

Dear Friends

Remembrance this year takes on a special significance as we truly celebrate that one hundred years ago the guns fell silent and the abomination that was World War 1 came to an end. The slaughter which decimated communities on both sides left a deep scar on human history and taught lasting lessons about what men (mainly) are capable of doing to one another. We do well to continue to remember, long after the 100 years have passed.

The difficulty is that the remembering isn't enough to change our ways. At best it makes us thankful for those who gave their lives in the past, more determined to support those injured in battle or those who have lost husbands, sons or fathers in the conflict. But seldom are we willing to make new efforts to forgive, build bridges, or love our enemies in pursuit of peace. Instead the thirst is to lay the blame for the problems of the world at someone else's door – to build walls, put up defences, tear up arms limitation agreements. There's a need to have prevailed over "the other lot" and protected our own superior position. We see this played out by leaders whom we elect (male or female) because of their machismo, and their promise thereby to make life better for us.



There is, of course, a better way, proclaimed and lived by the one to whom we swear our allegiance: Love your enemies; when someone strikes you on one cheek, offer him the other; forgive - as you are forgiven; hunger and thirst for righteousness. We're happy to adhere to the rules about not swearing or murdering – but these others are just too hard! It was Gandhi who said: "You Christians look after a document containing enough dynamite to blow all civilisation to pieces, turn the world upside down and bring peace to a battle-torn planet. But you treat it as though it is nothing more than a piece of literature."

Perhaps this November we can start to make the world a more peaceful place by holding a mirror to ourselves and asking whether we can do a better job at following the Christ we follow. Could we perhaps find a Christ-like attitude to someone whom we've felt it impossible to forgive? From our small beginnings others might come to recognise the true Christ who is our peace – peace might flow like a river.

Blessings

Kim