

# 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 12:2

Winter 2019

Take a  
Moment to  
Pray for  
Peace!



## What is Your Ministry?

All of us are called into ministry when we accept the invitation from Jesus to follow him. That is what we mean when we speak of the priesthood of all believers. Each of us is a unique person and each of us has a unique calling from God. One of the gifts that God has given his people, that we too often forget about, is this wealth of possibilities! Just think of it. No one person can do everything, know everything, or solve every problem that arises, but each one of us is only a handful of people away from someone who can help with the thing that is stumping us! If we do not know someone who can help, someone we know, or someone they know, does. That is part of the reason Jesus called us to follow him, not on our own, but as part of a community of faith. A community is like a body that relies on each part and works together for the good of all (I Corinthians 12:12-31). Humans are tempted to put limits on community. We often try to associate only with people like ourselves and exclude those who are different or do not see the world just as we do. Our society glorifies the individual and being 'self-made' even though no one really gets anywhere entirely on their own. When we fall into the trap of ignoring or stifling the possibilities God has given us in other people, we suffer, other people suffer, and the world is a less friendly, less creative, and a more challenging place. When we hide our own gifts or hoard them, we do not become the gifted people God created us to be. What ministry is God calling you to develop and celebrate in yourself? What ministries is God calling you to help call forth and celebrate in the people around you? Answer the call to unleash all these God given possibilities!

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## A Government Commission Is Considering Changes to Selective Service

Victoria Bateman reports in *Newsline* that the Church of the Brethren Office of Peacebuilding

and Policy attended a press conference of the National Commission on Military, National, and Public Service held at the Newseum in Washington, D.C., on Jan. 23.



This commission is tasked with exploring national attitudes toward military and volunteer service, and potentially recommending changes to the Selective Service system.

Several faith-based organizations submitted public comments to the commission, and the Office of Peacebuilding and Policy continues to monitor how the commission engages with the issue of religious freedom and conscientious objection in their work.

The commission was created in response to the question of whether or not women should be required to register with Selective Service. In addition to expanding the number of Americans who are required to register in the event of a military draft, the commission is considering changes that are of concern to the Church of the Brethren and other peace churches, including increasing the number of high school students who take a version of the military entrance exam and making some type of military or civilian service mandatory for all Americans.

If you would like to share your perspective on the Selective Service with the commission, public comments may be submitted at [www.inspire2serve.gov](http://www.inspire2serve.gov)

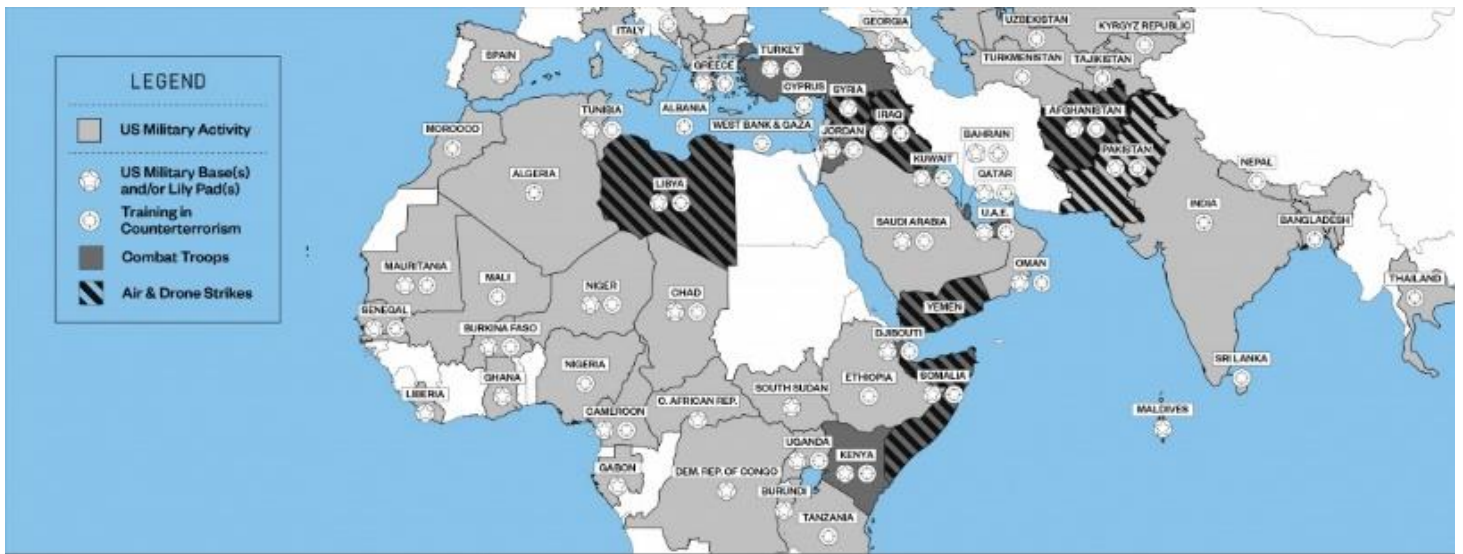
A video of the panels is at:

[www.facebook.com/Inspire2ServeUS/videos/755683714800714](https://www.facebook.com/Inspire2ServeUS/videos/755683714800714)  
Conscientious objection is discussed starting at minute 58:50.

There are public meetings and hearings taking place regularly, and interested Brethren can find an updated listing at:

[www.inspire2serve.gov/content/events](http://www.inspire2serve.gov/content/events).

Source: Church of the Brethren Newsline January 23, 2019. Victoria Bateman is a Brethren Volunteer Service worker at the Church of the Brethren Office of Peacebuilding and Policy in Washington, D.C. For more about this ministry go to [www.brethren.org/peacebuilding](http://www.brethren.org/peacebuilding).



The map and information are provided by the prestigious *Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs* at Brown University. Brown is a private Ivy-League research university in Providence, Rhode Island, founded in 1764. It is the seventh-oldest institution of higher education in the United States and one of the nine Colonial Colleges established before the American Revolution still in existence.

## Fighting World War III; The Unending War

by Clyde C. Fry

In September 2014, the Pope visited the largest military cemetery in Italy. He looked at what appeared to be the endless rows of graves with sorrow and compassion. Then he warned that we are filling thousands of new graves around the world, right now, because the fighting continues in what he called a *“piecemeal World War III.”* In the map at the top of the page we have a sample of what he means. We, alone, are involved in over 80 countries where we have 40 military bases, 65 counterterrorism training units, 26 military “exercises.” 14 areas in which troops are in combat, and 7 known regular air and drone strikes areas. (*Smithsonian* 1-2019)

Today’s fighting is a “world war,” the likes of which we have never seen before. These are undeclared wars, many of them are civil wars and tribal conflicts, that wrap themselves in the false garments of theology or the irrationalities of certain political theories. They are ripe with racial and religious intolerance, infuriated by lopsided wealth distribution systems, and hierarchical competitions. The smaller groups are eclipsed by the military strength of larger nations with the result that they depend upon the tactic of terrorism to create havoc on their enemies. They are often assisted by nations whose self-interests profit by the mayhem their terror causes.

Ever since the horror of the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor and the more recent 9-11 terrorist attack in New York, we have been obsessed with security and military readiness. As a result, the United States has built a **permanent security-war economy** with the establishment of a *Security-Military-Industrial Complex (SMIC)* that is busy creating the weapons, devices, delivery systems, and support systems for fighting wars. Its structures and rationalizations are carefully woven into our economic, political, social, and religious fabric. SMIC does business in every state in the union, creating thousands of jobs that provide a living for hundreds of families.

It is an unfortunate truth that the war and security industries in our nation **depend upon the continuation of violence** in international and personal affairs in order to stay in business. The employment they create and the goods and services they produce must be **purchased and used**, or the jobs they provide and the business they

conduct will end. It’s that simple. Like any business they depend upon sales and consumption. Like any business they work to develop new and improved products and seek growth in both their production and profits. They work diligently to see to it that their potential clients have unfettered, easy access to their products. Although they may be oblivious to the fact, the war/security industries have a **vested interest in the continuation of fear and violence** because fear and violence create the conditions under which their products are desired, needed, and purchased.

In 2019 we will spend over one trillion dollars in our federal military and security budgets while our infrastructure continues to crumble and our social agendas shrink. This money, in large part, does not come from income, but from borrowing. Federal income does not cover its expenses. To further complicate the matter, the Congress rewards its wealthy cronies with tax cuts that further reduce federal income and increase borrowing, escalating the national debt burden and pushing the budget/income doomsday further down the road. At this writing the *National Debt Clock* lists our current debt at **\$21,974,095,705,790.55** (Check the clock for a minute-by-minute update). In the past two years alone, we have added an unprecedented two trillion more dollars to our national debt!

Not only do we have a war economy, we also have an **acceptance of the idea of inevitable violence and war**. Most people assume that humans have always been warriors who used violence as a social tool. During the hunter/gather stage of human history there is no evidence of fortifications or military tools. It appears to have been a time of social cohesion. It is only when the ancients developed agriculture and private ownership that social violence raises its ugly head. **We must, therefore, challenge the assumption that violence is natural and inevitable in human conduct** if we are to save ourselves. We must reassess our attitude toward private ownership so that we can manage greed and guarantee justice.

Many in our society have armed themselves in the obscure hope of self-protection and/or heroic action in the event of a violent act of the kind that we have become so accustomed to in our schools, workplaces, social events, and shopping places. This scourge will not stop until we denounce our fears with faith and realign our priorities to focus on the **common good**.



# Remember Nigeria!

## Update

Ekklesiyar Yan'uwa a Nigeria (EYN, the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria) has announced it "continues establishing new congregations in the face of rebuilding and coping" in the wake of violence over the past eight years. The EYN Leadership Team recently granted "certificates of autonomy" to the Kofare congregation, in Jimeta Yola, and Tsamiya, in Garkida (EYN's birthplace), both in Adawama State. EYN's Theological Education by Extension program also recently awarded diplomas to 51 new graduates. US representatives Galen and Doris Heckman attended.

Newsline. October 19, 2018

## Peace Education Opportunities



### Christian Citizenship Seminar

April 27 – May 2, 2019

Christian Citizenship Seminar (CCS) provides 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.

This year's Christian Citizenship Seminar will focus on innovative approaches to resolving conflict and preventing civilian harm.

All high school youth and their adult advisors are eligible to attend the seminar. Churches are strongly encouraged to send an advisor with their youth, even if only one or two youth attend. Churches are required to send one advisor for every four youth.

Registration is limited to the first 60 participants. Registration opens 12/3 at 12 p.m. central time



**Yemen** – The U.S. has been waging a drone war in Yemen for 16 years. There were 154 drone strikes in Yemen during the Obama

administration (8-years) and 176 already in 2 years under Trump (as of November 2018). In 2018 alone a third of the deaths caused by drone attacks were civilians. Drone attacks are carried out by U.S. personnel who are in the U.S. based on 'intelligence' that is not always reliable and from their own guesses about what they think they see on drone footage. E.g. a high school

teen was targeted on his way home from buying vegetables because he was a young male on a motorcycle. . . (Maggie Michael & Maad al-Zikry. Associated Press. 11-14-2018)

The U.S. backed economic blockade of Yemen has contributed to the near total collapse of the economy there. The main employer in Yemen was the government, but the government has simply stopped paying people. Two thirds of the population cannot feed themselves. People from Somalia continue to flee to Yemen to escape the horrific situation in Somalia. The people of Yemen, however, have nowhere to go. Most of their land border is with Saudi Arabia which is the country attacking them. Most of the rest of their border is the sea which is infested by modern day pirates. U.N.C.F. reports that in Yemen, 10,000 people have died, and a child dies every 10 minutes of preventable illness as a result of the U.S. backed war Saudi Arabia is waging there. The country is also facing what could be the worst famine the world has seen in 100 years because of this war. "Half of the war-torn country's population - 14 million people - are on the brink of famine and an estimated 85,000 children may have died from malnutrition (BBC)." The UN helped bring a truce in the city of Hudaydah in December and UN truce monitors are now beginning their work, despite US efforts to weaken language about humanitarian issues in the UN resolution on the truce (Reuters World News 12-21-18).

**Haiti** – On October 6 a 5.9-magnitude earthquake struck off the northwest coast. 427 people were injured and at least 18 people died. It was Haiti's strongest earthquake since 2010. The U.N. reports damage to homes and other structures along the coast. The Eglises des Freres d'Haiti (Church of the Brethren of Haiti) has a congregation in St. Louis du Nord impacted by the earthquake. Many members were injured and lost their homes. The Brethren are at work helping after this new disaster and continue helping with the recovery from hurricane Matthew.

## Worship Resources

### Make Praying for Peace Part of Your Worship

Remember in prayer:

1. **On-going mis-treatment of children & parents by immigration authorities at the U.S. border.** Two young children have now died in US custody at the border.



2. **Remember immigrants in this country – including many in Ohio** who are living in fear and being denied the right to earn a living and support their families because of the current climate of intolerance. Remember also the businesses unable to get the workers they need because immigrant workers, who want to work and will take jobs no one else wants, are not allowed to work. . .
3. **Those facing discrimination** – including a New Jersey high school student who had to endure having his dreadlocks chopped off publicly without cause in order to participate in a wrestling match. Pray for all those who must endure such cruel discrimination.
4. **The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)** – health workers are trying to end an Ebola outbreak. More than 300 people have died and there are at least 542 cases. War and the movement of refugees in the area may spread the disease further. This is the second deadliest outbreak ever (CNN 12-19-18). Also in the DRC they held presidential and parliamentary elections on Dec. 30, 2018. The DRC's National Electoral Commission announced the election of opposition candidate Felix Tshisekedi as president. Pray that the transition will be peaceful. The DRC has not had a peaceful transition of power following an election since the DRC's independence in 1960.
5. **People in Syria** live with constant warfare. Much of the country is in rubble with no water, sewer, electricity, etc.
6. **The victims of gun violence and for those willing to commit such senseless acts.** The TV program 60 Minutes reported in November that the incidents of mass shootings and other shootings where military high velocity ammunition is used, have become so common that emergency medical personnel around the country are regularly carrying the kinds of tourniquets, and other equipment to stop bleeding once only needed on the battle field. There are people around the country, including school children who feel they need, and are being given, special training called 'stop the bleed' to deal with the devastating damage inflicted by this ammunition. High velocity ammunition is designed to do as much damage as possible. "It's like a bomb going off inside the body." Pray for school children who feel the need to carry a 'stop the bleed', kit with their school books. . . Pray for everyone who lives with the fear that makes this action feel necessary.
7. **Pray for people forced to flee their homes in this hemisphere.** 2.3 to 4 million Venezuelans have fled government corruption which turned their once flourishing country into a place where people cannot get enough food, medical care, etc. This refugee situation may be as serious as the one in Syria. Thousands more are fleeing violence in El Salvador, Guatemala, & Honduras.
8. **The Rohingya, minority group in Myanmar** (Burma) face persecution which amounts to genocide. A U.N. investigation found that Myanmar's military is responsible. The Rohingya are not even acknowledged as citizens in Myanmar where they have lived for generations.
9. **All people in this world who live with war.**
10. **People facing torture.**
11. All those whose lives are dominated by fear.
12. **Child Soldiers**
13. **People recovering from natural disasters** – especially those not getting the help they need in Puerto Rico where thousands

- are still without power, safe housing, clean water, etc. after last season's hurricane. People still dealing with the flooding in the Carolinas and elsewhere. Western fire victims.
14. **Those affected by the earthquake & tsunami in Indonesia** September 28<sup>th</sup>. Nearly 1,400 people were killed, many are missing, there is major destruction. The Soputan volcano erupted on the same island just after the tsunami
  15. **Yemen, Niger, & elsewhere;** where the U.S. is involved in forgotten wars. Civilians are victims every day.
  16. **South Sudan** has the world's worst human rights record. Many people are fleeing to Uganda to escape violence & famine.
  17. **Nigeria:** The crisis there is now 8 years old. Remember EYN, & all people trying to rebuild their lives. Much rebuilding is going on and the church is growing! However, many remain displaced and attacks by Boko Haram and extremist Fulani herdsmen continue. Do not forget, 106 Chibok girls & more than 2,000 other women & children are still missing.
  18. **Bangladesh** – brutal attacks by Islamist militants on minority groups including non-Muslims & intellectuals are rising. Bangladesh is also taking in more than 650,000 fleeing the genocide in Myanmar.
  19. **Girls & Women** facing abuse & violence every day
  20. **Women** who face sexual abuse in the workplace.
  21. **Those in prison for their beliefs. Those in prison or persecuted because they report** on genocide & other human rights abuses around the world. Among them: reporters in Myanmar, opposition leaders in Cambodia & Russia, those working for change in Central America.
  22. Those who **don't know God's peace** or have lost hope & joy.
  23. **People facing execution** & those willing to execute because they put revenge above redemption & forgiveness
  24. **People Displaced** by war or political unrest – the people of **Somalia, Syria, Myanmar, Democratic Republic of Congo, in the Middle East, South America & others.** Right now there are 68.5 million forcibly displaced people in the world. 25.4 million are refugees, 40 million are internally displaced; 3.1 million are seeking asylum. That is 1 in every 110 people on earth, a record high (UN Refugee Agency statistics).
  25. People **working for peace** locally & in the world.
  26. **Veterans'** living with their part in war. 18 U.S. Iraq/ Afghanistan veterans commit suicide every day. (US Veterans Affairs statistics)
  27. **Those now waging war by remote control** – they push buttons here that hurt or kill men, women, children on the other side of the world
  28. **800,000 children, now young people,** who fall under the provisions of the Dream Act – the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program which is to be cut
  29. **People affected by gun violence.**

**Look for Peace & Reconciliation Resources  
on the Northern Ohio District Website.**

For access go to: [www.nohcob.org](http://www.nohcob.org)



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