



Peace Advocate News

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

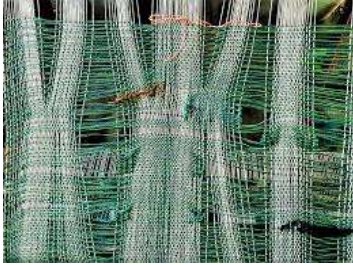
Peace begins when you make your peace with Jesus, accept Him as Savior and follow Him as Lord.

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It's A difficult But Marvelous Thing

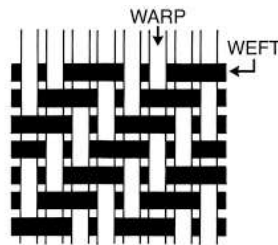
Lord, it is hard for ordinary mortals to balance the many strands that are necessary to weave our lives together. Too many of us try to emphasize one or two strands over the



others and do not realize that, as strong and important as our favored strands may be, without the ones we neglect, ignore, or write off, the fabric of our lives will be full of holes and not strong enough to carry

us through. The warp threads – the threads that run the whole length of our lives – are the strands upon which our lives are woven. They are made of our faith in God; his sustaining grace; and the witness of all those who went before us to create us and bring our faith into being. They are the ancestors, the traditions, and the experiences that have formed us. Without all these warp threads, there is no foundation upon which to weave. They may be subtle and we may not be aware of their impact, or we may try to deny their importance, but warp threads hold the weaving together. At the same time, we cannot rely only on the warp threads or no weaving will happen!

To weave we must also have weft threads – friends, family, the choices we make, the work we do, our relationship with the world, how we get along with other people, how we use our time, and how we live out our faith. Weft are



the threads that are woven in and out, over and under the warp threads to make the fabric of our lives. We find them more colorful. We may feel we have more control over them. Our choices about weft threads create the pattern of the weaving, the color and design that is us. These threads can change. Some will end and new ones continue on in their place.



We may start a pattern only to damage it by ignoring a thread or cutting ones we need. If a weft thread is dropped, the weaving is looser or weaker. If one is clung to too tightly

it can break leaving a hole, or it's tightness can pull the weaving out of shape. The weft threads can make the weaving look altogether different at the end than it did in the beginning – sometimes miraculously beautiful, sometimes puzzling, sometimes unfinished looking.



Lord, help us to remember that you provide the loom on which we weave, and that you will help us with the patterns if we ask. Your power in our lives can help us

replace or reinforce a weak thread or tie in a new weft so that future weaving can be strong and vibrant. However, help us not to forget, you do not call us to sit back and wait for you to do the weaving, fix the knots we make in the thread, or mend the holes our poor choices or selfishness cause! Your love and the love of those you surround us with can keep us weaving till the end even when our strength fails. The bit of fabric our lives weave is joined with everyone else's bit to form a great quilt that encompasses all people with love, support and caring when we all do our best weaving. Guide our weaving hands and our use of threads!

A Person Is A Person When. . .

We are caught in an intriguing puzzle. God calls us to value every person as a child of God – not for who they are; where they come from; what they cannot or can do; what they have or have not done, but because they are made in the image of God who loves them. Society on the other hand, does want us to value people for who they are, where they are from, what they can do, and often most importantly, how rich they are in material things.

These two ways of looking at people do not fit together well, though Christians have worked hard to find a way to make them fit for centuries. Before the Reformation, Christians considered 'good works' (helping the needy, caring for the sick, visiting the prisoner, Matthew 25:31-46) to be ways of responding to God's grace. Then the founder of Protestantism, Martin Luther, defined 'work' to mean worldly work (what we think of as work to earn a living) and made it a duty, for the good of the individual and society. Diligent worldly work became an obligation and a sign of grace.

John Calvin added the idea that only those who were predestined to be saved would be saved. This tied worldly work to salvation in a somewhat offhanded way. It was not possible to know who was predestined for salvation, and salvation could not be earned. However, it might be possible to discern who was predestined by watching how people live. People who were predestined for salvation were thought to be hard working and frugal, so Calvinism taught people to be hard working and frugal in the hope of being predestined for salvation. This understanding of work came to be known as the 'Protestant Work Ethic'. Some trace the origins of capitalism to this Protestant concept. (Capitalism is a system in which producing goods is controlled by private people and their companies for profit. Workers are paid, but the system depends on high profits for the producer and requires high consumption of the products made to produce those profits.)

Both the Protestant Work Ethic and capitalism have contributed to defining and valuing people by their worldly work and the possessions they acquire. The first questions we ask when meeting someone new include, what do you do or where do you work? Where are you from is often second, and questions about family come third. Questions about faith, talents, interests, or past experiences may come forth or even wait for a later encounter with the person. How often do people answer the question, "Who are you?" with, "I am a janitor, banker, doctor, construction worker, etc." We are accustomed to defining ourselves first by our work.

This connection between work, identity, and worth has very real and consequential ramifications. For example, the mayor of Los Angeles says the thing that is most likely to keep people who have been in jail from going back to jail is a job (a person is 75% more likely to stay out of jail with a job than without one). Education has become more and more geared toward getting a 'good paying job' rather than about encouraging creativity, innovation, or acquiring a well-rounded world view. Questions are now being raised as to whether an education is 'worth it' if a job with a big pay check does not come with graduation. Even the ideas of service to others and the willingness for self-sacrifice to help others in one's choice of work are often not at the forefront in the ways they use to be. Take the ads for a trade school that trains medical technicians. The ads do not stress training to help people but do tout "you get to wear scrubs!" as a big reason for getting the training. There is money in it too of course.

One's ability to 'consume' goods has become a measure of worth as well, to the point of causing many people to live far beyond their means to keep up appearances or because they feel 'entitled' or 'obligated' to do so by society's expectations. Most Americans have no savings. People use to go into debt as a last resort for necessities like a house,

food, medical bills, or basic clothing. Now, everything from the latest gadgets to luxury goods like designer clothes or boats, or cruises, and the like are on the debt worthy list.

Society defines people by wealth and consumption and many people define themselves that way. The ramifications are enormous, especially when human prejudices are thrown into the mix. We start talking about what a person 'deserves' or is 'entitled to'. Individuals think of themselves as valuable or as worthless based on societies expectations. This kind of thinking paves the way for division and intentional inequity. It becomes OK to think in terms of who 'deserves' good health care, or what people are 'entitled' to help when their lives are in danger. It becomes OK to think some people are 'entitled' to live as they chose even at the expense of others.

Jesus brought his message for everyone and valued people differently. He called fishermen and tax collectors to join him. He blessed the poor; he said love your enemies and forgave those who killed him (Luke 23:33-34); he praised helping the needy, and said treasures in heaven were more important than earthly treasure (Matthew 19:16-30). He spoke with and healed society's outcasts (Matthew 8:1-4), and answered requests for healing, even from the Roman occupiers (Matthew 8:5-13). Jesus pointed out that people were more important than rules when rules cause people harm (Matthew 12:1-8). He took his message to Jews and to Gentiles (John 4:1-42). He called his followers to help and welcome the stranger (Matthew 25:31-40).

In God's eyes, every person is a person with unique gifts, and shares in common with every other person the image of God in them. Honest work is a good thing, but it does not define who is a person or how valuable they are. Where people are from shapes how they see the world and express their hopes and dreams, but it does not make them more or less a valuable person. People who are sick or hurt or have lost everything are not less valuable as a person because they need help. A person is not less valuable because they disagree with you about something. All of us need to look at all people as valuable people and treat them as such. One of the first scriptures many of us learned as children is no less true now than it was when we were small: "do to others as you would have them do to you" (Matthew 7:12). The commandment Jesus said was the second greatest commandment of all, "love your neighbor as you love yourself" (Mark 12:31), stresses the same thing and is also still true. Regardless of what the world says, God calls us to live by these principles. If our society is going to work and succeed, we must find a way to apply them in our corporate life together as well.



Did You Know?

More than half of the American casualties in Afghanistan and Iraq between 2001 and 2010 were troops conducting convoy operations to get fuel to generators needed to power high-tech military equipment on the front lines. That is 1 casualty for every 24 fuel resupply missions.

It can cost as much as \$50.00 a gallon by truck or \$400.00 a gallon by air to get fuel to the battle field.

Keep in mind, some tanks use 3 gallons or more to travel 1 mile. There are no estimates of how much fuel many futuristic weapons would need and no viable plans for how that fuel could be provided if such weapons could ever become feasible.

Hopeless or Hopeful?

In these times, living with a sense of hopelessness rather than a sense of hopefulness is all too likely. Hopefulness is hard to maintain when anger, frustration, selfishness, and prejudice dominate much of the public conversation, and political leadership. We hear a steady diet of news about mean spirited actions, toxic rhetoric, and stories that arouse division, inhumanity and fear. When people who strongly disagree cannot work together, and cannot talk to each other without name calling, character assassination, and disrespectful behavior, it is difficult to remember that we are all children of a loving God who calls people to be better than that.

There was a day when people – public figures and politicians included – disagreed to the very core of their being and would use every argument, they could muster to make their point. Then, they would go to dinner with their opponents as friends; always treating each other with respect and as equals. On one of the occasions when my father visited the U.S. Senate, he watched Senators John F. Kennedy and Barry Goldwater (who were on opposite sides politically) engage in a fierce verbal battle over a contentious issue on the floor of the Senate. Later, as my father walked to the Senate dining room, he watched the two “combatants” walk, arm-in-arm laughing and joking together as friends. It was in that time when politicians shared a mutual respect for each other and worked together to solve problems for the common good instead of the stiff polarizing ideological battles that they fight, as enemies, today. Some days, it is impossible to believe that there was such a time.

These days, it feels like negativity and plain meanness have taken over. We have to look hard to find reasons to hope. Our morbid fascination with the negative keeps the negative in the news. There are reasons for hope out there! “Look for the Beautiful, Look For the True!” (1952 red Brethren Hymnal, page 309)

In your prayers: Remember and Give Thanks!

- there are Disaster Childcare workers helping refugee children at the border (*Messenger online*, October 16, 2019).

- there are congregations, like West Charleston, Ohio that welcome refugees from several cultures into their midst as brothers and sisters in Christ (see *Messenger* July/August 2019, p. 16-17).
- the church in Nigeria, is continuing to reach out and grow despite the violence they face (Take a Moment to Pray for Peace, #58 July 24, 2019).



The International Peace Day is September 21, 2019.

The theme this year is "The Case for Peace." We invite you to use Peace Day as a time to understand the case for peace from the perspective



of the Christian faith. Peace is essential for those committed to following the Prince of Peace - but where does that commitment come from? Knowing how peace is an essential part of our faith equips us to live peaceful lives and to build peace in our communities. We can help ourselves and others see and share why peace matters in our world and for our faith. What does peace look like for our friends, families, and community members? What does peace mean in situations of injustice or marginalization? How can we deepen our spiritual life to experience inner peace at the core?

Romans 12:18 states, “If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.” As followers of Christ, we are called to live peaceably with all. Not just those who look, think, or act like us. How can we practice this and encourage others to live peaceably with all?

This year, join us as we discover together the case for peace, its foundations in the Christian faith, and how we can bring more of God’s peace here on earth. What can we do to ensure that all humanity knows they are made in God’s image, are loved, and are valued for who they are? What will you pray for? How can you get your community focused on an important issue? How can you serve and work towards peace with justice for all? How can you use the inspiration of Peace Day to take one small action that could make all the difference in a broken relationship?

- **Learn more about Peace Day & what you can do to join in:**
 - Connect with us on Facebook:
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/OEP.PeaceDay/>

- Questions?
Send us a message: peaceday@onearthpeace.org
- **Ways to get involved:**
 - Hold a prayer service or gathering for peace with your church or community, and post pictures or stories on social media using [#peaceday2019](#) and [#thecaseforpeace](#)
 - Find a local Peace Day event to join at Campaign Nonviolence
 - Learn about and host a People's Supper with your community
 - Take the Peace Day challenge for kids or adults
 - Create welcome kits for migrant families. More information can be found at <https://www.borderperspective.org/welcomekit> or <https://mcc.org/get-involved/kits/relief>.
 - Join us on September 11th at 7 PM EST for a webinar discussing the biblical basis for peace. Dan Ulrich, the Wieand Professor of New Testament Studies from Bethany Seminary will lead us in a bible study discussing how the Sermon on the Mount has influenced peacemakers. There will be time for discussion as well as important information about Peace Day this year.
Email peaceday@onearthpeace.org for the ZOOM link or more information.

Information from On Earth Peace

Worship Resources

Make Praying for Peace Part of Your Worship

Remember in prayer:

1. **Remember Brazil – The Amazon Rain Forest is burning!** The current U.S. president's trade war with China, has caused China to look for new sources for products they now purchase from the U.S. (like soy beans). The Brazilian president and farmers want to cash in. One reason they are burning down the rain forest is to make way for crops to court the Chinese market. The damage being done to Brazil and the planet is incalculable. The importance of the rain forest to the health of the planet is well known (though both the U.S. & Brazilian Presidents deny this). The number of plant and animal species being wiped out is unknowable since many are unknown to the outside world. The damage being done to indigenous people may never be fully known if their forest way of life is destroyed. The long-term effects of the fires on the world will not be known for decades. Once the rain forests burn, the massive losses cannot be restored.
2. **Those affected by gun violence –** Children's Disaster Services sent Critical Response Care teams – 1 to Gilroy, CA (12 people were hurt & 3 killed at the Garlic Festival) & 1 to El Paso, TX (24 people were hurt & 22 killed in the shooting at Wal-Mart). The Gilroy team served 39 children over 6 days. The El Paso team served 35 children over 7 days. A team on stand-by to go Dayton, OH, (17 people

were hurt & 10 killed) was not called (teams go when the Red Cross calls).

3. **On-going mis-treatment of children & parents by immigration authorities at the U.S. border.** Separating families continues. Raids take parents and leave children alone. Everything is being done to make seeking asylum as hard and unpleasant as possible. Nothing is being done to help improve conditions in the Central and South American countries people are fleeing to make it safe and possible for them to stay in their homes. When people are faced with possible death or torture, they will flee. . .
4. **The mis-treatment of people in the U.S. for medical treatment.** People who have come here, or brought their children here for life-saving medical treatment, have been ordered to leave with very little notice by the current administration. Some did not receive the letter ordering them to leave until half their "grace period" was already over. For many, leaving will be a death sentence.
5. **Pray for people forced to flee their homes in this hemisphere.** People from Venezuela, El Salvador, Guatemala, & Honduras.
6. **The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and surrounding countries –** health workers continue trying to end an Ebola outbreak in the midst of war.
7. **The victims of gun violence and for those willing to commit such senseless acts.** Attacks in Dayton, Ohio, El Paso, Texas, and Gilroy, California are the most recent
8. **All people in this world who live with war.**
9. **People facing torture.**
10. **Child Soldiers**
11. **Girls & Women** facing abuse & violence every day
12. **Those continuing to wage war by remote control –** they push buttons here that hurt or kill men, women, children on the other side of the world
13. **Those in prison for their beliefs or persecuted for reporting** genocide & other human rights abuses including: reporters in Myanmar, opposition leaders in Cambodia & Russia, those working for change in Central America.



Resource List

See specific articles for related resource information.

Look for Peace & Reconciliation Resources on the Northern Ohio District Website.
For access go to: www.nohcob.org



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