

Desert Voices

The Newsletter of Nevada Desert Experience Volume 12, Number 1 June 1999

MILLENNIUM 2000; A CALL TO UNITY

by Chris Montesano

The Buddhist monk Thich Nhat Hanh in his book, Living Buddha Living Christ talks about religion and says that the deepest way that we can approach our faith tradition is as a living truth. Living from this kind of depth, when we encounter another faith tradition we see it as an opportunity to draw us deeper into the roots of our own tradition. Unfortunately, historically this has not occurred. One faith tradition has encountered another as the extension of an imperialist power. Religion has often been used as a tool to bring people of other traditions under the thumb of a dominating world power. For those of us in the Christian tradition, we have lost sight of the simple truth Christ taught; "With others, those in authority lord it over one another; it is not to be so among you. He or she who is first is to be least and the servant of all". What

Thich Nhat Hanh says in his book is that during the Vietnam war, when he encountered Christians who were living true to their own tradi-

tion and actively working to help establish peace, it allowed him to experience Christianity not as an (continued on next page)

Appeal for your Support of Millennium Event

Dear Friends of the Nevada Desert Experience;

We approach the new millennium with an awareness that peace is still very illusive and the threat of nuclear annihilation continues to haunt us. The recent conflict in the Balkans has only once more illustrated that we are very quick to try to bring an end to violence with a response. In this age it is generally a massive violence to counter violence, such as massive bombing by the B-2 Stealth bomber that hit among other targets, the Chinese embassy. This particular bombing reminds us of the warning of retired General Lee Butler (until 1994 head of the Strategic Air Command that managed the nation's nuclear arsenal). Butler insisted that all contemporary wars lead to the danger of a nuclear response. This is not unimaginable in the case of a bombing of the embassy of a nuclear power.

As this issue announces, we will be gathering in Las Vegas in the final days of this millennium and will be at the Nevada Test Site as we enter the new era to declare our insistence that we end the continued development of new nuclear weapons and work towards the total abolition of nuclear arms.

We are experiencing a large response to this call for the Millennium 2000 event. But as we know, these events are costly. We must build to this event, and cover the costs it will incur. Las Vegas is the hottest entertainment spot in the world for New Year's Eve. Therefore, everything is more expensive in Las Vegas. In addition we must maintain an ongoing vigil at the Nevada Test Site and a continual protest in response to the sub-critical nuclear weapon tests and other less obvious tests that violate the spirit and even intent of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.

Unfortunately, too many believe that the nuclear age is over. The Cold War is over, we have a test ban treaty, why do we need to support Nevada Desert Experience? Well, the work still needs to be done. The sub-critical tests now being conducted in the Nevada desert enable us to continue developing new nuclear weapons. We continue to threaten the world with nuclear annihilation. Please help us in this cause. There is no more important campaign than this one. We need your support in our activities and in spreading the message. We also need financial support. We welcome all that you can give us. If you know any other sources of funds, please let us know. With your help we can continue until we achieve a total abolition of nuclear weapons. Please join us.

-Louie Vitale, OFM

Millennium 2000

Walking the Ways of Peace



**RELIGIOUS ACTION
FOR DISARMAMENT**

(SEE POSTER INSIDE)

(continued from front page)

imperialist power but as a living truth.

To quote from Living Buddha Living Christ: "Professor Hans Kung has said; 'Until there is peace between religions, there can be no peace in the world'. People kill and are killed because they cling too tightly to their own beliefs and ideologies. When we believe that ours is the only faith that contains the truth, violence and suffering will surely be the result". Thich Nhat Hanh concludes his book with the following thought; "We can enrich one another's spiritual lives, but there is no need to alienate people from their ancestors and their values. ... True understanding comes from true practice. Understanding and love are values that transcend all dogma."

I believe all major religious traditions point to the following truth. If we were to take a moment to look at the world as it really is, we would see at the center of the universe the vibration of the power of God's love. From the stars to a single blade of grass and the smallest grain of sand is the power of God's love. Each human person and all creatures of this earth are surrounded in this love. It is all around us and within us and it is our true call. The question it poses to us is will we say yes? If we do say yes, that begins to give us the power in our daily living to honor one another and all the creatures whom we meet because we are grounded in the truth that all are one.

As well, you know that despite the signing of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, our government has allocated \$40 billion over the next decade to do sub-critical and computer-simulated nuclear weapon tests, as well as building a facility that can produce a few nuclear weapons or many, if need be. In August 1997, Dr. Ted Taylor (who

worked as a nuclear scientist for 30 years with the Los Alamos Labs) was one of our speakers. His specialty before opposing nuclear weapons was the study of their miniaturization. It is his belief that the fusion technology being developed at the National Ignition Facility being built at Livermore Laboratory and a similar laboratory in

France is primarily weapons related, not energy related. It is this research that will enable people to make nuclear weapons without a plutonium trigger. Nuclear weapons could be made the size of a pen which could destroy buildings or they could be made small enough to be put in a vehicle and destroy any major city in the world! He

PETE SEEGER'S 70TH BIRTHDAY PARTY

Nevada Desert Experience and School of the Americas Watch hosted a benefit "Celebration of Hope" concert in Washington, D.C. on May 1. Performers were Pete Seeger, Odetta, Iris Dement, Grupo Morazon and Jon Fromer. Below: Pete Seeger performing. Photo on right: (left to right) Fr. Roy Bourgeois of SOA Watch, Iris Dement, Nevada Desert Experience Director Bev Hoffman, Carol Richardson of SOA Watch, Pete Seeger. Posters (\$8) and T-Shirts (\$12) are available from NDE, postage paid.



believes that we must stop this research before we acquire the knowledge that would take us to another level of nuclear weapons development. Since the dawn of the Nuclear Age, our government has spent trillions of dollars on nuclear weapons systems. The true reason for our deficit is this spending--not our spending on human services. Our society has chosen to place the blame on the immigrant, the poor and the outcast as the cause of our woes. As the Welfare Reform Act takes effect, it is the poor and disenfranchised of our society who have been chosen to bear the burden of our greed. In reality, the cause of our woes is this nuclear madness and the violence and bloodshed of war and racism. Especially now with the outbreak of war in the Balkans it is essential that all religious traditions address war and the preparations for war.

The human family has come to the point where either we acknowledge the unity in our different traditions or we continue in our madness of violence and our preoccupation with weapons of mass destruction. A new truth is ready to emerge in the human family, just as new truths emerge in the human spirit. Working together to end nuclear weapons research and testing is a concrete way that different faith traditions can express their unity.

For these reasons, Nevada Desert Experience along with Healing Global Wounds, Fellowship of Reconciliation, Pax Christi USA and the Los Angeles Catholic Worker are sponsoring an event called; "Millennium 2000, Walking the Ways of Peace". This event will be held in Las Vegas, Nevada as an alternative way to welcome in the new Millennium. It will begin on December 29th, 1999 with a

LDE XVIII: Vigil, Retreat, Walk, Encampment

by David Buer, OFM

The Lenten Desert Experience (LDE XVIII) began this year with twenty supporters attending an Ash Wednesday prayer service at the Mercury gate to the Nevada Test Site. After the service, most headed back to Las Vegas for the sentencing of Susi and Reinhard of Shundahai Network for their "Sweeties" action at the Las Vegas Federal Building last September. Sr. Ginny and I drove up to Tonopah to see our friends from the Los Angeles Catholic Worker, Martha Scarborough and Joyce Parkhurst, in jail there for their August 1997 "Defencing action". Mike Walli stayed behind to begin the Lenten vigil in the friar camper parked at Peace Camp across the freeway from the Nevada Test Site, NDE kept an ongoing vigil at Peace Camp all during Lent. Over two

dozen folks spent time at Peace Camp, with some choosing to vigil the Nevada Test Site workers as they arrived to work early in the morning.

Palm Sunday weekend, NDE hosted a Lenten retreat at St. James Church entitled, "One Step, Then Another into the Earth Community". Over forty folks attended the retreat led by Louie Vitale and a team from Pace e Bene including Mary Litell, Rosemary Lynch, Peter Ediger and Julia Occhiogrosso. The retreat included presentations, music and dance from the ages as well as a walk meditation in the nearby desert on the outskirts of an ever expanding Las Vegas. Our meals were lovingly prepared by Joan Monastero, Barbara Alumbaugh and others. Early Palm Sunday morning, the retreatants gathered with the Holy (continued at bottom of back page)

youth program organized by Ched Myers and Jesse Manibusan. Thursday, December 30th will be a Bishops's Dialogue on whether or not deterrence is any longer morally justified. There are already five Bishops participating. The keynote speaker will be Jonathan Schell who wrote "The Gift of Time". On Friday, December 31st the morning keynote speaker will be Joyce Hollyday with a response from a panel of representatives from five different faith traditions. The afternoon workshops will explore the human and environmental impacts of the bomb. The keynote speaker will be Daniel Berrigan, SJ. At 11:00 p.m. at the Nevada Test Site will be a liturgy lead by

Bishop Thomas Gumbleton. At midnight a candlelight procession will walk to the Nevada Test Site gates, and then an optional nonviolent direct action procession onto the Test Site. The afternoon of January 1, 2000 will involve an exploration of "Our Brokenness, the Violence Within". In the evening will be a concert. On Sunday, January 2, 2000 will be a panel of Anti-nuclear organizations discussing "Where do we go from here?". I hope you will participate.

Chris Montesano is a Board member of Nevada Desert Experience and member of the Catholic Worker movement for thirty years.

Bishops' Dialogue

A Bishop's Dialogue for Disarmament will open Millennium 2000 on Wednesday evening, December 29th at 7:30 p.m. The event will be hosted by Las Vegas Bishop Daniel Walsh. Three Bishops are already committed to coming.

Nevada Desert Experience

FRANCISCAN FRIARS OF CALIFORNIA

P. O. Box 46645

Las Vegas, NV 89114

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

HAVE YOU THOUGHT ABOUT PUTTING NEVADA DESERT EXPERIENCE IN YOUR WILL?

We've been doing anti-nuclear work for 17 years and will be here until nuclear abolition is a reality. Give us a call for info about planned giving. Phone Bev at (702) 646-4814.

N.D.E. STAFF & BOARD

We welcome new board members *Paula Olivares, Allan Sawyer and Bishop Tom Cumbleton*. *Bev Hoffman* was hired in January as N.D.E. Director. *David Buér, OFM* has left to work full time at Poverello House, a center for homeless men. We thank him for his loyal years of service.

U. S. TESTS NUCLEAR WEAPON!

An underground "subcritical" nuclear weapon was tested in Feb. 1999

Nonprofit Organization

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(continued from LDE XVIII)

Week Walkers at the DOE (Department of Energy) headquarters in Las Vegas for their prayer and blessing send-off. As the walkers began their sixty-five mile walk to the Test Site, the retreatants drove out to the Nevada Test Site for a liturgy and non-violent action. There were nine arrests at the Test Site gates.

The Holy Week Walk had sixteen walkers from several states and The Netherlands. Each decade was represented, with walkers ranging in age from the 20's through the 80's. Again, Bill White graciously accompanied the walkers with his large RV and tended to us, as needed mile after mile. Each day we took turns leading morning and evening prayer and sharing a bit about our faith and life journey. Meals were provided and served by Stan Philoon, Sr. Ginny, Bev Hoffman and Deborah Merola, Charlie Hilfenhaus, Greg Gable, Patricia Pearlman, the Shundahai Network and others. We

arrived 65 miles later at Peace Camp on Good Friday and were greeted by Shoshone elder Corbin Harney and twenty supporters.

After our prayer circle we processed toward the Mercury Gate for the thirteenth annual Nuclear Stations of the Cross hosted by the Las Vegas Catholic Worker. Gary Cavalier, Peter Ediger and Sr. Rosemary helped coordinate the stations. At the last station there were sixteen arrested for crossing onto the Nevada Test Site. Afterward, a Holy Triduum encampment was established at Peace Camp. On Holy Saturday, Corbin led a caravan of five vehicles to Yucca Mountain, where we all pitched-in to set up a new sweat lodge for ceremonies to take place the next week. South of Beatty, we drove around the leaking nuclear waste dump operated by U.S. Ecology. In Beatty, we snacked on the famous chili at the Burro Inn. Back at Peace Camp we had a farewell supper with some of the walkers, in the large tent provided

by our friends at Cactus Springs. Early Easter morning we woke up to two inches of wet snow! The weather cancelled our sweat lodge, but we had a final prayer circle with Corbin before we processed to the Mercury Gate entrance to the Test Site for our Easter morning prayer and action. There were seven arrests. Even the Nye County Sheriffs were anxious to get us released and out of the snow and cold.

MILLENNIUM 2000 EVENT T-SHIRTS AVAILABLE: \$12

(See order form on poster inside)
Green ink on unbleached shirt

NDE Wish List:

Office Chairs, Copy Machine, Cordless Telephone, Stamps, Office Desk, Name Tags, Air Mileage. Call Bev at (702) 646-4814 if you can donate any items (tax-deductible).

NEVADA DESERT EX

Millennium 2000: Wall

In September 1996, President Clinton signed the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. Since that time:

- * The U.S. has continued to test and design increasingly horrific nuclear weapons under the guise of the Stockpile Stewardship & Management Program (SSM).
- * Global proliferation has erupted as countries like India & Pakistan point to the SSM as justification for their own testing.
- * The U.S. has developed the "bunker buster" for use against an already crippled Iraq. It is the first new nuclear weapon to enter our arsenal since 1989.
- * Five subcritical tests have been conducted at the Nevada Test Site and Russia reciprocated with its own test in December 1998.
- * The largest military budget since the end of the Cold War was recently passed by Congress.

Now is the time for prayer, reflection and action...How will we enter the new millennium?

- * Join the Nobel Peace Laureates in calling for a new millennium of nonviolence and peace!
- * Join generals and admirals, heads of states, religious leaders and people throughout the world in calling for the complete abolition of nuclear weapons!
- * Join NDE and special guests: Jonathan Schell, Bishop Thomas Gumbleton, Dr. Rosalie Bertell, Dan Berrigan, SJ, Joanna Macy, Rev. Jim Lawson, Ched Myers, Rabbi Lynn Gottlieb, Corbin Harney, June Stark Casey, John Dear, SJ, Rabbi Margaret Holub, Clayton Ramey, Rosemary Lynch, OSF, Louis Vitale, OFM, Jesse Manibusan and a multitude of others for Millennium 2000!

Transportation:

Make your travel arrangements as soon as possible (TODAY!). Pat Bell at Horizon Travel (702) 451-0406 has arranged discounts on 3 major airlines. NDE will not be able to provide transportation to and from the airport. Directions to Bishop Gorman High School will be in your registration packet.



PERIENCE PRESENTS:

aking the Ways of Peace

ENNIIUM

2000



Peace •

Registration:

The registration fee for either the Youth Day and the regular program or the regular program alone is \$50 (\$75 after July 1, 1999). This amount includes housing and eight meals prepared by Catholic Worker communities.

Housing:

Sleeping bag space will be provided at our meeting place. Housing (with beds) in the homes of local supporters is available on a limited basis. NDE has arranged RV rentals as well as 20 rooms at Indian Springs Hotel (near the Test Site). Call Pat Bell at Horizon Travel (702) 451-0406 to make reservations.

Highlights of Schedule:

Wednesday, December 29, 1999:

Bishops' Dialogue for Disarmament

Youth Nonviolence Workshops

Thursday, December 30, 1999:

Opening Ceremony / Youth Program continues

Keynote: Jonathan Schell: "The Gift of Time"

Friday, December 31, 1999:

Keynote / Faith Response Panel / Workshops / New Year's Eve Party

MIDNIGHT: OVER A THOUSAND PEOPLE JOIN IN A
CANDLELIGHT PROCESSION ONTO THE TEST SITE!

Saturday, January 1, 2000:

Our Brokenness: the Violence Within / Concert with Jesse
Manibusan

New Year's Day Vigil on Las Vegas Strip

Sunday, January 2, 2000:

Panel of Anti-Nuclear Organizations / Closing Ceremony

Please clip and return to: Nevada Desert Experience,
P. O. Box 46645, Las Vegas, NV 89114

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone(s): _____

Organization: _____

☐ Enclosed is my registration fee of \$50 or (\$75 after July 1, 1999. Limited scholarships are available.)

☐ Enclosed is a donation to help with this event. Amount: \$ _____

☐ I will be attending the Youth Day. ☐ I will be attending the regular program.

☐ Sleeping bag space is fine. ☐ I would like alternative housing.

☐ I am organizing others to come: carload, vanload, busload, etc.

☐ (circle one) # of people: _____

☐ Send me more brochures to help with organizing.

☐ Please send a Millennium 2000 T-Shirt (\$12) Circle: M L XL

Religious

December

Bishop C

& the New

Co-spons

Fellow

Pax

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NEVADA DESERT EXPERIENCE, P. O.

PHONE: (702) 646-4814, FAX: (702)



s Action for Disarmament

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orman High School, Las Vegas

yada (Nuclear Weapon) Test Site

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Christi USA

healing Global Wounds

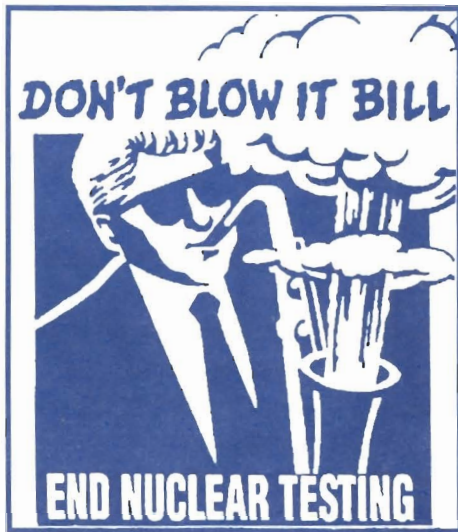
Los Angeles Catholic Worker

BOX 46645, LAS VEGAS, NV 89114

631-5538, E-MAIL: nde@igc.apc.org.

President Bill Clinton
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, D. C. 20500





Dear President Clinton;
I urge you to cancel the "low-yield" underground nuclear weapons tests planned this year at the Nevada Test Site. Can we as a nation expect other nuclear weapon states to comply with the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty while we continue nuclear weapons research and design? As retired U. S. Air Force General Lee Butler recently stated; "Nuclear weapons are inherently dangerous, hugely expensive, militarily inefficient and morally indefensible".

sincerely,

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____



Place
Stamp
Here

Nevada Desert Experience

P.O. Box 4487
Las Vegas, NV 89127

