
SATYA - TRUTHFUL IN THOUGHT, SPEECH & ACTION

Covid 19 and Yes We Can Peacebuilders

How are you bearing up? Are you as tired as I am of Covid 19? A quarter of our year has flown by with most of us sequestered in our homes. And the future doesn't foresee any change although I see more and more people out and about. Not me. I cannot. Living as one of the greatly at-risk persons places me under an imposed "house arrest" of sorts. The only contact is by phone, email, and the sketchily performance of Zoom sessions. This leaves me with a question as to the continued life of our peace and nonviolence organization, Yes We Can Peacebuilders (YWCP)



How can an organization that was made up for presenting workshops, group discussions, book signings, lectures by prominent people in the nonviolence world, etc. survive without the gathering together of people?

Part of the process of studying the methodology of nonviolence is the sense of belonging that comes from a group of people sitting together to Talk Around the Table. The nice thing about this is everyone does not have to agree to belong. Without this personal attachment we are left to drift in space on our own and the lack of support leaves many of us so isolated that despair can set in. Lately there is a lot to despair about! How wonderful it is to be in the company of another to whom you can say simply, "I understand." I don't know about the rest of you, but this is what I am missing.

Aside from being charged with the task of bringing the principles and methodology of nonviolence to our community there is the concern that whatever spark of understanding may have been present in just a few who were touched by any of the events YWCP brought to the public, that spark has died or is dying. Whatever comfort being able to express one's thoughts and fears is lost. There is real concern for how our friends will cope with the possibility of having another four years of the same federal administration should the election in November go that way. We feel powerless to bring aid to these individuals without the ability to gather together. It is almost religious. It is almost like missing church.

I ask myself this question. Do we dare try to meet somewhere where we can socially distance ourselves from one another? Or is it still too dangerous? And is there even a place where we could do this? An organization can only exist if it can achieve its purpose and it relies on people participating. YWCP has been struck down by Covid 19 almost as if it has caught the disease. Paula Hulet and I have been carrying this burden and each has participated in Zoom sessions with other organizations. We feel now that we can offer you an opportunity to join with us in this same manner through our own Zoom sessions. Therefore, we are suggesting three topics for discussion for a 40-minute Zoom session beginning in July. The topics are:

Corona Virus Grieving - Being Black - Election Fears

Jane Goodall put it explicitly when it comes to grieving “ –When we lose something that was very precious to us, whatever its nature, we grieve.” Losing the way of life we had prior to Covid 19 has thrown many of us into a state of grief whether we recognize it or not. This chat will allow us all to express our grief.

For those of us who are not Black it is difficult to imagine what the average Black person’s life is really like. Being Black will give us the opportunity to role play life as a Black person where we may discover new thoughts and attitudes to lead us to better understanding of the issues surrounding Black Lives Matter.

Election fears – I know you have them. I do. I suggest we spend some time voicing our fears whether they be about election tampering or the fear that nothing will change for the next four years.

We would like to hear from you with your thoughts on these topics and your interest in joining us for some Zoom sessions. Would you want to do these topics one at a time or would you prefer to at least touch on all three for our first session and then decide how we go forward.

The email is yeswecanpeacebuilders1@gmail.com. We look forward to hearing from you!



**Yes We Can Peacebuilders
Has Not Been Idle!**

Despite being unable to go out and about Paula and I have been busy with Zoom sessions, emails, phone calls, sermons, articles for the newspaper, etc.

I have been writing up descriptions of the classes I attended at the Morro Bay Citizen's Police Academy for the Estero Bay News. These three-hour classes were held once a week beginning in September for 10 weeks. Attending these gave me a much different perspective on the operations of a police department and the policies governing law enforcement actions. I suspended the articles just as I was about to write about the class on the use of a taser when George Floyd was murdered by a police officer by kneeling on his neck for almost nine minutes. As protests began and the cries for justice were heard I felt it would do little good to continue these articles at this time and the paper agreed. However, plans are in place for me to meet with the Morro Bay Police Chief and Commander to discuss many of the issues surrounding the policies pertaining to arrest and the use of force and how this is handled in our communities and what next steps will be taken in regards to police actions. The outcome of those meetings will be what I will then write articles on for upcoming issues of the paper.

Peacebuilders was awarded a \$250 grant from Thrivent to be spent on items for area homeless people. We spent the

money on sleeping bags, socks, gloves, flashlights, lanterns, and hot/cold beverage containers. We had hoped to continue a program like this by applying for a grant but were interrupted by the shelter at home restrictions for the virus. However, just prior to that we held a successful talk and book introduction for peace activist John Dear at Coalesce Bookstore and spoke about this program. Richard and Pat Kresja responded with another check of \$250 for us to continue. We decided to put that money forward to school lunches. Janet Gould, Principal of Del Mar Grammar school advised that the school lunch program was not in need but that the Estero Bay Kindness Coalition could use funds as they supply meals to children for the weekends when they are not in school. We chose to use the money to sponsor one child for one semester through that organization. Hopefully in the future we will be able to continue a program of this type.

This year there will be no outdoor Peace Picnic celebration for International Peace Day, and we will not be spending the money to have our large banner hanging in City Park in Morro Bay. However, we are considering a special Zoom session for everyone to participate in on Monday, September 21, 2020. We would love to have the peace choir join us for the third year in a row if possible and will be open to suggestions for how you would like to celebrate and participate.

I will be part of a ten person study group about climate based on the book "What Is Ecological Civilization" beginning on July 6th.

If you are interested in the climate change issue, I recommend you watch Kamp Solutions on the Los Angeles PBS KCET station. This is an exciting interview program with business leaders, scientists, and others who speak on the already existing “solutions” taking place to reverse global warming and climate change. You can also see and listen to these online at www.kampsolutions.org. Well worth your time! Particularly the one with Deepak Chopra!

Paula has been active in discussions planning and shaping future zoom groups on Race and Nonviolent Communication, facing our own culpability in perpetuating racism and learning to truly listen to another person’s story. There are two books that are foundational for these proposed groups. White Fragility by Robin DiAngelo and Tears We Cannot Stop by Michael Eric Dyson. They are not easy reading and are very eye opening. I would also recommend both the books and/or movies of the following: Just Mercy by Bryan Stevenson and the Hate You Give by Angie Thomas. An excellent summary of US history, a history that has not been talked about, was put together by Veggie Tales creator, Phil Visser, entitled “Race in America.” It can be found at: <https://digg.com/video/phil-visser-veggie-tales-history-of-race?fbclid=IwAR0qz1aYUo3nseQ5PWJtbZMmPQF8chTWfXHY2hn26IqEDx5-R5XwOyrZgNI>.

More information to follow as these groups develop.

If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of oppression.

Bishop Desmond Tutu

The greatest challenge of the day is how to bring about a revolution of the heart, a revolution which has to start with each one of us.

Dorothy Day

