



21 September 2009

WE MUST BELIEVE IN PEACE

On this the United Nations International Day of Peace, the Uniting Church offers its prayers for a world without nuclear weapons.

As we commemorate this day of peace, as well as the coinciding World Council of Churches' International Day of Prayer for Peace, we acknowledge that we have not believed enough in the power of peace. We have placed our faith in the ownership of weapons and the idea of 'deterrence' to deliver security for the world's people. However, we believe there can be no security while there are about 26,000 nuclear weapons in the world with a few thousand of these on hair trigger alert.

The nuclear bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945 should have ended the use of all nuclear weapons but instead we have seen their proliferation. Fortunately the tide is now turning and this day, 21 September, provides us with the opportunity to build both on the good work already being done and further strengthen our resolve to build a peaceful world.

The Australian Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd, and the US President, Barack Obama, are leading a new wave of international commitment and cooperation on nuclear disarmament. Most recently, African states have come together to ratify a treaty that declares Africa a nuclear weapon-free zone. We affirm this work, praying for and encouraging ongoing efforts.

The Uniting Church has long been committed to the elimination of all nuclear weapons, most recently lending its voice to the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons. In 2006, in its statement *Uniting for Peace*, the Church declared that,

the ownership, use, or threatened use of nuclear, chemical and/or biological weapons is evil.

We continue to call on all nuclear weapons states to completely disarm and on those states seeking to develop nuclear weapons to end their programs. And we continue to pray that those who seek security in weapons may discover that genuine security can only be achieved through non-violent means.

On this day, the International Day of Peace and the International Day of Prayer for Peace, I ask you to especially pray for:

- the special disarmament session for the UN heads of state, on 24 September 2009;
- successful negotiations with the US and with Russia, towards their signing the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty;
- a successful Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference in 2010; and
- the Australian government and all governments, as they work towards nuclear-free zones.

Beyond prayer, I encourage you to actively involve yourself in peacemaking in your local community. If we could join with millions of Christians around the world who are praying and advocating for peace, imagine what we could achieve.

Rev. Alistair Macrae
President
Uniting Church in Australia National Assembly