

The Ailanthus Community

Ailanthus is a nonviolent peace community. We strive for nonviolence in all aspects of our lives, and to witness in love and in truth. We are spiritually grounded in Christian nonviolence and are indebted to Gandhi's model of nonviolent resistance as well as to the witness of James Douglass, the radical Catholic theologian/peace activist.

Ailanthus is open to all who share its sense of calling. At present, the group consists mainly of Quakers and Catholics, with a sprinkling of other faiths. We meet weekly at Haley House, Boston's Catholic Worker House, to study, reflect, and pray together. This leads to actions, which in turn lead to further meditation and study.

Ailanthus is an association of equals who try to mutually support and to challenge each other in belief and actions. We have no officers or spokespersons, and decisions are reached by the consensus method.

Ailanthus often joins other nonviolent peace groups in their witnessing, and conducts its own efforts at outreach.

The Draper Witness

Ailanthus has conducted a weekly nonviolent peace vigil at Draper Laboratory in Cambridge for more than five years. We go to Draper because it is a focus of violence in a violent world; because the first-strike weapons they develop there (Cruise, MX, and Trident II missiles and now "star wars" technology) have set nuclear

armageddon on a hairtrigger; because deep inside everyone knows that to threaten to annihilate the planet in the name of national self-interest or security is a crime against humanity and a blasphemy against God. It is the spiritual insanity of the twentieth century.

We go to Draper also because in pounds per person the world has more explosive power than food, and because while the U.S. is proposing to spend close to \$300 billion on armaments, 42,000 children in Third World countries die every day from lack of food.

We go to Draper to witness that there is another, nonviolent way to solve the world's problems; and that peace is indeed possible if we are willing to entrust our security to God's reconciling power, instead of to the weapons that enslave us.

We do not go to Draper to point a finger at the Bombmakers. The Bomb is deeply embedded in all our hearts and until we can disarm ourselves inwardly - all of us - we know that there will be no peace. For we are all complicit in the arms race: by paying taxes and by our self-aggrandizing life styles that require our nation to exploit have-not nations in order to underwrite our unheard-of affluence. We have made America an empire that needs the Bomb to enforce its dominance in the world.

So we go to Draper in a spirit of humility, reconciliation, and hope. We see ourselves (all of us) as victims of a violent, repressive society - so that if the witness succeeds, it succeeds in liberating all of us together.