

Penetcost Talks:

1 – Activity: Violence is Basic

Last week I was in West London attending a conference. While I was in the airport, returning home, I heard several people behind me beginning to clap and cheer. I immediately turned around and witnessed one of the greatest acts of patriotism I have ever seen.

Moving through the terminal was a group of soldiers in their uniforms, as they began heading to their gate everyone (well almost everyone) was abruptly to their feet with their hands waving and cheering. When I saw the soldiers, probably 30-40 of them, being applauded and cheered for, it hit me. I'm not alone. I'm not the only red blooded Briton who still loves this country and supports our troops and their families. Of course I immediately stopped and began clapping for these young unsung heroes who are putting their lives on the line everyday for us so we can go to school, work, and enjoy our home without fear or reprisal.

Just when I thought I could not be more proud of my country or of our service men and women a young girl, not more than 6 or 7 years old, ran up to one of the male soldiers. He knelt down and said 'hi,' the little girl then asked him if he would give something to her daddy for her. The young soldier didn't look any older than maybe 22 himself, said he would try and what did she want to give to her daddy.

Suddenly the little girl grabbed the neck of this soldier, gave him the biggest hug she could muster and then kissed him on the cheek. The mother of the little girl, who said her daughters name was Courtney, told the young soldier that her husband was a Corporal and had been in Afghanistan for 5 months now. As the mum was explaining how much her daughter, Courtney, missed her father, the young soldier began to tear up.

When this temporarily single mum was done explaining her situation, all of the soldiers huddled together for a brief second. Then one of the other servicemen pulled out a military looking walkie-talkie. They started playing with the device and talking back and forth on it. After about 10-15 seconds of this, the young soldier walked back over to Courtney, bent down and said this to her, 'I spoke to your daddy and he told me to give this to you.' He then hugged this little girl that he had just met and gave her a Kiss on the cheek.

He finished by saying 'Your daddy told me to tell you that he loves you more than anything and he is coming home very soon.' The mum at this point was crying almost uncontrollably and as the young soldier stood to his feet he saluted Courtney and her mum.

I was standing no more than 6 feet away as this entire event unfolded. As the soldiers began to leave, heading towards their gate, people resumed their applause. As I stood there applauding and looked around, there were very few dry eyes, including my own.

That young soldier in one last act of moment turned around and blew a kiss to Courtney with a tear rolling down his cheek. We need to remember everyday all of our soldiers and their families and thank God for them and their sacrifices. At the end of the day, it's good to be an British.

RED FRIDAYS

Very soon, you will see a great many people wearing Red every Friday. The reason?

We the men and women of this United Kingdom who support our troops used to be called the 'silent majority'. We are no longer silent, and are voicing our love for nation and home in record breaking numbers.

We are not organized, boisterous or over-bearing. We get no liberal media coverage on TV, to reflect our message or our opinions. Many British people, like you, me and all our friends, simply want to recognize that the vast majority of Britain supports our troops.

Our idea of showing solidarity and support for our troops with dignity and respect starts this Friday and continues each and every Friday until the troops all come home, sending a deafening message that every person who supports our men and women afar will wear something red.

By word of mouth, press, TV -- let's make UK on every Friday a sea of red much like a homecoming football team

If every one of us who loves this country will share this with acquaintances, co-workers, friends, and family, It will not be long before UK is covered in RED and it will let our troops know the once 'silent' majority is on their side more than ever, certainly more than the media lets on.

The first thing a soldier says when asked ' What can we do to make things better for you?' is... 'We need your support and your prayers'...

Violence, so it seems, is basic to human existence. People have always been violent with one another, and will always be violent with one another. And you can see it at the most basic level. I have four children – and it seems that not a day passes – and not an hour passes – when there is not violence!

Sticks and stones

Not always very obvious.

Bullying and Gang culture

Ecological Violence and Power Stations

Homeless people

Get any group of human beings together, and they are going to squabble. Even a gathering of those who are most passionate about peace and non violence – put them together, and sooner or later – and in the most polite way, there will be violence. One person hurts another.

Sermon

Jesus did not do away with violence. It is still with us. But he leads us to deal differently with violence. Today is Pentecost, when we celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit. And in the bible, the word for Holy means something completely and utterly different from us. And for most people, things that are completely different from us can be quite scary.

And often, we are violent towards things and people who are completely different from us. On the cross, Jesus – being Holy – was completely different from us. He threatened us. And so we got rid of him.

With the coming of the Holy Spirit though – this Spirit brings this God who is completely and utterly different from us, right to the heart of who we are. And what we see at Pentecost are crowds of people who were completely different from one another. All of them, praising God, in their own language. All of them coming together to praise this God who is completely different from us.

And the result of praising this God, is that we find ourselves drawn together. People from all over the world heard God being praised miraculously, in all kinds of different languages. And in worshipping this God, and being filled with this completely and utterly different Spirit, people who might have been violent with each other, are drawn together. That is why the Spirit in the Bible is sometimes called the Spirit of peace. It is not just that he makes us behave nicely – because you can still behave nicely and be violent. You can be polite, and give people hugs, and tell people you love them, and that you've listened to them – and still be violent towards them.

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Peace because he makes us into peacemakers, who worship a God who loves the whole world. The Spirit of Jesus that fills the church, helps us to love our neighbours. And that means that we work for peace in all sorts of ways.

Megabytes have listed some examples:

Christian Aid Week

Fair trade

Severn estuary tidal energy.

Homeless people and the way the church works with them.

Listening seriously to these people, without trying to force them into solutions that don't work yet. Listening comes first.

Story of Michael.

