

Bruce Kent

Christ's non-violence

The curse of violence falls on our arrival
And in frequent struggles for survival
But stimulates people to pine for peace
For plans and practices to pen the beast.

War terrorises, butchers, shrieks in alarm,
The serene Buddha taught us not to harm.
Then the raw, new Christian movement
Brought Christ's command to be non-violent.

3 anti-war centuries made martyrs' bones
Mihi licet militari, cut on gravestones
Of legionnaire refusals to go to war
'I may work as policeman, not do more.'

In full, *Mihi licet militari sed non bellari*

Christ's teaching taken courageously

Then compromise from the great Augustine
Loosened loopholes with just war doctrine.
Peace work we find in Francis, Erasmus, More,
Las Casas, Vittoria, the Jesuit protector
Cities, Friends, Peace Churches. All showed
Compassion, and perilously in peace, abode
With Christ, loving His Gospel of non-violence.
As Dunant of battles' agonies broke the silence.
Inspired too by Christ were Gandhi, war-objectors,
Women and men of all kinds, rogues to rectors.
Martin Luther King, and in the same breath,
Bruce Kent who's left us. We mourn his death.
He spent his life wholly for others, for persons
And nations, to share love and peace in abundance.

The lives of Bruce Kent

If we had surveyed all the parts he'd play
And guessed his ultimate chosen way-
Jobs that would fail his soul to nourish
Or others that could see him flourish,
We'd imagine him a legal eagle,
A tank corp's genial rebel general,
An airline pilot, international,
An MP emphatic, stirring trouble,
A cheerful chaplain, kindly, pastoral
Or rare, cool cat--a star Cardinal!
He was a prophet-priest, a paragon,
Who'd seen War in Biafra, stark, full on,
Violating humans, body and soul.
Fighting War with love was his major role.

*He took a Law Degree at Oxford
He did National Service with tanks
He learned to fly at University
He was a parliamentary candidate in Abingdon
He was the RC Chaplain at London University
Before his peace-making he was on his way.
His career was stalled by his dissidence
He visited Nigeria in this war for War on Want*