



A Reason For Hope

Catharina Coenen visits her family in Germany regularly. People here always ask her if things have changed in Germany now that so many refugees are living there. She writes; while visiting my family in Germany, I was traveling by train. As the train pulled into a station, I heard angry shouts, “We don’t want you here! Through the window I saw a man grab another’s arm. The man he grabbed pulled away and ran onto the train when it stopped amid angry shouts of, “Go back where you came from,” but also soothing murmurs of, “Calm down, calm down.” The man dropped into a seat ahead of me, then quickly sprang up and took another seat facing the way he had come into the train car. His face was full of fear. A woman, short, stout, gray-haired, followed him and stopped beside him to pat his wrist, - white hand on brown. “I am so sorry,” she says. “Please, please, don’t let it get to you.” It is not clear if he understands her words, but he nods, still looking down the train to where the profanities still rise and fall. The woman remains standing in the corridor, holding on as the train picks up speed. Behind her dozens of other people stand up and move into the aisle casually, as though they always stand for this part of their trip. “They fill the gap between the rows of seats, blocking the source of curses from our view, buffering, holding space.” They don’t talk or look at anyone. . . but they are there. Catharina says, “Yes, things have changed.” (*The Christian Science Monitor Weekly*. 11-19-2018 p. 41. Read the full article, it is beautifully written.)

We think peacemaking has to be a big showy thing, but it is the many small seemingly insignificant acts that happen every day in the lives of ordinary people. Such small acts added together can change the world.

This week pray for:

- all those facing violence, living in fear, dealing with tragedy.
- Pray also for the courageous bystanders who do not just stand by when others are facing abuse; bullying; hate; violence. They offer a soothing word; kindness, and compassion like these who stood up for a stranger a on train.
- Pray for the courage to be such everyday peacemakers.



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