



# Peace Advocate News

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

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

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Volume 9:3

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## Refugees – Who’s Problem Is It?

The refugee crisis in Europe has been much in the news for some months now. Thousands of people are facing death at home and are willing to risk everything for a chance at a new life in a ‘safe place.’ 80% of Syria’s children are directly affected by violence. The pictures are painful to watch – hundreds of people crammed into decrepit boats making a desperate attempt to reach land before they capsize or sink; bodies washing up on the shore – often those of children. . . . An unknown number, who did not survive the crossing, will never to be found or counted. Then there are thousands who have made it to shore only to face another long over-land journey in search of safety, hope, and a chance for life. Those who offer help – fishermen who rescue people from the sea; those who find the bodies on the shore day after day; those who try to give food and shelter and comfort – are overwhelmed to the breaking point but continue to help anyway because the need continues and they are compassionate people. . . . Then there are the countries receiving the flood of humanity trying to help but also overwhelmed and struggling to find a way to both help and survive the financial burden and logistics of providing space, shelter, food, and the services needed for so many people coming all at once. There is also fear – unfounded or not – that someone may try to use the crowds to as a screen to sneak through and cause harm . . . . As the crisis has continued with no signs of stopping, some people and nations are succumbing to the tendency to combine fear with their own prejudices and deny help, ignore the need and sent people back, often to their death. The issues involved in solving the problems that led to the violence that causes people to flee their homes are complex with deep roots. Most of the refugees heading for Europe are from Syria, where as in other places, refugees are fleeing, their own leaders or disgruntled factions who are willing to use their own people as pawns to get their need for power or control or revenge met. In most places, the policies or decisions made by outsiders – be it neighbor nations, former ‘colonial powers,’ or current world leaders – have contributed to the problems involved. Some of those decisions having been made decades ago. . . .

For many Americans this refugee crisis is seen as Europe’s problem. Some Americans are willing to go to any lengths (like banning all Muslims from the U.S.) to keep any of these refugees from reaching America. Many other Americans are content to ignore the problem.

Many Americans are equally willing to ignore the fact that there is a refugee problem in the Americas – far closer to home. Violence – be it from drug related ‘wars’, civil power struggles if not actual civil war, or gang violence on a scale we cannot imagine, is causing many people in several Central American countries to flee their homes in search of life and safety. For many of these refugees, that means trying to reach the U.S. Brian J. Hoffman, a lawyer working on the U.S. – Mexican border, points out that many Americans miss label these people using the U.S. media invented term “illegal emigrants”. The media and many political leaders encourage the idea that all people coming here across the border are illegal, and that they are Mexicans seeking American jobs. This perception is largely false.

- Most people crossing the border are not from Mexico. Many are from Honduras, El Salvador, or Guatemala – three of the five countries with the highest murder rates in the world. El Salvador is the size of Massachusetts but there are more that 480 murders a month in that country.
- The people, especially women and children, coming from these countries are actually refugees fleeing this violence at home. Afraid for their lives, they seek asylum in the U.S. International law gives them the right to do this and American law has provision for seeking asylum though the American process is very difficult and cumbersome.
- Since 2014 more and more women and children are coming – some children unaccompanied by an adult; all fleeing violence at home.
- The U.S. government has responded by making things harder and by restarting 3 ‘family detention camps’ (like those used to detain Japanese Americans during World War II) to house women and children. If men come, they cannot stay with their wives and children. They are held in detention facilities more like jails. The ‘family detention camps’ are in remote locations – hard to get to with no internet or cell phone service. Getting access to legal help or contacting family and friends is very difficult. Mail is censored; services provided are inadequate and in some cases life threatening (poor or even negligent medical care for example). The camps are run by private for profit prison companies that provide little or no training to their staff. ‘Guards’ are men. The treatment of the detainees is often harsh. Hoffman and others report, international protocols for dealing with refugees are ignored.
- Hoffman says the women and children detained in family detention camps (also called ‘baby jails’) have not tried to sneak into the country. Most go to a check point or to a border patrol officer with their identity, medical, papers etc. to seek help as soon as they cross the border. Most have family or friends here who will help them so the newcomers will not be a ‘burden’ for the U.S. to ‘support’. However, border officials frequently treat them as criminals and often falsify records. Some try to get refugees to sign immigration questionnaire forms that the refugees did not fill out – forms with the answers pre-printed by the border patrol officers. Some officers fill out forms for infants saying the infant “said” it was not afraid to go home. (Legitimate fear of going home is a prerequisite for seeking asylum.) The border patrol does not always make sure refugees understand their rights or the immigration system paperwork which is in English. Some attempt is made to put things in Spanish, but many refugees do not know English or Spanish. They speak regional languages so even if paperwork is in Spanish, it is of no help.

Not all families who come are detained and there is no clear reason why some are and others are not. For those who are not detained, there are very few courts that handle asylum cases. One is located in Cleveland, but there are only two immigration lawyers in Ohio. Most people appear for their court date if they can. Those who do not appear usually do not speak English and do not understand what they are suppose to do or have no way to get to the court for their hearing since it may mean hundreds of miles of travel.

U.S. law does not provide legal representation for asylum seekers. Unless asylum seekers have money for a lawyer, or one, like Brian Hoffman, volunteers to take their case they must face the system without help. The system is so complicated and, some would say, corrupt that it is rare for an asylum seeker to win their case without a lawyer. Of the 5,000 people Hoffman has worked with, he says, "maybe two have not had a legitimate need for asylum". People who are deported are very likely to end up dead. . .

The media and many politicians have made this issue into a political football that capitalizes on fear. They want Americans to believe the refugees coming into the country are dangerous criminals who want to hurt America. Calling them "illegal immigrants" is part of that. In fact, the states like California that have the most immigrants are benefiting from their presence economically. Those people labeled 'illegal emigrants' are contributing to the U.S. economy through their work, purchasing power, and paying taxes.

The problems in Central American countries that cause people to flee their homes are no less complex than those causing the situation in Europe. Corruption and greed among some Central American government leaders; the drug trade with its' violent greedy gang violence that is fueled by U.S. demand for drugs; and generations of often inept, usually self-serving, and frequently destructive U.S. foreign policies have helped create the current situation. So has corporate greed on both sides of the border. No one player in the refugee crisis bares all the blame or can solve the problems alone. Blaming the victims – especially women and children who take the only option they see open to them, will not help. New ways of working together and trusting each other are required. We must return to what Jesus taught centuries ago: Love your neighbor as you love your self; and we must return to the answer Jesus gave to the question: Who is my neighbor?

Source: Brian J. Hoffman, "Refugees At Our Border: What's Going On." An ACN sponsored presentation at Ashland University February 16, 2016.

## Farwell & God's Speed to Our First District Peace Worker



Paul Moser Martin died April 11, 2016 at the age of 94. Paul was a teacher, pastor, and the first Northern Ohio District Peace Worker.

In 1970 the Northern Ohio District created a Peace Task Team to "send Peace Education Literature yearly to all high school students and to be a resource for local congregations, Bible studies and individuals." The

Team also did workshops and other training in the District. By 1980 the Team felt the need of a staff person to emphasize and facilitate this work and on August 24, 1980 they recommended to Missions & Social Action Commission of the District Board that the staff position of Peacemaker be created. Bruce Rosenberger, Debbie Beer, Wayne Hochstetler, and Gloria Kindy served on the Commission at the time. In 1982 Noel Bradt, Clyde Fry, Wayne Hochstetler, and Penny Cameron (BVS Peace Worker) began work on the process of setting up an Endowment Fund to provide funding for the staff position and for district, congregational, and community education and action programs. In 1983 Paul Martin became the first District Peace Worker. He served in that position from 1983 to 1988. Paul laid a good foundation for the Peacemakers who would follow him,

continuing to be supporting and encouraging of the work following his tenure in the position.

Paul brought a unique background to this ministry. He was born to Presbyterian missionary parents in Brazil on October 28, 1921 and never tired of telling stories of growing up there. His Brazilian flag and 20 foot plus long anaconda snake skin made many trips to all kinds of presentations about his birth country. His Brazilian bird traps made frequent appearances at the District Peace Auction, an annual event at District Conference after 1988 to support the Peace Endowment Fund. One of the delights of Paul's later years was taking his family to Brazil to visit the home of his youth. Paul came to the U.S. to go to school, graduating from Bluffton College (General Conference Mennonite school) in 1948. He got his masters degree and taught 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade at Northwood Elementary school for 33 years. He was a much loved teacher who had a special way with children. His caring for them in the classroom and beyond was a life long vocation. Long after his retirement from teaching he continued to tutor children in the local schools and help children learn to plant and tend gardens.

Following his retirement from teaching, Paul and his wife Helen were licensed and then ordained into the ministry May 16, 1982 in the Church of the Brethren from the Lakewood Congregation. They were co-pastors at the Oak Grove Ohio, Blissfield, Indiana, and Richland Ohio congregations. They later also served an interim pastors twice for the First Church of the Brethren in Mansfield, Ohio.

Paul's witness for peace began in his youth. During World War II, Paul was a conscientious objector. He did alternative service in forestry camps in the west where he engaged in dangerous back-breaking manual labor. Then, following the war, he served as a Seagoing Cowboy, helping take cows and horses to Europe to help replace the livestock lost during the war. Paul's commitment to peace was strong and was communicated by his manner of living and relating to people. His students, parishioners, and colleagues report that Paul was never critical or judgmental. He was always encouraging and uplifting to those around him. Paul was known as a peaceful, gentle, spirit filled man who loved life and people. He and Helen always had an extra bed for a weary traveler and offered a helping hand to those in need.

Paul is survived by his wife of 64 years Helen (Knoke) Martin and four children Bonnie (Robinson) Taylor, Linda (Jim) Lynch, Neal (Beth) Martin, and Steve (Lori) Martin. Paul chose to be of service after death as well by donating his body to the Toledo College of Medicine. The family asked that in lieu of flowers, donations go the Habitat For Humanity in Paul's name.

### Little Shooters

- In 2015, 278 children under 18 unintentionally shot themselves or someone else. It has already happened 95 times in 2016.
  - These shooters are most likely to be 3-year-olds.
  - A preschooler shoots them self or someone else about twice a week.
- Only 27 states hold adults responsible for letting children have unsupervised access to guns. Only Massachusetts requires gun owners to store guns in a locked place. Most states leave gun safety to gun owners. In all states, children are still getting access to guns and shooting themselves or others. . .

Jack Healy, Julie Bosman, Alan Blinder, Julie Turkewitz. "The Smallest Fingers On the Trigger". *The New York Times*. May 5, 2016. Peter Holley. "Their 6-year-old Was Killed With A Neighbor's Gun. A Court Just Decided How Much His Life Was Worth". *The Washington Post*. April 22, 2016.

## Peacemaking Forerunners



### Gladdys Muir Launched the World's First Undergraduate Peace Studies Program

Gladdys Esther Muir was born on March 5, 1895 in McPherson, Kansas to Freeman I. and Mary Amanda Moherman Muir. She attended McPherson College, graduating in 1915. She then studied at the University of California at Berkeley, the University of Edinburgh, the Geneva School of International Studies, the University of California at Los Angeles, and the Pendle Hill center (Society of Friends). She was an outstanding teacher at La Verne College (now University) and Manchester College (now University) for more than 45 years. In 1947 Muir proposed that programs in international conflict be established at all the Brethren-related colleges. In 1948 she founded the Peace Studies Institute at Manchester College which she led for 11 years. It was the first program in the world in which students could graduate with an academic major in peace studies. This program has continued for nearly 70 years. The Manchester program was a model for many such programs at other schools in the 1960s. Muir wrote about the history of the Brethren on the Pacific Coast and about La Verne College as well as about peace. She was loved by her students and kept in touch with thousands of them from around the world through a newsletter. The children's book: *Gladdys Makes Peace* was written by Jan Hogan and published by Brethren Press in 1985 to encourage new generations of peacemakers. January 15, 2016 Manchester University announced they reached their \$1.5 million funding goal and now have the endowed Gladdys Muir Professorship in Peace Studies.

Sources: *Manchester Magazine*. "MU Adds Muir Professorship in Peace Studies". vol. 110:1, Spring 2016, p6; *Brethren Encyclopedia*. "Muir, Gladdys Esther. p893.

### News For Young People of Conscience

There are competing pieces of legislation in the House of Representatives. One is an amendment to the House Armed Services Committee attached to the military spending authorization bill. It would require that women register for the draft along with men. At the same time, the chair of the House Armed Services Committee, who voted for this amendment, has asked the Department of Defense to study the effects of the opposite action – abolishing draft registration all together.

The other legislation: House Bill HR 4523, would repeal the Military Selective Service Act thus ending registration requirements for everyone and require that "a person may not be denied a right, privilege, benefit, or employment position under federal law for having refused or failed to register before the repeal." This bill would end draft registration and the life-long penalties the current system imposes on people whose religious or moral beliefs will not allow them to participate in killing and war in any way including registering with Selective Service.

The amendment would subject women to the same challenges of conscience now faced only by men, including the penalties imposed – no student loans, no government jobs, etc. – for those who cannot in good conscious register. The other (House Bill HR 4523) would eliminate Registration and the penalties for not doing so. Under the current system (which would include women if the amendment passes), there is no way for young people to register their objection

to participation in war until a draft is actually begun. At that point, individuals would have only a couple weeks (or less) to make their case and seek conscientious objector (CO) status. Young men and women who would seek CO status have been encouraged to document their beliefs and have them on file at home and with the church so they will be prepared if a draft is begun.

The Center on Conscience and War (CCW) says these bills will take time to go through the House and then must go through the Senate before either would become law. More information may be found in a *Messenger* article by CCW staffers Bill Galvin and Maria Santelli. The article is available at:

<http://www.brethren.org/messenger/articles/2016/abolishdraftregistration.html>. A second article on the history to resistance to the draft was published by *US News and World Report*. It may be found at: [www.usnews.com/news/articles/2016-05-03/gender-neutral-draft-registration-would-creat-millions-of-female-felons](http://www.usnews.com/news/articles/2016-05-03/gender-neutral-draft-registration-would-creat-millions-of-female-felons).

### What Are 2016 Politics Doing to Our Children?

The Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) has just released a study which indicates that the 2016 political campaign "is having a profoundly negative effect on children and classrooms." "It's producing an alarming level of fear and anxiety among children of color and inflaming racial and ethnic tensions in the classroom. Many students worry about being deported. Other students have been emboldened by the divisive, often juvenile rhetoric in the campaign. Teachers have noted an increase in bullying, harassment and intimidation of student whose races, religions or nationalities have been the verbal targets of candidates on the campaign trail."

The study surveyed 2,000 K-12 teachers and "did not identify any candidates." Even so, more than 1,000 of the 5,000 comments mentioned Donald Trump. Fewer than 200 comments mentioned any of the other candidates.

The study says, "The gains made by years of anti-bullying work in schools have been rolled back in a few short months. Teachers report students have been 'emboldened' to use slurs, engage in name-calling and make inflammatory statements toward each other. When confronted, students point to the candidates and claim they are 'just saying what everyone is thinking.' Kids use the names of candidates as pejoratives to taunt each other." Source: Michael Winshp. "This Election's Teaching Our Kids Bad Habits". *Common Dreams*. 4-21-2016. (Licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 License)

## Worship Resources

### Peace Requires Action

In my mind's eye, I see a world where all people have enough to eat, a comfortable place to call home, meaningful work, a good education and health care, dignity, love, and a healthy family; where everyone feels safe, is free of the threat of violence, actively cares for those around them, and has an opportunity to find joy in living.

I also see an earth with all its creatures that is cared for, respected, and protected as the creation and dwelling place of the Lord should be.

I know that this will happen only when we all learn to love as God loves, surrender selfishness and put others first, reject violence and hate, and learn to forgive as Christ taught us.

O Lord, use me to help bring these things about. Remind me that love, dignity, respect, caring, and forgiveness are action words not just platitudes!

## Bring Peace

Let Peace begin with Me.

Let me see all the world's people as  
brothers and sisters  
created in your image just as I  
see myself.

Let me remember You hold all  
of us in Your hands;  
love us all as Your children;  
expect us to love each other  
and expect us to care for each other  
as You care for each of us.

Remind me that the greatest gift You gave us to share is  
Love; and the second is Forgiveness.



## Hard Questions

Lord, it is easy to get comfortable with the status quo – to let 'me and mine' become the center of the universe and forget that there is a world out there which I am both responsible for and dependent on. . .

Lord, it is easy to look only at the people I can see; the ones who live next door, down the street, or in 'my town' when I feel the calling to serve and offer help to those in need. . .

Lord it is easy, when a disaster or tragedy occurs, to lament and pray and perhaps send a few dollars to help when the media is full of the story and the images of pain and suffering are fresh. . .

It is much harder to "get woke" – to understand that if the status-quo is comfortable for me, someone else's pain and suffering is probably paying for my comfort and I am responsible for that pain and suffering – and for making changes to end it.

It is much harder to remember that helping those in need I can see is great because the needs are real and help is needed, yet also understand that helping only the needy in my own backyard can be selfish because I may be helping them because I want to control my help and maybe even those I help. . .

It is much harder to remember that people are still suffering and in need of support, love, and help days, weeks, years after a disaster or tragedy – just as I would be in their place. "Moving On" as the media does to the next big story is a luxury available only to those who view the situation from afar. Moving on can be a selfish act for "my" comfort only.

God calls me to love and care about and for people – all people. All people are God's people and precious in the eyes of their Creator. All people have the same possibilities and needs.

Lord, remind me I am one of many and every person is special in your sight. Forgive me when I forget that. Remind me to check my motives. Help me to see through your eyes, and act as you would have me act.

## Make Prayers for peace part of your worship Remember in prayer:

1. **Bangladesh** – brutal attacks by Islamist militants on minority groups including non-Muslims and intellectuals are rising
2. **South Sudan:** has the worst human rights records in the world – women & children burned alive; women & girls raped; parents forced to watch children gang raped; children forced to watch parents killed; children taken from families as 'payment' by soldiers; their government is responsible for most of this

3. **People affected by gun violence.**
4. **People affected by gun negligence** – at least 278 children under 18 unintentionally shot themselves or someone else in 2015; 95 such cases already in 2016. Many shooters are toddlers. . .
5. **Mothers & children in prison** – more than 1,000 mothers & their children (infants, toddlers, teens) fleeing violence in their home countries are held in U.S. prisons. More unaccompanied children are seeking safety now than when the story broke in May 2015.
6. **Nigeria:** for the Chibok school girls missing 2 years as of April 14, 2016; EYN, all those affected by the violence. Remember the 2 girls who have been rescued. Remember their families and communities.
7. **Republic of Congo** – where war continues
8. **People facing torture.**
9. **Those in prison** because of their beliefs.
10. **Those facing execution** – & those willing to execute because they put revenge above redemption & forgiveness
11. **Ukraine** – where political violence continues.
12. **All people in this world who live with war.**
13. **Yemen** & other places where the U.S. regularly launches drone attacks – often hitting civilians.
14. **People Displaced** because of war or political unrest.
15. **Veterans'** living with their part in war. 18 U.S. Iraq/Afghanistan veterans commit suicide every day. (US Veterans Affairs statistics)
16. All those whose lives are dominated by **fear**.
17. People **working for peace** locally and in the world.
18. Those who **do not know the peace of God** in their lives and so have lost sight of hope and joy.
19. **Girls & Women** facing abuse and violence every day
20. **Child Soldiers**
21. **Community – Police issues**, that communities and police will work together respectfully with each other for the common good.
22. **Those now waging war by remote control** – those who push buttons from far away that hurt or killed men, women, children
23. **Syrian refugee crises** – 220,000 Syrians fled to Europe in October 2015 – the same number who came in all of 2014. More refugees are attempting to reach Europe everyday
24. **Nepal** – one year after the earth quake there, people are still living in tents and little rebuilding has begun
25. **People living with the effects of exposure to radiation** – on the battlefield (the U.S. and NATO nations use depleted uranium in shell casings fired from tanks and planes; when the shells explode, they release radiation) and following nuclear testing or disasters (U.S., Russian, North Korea, testing; Chernobyl 30 years ago April 26<sup>th</sup>; Fukushima 5 years ago March 11 still affecting Japan and the U.S. West coast)

When any religion turns to violence what it believes really does not matter, for violence is anti-human and anti-divine.

Clyde C. Fry 2003



See specific articles for related resource information.



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