

# Blessed are the peacemakers

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Considerations after the attacks on the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon.



We grieve with the WACC family, especially our members and friends in the USA. We grieve for the untimely deaths, the violence of it all, the tragic aftermath, the trauma of broken lives. Grieve, we must. Justice. Of course. But what will happen after the dust has settled and the theatre of war shifts elsewhere, far away, perhaps to some remote part of Afghanistan? Will we continue to grieve for the innocent victims of this war in the making or would that, as some commentators have already pointed out, be a case of misdirected Christian sympathy, by Christians who have lost their nerve in the midst of a call for a Jihad? In order to gain some semblance of an answer to that question, perhaps we need to keep our image of the crucified Christ with us as we strive to understand this tragic happening as one event in a cycle of events.

In the eyes of the mainstream media, this was a singular, unique, event. The sheer unbelievability of such suicidal madness, in all its immediacy, was breath-taking news. It was a lethal attack on democracy, the free world, the American way of life. This was the sub-text and the text. In a CNN-dominated world, there was no news but this news, followed by the news of revenge and retribution narrated by an assorted array of war hawks, each

fuming fire and brimstone. In the immediate aftermath of such wanton destruction, such a response is expected, even normal. But as the clock ticked and the answers were not forthcoming and cool heads were scarce, scapegoats were needed - and the corporate media obliged by pointing their fingers at Muslims. The language of 'crusades', and a military resolve and response in the defence of 'civilisation', merely accentuated local feelings against a specific faith community, the vast majority of whom grieved like the rest for the victims of this atrocity.

Can we expect the media to respond any differently to a crisis of this sort? Perhaps not. Yet, nearly thirty years ago, a few graphic photographs and war-reports from Vietnam changed US public opinion and led to the US pull-out from the Indo-China region. Today, after lessons learned during 'Desert Storm' we are in an era characterised by the symbiosis between the corporate media and the establishment. At times like this, it is hard to distinguish between the CNN and the Pentagon. But it makes sound business sense, for in this way, CNN gets to where the action is and occupies the front seat and the Pentagon gets to spout its war-speak. We can be reassured that CNN and other corporate media will get to report the 'fireworks' in Afghanistan and Iraq. If there is a ground war, it is unlikely that images of body-bags will feature in it.

Thankfully, the Taleban do not have access to global television. Ordinary Afghans do however have many stories to share - of being pawns during the Cold War, of half a million children

disabled by war and land mines, and of the depredations of the Taleban on life and human dignity. Perhaps there may be others who might share their thoughts on the seige of Palestine and the deaths of children in Iraq. But where are the media to report such stories? For it is only when the world community is informed of the global scale of human suffering and of the global institutions that profit from such suffering, that we will begin to realise the futility of militarism as a solution and of the need for an alternative response.

Christ has already been crucified in Afghanistan, as he was in New York, Washington and Pittsburgh.

Blessed are the peacemakers for theirs...