



Peace Advocate News

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.
Matthew 5:9

Peace begins when you make your peace with Jesus, accept Him as Savior and follow Him as Lord.

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Peace Witness News

Brethren, Mennonites, and other people of goodwill in Lancaster County, Pa., have received a "shout out" from Lancaster Online, in an editorial titled "As acts of hatred are committed elsewhere, Lancaster County represents a "beacon of light." "Lancaster County religious organizations offered their support to the Islamic Society of Greater Harrisburg after that mosque received a threatening hate letter from a group calling itself Americans for a Better Way." The Lancaster Online article spoke of the response to this threat. The article said, in part. "Elizabethtown Church of the Brethren leaders sent a letter pledging their support and offering 'any practical assistance' [to the Islamic Society]. The Islamic Community Center of Lancaster also offered its support. You may have noticed the green, blue and orange lawn signs appearing outside people's homes around the county. In English, Spanish and Arabic, they read: 'No matter where you are from, we're glad you're our neighbor.' ...While racist and anti-Semitic symbols are scrawled on buildings in communities across the country--manifesting like a viral rash--and the number of hate crimes continues to climb nationwide, Lancaster County is mounting a quiet resistance." Read the article at: http://lancasteronline.com/opinion/editorials/as-acts-of-hatred-are-committed-elsewhere-lancaster-county-represents/article_e120463c-c0c3-11e6-a11c-6bcf4ddddd27.html .

Source: Church of the Brethren Newsline December 16, 2016.

Don Miller Speaks at Ashland University Martin Luther King, Jr. Event



Pictured are members of the ACN Steering Committee and ACN Peace Scholars. Don Miller is in the center.

The Ashland Center For Nonviolence (ACN) sponsors Martin Luther King Day events at Ashland University. This year, Church of the Brethren Leader Donald Miller was the speaker. His message of a "just peace" highlighted Martin Luther King's condemnation of militarism and advocacy of creative alternatives. Professor emeritus at Bethany Theological Seminary and former general secretary of the Church of the Brethren,

Miller was involved in the "Decade to Overcome Violence" initiative of the World Council of Churches. From 2000 to 2010, Miller coordinated a number of international conferences with the Historic Peace Churches (Brethren, Mennonites, & Quakers) throughout the world that aimed to address the root causes of violence, the role of peacemakers, and the needs of victims while challenging the widespread idea that there can be a "just war." Miller's advocacy of a "just peace" as an alternative is deeply informed by his international experiences with peacemaking. The stories he shared of nonviolent peacemaking in the world were inspiring and well received. His book, *From Just War to Just Peace: Stories From the Decade to Overcome Violence*, recounts these stories and many more. *They are candles of hope shining in the darkness of a violent world.*

Book: Miller, Donald Eugene. *From Just War to Just Peace: Stories From the Decade to Overcome Violence*. Richmond, IN: Augustin Printing & Design Services. 2013.

Glimmers of Hope

What of Peace in the Middle East?

Not everyone in Israel agrees with Netanyahu, the current Israeli prime minister and his view of Israeli - Palestinian relations. In response to December's unprecedented U.N. resolution against Israeli settlements in occupied Palestinian territories, Gideon Levy, an Israeli peace activist said the resolution was "a breath of hope in a sea of darkness and despair." Levy speaks for thousands of Israelis and Palestinians who work quietly and with little if any press coverage, to find a better peaceful way to end the conflict in the Middle East. Here are some examples of their peace making efforts:

- A group of Palestinian Santas peacefully protest the Israeli occupation in Bethlehem as they have on past Christmases. (Their efforts were met with tear-gas.)
- 600 Israeli and Palestinian families who have lost loved ones in the conflict continue to reach out to each other for comfort, for support, and to work for peace. They insist that if they can do it, anyone can!
- In October thousands of Israeli and Arab women joined a two-week long March of Hope to demonstrate what can be done for peace when we all work together. 4,000 women, half of them Palestinian, began the march with a prayer service. As they traveled through Israel and the West Bank, nearly ten thousand people joined them. The march ended with a peace rally in Jerusalem outside Netanyahu's residence. Israeli singer Yael Deckelbaum told the crowd, "They [people] told me there was nobody to make peace with. Today, we proved them wrong."



Photo by Abbas Momani/ AFP

One of the groups working for peaceful solutions is Women Wage Peace, a sponsor of the March of Hope. Their mission statement includes:

- The “Women Wage Peace” movement is a non-political, broad-based, and rapidly growing movement of thousands of women, taking action to influence the public and political arena.
- We want to restore hope and work towards a peaceful existence for ourselves, our children and future generations.
- Their goal is to prevent the next war and lead to resolution of the conflict that is non-violent, respectable and agreeable to both sides – Israeli and Palestinian, within four years.

As you pray for peace in the Middle East – indeed in any conflict situation – remember, it is not the one with the most or biggest weapons who brings peace, it is the people who are willing to see ‘the other’ as human and talk to them; condemn violence no matter who uses it, and risk themselves without putting the other at risk, and work for the good of all sides that bring peace and make it last.

Sources: Zimet, Abby staff writer. *CommonDreams*. December 27, 2016
For more about peaceful efforts to end the conflict in the Middle East see:
<http://womenwagepeace.org>



- I had to ‘fight for a place in line’ at the big sale.
- There were three of us in line for the promotion, but I ‘beat them out’ and got it.
- The store ‘slashed’ prices this week.
- There is a ‘price war’ between gas stations in town.
- Get out of my way or ‘I’ll punch your lights out’
- ‘Sock it to them’.
- I hope we ‘smash’ them in the big game!
- Our ‘offence delivered a crushing blow’ in the last seconds of the game; so we won!
- He just ‘made a killing’ in the stock market!
- I ‘annihilated’ the competition at work.
- Our quarterback ‘took out’ their quarterback.
- We ‘ran down’ the information.

- We ‘fight’ the cold and ‘battle’ a snow storm
- We ‘fight’ traffic, ‘tackle’ an assignment, or ‘wrestle’ with a problem
- We talk about not ‘shooting the messenger’ when getting bad news
- We ‘threaten’ those who get in our way – like other drivers on the road
- We use war images to talk about it when bad things happen. Instead of saying the town looked like a tornado hit after one did, why do we say the town looked like a war zone after the tornado? Why don’t we say the town looked like a tornado came through after it was bombed?

Many angry people use abusive or degrading language to express their feelings which is also a form of violence

- You idiot; or you’re a jerk; or worse
- Some people cannot express any strong feelings without using swearwords or sexual innuendos which are also forms of violent speech (and some would say actual violent acts!)

What does it do to the way we think and look at the world when we cannot describe anything without violent language? Do we become so ‘comfortable’ with violent images that the line between just talk and actual violent behavior becomes blurred – especially for our children? Does the language we use contribute to the fact that children and many adults cannot distinguish between emotions like disappointment and anger? Being unable to make that distinction, are they also unable to determine what responses to their feelings are appropriate?

Some people say words do not matter. . . . If that is so, why is there one notable exception to the prevalence of openly violent language in our culture? When the horrors of actual war are described, the military uses less violent sounding, less personal language. Especially in times of stress we now let law enforcement officers do the same.

- “collateral damage” instead of civilians killed
- “neutralized”: instead of killed the enemy or a suspect
- “Take out” instead of kill
- The “decedent was pronounced non-viable” instead of the person was pronounced dead

The constant use of violent images in language helps desensitize people to the realities of violence. At the same time, using impersonal images in language to describe actual violence also desensitizes people to the real horrors of violence and war by trying to mask it. Both make it easier for people to think of violence as acceptable.

What would happen if we all think about the words we use in daily conversation and make a conscious decision not to use violent words and images? It would certainly make big changes in our speaking! Would it also change how we think and see the world? Would changing how we see and think change the way we act? Give it a try. The time to wait for others to act to end violence is gone. Allowing the cycle of violence to continue will lead only to destruction. “All who live by the sword will die by the sword.” (Matthew 26:52)

America's Legacy to the World – Really?

Much of the world tightened their military budgets in 2015 and focused more on domestic budget concerns.

Even so the U.S. managed to sell \$40 billion dollars in arms in 2015 – more than half of all arms sales world wide and twice as much arms business as was done by second place France. The French only sold \$15 billion in weapons in 2015. This is the eighth year in a row the U.S. has been the world's number one arms seller. The Obama administration has approved more than \$278 billion in arms sales in those eight years – more than double the \$128.6 billion in arms sales approved in the preceding eight years by Bush (which was also an unprecedented total).

What of other major players? Russia sold \$11.1 billion (down slightly from \$11.2 billion in 2014), and China sold \$6 billion (double their 2014 sales).

The weapons the U.S. sold include bombs, missiles, armored tanks, Apache attack helicopters, F-15 fighters, among other items. Who were the biggest buyers? Qatar¹ bought \$17 billion; Egypt bought \$12 billion; and Saudi Arabia bought \$8 billion in U.S. Arms. (data comes from the Congressional Research Service which conducts national policy analysis for Congress.)²

What is the result? Among other things:

- Many of the weapons are supporting Saudi Arabia's fight against rebels in Yemen where civilian casualties are very high, in part because the Saudi-led coalition (which the U.S. supports) targets civilian institutions including hospitals. . .
- Weapons are easily available to anyone who has money. For a number of groups, kidnapping for ransom, gaining control over oil reserves and other assets, piracy at sea, or the drug trade is funding arms purchases.
- The U.S. has been 'at war' (mostly 'undeclared war' in the historical since) with American troops 'on the ground' longer and in more places than at any time in U.S. history. American drone and covert attacks, like attacks by other participants in this war, are not confined to defined 'war zones'. There is no sign that this 'war' is ending any time soon.
- The threat of violence, especially against civilians is growing and civilians in the U.S. have joined people in the rest of the world who live in fear of violent attacks in their home communities even when the people in those communities are not supporters of or participants in any conflict. American Muslims, like Muslims elsewhere are frightened and face discrimination because some combatants claim to be Muslims and that their view of religion is the only true one. Now American Christians, like Christians elsewhere feel threatened. American Christians were warned that celebrating the birth of Jesus, the Prince of Peace, in their church buildings at Christmas time 2016 could put them at risk of attack . . . Those participating in the violence on all sides are threatening and targeting people only because of their faith, or their ethnicity, or because of their location solely to generate fear. This in turn stokes the fires of mistrust and hate which continues the violence.

We are told being the best armed country in the world will keep us safe, and that arming 'allies' will help. Yet many Americans feel far from safe, far less safe now in fact. American arms are helping to fuel conflicts all over the world and American weapons are frequently being used by both sides in a conflict. Is arming the world really the legacy we want?

¹This country is a peninsula extending into the Persian Gulf from Saudi Arabia. It is the smallest country but has the highest per capita income in the world.

²Prupis, Nadia. "Even as Global Trade Dropped, US Arms Sales Boomed in 2015". *Common Dreams*. Tuesday, December 27, 2016. Under Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 License.

An Influential Bumper Sticker Has A New Look

Linda K. Williams of the First Church of the Brethren in San Diego created the bumper sticker that says "**When Jesus said, 'Love your enemies,' I think he probably meant, don't kill them**". It has been well known Brethren circles and beyond but is out of print. Now the bumper sticker is back with a new look. Go to the *Messenger* December 2016 page 4 to see the new design. Go to www.brethrenpress.com to get one.

Know the Facts

- More than two million American children live in homes with guns that are not stored safely and securely.
- There were at least 525 child shootings in 2016 resulting in 321 injuries and 204 deaths.
 - More than two-thirds of these tragedies could be avoided if gun owners stored their guns responsibly and prevented children from having access to them.
 - The U.S. has one of the highest reported rates of unintentional child gun deaths in the world. Everytown for Gun Safety Support Fund¹ research indicates that the number of incidents involving death and injury are significantly underreported.

To learn more go to <http://everytownresearch.org>. This site includes a map at:

<http://everytownresearch.org/notanaccident/1125/#2243> that shows where every reported gun incident involving a child happened. Clicking on the location on the map will give facts about the incident.¹

- On average 7 children are killed in the U.S. by guns every day.
- 1.4 million people were killed with firearms in the U.S between 1968 and 2011. That is .2 million more than the 1.2 million military deaths in all the armed conflicts from the Revolutionary War to the invasion of Iraq.
- There were 11,364 gun deaths in the U.S. from January to October 2016.²

¹ Everytown for Gun Safety Support Fund is an independent, non-partisan 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to understanding and reducing gun violence in America. Everytown For Gun Safety was started in 2013 when then New York mayor Michael Bloomberg contributed \$50 million to developing a grassroots network of gun-control advocates that would bring together some of the main organizations campaigning on the issue. These include Mayors Against Illegal Guns and Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America.

²(Younge, Gary. "Why the Gun-Control Movement Fails". *The Nation*. V303:19, Nov. 7, 2016. 12-15)

Peace Education Opportunities



The 2017 Ashland Center for Violence John D. Stratton Conference:

Understanding Our Gun Culture

Ashland University
Ashland, Ohio

March 31 - April 1 2017



UNDERSTANDING
OUR GUN CULTURE
ASHLAND CENTER FOR NONVIOLENCE * 2017 CONFERENCE

The keynote speaker will be Randolph Roth a professor of History and Sociology at Ohio State. He is a member of the Editorial Board of the American Historical Review, a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and a member of the National Academy of Sciences Roundtable on Crime Trends. Roth has written on homicide. He also works on improving data on homicide in America.

There will also be presentations on topics including:

- Guns on campus
- Faith & gun issues
- Gun control
- Who are gun owners?
- Youth violence

Registration for the conference is open. Take advantage of early bird rates through February 15, 2017. Registration is: \$25 for students, \$50 for general admission. Lunch is provided.

Register at <https://acn.nationbuilder.com/register>

For more information go to: <http://acn.nationbuilder.com>

Christian Citizenship Seminar: Native American Rights:

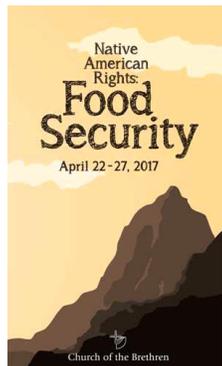
Food Security
April 22-27, 2017

Christian Citizenship Seminars are sponsored by the Church of the Brethren. They provide high school aged students the chance to explore the relationship between faith and a particular political issue, and then act from a faith perspective regarding that issue.

The 2017 seminar theme focuses on native people's food insecurity, especially as the issue relates to land rights.

All high school youth and adult advisors may attend the seminar. Churches are required to send 1 advisor for every 4 youth, and strongly encouraged to send an advisor even if fewer than 4 youth attend.

Registration for the 2017 Seminar is limited to 60 participants; first come first served. Register on-line at brethren.org. For more information or if you have questions go to brethren.org or Youth and Young Adult Director Becky Ullom Naugle, at bullomnaugle@brethren.org or 847-429-4385. Also feel free to contact Youth and Young Adult Assistant Paige Butzlaff, at pbutzlaff@brethren.org or 847-429-4389.



Worship Resources

Make Prayers for Peace Part of Your Worship

Remember in prayer:

1. **South Sudan:** has the worst human rights record in the world – people burned alive; women & girls raped; family members forced to watch family members brutalized & killed; soldiers taking children. Their government is largely responsible. December 2016, foreign aid workers & reporters expelled from the country. The fear: this done to eliminate outside witnesses to genocide. . .
2. **Nigeria:** the 21 Chibok school girls who have been released; their families & communities. The 197 Chibok girls and others still missing, EYN, all those affected by the violence. January 2017 the government inadvertently bombed a refugee camp killing many including Doctors Without Borders staff.
3. **Bangladesh** – brutal attacks by Islamist militants on minority groups including non-Muslims and intellectuals are rising.
4. **Those facing execution** – & those willing to execute because they put revenge above redemption & forgiveness
5. **People affected by gun violence.**
6. **All people in this world who live with war.**
7. **People facing torture.**
8. **People affected by gun negligence** – especially 525 child shooters in 2016. Many shooters are toddlers. . .
9. **Mothers & children in prison** – fleeing violence in their home countries; held in U.S detention camps. More unaccompanied children seek safety now than when the story broke in May 2015.
10. **Those in prison** because of their beliefs.
11. **Yemen & elsewhere;** the U.S. regularly launches drone attacks – often hitting civilians.
12. **People Displaced** because of war or political unrest including the **Syrian refugee crises**
13. All those whose lives are dominated by **fear**.
14. People **working for peace** locally and in the world.
15. **Veterans'** living with their part in war. 18 U.S. Iraq/Afghanistan veterans commit suicide every day. (US Veterans Affairs statistics)
16. Those who **don't know God's peace** & have lost hope & joy.
17. **Girls & Women** facing abuse and violence every day
18. **Child Soldiers**
19. **Community – Police issues,** that communities and police will work together respectfully with each other for the common good.
20. **Those now waging war by remote control** – they push buttons from far away that hurt or killed men, women, children

A Prayer For Guidance

Lord, we are in a time of unprecedented uncertainty. For many the future does not look bright. Instead, it appears threatening and foreboding; mean spirited and nasty. Many feel they are being pushed down a path they did not chose – a path that will bring hardship and suffering for many. Give us faith to put our trust in you. Give us wisdom and courage to speak the truth in love when our speaking can help those in need; the marginalized; the scapegoats among us. Call us to seek your path and use our hands and feet as you call us to work for the good of our neighbors whoever they are and where ever they may face injustice. Remind us that you call us to seek justice, love kindness, and to walk humbly with God. (Micah 6:8) Amen.



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