
SATYA - TRUTHFUL IN THOUGHT, SPEECH & ACTION

*Sending good tidings of comfort, peace
and joy to you and yours.*

Satya



What's New with Peacebuilders for 2021

In the New Year look for a series of podcasts and radio shows on Great People of Peace by Ruth Ann Angus coming your way. Reverend Paula Hulet and Ruth Ann are working with peace activist Fr. John Dear on the new spiritual nonviolence organization, "The Beatitudes Center for the Nonviolent Jesus," and continue our work to alleviate poverty in our community through the Estero Bay Alliance for Care.

You can learn more about Yes We Can Peacebuilders at www.yeswecanpeacebuilders.org .

Donations to help with this work can be offered by check made out to "EBUMC Peacebuilders" and sent to Ruth Ann Angus at 703 Anchor Street, Morro Bay, CA 93442.

The Good Fight – Gandhian Practice**By Ruth Ann Angus**

I have a problem with the word “fight.” We use it a lot. Right now, we are in a fight against a virus. We are in a fight against racial prejudice. We are in a fight against sexism. We are in a political fight. Seems we are always saying we are in a fight.

I’ve been having “words” with someone I care about and I don’t like it because it puts me into a fighting mode. Fighting is violent, even for a good cause. I’m asking myself how I can deal with these problems and not be in a fight. That’s where “transviolence” comes in. Okay, it’s a new word. I know you’ve heard me talking about nonviolence, so what is transviolence. Let me tell you how I learned about it.

Back when India was fighting for its freedom from the British two people became prominent. One was Mohandas Gandhi; I know you’ve heard of him, and the other was Badshah Kahn. Kahn was a Pathan and lived in the Frontier section of India that eventually became Pakistan. Historically, Pathans were a vengeful fighting people, mostly against other Pathans. Kahn came to know about the principles of nonviolence and adopted nonviolence as his way of life. He brought the concept to his people and many of them joined him. However, even though they no longer were physically violent, they never really lost that violent spirit. Kahn joined Gandhi in spreading the message of nonviolence. Well, you know the story, the British were chased out of India but that resulted in a Muslim state being erected by partitioning the country and giving birth to the country of Pakistan. Unfortunately, nonviolence is not as prevalent there as it could be. But that’s not the point I’m making.

Gandhi recognized that nonviolence was coming out of passive resistance. This was not his idea of nonviolence. True nonviolence does not issue from weakness but from strength. It is a matter of the powerful voluntarily withholding their power in a conflict, choosing to suffer for the sake of a principle rather than inflicting suffering, even if you could. Gandhi says this is the nonviolence of the strong as opposed to the nonviolence of the weak with passive resistance. Gandhi realized that Badshah Kahn’s Pathans were more successful at nonviolence because it came from their violent spirit.

Nonviolence aims at transformation, thus it becomes “transviolence.” A transformative nonviolence is the tool to reform and regenerate the human personality. Kahn’s movement with the Pathan people demonstrated the power of nonviolence to harness the negative forces in personality and use those same forces to harness and transform an individual and a community and society.

Just like Buddhism is not a religion but a practice, transviolence or transformative nonviolence is a practice, one we must struggle with day to day. In the book “Nonviolent Soldier of Islam” about Badshah Kahn, written by Eknath Easwaran, author Timothy Flinders in an Afterword writes “Nonviolence, properly undertaken, recasts and empowers the human personality. Very little is known about this kind of transformation. While some attention has been given by scholars to nonviolence as a political weapon, virtually nothing exists in the literature regarding the effects of nonviolence upon those who practice it.”

Gandhi called it “soul force.” He did not call it fighting. As we go forward into the new year still dealing with a pandemic, still dealing with racial unrest, still dealing with economic injustice, still dealing with sexism, still dealing with political upheaval, may we strive to harness our innate violent spirits and become transformative nonviolent people. My wish for everyone is to embrace “transviolence” as a way of life. May the blessing of Christmas come upon us all.

Light gives of itself freely filling all available space. It does not seek anything in return; it asks not whether you are friend or foe. It gives of itself and is not thereby diminished.

Michael Strassfeld.

Living into The Season of Darkness**By Rev. Paula Hulet**

This is the season of darkness. Daylight is eclipsed by the abundance of night sky. For star gazers this is a great time to observe the night sky, maybe get a glimpse of a meteor shower or the alignment of planets to form what some are calling the Bethlehem star.

This is also the season of light. For we fill our lives with lights, stars and twinkle lights on Christmas trees and lights on the eaves of our houses. How many of us have taken a drive through the town just to see the lights displayed by our neighbors? For those lucky enough to have a fireplace, they are lit so the flames not only dance in warmth but keep the darkness at bay. And then there are candles. Somehow this season of darkness and light calls for candles. Candles on the fireplace, at the dinner table, on the coffee table. Their tiny flames give us a feeling of warmth and comfort.

We also light candles reminding us that the darkness cannot overcome the light that brings light to our souls. Some light the candles of Hannukah, others the candles of Kwanza, and some the candles of Advent and Christmas. As we light the candles of our faith traditions, we remember times past, we are reminded to look inward into ways we can grow, and we seek to prepare ourselves in heart and mind for that which is to come.

Even though this is the season of darkness, even though we live in a world filled with darkness, conspiracy theories, fear, and a pandemic, embracing the light enables us to rededicate ourselves to growing in peace within us so that we may live in peace with each other. In so doing we let our light shine for others to see.

In the light we remember that peace on earth and goodwill to all is not just a glib phrase of the season but a way of life that we, as PeaceBuilders, are called to live.