



Satya

truthful in
thought, speech, and action

Yes! We Can Peace Builders January/February 2023

Yes We Can Peacebuilders is dedicated to promoting and teaching nonviolence, inspiring and engaging people to create a nonviolent community, nation and world.

"Resurrected people are the ones who have found a better way by prayerfully bearing witness against injustice and evil, while also agreeing compassionately to hold their own complicity in that same evil."

Richard Rohr

A Pilgrimage to the Civil Rights South

By
Ken Hill

(Ken Hill and his wife Gina Whittaker went on a Living Legacy Tour of the deep south in October 2022 where they met people and descendants of people who had experienced the injustice of that era and visited museums and historical places. The following are some of Ken's reflections that were presented in a program by the People of Faith for Justice MLK Sunday event on January 15, 2023, in San Luis Obispo, California.)

I am so glad that we started our pilgrimage to the South with the Living Legacy Pilgrimage to Mississippi. The Living Legacy Project asked us to join them to explore a vision of a United States that acknowledges and works to heal the wounds of racism rooted in our history of slavery and oppression. They confirmed the wisdom of Dr. King in showing us that the consequences of hate are death and that the power of love can redeem. Our nation has suffered from so much hate, evidenced by the bombings, the lynching, the murders, the needless suffering inflicted in so many ways. The root cause is always the same, hatred dressed up as greed, jealousy, fear and that most insidious weapon of hate: indifference. Fortunately, our pilgrimage also showed us something of the promised land that Dr. King talked about. The evidence of healing was in meeting people and hearing the stories of those who came out of the horrors with their capacity to love still intact.

However, while being touched by individuals and their stories is of paramount importance, institutions are also important. They can be powerful tools for loving people to work together. One institution that both clarifies and meets suffering, past and present, is the Equal Justice Initiative, based in Montgomery, AL. We visited EJI's The National Memorial for Peace and Justice, a

memorial to the more than 4,400 African American men, women and children that were brutally killed or lynched between 1877 and 1950. Racial terror lynching continued into the 1980s. The victim's names are engraved on eight hundred, six-foot steel monuments. Each monument is inscribed with the victims in a particular county. As you walk through the monuments, you descend, and the monuments stay fixed to the roof, making them seem to rise. This sacred place truly elevates these individuals whose lives were stolen after they were supposedly set free. We honor them by raising up the truth of what really happened. The EJI memorial and museum clearly document that slavery has not completely ended but has evolved into our mass incarceration system.

The companion institution is called The Legacy Museum: From Enslavement to Mass Incarceration. It documents the stunning legacy of slavery in personal stories, numbers and impactful art. It also documents the horrors of the incarceration system that is designed to grind up human beings and spit them out, completely dehumanized. These are the people that we do not see today—locked up, shut away and commercially abused. I highly recommend learning about the work of Equal Justice Initiative and Bryan Stevenson. They are a powerful resource to educate us all about the evolution of slavery and the efforts needed to end it, in all of its manifestations, once and for all.

Both the pilgrimage and Dr. King taught us to love, but also to be maladjusted to the consequences of our history. That same history of our civil rights legacy is evidence that loving determination and discipline work. The murders and the hate did not stop the transformation of our society. For love to win, we need to continue driving out hate. Van Jones, a well-known activist and commentator, called progressives the Love people. He said that we would never out hate the haters and we should not try. We are simply not that good at it. So let us start a love competition. Those that love the most, that love the best, win.

There are some that don't want to compete in a love contest. I've heard some say that we should not be "woke;" that we should not embrace the full pain that love feels and celebrate the victories love has won. They have it wrong, we need to be fully awake to see that our history does not teach us to be angry or guilty. It teaches that Love won and will keep on winning until the work is done! We cannot tolerate isolating Black History and experience to Martin Luther King, Jr. Day and Black History Month.

These are rich histories, with ample resources to explore all year long. They are American History, through and through. The tools, power and determination that shone through in that liminal time are what we need right here, right now. The power that seriously cracked oppressive power structures from border to border in this country still can bring justice and freedom in these distressful times.

We have no right to be hopeless. Contemplating mass incarceration, white supremacy and rampant violence can make me feel that the garment of destiny has been soiled beyond recovery. Then I remember how powerful love is, always ready to bring redemption. Love empowers us to see each other and the suffering that is going on right in front of us.

If I sound upset, it is because this pilgrimage has helped me to grow even more maladjusted to the indifference and suffering going on right now. It doesn't have to continue. Only love can guide us. Only a sober, clear eyed, beauty seeking love can see what is and what needs to be done. This love calls me to a daily pilgrimage leading to a beautiful, promised land, but it does not promise comfort or ease in the status quo.

There are many paths to take. If you can avail yourself of powerful experiences like those from the Living Legacy Project and Equal Justice Initiative, by all means do so. If you can't, there are many ways to create your own pilgrimage.

There are peace organizations, justice groups, and other institutions that need your help and so much more. Whatever you do, do it to join others, celebrate diversity, and joyfully build that promised land together.



Peace Tea Nonviolence Discussion Group

The Six Principles of Nonviolence from Martin Luther King , Jr. Presentation

Peace Tea Nonviolence Discussion Group of Morro Bay, California celebrated Martin Luther King Jr.'s Six Principles of Nonviolence on January 24th showing a Power Point with six videos by Dr. Bernard Lafayette, Jr. doing explanations of each principle and demonstrations of how they work.

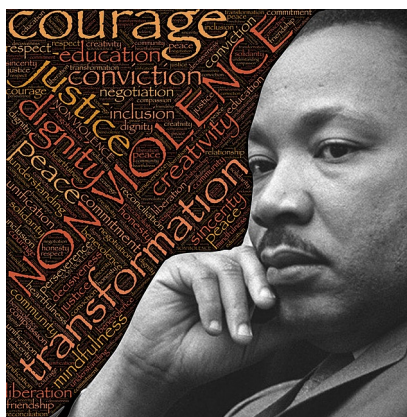
King's principles are:

1. Nonviolence is Not for the Faint of Heart
2. Nonviolence Seeks to Defeat Injustice, Not People
3. The Goal of Nonviolence is Reconciliation
4. Redemptive Suffering Holds Transformational Power
5. Nonviolence Pertains to Physical Acts and Internal Thoughts
6. The Universe is on the Side of Justice

Dr. Bernard Lafayette, Jr., is an American civil rights activist and organizer who was a leader in the civil rights movement of the 1960s working closely with King organizing the Selma Voting Rights Movement in coordination with the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. He participated in the Freedom Rides in 1961 to Montgomery, Alabama where riders were greeted by angry members of the Ku Klux Klan and were viciously attacked. He was later arrested in Jackson, Mississippi and jailed. During his participation in these civil rights activities, he was beaten and arrested 27 times. He helped organize activists in Selma, Alabama beginning in 1963 and was severely beaten once for his activities. He participated in 1964 and 1965 in the pursuit for voting rights in Selma along with King and other organizers culminating with the march from Selma to Montgomery in 1965 that put pressure on the President and the federal government to pass the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

In the program Dr. Lafayette's definition of each of King's six principles were presented in easy to understand language that encourages today's efforts by people searching for ways to stem the violence we are still experiencing with racial discrimination. He was particularly powerful in covering the principle of reconciliation and redemptive suffering.

You can view Dr. Lafayette's videos on YouTube for free from the Connecticut Center for Nonviolence.



People of Faith for Justice Presents Podcast "Climate Change - Global Challenges, Local Solutions" with Deb Pritchard and Don Maruska

Global climate change is on all our minds these days...or is it? Should it be? How can we ignore it? We live our lives, trying to maintain the status quo, but our status quo is leading to suffering and destruction. There is nothing that is in our lives that is not touched today by global climate change. The homes we build and live in, our transportation, the weather we experience every day, the clothes we wear, the trash we discard, the fuel that powers our heat, lights and automobiles, the food we choose to eat, how our cities, towns and buildings are designed...there is nothing that isn't touched by the state of our planet today. Humans are changing the climate, and how we cope with these changes says a tremendous amount about our relationship to life on planet Earth.

But wait! There are possibilities, and there are solutions! They start with us, and the changes that come from hope, not fear. Join our guests as they help us discover how to set a joyful path toward climate health.

Deb Pritchard is a native Californian who loves to snorkel, and has done so all around the world. Her favorite snorkeling was on the island of Palawan, in the Philippines, where she spent 10 years, first as a Peace Corps Volunteer, and then as a management consultant, founding and growing NGOs and private businesses. She helped start the Special Olympics there as well as the Palawan ICT Association, working on many community projects with the Chamber of Commerce and Rotary Club.

Deb began her career in sales at Shell Chemical and was the first woman promoted to management with a B.S. in Chemistry and Psychology. She married and raised two daughters, returning to school for a teaching degree in Special Education and Educational Therapy. Deb has had a variety of careers: Corporate Sales and Marketing Director, Special Education teacher, and International Management Consultant with a specialty in organizational development.

She has returned to California's Central Coast and focuses on intergenerational work addressing climate change and women's empowerment. Her passion is the environment, and she attended the UN summit, COP27 in Egypt in November, 2022. Deb is in the process of publishing her memoir, *Vipers and Geckos: Defining Friend, Foe, and Truth in the Peace Corps*.

Don Maruska engages people around the world to take climate action and have fun doing it. He enjoys grassroots actions. These include developing strategies with businesses and community organizations to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions and restore our balance with nature. Don has also created videos, study guides, and support resources in use by faith-based groups from multiple denominations. He sees an important role for people from faith and justice communities to demonstrate stewardship for creation and the practices of sacrificial giving to reorder our lives for a healthy climate and a world that works for all. These values and experiences inspired Don to write *Solve Climate Change Now: Do What You Love for a Healthy Planet*.

Earlier in his career, Don founded and was CEO of three Silicon Valley companies, earning a national Innovator Award. Now, he's a Master Certified Coach helping others succeed. Don is also the author of *How Great Decisions Get Made* and co-author of *Take Charge of Your Talent*. He earned his BA magna cum laude in government from Harvard University and an MBA and JD from Stanford University. Audiences appreciate Don's inspiring keynotes and productive workshops delivered both in person and online.

<https://pfjpodcast.libsyn.com/climate-change-global-challenges-local-solutions-025>

Jane Thornton Presents New Thought Musicians Showcase

New Thought Musicians Showcase is upbeat and positive peaceful music brought to you via YouTube by Jane Thornton's "New Thought Musicians Showcase."

Featuring: All Together in Dignity Fourth World

ATD (All Together in Dignity) Fourth World is a movement of solidarity among and in collaboration with the most excluded families around the world. Founded in 1957 by Joseph Wresinski, ATD Fourth World brings together women and men from all cultures and social classes and is active in 34 countries. It is an international non-governmental organization with no religious or political affiliation.

<http://www.atd-fourthworld.org/>

ESSENTIAL LINKS - New Thought Musicians Showcase™

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New Thought Musicians Showcase™ - Host Jane Thornton

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"Nonviolence means avoiding injury to anything on earth in thought, word or deed." -- Mohandas Gandhi

On September 11, 2018, Yes We Can Peacebuilders accepted a proclamation of peace and nonviolence from the mayor and city council of Morro Bay, California establishing Morro Bay as a Nonviolent City. In September 2022 a second peace proclamation from the current mayor and city council was accepted by Peacebuilders strengthening the City of Morro Bay's dedication to peace and nonviolence through the Nonviolent City Project.

The Nonviolent City Project is a grassroots movement that organizes strategy for activists to work for the transformation of their community into a peaceful, nonviolent city. This is a shift in consciousness to work holistically with every sector of the city to establish a culture of peace.

**Yes We Can Peacebuilders offers workshops and training for adults and youth on ways nonviolence is fostered, defining nonviolence to aid in the development of nonviolent communication and strategies for change within ourselves and our community. You can learn more at:
www.yeswecanpeacebuilders.org or email us at
yeswecanpeacebuilders1@gmail.com.**

**You Can DONATE to help us with our work by going to
www.yeswecanpeacebuilders.org and clicking on the DONATE button to reach
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"Peacebuilders" in the Notes section. Thank You!**



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