



An Interim Time for Pax Christi Metro New York

by Nancy Small

With the retirement of Executive Director Rosemarie Pace, PCMNY faced an important moment. A strong leader moved on and an open space was created. PCMNY entered an interim time, that sacred space between what has been and what will be.

Rather than rush to fill that space, the PCMNY Board of Directors paused to discern some important questions. How will the leadership torch be passed on after the director's unprecedented twenty-year tenure? What is the call of the Spirit for PCMNY at this moment in its history?

In order for the board to assess PCMNY's needs and consider future leadership models, a decision was made not to hire a new Executive Director immediately. An Advisory Council was formed to assist the board in its discernment.

Shortly thereafter, another wave of transition washed upon PCMNY's shores.

After many years at St. Joseph's Church, PCMNY received notice in May that the church needed its office space for church use. A number of possible sites for new office space were considered, and the PCMNY office moved to St. Francis of Assisi Church at 135 W. 31st Street on August 12th. This move offers opportunities for collaboration with St. Francis of Assisi as a partner in peacemaking. The new office location is easily accessible by public transportation from many directions.

We move through this interim time mindful of many changes and grateful for continuity. The PCMNY office is presently staffed by Elda Luisi, Office Coordinator, on Mondays and Wednesdays. Elda provides office oversight and administration while assisting with program work when possible. She, along with several board members, was instrumental in locating new office space for PCMNY and coordinating its move.

The PCMNY office is not currently forwarding emails it receives from other peace organizations. Because the office is not staffed daily, there may be a longer response time to requests. Some initiatives that were led by the PCMNY director are continuing albeit in a different way through working committees and volunteers. New volunteers are greatly needed to keep this work going. PCMNY is committed to continuing its flagship event, the Good Friday Way of the Cross.

As PCMNY's board and advisory council continues its discernment process, some important findings have come to light. PCMNY approaches its 40th anniversary in 2023 as a strong organization with an aging

membership. Its local group structure has grown smaller while its presence in the New York peace community has grown more prominent. There is a desire to attract younger members and a need for new volunteers to serve on the board or advisory council and assist with program work. PCMNY is a well-respected part of the New York peace and justice community with a determined following among a dedicated membership.

In *The Other Side of Chaos*, Margaret Silf writes about “minding the gap” between the past and future, encouraging us to pay attention to the gap because the space itself has something to teach us. Let us move mindfully through this interim time for PCMNY, open to the wisdom that this space has to offer.

Nancy Small served as the PCMNY Coordinator from 1991-1996 and is a member of its advisory council.

BOOK REVIEW: All Hell Breaking Loose

by Marian Ronan

All Hell Breaking Loose: The Pentagon's Perspective on Climate Change. By Michael T. Klare. Metropolitan Books. 2019. 237 pp. Paper. \$18.00.

I have been reading Michael's Klare's critiques of US militarism in *The Nation* and elsewhere for years. Klare is a scholar of peace studies and a fellow at the Arms Control Association in Washington. Never in my wildest would I have expected him to portray the Pentagon as an ally in the fight against climate change. But in *All Hell Breaking Loose*, that, to a great extent, is what he does.

Specifically, Klare draws on official documents and statements by officials to demonstrate that the Pentagon has long rejected the political posturing of much of the rest of the US government regarding climate change. This is the case because they believe that climate change will exacerbate the global security threats that are their immediate concern: wars with Russia, China, Iran and North Korea. With this in mind they call climate change a “threat multiplier.”

Klare's extremely readable book is divided into eight chapters, bookended by an introduction and a conclusion. The first chapter, “A World Besieged,” uses the Cold War concept “ladder of escalation” to explain the Pentagon's understanding of climate change as “a spectrum of increasingly severe disasters resulting in ever more complex and demanding missions for American military forces.” Indeed, Pentagon reports between 2000 and 2010 had already predicted the integrated climate calamities and tipping points that we have experienced more frequently in recent years--wildfires that cause thunderstorms whose lightning ignites more fires, for example, or the melting of permafrost caused by global warming giving off methane that increases the warming.

Chapter II, “Humanitarian Emergencies,” addresses what is, in general, the lowest step on the ladder of climate escalation, assistance the military has to provide in climate emergencies like Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines in 2013. But as Klare explains in Chapter III, “States on the Brink,” violence often breaks out between already hostile groups because of the effects of climate change, as when war began in Mali when Islamicists rose up against the government not only because of religious/ethnic differences but also because a drought drove nomadic Tuaregs into battles with agricultural tribes. At the end of this chapter and throughout Chapter IV, “Global Shocks,” Klare links climate change crises to other security threats--in Latin America to the migration crisis on the US southern border (and to the rise of cartels in Mexico). Then, even more masterfully, he links a Russian heat wave that reduced grain production to the Arab Spring in 2011.

In the chapter that I personally found most concerning, Chapter V, “Great Power Conflicts,” Klare delineates the way the Pentagon connects massive climate transformations with the possibility of actual military confrontations between the great powers. He does so by focusing primarily on the Arctic. I could hardly get my head around the idea of melting ice turning the Arctic into a “whole new ocean,” but that’s what the Pentagon anticipates.

Such an ocean would present great new opportunities for tourism, transportation, and the extraction of invaluable resources. Yet it is precisely potential conflicts over who controls those resources—oil, gas, and especially vital minerals—that most concerns the military. And international law about the rights of nations bordering this new ocean is worryingly ambiguous. The most powerful claim on such resources comes from Russia, and the US and Russia have each been conducting massive military training exercises in the area. And Putin has threatened nuclear war if any conflicts should erupt. The warming of the oceans and the security of the US and the entire planet clearly intersect in the Arctic.

Chapter VI, “Homeland,” addresses the threat of successive, escalating climate crises on the North American homeland, and the military’s increasing involvement in them, such as its extensive deployment in response to hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria in Texas, Florida and Puerto Rico in 2017. The great fear is that as the crises multiply and resources dwindle, the military will confront “escalating failure.”

The last two chapters “No Safe Harbor” and “Going Green,” connect the degradation of defense capabilities from damage to US military bases caused by climate change with military efforts to go off fossil fuels. Even in the Iraq War (2004), the Pentagon became aware of the fragility of infrastructure dependent on power grids and fossil fuels as the enemy attacked convoys bringing such fuels to troops. So a switch to solar and wind, and the achievement of net zero emissions, is crucial for the deployment of military resources.

In his conclusion, Michael Klare brings together the various steps in the “climate ladder of escalation” detailed in the previous eight chapters, culminating in “all hell breaking loose.” The military’s “greatest nightmare” is being confronted with multiple warming-related crises abroad while the homeland also experiences severe climate effects, the immobilization of US military bases by rising seas, and global trading systems breaking down.

Although the 2018 National Defense Strategy does not address climate change, because military leaders were forbidden to do so by the commander-in-chief, in response to this nightmare, the military has in fact formulated a deeply ambitious strategy for addressing climate change. This strategy begins with, first, vastly better preparation of the military’s own forces and installations to withstand coming harsh effects of climate change; second, reducing the DOD’s reliance on carbon emitting fossil fuels.; and third, cooperating with the militaries of other nations in adopting similar measures.

All this has crucial implications, Klare argues convincingly, for non-military communities as well. In particular, the military’s emphasis on international cooperation, such as stockpiling emergency supplies and conducting joint disaster drills, would be a tremendous addition to current US environmental policy.

One review of *All Hell Breaking Loose* expresses fear that Klare’s generally positive review of the Pentagon’s attitude and policies toward climate change will result in increased funding for the military. Funding for civilian volunteers during coming climate crises would be far better. Writing this as I am during the national Global Days of Action on Military Spending, I share this concern*.

Yet that does not undercut the importance of the information Michael Klare makes available in this book. If even the Pentagon is so frightened by the climate crisis that they are converting their bases and vehicles to renewables and preparing for war in the melting Arctic, surely the rest of us, including the rest of the US government, should be scared into greater action as well.

Marian Ronan is a former member of the Pax Christi board and Research Professor of Catholic Studies at New York Theological Seminary in Manhattan.

*<https://www.peace-ed-campaign.org/event/global-days-of-action-on-military-spending-gdams/>

Towards Ending War: The Unrecognized Deeper Nonviolence Presence Amidst Competing And Conflicting Religious Claims And Texts

by James Kelly, Ph.D.

In “A Biblical View of Covenants Old and New,” in the prestigious THEOLOGICAL STUDIES, September 2020, Vol. 81, No. 3, Andrew R. Davis writes about the tendency in recent theological discussion to describe the New Covenant as a fulfillment of its predecessors, but he claims this tendency lacks a biblical basis. Now this may sound pertinent solely to theologians and, even among them, only to the narrowly academic, as opposed to those more pastorally inclined and who think theology can and does make a difference in what the rest of us call “the real world.” But this real world contains real differences of judgment, often based on religious understandings and misunderstandings, which can lead to all too real acts of violence deepened by religious differences. My interest in reading and re-reading and thinking, and now writing, about the bible and covenants goes back to my Ph.D. dissertation on attitudes toward ecumenism in 1969 and then my long-time interest, since the Vietnam War era, in just war theory and nonviolence, especially in my present work with PAX CHRISTI, the Catholic Peace movement which began after the Second World War when Catholic Germans and Catholic French had to figure out how and why both sides could claim that they were fighting on the right side, which in retrospect we can now take as an act of religious nationalism rather than of Catholicism. In our present moment of history, the concerns about violence and war grow ever deeper.

As more than a few have said, the next war might be the last war because there will be left nothing else to destroy. So, because we deeply want less violence and deeper hope for world peace, let’s give some of our non-academic believers’ attention to this learned theologian’s challenging essay in the erudite THEOLOGICAL STUDIES.

Here are Davis’s key points with his explanations of their significance. More than a little reader’s patience is required to see their relevance to the pressing issues of war and nonviolence. The Second Vatican Council in its 1965 document *Nostra Aetate* moved Catholic teaching to greater respect for Judaism than had preceded it. It still viewed Catholicism as “fulfillment” of Hebrew scripture, but no longer “replacement” of it. This allowed Catholicism to retain the understanding that the Jewish Bible, and all other traditions and their texts, were inferior to Catholicism while appearing to be more tolerant of them. In short, to accept Jesus Christ as messiah - ultimately - meant expecting the absolute demise of all the other covenants. So, even though holy truths “subsist” in other traditions, they remain inferior and ultimately replaceable.

But Davis insists: “The tendency in recent theological discussion to describe the New Covenant as a fulfillment of its predecessors lacks a biblical basis. It is not biblical covenants that are fulfilled but their

promises, and this small shift in language can help avoid the superiority complex and recognize the shared hope of Jews and Christians for the ultimate fulfillment of God’s covenantal promises....” Rather than holding to the language of comparison, “a view of the covenants as complementary allows for multiple covenants to offer their distinctive witness of God’s promise and fidelity.”

He continues, “A closer look at these covenants shows that new covenants neither replace nor are superior to older Hebraic covenants. What we find instead is a dynamic tension among the covenants of the Hebrew Bible. An appreciation of this tension, which is the inevitable result of the covenants’ plurality and diversity, moves us away from the implied superiority of later covenants. This recognition is instructive for understanding the relationship between the New Covenant of Jesus and its biblical predecessors.”

Davis admits, “Not all differences align; some pull in different directions. We need room in our exegesis and theology for the various trajectories of biblical covenants because their multiplicity and diversity can expand our view of what it means to be in relationship with God.” The New Covenant of Jesus is ultimate for Christians “not because it perfects its predecessors but because we believe there will be no future circumstances for which this covenant will not be sufficient.” So, other covenants retain their truth, their validity which means that “the Jews and Christians (and other religions) stand together - ‘shoulder to shoulder’ in the memorable verse from Zephaniah 3:9 quoted in *Nostra Aetate* in anticipation of God’s fulfillment to Israel”. [Then I will purify the lips of the peoples, that all of them may call on the name of the God and serve God shoulder to shoulder.]So, however nations define their enemies, if they do so in religious terms they have no biblical warrant. Any hint of a religiously tinged nationalism should be regarded as heretical. This is far from a commonplace view among religious people. But those of us fortunate enough to be able to can, in our various ways of faith reflecting and doing, share the biblical truth that there can be no wars or violence with any true religious justification. My way is through Pax Christi with its conviction that violence leads only to violence and that even the possession of nuclear weapons violates every truth of scripture, reason, and humanity. My prayerful best wishes as you search for your way.

James R. Kelly, long-time member of Pax Christi Downtown Brooklyn, is Fordham Sociology Professor emeritus and has published in *America*, *Commonweal*, *The Review Of Religious Research*, and *The Fellowship Of Catholic Sociologists*.

James R. Kelly is Emeritus Professor of Sociology, (Fordham University)

Kerux No. 127 **2021 Fall**

“Kerux” is the Greek word meaning “herald”. As the name of our newsletter, it reminds us that we are to be heralds of God’s nonviolent love. We welcome letters, articles and reviews.

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Nominate Peacemakers for 2022

It is time once again to nominate notable Peacemakers for our annual Awards Ceremony. As always, we are seeking those whose efforts, vision, and spirit lead us on the way to peace. One should be a **person of faith whose peacemaking has reached people across the nation** in his or her efforts to teach peace, make peace, and be peace. The other should be a **person of faith whose work is helping to transform metropolitan New York into the City of God**. Please nominate one or both who fit these descriptions, have inspired you, and will draw others to our cause. **Send a paragraph** for each to the PCMNY office by *November 6th*. **Designate if each nominee is for the national or local award. Tell us why** you think he or she should be honored as a peacemaker. And please **include contact information** for your nominee. **Send an email** message to info@nypaxchristi.org, and be sure to include all required information. Thanks !

A Gift of Peace has been given in memory of:

Rev. Dennis Foley, C.Ss.R.
Sr. Ellen Kieran, MSBT
Fr. Raymond Nobiletti, M.M.
Linda M. Thorson

Please remember them in prayer.

Announcements

September 11th 20th Anniversary Memorial: Join Pax Christi Metro New York and Pax Christi New York State at 11 AM, September 11th for a Memorial on the 20th Anniversary of the September 11th Attacks. Share a personal memory. Recite a poem. Read a reflection. Offer a prayer. Contact nypaxchristi@gmail.com if you would like to participate in this way. Whether you want to participate or just observe, please **register at:** <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZUkcuiuj0sH9yrhlOuc5XVvfz8XLCOe6B>.

Rising Together: A Celebration in the Struggle for Justice, People and Planet! Join a coalition of organizations who are hosting a multitude of speakers and performers in Foley Square on Sunday, September 19th from 11 AM to 5 PM. This event will also be available on-line.

Interfaith Prayer Service for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons: Join Pax Christi New York State and an interfaith community for this annual gathering in observance of the UN International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons. All are welcome to share a prayer for peace and the abolition of nuclear weapons from your faith tradition on Saturday, September 25th, starting at 11 AM via Zoom. Register in advance at:

https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZ0qcemspzkiGd0cYXWKV62-XsIreVIFxP_1

Protect Our Ocean: Japan is planning to release over one millions tons of radioactive water from the Fukushima-Daiishi nuclear power plant into the Pacific Ocean starting in 2023 and continuing for the next 30 years. Join the Manhattan Project for a Nuclear-Free World on Saturday, October 2nd at 10:30 AM in Bryant Park and march to Dag Hammarskjold Plaza to say NO to this desecration of the Pacific Ocean.

Afghanistan War Commemoration: Join War Resisters League and the local peace community for this annual commemoration on Thursday, October 7th, the anniversary of the start of the war. Details to come.

Fall Assembly: Attend PCMNY's annual Fall Assembly on Saturday, October 23rd, on ZOOM. Details to follow. Speaker: John Amidon, founder of the Kateri Peace Conference and member of Veterans for Peace.

Annual Appeal: If you haven't already done so, please reflect on the many reasons you value PCMNY, especially in the current political climate, and respond as generously as possible to our annual appeal. If you did respond, THANK YOU!

Other Ways to Support Your Pax Christi Region: Visit <https://www.nfggive.com/guidestar/13-3424349> to donate online. Also support us by searching the Internet with GoodSearch.com (powered by Yahoo) or shopping online with GoodShop.com. Just indicate Pax Christi Metro New York as your charity. You can also turn your online shopping and searching into much-needed donations at www.iGive.com/PaxChristiMetroNewYork OR <http://smile.amazon.com/ch/13-3424349>.

"Gifts of Peace": Donate to PCMNY in honor of those you love, whether they're celebrating a special holiday, a birthday, anniversary, jubilee, or new baby, are in need of encouragement, or mourning a loss. Cards are available from the PCMNY office for a recommended donation of \$5 each.

Pennies for Peace: On your own or with others, collect pennies throughout the year. Convert them to dollars and send them to PCMNY as a year-end gift.

Matching Gifts: Ask your company if it will match your gift to PCMNY.

Bequests: Please remember PCMNY in your will. Our legal name is Pax Christi Metro New York and our tax ID number is 13-3424349.



**The PCMNY office has moved. Our new address is:
135 W. 31st Street
New York, NY 10001**

The phone number remains the same.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Sept. 11th: 20th Anniversary Memorial on Zoom, 11:00 AM – 1:00 PM

Sept. 19th: Rising Together, Foley Square, 11:00 AM – 5:00 PM

Sept. 22nd: Interfaith Prayer Service for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons on Zoom
11:00 AM – 1:00 PM

Oct. 2nd: Protect Our Oceans, Bryant Park to Dag Hammarskjold Plaza, 10:30 AM - Noon

Oct. 7th: Anniversary of the war in Afghanistan, details to come

Oct. 23rd: Fall Assembly, details to come

Contact the office for updated information on all events:

info@nypaxchristi.org, 212-420-0250, or www.nypaxchristi.org.

Also visit us on Facebook and Twitter.

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