



# Pax Scotia

## Issue 33

### Contents:

Page 2: SCANA - working together for a nuclear-free world

Page 3: Sarah Augustine on the shocking effects of mineral extraction

Page 4: Pax Christi Scotland - event links and information

## The Power of Small

### The mustard seed theory

*What shall we say the kingdom of God is like? What parable will we use to explain it?*

*It is like this. A man takes a mustard seed, the smallest seed in the world and plants it in the ground.*

*After a while it grows up and becomes the biggest of all plants. Mark 4:30,31*

I have always loved Jesus' parable of the mustard seed. I love the idea that small actions and so-called 'small' people can achieve great things, particularly when working together. In my previous congregation in Cranhill in Glasgow we commissioned a new stained glass window showing the birds nesting in the branches, and the roots deep in Christ. We talked a lot about 'the power of small'.

Here in my newish post in Tiberias by the Sea of Galilee I've come to understand the power of the parable in new ways. For the thing about the mustard seed, tiny as it is, is that it spreads absolutely rampantly. Not to put too fine a point on it: it is a weed!

On every road side verge, in every disturbed soil, even forcing through concrete, there is the distinctive acid yellow plant. An abundance of it! If you take a few flowerheads in your finger and rub out the seed and taste it that unique mustard taste nips your tongue.

Cranhill Church congregation recently united with a neighbouring congregation. In the last service conducted in front of the stained glass mustard tree Rev Dr Martin Johnstone quoted Milton Schwantes, a Brazilian theologian. When Martin asked him what the church in South America might teach the church in Scotland he said he didn't know. But he knew this, 'The kingdom of God is like grass,' he said, 'but the problem is that the Church always wants to plant trees.'

*Rev Muriel Pearson  
Church of Scotland Mission  
Partner  
St Andrew's Church of  
Scotland, Jerusalem and  
Tiberias*

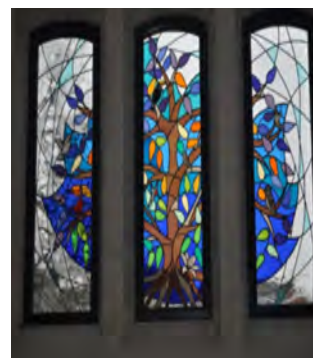


In the face of enormous problems on a global scale, with at least four wars immanent or already here and the nuclear clock set closer to midnight than ever before, grand solutions are not in evidence.

***Instead, ordinary people are using their individual power for good, holding to non-violence, developing friendships across boundaries, working with others to improve life in their community.***

For those with eyes to see, there are small signs of the kingdom everywhere you look. That small action, or prayer or smile or act of justice puts down roots in the unlikeliest of soils and then flowers and seeds and begins again. And when those actions proliferate there is a sea of acid yellow as far as the eye can see. Thanks be to God!

*Muriel Pearson*



The Mustard Tree Cranhill, Glasgow

Wildflowers in the Golan Heights, with the mustard seed glowing yellow. Photographs by Muriel Pearson



*Pax Christi Scotland believes that working with like-minded organisations is the way forward if we are to make progress on peace issues, which of course include the nuclear-free world for which Scottish Catholic Bishops have advocated since 1982. We work with Don't Bank On The Bomb, and recently we have met with members of organisations seeking to re-invigorate SCANA - Scottish Christians Against Nuclear Arms. Founding members of SCANA, David McLachlan and John Harvey, here explain the past & present of SCANA, & future hopes.*



## Putting Christians on Nuclear High Alert

*The Rev Dr John Harvey is a retired Church of Scotland parish minister and a former leader of the Iona Community. Rev David McLachlan, formerly minister of Glasgow's Langside Parish Church, has also long campaigned on the nuclear issue.*



Since 1985 the Church of Scotland has consistently opposed the possession and threatened use of nuclear weapons. Now all mainstream churches in Scotland are united in saying the same thing.

CLERGY ACTION was started shortly after that, as a way for a group of ministers to organise practical action and protest to follow up the rhetoric. It was thought helpful to have a group within the myriad of peace groups which emphasised the faith element of the opposition. Eventually the name changed to SCANA (Scottish Clergy Against Nuclear Arms) in 2007 and finally (to emphasise that our membership and activities should not be limited to ordained folk), the more inclusive "Scottish Christians Against Nuclear Arms" was adopted in 2014.

We were on the steering group of Faslane 365 – the year-long blockade of the base in 2005 – and the nationwide Scrap Trident Postcard Campaign of 2010. We then organised annual SCANA Witness for Peace events at Faslane on Easter or Pentecost.

Over the years we have organised marches, all-night Vigils, picnics, Communion Services, Faslane blockades, public debates, articles and leaflets, letters to the press, lobbied MPs and MSPs and the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, liaised with Nicola Sturgeon and the SNP, the Labour Party, the Greens and the Liberal Democrats, produced worship resources, and worked together with other peace groups such as Catholic Justice and Peace, Scotland's for Peace, Trident Ploughshares, SCND, the Iona Community, Greenpeace, etc..

During the Independence campaign of 2013/14, we organised a weekly demonstration in the middle of Sauchiehall Street in central Glasgow for many months, to draw attention to the presence of weapons of mass destruction in the Firth of Clyde. As well as highlighting this issue, the response of some of the public to our demo brought home to us how low down the scale of many people's priorities this issue actually now was.



Rev David McLachlan (L) & Rev John Harvey (R)

*For example, three young men stopped to speak to us one day, and asked why we were demonstrating against chewing gum (Trident apparently being the trade name for a brand of chewing gum!). They weren't aware of weapons of mass destruction on their doorstep.*

Our annual Witness for Peace events at Faslane have been quite well supported over the years, with church leaders and politicians often joining in. On a number of occasions, members of SCANA took part in sit-down blockades there, and were arrested (and on at least one occasion received a jail sentence for refusing to pay a fine for "breach of the peace"). Covid interrupted these events, but we are holding one this year on **June 24th, from 12.0 to 1.0 pm, and everyone is invited.**

*Meanwhile, we are looking forward to the next phase of our work, and are pleased to be linking up with Pax Christi, as we try to alert Scottish Christians to this crucial issue.*

We recently ran a morning seminar on Zoom with Alastair McIntosh, who gave us food for thought as to our way ahead and we hope to run another seminar soon.

*John Harvey*

*David McLachlan*



# Joining in Prayer to Preserve Sacred Lands - part of our peace mission

*Sarah Augustine is the cofounder and executive director of the Coalition to Dismantle the Doctrine of Discovery. She is also executive director of the Dispute Resolution of Yakima and Kittitas Counties in the US State of Washington. These counties were named for Native American tribes and the lands of those tribes are now threatened by plans to extract copper. Pax Christi Scotland added its name to a letter seeking to halt those plans. Here, Sarah explains the situation.*

On March 21, The Apache Stronghold's case challenging Resolution Copper was heard in the 9th circuit court of appeals in Pasadena, CA. The Apache Stronghold argued that allowing the destruction of their traditional territory by a copper mining company is a violation of their right to religious freedom. The Apache legal case asks that the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA) be used for its original, good purpose: to protect their religious freedom.

They are standing in defence of Oak Flat, their traditional place of worship that has been scheduled to be decimated by the largest copper mine in US history. Oak Flat (Chíich'il Bit Dagoteel) is a "blessed place" where Ga'an — guardians or messengers between the people and Usen, the creator, dwell. Apache have lived on, worshipped on and cared for this site since before recorded history.

The traditional Apache homeland included a vast region stretching from what is now central Arizona to central Texas, and from northern Mexico to the high plains of southeastern Colorado. When the U.S. government established the San Carlos Indian Reservation in 1871 to hold members of many Apache groups, the Apache did not cede their territories and were guaranteed the right to worship at Oak Flat. The Apache have continued to care for Oak Flat and worship there even though it was designated federal land, part of the Tonto national forest, in the 1950s. The waters of this sacred land, and many traditional plants the people gather, are healing. Oak Flat is a sacred site to many Indigenous Peoples, including the Yavapai, O'odham, the Hopi, and Zuni.

In December 2014, a rider attached to a defense appropriation bill authorised the US to trade forest land for parcels of private land owned by Resolution Copper, which is owned by mining companies Rio Tinto and BHP. The Southeast Arizona Land Exchange and Conservation Act authorised the transfer of 2,400 acres of Tonto National Forest land to Resolution Copper. This transfer is a desecration of one of the Apache people's holiest sites as well as one of Arizona's rare riparian (riverbank) zones.



**Sara Augustine, a Puebla descendant, explains the effects of planned extraction**

## Violating Religious Freedom

***To obtain copper ore, Resolution Copper will use a method known as block cave mining which will collapse the ground under Oak Flat, leaving a crater 1,000 feet deep and two miles across. The proposed mine would use over 3 billion gallons of water from the Colorado River, destroying the fragile underground water channels and aquifers in the Arizona desert.***

Because the land transfer was made by an act of congress in 2014, the process to transfer this sacred land to Resolution Copper is ongoing. In recent weeks, we have flooded President Biden's administration with urgent requests to halt the process pending the court's decision. The transfer could take place as soon as this summer (2023). We hope the court process will find in favour of the rights of the Stronghold Apache to worship at Oak Flat, establishing that the transfer violates their rights to religious freedom.

While we wait for the decision of the court, we ask for Christians around the world to stand with the Stronghold Apache in prayer for the preservation of this sacred, healing land.

*Sarah Augustine*

## Our website

Blogs, podcasts, past and future events – these are all on our Pax Christi Scotland website. All newsletters are archived there. You can pay your annual membership fee on the Membership page and make donations. Please explore and share:

<https://www.paxchristiscotland.org>

Continued thanks to webmaster Chris Boles of Caledonian Websites:

<https://www.caledonianwebsites.com/>

## Membership Reminder

**Easiest method? Pay on the membership page of our website.**

If you pay by online banking, please give your name to identify your payment.

If you wish to pay by cheque, send to the address below, cheques payable to Pax Christi Scotland.

You can also make regular donations on our 'donate' page - thank you.

Membership fees are £10 for waged, £5 for unwaged.

Explore the website for all our activities:

<https://www.paxchristiscotland.org>

## Where to find Pax Christi Scotland:

<http://www.paxchristiscotland.org>

[https://www.facebook.com/](https://www.facebook.com/PaxChristiScotland)

[PaxChristiScotland](#)

[@PaxScotland](#)

Snail mail:

Pax Christi Scotland

c/o Xaverian Missionaries

Calder Avenue

Coatbridge ML5 4JS

## YouTube Channel

You can find recordings of all our events at:

<https://www.youtube.com/>

[@paxchristiscotland](#)

Click on the word 'Subscribed' and you will be informed whenever a new recording is posted.

Pax Scotia April-May 2023 Issue 33

# The Holy Land: Seeking a Nonviolent Future

The Holy Land is embedded in the DNA of Jews, Moslems and Christians. To visit the Holy Land is the ultimate pilgrimage - but the on-going political situation denies many of us that opportunity.

On Page 1, Rev Muriel Pearson suggests that peace can only come if we work together from small beginnings.

Pax Christi International's Nonviolence Initiative has worked to promote nonviolence worldwide since the Nonviolence and Just Peace Conference held in Rome in April 2016, working in solidarity with lay people, theologians, members of religious congregations, priests and bishops from Africa, the Americas, Asia, Europe, Oceania - and of course, the Middle East.

To achieve a nonviolent future in the Holy Land may seem right now to require a miracle, but the situation there cannot be ignored, cannot be swept under the carpet.

Muriel Pearson and other experts will join us online for an event to learn about and discuss Israel, Palestine, and how we can respond. Please put the date in your diaries - there will be more details soon.

We look forward to sharing this time: **June 22, 2023 19:00 UK time:**

**Register in advance for this meeting:**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/join/register/tZErF-yqqDksGtXy2SQZicnH8iuKhVQgRXz3>

**After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.**

and the link to the event



Pax Christi Scotland has been active in seeking justice for Colombia for some time, monitoring the work that Police Scotland has been involved in there training police officers.

Our fears initially were that the previous Colombian government would use this contract to tick boxes on issues of human rights - a similar situation to that in Sri Lanka where continued police violence and abuses of human rights eventually ended the Police Scotland involvement after Pax Christi Scotland, MSPs and other organisations intervened.

The new regime in Colombia promised big changes. We continue to meet with Police Scotland to ensure those changes are achieved. We are supported by Martha Inés Romero, Pax Christi International's Secretary General & a Colombian.

Now there is an initiative by Justice for Colombia to create a support network in Scotland. We are all invited to the inaugural meeting - can you join us? Martha is to send a video message for the meeting, which will be at:

**UNITE Scotland's offices**

**John Smith House, 145-165 W Regent St, Glasgow G2 4RZ  
25th of May at 7pm**