

ASH WEDNESDAY 2014

Christian witness to the research and development of armed drones.

Organised by Liverpool Pax Christi

World Council of Churches (WCC) Executive Committee has condemned the use of Drones or Unmanned Aerial Vehicles(UAVS) saying that they pose 'SERIOUS THREATS TO HUMANITY' AND 'THE RIGHT TO LIFE' WHILE SETTING 'DANGEROUS PRECEDENTS' IN INTER STATE RELATIONS'

The statement adds that UAV technology is permitting countries like the 'U.S.A, Israel, Russia and the U.K TO MOVE TOWARDS SYSTEMS THAT WOULD GIVE FULL COMBAT AUTONOMY TO MACHINES'

Gather at the University Square 1pm

Opening Prayer

ALL

We pray to you this day mindful of the sorry confusion of our world.

Look with mercy upon this generation of your children, so steeped in misery of their own contriving, so far strayed from your ways and so blinded by passions.

We pray for the victims of tyranny, that they might resist oppression with courage and may preserve their integrity by a hope which defies the terror of the moment.

We pray for wicked and cruel people whose arrogance reveals to us what the sin of our own hearts is like when it has conceived and brought forth its final fruit.

O God, who resists the proud and gives grace to the humble, bring down the mighty from their seats.

Excerpt from a prayer by Reinhold Niebuhr.

Song- **'Kyrie Eleison' Lord Have Mercy**

Look around you, can you see?
Times are troubled, people grieve,
See the violence feel the hardness,
All my people weep with me
Kyrie Eleison, Christe Eleison, Kyrie Eleison

Walk among them, I'll go with you
Reach out to them, with my hands,
Suffer with me, and together
We will serve them, help them stand
**Kyrie Eleison, Christe Eleison
KyrieEleison**

Forgive us Father, hear our prayer
We would walk with you, anywhere
Through your suffering, with forgiveness
Take your life into the world
Kyrie Eleison, Christe Eleison, Kyrie Eleison

READER

We are gathered in the shadows of the University of Liverpool, one of 5 universities engaged in drone research. The GAMMA programme is a three-year programme to develop and improve "autonomous systems". According to the University of Liverpool, (one of the universities involved in the programme) autonomous systems are technology based solutions that replace humans in tasks that are mundane, dangerous and dirty, or detailed and precise, across sectors, including aerospace, nuclear, automotive and petrochemicals. This definition includes military drones. The program is backed by £4.42 million of taxpayers' money, through the regional growth fund, whose panel includes a senior arms dealer, the finance director of Rolls Royce. The remaining £4.6 million comes from the programme's partners which include BAE Systems. The universities involved are Manchester, Liverpool, Lancaster, Salford and UCLAN. Specific information about the programme is hard to find, the level of transparency symbolized by the fact that their privacy policy is written in Latin.

REPENTANCE

L. For Christians Ash Wednesday begins 40 days of preparation for Christ's journey to Jerusalem, and ultimately death. We consider today how we are caught up in structures and systems that deny life to others, we remember those killed, maimed by instruments of war, specifically drones, we listen now to those affected by drones in other parts of the world.

During this time a cross is held in the centre of the circle;

Reader; SINCE 2004 884 CIVILIANS HAVE BEEN KILLED BY DRONE STRIKES IN PAKISTAN. THESE ARE CARRIED OUT BY THE CIA AS PART OF ITS COVERT WAR ON TERROR. (Living Under Drones)

L. For our incapacity to feel the suffering of others and our tendency to live uncomfortably with injustice, **GOD FORGIVE US**

Reader; THE U.K HAS BORROWED AMERICAN DRONES TO CARRY OUT OVER 250 UNREPORTED ATTACKS IN AFGHANISTAN WHILE DEVELOPING ITS OWN DRONES
L. For the self righteousness which denies guilt and the self interest which strangles compassion **God forgive us**

Reader; 'THERE ARE MANY DRONES IN OUR AREA AND THEY FLY LOW, LOTS OF THEM, BEFORE THE DRONES IT FELT THAT EVERYONE WAS YOUNG, NOW IT FEELS THAT EVERYONE IS ILL' (resident. North Waziristan, Pakistan) (Living Under Drones)

L. For those who live their lives in careless unconcern, who cry 'Peace Peace when there is no Peace' **WE ASK YOUR MERCY.**

Blessing and distribution of ashes

A reading from Joel chapter 2

All. Repentance means a change of mind and heart. Joel calls it heartbreak, letting God who is all tenderness and compassion, break the cocoon of selfishness with which we defend ourselves from God and one another. The call to repentance is a call to the nation to change, political, social and economic structures which oppress and exploit the weak,

(Gerry Hughes SJ)

During the distribution of ashes we will sing.

Be still and know that I am God (3 times) I am the Lord that healeth thee (3 times)

In thee , O lord I put my trust (3 times)

Prayers of Intercession.

Response – Lord hear our Prayer.

We pray for all whose lives are affected by war and violence, we remember Syria, Pakistan, the Middle East, Africa, Ukraine etc,

We pray for peacemakers across the world, individuals and organisations that inspire us and encourage us to put love into action eg

We remember those gathering today in London at The Ministry of defence and in Faslane, Scotland who make their Ash Wednesday together in solidarity

Please add your own

Peace - Putting Love into action

ALL . Call us Lord Jesus to seek your way of peace and proclaim it to the nations. A peace that seeks security through love , justice , co-operation and respect. A peace that has as its ultimate security our trust in and love of God.

You are invited to take a bulb as it is passed around the circle, as a symbol of new life. Please hold your bulb aloft . as we listen to these words attributed to Oscar Romero,

Ministers not Messiahs

This is what we are about. We plant the seeds that one day will grow. We water the seeds already planted knowing that they hold future promise.
We lay foundations that will need further development.
We provide yeast that produces effects far beyond our capabilities.

We cannot do everything, and there is a sense of liberation in realizing this.
This enables us to do something, and to do it very well.

It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning,
a step along the way, an opportunity for the Lord's
grace to enter and do the rest.
We may never see the end results, but that is the
difference between the master builder and the worker.

We are workers, not master builders, ministers, not
messiahs. We are prophets of a future not our own.

ACT OF COMMITMENT

Men; In this world of hatred, indifference, fear and anxiety we pledge to be instruments of
your love

Women; In this world of selfishness, greed and materialism, we pledge to be instruments of
your selfless service and generosity.

Men; In this world of revenge and retaliation and resentment, we pledge to be instruments
of your mercy, compassion and forgiveness.

Women ; In this world of doubt and despair, we pledge to be instruments of faith and hope

Men; . In this world of lies and darkness we pledge to be instruments of your truth and light

Women; In this world of war, drones and death, we pledge to be instruments of your peace
, non violence and life.

John Dear S.J(adapted)

Final song (Sing through twice)

You shall go out with joy And be transformed in peace
And the mountains and the hills shall break forth before us
There will be shouts of joy and the trees of the field
Shall clap, shall clap their hands
And the trees of the field shall clap their hands, and the trees of the field shall clap
their hands, and the trees of the field shall clap their hands
And you'll go out with joy,

THANKYOU FOR JOINING US TODAY.
www.paxchristi.org.uk
Local group contact janharper1@yahoo.co.uk
www.dronewars.org (info on drones)
www.caat.org.uk (campaign against the arms trade)

Ground the Drones



Sign the online petition here: <http://www.stopwar.org.uk/drones/>

THE SHAME OF A FINE UNIVERSITY

To it's shame, Liverpool University participates in the development of drones – one of it's partners is the giant arms manufacturer and dealer, BAE Systems.

Last year Edinburgh University stopped working with a company which makes navigation controls for US Predator and Reaper drones, which have killed many women and children, and terrified thousands more.

Come on Liverpool – do the right thing and walk away from this disgusting business.

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