

## ***Field Notes 10***

### **Fields of Peace – Communities of Faith Working Together for Nonviolence**

Dear Friends,

**Its** first test was code named “Trinity.” The test’s success was reported to the President as, “Babies satisfactorily born.” Its handlers called It “Little Boy.” The plane that would carry It was named for the pilot’s mother, “Enola Gay.” Code for the bombing mission was a smile: “Dimples.” The Island of Tinian, the base where the plane took off and would return, was “Papacy.”

**8:15 a.m., August 6, 1945:** “Enola Gay” was over Hiroshima at 31,000 feet. The sky clear and sunny. The fliers could see green grass in the gardens below. All was quiet. “Little Boy” exploded within 100 feet of the aiming point. The fireball was 18,000 feet across. Temperature: 10,000 suns. In 9 seconds, the city was gone. All was fire. The immediate number of people killed: 80,000. A few of them were soldiers.

The people of Japan named It “Original Child.” The first of Its kind.

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This issue of *Field Notes* carries a worn, but urgent message: A nuclear catastrophe may be more likely now than during the Cold War.

Your voice is needed to name It: Last Child.

Sincerely,

Charles and Cathey Busch

P.S.

Fields of Peace communities receive these *Notes* with “*Nuclear Tipping Point*,” a DVD provided courtesy of the Preventive Defense Project, Stanford University, and the Center for International Security and Cooperation. Individuals may receive a free copy by contacting: [nuclearsecurityproject.org](http://nuclearsecurityproject.org)

## Quotes

Dismiss whatever insults your own soul.

-**Walt Whitman**, *Leaves of Grass*

Robert Oppenheimer's immediate thought upon seeing the first blast of an atomic bomb--- its flash and rising cloud---was a line from the *Bhagavad Gita*: "Now I am become Death, the destroyer of worlds."

-"Trinity" Test Site, Alamogordo, July 16, 1945

The bomb was the absolute weapon in this sense: what human beings, no matter how depraved, would never have had the moral capacity to do over time and personally---with ice picks---they would do now with nary a second thought---in a second.

-**James Carroll**, *House of War*

There are no innocent civilians...you are fighting a people, you are not fighting an armed force anymore. So it doesn't bother me so much to be killing the so-called innocent bystanders.

-**General Curtis LeMay**, U.S. Air Force Commander 1944-45

I belong to a small fanatical sect. We believe that current ways of carrying on world affairs are malignant. We believe that armies, and the kind of international dealings based on armed might, will be self-perpetuating to a certain point---and that point may bring annihilation. Armies are the result of obsolete ways---just as gibbets are, and as thumb-screws are, and leper windows.

-**William Stafford**, Journal, 16 August 1955

Listen to me! I know it will happen again.  
An entire city will be lifted off the ground,  
then fall back to earth in ashes.

-the "she" in **Hiroshima Mon Amour** (1959 movie)

## Is the dark going to catch us?

In his novel, *The Road*, Cormac McCarthy tells the story of a father and his seven-year-old son who are making their way on foot across a cold, silent, barren landscape. It has been destroyed by burning, by the kind of devastation which would follow a climatic catastrophe or nuclear holocaust.

A cover of gray clouds blocks the sun. Flakes of soot drift in the air. There are no fresh grasses, no leaves on the trees, no fruit. No birds, no fish, and only a scattering of surviving people.

*The frailty of everything revealed at last.*

The father and son are continually on the brink of starvation, and on alert against the terror of roving bands of road warriors who are cannibals.

*We wouldn't ever eat anybody, would we?* asks the boy.  
*No. Of course not,* says the father.  
*Even if we were starving?*  
*We're starving now.*  
*You said we weren't.*  
*I said we weren't dying. I didn't say we weren't starving.*  
*But we wouldn't,* says the boy.  
*No. We wouldn't,* answers the father.  
*No matter what.*  
*No. No matter what*  
*Because we're the good guys.*  
*Yes.*  
*And we're carrying the fire.*  
*And we're carrying the fire. Yes.*

On the road, all that the father and son have is their love of one another, and the mystery of what leads them on.

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They encounter an old man, thin and bent. The boy asks his father to share a bit of food with the man. His name is Ely. He tells them:

*I knew this was coming...This or something like it.*

Heading south, the boy and the father push on. Their small store in a shopping cart.

*Is the dark going to catch us?* asks the boy.  
*I don't know.*  
*It is, isn't it?*  
*Come on. We'll hurry.*

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The father and son in *The Road* are nameless. We, the reader, can step into their shapes, stand where they stand, feel what they feel. Hunger. Horror. Fear. Puzzlement at what keeps us going. Awareness of how precious the other is.

The gift of this story is the perspective it offers: The reality of a nuclear winter. We want to stop reading, close the book, and return to the time before the fire. Our time, in which there is still time to say NO!

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\*8 nations are armed with nuclear weapons: U.S., Russia, United Kingdom, France, China, India, Pakistan, Israel and North Korea.

\*The U.S. and Russia possess more than 90 percent of the world's 20,500 nuclear warheads: U.S. 8,500 - Russia 11,000.

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“The acquisition and use of nuclear weapons by a terrorist organization is indeed becoming more likely, by theft or construction of a nuclear explosive device. Terrorists may steal a nuclear bomb, as the security of such weapons is questionable. In Russia there is particular concern over certain ambiguities regarding suitcase sized “mini-nucs”, though even larger nuclear weapons, such as those possessed by Pakistan, could be stolen with a large truck.”

-NuclearFiles.org, Project of the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation

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Four statesmen, who were U.S. leaders during the Cold War, have initiated a joint plea for a world free of nuclear weapons. In the DVD, *“Nuclear Tipping Point,”* they offer passionate warnings and steps to reduce nuclear danger:

If the existing nuclear countries cannot develop restraints among themselves, if nothing fundamental changes, then I would expect the use of nuclear weapons, in some 10 year period, is very possible.

-**Henry Kissinger**, former Secretary of State

This problem dwarfs all other considerations

-**Bill Perry**, former Secretary of Defense

We are in a race between cooperation and catastrophe.

-**Sam Nunn**, former U.S. Senator

I think it’s a very dangerous moment.

-**George Shultz**, former Secretary of State

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“Nuclear detonations within urban and industrial areas would ignite immense firestorms which would burn everything imaginable and create millions of tons of thick, black smoke. Much of this smoke would rapidly be lofted above cloud level, into the stratosphere, where it would block warming sunlight from reaching the lower atmosphere and surface of the Earth. Sunlight would then markedly heat the upper atmosphere and cause massive destruction of the protective ozone layer, while darkness below would produce average surface temperatures on Earth characteristic of those experienced during an Ice Age.”

--Steven Star, “Deadly Climate Change From Nuclear War” INESAP Bulletin, Apr. 2008

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*Offering our heartfelt condolences to the souls of the A-bomb victims, reaffirming our conviction that “the atomic bombing must never be repeated” and “no one else should ever have to suffer like this,” we hereby pledge to do everything in our power to abolish nuclear weapons and build lasting world peace.*

From the 2011 Hiroshima Memorial Peace Declaration  
MATSUI Karumi  
Mayor, The City of Hiroshima

### **What can we do to help avoid a nuclear catastrophe?**

- \*Risk being outspoken about nuclear threats.
- \*Share “Nuclear Tipping Point” with our faith community and others.
- \*E-mail (often) our President, Senators, members of Congress.
- \*Insist that our nation take the lead in multi-lateral disarmament.
- \*Insist that our nation not design or test nuclear weapons.
- \*Refuse to vote for candidates who broadcast fear and scapegoating
- \*Promote foreign aid projects that will meet real human needs

### **What else?**

- \*Admit our own complicity.
- \*Inform our imagination (read *The Road*).
- \*Pray.

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## **A Deeply Moral Issue**

“Above all, the issue of nuclear weapons in our world is a deeply moral issue, and for the religious community to engage this issue is essential; for the religious community to ignore this issue is shameful.

“I have long believed that our country would become serious about providing leadership for the elimination of nuclear weapons in the world only when the churches, synagogues and mosques became serious about demanding such leadership.

“The abolition of nuclear weapons is the most important issue of our time. I do not say this lightly. I know how many other important life and death issues there are in our world. I say it because nuclear weapons have the capacity to end all human life on our planet and most other forms of life. This puts them in a class by themselves.

“Nuclear weapons hold all Creation hostage.”

-from “The Most Important Moral Issue of Our Time” by David Krieger

