



# SATYA

Truthful in Thought, Word, and Actions

## YES! WE CAN PEACEBUILDERS JULY/AUGUST 2023

*Initially, it seemed a bit ridiculous to me to think that by starting a small community, we could somehow change the world, but now, it seems more ridiculous to me to think that somehow the world will change if we don't do something. —Becca Stevens*



### IDENTITY CRISIS UKRAINE

by  
Ruth Ann Angus

We all want to know who we are, where we came from. This is evident in all the interest in Ancestry.com and DNA tests. Even though we who were born in the United States can say we are Americans, our interest in our forebears is keen. When the war in Ukraine broke out, I saw the name of a city in the western section of that country that matched the name of the city in which my grandmother on my mother's side was born. Lviv, only it was listed as Lvov on the paperwork we had from her emigration to the United States and that city was in Russia.

Listening to Medea Benjamin of Code Pink and Peace in Ukraine.org on a recent Zoom from The Beatitudes Center for the Nonviolent Jesus I learned a lot of the suffering of the Ukrainian people in this unjust war with Russia. She told us of the recent effort of a diplomat from Turkey (yes, it is spelled that way now) to affect a cease fire and how that effort almost came to fruition except that neither our president nor Congress supported it. Why is Congress not questioning the president as to his intent as he sends cluster bombs to Ukraine and stations more troops on the perimeter of the conflict, all ready to intervene? Democrats say the responsibility for the war is with the president and is not theirs. Some Republicans say they should fight it out to the end. Where does this leave the Ukrainians who have not only lost their freedom, but once again, lost their identity.

And it is identity loss that I think is the worse problem. Did my grandmother have a Ukrainian identity or was she Russian, or Austrian since at the time of her birth in 1882, the entire area was in the Austrian/Hungarian Empire? There was no Ukraine or Poland and not soon after her birth the town of Lvov was in Russian territory. Identity has always been an issue for the people of these lands.

It is a mystery that we in this country, still mostly free, have not been protesting this war. We seem to think that the war in Ukraine is “their” war, not ours and yet we are in this up to our eyeballs. Benjamin spoke about what she saw and experienced in her recent visit to that country, and we should take heed. “The war is at a stalemate,” she said, “there are war crimes on both sides. Let us agree that we need a way out.” Cluster bombs are not that way. Nuclear should not even be thought about but some on both sides are saying “Why not use mini-nuclear bombs to end this”. Saying they can control those, whatever that means. Are we in the United States going to remain silent as we advance closer and closer to a nuclear war?

Benjamin is asking us to join the Peace in Ukraine Coalition at [www.peaceinukraine.org](http://www.peaceinukraine.org) and sign up for what we can do to protest and get peace talks on the road. She says we need to write and call our congressional representatives and ask them why they are not doing anything to end this war. It’s costing us tax money and we should be outraged.

She also asks why the faith-based community has not joined in to appeal for the end to this war that is killing people every day. She wonders, as do I, where are the environmental leaders and why are they not on-board supporting letters to the president for peace talks? The habitat destruction you see every day on the nightly news is appalling. It will take hundreds of years for that environment to recover.

Benjamin spoke about a congressional Amendment to the Rules Committee that would ask for specific actions regarding the “Strategy for the United States Involvement in Ukraine” and said that this is likely to be developed into a House bill. One of the items in that amendment states that “a plan (be put in place) detailing a diplomatic pathway, including any personnel involved in diplomatic communications, by which the United States can facilitate a negotiated cessation of hostilities in Ukraine.” She recommends we support this bill with these requirements, so be prepared to contact your congress person.

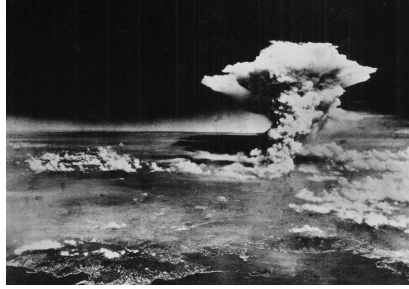
Even though the Ukrainian’s loss of freedom is what is being challenged by this conflict, their loss of identity may be more crushing. Everyone wants to know who they are. Everyone wants to belong.

I can trace my lineage on my father’s side in Scotland back to the 14<sup>th</sup> century. I can say without hesitation that I am Scottish, even though I am clearly American. But my identity with my mother’s people remains unknown.

Over the years the peoples of much of Eastern Europe have suffered an identity crisis. Who are they? Will there be a Ukraine once this war is over? Will they ever be able to say with confidence, I am Ukrainian!

Please see [www.codepink.org](http://www.codepink.org) and [www.peaceinukraine.org](http://www.peaceinukraine.org) and [www.worldbeyondwar.org/endingwar101](http://www.worldbeyondwar.org/endingwar101) .

*Ruth Ann Angus is Director of Yes! We Can Peacebuilders [www.yeswecanpeacebuilders.org](http://www.yeswecanpeacebuilders.org)*



## ANCIENT NONVIOLENCE

Poetry by Rivera Sun

Ancient fires. Years, measured in hundreds  
of thousands. Forgotten stories, human epics  
scrawled across ice ages, surrounded  
by goddesses, long, long ago  
in the time before war's invention.

In the spiraling ladders of our DNA lies a greater share  
of navigations, guided not by brute force,  
but soul force.

As if we journeyed,  
star-struck, guided, or fated  
through sisters' quarrels, clans' conflicts  
bitter rivalries, territorial challenges  
over unfathomable stretches  
of elders and children  
mothers and newborns  
fathers and lovers  
journeys, encounters, travails  
without seeing a reason to grab spears, adzes, arrows  
and slaughter.

Imagine – two hundred thousand years  
with weapons, but not used on fellow humans  
not en masse, not organized in mobs or armies.  
Two hundred thousand years,  
with barter that did not rise to blows  
with strangers and strange cultures  
that never walled against each other  
and loosed the wail of war.

Through time, an undeniable equation tips  
our odds toward inherent nonviolence  
utterly human, innate, natural  
as breath  
as birth  
as being  
an inclination, a yearning to traverse  
conflict's crossroads without the violence  
that could have shattered us whole  
scattered us to extinction's winds.

How many grandmothers' stories went like this:

And then . . .  
a sister spoke a soothing word.  
a mother lifted a gentle hand.

two brothers came to forgiveness, not fists.  
an elder halted a soured word.  
a leader sat down to negotiate.  
a messenger offered an apology.  
a child smiled at the stranger's child.

What lurks in our bones  
has stories to tell us  
deep tales, long buried, whispering  
wisdom for desperation's listeners.

Our very existence is evidence of ancient nonviolence  
living in us, history's inverse equation:

We are, therefore, they were . . .  
We live, and thus, they must have . . .

... favored nonviolence one sand grain more than violence  
on the hidden scales of life.

\*It is commonly believed that humans are naturally violent, having descended (as popular conception goes) from cavemen with clubs. But, while incidents of violence do occasionally show up in the archeological record of ancient history, war – or organized violence of groups – does not show up until 10,000 BCE. That may seem like a long time ago, but it is a mere fraction of our 200,000+ years of the human species' existence. If we're lucky, war will be a blip – tragic, horrific, and ultimately ended – on the vast timeline of humanity.

*Rivera Sun is the Coordinator of the Nonviolent Cities Project with Pace e Bene Nonviolence Service*  
[www.paceebene.org](http://www.paceebene.org)



## INTERNATIONAL PEACE DAY - SEPTEMBER 21, 2023 2023 Theme **Actions for Peace: Our ambition for the #GlobalGoals**

Each year the International Day of Peace (IDP) is observed around the world on 21 September. The UN General Assembly has declared this as a day devoted to strengthening the ideals of peace, through observing 24 hours of non-violence and cease-fire. Never has our world needed peace more.

This year's theme is **Actions for Peace: Our Ambition for the #GlobalGoals**. It is a call to action that recognizes our individual and collective responsibility to foster peace. Fostering peace contributes to the realization of the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals will create a culture of peace for all.

United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres said, “Peace is needed today more than ever. War and conflict are unleashing devastation, poverty, and hunger, and driving tens of millions of people from their homes. Climate chaos is all around. And even peaceful countries are gripped by gaping inequalities and political polarization.”

2023 marks the mid-point in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals. The 2023 observance of the International Day of Peace coincides with the **SDG summit** (18 – 19 September) to mark the mid-point milestone.

The SDGs aim to bring us closer to having more peaceful, just, and inclusive societies, free from fear and violence. But without the buy-in and contribution of a wide range of actors including the 1.2 billion young people alive, the goals will not be achieved. We invite you to join the United Nations’ call to take action for peace: fight inequality, drive action on climate change, and promote and protect human rights.

2023 is also the **75th anniversaries of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights** and the **Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide**. IDP 2023 encourages all youth to be ambitious in their engagement as positive and constructive social agents, to join the movement to reach the SDGs and contribute to building sustainable peace. Together we can help to lead our world towards a greener, more equitable, just, and secure future for all.

Embrace the possible. That’s the call of the **17 Sustainable Development Goals**, a blueprint for a better world. We don’t have to wait for the future we want—we can create it right now. Everyone can join the global movement for change.

**ActNow** is the United Nations campaign to inspire people to act for the Sustainable Development Goals.

The **2023 SDG Summit** takes place on 18-19 September 2023, during the United Nations General Assembly high-level week to follow-up and review the implementation of the **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development** and the **17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** . Member States will carry out a comprehensive review of the state of the SDGs, respond to the impact of multiple and interlocking crises facing the world, and provide political guidance on transformative and accelerated actions leading up to the target year of 2030 for achieving the SDGs.

## LINKS

Paul Long from Our Walk Together recorded a podcast with Ruth Ann Angus, Director of Yes! We Can Peacebuilders where they talked about nonviolence education. You can listen here: <https://our-walk-together.simplecast.com/episodes/yes-we-can-peace-builders-with-ruth-ann-angus>

Jane Thornton of New Thought Musicians Showcase recorded a podcast and a video with Ruth Ann Angus Director of Yes! We Can Peacebuilders where they talked about the use of music in nonviolence actions and more. You can listen here: [NTMS\\_Yes we Can Peacebuilders.mp3](#)

And you can view the video here: <https://youtu.be/0ZyOwQ-bb6k>



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