

News release



The Church of Scotland

The **Methodist** Church



The  
United  
Reformed  
Church

13 July 2016

## **Replacement of Trident is "unwarranted" and "unethical" say Churches**

The Baptist Union of Great Britain, the Church of Scotland, the Methodist Church, the United Reformed Church and Quakers in Britain have said that the proposals to renew the Trident nuclear weapons system are “unwarranted” and “unethical.”

This announcement comes in advance of the Parliamentary debate on Trident is to take place, where the UK Government will seek approval to spend £41 billion on building new submarines to carry nuclear weapons.

The Churches have previously expressed dismay that the UK Government is resisting discussions sponsored by the United Nations on multilateral disarmament. UK Churches have been represented at Non-Proliferation Treaty conferences in New York and have sought for many years to influence Government policy on nuclear weapons. In 2015, 26 faith leaders called on the UK Government to join with others in developing a robust plan of action to lead to a world free of nuclear weapons.

With a combined membership of over one million people in the UK alone, the leaders of the five Churches are encouraging all to pray and write to their MPs.

Earlier this week, the General Assembly of the United Reformed Church reiterated its opposition to the Trident nuclear weapons system and called for the negotiation of a treaty banning nuclear weapons. Alan Yates, Moderator of the General Assembly of the United Reformed Church said: “We appreciate that negotiations take time, but the UK must take steps down the nuclear ladder. The threats that we face today are diverse and nuclear weapons simply cannot offer security or peace for anyone.”

Rachel Lampard, Vice-President of the Methodist Conference added: “It is scandalous that the UK Government has consistently opposed opportunities for discussion on multilateral disarmament. A decision to build Trident submarines now, just as talks on disarmament are due to get underway in the United Nations General Assembly, seems ill-timed and unwarranted.”

Paul Parker, Recording Clerk of Quakers in Britain said: “We see something of God in everyone and seek to love our neighbours as ourselves. A teaching

which is present in many religions. This means we cannot threaten others with weapons of mass destruction. We will build a more secure future by modelling in our own actions the behaviour that we ask of others.”

Recalling that the Church of Scotland has spoken out against nuclear weapons for thirty years, the Rt. Rev Dr Russell Barr, Moderator of the Church of Scotland said: “Attempts to sustain peace through the threat of indiscriminate mass destruction could not be further from the peace to which Christ calls us. It is vital that the UK demonstrates the sort of change it wants to see in the world; building peace through strong and courageous leadership and not by commissioning more nuclear weapons.”

The Revd Stephen Keyworth, Faith and Society Team Leader, the Baptist Union of Great Britain added: “We have an opportunity to give strong moral leadership and to work creatively as peacemakers. We will never achieve the peace which Scripture encourages us towards with a defence policy built on fear –peace is achieved through justice and relationship, not fear.”

*Notes:*

- For more information on the issue and to write to your MP, please visit the Joint Public Issues website.
- Policy Advisor, Steve Hucklesby, and Church and Society Secretary, Grace Pengelly, are available for interview. Please email Toby Fairclough on [fairclought@methodistchurch.org.uk](mailto:fairclought@methodistchurch.org.uk) or call on 020 7567 5208.
- Earlier this year, all 8 Catholic Bishops of Scotland signed a statement in opposition to the renewal of Trident. [Click here to read the story.](#)
- For Quaker comment contact [annev@quaker.org.uk](mailto:annev@quaker.org.uk) 07958 009703 and see <http://www.quaker.org.uk/our-work/peace/nuclear-disarmament>

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