

PEACE TALK



NC Peace Action
Fall/Winter 2017
Newsletter

ACCEPTANCE SPEECH BY MARY RIDER & PATRICK O'NEIL, 2017 NCPA PEACEMAKER AWARDEES

Thank you for honoring us tonight. Patrick, our daughter Bernadette, Sr. Kitty Bethea and I moved to Garner in 1991 to start the first Catholic Worker House in NC. Our dear friend, Father Charlie Mulholland, was in Garner at the time and was our Chaplain.

1991 was quite a while ago and a lot has happened in our lives, in our state and in the world since then. We are honored and humbled to have been working with you all on trying to bring some peace and some justice to our state and our world.

Those who know me well know that I am “prolife.” That doesn’t mean that I am out picketing at clinics. What it means is that I am pro-everybody’s life. I want to see the kind of supports in place in our society that will help a woman to choose not to have an abortion whether her child has a disability or the mother’s on her own and needs financial and loving support or help in finishing her education. As a feminist I believe women should receive equal pay for equal work, maternity leave that gives us real time with our newborns and good options for childcare and job sharing.

But that’s not all. I’m prolife on the death penalty. I was on the board of People of Faith Against the Death Penalty for a number of years and once spent 15 days in jail for kneeling in front of Central Prison the night the state of North Carolina executed Sammy Flippen in our names. That was the last time the state of North Carolina executed anyone in more than 10 years.

I’m prolife on immigration. I believe that people who are in the U.S. without benefit of papers should be given a chance to have legal standing in our country and a path to citizenship.

I’m prolife on healthcare. I believe it is a RIGHT not a privilege and everyone should have access to good health care.

And I’m prolife on peace which means I am opposed to nuclear war. I’m opposed to “conventional war” (whatever THAT means). I’m opposed to drone warfare. I’m just opposed to us killing each other, be it in the name of God or country or, if we want to be honest about it, in the name of oil and money and power.

So I stand her tonight pledging to you that I will continue to be prolife by opposing violence in all its forms: racist violence, sexist violence, LGBTQ violence, economic violence and environmental violence.

I hope that someone will say about me what Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. wanted people to say about him: “I’d like for somebody to say that day that (I) tried to love somebody. Yes, if you want to say that I was a drum major, say that I was a drum major for



Mary Rider, Patrick O'Neil & family, after receiving this year's Peacemaker Award from Anne Cassebaum.

justice. Say that I was a drum major for peace.”

In closing I’d like to read to you an easy essay written by Peter Maurin, a frenchman who founded the Catholic Worker with Dorothy Day. He gives some good advice as to what we are to do in times such as this.

Better Off by Peter Maurin

The world would be better off
if people tried to be better.

And people would become better
if they stopped trying to be better off.

For when everybody tries to become better off,
nobody is better off.

But when everybody tries to become better,
everybody is better off.

Everybody would be rich
if nobody tried to become richer.

And nobody would be poor
if everybody tried to be poorest.

And everybody would be what we ought to be
if everybody tried to be
what we want the other one to be!

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2017 PEACEMAKER AWARDS KEYNOTE SPEECH, REV. DR. RODNEY SADLER THOUGHTS ON PEACEMAKING: FOUR STEPS FOR THESE PERILOUS TIMES*

4. Fostering a Cleaner, Greener, Better World

I want to end by adding one other notion to this conversation. I think that at this time of



Rev. Dr. Sadler delivering the 2017 Peacemaker Awards keynote speech.

multiple crises we need to target our peacemaking activities on making a cleaner, greener, better world.

By cleaner world I mean working towards the elimination of carbon based

fossil fuels as our primary mode of energy production.

By greener world I mean fostering a shift to renewable energy sources like solar, And wind a hydro electric and geothermal that pose not threat of planetary pollution and no threat to the health of people.

But by better I mean that I don't want to save this world replete with its power imbalances, racism, poverty, and inequalities. No, this world should die and we should let it. In its place we should foster a better world where there is racial equality, democratized modes of energy production, shared prosperity, and the elimination of poverty through the proliferation of living wage jobs.

This is the kind of world that we should work towards; it is a fairer world, a just-er world, a better world... a world worthy of our collective striving.

And it is an attainable world, if we finally believe it can be so and live to make it so. We can have this world, if we work and will it into being...it will be! It is in our hands to make it so.

In this time of manifold crises it's time for peacemakers to work for a cleaner,

greener, better world. This is a vision around which we can all rally because it is about saving the planet and all of its people. Let us use this crisis as an opportunity, to realign our priorities, to engage in that spiritual renewal, and to remake our world into the just, fair, loving place it should be! Let those of us who are peacemakers work to address the climate emergency!

Why focus on the climate emergency? Because the climate emergency is perhaps the most obvious emergency that involves us all. If we lose our planet then literally none of the other issues about justice, equality, healthcare, education, or anything else will matter. The climate crisis that imperils our planet and all of its people is the least common denominator for all of humanity! All of our futures depend on us successfully addressing this.

As you start to think about addressing this problem let us do so from the perspective of a single table. This single table should be in inclusive table. It should include all people regardless of color, religion, language, nation of origin, or any other aspect of our identities. This conversation should engage our allies and our enemies, the climate protesters and the climate polluters, those who have been beneficiaries of the system and those who've been oppressed by it. We all have a space at this table and a role to play in the planet's redemption.

We need everyone at this table for a number of reasons.

The earth belongs to God, but each of us has an equal stake in our world. We cannot allow this problem to be solved by the wealthiest and whitest among us. We can't wait for someone else to step in and save us. We can't wait for the next Martin King, the

next Jack Kennedy, the next Rosa Parks, the next Barack Obama...If this truly is all of our world, then we all have a stake in what happens and we all have a responsibility to ensure that we work together to remake it.

The solution needs vision found in all of us. Each of us from our various perspectives and different vantages can give a little piece of the solution to this "world sized" problem. Perhaps if we'd all been at the table before, we would not be in the situation we are now in. But now, more than ever, we need to bring new thinking from a diversity of world views to this climate problem.

This is the work for peacemakers today.

- To foster Justice that makes for Peace,
- To work for a fusion vision of Justice,
- To do the spiritual work of reimagining our valuation of people and the planet,
- And to work together to make a cleaner, greener, better world.

Let me end with this quote from Dr. King. "Progress never rolls in on wheels of inevitability, but comes by the tireless effort and persistent work of those willing to be coworkers with God."

We've got some work to do! It's time that we join our work as peacemakers to God's Justice bringing, Love showing, people uplifting, planet redeeming work that we might help give birth to a better world!

**Rodney Sadler is Prof. of Biblical Literature and Interpretation at Union Presbyterian Seminar, Charlotte, NC. This is an excerpt of the keynote address at the 2017 Peacemaker Dinner. The complete essay is available online at www.ncpeaceaction.org.*

2017 CONFERENCE AGAINST THE USE OF DRONES IN WARFARE

The Conference Against the Use of Drones in Warfare (10/20-21) was organized by Prof. Amy Laura Hall of Duke Divinity School and co-sponsored by NC Peace Action. Speakers included: Murtaza Hus-sain, Journalist for *The Intercept*; Marjorie Cohn, Prof. Emerita at Thomas Jefferson School of Law; Pardiss Kebriaei, Center for Constitutional Rights; Kara Slade, Theologian and former aerospace engineer; Benjamin Friedman, George Washington School of International Affairs; and Lisa Ling, Veteran, U.S. Army.

Speakers' Notes

- The use of armed drones is uniquely pernicious because operators are off-site, away from casualties, without reflection on the human cost.
- It is very easy to make war with drones, relatively cheap, low risk, rarely newsworthy, and borderless. You can have a war and not even show up.
- Drones are promoted as unmanned but are actually multi-manned, when the number of people required to conduct a drone attack—computer operators, analysts, and others—are included.
- 80% of military drones are used by America and Israel. Pres. Bush used kidnap and torture; Pres. Obama relied on assassination by drone.
- The notion that the killing is justified because of imminent threat is judgment call. And, what defines an immediate threat is very vague.
- Drones buzzing overhead are terrorizing and many noncombatants are killed —“drones do not see children.”
- Drones are inaccurate. A 2014 review by *The Guardian* showed 1147 people killed when 41 people were the actual, not necessarily right, targets.
- A court case to prosecute the U.S. Government for the killing of civilians was judged not possible because classified information would be revealed.
- Since legal challenges have failed, we need a moral way to talk about constraints on executive power to conduct extra-judicial killings.
- The U.S. is currently making war in seven countries with armed drones while largely avoiding the costs. Reasons for this include the growth of military power, a belief that terrorists/jihadists inherently threaten national security, an increase in the power of the executive branch that lets the military do

what the military says they have to do, hunting terrorists has become a cause of terrorism, desire to hold down human costs of war, precision technology in targeting, and wanting to conduct warfare easily/cheaply.

- Underlying causes of insurgency are not being addressed—and real costs, financial and human, are difficult to evaluate.

Consequences

- Moral costs are important enough to end the program.
- Substantially more expensive (maybe 10 times) than seen on the surface.
- Extra-judicial killing has become normalized and entrenched.
- Drones foster chaos that destabilizes.
- Drone attacks create hatred of the U.S. which creates more terrorism.
- Secrecy prevents educated opinion regarding drones' effectiveness.

- Doesn't settle conflict; causes wider wars.
- Creates dangers for constitutional government—an unwillingness to think, and to see only “cheap.”

What To Do

- Make costs more evident and felt by the public.
- Find ways to make Congress struggle with and debate the drone program.
- Get rid of OCO (Overseas Contingency Operations) funding and the AUMF (Authorization to Use Military Force).
- Rebirth anti-war ideology.
- Audit the Pentagon.
- Educate about how militarism, racism, the environmental and economic crises are interconnected.
- Take weapons off of drones.
- Recognize that all terror—including drones—is wrong.
- Grant the request of Afghans that we not blow up their children.

AN ARMY CHAPLAIN RESIGNS IN PROTEST

April 12, 2016

MEMORANDUM FOR:
Commander-In-Chief
The White House

SUBJECT: Resignation in Protest

Dear Mr. President:

I hereby resign my commission as an Officer in the United States Army.

I resign because I refuse to support U.S. armed drone policy. The Executive Branch continues to claim the right to kill anyone, anywhere on earth, at any time, for secret reasons, based on secret evidence, in a secret process, undertaken by unidentified officials. I refuse to support this policy of unaccountable killing.

I resign because I refuse to support U.S. policy of preventive war, permanent military supremacy, and global power projection. The Executive Branch continues to claim extra-constitutional authority and impunity from international law. I refuse to support this policy of imperial overstretch.

I resign because I refuse to serve as an empire chaplain. I cannot reconcile these policies with my sworn duty to protect and defend America and our constitutional democracy or my covenantal commitment to the core principles of my religious faith. These principles include: justice, equity, and compassion in human relations; a free and responsible search for the truth; and the inherent worth and dignity of every person.

Respectfully submitted,
Christopher John Antal



2017 PEACEMAKER AWARDS: YOUNG PEACEMAKER CASEY WEBBER

Casey Webber received this year's young peacemaker award for providing anti-suicide support for veterans, advocating and training of non-violent methods in activist interventions, and for helping to create a non-profit model for Peace House in Washington, DC.

After graduating from Earlham College, Casey moved to Washington, DC, and became an active member of Occupy Freedom Plaza. Within the Occupy movement, it was known as Occupy of the Rules. Many of the active participants at Freedom Plaza had military or law enforcement backgrounds both active and retired. It was through these friendships Casey first became engaged in efforts to addressing veteran suicide rates which is really a

quest to provide adequate health care for our veterans.

Simultaneously, Casey became one of the people maintaining a 31-year vigil for peace and against nuclear proliferation outside the White House begun by William Thomas and continued by Concepcion Picciotto.

Currently, Casey lives in the oldest collective in Washington, DC which serves as a model for community engagement. He spends his time advocating and training for non-violent methods in activist interventions. A critical activity is providing high-quality child care enabling parents to work and attend training. Community engagement includes feeding the homeless.

WNC 4 PEACE PEACEMAKER AWARDS, DAY OF PEACE



L to R: Colin Neiburger, WNC 4 Peace; Rev. Amy Cantrell, Beloved Community; Anne Craig, Jewish Palestine Equalitarian Project; Rachael Bliss, NCPA board & WNC 4 Peace member.



Day of Peace doves were released at Pack Place in Asheville.