



# OF FAITH *take action!*

## FAITH SEEKING PEACE STUDY GUIDE: III



### *Weapons and the World*

**T**HIS STUDY GUIDE PROVIDES A BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL framework with which to think critically about war's destruction of God's creation. Participants discuss policies shaping weapons production and use from a Christian perspective, while exploring the Biblical emphasis on the inherent value of all living things.

#### *Objectives*

- To educate participants about the environmental impact and human cost of the production and use of nuclear weapons.
- To practice ritual to remember victims and survivors of war and to celebrate the endurance of the human spirit and life.
- To place the Biblical valuing of creation and life in conversation with current policies regarding the development and use of nuclear weapons and weapons in space.

#### *Outcomes*

- Participants will connect the deaths that resulted from the bombing of Hiroshima to the loss of life after the events of September 11, 2001.
- Participants will gain an understanding of current policies guiding the production and use of nuclear weapons and weapons in space.
- Participants will challenge weapons production in light of the Biblical emphasis on the value of creation.

*God who birthed  
creation,  
Whose works wield life,  
Whose faithfulness harvests good fruit,  
Grant us wisdom in the study of your Word  
and world that,  
overtaken by the beauty of all you have knit  
together,  
We might seek life.  
In the name of Jesus Christ,  
The one who died that we might live.  
Amen.  
—Amanda Hendler-Voss*



Faith

in Action for New Directions

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Faith  
in Action for  
New Directions

A project of Women's Action for New  
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*WAND Education Fund educates the public and opinion leaders about the need to reduce violence and militarism in society, and redirect excessive military spending to unmet human and environmental needs.*

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## EXERCISE 1

# Responding to Scripture

(9 minutes total)

### Instructions

Walk around the room and read each text. Write down the first word or phrase that comes to mind after reading each one.



“The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad,  
The desert shall rejoice and blossom.”  
—Isaiah 35:4

“Say to those who are of a fearful heart,  
‘Be strong, do not fear!’  
Here is your God. “  
—Isaiah 35:4

“Then the lame shall leap like a deer,  
And the tongue of the speechless sing for joy.  
For waters shall break forth in the wilderness,  
And streams in the desert.”  
—Isaiah 35:4

## EXERCISE 2

# A Study in Contrast

(18 minutes total)

### Introduction: 2 minutes

*Before we move on, it's important to acknowledge that violence is a theme we will explore at length in this session. Personal experiences with violence may surface as we discuss the violence of war. Please feel free to take a break any time you need one.*

Isaiah 35:1-7 reminds us that God created us to live abundantly, and the earth to bloom. According to the Bible, there is a relationship between the health of the land and the health of the people living in it. We know that there is also a correlation between the destruction of the earth and of the people living in it.



As American Christians, it is difficult to discuss the implications of our faith on the issue of nuclear weapons without reflecting on the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki during World War II. At 8:15am on August 6, 1945, the world's first atomic bomb used in warfare exploded over Hiroshima. Instantly, the entire city burned, and hundreds of thousands of people died. Many who survived suffered psychological, spiritual, and bodily trauma.

Some of us might remember exactly where we were and what we were doing when we heard about the bombing of Pearl Harbor, or the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr., or the attacks on September 11, 2001. Following are some quotes (translated into English) of memories of the children of Hiroshima.

—continued on page 3

—continued from page 2

**Remembering August 6, 1945:** 1 minute

- “A dragonfly flitted in front of me and stopped on a fence. I stood up, took my cap in my hands, and was about to catch the dragonfly when...”
- “Grandfather was tending the many trees and potted plants in his yard. I was riding my tricycle barefooted when...”
- “I left the house in high spirits, grasping the money mother had given me for ice candy, when...”

- “Mother was ironing father’s good shirts in the living room. I sat next to her. There was a big roar as an airplane flew right over our house. ‘It’s so low, it makes me nervous,’ she said. Just then...”

**Facilitator Introduction to Hiroshima Photograph:**

2 minutes

**Mini Session:** 5 minutes

How is your reaction to this photograph both similar to and different from your reaction to 9/11?

**Sharing with the Group:** 8 minutes

**EXERCISE 3**

# Nuclear Weapons Overview

(6 minutes total)

**Recent Nuclear History:** 1 minute

On May 5, 2000 the U.S. attended the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference, held every five years. With international support, the U.S. agreed to 13 steps to end the nuclear arms race and move toward nuclear disarmament. For example, the U.S. agreed to strengthen the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty and diminish the role of nuclear weapons in security policies. Five years later, at the May 2005 NPT Review Conference, Robert McNamara, former Defense Secretary from the Vietnam era, stated: “If I were to characterize U.S. and NATO nuclear policies in one sentence, I would say they are immoral, illegal, militarily unnecessary, very, very dangerous in terms of the risk of inadvertent or accidental launch and destructive of the non-proliferation regime that has served us so well.”<sup>1</sup> At the 2005 conference, there was no agreed outcome amongst the participating nations.

**Current Nuclear Policies:** 2 minutes

In the proposed budget for fiscal year 2006 (FY06),

- Federal funding for nuclear weapons increases to a total of \$17.5 billion. (Go to [www.national-priorities.org](http://www.national-priorities.org) and click on “Trade Offs” to find out how much taxpayers in your state paid to fund nuclear weapons this year.) For the same amount of money, 10,289,766 children could receive healthcare.<sup>2</sup>
- Funding for ballistic missile defense in 2006 will total \$9.6 billion. For the same amount of money, we could create 86,052 affordable housing units.<sup>3</sup>

In the Department of Energy’s budget request for FY06,

- Funding for environmental cleanup and waste (including radioactive waste) at seven weapons sites is cut by \$556 million to \$6.01 billion.<sup>4</sup>

- Funding for the Robust Nuclear Earth Penetrator, a new nuclear weapon, totals \$8.5 million.<sup>5</sup>
- Funding for the Modern Pit Facility, a new nuclear bomb plant, totals \$7.7 million.<sup>6</sup>

**Weapons in Space:** 2 minutes

**Instructions:** Here is the introduction to “Keep the Heavens Free of Weapons” action guide:

Space remains the last weapons free sanctuary — but it may not stay that way for long. Right now the Pentagon is seeking something it calls “space dominance,”<sup>7</sup> a call to weaponize the heavens. This has the potential to jeopardize commercial and civilian satellites, and to threaten national and international security. As people of faith, we are called to care for God’s creation, including the cosmos.

**Space Security vs. Space Weapons**

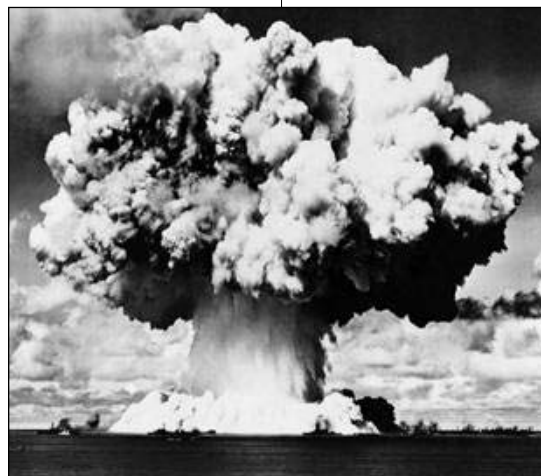
- Before becoming Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld chaired a commission that called on the Pentagon to **project power “in, from, and through space.”**<sup>8</sup>
- The U.S. Air Force seeks to implement a new doctrine calling

for weapons in space. According to an August’04 document, the U.S. Air Force endorses a strategy to **“dominate” space, including the use of weapons in space.**<sup>9</sup>

- Space warfare causes debris, which **indiscriminately kills** in space.
- Satellites save lives. The following life-saving services rely on satellites: police, fire, 911, search and rescue, natural disaster damage assessment, disease tracking, hurricane prediction, earthquake monitoring, and airplane navigation, to name a few.
- Satellites serve as the eyes and ears of nations with nuclear weapons. An attack

on a satellite could trigger a nuclear war.

**Facilitator Wrap-Up:** 1 minute



**EXERCISE 4**

# Biblical Priorities

(18 minutes total)

**Small Groups:** 10 minutes

**Group 1:** Read Isaiah 42:1-9

Here is my servant, whom I uphold,  
 My chosen, in whom my soul delights;  
 I have put my spirit upon him;  
 He will bring forth justice to the nations.  
 He will not cry or lift up his voice,  
 Or make it heard in the street;  
 A bruised reed he will not break,  
 And a dimly burning wick he will not quench;  
 He will faithfully bring forth justice.  
 He will not be crushed  
 Until he has established justice in the earth;  
 And the coastlands wait for his teaching.  
 Thus says God, the Lord,  
 Who created the heavens and stretched them  
 out,  
 Who spread out the earth and what comes  
 from it,  
 Who gives breath to the people upon it  
 And spirit to those who walk in it;  
 I am the Lord, I have called you in  
 righteousness,  
 I have taken you by the hand and kept  
 you;  
 I have given you as a covenant to the  
 people,  
 A light to the nations,  
 To open the eyes that are blind,  
 To bring out the prisoners from the dun-  
 geon,  
 From the prison those who sit in darkness,  
 I am the Lord, that is my name;  
 My glory I give to no other, Nor my praise to idols.  
 See, the former things have come to pass,  
 And new things I now declare;  
 Before they spring forth, I tell you of them.

**Discussion Questions:**

1. What is the role of the servant in this text, and how might it differ from the role of the king (or political leader)?
2. As Christian servants of God, how might we respond to the FY06 federal budget's funding of new nuclear weapons?

**Group 2:** Read Ephesians 2:14-19

For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us. He has abolished the law with its commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new humanity in place of the two, thus making peace, and might reconcile both groups to God in one body through the cross, thus putting to death the hostility through it. So he came and proclaimed peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near; for through him both of us have access in one Spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God.

**Discussion Questions:**

1. What does this passage suggest about the relationship between all of humanity?
2. How does the "one body" presented in this passage compare and contrast with the assumptions behind a weapons-in-space policy?

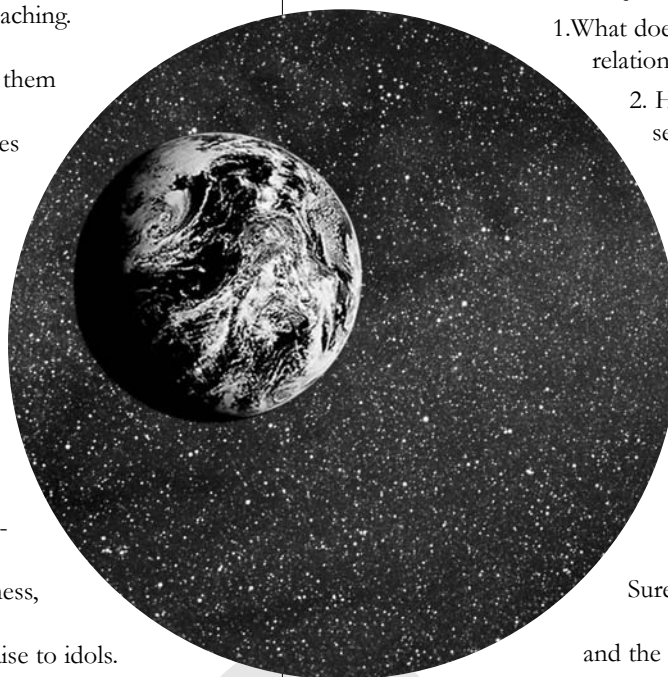
**Group 3:** In Job 38:19-27, God asks Job:

Where is the way to the dwelling of light,  
 and where is the place of darkness,  
 that you may take it to its territory  
 and that you may discern the paths to its home?  
 Surely you know, for you were born then,  
 and the number of your days is great!

Have you entered the storehouses of the snow,  
 or have you seen the storehouses of the hail,  
 which I have reserved for the time of trouble,  
 for the day of battle and war?

What is the way to the place where the light is distributed,  
 or where the east wind is scattered upon the earth?  
 Who has cut a channel for the torrents of rain,  
 and a way for the thunderbolt,

—*continues*



**EXERCISE 4, continued**

# Biblical Priorities, continued

to bring rain on a land where no one lives,  
on the desert, which is empty of human life,  
to satisfy the waste and desolate land,  
and to make the ground put forth grass?

**Discussion Questions:**

1. What is the cosmology (or understanding of the origins, development, and nature of the universe) presented in this passage, and what is the role of human beings within this cosmology?
2. How does the Biblical cosmology presented in this passage compare and contrast with the assumptions being made about creation in a weapons-in-space policy? What links exist between violence against land and against women?

**Group 4:** In Job 38:28-38, God asks Job:

Has the rain a father, or who has begotten the drops of dew?

From whose womb did the ice come forth,  
and who has given birth to the hoarfrost of heaven?

The waters become hard like stone, and the face of the  
deep is frozen.

Can you bind the chain of the Pleiades, or loose the cords  
of Orion?

Can you lead forth the Mazzaroth in their season,  
or can you guide the Bear with its children?

Do you know the ordinances of the heavens?

Can you establish their rule on earth?

Can you lift up your voice to the clouds so that a flood of  
waters may cover you?

Can you send forth lightnings,  
so that they may go and say to you, "Here we are"?

Who has put wisdom in the inward parts,  
or given understanding to the mind?

Who has the wisdom to number the clouds?

Or who can tilt the waterskins of the heavens,  
when the dust runs into a mass and the clods cling together?

**Discussion Questions:**

1. How might you describe the use of "wisdom" in this passage? What does it imply about the relationship between those who are wise and creation?

2. This text uses both father and mother imagery to describe God's relationship with creation. In the book of Proverbs, wisdom is characterized as a woman. How might women's wisdom speak to the development of new nuclear weapons or weapons in space?

**Sharing with Larger Group:** 8 minutes



## EXERCISE 5

# Closing Ritual and Prayer

(8 minutes total)

*Ritual Closing:* 6 minutes

**Instructions:** Write down your offering of a thought or prayer for the victims and their families of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and, by extension, all victims of violence and war.

*Closing Prayer:* 2 minutes



God of all  
You knit us together in our  
mother's womb,  
Just as you wove the breaking of the dawn.  
Your love unfolds from the east to the west,  
And your mercy is our comforting cover.  
Yet we have not always loved one another  
Or the beauty of the earth that you have created.  
We find ourselves confused in  
the midst of a world that is torn by violence  
Remind us today that we were formed in your image,  
That we might love one another as you have loved us.  
In the name of Jesus Christ,  
Who did not break the bent reed  
Who refused to quench the flickering flame,  
Amen.  
—Amanda Hendler-Voss, *Job 31:15;*  
*Isaiah 42:3*

<sup>1</sup>Louis Charbonneau, "US, NATO Nuclear Policies 'Immoral'-McNamara," Reuters, May 24, 2005.

<sup>2</sup>National Priorities Project, "Federal Budget Trade-Offs," 23 August 2005, <http://database.nationalpriorities.org>

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>DISARM, "New Nuclear Weapons Programs Pushed; Cleanup Cut," 7 July 2005. [www.wilpf.org/campaigns/disarm/EYE/previous\\_alerts2005.htm](http://www.wilpf.org/campaigns/disarm/EYE/previous_alerts2005.htm).

<sup>5</sup>Alliance for Nuclear Accountability, "New Report Documents \$2 billion in 'Radioactive Pork,'" 16 August 2005. [www.ananuclear.org/reportrelease2005.html](http://www.ananuclear.org/reportrelease2005.html), August 2005.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

<sup>7</sup>Commission to Assess United States National Security Space Management and Organization, "Report of the Commission to Assess United States National Security Space Management and Organization," 11 January 2001. [www.defenselink.mil/pubs/spacintro.pdf](http://www.defenselink.mil/pubs/spacintro.pdf), August 2005.

<sup>8</sup>Commission to Assess United States National Security Space Management and Organization, "Report of the Commission to Assess United States National Security Space Management and Organization," 11 January 2001. [www.defenselink.mil/pubs/spacintro.pdf](http://www.defenselink.mil/pubs/spacintro.pdf), p. 16, August 2005.

<sup>9</sup>"Counterspace Operations," Air Force Doctrine Document 2-2.1 August 9, 2004. [www.dtic.mil/doctrine/jel/new\\_pubs/jp3\\_14.pdf](http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/jel/new_pubs/jp3_14.pdf) August 2005.