

RESOLUTION OF CONFLICT

Some of us can remember showing opposition to Apartheid by refusing to buy South African oranges, a simple idea slowly spread by news bulletins and newspapers in the late 1950s. Global pressure helped bring about a change in government without more bloodshed. As with all conflicts, everyone has eventually to sit around a table and talk, and the Peace and Reconciliation process introduced by two men of strong faith and humility, Nelson Mandela and Desmond Tutu, helped bring about a peaceful transition. What an example those two gave us. Likewise the Good Friday Agreement in 1998 started long before with behind-the-scenes talks.

"History teaches us that history does not teach us" observed Tutu, and this is true today as we watch with horror the latest dictator bent on power, self-glorification and world dominance. Most animals fight for food and survival but man goes one step further inventing ever more gruesome and powerful ways just to kill and destroy. Whatever he has invented, he uses, so no surprise to see Putin deploying his latest hypersonic missile for mass slaughter and firing at a nuclear power station risking our beautiful planet Earth that we are all now trying hard to preserve.

However, he has not been able to control the power of satellite communication tools. Mobile phones, faster than oranges, have enabled instant diffusion of the reality of the aggressor, and with it the astounding global reaction of kindness, love, compassion and practical help wherever possible. People of different faiths and countries have united in prayer, support and action. The lasting image will not be of Putin wearing an expensive jacket on a podium but of the courageous Ukrainian President, Government and its people, backed by protestors worldwide. We live in hope.

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