

# WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

By Bill Pugh



The recent news of the threat to use a banned bomb in the Ukraine shocked the world.

How could anyone do that? Is the designer and maker responsible? Is the soldier who planted the bomb? Is the officer who gave the order? Is the dictator who started the war? It's very difficult to name a single cause. The result is a shared responsibility in various degrees. No one is devoid of guilt.

In the Easter story at the trial of Jesus, Pontius Pilate washed his hands before the crowd, saying "I am innocent of the blood of this just person". But is he? And many others undoubtedly believed the same.

Probably most Russians would say Putin is the one guilty of crimes in

the Ukraine. And yet many others committed crimes in the Ukraine. Is ever a nation free from guilt?

To admit wrongdoing is never easy. We don't like to own up. We make excuses, shift the blame. Guilt haunts us. Confession is soul-cleansing medicine.

Growing up, we had ways of avoiding punishment. We made all kinds of excuses. Parents and teachers confronted us with the evidence of our wrongdoing. And we were punished and, hopefully, we grew morally stronger as a result.

Nations and citizens share responsibility for actions taken. Honesty and acceptance of mistakes is a way forward.

## *Reflection:*

*"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness."*

1 John 1:9

*The Hymn puts public confession thus:*

*"Dear Father, Lord of humankind, forgive our foolish ways, reclothe us in our rightful minds, in purer lives, thy service find, in deeper reverence praise."*

Tis 598