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CHAPTER 29

Spiritual Activism, Atomic Theology, and 'The Bomb' in Scotland

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I am become death, the destroyer of worlds
(Robert J. Oppenheimer, Trinity, 1945, Bhagavad Gita XI:32)

In 1952, the United Kingdom became the third country, after America and Russia, to possess nuclear weapons. Today, its sole arsenal consists of a US delivery system, with Trident II intercontinental ballistic missiles, each armed with up to eight independently targetable thermonuclear warheads. These are carried on four Vanguard-class submarines that patrol the oceans of the world from their dock, Her Majesty's Naval Base, Clyde, usually known by the local name, Faslane. Just over the hill is the UK's nuclear weapon underground storage facility at the Royal Naval Armaments Depot, Coulport.

In any nuclear conflagration, these would be prime targets for attack. They stand at the gateway to Scotland's Central Belt, a densely populated region some 70 miles (112 km) across, holding two-thirds of Scotland's 5.3 million population. These facilities do not enjoy general political consent. They are imposed on Scotland by a United Kingdom that has deemed them too hazardous, militarily and politically, for locating farther south.

From its inception, the atom bomb has been couched in an apocalyptic theology, Hindu-Buddhist and Christian. In this chapter, I will sketch the theological and protest history of direct action against it in Scotland. As an activist, a Quaker and an independent scholar, I shall weave in personal insights gained during protest and from 25 years of guest lecturing on nonviolence at military staff colleges across Europe. In conclusion, I will suggest that 'atomic theology' presses us far beyond 'just war' theory and the 'myth of redemptive violence' (Wink 1992). It points towards a nonviolent understanding of the Cross. One that can bring insights of distinction to the table of world faiths. A faith restored to purpose for our age. Possibly, a Third Millennium Christianity.

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Atomic Theology at the Bomb's Nativity

I shall use the phrase 'atomic theology' to mean the confluence of three things: the natural theology of atomic physics, the moral theology of atomic war, and the implications for becoming fully human in the alpha to the omega of creation (cf. Panikkar 2010, pp. 276–318).

Since at least the days of Johannes Kepler and Isaac Newton, the currency of physics and mysticism have often intertwined. Wolfgang Pauli, best known for the Pauli Exclusion Principle in quantum mechanics, drew inspiration from the archetypal psychology — which is the psychology of mythic levels of transpersonal experience — of his friend, Carl Gustav Jung (Gefter 2009). Albert Einstein largely eschewed mystical physics. However, a 'forgotten controversy' took place throughout Einstein's lifetime around the degree to which consciousness, as expressed through the act of observation, can affect the properties of matter at a quantum level and, thereby, throw into question the Cartesian dualistic presumption of objectivity.

Writing in the *European Journal of Physics*, Juan Miguel Marin shows how the debate involved such leading figures as Niels Bohr, Arthur Eddington, Werner Heisenberg, Max Planck, ErwinSchrödinger, and Eugene Wigner. Marin roots it in an ability to position science within the wider field of metaphysical knowing, as entertained by European (or Continental) philosophy. Pre-war quantum physics developed before the move '...from its predominantly German context to a new one where English, not German, would be the language of science.' After World War Two, a more prosaic 'Anglo-American zeitgeist' gained ascendancy (Marin 2009, p. 820), and scientists were put on edge by populist 'New Age' borrowing from their field.

However, the legacy of such theoretical mysticism pales in comparison with a version of applied mysticism in J. Robert Oppenheimer. The 'father of the atom bomb' used a literal interpretation of Hinduism, with Christianity in the wings, seemingly both to rationalise making the Bomb at his Manhattan Project laboratory at Los Alamos, New Mexico, and to justify its use. In a detailed study, the historian of science, James Hijiya, points out that Oppenheimer was a physicist and a student of Sanskrit. He translated the spiritual classic, the Bhagavad Gita (*Gita*) and famously quoted from it after the first test detonation (Hijiya 2000). Neither has it been the only such connection between Eastern religion and the Bomb. In 1974, India codenamed its first atomic explosion, *Smiling Buddha*. The subsequent ballistic missile programme was driven forward by Abdul Kalam, dubbed 'India's Dr Strangelove' in *The Times of India* (Rajghatta 2015). An enigmatic Muslim, Kalam rose to become President of India from 2002 to 2007. Like Oppenheimer, with whom he has been compared, he too was well-versed in the *Gita*.

The *Gita* is the most sacred text in the matrix of faith loosely called Hinduism. It invokes an epic battle between Arjuna and his adversarial relatives, with Lord Krishna (the Atman, the oversoul) as Arjuna's chosen charioteer. This, to teach 'karma yoga', the path of union ('yoga') with God through actions, work, or deeds (*karma*). The point is to follow inner calling, one's *dharma*, which is often poorly translated into English as 'duty.' Thereby, to engage wholeheartedly upon the battlefield of life but to renounce attachment to the fruits of action. And so, to surrender what one does to God. As Rudyard Kipling said in his poem, *If*, to treat triumph and disaster as 'two impostors just the same.'

Hijiya suggests that Oppenheimer was in revolt against his secular German-Jewish upbringing. His education had 'abandoned the transcendental and supernatural aspects of

religion.' Here is a conflicted idealist who, '...to reinforce his determination to build the bomb ... used the *Gita*' in a literal reading (Hijiya 2000, p. 129). Had not Krishna told Arjuna, the reluctant warrior, that is it not his hand that looses the arrow? Rather, '...it is the Lord's doing ... it is all predetermined' (ibid., pp. 142–143). Oppenheimer's 'homemade Hinduism' boiled down to three principles (ibid., p. 125):

> ... duty, fate, and faith. He believed that he had a job to do; that he should do it only because it was his job and not because he was intent on obtaining any particular result; and that ... would bring a saving measure of serenity into his profoundly discontented experience. In Oppenheimer's philosophy these three precepts were not ornamental but structural.

'I did my job which was the job I was supposed to do', the physicist later said. Developing the Bomb had been 'an organic necessity.' Using it had been 'implicit in the project.' To have lost the hawkish edge, to have detonated it only as a warning to the Japanese over uninhabited territory, would merely have been setting off a 'firecracker over the desert' (Hijiya 2000, pp. 140, 143, 144).

Added to his Hinduism, Oppenheimer codenamed the first atomic test explosion *Trinity*. His ex-girlfriend and possible mistress, the psychiatrist Jean Tatlock, had introduced him to the Trinitarian poetry of John Donne after they met when he was a professor and she a graduate student at the university of California, Berkeley, in 1936. In Donne's *Holy Sonnet 14* he found such lines as (ibid., p. 162):

> Batter my heart, three person'd God; ...
> Your force, to break, blowe, burn and make me new.

Had Oppenheimer read such mystical lines more literally than intended? He last saw Tatlock in 1943, spending a night with her shortly after becoming director at Los Alamos. She was still in love with him (Pollenberg 2001, p. 74). In January 1944, she was found drowned in a bath, with a suicide note. Within a year and a half, Oppenheimer had detonated *Trinity*.

Video footage of the scientist speaking about the explosion and reciting from the Bhagavad Gita suggests a deadpan, hollowed-out and resigned man (Else 1980). Arising from such a dread nativity, the scene was set for decades of protest against nuclear weapons. That scene, not least, theological; and to be played out as such at Faslane.

The UK's Nuclear Force in Scotland

'Trident' properly applies to the Trident II missile delivery system. Colloquially, it also refers to the Vanguard-class submarines from which these stand ready to be launched. In laying the first keel in 1986, Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher gave this rationale to the shipyard workers at Barrow-in-Furness (Thatcher 1986):

> We have to be right up front in nuclear technology because if a potential aggressor has that technology we could not possibly deter him unless ours was as good as his and preferably better.... As the band played at the beginning of our great ceremony, may Britannia continue to rule the waves and stay a country free with justice and in peace.

The band played *Rule, Britannia!* – a jingoistic articulation of British national exceptionalism and manifest destiny (cf. Longley 2002). The lyrics portray 'guardian angels' granting Britain 'at Heaven's command ... the charter of the land.' That, to 'rule the waves', to be 'the dread and envy of them all', of 'nations not so blest as thee.'

Today's Trident debate is around a like-for-like replacement of what is now an aging weapons system that fulfils the 'Moscow Criterion' – what the Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg referred to in October 2012, as 'flattening Moscow.' A report of the Scottish Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (SCND), explains the following (Ainslie 2013, pp. 1–4):

> The targeting policy for Trident was established in the early 1980s. The primary aim-points were to be specific locations within the city of Moscow and command bunkers in the surrounding area. Today an attack on these targets with 40 nuclear warheads, the normal complement on a Trident submarine, would result in 5.4 million deaths, 4.5 million inside the city and a further 870,000 in Moscow Region. This is an estimate of casualties within the first few months and does not take account of long-term effects.

The report continues:

> Defence ministers are fond of saying that Trident missiles are now 'de-targeted', but the significance of this should not be exaggerated. In 1994, Britain, the US, and Russia agreed that their missiles would not normally hold real target data. This was to reduce the risk that the accidental launch of a single missile could trigger nuclear war. It does not mean that Britain has no target plans. It is almost certain that the Trident submarine on patrol carries electronic plans which can be implemented if the Captain receives authorisation.

Since the 2014 Scottish Independence referendum, when nuclear disarmament became a flagship independence position, opposition to the weapons may have dropped to 50:50 once 'don't knows' are taken out (What Scotland Thinks 2016). Prior to that, public opinion had fairly consistently polled at around 44 percent in England against and 55 percent in Scotland (SCND 2014).

Military Attitudes – a View from inside the Fence

For sake of balance, hope, and the avoidance of demonisation, it should be said that Europe's military are often a broader kirk than peace activists may assume. At military institutions like the UK Defence Academy in Shrivenham, I am invited to justify nonviolence and explain why 'otherwise respectable citizens' in protesting genocidal weapons are prepared to 'break the laws like bread.' I have had the opportunity of meeting with a number of nuclear submarine or submarine base commanders (McIntosh 2018 (2016)). On asking a Vanguard-class (Trident) commander over a beer in an officers' mess whether he would 'press the button', he replied without hesitation, 'Yes', and saw it in terms of surrendering his individual feelings to a trusted line of democratically accountable command.

Many recite the boilerplate line that, 'Trident lets us punch above our weight and ensures our place on the UN Security Council.' I reply, 'If we seek a world of justice, why should we want to *punch* above our weight?' On only four occasions have I experienced explicit anger in perhaps 40 military visits speaking to some 7,000 officers. Once was from a second-in-command at

Faslane who, around a dinner table, vented his frustration at '...having to get out of my bed in the middle of the night because of the antics of your (sic) peace women.' When a protestor breaks through the fence or sea barrier around the base and boards a docked submarine, '...it puts one of my marines in the position of having to make a split-second decision whether to shoot, because they are a terrorist, or to hold fire, because they are a protestor. That is not a fair position to put a young soldier in.'

More often, I am told, 'You remind us of the limits.' I find that nuclear doubters at senior levels (lieutenant-colonel and equivalents, upward) are more common in the army than the navy. I am surprised how often I have had expressed to me, under Chatham House Rule, three concerns: that Trident escalates the arms race, it diverts resources from more practical applications of force, and its degree of potential overkill renders it militarily unusable, unconscionable, and a source of 'moral injury.' As India's Abdul Kalam reflected retrospectively in his Tamil poem, 'Tumult': 'Did I explore space to enhance science/ or did I provide weapons of destruction?' (Roy 1995, p. 129).

At every military institution at which I have spoken, i.e. in Great Britain, Ireland, France, and Switzerland, military ethics spectrums along three positions (Whetham 2011): 'Realism', characterised by Carl von Clausewitz's 'absolute war;' 'Idealism', characterised by pacifism or nonviolence; and, in the middle, 'just war' theory, with staff colleges teaching St Augustine and his rooting in St Paul: 'For rulers do not bear the sword for no reason. They are God's servants, agents of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer' (Romans 13:4). The problem is that Jesus never taught nor practiced 'just war.' His way was full-on nonviolence (McIntosh 2011; McIntosh and Carmichael 2016).

Spiritual Activism as a Nonviolent Response

That nonviolence, that depth of soul-force, is spiritual activism. Jesus told Pontius Pilate in his trial: 'My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest.... My kingdom is from another place' (John 18:36–37). It is not 'My kingdom come', or 'Caesar's kingdom come', but '*Thy* kingdom come', the divine realm of justice as love made manifest, for which the Lord's prayer petitions (Matthew 6:10 KJV).

Spiritual activism is action for transformation: that, from a lower to a higher realm of being; that, from what is degenerate to what is regenerate; that, as resourced not just by outward means, but from 'that of God' within; and that, as moved by what Gandhi called *satyagraha*, meaning 'Truth force', 'Soul force' or 'Being force' (McIntosh and Carmichael 2016). As the Isa Upanishad of Hinduism says, 'Only actions done in God bind not the soul of man' (Mascaró 1965, 49).

Like Oppenheimer, Gandhi also translated the Bhagavad Gita. His Gujarati version was translated into English (with a commentary) by his personal secretary, Mahadev Desai. Whereas Oppenheimer's sense of faithfulness to the *dharma* came through as cold obedience to duty, Gandhi's was warmed through with loving decency. To Gandhi, the *Gita's* renunciation of the fruit of actions is not denial for denial's sake. Rather, it is clear-seeing purification from the contamination of craving (Gandhi in Desai 1946, pp. 131–132):

> Again let no one consider renunciation to mean want of fruit for the renouncer. The *Gita* reading does not warrant such a meaning. Renunciation means absence of hankering after fruit. As a matter of fact, he who renounces reaps a thousandfold. The renunciation

> of the *Gita* is the acid test of faith. He who is ever brooding over result often loses nerve in the performance of his duty [*Dharma*]. He becomes impatient and then gives vent to anger and begins to do unworthy things; he jumps from action to action never remaining faithful to any ... and he therefore resorts to means fair and foul to attain his end.

That end is to realise, to make real, to become conscious of, one's true nature. 'To be a real devotee is to realize oneself. Self-realization is not something apart' (ibid., p. 130).

Gandhi knew the *Mahābhārata*, the epic poem in which the *Gita* is nested. He considered that, like the *Iliad* of the Greeks, it proved the futility of war (ibid., p. 128). Early on, it has Krishna present Arjuna with a choice (cf. Deuteronomy 30:19). Either, says the narrator, he could have the entire *akshauhini* of the *Narayani Sena*, a fighting force that included 21,870 elephants, 65,610, horses and 109,350 foot soldiers, or he could have as his charioteer 'the high-souled Krishna ... as an unfighting counsellor.' He could have, in Krishna's words, 'a counsellor in myself who will not fight ...', one who, we are later told, had 'resolved not to fight on the field, and laying down my arms' (Ganguli 1883-86, 1:2 and 5:6).

For Gandhi, then, the *Gita's* battle plainly 'is not a historical discourse.' Rather, it is (Gandhi in Desai 1946, p. 136; cf. Plato, *Phaedrus* 245e, in Hamilton and Cairns 1961):

> ...a physical illustration ... to drive home a spiritual truth. It is the description not of war between cousins but between the two natures in us – the Good and the Evil ... the field of battle [as] our own body ... Krishna [as] the Dweller within, ever whispering to a pure heart.

Gandhi saw the *Gita* as poetry, whose 'meaning is limitless' in which, '...like man, the meaning of great writings suffers [i.e. allows for] evolution' and to which he had stepped into the bardic function of having 'extended the meanings of some of the current words' (ibid., p. 133). Set against this, a frequent riposte of urbane modern commentators is that 'Hinduism is anything but a nonviolent religion', and Gandhi's views are 'practically inoperable [in] the *realpolitik* worldview of India's strategic managers' (Roy 2014, pp. 530, 535). From Gandhi's gyre, however, the *Gita's* battle '...is going on, will go on, forever in us ... be patient meanwhile' (ibid., p. 534).

Such yoga frees the activist from the burdensome error, from the ego's karmic baggage, of forgetting that we are not God and, thereby, over-extending our capabilities. Our part is to discern our calling on life's long front, to trust there is a wider God's-eye view, and to relax into participation in the divine nature (cf. 2 Peter 1:4). That way, we loosen from the bonds of being ransomed to frustration, to despair, and even to cynicism. We reduce the danger of compassion fatigue and, thereby, mitigate the risks of burning out, or selling out, that blights so many activists whose resourcing comes not from depth of soul within.

'The need of the hour is not a divorce between religion and politics, as advocated by the secularists', says the late Indian activist, Swami Agnivesh. Rather, the need is to get on with '...the core spiritual vision ... the prophetic task of our times' (Agnivesh 2015, p. 62). Our prophetic prompting is to reconcile these, as Gandhi did. When karma yoga is brought to the table of world faiths, it is no longer the egocentric 'me', or even the social 'we', that is the locus of that prophetic call. It is the *dharma*. It is our yielding, as a lover yields, to the intimate divine humanity that the gospels call 'the way, the truth and the life' (John 14:6), for 'God is love' (1 John 4:8).

From Celtic Church to Nuclear Blasphemy

Let us then examine Scotland, and specifically Faslane. As Roman power receded in the so-called 'Dark Ages', a spiritual light shone from the Celtic Church on Iona. The Annals of Ulster of 697 CE tell that Adomnán, the seventh abbot of Iona, went to Ireland to enact a remarkable Law of the Innocents, the *Cáin Adomnán* or Adomnán's Law. Though not pacifist, it anticipated the Nuremberg Conventions. Clergy, women, and boys too young to wield a weapon were given the protection of an agreement '...imposed on the men of Ireland and Britain as an everlasting law until Doom.' Around 800 CE, the Martyrology of Oengus paid homage with these lines (Márkus 1997, pp. 2–17):

> To Adomnán of Iona,
> whose troop is radiant,
> noble Jesus has granted
> the lasting freedom of the women of the Gaels.

Fast forward, but mindful of that antecedent, the Very Rev George MacLeod MC who rebuilt Iona Abbey and founded the Iona Community was a founding member of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) in February 1958. Twice decorated for bravery in World War One, Lord MacLeod of Fuinary (as he became) hailed from a distinguished family of West Highland clergy and, in 1957, was elected Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland (CND 2018; Ferguson 1990, p. 315).

The Presbyterian (or Calvinist) polity of the Church of Scotland is, under the Church of Scotland Act (1921), 'by law established.' In constitutional law, it is charged with '...the duty of the nation ... to promote in all appropriate ways the Kingdom of God.' Historically, its position has been that of 'just war' theory. This maintains that for war to be 'just' and, therefore, justified (Whetham 2011):

- All else must have been tried;
- It must be waged by legitimate authorities;
- It has a reasonable chance of success;
- It should not implicate non-combatants; and
- Its response should be proportionate.

As Scotland increasingly found itself on the Atlantic front line of the Cold War (Jamison 2003) and as nuclear weapons failed on the last two Augustinian criteria, the stage was set for a confrontation of legitimacy between church and state. MacLeod led the cavalry charge. Writing in the *Glasgow Herald* in 1960 to celebrate the four hundredth anniversary of the Scottish Reformation under John Knox, he outraged many by condemning 'that damned bomb' (Ferguson 1990, pp. 312–313):

> As we watch, appalled, its ever gathering strength and its unimaginable lethal potential, we may come nearest, in terms of our day, to the biggest problem that was [the sixteenth century church Reformers'] – namely, when is God's purpose that his people should rebel against lawful authority?

Some said it was treason. To MacLeod's ear, the best response came from an old woman on the High Street outside St Giles Cathedral, the High Kirk of Edinburgh. Muttering under her breath to the beadle, she opined: 'It' a' fine enough: *but the flood is no' runnin' deep enough'* (ibid., p. 314). The time was not yet ripe. Responding to a rebuke from the Duke of Hamilton, MacLeod demanded the following (ibid., p. 314):

> Has the Church nothing to say about non-violence? Has the Cross nothing to say about it? Or is the Cross just about a personal transaction? If so, could we stop talking about a Christian West and just get on with the arms race and have done with it?

Roll on another 20 years, and in May 1980, the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland was deeply split. Hoping that a muscular approach might influence arms control negotiations, it passed a motion urging the UK Government 'to maintain a British nuclear force' (Church of Scotland 2010, p. 29; Steven 1990, p. 56). By this time, however, Margaret Thatcher was in power. Ronald Reagan was on his way to the White House. American Cruise missiles were on their way to RAF Greenham Common and RAF Molesworth. The witness of the Greenham Women would soon be 'everywhere.' Because wars begin in the minds of men, they said, war will only end by the actions of women (Cook and Kirk 1983).

The General Assembly (Assembly) of 1984 still sat on the fence, but managed to deplore 'HM Government's commitment to acquisition of the Trident missile system' (Church of Scotland 2010, p. 29). By this time the jingoism of the Falklands War and of Mrs. Thatcher's neoconservative policies were working through. In 1985, the Assembly accepted that the use and threatened use of nuclear weapons are 'blasphemous.' In April 1986, the Chernobyl disaster galvanised nuclear consciousness. One month later, the Assembly nodded through a sequence of radical motions, including George MacLeod's forthright proposition (Ferguson 1990, pp. 409–410; Montefiore 1990, pp. 112–113):

> As of now this General Assembly declares that no Church can accede to the use of nuclear weapons to defend any cause whatsoever. They call on HM Government to desist from their use and from their future development.

Other mainline churches have followed suit though not the Church of England (Cottrell 2018). At the time of writing, nuclear weapons still exist on Scottish soil, but across a significant raft of key ethical opinion, the prophetic call has achieved what lies within its immediate power. It has withdrawn blessing and cast legitimacy into question.

Legality, Morality and Trident Ploughshares

The late 1980s and 1990s saw sustained protest at Faslane and its semi-permanent Peace Camp (Figure 29.1). Across action groups, like CND, SCND, and Christian CND, an increasingly interconnected world expressing global concern saw international law emerge as the new front line.

In July 1996, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) at The Hague gave an opinion, determined by the chair's casting vote, that though it could not decide 'definitively', it could advise that '...the threat or use of nuclear weapons would generally be contrary to the rules of

Figure 29.1 Police dog attending protest at the Faslane nuclear submarine base, Scotland, 2003.

international law applicable in armed conflict, and in particular the principles and rules of humanitarian law' (International Court of Justice (IJC) 1996, p. 44). Protestors could now claim the high ground that nuclear weapons are 'generally' illegal.

In May 1998, a seasoned English activist, Angie Zelter, led the London launch of a new campaign. Zelter has been arrested more than 100 times to date and served multiple prison sentences. 'Trident Ploughshares' was named after the 'swords into ploughshares' passage of Isaiah 2:4. Echoing the 'Committee of 100' with which the philosopher Bertrand Russell had led civil disobedience in 1960, it drew up a list of people who were prepared to train and act to '...take our responsibilities seriously and start the practical work of dismantling the [nuclear] system' (Zelter 2001, pp. 13–15, 303–305). Initially comprising 49 names, Trident Ploughshares had risen to 179 pledgers from 15 countries by March 2001.

Organised into semi-autonomous groups to carry out nonviolent direct actions, these had names like the Pheasants Union Affinity Group to which Zelter belonged, and the Gairloch Horticulturalists Affinity Group with its penchant for cutting holes in Faslane's razor wire to grace inside the base with daffodil bulbs. The Dialogue and Negotiation Affinity Group included senior public figures to liaise with the British Government. Several groups had religious affiliations. These included the Adomnán of Iona Affinity Group and the Peace Pagoda Affinity Group made up of nuns and monks with ties to Japanese Buddhism. The latter pointed to a prophecy in the *Lotus Sutra*: 'There will come a time when all living beings will be about to be burned in a total conflagration.' However, just when the threat is greatest,

'deliverance will appear in the hearts and minds of human beings.... This prophecy must be made to come true now' (Zelter 2001, pp. 204–206).

The depth of witness can be gleaned from the testimony of Brian Quail, an octogenarian retired Glasgow Latin teacher and Catholic Worker (Quail 2017). Quail tells how he collapsed whilst intercepting a convoy of warheads. As fellow protestors rushed to his aid:

'I said 'No leave me here.'

> The pains were unbearable, like tiger's claws in my chest. I thought: 'This is it. I am dying. Why am I dying here, on the road beside a vehicle carrying nuclear bombs?'

I looked up at a patch of blue in the sky, and it reminded me of my youngest daughter Catherine, who has particularly lovely blue eyes. Then I thought, 'No, it's not just the blue eyes of my children, but the green eyes, and the brown eyes, and the grey eyes of all the children of the world – and their mothers and fathers too – that are the target of our bombs. Our fellow human beings, our brothers and sisters, whom we are prepared to burn and blast.'

> And I knew the answer to my question: Why here? It is love that drives me. Love is not an emotional or sentimental feeling.
> Active love is a harsh and fearful thing.
> So I am not a peace protestor. I am – though I don't look it – a lover.

Matching moral testimony with legal consequence, one June evening in 1999, Angie Zelter, together with Ellen Moxley of Scotland and Ulla Roder of Denmark, made their way in an inflatable boat onto a barge that served as a laboratory near Faslane. Finding a window unlocked, they relieved the room of its computer equipment — by ditching it over the side. Ellen Moxley said it felt like getting rid of the 'building blocks of oppression: Trident, the "free" market, the exploitation of children, unbridled militarism, the all-pervading violence of society, third world debt' (Zelter 2001, pp. 39–46).

Four months later, the 'Trident Three' were acquitted by Sheriff Margaret Gimblett at Greenock Sheriff Court (Mayer 2002). To mitigate such legal damage, government lawyers invoked the rare procedure of seeking a Lord Advocate's Reference. Its final sentence was the following: '...we are not persuaded that the facts of what the respondents did, or anything in the nature or purposes of the deployment of Trident, indicate any foundation at all, in Scots or in international law, for a defence of justification' (High Court of Judiciary 2001). A detailed analysis by the distinguished American law professor, Charles Moxley, concluded: 'The Scots High Court of Justiciary is in error – and does damage to the rule of law – by its abnegation of this restraint' (Moxley 2001).

The law had come down on the side of power but only to consolidate a feeling amongst protestors that the law had been made an ass of. The Big Blockade that followed on 12 February 2001 was organised jointly by Trident Ploughshares and SCND. One thousand citizens blockaded Faslane. In what was the biggest mass arrest in Scottish history, 385 were taken into police custody. Ironically, most were charged with Breech of the Peace. They included Caroline Lucas, the English Green Party MEP, and the Rev Norman Shanks as leader of the Iona Community. The protest was visited by the Right Reverend Dr Andrew McLellan, Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. His decorum lent a quiet sense of blessing to the protest. It was a day filled with unlikely serendipity. I had the

good fortune of finding myself locked in a police van with a distinguished-looking gentleman, who turned out to be the constitutional lawyer, Ian Hamilton QC. Prior to spending 14 hours in a police cell, I picked his brain for legal advice. Helensburgh Sheriff Court found us both 'not guilty' (McIntosh 2001; Sunday Mail 2000).

Today, the protests at Faslane continue. However, faith groups from the World Council of Churches (WCC) to the Vatican are putting 'just war' theory heavily into question (Ennis et al. 2004; McElwee 2016). On New Year's Day 2017, Pope Francis issued a major missive not just for the abolition of nuclear weapons, but for full-scale *nonviolence* as 'a way of life ... a style of politics for peace' (Francis 2017).

In December 2017, the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. The Church of Scotland, once so resistant to taking a stand, published a web page to celebrate some of its members who had borne witness. It quoted Molly Harvey of the Iona Community (Church of Scotland 2017):

> I will never forget that when I was being carried away to be arrested I was surrounded by other protesters and they were singing to each one of us by name "Molly Harvey, stand oh stand firm, stand oh stand firm, and see what the Lord can do".

The Church of Scotland, the church 'by law established' to call the nation to account, had come a long way since 1960. Its turbulent one time Moderator, George Fielden MacLeod, bearer of the Military Cross and the Croix de Guerre, would have been so very proud.

Nuclear Threat in Russia's Invasion of Ukraine

Beyond Scotland, and as this book was going to press in February 2022, Russia invaded Ukraine. President Putin placed his nuclear forces on high alert, widely interpreted as being to dissuade the West from such military interventions as a no-fly zone. Under the Budapest Memorandum of 1994, Ukraine had eliminated its nuclear weapons and acceded to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. In return Russia, the US and the UK had pledged 'to respect the independence and sovereignty' of its borders. Here is not the place to evaluate claims of the treaty's betrayal. What concerns us is the challenge that, had Ukraine retained its nuclear weapons, they might have deterred the invasion.

At one level, such logic of nuclear deterrence is impeccable. Impeccable, all the way through to mutually assured destruction (MAD), and to every state in the world possessing its own arsenal. At another level, the west (at the time of writing) was rendered militarily impotent partly because Russia's nuclear deterrence proved a deterrence to the utility of conventional force. At the deepest levels, time will be the judge. Will conventional or nuclear weapons best battle? Or will the longer day be won by nonviolent civilian resistance such as found such traction in East Germany's 'Peaceful Revolution' of 1989?

Under the Soviet regime, Russian Orthodox religion never had a process like the Catholic Church's Vatican II and its 1963 encyclical, *Pacem in Terris*. But might such a liberation theology now emerge? I asked an elderly friend, John MacAulay, the boatbuilder in the Isle of Harris and a Church of Scotland elder, where he sees hope. He said: *'I pray that the venerable Saint Andrew should retrace his footsteps through the Ukraine.'* The early Christian *Acts of Andrew* texts tell how this patron saint of Scotland persuaded Roman soldiers to disarm. Venerated in both Russia and Ukraine, legend holds that he planted a cross where Kiev grew up.

Nonviolence as Emergent Third Millennium Christianity

George MacLeod's concern was for the renewal of Christianity in our times. Today in Western Europe, the faith has lost credibility for most people. However, the depth of testimony in contexts like Faslane suggests that it might carry yet 'the gift half understood.'

Consider the Cross. Imagine that a stranger asks, 'What is the Cross?' Historically, the answer has revolved round: 'Why did Jesus die?' The gospels say he came to 'give his life a ransom for many' (Mark 10:45; Matthew 10:28) or, as traditionally attributed to the apostle Paul, 'for all' (1 Timothy 2:6). However, the Greek *lytron*, usually translated as 'ransom' in the military sense, also means 'to loosen' or 'to liberate.' Walter Wink translates it as 'to give his life to ... liberate many' (Wink 2002, pp. 109–110).

If Christ was liberator, then who might be the ransomer of souls? Broadly speaking, the *Christus Victor* (Christ as victor) view of First Millennium Christianity held it to have been the devil. At the start of the second millennium, Anselm of Canterbury felt this gave the Devil too much power. He reasoned that the ransomer of souls was God. Calvin ramped this up, holding that God was 'armed for vengeance.' His penal substitution theory of the atonement held that Christ was sent to stand in the dock, and take the punishment for human sin upon himself (McIntosh 2018 (2016), pp. 277–280, 331–333; Weaver 2001). Arguably, this leaves us with a blood-soaked theology.

The Mennonite pacifist theologian John Howard Yoder spoke of directions 'in which "cross" language can evolve' (Yoder 1994, p. 129). What might be a Christianity more fit for purpose in the third millennium? Might nonviolence be the key?

Towards the end of the second millennium, the French priest, Abbé Pierre, suggested that the ransomer is neither the Devil, nor God, but ourselves. His work with drug addicts had led him to conclude that, 'Because we are disconnected from our authentic divine source, we have become our own executioners. We are slaves to our disordered desires, to our egotism' (Pierre 2005, pp. 69–70).

If that is so, what makes the Cross distinctive? What still drives its power?

Salvador Dali was deeply affected by Hiroshima and Nagasaki. At the height of his 'atomic period', he painted *Christ of Saint John of the Cross* (1951, Figure 29.2). Purchased by the City of Glasgow, it hangs today in the Kelvingrove Gallery just 25 miles west of Faslane.

It depicts the cosmic Christ, transfigured and transfixed above a world of simple fishermen. An interpretative panel in the gallery shows a sketch he'd made of an exploding nucleus while working on the painting. It says that Dali had '...associated the nucleus of the atom with Christ.' There we glimpse beneath the surface of atomic theology. Christ, whose human face revealed the God of love, lies at creation's atom heart. Resurrection is intrinsic, for such love as this exists beyond the bounds of space and time. Such might be our Third Millennium Christianity.

In 2016, as a guest of University Congregational United Church in Seattle, I was taken to the Ground Zero Center for Nonviolent Action by the Kitsap-Bangor Naval Base where America's Trident submarines are docked. I was shown a cracked and blackened plinth out in the garden. Once it had been a shrine to the Buddha and the Cross. Now, it fluttered prayer flags and some Japanese lettering. The activist, Leonard Eiger, explained that two off-duty marines had come in under cover of darkness from the base. They'd burnt it down: the Buddha and the Cross, consumed as one in flames.

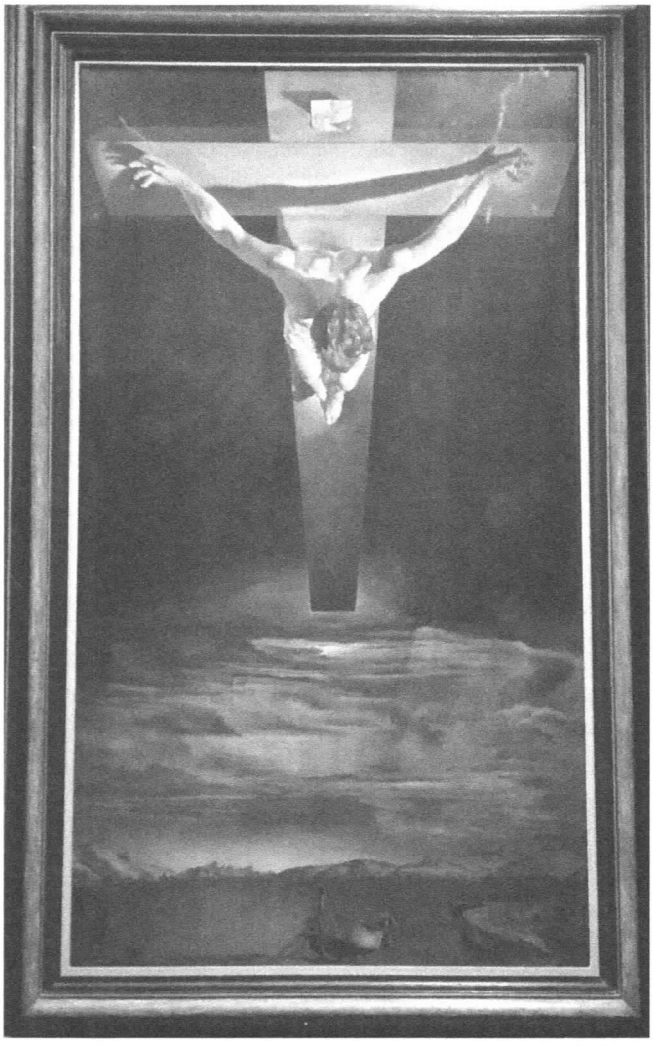

Figure 29.2 Salvador Dali, *Christ of St. John of the Cross*, 1951, Kelvingrove Art Gallery, Glasgow.

A couple of monks of the Japan Buddha Sangha, the Nipponzan Myohoji monastery, were with us. I turned to Brother Gilberto Perez, and asked him what he made of this symbolic holocaust.

He said: 'I truly believe the power of light can come from enduring the burning.'

Beyond space. Outside of time. The love that drives the atom round. The Cross absorbs the violence of the world.

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