peace.

**Response: This is our cry, this is our prayer: peace in the world.
This is our cry.**

Leader: We remember those who were able to forgive the suffering inflicted on them by their enemies in war. We pray for the same greatness of heart.

**Response: This is our cry, this is our prayer: peace in the world.
This is our cry.**

Leader: We remember the peacemaker visionaries who have come before us, and we will give thanks for their witness and their commitment to life.

**Response: This is our cry, this is our prayer: peace in the world.
This is our cry.**

c. A Litany for peace

For supporting the manufacture of arms through the payment of taxes
Forgive us
 For the unrelieved suffering and hardship which money spent on arms could heal,
Forgive us
 For threatening to commit genocide by holding nuclear weapons as a deterrent,
Forgive us
 For half-heartedness in hearing, living and sharing the way of peace,
Forgive us
 For dividing the world into good and bad, and treating human beings as enemies and objects
 of hatred or scorn,
Forgive us.
 Let us pray that we may be set free from the chains of violence and nuclear death,
Deliver us
 from the desire for power,
Deliver us
 from the conspiracy of silence,
Deliver us
 from the worship of weapons,
Deliver us
 from the celebrations of killing,
Deliver us
 from peace that is no peace,
Deliver us
 from security that is no security,
Deliver us
 from the politics of terror,
Deliver us
 from the spiral of armaments,
Deliver us.

By hunger and thirst for justice,
Grant us peace
 by reconciliation of enemies,
Grant us peace
 by gentleness and nonviolence,
Grant us peace
 by the power of love,
Grant us peace.

d. For an end to nuclear weapons

Leader: Peaceful God,
 We come to you from the midst of a broken world where nations
 raise weapons against nations and mothers and children are the
 innocent victims of violence.

Response: **We cry out for peace!**

Leader: Wise God,
 Share your wisdom with the leaders of the world who continue to
 stockpile dangerous weapons, giving other countries the incentive to
 do the same, despite their commitment to the Nuclear-Non-
 Proliferation Treaty. We pray for the ability to overcome our
 brokenness, cooperating, instead of competing, across borders and
 boundaries.

Response: We cry out for peace!

Leader: Healing God,
So many communities have been left in ruins as a result of the destruction of war. We pray for the healing and rebuilding of communities torn apart by war and violence.

Response: We cry out for peace!

ALL: God, Father and Mother of this world, we pray that you would inspire us to create a peaceful world.
Help us call our leaders to accountability and to remind them that more weapons and war do not bring peace.
Make us a peaceful people in a peaceful world. Amen.

7. Readings

- a. *Psalm 33 v 10 -18*
- b. *Isaiah : 2:2-5*
- c. *Ephesians 2:14-22*
- d. *Romans 12:17-21*

8. Prayers

a. *Universal Prayer for Peace*

Lead me from death to Life, from falsehood to Truth,
Lead me from despair to Hope, from fear to Trust,
Lead me from hate to Love, from war to Peace,
Let Peace fill our heart, our world, our universe.

b. *Prayers using the Lord's Prayer (provided by CCND)*

"Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us."

We ask forgiveness for our nation's policy of nuclear deterrence, our reliance on weapons for our security and our neglect of the poor, by squandering resources on these weapons.

We ask forgiveness also for the failure to respond to international calls for disarmament and particularly this year, in unwillingness to engage with the Nuclear Weapons Ban Treaty negotiations at the United Nations.

In sorrow, we pray, "Our Father..."

"Hallowed be Thy Name."

We praise and thank You and rejoice in the beauty of Your creation, the potential of every human being and the love that surrounds us. In hope we pray for a successful outcome of the Nuclear Weapons Ban Treaty negotiations so that ultimately, earthly creation will not continue to be threatened by nuclear weapons.

In the joy and hope of the resurrection, we pray, "Our Father..."

"Thy Kingdom Come; Thy Will be done."

In praying that our nation may see and follow the way of true peace and trusting in you sufficiently to follow the nations of the earth towards disarmament, we open our hearts to the Holy Spirit so that we may be shown the way forward and strengthened in our resolve and actions.

In confidence, we pray, "Our Father..."

c. Prayer for courage and peace

We pray for the courage to respond to Jesus' call to live non-violently.

We pray for the courage and creativity to challenge the policies that oppose nuclear disarmament..

We pray for the courage to question and challenge those things which oppress our sisters and brothers – poverty, violence, indifference...

We celebrate and encourage those who work for peace, especially those who have attended the UN Nuclear Ban Treaty Negotiations.

We pray that we will root ourselves through prayer and reflection in the teaching of the nonviolent Jesus.

More about NCPO:

The Network of Christian Peace Organisations (NCPO) is a UK-based ecumenical network committed to peace as central to the meaning of church community. We are a broad group of organisations in the Christian peace tradition committed to furthering peace and encouraging our churches to support the peace movement.

Find out more at: www.ncpo.org.uk

NCPO Members:

- Anglican Pacifist Fellowship
- Baptist Peace Fellowship
- Campaign Against Arms Trade Christian Network
- Christian International Peace Service
- Christian Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament
- Christian Peacemaker Teams (UK)
- Church and Peace
- Clergy Against Nuclear Arms
- Community for Reconciliation
- Ekklesia
- Fellowship of Reconciliation
- Martin Luther King Peace Committee
- Methodist Peace Fellowship
- Northern Friends Peace Board
- Pax Christi
- Quaker Peace & Social Witness
- SPEAK
- Student Christian Movement
- Third Order of St Francis
- Unitarian Peace Fellowship
- United Reformed Church Peace Fellowship