



# 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.**

Volume 11:2

Winter 2018

## Thousands Are Now In Limbo

In the past the U.S. government has granted Temporary Protected Status (TPS) to thousands of people. For some TPS is granted because they are fleeing danger at home from war or political unrest. Others were granted TPS because their homes and home countries were destroyed by a natural disaster. 60,000 people from Haiti were granted TPS after the massive earthquake in 2010. For most of the Haitians, there is no 'home' to go back to, no jobs available and no family left in Haiti to provide help with housing or anything else if they return to the island. The Haitians who came to the U.S. have now been here for eight years. They have made homes, found work, had children, and made new lives here. Even so, the Trump administration has rescinded TPS protection for all these people from Haiti effective in July 2019.

"The situation is very scary for our people because they don't know what really is going to happen," says Ilexene Alphonse, interim pastor of Eglise des Freres Haitiens in Miami, Fla., a Church of the Brethren congregation. "Is it time for them to get out of the country? They are in limbo. It is heartbreaking." Some 15 families have TPS status in Alphonse's congregation of 198 families--representing about a twelfth of the congregation--but he has a feeling there are more he does not know about. "Some of them don't really want to talk about it," he says. "We are fortunate," he adds. "Smaller churches will be having more problems." He thinks smaller Haitian American churches will have higher percentages of TPS holders.

Along with having no place to go or work to go back to, the main concern is for their children. How can parents take their children to Haiti under these conditions? The alternative is equally impossible. How can they leave their children who are U.S. citizens, here?

The Haitians are not the only people affected. An estimated 200,000 people from El Salvador and 5,000 from Nicaragua and 86,000 from Honduras are also affected. All have been told their TPS will end on various dates between now and December 2019. Many of them also do not have a home to go back to.

"We need prayer," Pastor Alphonse responds, when asked what he would like to tell the wider church. In light of President Trump's comments about Haiti and African

nations, among others, he concludes that "we can't rely on the government for anything." Their dependence is solely upon God, and the grace received through Christ.

800,000 children, now young people, who fall under the provisions of the Dream Act – the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program also remain in limbo since Trump rescinded the Dream Act.

Source: Cheryl Brumbaugh-Cayford. Ending of temporary protected status affects Haitian Brethren and their churches. *Newsline*. 1-13-2018

### ***A National Tragedy:***

Since Columbine in 1999 150,000 students in 170 schools have experienced a school shooting.

The Washington Post



## Remember Nigeria!

### **Update**

Markus Gamache, staff liaison for Ekklesiyar Yan'uwa a Nigeria (EYN, the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria) informs us that: "*The report of the Nigerian government to the outside world is that Boko Haram have been defeated. But the government is still losing soldiers, losing billions of Naira for security, and also losing lives. The internal situation is clearly different from the government report.*" There is progress. Non-government agencies are distributing relief aid and creating jobs for youth. Some people have been able to return home and rebuild. However, attacks by Boko Haram continue. In some places, like Madagali, there are still daily attacks. Other places, like the Biu market, have been considered secure until an unexpected attack occurs. There are also other groups in addition to Boko Haram which are using violence to achieve their goals. Much of the violence is against Christians but not all of it. Some of the violence is between ethnic groups and has long standing roots. (There are 371 ethnic groups in Nigeria). There are attempts at dialog to end such violence and some progress has been made. However, the Nigerian government is weak and communication is not good in the country. Some people in the south are not even aware of what has been happening in the north. Poverty and hopelessness are only adding to

the problems. Many children are at risk of becoming pawns in the violence. Markus Gamache says: *“Humanly it is hopeless. People have waited too long for our savior to come. It is almost becoming unbearable, waiting on the Lord. Only His own power and His miracle can change the situation. God please come and save us before the wicked ones convert your dear children forcefully.”* *“We have to prepare for more prayers and not lose hope. What kind of preparedness do I need, being part of the region? God have mercy.”*

Please continue your prayers and your support for the people of Nigeria!

Source: Markus Gamache. “Waiting on the Lord: A Reflection From Nigeria”. Church of the Brethren *Newsline* 12-17-2017.

### Dangerous Times

We are in a dangerous time but not for the reasons many people think. Many Americans think there is ‘danger out there somewhere’ so we must ‘circle the wagons’ and protect ourselves from ‘them’. There are several definitions of ‘them’, but two are dominant. 1) ‘them’ is anyone who is not like ‘us’ – that is anyone who does not look like or think like ‘us’. 2) ‘them’ is anyone who was not born here. Too many Americans are falling into the trap of thinking for safety sake, everyone from ‘outside’ must be kept out and ‘me and mine’ are the only thing that matters. Many Americans are going so far as to look no further than the present and are giving no thought to the future, even of ‘me and mine’. Decisions that may look good for me and mine today are considered good even if the consequences down the road will be devastating. People have a knack for looking back to the ‘good old days’ and doing two things: seeing only what they want to see and learning nothing from past mistakes. This creates a false reality which enables outside blaming for all problems and a rosy image of self as virtuous, deserving, and always right. In this is real danger – blaming all problems on the ‘them’ from outside and taking no responsibility for the consequences of the actions of ‘me and mine’ will be devastating for the future of everyone. Combine this with the self-serving myth that ‘me and mine’ can go it alone and a recipe for disaster is created. Throw in a willingness to look out for number one any way possible and at any cost and the future holds only destruction. This has been demonstrated in the past all too often. People must take off the rose-colored glasses of uncritical nostalgia or even blatant propaganda and also see the past as a teacher not a strait jacket. The past is the foundation for the present and the future whether people want it to be or not. The key is how that foundation is interpreted. The past cannot be changed, but for good or for ill, how people see and remember it can.

## Worship Resources

### Make Prayers for Peace Part of Your Worship

#### Remember in prayer:

1. **Victims of gun violence** – especially children. Since Columbine in 1999 150,000 students in 170 schools have experienced a school shooting.
2. **World leaders willing to risk the use of nuclear weapons** to save face, project personal power, advance their self-interest, to show off, just because they can. . .
3. **People recovering from natural disasters** – hurricanes, earth quakes, fires, extreme cold . . . especially those who are not getting the basic help they need including Porto Rico
4. **Yemen, Niger, & elsewhere**; where the U.S. is involved in often forgotten wars in which civilians are victims every day.
5. **All people in this world who live with war.**
6. **People facing torture.**
7. People trying to put their lives & their countries back together after living through **genocide or ‘ethnic cleansing’** events. Myanmar, & Rwanda are only two of many such places.
8. **People affected by gun violence.**
9. **South Sudan:** The country with the world’s worst human rights record. Large numbers of people continue to flee to Uganda to escape violence there. They are also facing famine.
10. **Nigeria:** The 106 Chibok girls & more than 2,000 other women & children still missing, EYN, all those affected by the continuing violence & famine. Boko Haram recently released a picture reported to be of some of the Chibok girls who have “chosen to stay” with them. The truth of this is not confirmed. Pray for all those involved.
11. **Democratic Republic of Congo** where violence continues.
12. **Those in prison** because of their beliefs.
13. All those whose lives are dominated by **fear**.
14. **Child Soldiers**
15. **Bangladesh** – brutal attacks by Islamist militants on minority groups including non-Muslims and intellectuals are rising.
16. **Those facing execution** – & those willing to execute because they put revenge above redemption & forgiveness
17. **People affected by gun negligence** – especially 525 child shooters in 2016. Many of these shooters are toddlers. . .
18. **People Displaced** because of war or political unrest including the people of **Syria, Myanmar, Democratic**

## Republic of Congo, countries in the Middle East, and South America

19. People **working for peace** locally and in the world.
20. Those who **don't know God's peace** & have lost hope & joy.
21. **Veterans' living with their part in war. 18 U.S. Iraq/Afghanistan veterans commit suicide every day.** (US Veterans Affairs statistics)
22. **Girls & Women** facing abuse and violence every day
23. **Women** who face sexual abuse in the workplace.
24. **People facing Deportation** –women, children, & men are frequently pulled from their homes & work places, with little due process. Some children come home from school to find parents gone without warning. . .
25. **800,000 children, now young people**, who fall under the provisions of the Dream Act – the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program
26. **Those now waging war by remote control** – they push buttons from far away that hurt or kill men, women, children

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### Forgive Our Selfishness

Lord, we are letting our fears; desires, needs, and selfishness get the better of us. When we refuse to look much beyond the end of our own noses, we lose site of the infinite possibilities and responsibilities we are all called to as your children. We stop being the creative, loving, generous people you created and become instead destructive, mean, and greedy. We live only for ourselves, think only of today, and pay little heed to what our choices mean for the world around us or for the hurt we cause. Then we blame the inevitable mess that results on everyone but the one responsible – ourselves. Forgive us and help us return to you so we can become the creative, loving, generous people you created again. Amen

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### Judging the Nations

In Matthew 25:31-46 Jesus speaks of those who will inherit the kingdom of God as being those who care for people in need because in doing so, they are actually caring for Jesus himself. At the same time, Jesus makes it plain that the people who do not care for others in need will be sent away from Jesus and the kingdom of God.

Many of us are good at helping those in need that we can see. We are also pretty good at applying band aids – that is handing out food and clothes, and sending out emergency aid when disaster strikes. All these acts are important and necessary examples of showing the love of Christ in a needy world. However, there is still a difference between giving a cup of milk or a cow. When it comes to the choices

needed to make lasting changes that will help people in the long run, especially if our lives and pocketbooks are effected, we are not always so good at seeing Jesus in the people who need our help. We forget that Jesus came for everyone and offers help to everyone – not based on merit as we are so tempted to do but based on their personhood (Matthew 5:43-48). We get so caught up in seeing people for what they do or what they 'contribute' as a measure of what they are worth that it is easy to forget that the value of every person in God's eyes is that they are his children important enough to be created in his own image! Dear Lord forgive us when we forget that!

### Did You Know

On February 15, 2018 the U.S. House passed a bill that guts the American's With Disabilities Act there by removing many key protections of the rights of disabled Americans. A number of disabled people trying to peacefully protest the bill in the house gallery were arrested. The house canceled a moment of silence to remember the Florida school shooting victims due to the protests and their desire to hold the vote on passing this bill. It now goes to the Senate.

February 15, 2018 was also the one-year anniversary of the U.S. Congress passing legislation that allows mentally ill people to purchase guns. . .

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## Peacemaking Remembrance Dates!



**January 22, 1939.** The atom was first split at Cambridge University making atomic bombs possible.

**January 27.** International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust.

**February 6.** Franklin D. Roosevelt authorized the Selective Service System to establish Civilian Public Service. This program, run by the Peace Churches, made provision for Conscientious objectors to serve people instead of participating in killing during WWII.

**February 19.** On this day in 1942 Norwegian teachers began successful nonviolent resistance to Nazification of their schools.

**February 28, 1989.** The movement to Stop All Nuclear Testing was founded in Nevada, U.S. and Semipalatinsk, USSR.

**March 1.** This is Nuclear Free & Independent Pacific Day also called Bikini Day. It marks the anniversary of the U.S. Bravo nuclear bomb detonation at Bikini Atoll in 1954. The explosion caused a crater 200 feet deep & a

mile across. The fallout caused widespread contamination in the Pacific.

**March 10, 1987.** The United Nations recognized conscientious objection as a human right.

**March 20.** On this day in 1983, 150,000 peace rallies were held in Australia.

**March 22.** On this day in 1980, 30,000 people marched in Washington, D.C., against draft registration.

**March 24.** International Day for the Right to the Truth concerning Gross Human Rights Violations and for the Dignity of Victims.

**March 25.** This in the International Day of Remembrance of the victims of Slavery & the Transatlantic Slave Trade.



## Going to the Garden



Just now in the midst of winter cold - in many cases record cold – it is not too soon to start thinking about this spring's gardening! Why? Because for more and more Brethren, growing gardens as part of their working for peace!

The Going to the Garden initiative “seeks to address hunger and other issues of food-related justice. We hope to be able to effectively address food insecurity locally through support for community gardens while also encouraging education and action on related broader problems like environmental degradation, poverty, and farm worker justice. Going to the Garden should serve as a point of education regarding local and larger food systems and policies as well as a point for theological reflection and strengthening congregations.



Going to the Garden began as a joint grant-giving initiative between the [Global Food Initiative](#) (GFI) and the [Office of Public Witness](#) (OPW), which sought to address local food insecurity by providing micro-grants to congregations that allow them to create or supplement a community garden.”

There are many places in America where people do not have access to the fresh fruits and vegetables people need to eat healthy meals. In many cities there is no grocery store or access to transportation to get to one. In these food deserts fast food is often plentiful as are the health

problems associated with a steady diet of it. A community garden allows people to eat better. It is also a great way to build community and teach the skills needed to care for the earth as well as each other. The goal is that local garden projects serve as a model for addressing food insecurity and inspiration for a theology of church and community engagement, nutrition education, environmental stewardship, land renewal, and food policy.

There are congregations in our District that have community gardens or use farm land to support area food banks. **Share your stories with us!** Contact Linda Fry using the contact information on page 4.

Resources for getting started and news about projects that are underway may be found at:

<http://www.brethren.org/publicwitness/going-to-the-garden-resources.html>

## Children's Disaster Services Training



A CDS volunteer caring for children after the southern California wildfires in 2017.

Children's Disaster Services (CDS) works with the Red Cross to provide care for children in the aftermath of a disaster whether it is natural or human caused. As parents fill out paperwork, talk to

FEMA, work with insurance companies, find housing, and try to do all the things they must do after a disaster to get on with their lives, CDS provides a safe place and compassionate childcare for the children. CDS is the only Red Cross recognized group that offers the training needed for childcare volunteers who provide this service. If you feel called to this ministry, several training sessions will be offered this spring around the country. Two sessions will be offered in California and one will be **offered in Ohio at the Trotwood Church of the Brethren April 20-21**. For more information and to register contact Laura Phillips at 937-837-3389, 937-371-1668, or [LPGardenlady@aol.com](mailto:LPGardenlady@aol.com).



**Resource List**

See specific articles for related resource information.



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