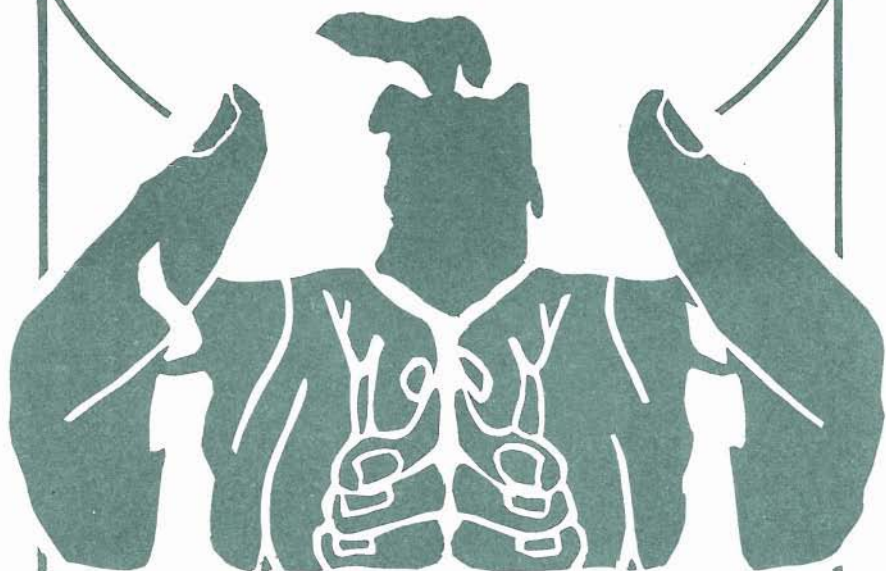


Voices Speaking PEACE

Anthology of poems & prayers by Unitarians



VOICES SPEAKING PEACE

an anthology of poems, prayers, songs and meditations on the theme of peace, written by Unitarians.

Compiled by Elizabeth Birtles.

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PREFACE

VOICES SPEAKING PEACE : some are strong, insistent, angry, some are despairing, some are quiet, confident and hopeful. Young voices, old voices: some have long felt themselves to be crying in the wilderness and some are only now beginning to shape their thoughts into words. Some voices are reflective and fall gently upon the ear, and others are more difficult to listen to. All are voices speaking peace.

This is an anthology of poems, prayers, songs and meditations on the theme of peace, written by Unitarians.

In compiling this anthology I have aimed for variety and broad appeal. There are poems about personal peace, about peace and the environment, about peace-making in the world, about remembering past wars and past peace events, and there are prayers which touch on all aspects of peace.

This book is offered in the hope that you will find here words which speak to you, words which fire your imagination and nurture you, and which perhaps you will be able to use in worship.

There are a number of places within these pages where I would have preferred to degenderize the language. I have not done so because it would have altered the voice. This leaves with you the possibility of making the language more inclusive.

May you find here words for your voice to speak, to sing, to pray.

Elizabeth Birtles
March 1990

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The book began more than three years ago following the International Year of Peace. The idea for the book arose from work to extend Unitarian witness for peace. A number of people expressed the need for material to strengthen individuals in their personal search for peace, and for material to use in worship.

The publication of **VOICES SPEAKING PEACE** has been paid for by forty four people who made pledges during 1986 to extend Unitarian work for peace: and to these people we give thanks, for without their pledges the book may not have been born. Profit from the sale of the book will go to the Unitarian Peace Fellowship to extend further the witness for peace.

I would like to express my gratitude to those who responded to the appeal for material, and I am grateful to those whose pieces have not been included.

I would like to give my personal thanks to those who have helped me during the years of the book's growth: in particular, I thank Joy Croft, Noreen Daniel, Lyanne Mitchell and Evelyn Ryder for all their support and encouragement.

I also thank Kath Ryder for her hard work in typing all the pieces, Fred Ryder for his proof reading, Rebecca Ford for allowing her design to be used on the cover, Lyanne Mitchell for her graphic design, the members of the Unitarian Peace Fellowship committee for their patience and Quick Red Litho (Swindon) for their co-operation.

Elizabeth Birtles
March 1990

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inner peace



MEDITATION WITHIN PEACE FOR EVERYONE

World peace dwells only in the human heart
Establish world peace by daily meditation.

I have a peaceful place for meditation;
it is my heart centered on thought of God.

I have time for meditation, morning to night,
when I live in realisation of Eternal Reality.

I confess and repent of my shortcomings to
re-align my life to Divine Peace.

I maintain world peace within my SELF.

Marjorie Easton

Peace is not absence of war,
peace is so much more;
peace comes from the inner being,
touching, knowing, seeing.
There is only one way peace can be taught
and that is living as we ought,
with peace in every word we say -
in all we do, come what may.

Jill Arthur

FOR A FRIEND

In the maze of the mind's whirling horror,
In the deep drained dryness of my soul,
I cry out for a response
"Why hast thou forsaken me?"

I, who can love, have no love left.
I, who can weep, can only scream dry tears.
I, who can share, have nothing to give.
Those about me, in bewilderment, ask for more
and still more.
God of the spirit's deep places,
Whose presence is in the darkest night,
I am alone,
Help me.
I am empty and in sad doubt.
I am destroying myself.
Hold me.

And in that holding comes, at last, my prayer,
For my craving blots out the quietness within.
My anger breaks the links of the spirit,
God is not in the tumult of my feelings,
But God is still there.
Beyond exhaustion, in the embrace of peace,
In the still small voice of healing
God is there, waiting within me.

O God help me to let go the desperate search
for you so that I may be with you.

Eila Forrester

THE BUTTERFLY OF PEACE

Peace is an elusive thing.
It's like a butterfly;
It flutters by,
 Is here - then gone.

Peace at times we truly find.
We seek to hold it fast
But it's soon passed;
 Was here - then gone ...

Butterflies would lose their charm
If long time still they stayed.
Not so they're made;
 But here - then gone ...

Peace too we appreciate
The most when found between
Our times of strain.
 Now here - then gone ...

Peace for me? Yes, on this earth
I'll glimpse from time to time
Something sublime,
 Now here - then gone.

Ann Gabell.

TIGGER

Purring cat
Automatic throaty sign of pleasure
Stretching and spreading her padded paws
Asking - begging for response
Like arousal
or a blush.
Audibly vulnerable.

Visual communicator
Trained to lay ideas so swiftly, on the line
Up-front for inspection
Presented on a pretty paper plate
to be devoured or sent back to the kitchen.
Professionally vulnerable.

And more and more
I hesitate to take my feelings out for you
to casually accept or playfully shun.
Forgive me - I am weary
And no response hurts most of all
while I hunger for your words.
Emotionally vulnerable.

What relief

No human purring power built in
Exposing - laying bare response!
And yet, imagine

Relating to our world, like Tigger
Secure - rejection free
Innocent with trust
Unable to conceal our love.

Lyanne Mitchell

THE WELL-TEMPERED CLAVICHORD

That shiver down the spine
May come on a mountain
Or in a back yard.
Unpredictably,
Fragmented spectrum bands
Of evanescent day
Gather into stillness
And merge in white light
Of disturbing serenity,
At once near and remote,
Intensely calm,
Awakening reverence and rejoicing
At the virginity, eternal novelty,
Unfathomable depth
And immeasurable breadth
Of the moment.

As if a mirage in the desert
Drew near and stood firm -
As if a raucous orchestra, ceasing,
Gave way to the still small voice
Of a well-tempered clavichord
Whispering plain expositions,
Clear-cut and crystalline,
Of ultimate pattern,
Affirming that polyphony
And harmony are true,
Our many voices blending
And tending to one end
With the incontrovertible logic
Of a fugue.

Henry Compton

It is all too complex to cope with
In our small fragile brains
Politics, economics, physics and ethics:
Somehow the jigsaw rarely fits.

5 a.m., nearly day,
And the sky is yawning, cloudy,
Wondering whether
To send a smile our way.

I sink back into the pillow and try to sleep.
You can't put the world right in a day, I say
To myself.
But I can begin anew, always anew.
Counting my husband's breaths as he sleeps,
so deep,

I let go and drift off.
Something soothes
And beautifully breathes
New hope into my heart.

I put a hand on his shoulder
As he lies there, where who knows?
Then return my gaze to the window
To see the dawn has decided to smile.

Helen Eadie.

REUBEN

Late again -
I should have set off earlier.
Why are traffic lights always red when I'm in a hurry?
That's better - find a parking space - pick up my mat
Queue at the ticket office - run up stairs
Open door quietly
Slip in - unroll mat - lie down.
O bother - forgot to post the letters
Have I got the shopping list?
Leave it -
Bring back the scattered thoughts
Take a deep breath and let go.
Sink into the mat
Relax the body, let mother earth bear the weight,
Trust as a child.
Breathe in peace, breathe out tension.
Let the worries wait.
Heartbeat slows, breath lengthens;
At home in myself.
Wholeness -
Peace.

Ann Arthur

Old man seated in the bar;
the stool, the mug with ancient usage
claimed his own for all his span.
Content he is in his fashion,
wanderer in a lost world
treading, in thought, the old ways,
respect his due by right of years
after the country way of things.
Serenity he has by right of toil,
and he, smiling, holds his head awry
to catch a random phrase - a name
linking the past he knew
to this, an alien world.
Little of his strength remains -
no monument to any craft.
Hired hand was he throughout his life
and ninety winters took their toll;
Yet still the eye is bright -
a window on a simple faith.
Captured there's the unclouded blue
of ninety summer skies
and in the heart - peace.

Archer Green

PEACE PENTECOST 1987

When the screaming jets rip apart the sky,
When the bombers roar over your head,
Do not let fear enter your heart:
Reach out.

When men spend millions
on making metal machines to kill,
When men revel in playing soldiers' games,
Do not let anger grip your heart:
Reach out.

Reach out to the quiet rooted in your soul.
Reach out and carry with you
the image of wildflowers and grasses
and a thousand white crosses
tied to a barbed wire fence.

Reach that quiet rooted in your soul
and you will grasp the power
which will transform the world.

Liz Birtles

BE OPEN

Only when we are unafraid
of the exposure that honesty brings
will we ever have peace
in our hearts and the world.

Celia Midgley

SHALOM

Shall I reach out to all those others?
Help me O God of Peace.
Ask me for that which you need my child.
Love me my God, my father, mother.
Our love: your love and my love
Meeting together.

Noemi Thomas



GREEN PEACE

based on three sermons preached in St. Mark's in
August 1986 on the general theme of Green Religion.

(The hymn was written with the Irish tune 'The Flight
of Earls' in mind but any tune in Double Common Metre
(8.6.8.6.D) fits)

The green grass brings the soil to life
upon this earthly globe;
restores the air. All living things
are clothed in nature's robe.
Hope for the world, hope for our lives
grows in God's wilderness!
So forest, jungle, marsh and moor
handle with gentleness.

The green earth yields sufficiently
for every human need;
but not enough when human life
is marred by wanton greed;
for each and every one is part
of a much greater whole:
the many and the one which make
the universal soul.

The green peace dwells with planet earth
when inner spirits rise
to meet the outer world and build
one home beneath the skies.
Within the garden home of earth
there grows a gracious tree,
whose healing leaves the nations calm
and set their subjects free.

Andrew M. Hill

RENEWAL

Through distant ages men have sought relief
From their oppressing cares and dull-eyed grief,
And from the valleys they have climbed to brood
Upon the strange delights of solitude:
And there amongst the dreaming, friendly hills,
From dark confusion they have known release,
And in the face of the almighty wind,
Have found a new dominion of peace.

The wind that through the ages long has blown,
Yet sweeps the mind of its recurring ills,
The Buddha felt it; Jesus after him ...
The mountains still are here, and the little hills.

Muriel Hilton

The Flower that Springs from the Ruins of War ...

The flower that springs from the ruins of war
is an inspiration
the moss that thrusts through cracks in the wall
is courage made manifest
the rock that lies in the bed of the stream
is patience incarnate
the tree that waves above the desolate landscape
is fortitude in flower
Listen to the wind, observe the flowers, pay attention
to the rushing of waters.
In observation is joy, in attention is growth,
in listening is peace.
Power without harm is given to him who harbours
no designs
on the myriad creatures

John Hands

THE GARDEN

There is a garden in the heart
Of loveliness, serene and still,
Where one may leave the hurried pace,
The dark-engulfing thoughts at will;
A place where conflicts find release,
A quiet sanctuary of peace.

Sunrise is ever there and joys
Soft gathered through the passing years:
A dewy rose, a blackbird's song,
A rainbow arch new-found through tears;
And love-enshrined flowers that bear
Their sweetness on the morning air.

There is a garden in the heart
Where one may wander silently,
Enfolded in the shining peace
That emanates from flower and tree;
A place where one has ever trod
And heard the quiet voice of God.

Muriel Hilton

PRAYER FOR A PEACE GARDEN

Peace:

Divine gift,

Human hope,

World's salvation;

We who seek it, from our varied paths of faith,
dedicate this place and ourselves to its affirmation.

May the peace of this garden remind all who share it
of the peace to which the earth is called, and whose
proclamation we celebrate at this season.

May it spur us to reverence the global garden in
which we live, and make of it a garden of peace
for all peoples.

Amen.

Cliff Reed

(written for the dedication of the Peace Garden in
Christchurch Park, Ipswich, on 31st December 1986)

REVELATION

Day after day we
trudge around doing our thing, each one of us
locked in his or her life-situation; the earth
unbudgable, the sky soldered in its place;
like lead-soldiers we march without moving or
let ourselves be shoved along, or wait for
some catastrophe to blow us all to pieces.

And then
this happens; the earth blossoms, the sky
becomes cloudless and perfect, this tree,
this grass, these birds are perfect. And
instantly we know "They" are wrong, we too
are perfect, we too blossom like trees, carol
like birds, flow like the river. They are
wrong. This earth is perfect, and we are of
the earth. There is no better life we should
be leading.

John Hands

Meditation on a Pine Tree Sapling

A man should have confidence when he plans for
the future
like making a proposal, or taking out a mortgage;
he should be bold as he sends his seed
travelling through the tunnel of years in hope
of a prosperous fruition; yet here
with my small son at my side and the trowel in
my hand
i tremble as i plant this tree.

A man should be sanguine yet prudent as they
were in the eighteenth century,
certain as they were when they landscaped their
parks
built bridges, drained fens, diverted the course
of streams,
confident their schemes would prosper, their sons
and daughters thank them
for their provident and wise provision; yet i
as i pause with my trowel in my hand and listen
to my son's curious questions
tremble as i plant this tree.

Tree, as yet a mere sprig from the Highlands,
with all my heart i
wish you a future tall, burgeoning, unremittingly
secure;
even as i wish you, and more dear son, an
extensive future free
of pestilence and war, and more personal distress,
a posterity which happily will smile at my
foreboding as i
stoop with my trowel in my hand and tremble
as i plant this tree.

John Hands

RAINBOWS

Rainbows

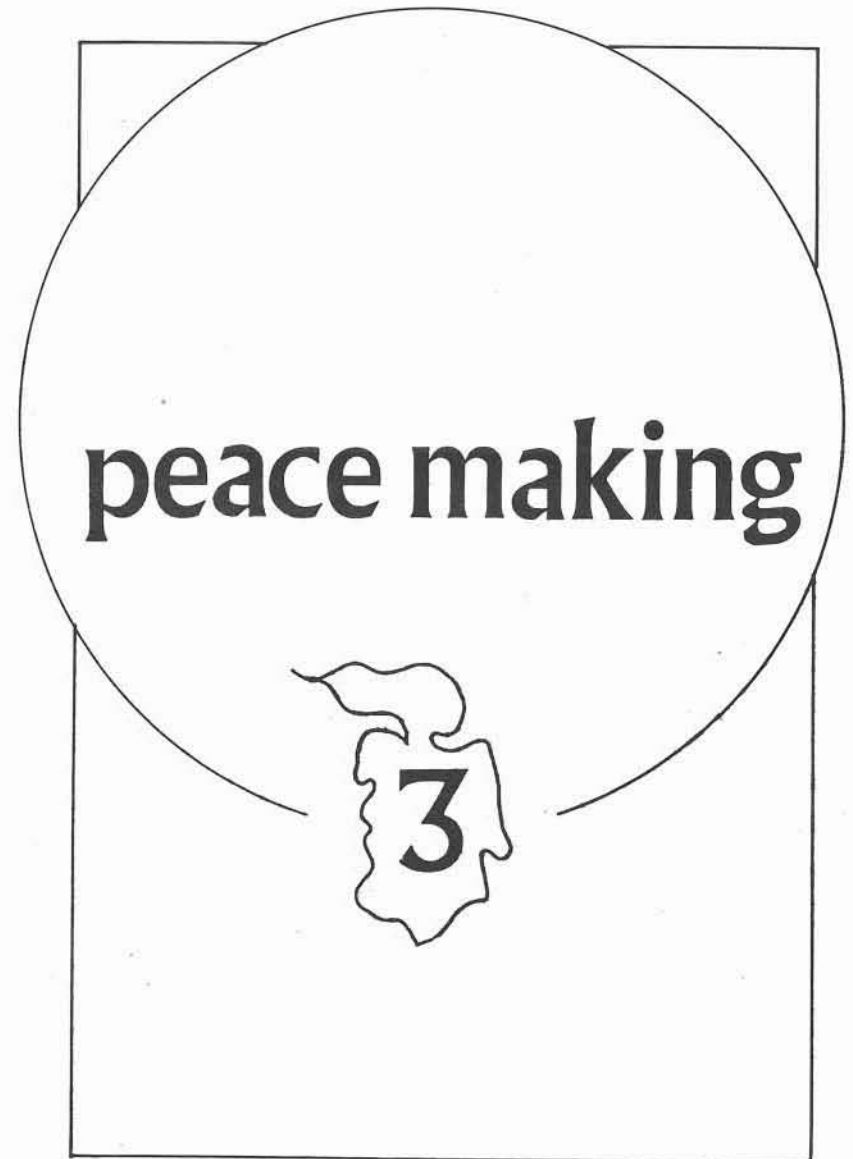
I'll climb

growing, living, loving

pattern of the universe

peace.

Linda King



PEACE DUET

I will learn peace,
Not in a cell apart to magnify the self.
My peace must dwell
Within the still centre of life's whirlwind.

I will learn peace,
Not in the lee of pleasant and profitable work.
My peace must dwell
Within my efforts to build shelters for mankind.

I will learn peace
Not in quiet days when old age overtakes me.
My peace must dwell
Within endeavours that proclaim The Timeless

= + = + = + = +

I will share peace,
Not only with friends who all enjoy my company.
My practice of peace
Must greet those who do not understand me.

I will share peace,
Not only with dwellers in this war-free land.
My practice of peace
Must uphold those who endure social unrest.

I will share peace,
Not only by distributing Third World leaflets.
My practice of peace
Must become part of the Universal Unconscious.

Marjorie Easton

THE ART OF PEACE

Since living together is an art, artists have something to teach us. Composers know that discords are the driving force of their music, moving it forward to dissolve finally into concord. Painters discover that contrasted colours, some aggressive, some reticent, can meet happily as friends on the same canvas. Sculptors find that their recalcitrant raw material can be chiselled to give substance to their dreams. Poets aver that sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought. Whatever his medium, every true artist can harness conflict to his transcendent purpose, like a ploughman yoking a spirited horse to his team. Every great work of art is a parable of peace.

Henry Compton

PEACE comes from -

Putting yourself in the other person's place.

Easing the load when you - or others -
are trying to do too much.

Accepting yourself as you are, and other
people as they are.

Creating space for stillness in your life.

Endeavouring so to live that you bring
happiness to someone each day.

Ann Gabell.

PEACE

God knows there will be Peace for me
When my children are fed
From this world's plenty
And when their staring eyes and swollen bodies
No longer haunt my dreams

There will be Peace for me
When I may sit in a classroom
And receive the knowledge I need and seek
That I may grow and see clearly

God knows there will be Peace for me
When my nation is left alone
And uninvaded
When I may speak freely and write freely
Without fear for myself and my family

There will be Peace for me
When I will have no part in war
When convoys of Peace are accepted
And convoys of Cruise are not

God knows
There will be Peace for me
When I can sit with my enemy
And talk to and love my enemy
And touch my enemy's face

There will be Peace for me
When everyone is clothed if naked
Treated if sick, sheltered if homeless
Accepted if rejected

God knows there will be Peace for me
When my way of worship, the colour of my skin
My age, sex or my way of life
Set me not apart.

There will be Peace for me
When we stop exploiting, dominating
Spoiling, defacing, or hurting
When we shall share not hoard
Give and not take

And God knows there will be Peace
When all of us hold hands
And let the Spirit flow freely and abundantly
From one to one
When we behold the Mystery and are content
When we share ourselves and are humble
And when the Kingdom of Love and Peace
Justice and Mercy
Is where we are.

Peter Hughes

Written on the occasion of the Peace Service at
Pendleton Church on 22nd October 1986.

In a world that's full of sorrow,
Let there be Love!
Help to make a brighter morrow,
Let there be Love!
Love means for each other caring,
All our griefs and burdens sharing,
Love means patiently forbearing,
Let there be Love!

In a world with wars unending,
Let there be Love!
Love means enemies befriending,
Let there be Love!
Love will break down separation,
Nation shall speak peace to nation,
Love means reconciliation,
Let there be Love!

In a world that is uniting,
Then there is Love!
When mankind its wrong is righting,
Then there is Love!
When all people come together,
Nothing will their friendship sever,
Peace will reign on earth for ever,
When there is Love!

Words: Francis Simons
Tune: Ar hyd y nos (All through the night)

TV APPEAL

No need to travel, no need to roam,
The world is right inside your home;
The facts come in from far and near,
People starving, people in fear.
No you can't turn away, pretend you don't see
The world of misery on your TV.

Fill in the form in the TV mag,
Send a few pounds from your pocket or bag.
Charities send you a card of thanks
While governments buy more bombs and tanks.
No you can't turn away, pretend you don't see
The world of misery on your TV.

You've eased your conscience - back in your chair,
What! more hate, hunger, violence on the air?
Don't throw out the telly, don't pull out your hair,
Stand up and shout - make them hear you out there.
No you can't turn away, pretend you don't see
The world of misery on your TV.

The world is a place of beauty and light,
Not a battleground on which to fight;
So make the day come when your TV
Shows a picture of love and harmony.

Rosemary Hamilton.

There are some who
Would drag us down,
Lead us to despair:
This way is right
That way is wrong -
This way is right
But it's not enough -
Do as I do
(Not do as you would be done by).

Peace is not a competition
Peace is not a casting of stones.
Only in peace will we grow to peace:
Peace is the way.

Helen Eadie.

Peace comes, when we feel right, inside,
When we've been fair, whate're betide.
Though others blame, though others scoff,
Peace comes.

Peace comes, when we, for love not gain,
Have helped another take life's strain.
With friendly smile or kindly deed,
Peace comes.

Peace comes, when we have stood the test,
When tempted, we have come out best.
When all unruliness has fled,
Peace comes.

Peace thus arises in each heart,
When fellow-feeling plays full part.
When we our harmful passions tame,
Peace comes.

Peace does not come from outward things,
But when the seed from which it springs,
Is freely sown by anyone,
Peace comes.

When thus mankind has sown its field,
A blessed harvest it will yield,
A truly holy harvest home.
When peace comes.

George de Gay

HOW LONG, O LORD, HOW LONG?

When will they stop the killing and the shooting?
When will they stop the shelling and the bombing?
Why don't they live together in peace?
Why don't they love one another instead of themselves?
Where will they go when they've destroyed their homes?
Where will they grow food when they've despoiled
 their land?
What is their religion to them that they murder
 in its name?
What is their nation to them that they defend its
 wrongs?
Can we stop them?
Can we love them?
Can we feed them? or house them?
Can we swear we would not betray our nation or
 our faith
 by killing
 and hating
 and destroying?

Peter Sampson.

THE NEW DAY

Parade of tanks - the largest seen,
The drone of bombers from afar,
Warship and nuclear submarine:
Dread sights and sounds that tell of war.

Sweet violets in the hedges' shade,
A primrose cluster by the stream,
A twittering in the leafy glade:
Dear sights and sounds that tell of Spring.

For Spring must come whate'er betide,
However much men kill and main
And desolate lay the countryside -
The love of God is still the same.

When love reigns in the hearts of men,
That peace will come for which men pray.
Walk in His way of love and then
Will come the Spring of that New Day.

Jamie A. Smith

Peace in our World

If we could gather the hurt,
The pain and terror and all
The suffering and dread,
Compress it into a ball
And with all our courage
And all of the clear-shining
Heart's strength unfurled,
Take it and roll it away
Over the edge of the world;

If we could return again
Where the westering sea-wind blows
And our aching hearts could know again
The glory of the rose,
Then in our freedom,
From all of the sadness and hurt
With the lost time redeemed ---
We'd know Peace in our world,
The Dream would be dreamed.

Alice Rawlinson

A KINDER WORLD.

We the heirs of many ages,
With the wise to guide our ways,
Honour all earth's seers and sages,
Build our temples for their praise.

But the good we claim to cherish -
All that Christ and Buddha taught -
Unrepentant hearts let perish,
Spurning truth most dearly bought.

Centuries of moral teaching,
Words of wisdom, ancient lore,
All the prophet souls' beseeching
Leaves us heedless as before.

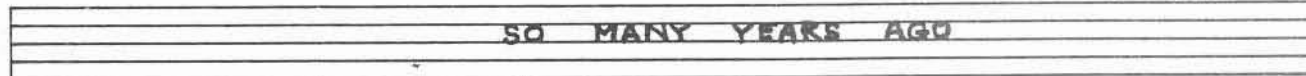
Late in time, may we forsaking
All our cruelty and scorn
See a new tomorrow breaking
And a kinder world be born.

John Andrew Storey.

SO MANY YEARS AGO

T. Wood

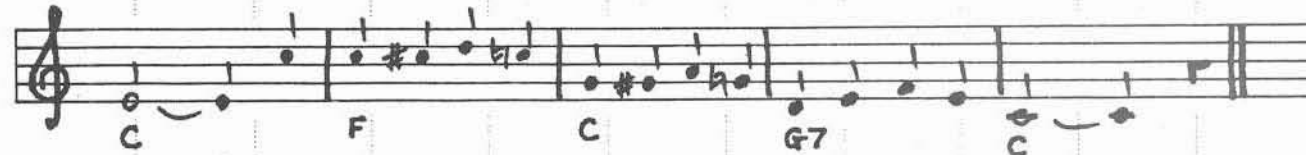
We live upon a tiny world
That circles round a star
It hardly seems believable
But that's the way we are
And what will be the end of it
Is more than I can know
I think of One who came to us
So many years ago.



Of all the people in the world
I only know a few
But I believe they're just like me
They're just the same as you
And when we choose to go to war
To burn and slay anew
I think about the One who came
and what He'd say and do.



He told us plainly we must seek
That he who seeks will find
He pointed out the way to go
The way for all mankind
I hold His words close to my heart
And pray that I may know
The meaning of the news He brought
So many years ago.



Thomas Wood

VISION OF A WORLD AT PEACE

Close we were to the earth
To each other
And to all living things:
A silence
Except for the laughter of children
And the music many were making in the sunlight.
All around was gentle industry,
A work which was playful and unhurried:
There was freedom to paint and dance
And take our food from the earth
With respect and thanks.
Nobody needed to tell anybody
What to do:
Everything was a good game to play.
Close we were
To each other
And there was touching
Without a demand or a fear
For we all of us
Were whole
Within ourselves.

Tony Bowland.

THE TRINITY OF PEACE.

A man, they say, must be at peace
Within himself, or he will mar
True peace with those around.
Dear Lord, make plain to us how these
Two states of grace, so near, yet far,
In peace with thee are found.

For man has failed, it seems quite plain
Through all the ages of his span
To find this bliss sublime.
He strives great goals of wealth to gain
And power and might o'er fellow man -
But peace? - Where now the time?

We rush around from morn till night,
Instead of drinking in that joy -
Long draughts from waters deep,
From wells of life which flow to right
Those wrongs which inner peace destroy,
And man from man would keep.

Faith, hope and love together ease
Man's pain. In threefold unity
These show, and they may rout
Despair, but knowledge of true peace
More potent is, a vital trinity -
With thee: within; with out.

Pat Kern

In a world free of greed and envy
I see the peace of which I dream
Hands once filled with weapons
Now held out in trust and faith.

In a world free of fear and prejudice
I see the love of which I dream
Minds once closed and blinded
Now open, full of light and joy.

In a world free of hunger and pain
I see the hope of which I dream
Hearts once broken, hard and bitter
Now are mended, whole and free.

Evelyn Ryder

Eirene

Irene - Greek word for peace. Perhaps because of that name, given to me amid the darkness and grief of the 1914-18 war, there grew in me a passionate concern for peace, in human relationships and in the world at large, and more than a concern, a belief, an inner conviction, that it can be so. The experiences of my life, notwithstanding its background of appalling examples of "man's inhumanity to man", have deepened the conviction that whereas cruelty, hatred, fear, are daunting and destructive facts, peace and compassionate love are Truth - they are Ultimate Reality, they are of God. When we aspire to them we are seeing and seeking Truth, and we have to go on working to nurture the seeds of hope in many people and places.

But what of inner personal peace and tranquillity of heart? - These are indeed hard won - It is not the role of religion to bring comfort and peace by neglecting our responsibility and blunting our sensitivities - How can we learn to live with them while maintaining our inner core of peace? Surely by action and service, adding our drop to the ocean of concern, according to our ability or opportunity - Thus comes some peace, not by burying our heads, but by lifting and facing.

Peace comes through prayer for others and with others. It comes quietly or thrillingly through beauty of mountain, lake and sky. Occasionally or perhaps, at a deeper subconscious level, always, it comes through a sense of awareness, of communion, of the increase of the Divine life within us.

Irene Hornby.

EVERY DAY

I hear it every day
Something's wrong somewhere, someway.
And they tell me that it's useless
Nothing's going to change.

I hear it every day
Sometimes it makes me cry
Why can't we just understand?
Why can't we all try?

When I'm lying in my bed
I think about the hate I see
And I can't find an answer
To why it has to be.

In my dreams it's so clear
Everybody dreams together
I want to tell everyone
I want to share my dream.

Vicky Hewerdine.

OUR PLEDGE

You and I love
Life, now, and the beauty
and joy of each day
In the land at peace
We are free within our selves

And when the peace of the world is taken from us, we
will keep our peace,
Till the desert sand covers all the graves,
When freedom is taken from us, we will preserve
the memory of freedom
and the beauty of it: the time for freedom will return,
We will keep the faith in humane and liberal values,
We will look after the learning of this age: the time
for learning will return,
We will never be governed by superstition,
though it take power for a thousand years,
And when all is hate and violence, we will love,
When all is death and destruction, we will conserve
and create,
Till the desert sand covers all the graves,
And when they ask us to tear up the living heart
We will remember that s/he is our friend, too.

Wade Gibson-Knight.

CIRCLES NOT PYRAMIDS

There is no peace
in a pyramidal world
where fewer and fewer
stand on the heads
of more and more
crushing them
compressing their liberty
and increasingly fearful
of falling.

Even in a circle
one at the centre
is powerful and afraid
of the dots closing in
becoming people.

Here on the edge
linking empowering
we create
possibility.

Celia Midgley

The bonds of anger and fear and resentment
fell away and the real stuff of life was set
free, came into play, gave of itself and
pervaded the place, enabling, enfolding,
enriching.

Hurt was healed, and healing made whole,
and hearts were full, and love and laughter
lifted up the spirit to rejoicing.

Anne McClelland.

remembrance



4

A VISION

Crosses whiter than bones
Taut to attention
Regimented in death
Numbered precise
Left to right, van to rear
Countless
Ever fewer mourners find a way through hard lines
To one grave identically unique.

The mind's eye overlooks this field in Normandy
Blurs the vision into softer shades of white
Swords into ploughshares
Earth flowering to the tree-line
The newly young make love in the meadows.

Keith Gilley

FOR HIROSHIMA IN HOPE

(Written for an international service of remembrance at the Peace Monument in Hiroshima, on August 6th, 1984)

What can I say to Hiroshima?
I, who was born half a world away,
Who was two years old the day they dropped the bomb.

They dropped the bomb, not I.
They suffered and died, not I.
I had no knowledge, I had no say.
Their decision, their guilt,
Their heart-splitting agony, their blighted lives.

No, not theirs but ours,
For we are one human family, share one world.
For too long we have imagined divisions
That rend our common humanity.
For too many centuries, fought the enemy
That was our other self.

Let the horror of Hiroshima teach us at last
That we are one people.
We all share the suffering,
For we have all known unreasonable pain and loss.
We all share the guilt,
For we have all wished to hurt or destroy.
We share the courage,
For we have all conquered grief and bitterness.
We share the responsibility
That it shall never happen again.

And if we have the courage
To accept the suffering, to acknowledge the guilt,
To take up the responsibility, to embrace one
another --
We may share in the hope for a world free from fear.

From the ashes of Hiroshima, may understanding love
arise
And blossom forth,
That our anguish may not have been in vain.

Joy Croft

ANNA LAETITIA BARBAULD (1743-1825) - poet, educationist
hymn-writer, pamphleteer and Unitarian. Among her
greatest passions was peace. The following are some
extracts from her writings on the subject:

"We should do well to translate this word war into
language more intelligible to us. When we pay our
navy and our army estimates, let us set down - so
much for killing, so much for maiming, so much for
making widows and orphans, so much for bringing
famine upon a district, so much for corrupting
citizens and subjects into spies and traitors, so
much for ruining tradesmen and bankrupts
so much for letting loose the demons of fury, rapine
and lust within the fold of cultivated society, and
giving to the brutal ferocity of the most ferocious,
its full scope and range of invention."

"Almost all nations have been in the habit of mixing
with their bad passions a show of religion, and of
prefacing these their murders with prayers and
solemnities of worship."

"An unjust war is in itself so bad a thing that
there is only one way of making it worse - and that
is by mixing religion with it."

"Every good man owes it to his country and to his
own character, to lift his voice against a ruinous
war, an unequal tax or an edict of persecution;
and oppose them, temperately but firmly by all
means in his power."

THE FRUITS

Trenches in Flanders
Mud and lice and wire
Two youths, identical
In age and type:
One wields a bayonet
The other dies.
Agony, waste, an endless desperate grief:
The fruits of strife.

A lane in sunlight
Meadowsweet and trees
Two youths, identical
In age and type,
Walking together to
A garden gate
To warmth of welcome, happiness and peace:
The fruits of life.

Kath Mayor

LAKENHEATH

Name to conjure
In the soft Suffolk Breck
Night and day hard
Light a glare
Blare of noise
Church tower never to know again
Its peal of 600 years of peace.

But we shall know the vision
Of heath and lake
All rabbits and sweet ling
When the boys have taken their toys away
Becoming human.

Keith Gilley

'THE GATES OF GREENHAM' ORATORIO

We sang 'for peace'
We sang in joy
And it was good.

Women had inspired it
One man conceived it
And scores of both took pride in giving it
To scores more who received it gladly.
Our small offering, part of the whole.

Between the clamour and chatter
Of the Green Room
And the exultation of the stage
Came a pause.
Silently spread the stillness.
Standing or sitting
In harmony we worshipped;
Praise and prayer:
A mere ten minutes:
But our inward applause
For God's lasting performance.

Helen Eadie

SIZEWELL RALLY (22nd November 1986)

Camaraderie - diversity - unity -
CND -FoE - sanity - happily -
family - balloons set free -
blue-grey sea - musically -
pollution-free - cups of tea -
never be - lunacy - Sizewell B.

Sheila Gorniak

VOICES

"Let no martial trumpet sound.
Raise no hero to inter your guilt.
Heinous it was to give omnipotence,
and arms conceived in hell,
to your ruthless war lords.
Fail not to record in all your history books
how the tide of evil, sated with our blood,
engulfed our forsaken children,
maimed, starved and orphaned."

Across the lonely years they call to us,
those millions robbed of youth and life,
sacrificed in battles long since lost.
God grant that all mankind
in every tongue may hear
and live at peace
for ever more.

Robert Mackintosh

WHITE COW WOOD, BUCHAN

The old stone circle stands
Atop the grassy rise
Between the break of trees
Whose branches in the evening light
Are barely stirring in the breeze.

Some old prehistoric grave
Of the ancestors of man
Full of quiet meaning
Sometimes felt by those who can.

The tomb slab faces eastward
Towards the rising sun
In hope that this life ended
Would new-life once more come?

Facing eastward, facing eastward
New life will it come that way
As the God who made the heavens
Orders each new dawning day.

On the hill just over yonder
Full of Space-age might
Stands the early-warning-station
Lest the missiles start their flight.

From the east, from the east
That's the way that they will come
Shout the early-warning-station
East from out the sun.

Facing westwards, facing westwards
On a hill far, far away
Stands another man-made circle
Facing now the other way.

From the west, from the west
That's the way that they will come
From the westward, from the westward
When the First-Strike has begun.

And in another age-time-zone
Three thousand years more gone
Will some wanderer upon these hills
Ponder upon what WE have once done.

Will our memory be as vague
As the stone-age man of 'yore
Because we in our generation
Still put our trust in WAR.

John Roberts.

P E A C E

In this age of warring madness,
In this century of strife,
Was the face of pity hidden
That we failed to cherish life?

Mercy, were you there at Flanders
Or our bloodbath on the Somme?
Were you there at Nagasaki
When we dropped the atom bomb?

You were there, your gentle pleadings
Fell on ears grown deaf with pride,
Hatred reigned and blood-lust triumphed,
Hearts were stone and pity died.

Love constrain us, guide us, train us,
Purge all hearts until wars cease,
Make us one in true compassion
And compatriots in peace.

John Andrew Storey.

AFTERWAR-DS

And when you've finished your war,
Remember that to your children being born today
- to your sister's children if you did not have time
to bring any into the world -
Already your war, remember, is ancient history;

When you have won your cause,
Women, blacks and Asians, gays, the inner cities,
have equal rights,
And there is no more hunger in the world, no more
acid rain,

No more Nations to be United,
Remember that to your children, and your sister's
children,
There is astir in the world a new and ancient vivid
evil,
For us this is our world that needs putting to rights,
This is the cause that now is burning.

Do not say Goose Green was fought in vain,
Though no scholar note it, fourteen hundred years on,
as we note Dyrham,
Say: you did what you must ...
But carry no bones forward from it,
Of grief, or contention:
Do not rule today from that consciousness;
Remember that every day is 'D' day for someone's
great cause,
In the great course of Time.

When you have finished your war,
Say: it is finished.
Do not rule today from that consciousness.

Wade Gibson-Knight

TOMORROW'S PAST.

The road inviting to the downs' summit
Ends in red alert
Tanks cross here - everywhere
Men their faces scored with fear and camouflage
The soft top-soil pocked in dis-ease
Could the land cry
It would be the whine of wire
Barbed to scar even the wind.

Yet beneath the deadly coil beyond tread
The purple hood of green-veined orchid
Inching through the turf and thyme
An embryo of peace defying
The holy game of war.

Keith Gilley

We are tomorrow's past,
we cast a shadow,
write a page in history's growing tome.
In time to come
our own - this present age -
like ancient Greece and Rome shall disappear.
No throne can long endure,
each has its day - and all must someday end.
We are tomorrow's past,
unless, through folly, our today
becomes for all Mankind
the last.

John Andrew Storey.

EIRENE *

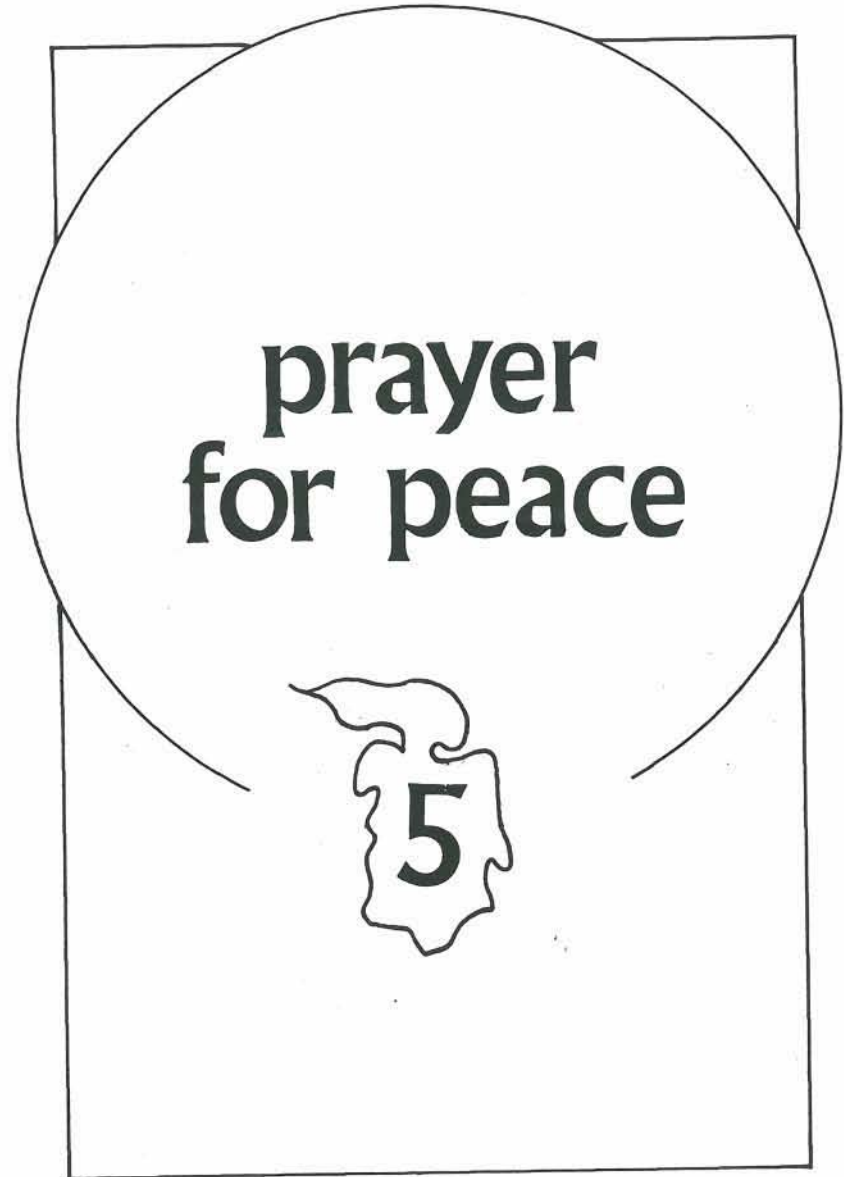
two years ago was it
Easter or St. David's Day
daffodil time anyhow
in a circle of worship
we shared the spring
in each hand a flower

and is it you recalling
hands outstretched on wire
an offering of daffodils
you took and we knew
both weariness and hope
in the bleak landscape

now back home
no fence separating
we are human beings
daffodils are blooming
hope renewing
understanding growing

Celia Midgley

* the peace chapel behind
the wire at Molesworth



IN IMPATIENCE AT EVIL

We are concerned about the evil of the world:
its injustice, its cruelty, its hatred.

We would be of those who seek to right the wrongs,
heal the wounds, end the sufferings.

Sometimes we seethe with anger at the wickedness
we see - how long, O Lord, how long before it is
swept away?

Our impatience can override our wisdom, our rage
can push aside our love, and so we become part of
the problem we want to solve.

Show us how to care without hating those who don't;
show us how to strive for the right without
despising others; show us how little we know,
and that we don't have all the answers.

We pray that all humanity may be awakened to the
way of love. We pray that all who seek to extend
your divine kingdom may do so in unity and true
respect.

Cliff Reed

MEDITATION ON THE PRAYER FOR PEACE

Lead me from Death to Life
from Falsehood to Truth.

There are dark and painful times
when I know a dying inside,
a dying of the soul perhaps,
when all my spiritual energy is drained,
when I have nothing left to give.

I need to find the strength
to move from these times
to choose life, to affirm life,
to begin to feel once again
fully human, fully alive.

There are sad and painful times
when I cannot be wholly honest,
when I am too weak to be willing to speak out,
when I compromise my feelings rather than face
a person honestly,
when I 'fudge', and blur lines which I know to be
clear and straight.

I need to find the strength
to hold on tightly to what I know is true,
to speak the truth even though I risk hurting others,
to be more open and honest even though I risk being
hurt.

Lead me O God towards Life and Truth.

Lead me from Despair to Hope
from Fear to Trust.

There are dark and painful times
when I am filled with despair.
I sit in meetings where people do not listen to each
other
or I hear politicians mouthing empty words about things
for which I care deeply,
and I realise my powerlessness
and I am overwhelmed by despair.

I need to have my hope rekindled,
to share with others in the sowing of seeds of hope,
to work with others in nurturing hope,
to witness with others the growing signs of hope,
to carry with me a strong vision of hope.

There are dark and painful times
when I am filled with fear.
I stand close to the razor wire at Greenham
close to the silos which hold the weapons that are
able to destroy our world
and I am overwhelmed by fear.

I need to break through the frozenness of my fear,
to help others break through the many different
barriers of fear.
I need to be trusted, and I need to find the simple
trust of the child who puts her hand into mine
I need to be willing to risk reaching out to the
soldier behind that wire,
willing to risk my trust.

Lead me O God towards hope and trust.

Lead me from Hate to Love
from War to Peace.

There are sad and painful times
when my despair and anger become hate.
When the Ministry of Defence demolished the peace
chapel at Molesworth,
I found myself so angry that I hated the men who
had done it.

It is sometimes difficult not to hate those whose
views and actions are different from mine,
whose views and actions fill me with fear, despair
and anger.

I need to find the strength
to turn away from hating
towards love.

I need to open my heart
to the pervading power of the loving spirit
that connects all people.

Although I may disagree with the views and actions
of the politician or the soldier, I need to respect,
to cherish and to love the person.

There are dark and painful times
when the inevitability and the imminence of the threat
may lead to war.

I have not experienced war, but I have known conflict
and the paralysis of fear in the face of conflict.

At the moment when I am confronted with violence

I need to unfreeze my heart and mind,

to allow peace to enter in,

for hope and trust to be reborn.

I need to be empowered by that of God in me.

Lead me O God towards Love and Peace.

Let Peace fill our heart
our world, our universe.

Peace begins with me.

I must start with my own heart and mind.

I need to practise the skills necessary for living
in a world at peace,
the skills needed to avoid or resolve conflicts.

The place to begin my work is in my own home,
in my personal relationships, in my place of work,
in my church.

Peace begins with me

and works outward,

nurtured by the pervading power of the loving Spirit
which connects all people.

Lead me O God.

Liz Birtles

STRUGGLE (After Mahatma Gandhi)

We celebrate the goodness of creation;
We give thanks for the kindness and the
love manifested in human lives.

But we are conscious also of the evil in
the world, the hurt and the suffering inflicted
by men and women on their fellow beings.

We know we are called to strive for human
welfare:

Remind us that to refuse the struggle against
the world's evil is to surrender our humanity;
But to enter that struggle is to enter our
humanity.

And more than this, remind us that to struggle
against the world's evil with the weapons of
God is to enter our divinity.

Cliff Reed

PRAYER

O Thou eternal Source of light
For which our spirits blindly grope,
Who hast through the long ages past
Sustained man with undying hope;
We ask for calm and fortitude
Amidst these days of dark despair,
That we as children of Thy light
May ever be of truth aware;
O Lord of Life we pray that we
May seek all lovely gifts of Thine,
And strive within the noise and strife
To make our solitude a shrine.

Muriel Hilton

UBIQUE

Peace be with all who come this day
to this place of prayer;
and with all for whom we pray:
The Peace of God, the Peace of the Eternal
That peace which our world must work for
 in our hearts
 in our homes
 in our religion

Peace between races and nations
Peace joined with Love
That Love which, starting in God,
finds its fulfilment in the fellowship of human-
kind the wide world over.
May our prayers help us to live
as our lives help us to pray,
so that each day we commit
ourselves and one another
to the peace of God.

Adapted from A.B. Downing
by Frank Walker.

Dear GOD, Thy PEACE is said to pass beyond our understanding. So grant us, please, the sense to get a shred of comprehension, for we cry out and yearn so much for wisdom, love and caring. How little do we comprehend, and thus we need Thy pardon!

The woes of Wars, which we create; these vicious wars, offend Thee; insult, besmirch Thy holy name. We ask, what can our end be?

SOLDIERS long for PEACE, oh Lord. They fought, still fight, for good and right, but pray and plead for THEE to lead against the evil foe. In warfare's shame YOU kept us sane to hold that heavy burden. Withstand the smack of the field-gun's crack, and bear the shriek of Stuka; the cold and dirt, the heat and thirst; mud, dust, the flies so hateful. You gave us comradeship and sleep, pity, strength, endurance; and washed us clean, kept us serene. We thank Thee for those mercies.

And also, for the will to live, to serve and give, to drive along for others. Help us to pity weakest men; the brave ones suffer least. Forgive our follies, fury, fire; please lift us from our self-made mire, that we may dwell as brothers.

Teach us, oh Lord, to value all the wealth of earthly goodness. To be re-born through strain and stress, the griefs and hopeless yearnings. But also let us not refuse to be uplifted over the strifes and conflicts of our days to recognise Thy worthship. To eat and drink, to feel and think, to realise our failings. Then, claim our heritage to sense the unseen in our existence.

This nightmare world of holocaust and other obscene things, broods 'neath a shadow of nuclear wings, which frightens and dements us. Restore our sense and set us free to dwell in PEACE and worship Thee.

Oh God, forgive the pettiness of man's manipulation. Impress us all both great and small, to seek our true potential. For we are told that after war we dwell in peace and plenty, but that we know to be untrue; the help we give is scanty. Whilst wanton wealth is freely spent on missiles, bombs and devilry, there is no "peace" whilst children starve, and die, in direst poverty.

Despite it all we come to see how richly we are blessed, are given a glimpse of what it means, if only we confess. Reach out to touch and thrill to feel the hem of Thy soft garment, seamless woven from tranquil weft through warp of love eternal. For love indeed Thou art. Please, take us to Thy heart! For there, PEACE is a part.

WE live for ever in Thy hand, but do not see or smell or hear, nor even care and still less, know, the surge and pulse and gleam and glow of life's true point and meaning. How far yet near it seems to be, but still we strive to dimly see what living really offers.

But, trust in Thee will set us free to live in PEACE with justice. And, at the end, when that day comes, we'll really know and blinded be by that pure light to set us free from all our earthly battles. And then, to know Thy lasting PEACE, but humbly, even so surpassing our understandings.

AMEN

Arthur Rowell

BROKEN BOWS (Psalm 46:9)

God of peace,
who stamps out war from end to end of the earth,
who breaks the bow and snaps the spear,
who burns the shield in the fire,
forgive us that we constantly undo your work.

When you stamp out a war, we start another one.
When you break the bow and snap the spear, we
replace them with guns and bombs.
When you burn the shields, we build armoured tanks.

Rebuke us.
Bring to our minds the children, women and men
our wars have killed and are still killing.
Open our hearts, and those of all humanity, to
the inflow of your peace.
Help us to turn our backs on war, and show us
the better way.

You have told us
to choose life, not death; love, not hatred;
forgiveness, not vengeance.
When we heed your voice we know your peace,
when we block our ears we know strife and discord.
Make us listen, for our sake and the world's.

Cliff Reed

ONE WORLD: A LITANY OF CELEBRATION

'What shall it profit?'

What shall it profit - all this worldwide praying
If we forget words spoken on a hill -
"First be thou reconciled, then bring thine off'ring" -
Words uttered long ago, but living still

Love, Love itself, we beg, come close and closer
Folding the nations gathered now to pray,
Lighting our world that travails in the darkness
Showing Thyself, the Life, the Truth, the Way

Lord, ere we lay our gifts upon Thine altar,
Cleanse every heart from bitter vengeful hate.
Help us to pray in love for eyes now blinded.
"Open them, Lord, before it is too late".

Ralph Goddard

Leader: Let us celebrate the unity of the world;
the reality beneath our divisive illusions,
the vision that lifts our eyes to the
future that could be.

Congregation: May there be an end to a world order
based on distrust and enmity, which
violates the human temples of the
divine with exploitation and idolatry.

Leader: Let us celebrate the glorious diversity of
the human race, the infinite variations on
a single theme.

Congregation: May there be an end to injustice and
prejudice; to all that persecutes
and diminishes people because of what
they are and what they believe.

Leader: Let us celebrate the web of life that enfolds
this good earth, rejoicing in its beauty and
variety.

Congregation: May there be an end to all that
despoils and destroys this global
home of ours; may we and all people
discover our oneness with the Universe.

Leader: Let us celebrate the resources of the earth and
give thanks for them, for the life and
comfort and pleasure that they give us.

Congregation: May we work for an end to the hunger,
the poverty, the despair that arises
from the wasteful husbandry and selfish
disposal of humanity's inheritance.

Leader: Let us celebrate the divine Spirit at work among us and within us - kindling the love that knows no bounds, that enfolds our one world and reaches out into eternity.

Congregation: May the Spirit clear our sight, inform our minds and touch our hearts. May the one-world vision be ours; may we dream it, pray it, live it.

(SILENCE)

Leader: Let us celebrate our unity here together. May what is true for us now be true for more people everywhere until the whole world knows that it is one.

Cliff Reed

IN THE SILENCE

May we frail, flawed, buffeted beings
be still.

.....

May we know peace in our hearts -
the deep healing peace.

.....

May peace enfold us now
in our stillness - the deep, healing peace.

.....

So may we carry from this place
the peace which is beyond all understanding.

.....

Thus may we bring into the lives
of all those we meet
the deep, healing peace.

Liz Birtles

We remember at this time especially all those suffering in the fighting in the Lebanon.

We pray for an end to the conflict and for a change in people's hearts so that they shall work together for a just and lasting peace.

We remember all those who have lost children, parents, relatives and friends in the fighting and who are full of grief and sorrow.

Give them strength to find the ways that reconcile and heal.

We remember all the victims of war and violence the world over; in Northern Ireland; in El Salvador; in South America; in Africa and in Asia.

We remember all those falsely and unjustly imprisoned on account of their political and religious beliefs, and we pray for their deliverance, that even in their time of suffering the fruits of the spirit will grow richly within them.

We pray for all those who are working for the comfort and release of prisoners of conscience.

We remember all who are working in the United Nations and in its specialized agencies for the health and healing of the nations.

Especially we pray for all those working in the United Nations for disarmament and for the constructive peaceful use of human talents and the world's wealth.

We remember all in positions of power and responsibility, those in government who take decisions that affect the lives of millions.

We pray that they shall feel as a great creative force the longing of people everywhere for peace.

We pray that they shall seek not the way of pride and vainglory and purely selfish advantage, but seek the ways that reconcile and build up the common good of all peoples.

Frank Walker.

May the Sunrise of Peace dawn swiftly over
the Face of the Earth, transforming the cold
and deathly pallor that now covers and curtains
the habitations of so many
And may its warmth and cheer revive the Spirit
of Humanity and lodge within the hearts and
homes of all God's children everywhere.

John McLachlan

THE SIGN OF PEACE.

The Sign of Peace symbolizes our intention to seek
the peace of God, the love of God, in our hearts,
and our intention to bring that peace and love
into the lives of others.

Shall we now offer each other the Sign of Peace
by greeting each other in whatever way seems
appropriate - perhaps with the words 'Peace be with
you'?

Liz Birtles

THE FLOWER: A BENEDICTION.

Peace is a fragile flower of your planting;
May we, as your gardeners, tend it and strengthen it
with the love we draw from you.

Cliff Reed

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