

# PAX CHRISTI AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND

KIA TAU TE RANGIMARIE KI A TAATOU KATOA / WORKING FOR PEACE FOR ALL EVERYWHERE

This month's news...

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Environmental Racism.

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21 Sept - 2nd October

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Declaration

*by Kevin McBride*

Remembering  
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75 years on.



Tēnā koutou katoa.

Many blessings to all readers this Season of Creation.

The picture that graces this edition of the Pax Christi Aotearoa newsletter comes from a collection of photos taken on my sabbatical in the US, in 2016/2017. This picture is especially poignant. The crosses you see amongst the trees and leaf litter mark the graves of the people who were born or sold into slavery in the American South.

The crosses are the only visible witness of their time in that little place. It is a picture that reflects the phrase 'cry of the earth, cry of the poor'; exploitation of peoples particularly of colour, to further the economic gains and wealth of others.

The questions I ask myself now are: how much have we (humanity) learnt about ourselves and others since the time slavery was the norm, to its abolition, through until today? Have we changed or are we no better?

I hope you enjoy this edition of the newsletter. May it be informative, may it deepen your perspective and allow new questions to bubble up. Above all, may it help towards making our world a better place for *all* humanity and *all* life.

*Bridget Crisp rsm*

# Reflecting on Environmental Racism

by Bridget Crisp rsm

The theme for the 2020 Season of Creation is 'Listen to the Cry of the Earth, the cry of the Poor'. This theme runs through Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si* and even earlier, Leonardo Boff's 1987 book *Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor*. Much of his theme can be summed up in two words 'Environmental Racism'.

Environmental Racism can be defined as 'any policy, practice or directive that differentially effects of disadvantages (where intended or unintended) individuals, groups or communities based on race'. \*A well-known example of this is the poisoning of thousands of people in the city of Flint, Michigan USA., a city whose residents are primarily African American and low-income. Only recently has local government admitted negligence and lack of care for the residents of Flint.

In our own backyard of Aotearoa one can argue that the location of powerline pylons within urban environments or aeroplane runway extensions as examples of major planning decisions, impact primarily on communities who are predominantly Māori or Pacific Island in demographic. Wealthy communities who set up protests against the construction of mobile phone towers, or roading have protest slogans like 'Not in my backyard'. With enough noise, and prominent people supporting them they celebrate the success of halting such decisions. However, in forcing the halt but not offering alternatives that benefit all, companies and councils will then move to communities that offer the least resistance or the capital to set up their own protests.

The colonial history of our region, the Pacific,

is also littered with examples of environmental racism from the time of the first colonists that set foot on any land throughout the Pacific and Aotearoa New Zealand through to the choices of states who reigned supreme in nuclear weaponry to test their weapons in various locations around the Pacific Ocean.

During the Season of Creation, we are asked to reflect on 'the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor'. "Poor" encompasses more than materially deprived. "Poor" includes the spirit. The preservation and care of land links to our own identity. It gives a sense of home. What happens when you have lost your home? Can you hear the cry? The cry of despair and utter loss? The land that is poisoned by chemicals dumped in rivers, seas, or coastlines. The forest that is clear-felled. The land lost due to coastal erosion linked to climate change. Can you hear the cry?

*\*Quote from Robert Bullard, in book *Dumping in Dixie*, used in article 'The Complicated History of Environmental Racism by Victoria Peña -Parr (August 4, 2020).on The University of New Mexico website for their Racism: An Educational Series. <http://news.unm.edu/news/the-complicated-history-of-environmental-racism>*





# The Anglican Communion Calling out Environmental Racism

More than 60 Bishops and Archbishops of the Anglican Communion, including here in Aotearoa New Zealand, have signed an environmental racism statement that highlights the impact of climate change and environmental destruction on black and indigenous people lives. The statement was an initiative of the Anglican Communion Environmental Network (ACEN) and was released on the 19th June 2020 to coincide with the 'Juneteenth' – the annual commemoration day that marks the end of slavery in the USA.

The statement is as follows:

## **Environmental Racism - When #Blacklives Don't Matter.**

Black lives are disproportionately affected by police brutality; COVID-19 sweeps through crowded vulnerable communities unable to socially distance; toxic dump sites are placed next to poor communities of Black people; indigenous people are forced off their land.

The world is slow to respond to climate change, hanging on to an increasingly precarious and unjust economic system. It is predominantly Black lives that are being impacted by drought, flooding, storms and sea level rise. The delayed global response to climate injustice gives the impression that #blacklivesdontmatter.

Without urgent action Black lives will continue to be the most impacted, being dispossessed from their lands and becoming climate refugees.

We stand at a Kairos moment - in order to fight environmental injustice, we must also fight racial injustice. In the words of Archbishop Tutu, "If you are neutral in times of injustice you have chosen the side of the oppressor."

The Anglican Communion Environmental Network (ACEN) calls attention to environmental racism. We issue this urgent statement today, June 19 2020, a day known as Juneteenth in the United States, marking and remembering the official end of slavery in that country in 1865.

We call attention in particular to the impact of environmental racism on indigenous peoples decimated by the effects of colonization. Tribes of people were enslaved and annihilated by harsh conditions and by diseases for which they had no immunity in the first decades of colonization. Later

indigenous groups such as the Taíno in what is now Haiti and the Dominican Republic were replaced by enslaved peoples from Africa.

From the Gwich'in in the Arctic Circle to the many tribes in the Amazon River Basin, indigenous people continue to be subjected to intense, sustained racism.

Unjust economic structures and extractive industries subject indigenous peoples and traditional Black communities to forced, violent removal from lands with which they have been integrally connected for centuries.

Prominent indigenous leaders - defenders of the land - from tribes such as the Guarani in Brazil, have been murdered and tribes terrorized.

For example in Panama, the Guna and Embera were granted land rights under the Comarcas (Reservation). However, land grabbers - non indigenous farmers - seize this land for their own farms, leading to escalating levels of violence from house burnings to murders.

ACEN also witnesses the growing and alarming rise in the number of people becoming refugees due to climate change. It is estimated that there are 40 million climate refugees in the world today, and by 2050 that number could reach one billion. Communities are being forced from their traditional lands due to drought and sea level rise. Climate change can lead to increased conflict as farming communities are forced off their land into cities.

In Central America thousands of indigenous people have been made climate refugees. Upon reaching the United States, they are often subjected to double discrimination, firstly for being refugees and then as people whose first language is a tribal language rather than Spanish.

Pacific Islanders in places such as Tonga and Fiji face the destruction of their homes and cultures due to sea level rise.

Even in the midst of the wealthiest countries Black people bear the brunt of environmental racism. Dumpsites for toxic chemicals are situated near poorer Black communities. These communities become food deserts - lacking both access to nutritious food and safe water.

Take action for climate justice to show #blacklivesmatter  
June 19, 2020

Source:

[https://www.anglicantaonga.org.nz/news/the\\_communion/blm\\_enviro](https://www.anglicantaonga.org.nz/news/the_communion/blm_enviro)

## Getting involved with the Issue of Environmental Racism

In face of this issue, what might acting justly ask of us as individuals, schools, churches, organisations?

- We can ask what we know about the mana whenua of our area, that is, the hapū and iwi with long-established relationships with the land on which we stand. Putting “mana whenua”, the name of the area where you live as well as the word ‘environmental racism’ into an internet search can be a start.
- We can ask what our schools, churches or organisations are doing to strengthen relationships with the mana whenua or local marae.
- we can begin conversations with our families, friends and colleagues about the symbols and effects of colonisation that are associated with the environment and mana whenua. We can discuss how our communities might establish respectful and mutually-beneficial relationships with the mana whenua and the land itself.

*Adapted from suggestions Susan Healy included in her article 'Symbols of Injustice.', in Tui Motu Interislands Issue 251 August 2020. Used with permission of the author.*

## Social Justice Week 6 - 12 September

The theme for Caritas’ Social Justice Week that ran from 6 – 12 September is based on Catholic Social Teaching with the title ‘Enduring Principles in a time of Challenge and Change’. During this challenging time of living in the reality of a global pandemic, we are reminded that Catholic Social Teaching principles are grounded in core Gospel values of love, peace, justice, and compassion.

We are invited beyond social justice week to remind ourselves of Catholic Social Teaching principles by rereading them and reflecting on how important they are for getting us through this pandemic. With the general election coming up, reflecting on Catholic Social Teaching principles will help us make that choice at the ballot box.

Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand website ([www.caritas.org.nz](http://www.caritas.org.nz)) has a richness of resources on the principles to help you in your personal reflection.

Source & Image: [www.caritas.org.nz](http://www.caritas.org.nz)





# The David Wakim Memorial Lecture 2020



John Minto

## Telling Lies about Palestine

Many lies are told about Palestine by pro-Israeli lobby groups. John will talk about these and how claims of anti-semitism are used to deflect criticism of the Israel's brutal military occupation of Palestinian land and the blockade of Gaza.

John will also talk about the future direction and way forward for the Palestine Solidarity Movement.

John Minto is a political activist, who is well known for taking a leading role in the anti-apartheid movement and the Springbok tour protests in New Zealand in 1981. He is involved in many social justice campaigns. Currently, John is the convener of the Christchurch Progressive Network and the National Chair of the Palestine Solidarity Network Aotearoa.

*The Memorial Lecture commemorates the life and work of David Wakim, first national president of Pax Christi Aotearoa New Zealand who died on the 2nd October 2005.*

**St Columba  
Centre**

40 Vermont St  
Ponsonby  
Auckland

**7pm**

**Thursday 8th  
October**

A koha towards costs  
will be appreciated.

ph 09 3775541 or 021729944



## Catholic Non-Violence Days of Action

21 September – 2nd October

Pax Christi International, through the Catholic Nonviolence Initiative are encouraging actions of solidarity to promote and celebrate nonviolence between the International Day of Peace (21 September) and International Day of Nonviolence & Gandhi's Birthday (2nd October). The hope is that this could be an annual event, aligning within the Season of Creation.

On the Pax Christi International website (<https://paxchristi.net/2020/07/06/catholic-nonviolence-days-of-action/>) are a range of tools and resources that can be easily adapted to suit your own communities need. They are:

- Active nonviolence: Our way of life in the Church and the world, a preparatory document and questionnaire.
- Making a vow of nonviolence.
- A Framework to celebrate nonviolence.

Go to the Pax Christi International website for more information and to download resources.

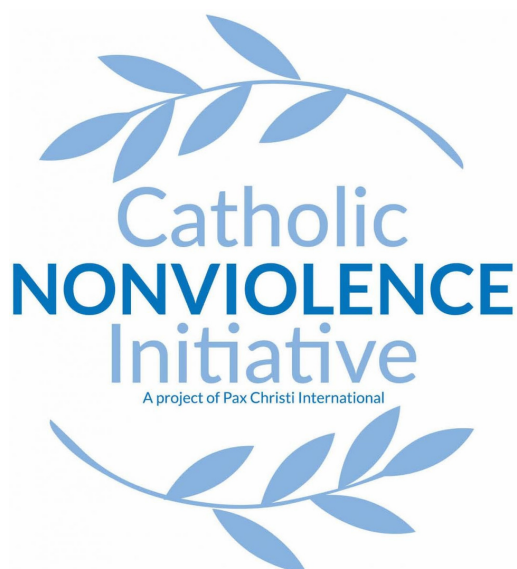


Image: paxchristi.net

## The Forgotten Declaration

by Kevin McBride

For most of my life, I had good reason to remember 28 October: it was my mother's birthday. But it wasn't until I was well into my teaching career that I found out that like the United States and several other nations, New Zealand has its own Declaration of Independence. By then, I had studied history at high school and done a stage or two of history studies at university. But at that time, the focus was on European, British and post-colonial New Zealand's history, so I knew a lot about the Renaissance and Reformation in Europe and something of the "discovering" voyages of Magellan, Columbus and Cook, but little if anything about our own colonisation period. When mentioned, even the voyaging of Maori and other Pacific peoples was typically compared to the Atlantic exploration of the Vikings rather than in its own physical and spiritual context.

It was only when I became involved with "Treaty education" in the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace, that I became aware of the Declaration, a forerunner to the Treaty, or Te Tiriti o Waitangi, which had brought the signatory tribes together and later, to sign Te Tiriti.

What I did know of the Treaty of Waitangi, was based on the inaccurate "English" translation, in which Maori ceded all rights of sovereignty over "their respective territories" to Her Majesty, the Queen of England. It was many years later that I became aware that a new word, Kawanatanga, had been coined to denote "governance", first in a Declaration of

# The Forgotten Declaration cont...

Independence, and later in Te Tiriti. In the Maori view, this denotes a limited form of authority created mainly for the purpose of allowing the Queen to control her own lawless people in the lands of the Confederation of the United Tribes of Nu Tirani (New Zealand).

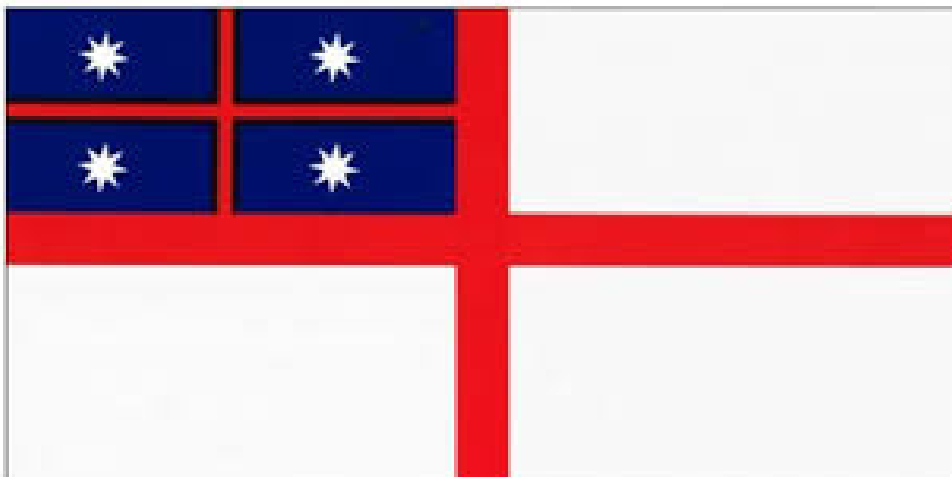
As part of growing British involvement in trade in timber and flax with Maori, the Crown appointed a Resident, James Busby, in 1833, to look after British interests. When he became aware of the possibility of greater French and United States interests in the country, Busby persuaded some northern tribes involved in trade to form a Confederation of United Tribes of New Zealand, and on 28 October 1835, 35 chiefs, from North Cape to the Firth of Thames, signed a Declaration of Independence, He Wakaputanga o te Rangatiratanga o Nu Tirenī, comprising four articles which declared for Maori the independence of their country, claimed that all sovereignty within the territories “to reside entirely and exclusively in the hereditary chiefs and tribes in their collective capacity”, agreed to meet at

Waitangi each year “for the purpose of framing laws for the dispensation of justice, the preservation of peace and good order, and the regulation of trade” and asked the King to “continue to be the parent of their infant state” and “its protector from all attempts upon its independence.”

This document, which was later sent around the country and signed by more chiefs, some from the South Island, was not a preparation for the Treaty of Waitangi, acted as a “hands-off notice to French rivals, was recognised by the British Crown and made good economic and political sense in its own right.

In effect, the above are good reasons for recognising the 28 October Declaration as the true foundation of the New Zealand’s (or Nu Tirani’s) role among the family of nations. There is reason to give it equal, if not greater status than the 5 February Treaty, which could be seen as an extension of the Declaration to allow for greater Crown responsibility to control the growing number of their citizens settling in Maori land.

It should certainly not be consigned to the “lost in transit” status it suffers today.







**Remembering  
Hiroshima & Nagasaki  
75 years on...**

On the 9th of August, Pax Christi organised a prayer ritual to remember the bombings that happened on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, 75 years ago. During this prayer ritual, we also paused to make origami paper cranes in remembrance of Sadako Sasaki who managed to fold more than 1000 paper cranes before her death, aged 12 from leukaemia as a direct result of the radiation of the Hiroshima Bomb. Following the ritual, some of us stayed to watch the live streaming of the film: "The vow from Hiroshima" that was available free for a short time from iCANw.



Photos: B Crisp

Bridget Crisp is willing to come to groups and share background on Hiroshima, Nagasaki and the call to peace and to lead a reflective liturgy. Contact the Pax Christi office for further information.



## DIARY DATES

Sept 1st -	Season of Creation
Oct 4th	
Sept 19th	Suffrage Day (NZ) 127 years!
Sept 21st	International Day of Peace
Sept 26th	World Day Against Trafficking of Humans
Oct 8th	David Wakim Lecture, given by John Minto
Oct 28th	Signing of NZ Declaration of Independence
Nov 5th	Parihaka Day

Peace Movement Aotearoa is hosting a webinar.

### **Election 2020: Disarmament Policies and Priorities.**

The launch begins 1.30pm on Thursday 24th September. Check out [www.converge.org.nz/pma](http://www.converge.org.nz/pma)



## PAX CHRISTI AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND

Pax Christi is an independent Catholic social justice organisation. We work hard to address issues of peace and justice at a local, regional and global level.

If you want to know more about Pax Christi, to join meetings, or to set up group meetings in your area, please contact [paxchristiaotearoa@gmail.com](mailto:paxchristiaotearoa@gmail.com) or ring 09 377 5541 / 021 729944

Pax Christi relies on volunteers & donations to enable the work to continue.

To make an online donation our a/c name and number is: Pax Christi Aotearoa New Zealand 03-01730353-867-00  
Please contact us for a receipt.  
Your support is greatly appreciated.

*Editor: B Crisp rsm Promoter/Manager Pax Christi Aotearoa New Zealand*

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