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SEEK THE TRUTH AND SERVE HUMANITY



EDITORIAL

'THE TRUTH WILL OUT' is an old truism but unfortunately those who have a vested interest in suppressing the truth have the resources and support from government to keep truth hidden for a very long time. This was the case with the Iraq war. Of course those, including the Melbourne Unitarian Church, who were unequivocally stating before the war started that the Iraq war was all about control of oil and absolutely nothing to do with 'freedom' for the people of Iraq, were categorised as the 'loony left', and there were those who tried to stop this church speaking out, saying the church should not make political statements. Shame on those who knew but kept silent!

Now, thanks to brave and committed journalists from Fairfax Media and the Huffington Post, corruption; scandal; the murderous slaughter of vulnerable, innocent people through the imposition of a totally unnecessary and corrupt Iraq war; illegal misappropriation of sovereign natural resources; gross profiteering and collusion; and excessive exploitation have been exposed, and all can now be summed up in two words: oil scandal. This is the biggest exposure of governments, corporations, banks and criminals since Watergate and these reporters are to be congratulated for their positive and courageous journalism.

Along with our 'great democratic allies' the United States of America and the UK, Australia now stands exposed, like the emperor with no clothes, embroiled in a scandal that involves governments, multinationals and banks, along with a Monaco-based, shadowy company called Unaoil acting as a sleazy go-between and making billions out of their perfidy. Who knows how widely this has spread or what politicians were aware of or even complicit in.

'Unaoil has "almost perfected the art of corruption",' the reporters write. 'The trove (of emails) reveals how they rub

shoulders with royalty, party in style, mock anti-corruption agencies and operate a secret network of fixers and middlemen throughout the world's oil producing nations.'

The royal commission into the building unions, a politically motivated attack on the trade union movement, is like a game of marbles compared to these revelations into oil. Union officials were guilty of defending their members ... not of slaughtering innocent people for profit. Let's get some perspective!

Can we now assume those who dragged us into the Iraq war under the pretense that we were freeing the Iraqi people from tyranny will be tried and punished as war criminals? Can we now assume that the Bush Administration, the Blair Administration and the Howard Administration will be fully investigated for being complicit in that war which was always about oil and never about justice for the people of Iraq?

This oil war resulted in the slaughter of almost a million Iraqis, most of who were non-combatants, and their suffering continues. How much profit are a million innocent people and the destruction of an ancient civilisation worth? How many more need die so that corrupt multinationals and banks can inflate their already obscene wealth? How many innocent men, women and children have been forced to flee these corrupt wars, creating the greatest exodus of refugees the world has ever seen?

This major scandal exposure, while extremely important, will only be effective if those involved are properly investigated and charged by their respective law enforcement agencies. But let's not get too excited at that prospect. Such investigations are generally entered into when it suits those in power to do so, such as in the royal commission into the building trade unions. We wait with bated breath for condemnation of this oil scandal or a royal commission into it, from our Government. ✝

HIBAKUSHA, H-BOMBS AND HIROSHIMA – REFLECTIONS ON THE 70TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ATOMIC BOMBINGS

An address given at the church by **Fiona McCandless** on 7 February 2016

As it has been six months since I returned home from the A & H bomb conference in Japan, I will speak more of how the conference has influenced my understanding of peace, of activism, and helped me discover my own small voice within the peace movement. My speech will also touch on Australia's history and future with nuclear warfare, and how our complacent, often-silenced voice is damaging our land and sovereignty.

Our involvement in the Hiroshima and Nagasaki peace conference allowed us to mingle with people from around the world, experience different cultures and their understandings of land, of war, of peace, and of how peace affects a person's personal and cultural identity.

We participated in sessions with different groups of activists – such as youth groups and the Japanese Women's Forum. I found these interactions with different groups the most inspiring aspect of our time in Japan because they showed how discussions of peace can vary, and how each different immersion into the peace cause is important for the final goal – and in the case of this conference in particular – for the eradication of nuclear warfare.

Due to the sheer size of the conference it was held in a large room or stadium, with the panel seated on a stage, each esteemed speaker introduced and allowed to say their part, followed by question time. This is, I suppose, how most conferences are held, be it for business, peace talks, or even in churches such as this. We heard from astounding speakers. It was also the first time I have been surrounded by so many people who have spent their lives fighting for peace – the 'leaders' of the anti-nuclear weapon movement. In a sterile, patriarchal conference environment it was difficult for me to digest all the information I was listening to every day. However, the information was so important, and so dense, and so shocking, I couldn't sleep at night trying to comprehend it all; trying to comprehend the nature of nuclear fallout, and the horrors of the hibakusha, and to understand why these weapons are still being manufactured. And, most importantly, I spent many sleepless nights wondering what I could possibly do to stop it.

I knew the 'story' of the atomic bombings in Hiroshima and Nagasaki long before I visited Japan for this conference. I had studied Japanese language and culture since primary school and had read accounts from the atomic bomb survivors – the *hibakusha* – during class. My nanna had also told me about the horrors of nuclear warfare throughout my childhood, and with her I attended 'Friends of Japan' solidarity peace events in Melbourne. During the

conference we were privileged to listen to approximately fifteen first-hand accounts of the bombings from the few living survivors. Hearing the voice of the hibakusha and inhabiting the same room as them allowed us to understand their experience more than any history book can communicate. We had a chance to really listen to their voices and incorporate it into our own dialogue for peace. This conference provided a balance between proactive discussion on how to eradicate nuclear weapons, and personal accounts, reminding us why we can never allow these weapons to be used again. It is vital that we continue to listen to these stories, and take them in as best we can, so we can comprehend and remember the devastation a single bomb can cause.

Being able to speak face-to-face with a variety of people, and in a setting that is personal where I was allowed to truly engage in a story, I slowly came to realise how my voice fits into that story, and learnt how to listen to others' experiences of war and of peace. I experienced this particularly while attending Japan's Women's Forum.

The Women's Forum was an eye-opening experience for me because it gave a perspective on alternative ways peace events can be run. The Women's Forum was not as ordered as the rest of the conference. Children ran in front of the stage, and the stage itself was not somewhere you needed to be invited on to – you could simply join the line and have your own turn in front of the microphone. Everyone was respectful, and it allowed the audience, and me, to feel as though we had something to say, and was an avenue to making our voices heard.

My voice, I learned, is a sum of my parts. I am young, and I am a woman. I am an activist striving to live in a healthy planet where there is no threat to my future children's lives due to inhumane weapons wielded to fight someone else's war. I also realise that I am lucky. I am white, so I have a louder voice than the many impoverished people who share this planet alongside me: people who are told they don't have a voice because of the colour of their skin or because of the small size of their bank accounts. The Women's Forum helped me remember that peace is about protecting people, and when it comes to peace, we all need to be involved. There was life in this women's forum – a place where we came together as equals, fighting for an equal cause.

During our short time in Japan a petition was dispersed that had collected 6.2 million signatures: 6.2 million voices against the Abe government's proposal to reintroduce a Japanese military and be gone with their nonviolent

constitution. Article 9 in the Japanese constitution has become a proud part of Japanese identity, defining them since World War Two as a peaceful people. Despite collecting millions of signatures against the abolition of Article 9, and despite student protests within Tokyo and across the country, Abe ignored these voices and has started chipping away at the peaceful Japanese constitution.

I spoke with a self-proclaimed 'Peace Pilgrim' from the Philippines, named AG, about the amazing number of signatures in support of Article 9. AG walks for peace, having walked around the Philippines, Australia and America, and recently he walked from Rome to Paris for the Climate Change Summit late last year. His peace activism sees him speaking with local people, perpetuating a grass roots idea of pacifist protest, whilst painting art murals illustrating his cause along the way. I remember AG's take on the petition signing, saying that 6.2 million signatures is an astounding number – almost too many to comprehend. However, the impossibility of comprehending this many signatures is the issue. 'Imagine if the 0.2 of those people who signed the petition took to the streets', AG said. 'Imagine if they sat outside the government Diet building in Tokyo and refused to move until Prime Minister Abe was forced to confront them. Two hundred thousand people occupying a public space in the name of democracy and peace. Now that would be a statement.'

This concept has stuck with me. There is power in numbers, but again during this conference I learned that there is also power in voice and in occupying a space together. Listening to others and sharing ideas helps concepts grow into voice, and hopefully from voice into action. Action formed this way – through sharing experiences – may have more might than the trend of the web-based activism of today.

The conference also provided a plane for us to meet with indigenous people from other Pacific Islands who have experienced nuclear weapon testing. Two nuclear weapons may have been dropped in war, but over two thousand bombs have been detonated in Earth's history. To quote the 'Nuclear Testing Tally' website: 'Most of the test sites are in the lands of indigenous people, far from the capitals of the testing governments'. In Japan we met several representatives from the Mariana Islands: from Guam and Tinian whose land is being forcibly transformed into an American military base, and women from the Marshall Islands whose homeland is still poisoned from nuclear fallout thanks to the testing of new nuclear weapons.

These women live with such love and fight with such passion to get their voices heard. It made me wonder



what Australian sacred lands have gone through in the name of nuclear power and weaponry.

The British have detonated twelve nuclear warheads on Australian land in Maralinga, Emu Field and on the Montebello Islands. The fallout from the first British test on the Montebello Islands saw fallout reaching from WA to Rockhampton on the east coast of Queensland. Hundreds of smaller plutonium tests were undertaken into the early 1960s. This plutonium is yet to be properly cleaned up off our land, and much of this radioactive material is still sitting on our land's surface. A WikiLeaks article also reveals the government's concern that terrorists could potentially collect this plutonium and disperse the radioactive waste over a city. Fifty years after the nuclear tests and this plutonium can still be used to cause irreversible destruction on human lives. This plutonium is still poisoning our land and our land's people and yet we are sitting in silence, not listening to the voices of our indigenous people, and not caring to raise our own privileged voices at these injustices.

Australia may be a signatory to the nuclear non-proliferation treaty, however we have the largest deposit of uranium in the world, accounting for 31% of the world's total uranium. We export this uranium to nuclear weapon states such as China, France and India, and we transported our uranium to America during the Second World War – which really makes you think. The threats and plans to mine uranium in Kakadu are still under discussion – these sacred lands having the largest discovered deposit of uranium in the world. The irony that our ancient land that has sustained life for tens of thousands of years could be dug up and used to fuel weapons that can destroy small countries is too full of capitalistic blind-sightedness, is too painful to bear. It is something that we must prevent from happening at all costs.

This year marks 50 years since the opening of the US base, Pine Gap, in Alice Springs. There may be no war on our land, but our Outback, convenient global position and our ancient soil is being used by foreign powers to create and to wage wars that are not our own. Our silence makes us personally responsible for their actions.

There can never be true peace whilst countries harbour nuclear weapons. The suppression of other human beings prevents wholesome discussions of peace. My voice may be inexperienced but it is a voice whose sentiment was replicated by people young and old, and resonated with other voices during this conference.

We now need to listen, to speak, and to act in order to make a difference, and to continue the fight that my nanna was fighting in order for my children to live in a world without the poisonous threat of nuclear war; in a world that embodies peace. No more Hiroshima, no more Nagasaki, no more war. †

NO MORE HIROSHIMA, NO MORE NAGASAKI,
NO MORE WAR.



THE AUSTRALIAN FLAG: WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO YOU?

By **KLAUS KAULFUSS**

BACKGROUND

I arrived on these shores from Germany as an 11-year-old with my parents and brother (all deceased) in 1954. On Monday mornings at primary school we sang *God save the Queen*, which to me was somewhat alien at the time i.e. singing to a flagpole with a flag masquerading as our Queen. Of course human nature tells us to fit in, which I did, albeit receiving derogatory, racist comments from time to time during those early years.

My Army service during the '60s gave me the opportunity to travel as part of my service requirement and I enjoyed meeting people beyond the confines of Army life. During these escapades and by chance I met and crossed paths with First Nations people – some became my friends and so began my journey of understanding the difficult challenges First Nations people have faced since 1788.

Moving on from Army service and returning to civilian life – further studies, marriage, children and the whole shebang that goes with it, etc. I continued to educate myself on Australia's history, warts and all – not just the whitewashed version. Sadly I believe the majority of our citizens are not aware of or do not want to know all of its history. This may be due to constraints within schools, lack of political will and media limitations or, as is the case in Germany, where some people still believe that the NAZI holocaust did not happen!

My wife and I are both passionate in our desire to liberate ourselves and strive to do all in our power to support our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) people in their quest for sovereignty, treaties and justice.

The flag per se is okay but would love to see the ensign replaced with the ATSI colours. In my opinion the flag has been prostituted and used as a nationalistic icon, especially during and since the Howard era – those that don't love it should leave – is a familiar cry. Where do our original people go? Mars maybe. I believe the Australian flag to me now represents division, racism and hatred towards people of colour, especially towards people of Muslim faith. One only needs to look at the UPF

(some members of which revere Adolf Hitler) wrapping themselves with the Australian flag. Radio shock jocks, some politicians and media in my opinion are milking the hysteria for personal gain.

Australia Day is traditionally the most racist day for our original people. It is the day when one race of people invaded another race of people and took control of their lands/countries 228 years ago. It is also a day when a significant number of drunken louts cloak themselves in the flag, abuse, harass, intimidate and generally antagonise members of the public that don't match their criterion. A quote from Gary Foley some time ago said, 'It is the masturbation of a nation'.

Australia has the highest incarceration rate of a group of people in the world – higher than during the apartheid era in South Africa. More than 80% of jailed youths in the NT are Indigenous. On average we have one black death in custody every twenty-eight days. Up to one hundred and fifty Aboriginal communities are threatened with closure in WA. I believe our law enforcement agencies, legal and justice systems are entrenched with racism. With this background how can anyone with a conscience celebrate Australia Day?

The flag to me now symbolises genocide, dispossession of land, destruction of culture and a way of life for ATSI people. The national anthem is another bone of contention for me. This country is certainly not young. Evidence has shown that people have been living here for tens of thousands of years. Our First People I think are definitely not free and this is apparent as no treaties exist and they are restricted at every attempt when asserting their rightful sovereignty.

In concluding, Australia has the potential to be paradise on mother earth. We need to grow up, face its demons, correct them and then move forward in true partnership.

Klaus Kaulfuss
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One of the epic miscarriages of justice of our time is unravelling. The United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention — the international tribunal that adjudicates and decides whether governments comply with their human rights obligations — has ruled that Julian Assange has been detained unlawfully by Britain and Sweden.

After five years of fighting to clear his name — having been smeared relentlessly yet charged with no crime — Assange is closer to justice and vindication, and perhaps freedom, than at any time since he was arrested and held in London under a European Extradition Warrant, itself now discredited by Parliament.

The UN Working Group bases its judgments on the European Convention on Human Rights and three other treaties that are binding on all its signatories. Both Britain and Sweden participated in the 16-month-long UN investigation and submitted evidence and defended their position before the tribunal. It would fly contemptuously in the face of international law if they did not comply with the judgment and allow Assange to leave the refuge granted him by the Ecuadorean government in its London embassy.

Obama, the betrayer, has since prosecuted more whistleblowers than all the US presidents combined. The courageous Chelsea Manning is serving 35 years in prison, having been tortured during her long pre-trial detention.

The prospect of a similar fate has hung over Assange like a Damocles sword. According to documents released by Edward Snowden, Assange is on a 'Manhunt target list'. Vice President Joe Biden has called him a 'cyber terrorist'. In Alexandria, Virginia, a secret grand jury has attempted to concoct a crime for which Assange can be prosecuted in a court. Even though he is not an American, he is currently being fitted up with an espionage law dredged up from a century ago when it was used to silence conscientious objectors during the First World War; the Espionage Act has provisions of both life imprisonment and the death penalty.

Assange's ability to defend himself in this Kafkaesque world has been handicapped by the US declaring his case a state secret. A federal court has blocked the release of all information about what is known as the 'national security' investigation of WikiLeaks. †

Freeing Julian Assange: **THE FINAL CHAPTER**

By **JOHN PILGER**

In previous celebrated cases ruled upon by the Working Group — Aung Sang Suu Kyi in Burma, imprisoned opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim in Malaysia, detained *Washington Post* journalist Jason Rezaian in Iran, both Britain and Sweden have given support to the tribunal. The difference now is that Assange's persecution and confinement endures in the heart of London.

The Assange case has never been primarily about allegations of sexual misconduct in Sweden — where the Stockholm Chief Prosecutor, Eva Finne, dismissed the case, saying, 'I don't believe there is any reason to suspect that he has committed rape', and one of the women involved accused the police of fabricating evidence and 'railroading' her, protesting she 'did not want to accuse JA of anything' — and a second prosecutor mysteriously re-opened the case after political intervention, then stalled it.

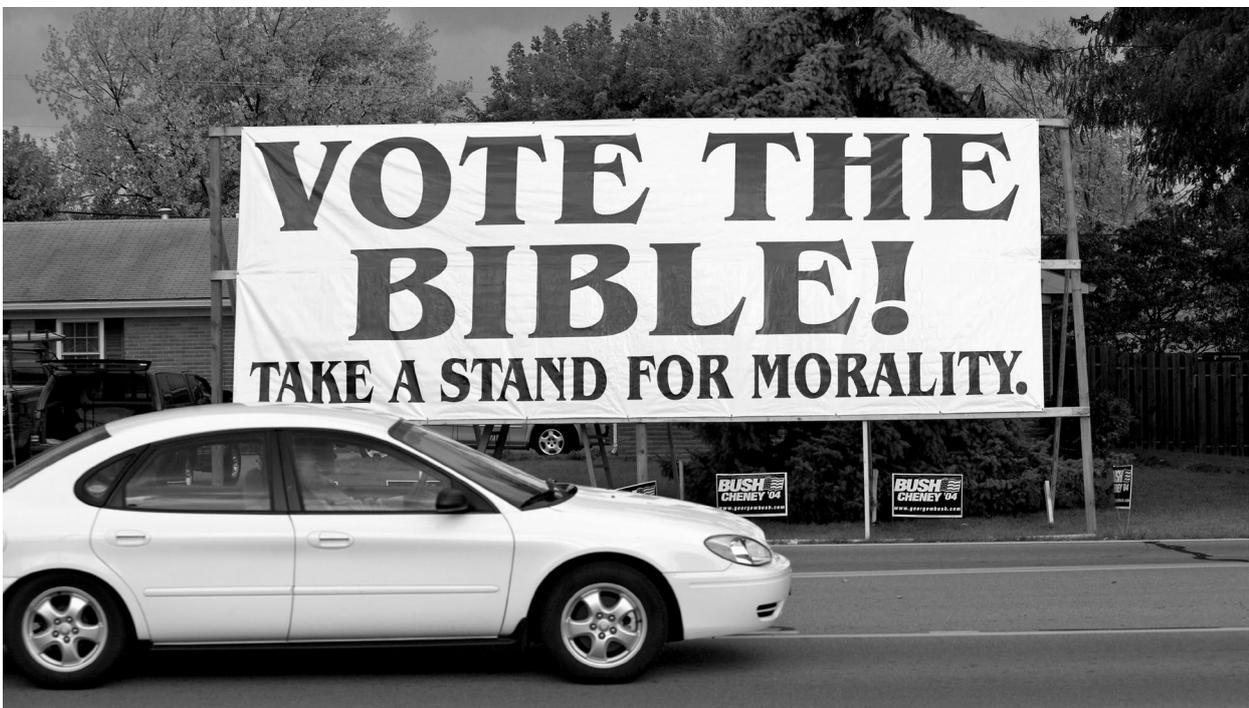
The Assange case is rooted across the Atlantic in Pentagon-dominated Washington, obsessed with pursuing and prosecuting whistleblowers, especially Assange for having exposed, in WikiLeaks, US capital crimes in Afghanistan and Iraq: the wholesale killing of civilians and a contempt for sovereignty and international law. None of this truth telling is illegal under the US Constitution. As a presidential candidate in 2008, Barack Obama, a professor of constitutional law, lauded whistleblowers as 'part of a healthy democracy [and they] must be protected from reprisal'.

The supporting act in this charade has been played by the second Swedish prosecutor, Marianne Ny. Until recently, Ny had refused to comply with a routine European procedure that required her to travel to London to question Assange and so advance the case that James Catlin, one of Assange's barristers, called 'a laughing stock ... it's as if they make it up as they go along'. Indeed, even before Assange had left Sweden for London in 2010, Marianne Ny made no attempt to question him. In the years since, she has never properly explained, even to her own judicial authorities, why she has not completed the case she so enthusiastically re-ignited — just as she has never explained why she has refused to give Assange a guarantee that he will not be extradited to the US under a secret arrangement agreed between Stockholm and Washington. In 2010 the *Independent* in London revealed that the two governments had discussed Assange's onward extradition.

Then there is tiny, brave Ecuador. One of the reasons Ecuador granted Julian Assange political asylum was that his own government, in Australia, had offered him none of the help to which he had a legal right and so abandoned him. Australia's collusion with the United States against its own citizen is evident in leaked documents; no more faithful vassals has America than the obeisant politicians of the Antipodes.

Continued page 9

RELIGION AND THE US PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION



The inspiration for today's address comes from a nine-year-old front page of *The Bulletin*, the now defunct news magazine that closed down in 2008, less than three years after the death of its benefactor Kerry Packer. The front page referred to our 2007 federal election. It read GOD'S VOTE. John Howard and Kevin Rudd are desperate for the religious vote. Inside were comments by representatives of a number of religious organisations. Not in any order these were Catholic, Buddhist, Pentecostal, Islam, Lutheran, Hindu, Jewish, Presbyterian, Uniting and Anglican. The religious influence on Australian politics has spawned several books, the most famous being *God Under Howard* by Marion Maddox, who teaches at Macquarie University. We've even had religious or quasi-religious political parties. I won't list these as our talk today is basically about the United States, which has a different political system but, like in Australia, religion is an important factor in the minds of many voters. One point of interest is the fact that *The Bulletin* article, written by Roy Eccleston, invited comments from representatives

of four non-Christian religions. In the United States this would be very unusual.

An article in *Salon*, the US liberal online news site on March 21 this year by Edwin Lyngar has as its title 'America is overdosing on religion: How the presidential election got taken over by theocrats and zealots. From the Islamophobia of Donald Trump to everything about Ted Cruz, this is getting bad. And the Dems (that is, the Democrats) are not immune.'

The US Constitution, in the first Amendment, also called the Bill of Rights, ratified by the necessary number of states in December 1791, prohibits the making of any law respecting an establishment of religion, impeding the free exercise of religion, and other matters such as abridging the freedom of speech, freedom of the press, and the right to peaceably assemble. Section 116 of the Australian Constitution is based on religious provisions in the US Constitution, but it is narrowly drafted and unlike its American counterpart, it does not apply to the states.

Lyngar is of the opinion that no matter what the US Constitution says there is a de facto requirement of religious belief for public office, and that this year it has taken the form of 'breathtaking religious pandering and bigotry'.

Who are the religious groups that might be important in this year's election? The US Census, unlike our own, does not ask a question about religion, so we need to look at surveys to get some idea about the religious make-up of the US population. The Pew Research Center in 2014 found that 71 per cent of the US population are Christian of some variety. This will be discussed in greater detail later but included as Christian are Mormons at just under 2 per cent. Unitarian Universalists, normally included in the Christian category in surveys, are not listed. There are 6 per cent non-Christian faiths, including Jewish at just under 2 per cent and Islam at just under 1 per cent. Unaffiliated are 23 per cent, which includes atheist and agnostic at 7 per cent and 16 per cent 'nothing in particular'.

Small percentages in the US as a whole do not translate into electoral insignificance. Mormons, for example, while a small percentage of voters in the US as a whole are politically significant in Utah, where Mormons make up over 70 per cent of the population. Similarly for the percentage of Jews as a whole. In New York State the Jewish vote is important in some elections. It is among the Christian category where groups that are presently of high significance electorally will generally be found.

Pew finds Evangelical Protestant at 25 per cent and Catholic at 20 per cent. We need to look at both of these, as they can be very important in US elections. Some US studies include a subcategory of 'born again' with Evangelicals, and sometimes as a separate category. Born agains are people who are converts from being either nominal Christians or what Pew calls 'nothing in particular' who accept the teachings of Christ and the literal interpretation of the Bible. The National Association of Evangelicals in the US includes born agains as evangelicals, but its core convictions are belief in the one triune God, the Bible, faith, Jesus, salvation, evangelism and discipleship. Unitarians would not qualify, and nor, incidentally, would Mormons. Non-belief in the triune God, that is the Trinity, is a disqualification from being an evangelical.

According to Pew almost all US presidents have been Christian, and nearly half have been Episcopalian or Presbyterian. Four, Taft, Fillmore and both presidents named Adams were Unitarians. Jefferson is sometimes referred to as a Unitarian but he never joined any church. Barack Obama was raised in a non-religious household. He once attended a Unitarian Sunday School in Hawaii. As an adult he worshipped in a Christian church in Chicago. He presently calls himself a Christian but is not a regular churchgoer. There has only been one Catholic

president, John Kennedy, despite that church being the largest in the United States in terms of numbers.

In this year's presidential contest Donald Trump is currently the frontrunner for the Republican Party nomination. While he lost the Wisconsin primary to Ted Cruz last week he still leads in delegate numbers for the Republican Convention to be held at Cleveland, Ohio, commencing on July 18. Trump's views about religion are described in his book *Crippled America: How to Make America Great Again*. Trump is a Christian. The first church he belonged to was the First Presbyterian Church in Jamaica, Queens, a borough of New York City. Trump claims that God is in his life every day. He is not full on, a popular expression to describe many Evangelicals.

Trump is a populist. His Australian equivalents might be Jacqui Lambie or Pauline Hanson, both of whom may grace the red Senate Chamber if Prime Minister Turnbull decides to hold a double dissolution election on July 2. Trump is not the popular choice of Protestant pastors according to the website Christianity Today. He is not overwhelmingly popular among regular churchgoers. According to polling by Reuters, church attendance directly decreases support for Trump, who has the least religious supporters among GOP candidates.

Trump's present major opponent is the Texan Ted Cruz, a Southern Baptist. Cruz launched his presidential bid at Jerry Falwell's evangelical Liberty University in Lynchburg, Virginia. He is well organised. He claims that he 'surrendered his heart to Jesus' as an eight-year-old at a summer camp at a Christian ranch. Cruz was born in Canada to an American father. His right to be President has not been tested in the courts. The US Constitution provides that a President must be a native-born US citizen. US law determines that a person born outside the United States to an American parent is treated as being native born. The Supreme Court may have to decide this. It is not proper for me to express an opinion, but Donald Trump has, questioning whether or not Cruz is legally qualified.

Cruz is a hardliner on most issues. His views on a number of subjects would sound extreme in Australia. He would be closer to South Australian Senator Bob Day than possibly anyone else in this country. Cruz opposes Obamacare, a health initiative of the present administration. He supports strong controls on immigration. He supports limits on abortion. He is a darling of the Tea Party faction of the Republican Party, although his former strong supporter and Tea Party acolyte Sarah Palin now supports Trump. Evangelical voters are likely to support Cruz in a general election, possibly more than Trump.

On the Democratic Party side, the party generally more to the left than the Republicans, the contest seems to be a race between Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders, a non-practising Jew, and Hillary Clinton, former Secretary of State and wife of former President Bill Clinton. Sanders claims not to be greatly religious. It is doubtful that he has many votes from Evangelicals. Hillary Clinton, a Methodist even if a nominal one, has been seeking votes from religious Democrats by attending church services. Clinton has been successful in all of the southern states with heavily black voters in Democratic primaries. She has an appeal to African-American religious voters that is overwhelming. It is likely that Clinton will win the Democratic nomination, but Sanders will give her a fight for her money.

The preferred candidate by faith according to a survey by the Barna Group found that Evangelicals preferred Cruz, but had no preference for either Democratic candidate. Practising Christians also preferred Cruz if they were Republicans, and if Democrats they preferred Clinton.

Non-evangelical born agains, notional Christians, all born-again Christians, all non-born-again Christians, Protestants and Catholics who were Republicans favoured Trump and Democrats favoured Clinton.

There was no preference recorded for Republicans from non-Christian faiths or Sceptics. Non-Christian Faith Democrats favoured Clinton and Sceptics favoured Sanders.

Franklin Graham, the son of evangelist Billy Graham and a supporter in 2012 of Mitt Romney, this time has yet to express a preference among the candidates, but we can be sure he will support whichever Republican is nominated. Graham said on television that only God can save America, and that non-Christians are unfit to hold public office.

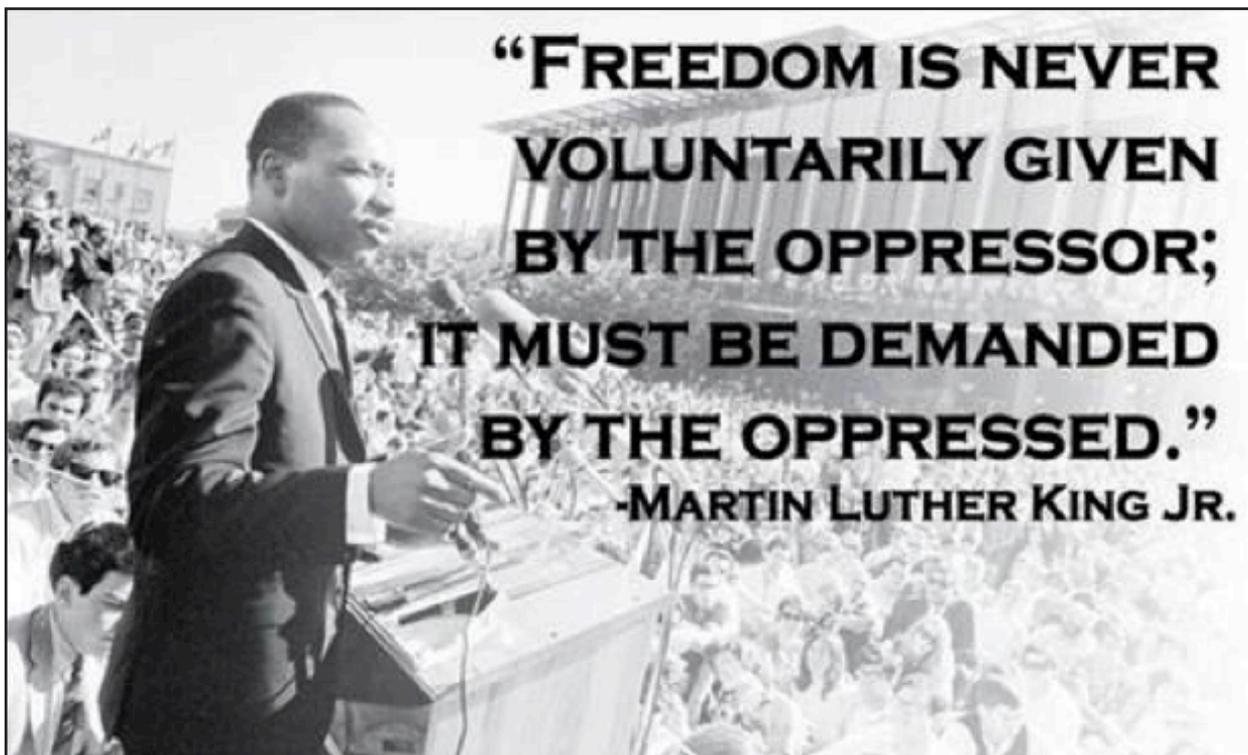
An issue that will certainly be raised is that of the filling of a vacancy on the Supreme Court following the death of conservative Justice Scalia. Cruz has argued that the vacancy should not be filled until after the election of a new President. The Republican Senate, which must ratify a nomination by the President, may agree, but there have been precedents where an appointment by a President towards the end of his term have been ratified by a Senate with a majority from the opposition party.

Republican Herbert Hoover in 1932 nominated Benjamin Cardozo, a Jew and a distinguished jurist, to the Supreme Court. Cardozo's appointment was ratified unanimously by the Senate, and then controlled by the Democrats.

The Living Church of God in *Tomorrow's World*, January–February 2016, has criticised the Supreme Court as bowing to the dictates of Satan. It condemns certain court decisions from 1958 onwards. Among these the Court has ruled that pro-homosexual material is not inherently obscene, that same-sex couples have the same rights to marriage as heterosexual couples, and that a definition of obscenity excludes sexually explicit materials deemed to be of serious literary, artistic, political or scientific value. Ted Cruz argues that Courts should be elected, and may have been influenced by these decisions.

I will close with a comment by Lyngar in *Salon*. He states:

The presidential race is overflowing with offensive religious nonsense. Donald Trump is making fumbling overtures to the religious right, and condemning a billion Muslims solely because of their religion. Ted Cruz is playing to the most regressive form of Christianity, all but declaring non-Christians anti-American. Hillary Clinton won't stop waxing poetic about prayer, and, although an understandable strategy, Bernie Sanders has tied himself into knots to infuse humanism with as much religion as possible. And yet, even the faithful should be offended at the central role religion has taken in this presidential election. †



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Four years ago, in Sydney, I spent several hours with the Liberal Member of the Federal Parliament, Malcolm Turnbull. We discussed the threats to Assange and their wider implications for freedom of speech and justice, and why Australia was obliged to stand by him. Turnbull is now the Prime Minister of Australia and, as I write, is attending an international conference on Syria hosted by the Cameron government — about 15 minutes' cab ride from the room that Julian Assange has occupied for three-and-a-half years in the small Ecuadorean embassy just along from *Harrod's*. The Syria connection is relevant if unreported; it was WikiLeaks that revealed that the United States had long planned to overthrow the Assad government in Syria. Today, as he meets and greets, Prime Minister Turnbull has an opportunity to contribute a modicum of purpose and truth to the conference by

speaking up for his unjustly imprisoned compatriot, for whom he showed such concern when we met. All he need do is quote the judgment of the UN Working Party on Arbitrary Detention. Will he reclaim this shred of Australia's reputation in the decent world?

What is certain is that the decent world owes much to Julian Assange. He told us how indecent power behaves in secret, how it lies and manipulates and engages in great acts of violence, sustaining wars that kill and maim and turn millions into the refugees now in the news. Telling us this truth alone earns Assange his freedom, whereas justice is his right. †

John Pilger can be reached through his website:
www.johnpilger.com

Source: *Counterpunch*

The Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association (UUMA) has received the following request from the UUSC regarding an open letter to Donald Trump that organisers are planning to publish as a full-page ad in one or more newspapers. More than 2,500 faith leaders signed in the first 24 hours.

This effort is being organised by Faith in Public Life (FPL), a very well respected PR firm known for its fine work with the religious community. They were the genius, for example, behind the Nuns on the Bus tour with Sister Simone.

Open letter from faith leaders to Donald Trump

As leaders in America's faith community, our institutions do not engage in partisan politics. We do, however, speak to important moral and ethical issues facing our nation.

In this spirit, we write to express in the strongest possible terms our deep disappointment and even disgust with the proposal made by you to stop allowing Muslims to enter the United States.

Our faith traditions demand that we extend a welcoming hand to those in need. America is an immigrant nation. We know that many have come to our country, and continue to do so, seeking religious freedom and an end to persecution. This is true for Syrian refugees fleeing ISIL today, and many others displaced by war, conflict and disaster.

We remember that too many religious leaders stood silent as Jews fled Germany during Hitler's rise to power. In fact, some religious leaders and politicians argued that Jews should not be allowed into the United States during that period. In that same timeframe, too many religious leaders stood silent as Japanese-Americans were interned into camps as their patriotism was questioned. Bigotry and discrimination prevailed.

Muslims serve this nation in offices of public service, in our Armed Forces, in law enforcement, and as community builders. These are our neighbours, our friends, and children of God.

We cannot remain silent as political leaders seek to divide Americans along religious lines for partisan gain. Your language and proposals serve only to divide our nation and to bring comfort to ISIS and their allies.

Mr Trump, we ask in this holy season that you reflect on your proposals and repudiate those that you have made, that our country may be a beacon of hope and not fear.

THE THIRD WAY: SHARE-THE-GAINS CAPITALISM

Posted on 3 May 2016 Common Dreams

By **ROBERT REICH**

Marissa Mayer tells us a lot about why Americans are so angry, and why anti-establishment fury has become the biggest single force in American politics today.

Mayer is CEO of Yahoo. Yahoo's stock lost about a third of its value last year, as the company went from making \$7.5 billion in 2014 to losing \$4.4 billion in 2015. Yet Mayer raked in \$36 million in compensation.

Even if Yahoo's board fires her, her contract stipulates she gets \$54.9 million in severance. The severance package was disclosed in a regulatory filing last Friday with the Securities and Exchange Commission.

In other words, Mayer can't lose.

It's another example of no-lose socialism for the rich – winning big regardless of what you do.

Why do Yahoo's shareholders put up with it? Mostly because they don't know about it.

Most of their shares are held by big pension funds, mutual funds, and insurance funds whose managers don't want to rock the boat because they skim the cream regardless of what happens to Yahoo.

In other words, more no-lose socialism for the rich.

I don't want to pick on Ms Mayer or the managers of the funds that invest in Yahoo. They're typical of the no-lose system in which America's corporate and financial elite now operates.

But the rest of America works in a different system.

Theirs is cutthroat hyper-capitalism – in which wages are shrinking, median household income continues to drop, workers are fired without warning, two-thirds are living paycheck to paycheck, and employees are being classified as 'independent contractors' without any labour protections at all.

Why is there no-lose socialism for the rich and cutthroat hyper-capitalism for everyone else?

Because the rules of the game – including labor laws, pension laws, corporate laws, and tax laws – have been crafted by those at the top, and the lawyers and lobbyists who work for them.

Does that mean we have to await Bernie Sanders' 'political revolution' (or, perish the thought, Donald Trump's authoritarian populism) before any of this is likely to change?

Before we go to the barricades, you should know about another CEO named Hamdi Ulukaya, who's developing a third model – neither no-lose socialism for the rich nor hyper-capitalism for everyone else.

Ulukaya is the Turkish-born founder and CEO of Chobani, the upstart Greek yogurt maker recently valued at as much as \$5 billion.

Last Tuesday Ulukaya announced he's giving all his 2,000 full-time workers shares of stock worth up to 10 per cent

of the privately held company's value when it's sold or goes public, based on each employee's tenure and role at the company.

If the company ends up being valued at \$3 billion, for example, the average employee payout could be \$150,000. Some long-tenured employees will get more than \$1 million.

Ulukaya's announcement raised eyebrows all over corporate America. Many are viewing it as an act of charity (*Forbes Magazine* calls it one of 'the most selfless corporate acts of the year').

In reality, Mr Ulukaya's decision is just good business. Employees who are partners become even more dedicated to increasing a company's value.

Which is why research shows that employee-owned companies – even those with workers holding only a minority stake – tend to out-perform the competition.

Mr Ulukaya just increased the odds that Chobani will be valued at more than \$5 billion when it's sold or its shares of stock are available to the public. Which will make him, as well as his employees, far wealthier.

As Ulukaya wrote to his workers, the award isn't a gift but 'a mutual promise to work together with a shared purpose and responsibility.'

A handful of other companies are inching their way in a similar direction.

Apple decided last October it would award shares not just to executives or engineers but to hourly paid workers as well. Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey is giving a third of his Twitter stock (about 1 per cent of the company) 'to our employee equity pool to reinvest directly in our people.'

Employee stock ownership plans, which have been around for years, are lately seeing a bit of a comeback.

But the vast majority of American companies are still locked in the old hyper-capitalist model that views workers as costs to be cut rather than as partners to share in success.

That's largely because Wall Street still looks unfavourably on such collaboration (remember, Chobani is still privately held).

The Street remains obsessed with short-term stock performance, and its analysts don't believe hourly workers have much to contribute to the bottom line.

But they're prepared to lavish unprecedented rewards on CEOs who don't deserve squat.

Let them compare Yahoo with Chobani in a few years, and see which model works best.

If I were a betting man, I'd put my money on Greek yoghurt.

And I'd bet on a model of capitalism that's neither no-lose socialism for the rich nor cruel hyper-capitalism for the rest, but share-the-gains capitalism for everyone. †

from our readers



Dear Editors

Enclosed \$50 covering my subscription and donation for 2016.

I am sorry to be late with it. I always find the *Beacon* interesting, but cannot attend your activities.

Best regards

H Koppel, Vic

Dear Beacon

Payment for next two years.

Thanks so much for such a heartening read.

Cheers

K Taylor, NSW

Keep up the good work, folks!

D Locke, Vic

Dear Editor

On the subject of submarines, border control and related war-mongering rhetoric from our fearless, unimaginative federal leaders ...

Anyone who has been able to see the screening of the film *Eye in the Sky*, starring Helen Mirren and the late Alan Rickman, will know it raises many troubling concerns about contemporary drone warfare.

It is a disturbing and thought-provoking insight into humanity's infinite capacity to develop weapons of mass destruction, and a clear indication of the sheer pointlessness of putting any more wasteful expenditure into submarines, frigates and military hardware that is now virtually obsolete.

All the more reason why this huge expenditure should go into education and health.

Education is essential in a world where brains are now much more necessary than brawn.

Health, because as evidenced in the film, war has deep effects on those who are caught up in the carnage, combatants and the 'collateral damage' to innocent civilians.

War is not a game.

As the British general, played by Alan Rickman, strongly states, 'Never think a soldier doesn't know the cost of war'.

Lyn Maciver, NSW

The Editor

Enclosed please find a cheque for subscription to the *Beacon* (\$10 and \$20 donation). Keep up the good work!

Yours sincerely

S Bains, NSW

Finally: the truth about Syria, a great article by Susan Dirgham.

Thank you

B Yates, NSW

Dear Friends

I am sending you my contribution for 2016, plus a bit extra.

Keep up the good work!

Many thanks

E Bron, NSW

Greetings all!

Here is my sub, due April 2016.

Thank you for your good work.

J Wheeler, NZ

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