

THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE ARCHIVES

NAME OF COLLECTION: DICKIE, REVEREND ALF

ACCESSION NO: 83/81

CATEGORY: Other, private

ACTIVITY: Clergy; Political Activist

DATE RANGE: 1926 - 1980

SIZE OF COLLECTION: 1.9 m (11 archives boxes; 1 oversize item)

DATE OF TRANSFER: 14 June 1983

ACCESS CONDITIONS: Restricted

HISTORICAL NOTE: Reverend Alf Mathew Dickie (1903-1978) played a leading role in the Australian peace movement. He came from among those Christians who believed they should act forthrightly on the Christian message calling for world peace and social justice. He found kindred souls in Methodist minister, Frank Hartley, and Unitarian, Victor James, who also became public figures through their peace activities. The three ministers came to be known as the 'peace parsons'.

Dickie began challenging social inequities and injustices of the existing political system as he saw them in the light of his Christian beliefs. In 1947 he joined a group of clergy, led by Anglican Dean Langley, in a May Day march. In July 1949 the three 'peace parsons' met with a number of peace activists to form the Australian Peace Council (APC) with Alf Dickie as chairperson.

In 1951 Dickie was one of a group of clergy who set up the Peace Quest Forum to provide 'an opportunity for conflicting views upon politics that made for war and peace'. All this was happening in the early years of the Cold War when critics of government foreign policy of whatever political affiliation were vilified as 'fellow travellers' or 'communist dupes'.

Alf Dickie, as a leading figure in the peace movement, bore much of the brunt of this intolerance. The objectives of the peace movement that Dickie pronounced upon publicly, which challenged government policy, were indeed many. Among the issues were: nuclear disarmament, a nuclear-free Pacific, a non-aligned Australia, recognition of China, and disengagement from Eastern Europe.

[*Note:* See appendix for more detailed biographical note]

- DESCRIPTION:** Correspondence 1930-1978, pamphlets, sermons, circulars; photographs, publications relating to Rev. Dickie's work in the Presbyterian Church and for peace and other social issues; notebooks and scrapbooks; World Peace Council material; Christian Committee proceedings; Centre for Urban Research and Action documents; negotiations on formation of Uniting Church parishes.
- NOTE ON LISTING:** This listing has been developed from a draft box list prepared by John Ellis. As the material was in no discernible order a minimal reordering, mostly subject based, was undertaken. Material has been refoldered and file numbers allocated, but is not arranged by series.
- CONSERVATION NOTE** Some items are fragile, including Reverend Dickie's sermons and bound news clippings
- RELATED COLLECTIONS:** Private: Frank Hartley & Victor James (the other 'peace parsons), Vivian Abrahams, Frank Coaldrake, Dorothy Gibson and Kenneth Rivett.
Organisations: Congress for International Cooperation and Disarmament (CICD), Victorian Peace Council, United Peace Council (pre World War II).
Oral History: Stephen Murray-Smith, Sam Goldbloom & John A. Lloyd
- LISTED BY:** Les Dalton and Sarah Brown
- DATE:** 23 July 2003

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<u>Box</u>	<u>File</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Date</u>
<u>No</u>	<u>Number</u>		
5		World Peace Council: Assorted papers, correspondence, news clips	1970-72
6		Peace and the Crimes Act Includes: <i>Report of Royal Commission on Espionage, 1955</i> <i>A Crime to Work for Peace?</i> by Frank Hartley, 1960 <i>Case for Conversions between Christians and Communists</i> by Frank Hartley, 1968	1955-1968 1955 1960 1968
2	1	Crossing the border into China – hand written notes sent to Clive Sandy	nd
	2	<i>Christian Common Wealth Movement</i> bulletin	1944-46
	3	<i>The Protestant</i>	1943-52
	4	<i>ONE Magazine</i> (formerly <i>The Protestant</i>)	1953
	5	Uranium and Nuclear power [leaflets, resource packet]	1975-1977
	6	The New Imperialism [manuscript]. Crisis in Czechoslovakia	Nd 1968
	7	Australia & S E Asia - Directions for the 1980s Conference: Papers: E L Wheelwright: <i>New International Division of Labour</i> ; Terry Norman: <i>Australia's Political Ties with Asia</i> ; Bruce McFarlane: <i>Recent Political Developments in Asia</i> ; John Halfpenny: <i>Economic Relations - Competition or Complementation</i>	1980
	8	Church Reports and Statements, including on homosexuality Warsaw Ghetto	1972-1977 July 1973
3	1	Church, Socialism and Peace Includes: Clergymen & Socialism from the Australian women's movement against socialisation Statements, speakers' notes, articles on peace issues <i>Motive</i> , University Christian Movement, 1966. <i>The Church in a Revolutionary Situation</i> by Emilio Castro, 1975 [roneo]. <i>Symphony for Peace</i> by Nat Seeligson. Frank Hartley reports on overseas conferences. Medical Peace association formed. Assorted articles on peace issues.	c1950-1975 1951 1966 nd 1950s
	2	Christianity and Communism Includes: Burchett vs ex-Senator Kane - libel action	1975

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<u>Box</u>	<u>File</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Date</u>
<u>No</u>	<u>Number</u>		
3		News clippings on nuclear weapons [bound volume]	1949-54
4	1	Journals and Publications: Includes: Draft film script, Bob Bonsack – “The Rising Tide”	nd
2		<i>Peace</i> . editors: Alf Dickie and Ian Turner [issue 1 only, May 1951].	1951
		<i>Peace: a World Review</i> [incomplete].	1950-1951
		<i>In Defence of Peace</i> [incomplete].	1950
		<i>For Peace and Friendship: Poems by Bartlett Adamson</i>	1952
3		Vietnam War <i>Ramparts Extra: Children of Vietnam</i>	c.1966
		<i>Geneva Agreement on Vietnam, 1956</i>	1956
		<i>Peace for Vietnam?</i> by Ivor Montagu	nd
4		Awards The Joliot-Curie Gold Peace Medal	1965
		International Peace Award.	nd
5		Newsclippings Include: Newspaper cartoons, 1949-1951 Rev. John Graf dismissed from church, nd post 1962 News of Rev. Frank Hartley’s death, 1971 Silberman’s disappearance in Pinochet’s Chili Ustashi activities in Australia	1975 1970
6		Hungary Includes: Hungarian Church Press, newsletters Correspondence and information re Hungarian refugees	1970-1971 1957

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<u>Box</u>	<u>File</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Date</u>
<u>No</u>	<u>Number</u>		
7		Alf Dickie: Biographical Information, Life and Activities	
		Includes:	
		Questions put at the Presbyterian Church Assembly	1951
		Speech on Dickie's appointment as Executive Officer of Melbourne Presbytery, 1968	1968
		Response by Dickie at his 75 th birthday celebration	
		[Note: See John Ellis collection, UMA, for photograph of this occasion]	1978
		Assorted correspondence, statements, news clippings.	1964-1976
		<i>Should Such a Faith Offend?</i> by Alf Dickie, 1948	
		<i>Statement of Common Belief</i> by Alf Dickie	
		List of offices held by Dickie in Peace Movement and Church Assemblies.	
		Articles on life and work of Alf Dickie, obituaries	1932-1978
		Dickie statement to church elders	n.d
5	1	Sermons by Rev. Alf Dickie	1963
	2	Sermons by Rev. Alf Dickie	1972-75
	3	Sermons by Rev. Alf Dickie	1973-75
6	1	Peace; Indonesia; Omega: Reports and Booklets	
		Includes:	
		CARPA Bulletin. Committee Against Repression in the Pacific & Asia – No. 2, 5	1978-80
		<i>Omega Navigational System: report from the Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence</i>	1975
		<i>Indonesia: The Prison State</i> Tapol, No 1	1975
		Human rights in Indonesia	1980
		<i>How I came to work for peace</i> by Dorothy Gibson	1973
		<i>My pilgrimage for Peace</i> by Rev. F.J. Hartley, 1965	1965
		<i>Asia Awakes</i> by Marion Hartley, nd post 1955	
	2	Poem – <i>Light in the Asphalt Jungle</i> , Vincent Harding	nd
		<i>The Record</i> , North Essendon Presbyterian Church, 1926; 1943-1949	1926; 1943-1949
	3	Censoring of Dickie's TV Epilogue program	
		Epilogue program notes	1958-1959
	4	Australian Student Christian Movement (ASCM) Newsletter	1972-1975
	5	Report on Pacific Church Conference, 1966.	1966;
		<i>Christian Conference of Asia</i> Issue 24, 1980	1980

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6		Korea Includes: World Student Christian Federation - Korean delegation, 1974 <i>Let us heed the warning of the Women's Commission in Korea</i> [Statement by Jessie M. G. Street] 1951 Church in Korea <i>The Struggle for the Armistice in Korea (Selected Documents)</i>	1974 1951 1958-59 1966
7		CICD conference on imperialism, oil & energy	1972
8		Peace Quest Forum: notices, statements, correspondence, news cuttings	1951-1962
9		<i>Italians in Australia</i> by Des Storer, 1975 <i>Cambodia - Politics of Food</i> , 1976 Papers regarding migrant workers, c 1978 Mining at Aurukun – church response, c.1976	1975 1976 1978 1976
10		<i>Christian Peace Conference</i> [journal]	1962-1964; 1971
11		Vietnam Moratorium Campaign, minutes/resolutions (formative meeting at Caprice Restaurant 9 Dec. 1969)	1969-1970; 1973-1974
12		Papers, correspondence and cuttings on Christian beliefs	1951-1968
13		Papers on Christian faith and social and peace issues	1939-1976
7	1	Note books and scrapbooks compiled by Rev. Alf Dickie	1926-1933
	1/1	Notebook indexed by subject containing homilies and quotations, nd	
	1/2	Scrapbook of newspaper clippings, 1926-1928 <i>Note: Three photographs taken in Ballarat are included at end of this volume]</i>	
	1/3	Scrapbook of newspaper clippings, 1928-1932 <i>Note: Six photographs taken in Elwood are included at end of this volume]</i>	
	1/4	Notebook containing homilies and quotations, and typescripts, nd	
8	1	<i>The Canadian Far Eastern Newsletter</i>	1963-1969

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2		Inter-church Committee on Peace – statements, reports <i>Peace and War</i> by J.W.Cox	1961-1963 1946
3		North Essendon Presbyterian Church matters Includes: Investigation of Dickie's peace activities. Boys Club Reports Essendon Scout Troop Report	1951-1952 1952 1951 1951
4		North Essendon Presbyterian Church: Contention on social issues in North Essendon parish	1947-1961
5		Contention on social issues in North Essendon parish	c 1948-1951
6		Rejection of Dickie's article by <i>The Messenger</i> ; assorted correspondence, including North Essendon Presbyterian Church matters	c 1940-1958
7		Christian statements on peace and social issues	1965-1980
8		Ormond College correspondence regarding Nominating Committee for appointments to Theological College	1964
9	1	<i>Ramparts</i> [2 files]	1967-1969
	2	<i>Cambridge Review</i> Vol 92(2200) ((2201)	1971
	3	Middle East Conflict Includes: CICD statement on Middle East U.N. Security Council – Resolutions on Middle East Israel Peace Movement	1967
	4	<i>The Oil Embargo and the New relationship Between Christianity, Islam, Judaism</i> , compiled by Ian Fry	1975
	5	Assorted publications re: Palestine, Paul Robeson Australian tour, 1960, Christian Peace Conference (1975), human rights legislation (Lionel Murphy); <i>Australian Frontier</i> – nine lectures, Colin Williams, 1967	1960-1975
	6	Christian and peace poetry	c 1954-1959

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	7	Assorted papers on the church and urban and industrial society	1967-1970
			1975
10	1	Richmond-Burnley Parish: correspondence, reports, finance	1963-1970
	2	Richmond Methodist/Presbyterian: correspondence, minutes, constitution united churches	1965-1970
	3	Collingwood-Methodist-Presbyterian Parish: correspondence	1963-1969
	4	Cairns Memorial Church, East Melbourne: correspondence, reports	1964-1968
	5	Code Committee and Advisory Council on uniting of churches, Ormond College and Geelong Girls School constitutions	1968-1970
	6	Notes and documents on child day care	1965
	7	Fitzroy Ecumenical Centre	1970
	8	Fitzroy Ecumenical Centre	1971-1975
11	1	Correspondence - assorted	1950-1969
	2	Correspondence - assorted	1950-1969
	3	Correspondence - assorted	1950-1969
	4	Correspondence - assorted.	
		Correspondence re 'Scissors Without Paste'	1950-1951
	5	Centre for Urban Research and Action (CURA) reports, minutes, correspondence	1976
OS 1	1	Testimony of high regard to Alf Dickie by CICD on occasion of his induction as Moderator of the Presbyterian Church	1 November 1965

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APPENDIX :

DICKIE, REVEREND ALF

Biographical information by Les Dalton

July 2003

Reverend Alf Mathew Dickie (born: Melbourne 22 June 1903: died: Melbourne 30 December 1978) played a leading role in the Australian peace movement. He came from among those Christians who believed they should act forthrightly on the Christian message calling for world peace and social justice. He found kindred souls in Methodist minister, Frank Hartley, and Unitarian, Victor James, who also became public figures through their peace activities. The three ministers came to be known as the 'peace parsons'. Companion collections of the three repose in the University of Melbourne Archives. Together they provide an invaluable record of the campaigning of the peace movement during the politically repressive Cold War years.

Alf Dickie had commenced his working life as an apprentice fitter and turner. He worked in his trade until, at the age of 30 years, he answered the call to join the ministry of the Presbyterian Church. As minister he served in several parishes in South Australia and Victoria before coming to the Parish of North Essendon in 1943 where he remained until 1968. Soon after coming to the Essendon parish he began to speak out publicly on social and political issues. He began challenging social inequities and injustices of the existing political system as he saw them in the light of his Christian beliefs. In 1947 he joined a group of clergy, led by Anglican Dean Langley, in a May Day march. The following May Day he spoke on the Yarra Bank publicly identifying himself with the trade union call for economic and political reform. He publicly opposed federal legislation banning the Communist Party.

In July 1949 the three 'peace parsons' met with a number of peace activists to form the Australian Peace Council (APC) with Alf Dickie as chairperson. The APC has been much criticised for the dominance of its policies by communists. However, it is clear from the records that while Dickie and his fellow Christians encouraged dialogue with Marxists they sought their own path, keeping to their own religious beliefs on how to proceed towards creating a peaceful nuclear-free world. Dickie saw as part of his Christian mission the mobilising of ordinary people against the warlike policies of governments, more especially against preparations for nuclear war. If governments were to exercise the immense power opened up to them by nuclear science, Dickie believed, 'they will bring doom on God's creation'.

In 1951 Dickie was one of a group of clergy who set up the Peace Quest Forum to provide 'an opportunity for conflicting views upon politics that made for war and peace'. Setting up this independent forum was partly in response to accusations that the APC was controlled by communists. All this was happening in the early years of the Cold War when critics of government foreign policy of whatever political affiliation were vilified as 'fellow travellers' or 'communist dupes'. Alf Dickie, as a leading figure in the peace movement, bore much of the brunt of this intolerance. The objectives of the peace movement that Dickie pronounced upon publicly, which challenged government policy, were indeed many. Among the issues

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were: nuclear disarmament, a nuclear-free Pacific, a non-aligned Australia, recognition of China, disengagement from Eastern Europe.

It was not only in the media and parliament that Dickie faced accusations of being 'communist' and disloyal to his country. Some of his parishioners were disturbed not only by what they heard in the media but also more personally in his weekly sermons from the pulpit.

Dickie faced his parishioners with a willingness to discuss the social and political meanings of his beliefs. Taking Paul's defense of his faith before the Corinthians, Dickie set out his own beliefs in a tract 'Should Such a Faith Offend' in order that his parishioners 'may judge the truth or error of the rumours'. He was not, he said, a communist by affiliation or philosophy but one who believes Christians should be working to change the present order of society'.

Dickie was chairperson of the APC, 1949-59; member, World Peace Council, 1950-78; chairperson, Democratic Rights Conference, 1950; member, Peace Quest Forum, 1951-68; chairperson Congress for International Cooperation and Disarmament, 1959-72.

In his struggle for peace and justice Dickie slowly won respect among his Christian brethren. He was chosen as moderator of the Presbyterian Church, 1965-66 and held the post of executive officer of the Presbytery of Melbourne, 1968-72. Dickie brought to the peace movement an independent viewpoint, which though not always prevailing, eventually led to a growth in public support culminating in the successful campaign against the Australian commitment to the war in Vietnam.

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Version 23 July 2003