

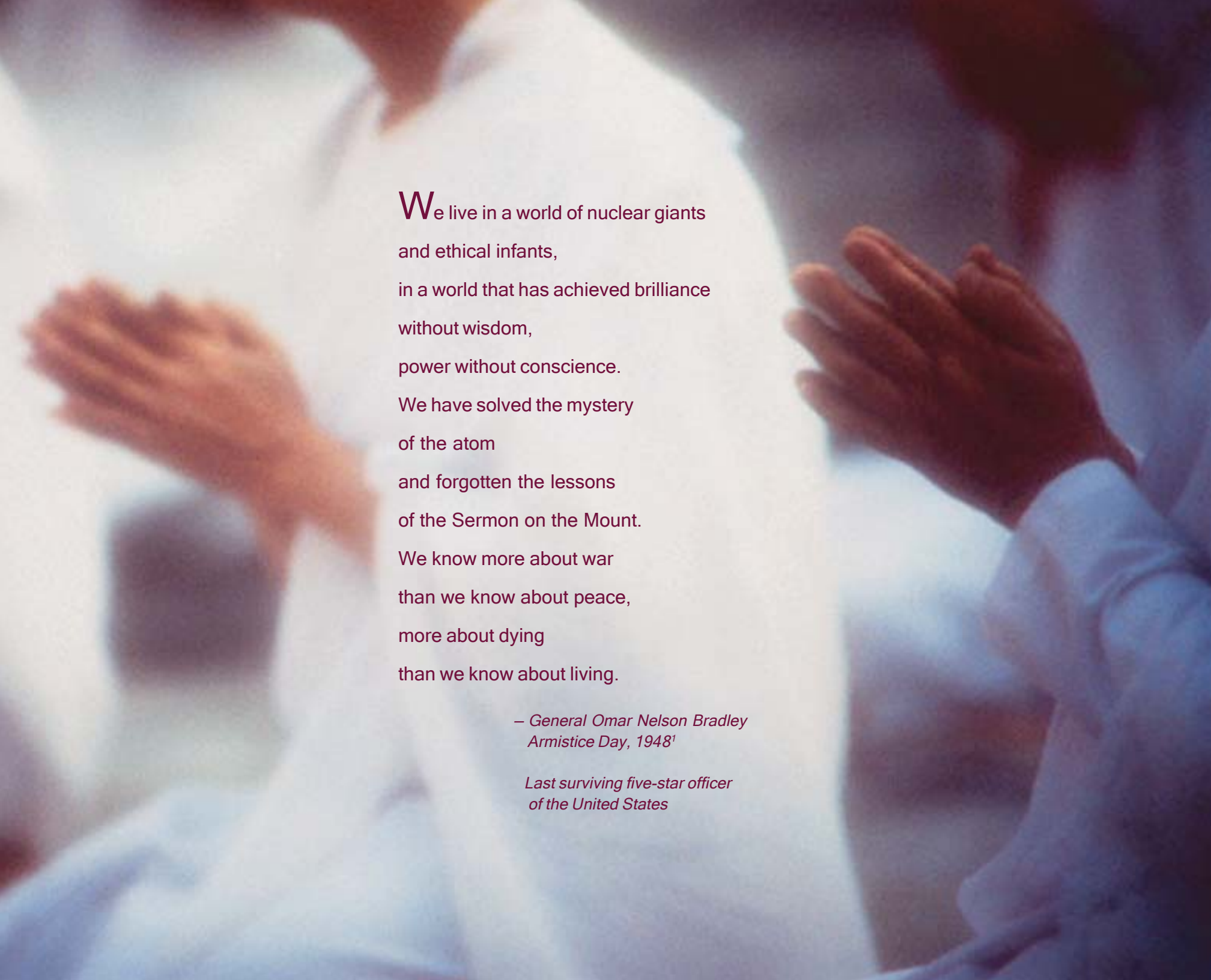


# **BREAKING FAITH WITH NUCLEAR WEAPONS**

**A Guide for Religious Communities**

Prepared by Faithful Security: the National Religious Partnership on the Nuclear Weapons Danger • 2006

**[www.faithfulsecurity.org](http://www.faithfulsecurity.org)**



We live in a world of nuclear giants  
and ethical infants,  
in a world that has achieved brilliance  
without wisdom,  
power without conscience.  
We have solved the mystery  
of the atom  
and forgotten the lessons  
of the Sermon on the Mount.  
We know more about war  
than we know about peace,  
more about dying  
than we know about living.

– General Omar Nelson Bradley  
*Armistice Day, 1948*<sup>1</sup>

*Last surviving five-star officer  
of the United States*

# A world at a crossroads . . .

As 2006 begins, terrorists are seeking to acquire unsecured weapons and materials, several countries are expanding their arsenals, and other nations are actively seeking to join the nuclear club.

With the combination of all these threats, former military officials are saying that there is a 50 percent chance of a nuclear strike on an American target within the next ten years.<sup>2</sup> We are truly at a crossroads. As religious people, what is our response to these new developments? How do we work together to ensure that the U.S. and the world keep faith with God by eliminating nuclear weapons?

Several months ago, Rev. William Sloane Coffin convened a group of religious leaders from national religious organizations and denominations, regional religious bodies, and religious schools to address these questions. The group responded by establishing *Faithful Security: The National Religious Partnership to End the Nuclear Weapons Danger*.

The goal of Faithful Security is to work toward the permanent elimination of nuclear weapons by empowering religious communities to take action on a local level. It is our hope that this toolkit will provide you with the resources you need to learn about the nuclear weapons danger and take action to build a safer world for all of our brothers and sisters.

If you need any additional information, our staff organizers can connect you with films, fact sheets, and other resources to help you speak out about the need to break faith with nuclear weapons. Obviously we can't do this alone. It will take all of us—Jewish, Protestant, Shinto, Catholic, Muslim, Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist—and everyone who believes that human life is sacred.

**Join Us. Become Part of Faithful Security!**  
Sign up at

**[www.faithfulsecurity.org](http://www.faithfulsecurity.org)**

<i>Six Things People of Faith Can Do</i>	2
<i>Other Ideas for Taking Action</i>	3
<i>Call to Action</i>	4
<i>Faith in Action</i>	5
<i>We Can Help</i>	6
<i>Religious Perspectives</i>	7
<i>Model Resolution</i>	8
<i>What the U.S. Can Do</i>	9
<i>Sample Sermons</i>	10
<i>Study Guide</i>	12
<i>Bulletin Insert</i>	13
<i>Prayers from Different Religious Traditions</i>	14
<i>National Resources</i>	15
<i>Organizing Tips and Materials</i>	16
<i>Notes on Sources</i>	17





“WE DO NOT HAVE FAITH IN GOD IF WE DEPEND UPON THE ATOM BOMB.”

— *Catholic Worker Leaflet, 1955*<sup>3</sup>

## Six Things People of Faith Can Do

**1. KNOW THE FACTS.** Learn the basics about nuclear weapons and their current status in the United States and in other countries. Keep abreast of current policy developments. Visit the most informative and useful websites, including the ones listed in the “National Resources” section. Stay current on legislation by joining the Faithful Security Network ([www.faithfulsecurity.org](http://www.faithfulsecurity.org)).

**2. PRAY.** The nuclear weapons danger cannot be addressed through action alone. All activism must be accompanied by an inner journey that faces the existence of nuclear weapons, the possibility of annihilation, and the power of God in the face of these threats. Religious people can be a voice of hope for the future while they are performing the prophetic task of warning powerful institutions to change their course.

**3. GET TOGETHER.** Organize a small gathering in your home or religious community to strategize about how to raise awareness and take action. Consider showing a film that exposes the destructive power of nuclear weapons (see page 16).

**4. PASS THE MODEL RESOLUTION.** Once you’ve learned more about the nuclear weapons danger, encourage your religious community to pass the model resolution urging the government to develop a plan for how to eliminate nuclear weapons (see page eight). Look for partners in your community that can help you spread the word. Reach out to other religious communities, especially those of different faiths. Consider partnering with grassroots groups that work for peace and disarmament. Submit the model resolution to your local city council or town meeting.

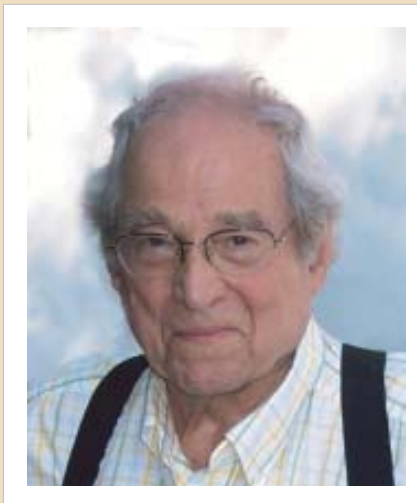
**5. BUILD MOMENTUM.** As you take action, keep letting others know about your efforts. Prepare an op-ed for your local newspaper. Meet with the editorial board of your local paper. Initiate conversations with your local religious leaders. Write an article for the regional newsletter in your faith community.

**6. SPEAK TRUTH TO POWER.** Our elected officials are the ones who are making the daily decisions to fund new nuclear weapons or to follow our treaty obligations by reducing and eliminating nuclear weapons. Build a relationship with your local and national elected officials by writing letters, making phone calls, and setting up in-state lobby visits.



# Other Ideas for Taking Action . . .

- Plan an interfaith worship service with other local congregations that focuses on the nuclear weapons danger.
- Encourage your mayor to become part of the Mayors for Peace Emergency Campaign to Ban Nuclear Weapons. (<http://www.abolitionnow.org/mayors.html>)
- Approach your religious leader with suggestions for how your community can work together to help end the nuclear weapons danger.
- Begin planning an event to remember the 61st anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki (August 6-9, 2006).
- Invite a speaker knowledgeable on nuclear weapons to address your faith community.
- Attend your religious body's annual conference to raise awareness for the nuclear weapons danger and find new allies.



"If faith puts us on the road, hope is what keeps us there. It enables us to keep a steady eye on remote ends. It makes us persistent when we can't be optimistic, faithful when results elude us. For like nothing else in the world, hope arouses a passion for the possible, a determination that our children not be asked to shoulder burdens we let fall.

Hopeful people are always critical of the present but only because they hold such a bright view of the future."

— Rev. William Sloane Coffin Jr.  
quoted from his book,  
*A Passion for the Possible:  
A Message to U.S. Churches*<sup>4</sup>

*"It is not the work of one community only; it is not the work of somebody else; it is our work together. We have to see how we can save the world from these weapons as well as any other weapons of mass destruction."*

— Dr. Muzammil Siddiqi  
Muslim-Christian Consultation on the Nuclear Weapons Danger<sup>5</sup>

# Call to Action on the Nuclear Weapons Danger

**“The warhorse is a vain hope for victory, and by its great might it cannot save”  
– Psalm 33**

In 2006, our leaders are renewing nuclear production activities and upgrading nuclear testing facilities. They are invigorating arsenals that should be left to decay. Our country cannot rightly seek to halt the spread of nuclear weapons while at the same time developing new weapons capabilities of our own. Today, as these dangerous weapons spread to North Korea and beyond, and as terrorists seek to acquire them, we must realize that we have made a deadly mistake. It is time to break faith with nuclear weapons once and for all. Nuclear weapons merit unequivocal and unhesitating condemnation. The 30,000 nuclear weapons around the globe have more than 100,000 times the explosive power of the bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. These are doomsday arms—genocidal, ecocidal, and suicidal.

It is our belief that only God has the authority to end all life on the planet; all we have is the power, and it is past time to surrender it. To live in a world within minutes of possible annihilation is to defy God’s will, not to do God’s will.

When the cold war ended, many thought the nuclear danger had ended with it. It did not, and now, having assumed a more sinister shape, it is mounting again. Scores of admirals and generals from many countries have come to believe that nuclear weapons *invite* far more than they *deter* catastrophic conflict. They agree that the possession of nuclear weapons by some states is the strongest incentive for other states to acquire them. They are also painfully aware that nuclear weapons, while most useful to terrorists, are utterly useless against them. Consequently, these leaders now advocate, as do we, the abolition of all nuclear arsenals. As General Lee Butler declared five years ago, “A world free of the threat of nuclear weapons is necessarily a world devoid of nuclear weapons.”<sup>6</sup>

The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty was a grand design struck in 1970. Since that time, over 180 non-nuclear countries have promised to forego nuclear weapons provided the nuclear powers abolished theirs. In other words—and this is crucial—*non-proliferation was, from the beginning, inextricably linked to nuclear disarmament*. But instead of honoring their obligations under Article VI of the treaty, the nuclear powers have substituted a double standard for the single one intended. For 35 years, they have practiced nuclear apartheid, arrogating to themselves the right to build, deploy, and threaten to use nuclear weapons, while policing the rest of the world against their production.

**We call on all members of America’s religious communities, as a testament of our common faith, to join Faithful Security, and to take action immediately to break faith with nuclear weapons. The first step to eliminate nuclear weapons is to demand that the U.S. government lead the way for the global abolition of nuclear weapons by immediately making a plan for how to freeze, lock down, reduce, and eliminate nuclear weapons in a step-by-step process with ever increasing verification.**

Fellow believers, we know how often justice appears a weary way off, peace a little further. But if we give up on justice, if we give up on peace, we give up on God. So let us resolve to labor mightily for what we pray for fervently, confident in the poet’s contention that “we are only undefeated because we go on trying” and in the vision of the prophet that “the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of God as the waters cover the sea.”

God bless you all.

*Call to Action initiated by Rev. William Sloane Coffin Jr., 2005*

# Faith in Action . . . Make a Commitment

Diverse religious communities all over the country, including groups of Pentecostal Christians in Texas, a Benedictine convent in Chicago, and students at a seminary in Washington, D.C., are all making commitments to take action on the nuclear weapons danger.

Religious bodies such as the United Methodist Church and the Islamic Society of North America have committed to educating their members and speaking out publicly.

Individual religious leaders are preaching and teaching about the need to eliminate nuclear weapons.

What steps will you take in the coming months? Fill out the coupon below to let us know your ideas.

Faithful Security pledges to:

- keep you informed about ways to take action;
- connect you with resources in your community; and
- continue to build national momentum to encourage the government to develop a plan for the elimination of nuclear weapons.

Send your commitment to:

**Karen Jacob**

*Faithful Security*

**803 North Main Street  
Goshen, IN 46528**

**Fax: 574-534-4937**

As an individual person of faith, I am committing to take action to break faith with nuclear weapons. In the coming months, I will take the following steps:

1.

2.

3.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_ @ \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

Faith Tradition \_\_\_\_\_

As a religious community, we are committing to take action to break faith with nuclear weapons. In the coming months, we will take the following steps together:

1.

2.

3.

Community Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address \_\_\_\_\_ @ \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

Faith Tradition \_\_\_\_\_



# We Can Help to Reduce the Nuclear Weapons Danger

## Victory in 2005

In 2005, religious communities and grassroots groups joined hands to speak out against funding for new nuclear weapons.

The “bunker buster” weapon would have been over 70 times as powerful as the bomb dropped on Hiroshima.

Major religious bodies forwarded action alerts to their members, and local congregations responded by writing letters, meeting with editorial boards at local papers, visiting their legislators, and holding community meetings to raise awareness about the dangers of building new nuclear weapons.

These efforts were successful. Senator Pete Domenici’s office announced in October that the funding for the nuclear “bunker-buster” would be completely eliminated from the 2006 budget.

2006 is the second year in a row that Congress has refused to fund research for new “bunker-buster” weapons. Thanks are due to all religious communities who took action for this important cause.

This success confirms that ordinary citizens and people of faith have the power to shape government decisions on nuclear weapons policy.

## Success is Possible!

What can one person do about the nuclear weapons danger?  
Here are some examples of how citizens have affected the U.S. policy on nuclear weapons:

- In 1963 President John F. Kennedy responded to widespread public concerns about radioactive fallout and increased nuclear dangers by signing a treaty with the Soviet Union permanently banning all atmospheric nuclear tests.
- In 1980 the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints issued a statement that helped to convince President Ronald Reagan to cancel plans to deploy hundreds of mobile MX missiles in Utah and Nevada. “We deplore the building of vast arsenals of nuclear weaponry,” the Mormon First Presidency declared.<sup>7</sup>
- In 1983 the U.S. Catholic Conference of Bishops issued the pastoral letter, “The Challenge of Peace: God’s Promise and Our Response,” which significantly influenced public thinking and led to greater U.S. efforts for arms reduction.
- In 1992 President George H.W. Bush signed legislation halting U.S. underground nuclear testing, in response to pressure from the Nuclear Weapons Freeze Campaign and after years of sustained citizen lobbying that convinced Congress to ban further nuclear tests.

These are but a few of the successes citizens have achieved over the years in helping to reduce the nuclear weapons danger.

## Immoral, Idolatrous, Incompatible with Faith in God . . .

- The same year that nuclear weapons were developed, the Federal Council of Churches condemned nuclear weapons as “immoral, idolatrous, incompatible with faith in God. . . .” When the nuclear danger increased during the cold war, religious bodies were at the forefront of the movement that succeeded in reversing the arms race and drastically reducing the nuclear weapons danger.

What does your religious tradition  
have to say about nuclear weapons? Visit  
[www.zero-nukes.org](http://www.zero-nukes.org)  
to view statements from Jewish, Muslim, Christian, and  
other religious traditions.



# Religious Perspectives on the Nuclear Weapons Danger

In the Bible it was commanded that before the Israelite army could engage in warfare, the priests needed to read to the assembled the rules of what was ethically permitted in warfare and what was prohibited. That interaction between religion and the military created the first ethical strictures of warfare—the foundation of what later became known as “just war theory.”



Today we religious and military leaders continue this tradition. We stand together in this House of God, informed by our values, aware of the horrible human cost of war and conflict, weary of the threat posed by nuclear proliferation—to call upon Congress, the president, the American military, and the American people to lead the way towards a process of nuclear reduction and disarmament.

. . . at this crucial crossroads of history, we join to call on the world to recognize that violence begets violence; that nuclear proliferation benefits no one; that we can, we will, and we must find other ways to protect ourselves, our nations and our future: for it is not sufficient to have peace in our time, but, instead, we must leave a peaceful world to our children.

– Rabbi David Saperstein<sup>8</sup>

What can be said, too, about those governments which count on nuclear arms as a means of ensuring the security of their countries? Along with countless persons of goodwill, one can state that this point of view is not only baneful but also completely fallacious. In a nuclear war there would be no victors, only victims. The truth of peace requires that all—whether those governments which openly or secretly possess nuclear arms, or those planning to acquire them—agree to change their course by clear and firm decisions, and strive for a progressive and concerted nuclear disarmament. The resources which would be saved could then be employed in projects of development capable of benefiting all their people, especially the poor.



– Pope Benedict XVI<sup>9</sup>

When you drop bombs on your enemy, you drop those same bombs on yourself, your own country.

– Thich Nhat Hahn  
Buddhist Monk<sup>10</sup>



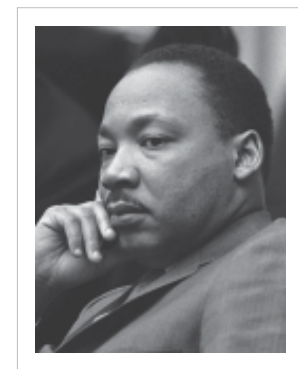
Nuclear poison turns the water in the well of life into blood and poison for all who drink from that well.

– Rev. Joan Brown Campbell<sup>11</sup>

The alternative to disarmament, the alternative to a greater suspension of nuclear tests, the alternative to strengthening the United Nations and thereby disarming the whole world may well be a civilization plunged into the abyss of annihilation and our earthly habitat will be transformed into an inferno that even the mind of Dante could not envision.

We've got to see that, and work diligently and passionately for peace.

– Martin Luther King Jr.<sup>12</sup>



# Action Resources

Resolved

## Model Resolution on the Nuclear Weapons Danger

*Invite your religious community to endorse the resolution below. Reach out to members of other religious communities in your area to encourage them to do the same. Let us know how it goes! Register at [www.faithfulsecurity.org](http://www.faithfulsecurity.org) and see how other communities are doing in this campaign.*

WHEREAS, we, as religious people, believe human life to be sacred and the earth beloved;

WHEREAS, we stand witness to the triumph of life over death, love over hatred, and hope over fear;

WHEREAS, humanity has lived in the shadow of nuclear weapons for sixty years too long;

WHEREAS, the nuclear weapons danger has grown recently due to the risk of terrorists acquiring such weapons, the spread of weapons capability to North Korea and beyond, and efforts in the U.S. to develop new nuclear weapons and lower the threshold of nuclear use;

WHEREAS, we cast a cold eye on the history of nuclear weapons, and see with utter clarity their indiscriminate destructive power and their resulting legacy of terror;

WHEREAS, our country cannot rightly seek to halt the spread of nuclear weapons while at the same time developing new weapons capabilities of our own;

WHEREAS, we have stood by too silently as our fellow citizens have been gripped by a kind of fatalism, unable to believe that eliminating nuclear weapons is possible;

WHEREAS, we, as religious people, vow to no longer remain silent;

WHEREAS, we stand with scientists and military leaders who believe that eliminating nuclear weapons will make our country and the world safer;

WHEREAS, the first step to eliminating nuclear weapons is to develop a detailed plan for how to lock down, reduce and eliminate such weapons;

WHEREAS, there is no better time to begin than now;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that [NAME OF GROUP] calls on the U.S. government to lead the way for the global abolition of nuclear weapons by immediately making a plan for how to lock down, reduce and eliminate nuclear weapons in a step-by-step process with ever increasing verification.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that until this plan is developed and implemented, [NAME OF GROUP] will work with all people of goodwill to ensure that there will be no new nuclear weapons, no new materials for nuclear weapons, no testing of nuclear weapons, and no chance that a nuclear weapon can come into the hands of anyone wishing harm to another.

# How the U.S. Can End the Nuclear Weapons Danger

The U.S. must lead the way by immediately making a plan to eliminate nuclear weapons. Any plan must include taking action to **FREEZE, LOCK DOWN, REDUCE, and ELIMINATE** nuclear weapons.

## 1. FREEZE:

First, we must have a permanent end to the development of new nuclear weapons. We must say no to new nuclear weapons and nuclear materials, no to nuclear testing, and no to weapons in space!

We've come close before . . . by 1995, the governments of the world were close to ending the development, testing, and production of nuclear weapons.

Now the near-freeze has begun to melt. To stop any further spread of nuclear weapons, the world's nuclear powers must ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, and ban the production of dangerous nuclear materials. We must also make sure that no new nuclear weapons are produced.

## 2. LOCK DOWN:

One nuclear weapon exploded in a city could kill millions of people. Once terrorists get ahold of a nuclear weapon or nuclear materials, it will be too late. To increase security in all parts of the world, we must install safety devices on all weapons, and make sure that all existing nuclear weapons and nuclear materials are ultra-secure.

Today the presidents of the United States and Russia have only a few minutes to decide whether or not to launch thousands of nuclear weapons based on early-warning signals.

*A false warning could lead to an accidental nuclear war that would destroy civilization.* All nuclear powers should end these dangerous policies and take weapons off of hair-trigger alert—and publicly promise that they will never use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear countries or use nuclear weapons first.

## 3. REDUCE

Under the 2002 Moscow Treaty, the United States and Russia agreed to remove thousands of nuclear warheads from active service; but under the agreement, the weapons only need to be stored—not destroyed, and the treaty limits enter force on the day the treaty expires.

This is not good enough.

Instead of keeping thousands of nuclear weapons in service or storage, the United States and Russia must cut more deeply and verifiably dismantle the weapons removed from active service. When U.S. and Russian nuclear stocks reach a few hundred each, other nations—Britain, France, China, India, Pakistan, and Israel—must join in deeper cuts.

## 4. ELIMINATE

The U.S. government must lead the way for the global abolition of nuclear weapons—a process that includes the steps outlined here, plus any additional steps necessary to permanently eliminate nuclear weapons. It's a matter of life and death.

Based on the “Urgent Call to End the Nuclear Weapons Danger” drafted by Dr. Randall Forsberg, revised January 2006. Full text at

**[www.urgentcall.org](http://www.urgentcall.org)**

# Sample Sermons on the Nuclear Weapons Danger

Rev. Dr. Nancy Jo Kemper is the executive director of the Kentucky Council of Churches and the current minister of New Union Christian Church in Woodford County, Kentucky. Rev. Kemper gave the following sermon in July 2005 following a meeting of the National Religious Partnership on the Nuclear Weapons Danger.



## “The Seeker and the Sought”

Genesis 28:10-19, Psalm 139:1-12

The story of Jacob, on the run from the consequences of his betrayal of his brother, Esau, tells of a profound spiritual experience incurred by one who wasn't looking for it, who hadn't prayed even for help.

Jacob's experience reverses everything we usually think about spirituality—that we are the seekers, and God is the one sought. This biblical story, like so many others we could tell, shows a different reality: God is the seeker and we are the ones sought. The psalmist knows this reality as well: O Lord, you have searched

me and known me. . . . You search out my path and my lying down, and are acquainted with all my ways.

Now it is true that dreams and spirituality often correspond. But dreams are free gifts. I don't know how to make dreams happen; they just do, and some mornings you awaken with a profound sense and clear memory of a dream. We ought to pay attention to them. But it is also true that sometimes we encounter something that seems to be an impossible dream in the midst of our waking hours. Either in the dark night when we are not seeking, but are the ones being sought, or in the bright light of day, again when we are not seeking, we become the sought, and a calling is laid on our hearts and our minds.

Such was my experience last Thursday when I attended a meeting of the National Religious

Partnership on the Nuclear Weapons Danger. Here I am in my early 60s, trying my best to figure out how to deal with the things that are worrying me, how to cope with multiple demands of my job to be knowledgeable about many different things, and, moreover, trying to figure out how to respond to a world going insane with violence—as if I have any power to do that.

Just because I know a man, I get invited to a meeting. Just because I love the man, and am fed by his hopefulness, I go. The man has a dream, an impossible dream, some would say . . . but I don't think it is his dream, anymore than Jacob's dream belonged to him. In Jacob's case, it was God's dream that through Jacob, rascally scoundrel that he was, all the families of the earth would be blessed in him. And God was going to make that dream come true. It is God's dream that we rid the earth of nuclear weapons, weapons that are now more tools for terrorists than they are serious military options for any civilized nation on earth.

Jonathan Schell has written a less well known book, *The Unconquered World*, in which he compares conventional warfare as expounded by Clausewitz, the great Prussian general, and, on the other hand, what Schell calls “peoples' wars”, beginning with our own Revolutionary War, which are politically and militarily unwinnable by conventional military methods.

With the insurgency increasing daily, with terrorists home grown in our democratic nations, using traditional military means against what the insurgents see as a “peoples'

“ . . . sometimes we encounter something that seems to be an impossible dream in the midst of our waking hours. Either in the dark night when we are not seeking, but are the ones being sought, or in the bright light of day, again when we are not seeking, we become the sought, and a calling is laid on our hearts and our minds.”



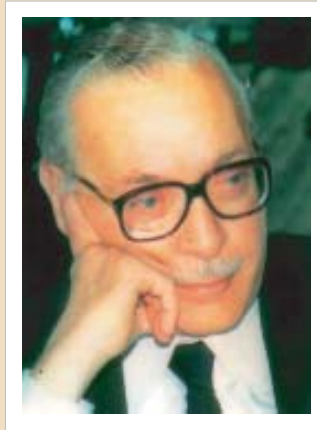
cause,” and with fissile material easily available from a weakened and corrupt former Soviet Union, unless we act now to lock down, and stop funding nuclear weapons projects, it is only a matter of months until someone unleashes a dirty bomb in one of our cities. And the annihilation of God’s earth is begun.

Bill Coffin says that “only God has the authority to end all life on the planet, all we have is the power. To live in a world within minutes of possible annihilation is clearly to oppose, not to do God’s will.”

Impossible, quixotic dream, you say. Maybe so. But not to do anything is more insane. And anyway, I don’t think it is our dream, I think it is God’s dream, seeking us to be a blessing to all the families of the earth. And who are we to do it? Well, I don’t think we are as awful as Jacob, and God used him, so God can use us as well. And I’m laying it on you, just as it was laid on me.

Bill Coffin once told me the story of Michaelangelo’s poignant painting of “. . . the man in the Last Judgment being dragged down to hell by demons, one hand over one eye and in the other a look of dire recognition. He understood, but too late. . . . Rarely,” Bill said, “do we see the truth that stares us in the face until it hits us in the face. A crisis is seldom a crisis until it is validated by disaster. Michelangelo was right: hell is truth seen too late.”

And as I read Jacob’s story and reflected on it this week, I believe that God continues to seek us out . . . not the other way around for we are far too comfortable most of the time to go searching for God . . . to take on this dream of God’s that we save the planet, that we be new Jacobs for the blessing of all the families of the earth. This religious vision, or dream, is now a pragmatic necessity. God is the seeker, and we are the ones who are sought by the dream, the ones called to be the new Jacobs by whom all the families of the earth will be blessed.



## “A Muslim Ponders Nuclear Arms”

*Dr. Hassan Hathout currently attends the Islamic Center of Southern California, Pasadena.*

As a Muslim, I cannot help the feeling that the world is getting more and more godless. We are witnessing an era of the cheapening of human life at a scale never seen before. In the Qur’an, God comments on Cain and Abel, the sons of Adam, one brother killing the other, saying: “On this account WE (God) decreed on the

Children of Israel that whoever kills a soul except for manslaughter or corruption in the land, it is as though he killed all people, and whoever saves a life is like saving all people” (5:32). It is obvious therefore that the Abrahamic faiths of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam concur on the sanctity of human life; in fact the three faiths share the same moral code.

It is difficult to reconcile the state of affairs in the world with the Qur’anic injunction: “You...human beings, WE (God) created you from a single pair of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes to know and cherish one another, not to despise one another” (49:13). Humanity is one family, and it is so shameful to see the race nations are competing to excel in mutual destruction.

God appointed the human race to be HIS agent on earth. “God said to the angels: Behold! I am about to establish on earth a vicegerent” (2:30). As God’s agents, we are supposed to manage the planet upon its Owner’s manual, not upon our selfishness, greed, and hostility. It is true that the human mind has accomplished a lot for the benefit of humanity, but also enough to destroy earth several times over. This is a very serious situation since we have so far failed to devise a method to solve disputes in justice and peace. The Qur’an says, “God calls for the Abode of peace” (10:25). For this Muslims should work, with all others who believe in human values, especially the People of the Book (Jews and Christians) who are actually our co-religionists. As the Qur’an says: “HE (God) has ordained for you (Mohammad) that which HE had enjoined upon Noah, and the Qur’an WE revealed to you, as well as that which WE had enjoined upon Abraham, Moses and Jesus. Steadfastly uphold the faith, and break not your unity therein” (42:13).

Things usually change from below upwards. So we should reach out to the grassroots and masses until we create a market for the politics of peace. It is the masses that do vote the politicians in or out. We, people of faith, should take a leading role in nurturing a peace mentality. “Help one another in furthering goodness and God-consciousness, and do not help one another in furthering evil and enmity” (5:2).

*From the Nuclear Threat/Reduction Disarmament Initiative Educational Kit. Used with permission.<sup>12</sup>*

# Study Guide on the Nuclear Weapons Danger (for Small Groups)

Small group study can be an important part of assisting an individual in finding ways to shape his or her response to nuclear weapons policy. Here is a study guide that you can use as a template to develop your own group program.

## Opening Prayer (2 minutes)

The facilitator leads the group in an opening prayer, which may be modeled after one of the prayers located in the “Prayers from Different Religious Traditions (page 14).

## II. Introduction: The Legacy of Nuclear Weapons (20 minutes)

The facilitator asks the group to answer some of the following questions.

- “ When and where was the first atomic weapon dropped on human beings? (August 6, 1945 in Hiroshima)
- “ Who developed the first bomb? (The U.S.)
- “ Which nations have declared that they possess nuclear weapons? (France, United States, China, Britain, Russia, India, Pakistan, and North Korea)
- “ How many nuclear weapons are there in the world? (more than 30,000)<sup>14</sup>
- “ How much does the U.S. spend on its nuclear weapons program? (\$5.5 trillion since 1940)<sup>15</sup>

**The Facts:** Read the “Call to Action” (page 4).

**The Stories:** As we learn the facts about nuclear weapons, we cannot overlook the human costs of nuclear weapons. Testimonies from the hibakusha, the survivors of the atomic bomb, remind us of the true nature of nuclear weapons.

*I wasn't up yet on the 6th of August at the time the atomic bomb fell. When the explosion came I couldn't imagine what had happened and got up to see. I found that everything was in darkness. . . . Just then over my head the roof tiles came down and I thought something had happened and I stood up. By that time both the roof and the ceiling were gone.”*

— Tokuo Nakajama, in First Grade in 1945<sup>16</sup>

*While my friends and I were playing at school, we all noticed an airplane flying over our heads . . . And then there was a flash of greenish light or I'm not sure what kind of light. I covered my face with my hands. Wondering what this can be, I open my eyes and find it so pitch dark that I can't see a thing. While I am walking uncertainly around, it gets light. Thinking to go back home, I look around and find that there isn't a building left that looks like a house, and here and there the flames are rising. Crying and calling my mother's name, I hurried home. I can't tell where my house is supposed to be, and as I'm wondering around I hear the voice of my sister calling my name. The instant I saw my sister I was frightened. She was standing there dyed bright red with blood.*

— Masataka Asaeda, in Third Grade in 1945<sup>17</sup>

## IV. Discussion (10 minutes)

Now that you know more about the nuclear weapons danger, do you believe that it is morally wrong for a country to possess and use a nuclear weapon? What is the relationship between nuclear weapons and self-defense? What actions can we take as a community to make sure that that nuclear weapons are never used on human beings again? How can we encourage our elected officials to eliminate nuclear weapons once and for all?

## V. Our Tradition (10 minutes)

Explore the history of your religious tradition's work to eliminate the nuclear weapons danger. (The facilitator may wish to review the statements on [www.zero-nukes.org](http://www.zero-nukes.org) prior to the session.) What do your sacred texts say to guide us on this issue? What statements have your religious leaders made?

## VI. Closing Prayer (2 minutes)



## Breaking Faith With Nuclear Weapons

Nuclear weapons merit unequivocal and unhesitating condemnation. The 30,000 around the globe have more than 100,000 times the explosive power of the bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. These are doomsday arms—genocidal, ecocidal, and suicidal.

It is our belief that only God has the authority to end all life on the planet; all we have is the power, and it is past time to surrender it. To live in a world within minutes of possible annihilation is to defy God's will, not to do God's will. Therefore, we turn to you, our fellow believers. We want, we need your help to end this deadly peril to humanity and its habitat.

— Rev. William Sloane Coffin Jr.  
January 1, 2006<sup>18</sup>

Faithful Security: The National Religious Partnership on the Nuclear Weapons Danger is a newly formed coalition of national religious organizations, state and regional religious bodies, religious schools, and religious leaders who have pledged to:

- Keep you informed about ways to take action;
- Connect you with resources in your community; and
- Continue to build national momentum to encourage the government to develop a plan for the elimination of nuclear weapons.

### *What You Can Do*

Sign up to become a part of The Faithful Security Network. Go to [www.faithfulsecurity.org](http://www.faithfulsecurity.org) or write to:

**Karen Jacob**  
*Faithful Security*  
**803 North Main Street**  
**Goshen, Indiana 46528**

**Phone: 800-233-6786, ext. 12**

(Outside the U.S., call +574-534-3402, ext. 12)

Send your name, address, phone number, and contact information, and we will let you know about activities going on in your neighborhood to end the nuclear weapons danger.

# Prayers from Different Religious Traditions

## A Jewish Prayer for Peace<sup>19</sup>

May it be your will, Eternal One, our God, God of our ancestors, that wars and bloodshed be abolished from the world, and bring into the world a great and wonderful and lasting peace. And let no nation lift up sword against nation—let them learn no more the ways of war!

Let all who dwell on earth simply acknowledge the truth of truths; that we have not come into this world for the sake of quarreling and war, nor for the sake of hatred, jealousy, anger, or bloodshed; rather, we have come into this world only to know you—may you be blessed eternally!

Therefore, have mercy on us, and fulfill among us what is written in Your Torah: “I shall give peace upon the earth, and you shall lie down with no one to make you afraid. . . . The sword shall never come upon your land. Justice shall roll down like waters, and righteousness like a mighty stream. For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of The Omnipresent, as the waters fill the seas.”

## A Christian Prayer for Peace<sup>20</sup>

O Lord,  
you love justice and you establish peace on earth.  
We bring before you the disunity of today’s world;  
the absurd violence, and the many wars,  
which are breaking the courage of the peoples of the world;  
human greed and injustice,  
which breed hatred and strife.  
Send your spirit and renew the face of the earth;  
teach us to be compassionate towards the whole human family;  
strengthen the will of all those  
who fight for justice and for peace,  
and give us that peace which the world cannot give.

Amen.

## Muslim Prayer for Peace<sup>21</sup>

In the name of Allah,  
the beneficent, the merciful.  
Praise be to the Lord of the  
Universe who has created us and  
made us into tribes and nations  
That we may know each other, not that  
we may despise each other.  
If the enemy incline towards peace, do  
thou also incline towards peace, and  
trust God, for the Lord is the one that  
heareth and knoweth all things.  
And the servants of God,  
Most gracious are those who walk on  
the Earth in humility, and when we  
address them, we say “PEACE.”

## A Native American Prayer for Peace<sup>22</sup>

Almighty God, the Great Thumb we cannot evade to tie any knot; the Roaring Thunder that splits mighty trees: the all-seeing Lord up on high who sees even the footprints of an antelope on a rockmass here on Earth. You are the one who does not hesitate to respond to our call. You are the cornerstone of peace.

## A Shinto Prayer for Peace<sup>23</sup>

Although the people living across the ocean surrounding us, I believe, are all our brothers and sisters, why are there constant troubles in this world? Why do winds and waves rise in the ocean surrounding us? I only earnestly wish that the wind will soon puff away all the clouds which are hanging over the tops of the mountains.”



# National Resources on the Nuclear Weapons Danger

Visit these websites for helpful educational resources, action alerts, and information about national campaigns to build a safer world.

## Abolition Now!

[www.abolitionnow.org](http://www.abolitionnow.org)

The Abolition Now! campaign aims to create the political will, through the mobilization of civil society, for the complete abolition of nuclear weapons by 2020.

## Alliance for Nuclear Accountability

[www.ananuclear.org](http://www.ananuclear.org)

The Alliance for Nuclear Accountability is a national network of organizations working on nuclear weapons and waste issues. Check out their website to find a local partner.

## The Churches' Center for Theology and Public Policy

[www.cctpp.org](http://www.cctpp.org)

The Churches' Center for Theology and Public Policy has partnered with the Islamic Society of North America on the "Muslim-Christian Initiative on the Nuclear Weapons Danger." Visit their website for useful educational resources and more information.

## Faithful America

[www.faithfulamerica.org](http://www.faithfulamerica.org)

Faithful America is an online community of people of faith working together to build a more just and compassionate nation.

## Fourth Freedom Forum

[www.fourthfreedom.org](http://www.fourthfreedom.org)

The Fourth Freedom Forum devotes itself to freeing humanity from the fear of war by eliminating nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction and strengthening international law.

## Friends Committee on National Legislation

[www.fcni.org/nuclear](http://www.fcni.org/nuclear)

The Friends Committee on National Legislation is a Quaker lobby active on disarmament issues. Visit their website to subscribe to action alerts, the Nuclear Calendar, and to view helpful lobby guides.

## National Council of Churches

[www.nccusa.org](http://www.nccusa.org)

Representing 45 million persons from a wide spectrum of churches, the National Council of Churches has been the leading force for cooperation among Christians in the United States.

## Nuclear Age Peace Foundation

[www.wagingpeace.org](http://www.wagingpeace.org)

Sign up at the NAPF web site for *The Sunflower*, a free monthly newsletter on nuclear weapons issues, and join the Turn the Tide Campaign to receive regular action alerts on nuclear dangers.

## Nuclear Threat Initiative

[www.nti.org](http://www.nti.org)

Founded by Senator Sam Nunn in 2001, the Nuclear Threat Initiative aims to strengthen global security by decreasing the risk of the use and proliferation of nuclear weapons.

## Pax Christi

[www.paxchristiusa.org](http://www.paxchristiusa.org)

Pax Christi USA works to make the gospel imperative of peacemaking a priority in the Catholic Church in the United States. This includes promoting nuclear, conventional, and domestic disarmament

## Peace Action

[www.peace-action.org](http://www.peace-action.org)

Peace Action, the merger of SANE and The Nuclear Freeze, has effectively mobilized for peace and disarmament for nearly fifty years.

## Physicians for Social Responsibility

[www.psr.org](http://www.psr.org)

Physicians for Social Responsibility has been a longtime advocate for nuclear disarmament. The national office monitors nuclear weapons issues carefully, and local chapters are excellent allies and resources.

## Sojourners

[www.sojo.net](http://www.sojo.net)

Sojourners is a progressive Christian community that focuses on faith, politics, and culture. Their monthly magazine and weekly news updates provide a refreshing Christian commentary on public policy.

## United Methodist Church, General Board of Church and Society

[www.umc-gbcs.org](http://www.umc-gbcs.org)

The General Board of Church and Society is an agency within the UMC that seeks to bring the whole of human life, activities, possessions, use of resources, and community and world relationships into conformity with the will of God.

## Women's Action for New Directions

[www.wand.org](http://www.wand.org)

Women's Action for New Directions empowers women to change our government's priorities by taking action for peace and security. WAND's new set of study guides, *Faith Seeking Peace*, addresses issues about nuclear weapons, military spending, and terrorism.

# Organizing Tips & Materials

## *Organizing a Film Screening*

- Choose a time and place for the event. Consider holding the event in your home or place of worship. Other possibilities might include a local library, school, or community center.
- Invite friends, family, and members of your faith community. Publicize the event in your community's bulletin, over e-mail, and in local newsletters and newspapers.
- Consider inviting a local speaker to moderate a discussion before or after the film. You may need to provide the speaker with educational materials and information about the nuclear weapons danger. Not sure who to invite? Give us a call—we're happy to help you find someone in your community.
- Before the event, send out a reminder e-mail with directions, the location, and a description of the event.
- Have sign-in sheets handy to record the names and contact information of everyone who attends the event. They will be your allies in the future!
- Provide attendees with one or two ways that they can take action on nuclear weapons issues.

## *Reaching out to Local Religious Leaders*

- Start at home. Schedule a meeting with the leader of your faith community to share your concerns about the nuclear weapons danger. Ask for suggestions about how you can raise awareness within your own community, and the best ways for reaching out to other communities.
- Make contact with local peace groups to see if they can recommend any religious leaders who have been involved on nuclear weapons issues.
- Consider convening a breakfast for clergy that are interested in learning more about the nuclear weapons danger. Ask an interested religious leader to host the event, and invite a speaker knowledgeable on nuclear weapons issues. Give the attendees educational packets and sample sermons to take home. (Faithful Security can help you with these materials.)

*Among the many resources available to help you raise awareness about the nuclear weapons danger are these:*

### **"Last Best Chance" DVD**

Produced by the Nuclear Threat Initiative, this docudrama is a vivid portrayal of the dangers caused by unsecured nuclear weapons. The movie builds common ground between members of all political parties by emphasizing the importance of non-proliferation, and the very real danger caused by our own nuclear legacy. Go to [www.lastbestchance.com](http://www.lastbestchance.com) to receive your free copy.

### ***Still in the Shadow of Nuclear Weapons***

This thirty-page booklet provides a thorough overview of the legacy of nuclear weapons, and paints a vivid picture of the choice that the U.S. must make between embracing nuclear weapons or embracing a future without them. To order a booklet, e-mail [publications@fcnl.org](mailto:publications@fcnl.org) with your full name and postal address, or call 800-630-1330, ext. 2535. Your first booklet is free, and there is a suggested donation of \$2.00 each for additional copies.

### **Additional Films**

The classic films "Dr. Strangelove," "The Day After," and "On the Beach" are still appropriate as educational tools for the nuclear weapons danger. The new film, "Genie in the Bottle," recently produced by two teenage boys, is a short piece that casts the nuclear weapons danger in a modern light. To order a copy of this film and other documentaries about the nuclear weapons danger, contact Faithful Security.

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## About *Faithful Security*

On the 60th anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, religious people from a variety of traditions came together and formed a new group committed to ending the nuclear danger once and for all.

Faithful Security is a network of citizens who participate in the National Religious Partnership on the Nuclear Weapons Danger. We are committed to organizing religious communities on a local level to break faith with nuclear weapons once and for all.

Over the next year, we'll be working with students at religious schools to educate them about nuclear weapons. We'll monitor legislation on nonproliferation and new nuclear weapons systems. We'll develop a speaker's bureau so that you can have easier access to the experts. We'll encourage national denominations to increase the amount of energy that they spend working on nuclear weapons issues.

Best of all, we're building a Faithful Security Network made up of thousands of religious people just like you. You'll be able to connect with ways to take action, and find new partners in your own area.

You can help! Whether you are a religious leader or a lay person, a student or a professor, an activist or a scholar, a community member or a legislator, we urge you to join us as we make our vision a reality, and work toward a world free of nuclear weapons.

Sign up today! Go to [www.faithfulsecurity.org](http://www.faithfulsecurity.org).

To obtain printed copies of this toolkit,  
please contact Karen Jacob at [kjacob@faithfulsecurity.org](mailto:kjacob@faithfulsecurity.org),  
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