

Special Issue

MOTIVATED

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While thinking about what topic to choose for this special holiday issue of *Motivated*, the first thought that came to me was “peace on earth.” After all, that’s the message the angels proclaimed over two thousand years ago, when they announced the birth of Christ.

I think you will agree that today, in this war-torn world, there’s not nearly enough peace. Reports of conflict and violence pervade the daily news, to the point where we may almost feel that trying to work towards peace is a hopeless cause. But is it?

One definition of peace states that peace is “a stress-free state of security and calmness that comes when there’s no fighting or war, with everything coexisting in perfect harmony and freedom.” That’s the kind of peace we want and need for entire countries and communities, as well as in our personal situations and relationships.

So where do we start, and how do we find that kind of peace? Although worldwide peace may seem far away, inward and outward peace are not beyond our reach. I know the wonderful stories and articles in this issue of *Motivated* will inspire and encourage you that by working together we can be the peacemakers that our world needs more than ever.

Wishing you and yours happy and peaceful holidays.

Christina Lane
For *Motivated*

PEACE ON EARTH?



By Joe Stowell, adapted

I wouldn't want to pick a fight with a sky full of angels, but I must admit that I've always wondered about that promise of peace the angelic host made to the shepherds in the fields outside Bethlehem. For the last 2,000 years, peace on our planet has been at best a rare commodity. Wars continue to ravage innocent lives, domestic violence is a growing calamity, divorce rates soar, and peace seems to be an elusive dream.

Where is the promised peace? Actually, on reflection, we can see that Jesus Christ brought all that is needed for peace in our world. He taught the principles of peace, calling for people to love their neighbors as they love themselves. And as He was

leaving this planet, He promised, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you." He told us to turn the other cheek, go the extra mile, forgive offenses, reject greed, tolerate each other's weaknesses, live to serve and love one another as God loves us.

It seems that in large part, peace is up to us. This holiday season, let's make peace our gift to the world in which we live. ■

**We know at times there will be strife;
On this we must agree—
When conflict drops into our lives,
We'll solve it peacefully.**

—Fasick



A SMALL CHRISTMAS TRUCE

By David Hunt, adapted

In World War II, there was no truce similar to the one that occurred during Christmas in 1914 in World War I. In that earlier conflict, thousands of British, French, and German soldiers, exhausted by the unprecedented slaughter of the previous five months, left their trenches and met the enemy in *No Man's Land*, exchanging gifts, food, and stories. Generals on both sides, determined to prevent fraternization in the future, saw to it that such activities would be severely punished, and so there were no more Christmas truces the rest of that war or the next. But, in December of 1944, during the *Battle of the Bulge*, while the Americans fought for their lives against a massive German onslaught, a tiny shred of human decency happened on Christmas Eve. A German mother made it so.

Three American soldiers, one badly wounded, were lost in the snow-covered Ardennes Forest as they tried to find the American lines. They had been walking for three days while the sounds of battle echoed in the hills and valleys all around them. Then, on Christmas Eve, they came upon a small cabin in the woods.

Elisabeth Vincken and her 12-year-old son, Fritz, had been hoping her husband

would arrive to spend Christmas with them, but it was now too late. The Vinckens had been bombed out of their home in Aachen, Germany, and had managed to move into the hunting cabin in the Hurtgen Forest about four miles from Monschau near the Belgian border. Fritz's father stayed behind to work and visited them when he could. Their Christmas meal would now have to wait for his arrival.

Elisabeth and Fritz were alone in the cabin when there was a knock on the door. Elisabeth opened the door to find two enemy American soldiers standing at the door, and a third lying in the snow. Despite their rough appearance, they seemed hardly older than boys. They were armed, and could have simply burst in, but they hadn't, so she invited them inside and they carried their wounded comrade into the warm cabin. Elisabeth didn't speak English and they didn't speak German, but they managed to communicate in broken French. Hearing their story and seeing their condition—especially the wounded soldier's state—Elisabeth started preparing a meal. She sent Fritz to get six potatoes and Hermann the rooster—his stay of execution, delayed by her husband's

absence, rescinded.

While Hermann roasted, there was another knock on the door, and Fritz went to open it, thinking there might be more lost Americans, but instead there were four armed German soldiers. Knowing the penalty for harboring the enemy was execution, Elisabeth, white as a ghost, pushed past Fritz and stepped outside. There was a corporal and three very young soldiers, who wished her a Merry Christmas, but they were lost and hungry. Elisabeth told them they were welcome to come into the warmth and eat until the food was all gone, but that there were others inside who they would not consider friends. The corporal asked sharply if there were Americans inside and she said there were three who were lost and cold like they were, and one was wounded. The corporal stared hard at her until she said, “It is the Holy Night and there will be no shooting here.” She insisted they leave their weapons outside. The German soldiers slowly complied, and Elisabeth went inside, demanding the same of the Americans. She took their weapons and stacked them outside next to the Germans’.

Understandably, there was a lot of fear and tension in the cabin as the Germans and Americans eyed each other warily, but the warmth and smell of roast Hermann and potatoes began to take the edge off. The Germans produced a bottle of wine and a loaf of bread. While Elisabeth tended to the cooking, one of the German soldiers, an ex-medical student, examined the wounded American. In English, he explained that the cold had prevented infection but he’d lost a lot of blood. He needed food and rest.

By the time the meal was ready, the atmosphere was more relaxed. Two of the Germans were only sixteen; the corporal was 23. As Elisabeth said grace, Fritz noticed tears in the exhausted soldiers’ eyes—both German and American.

The truce lasted through the night and into the morning. Looking at the Americans’ map, the corporal told them the best way to get back to their lines, and he provided them with a compass. When asked whether they should instead go to Monschau, the corporal shook his head and said it was now in German hands. After Elisabeth returned all their weapons, the enemies shook hands and left, in opposite directions. Soon they were all out of sight; the truce over.

Fritz and his parents survived the war. His mother and father passed away in the Sixties. By then he had married and moved to Hawaii, where he opened a bakery. For years he tried to locate any of the German or American soldiers, to see how they had fared, but it wasn’t until the television program *Unsolved Mysteries* broadcast the story in 1995, that it was discovered that a man living in Frederick, Maryland had been telling the same story for years. Fritz met with Ralph Blank, one of the American soldiers who still had the German compass and map, in January 1996. Ralph told Fritz, “Your mother saved my life.” Fritz said the reunion was the high point of his life.

Fritz Vincken also managed to later contact one of the other Americans, but none of the Germans. He was forever grateful that his mother got the recognition she deserved. He died on December 8, 2002, almost 58 years to the day of the Christmas truce. ■

HOW TO LIVE IN PEACE



By Atenyi Solony, adapted — www.peacerevolution.net

Peace is not just for hippies! Living in peace is about living harmoniously with yourself, others, and all sentient beings around you. Living in peace is both an outward and an inward process. Outwardly, living in peace is a way of life in which we respect and love each other in spite of our cultural, religious, and political differences. Inwardly, we all need to search our hearts and minds and understand the fear that causes the impulse to violence, for in continuing to ignore the rage within, the storm outside will never subside.

While you will find your own meanings of peaceful existence and outward manifestations of a peaceful life according to your beliefs and lifestyle, there are some basics underpinning living in peace that cannot be overlooked, such

as being non-violent, being tolerant, holding moderate views, and celebrating life.

Following are some steps that can help you to discover your journey to living in peace.

- **Find your inner peace.** Without inner peace, you'll feel in a constant state of conflict. Trying to fill your life with possessions or improving yourself by social climbing without ever stopping to value your inner worth will leave you perpetually unhappy. When you're angry, find a nice quiet place to stop, take a deep breath, and relax. Turn off the TV or computer. Get out into nature if possible, or go for a good, long walk. Put on some soft music or turn down the lights. When you feel calm again, get up and get on

with your life. At least once a day spend ten minutes in a peaceful place, such as under a shady tree or in the park, anywhere where you can just sit quietly without distractions.

- **Seek to love, not control others.** Ceasing to seek power over people and outcomes in your life is the first major step to living peacefully. Trying to control people is about seeking to impose your will and reality on others without ever trying to see their side of things. A controlling approach to relationships will keep you in conflicts with others. Replacing a will to control with a broad approach of loving others instead, including their faults and differences, is the way to a peaceful life.

- **Moderate your convictions.** Thinking in absolutes and holding to convictions without ever considering the viewpoints and perspectives of others is a sure way to live a life without peace. This type of extremist thinking usually leads to reactive, hasty, and driven behavior that lacks the benefit of reflection and deliberative thinking. While this may be convenient because it allows you to act with the confidence of absolute conviction, it blocks out other realities in the world around you, and can easily lead into conflict when other people fail to agree with your convictions. It's harder work to remain open-minded and ready to review your understandings, yet it's more rewarding because you'll grow as a person and live in greater harmony with those around you.

- **Be tolerant.** Tolerance in all that you think and do will make a difference in your life and in the lives of others around you. Tolerance for

others is about appreciating diversity, the plurality of modern society, and being willing to live and let others live too. When we fail to tolerate others' beliefs, ways of being, and opinions, the end result can be discrimination, repression, dehumanization, and ultimately aggression. Practicing tolerance is at the heart of living peacefully.

- **Be peace.** A peaceful person does not use violence against another person or animal. While there is much violence in this world, make a choice to not let aggression be a part of your philosophy of living.

- **Seek forgiveness, not revenge.** Live in the present, not the past. Dwelling on that which should have been, and reliving past hurts will keep the negatives of the past alive. and bring constant internal conflict. Forgiveness allows you to live in the present, to look forward to the future, and to let the past settle gently. Forgiveness is the ultimate victory, because it lets you enjoy life again by making peace with the past.

- **Live in joy.** Choosing to see the wonders of the world around you is a wonderful thing and will generate joy. Joy brings peace to your life because you're always prepared to see what is good in others and the world, and to be grateful for the wondrous aspects of life.

- **Be the change you wish to see in the world.** Change yourself. Aggression starts with your acceptance of its possibility as a solution, and often its inevitability. So it's inside you that you need to go to stop violence and become peaceful. In seeking not to harm living beings, to live peacefully, first change yourself, and then change your world. ■

PEACEMAKERS

Modern-day people who contributed to peace

Nelson Mandela (1918-2013) made a significant contribution to peace in South Africa. Although imprisoned for fighting apartheid, he was released and became the first democratically elected President. Mandela sought to forgive and work with the former white minority. Mandela became a global symbol of goodwill and how people can make a real contribution to peace. He was jointly awarded Nobel Peace Prize with F.W. de Klerk in 1993.



Betty Williams (1943-) Williams, along with Mairead Corrigan, co-founded the Community of Peace People—an organization dedicated to promoting a peaceful resolution to the Northern Ireland conflict. She was jointly awarded the Nobel Peace Prize with Corrigan in 1976.



Muhammad Ali (1942-2016) When Ali refused to fight in Vietnam, it was a controversial decision which cost him his professional boxing license. However, Ali's principled stance was increasingly appreciated as the war became more unpopular.



14th Dalai Lama (1935-) The Dalai Lama, the spiritual leader of Tibet, has sought to protect the interests of the Tibetans while promoting a non-violent approach to the Chinese. He teaches the importance of compassion for promoting happiness and inner peace.



William Wilberforce (1759-1833) campaigned against slavery, and helped to outlaw slavery in Great Britain. The Slavery Abolition Act 1833 was passed three days after his death.



Tegla Laroupe (1973-) Kenya marathon runner and peace activist. Widely praised for promoting peace amongst African tribes. In 2003, Laroupe created an annual series of Peace Marathons sponsored by the Tegla Laroupe Peace Foundation.



The United Nations’ Resolution A/ RES/53/243 invites us:

To foster a culture of peace
through education

To promote sustainable
economic and social
development

To promote respect for all
human rights

To ensure equality between
women and men

To foster democratic
participation

To advance understanding,
tolerance, and solidarity

To support participatory
communication and the free
flow of information and
knowledge

To promote international
peace and security

TAKING ACTION

10 keys to creating more peace in your life and beyond

By Naomi Drew, adapted

1. Make a commitment to being kind over all else.
2. When you are angry, put yourself in the shoes of the other person instead of only focusing on your own reactions.
3. Breathe first, then speak. Use *I* messages to communicate when something makes you mad.
4. Find a way to help someone else every day.
5. Make thanking people a part of your life.
6. Do the right thing, even when no one is looking.
7. Stand up for people who are excluded, put-down, or marginalized.
8. Always remember that words have power; a kind word can enrich a life, a hurtful word can diminish it.
9. Hang these words in your home: I am the key to peace.
10. Now go out and live them. ■



TEACHING CHILDREN TO BE PEACEMAKERS

By Jeannie Cunnion, adapted

One morning, while I was dressing the baby, my son Brennan came bouncing into the nursery and announced, “Mom, Cal just said poop!”

I turned to Brennan. “And?”

Brennan looked surprised that I didn’t know why this was important information. “Aaannd... Cal isn’t allowed to say poop,” he replied. “I wanted you to know.”

“Brennan, are you being a peacemaker, or are you trying to get Cal in trouble?”

Brennan was quiet for a moment. “Trying to get Cal in trouble,” he said. “Sorry.”

“Please apologize to Cal for tattling,” I said. “Then think about how you can encourage your brother to make good choices.”

Normally, the word peaceful isn’t one I would use to describe our home. But we’re trying to help our boys understand how they can become peacemakers. We tell them that peacemakers are not fueled by arguing, getting even, or trying to get others in trouble.

Peacemakers pursue harmony.

As we teach our boys about peacemaking, we start with this message: “Boys, you are God’s gift to each other. You may not always see each other as gifts, but it’s true. God intends for you to build each other up in love. He has made our family a team, so we must function as one. As teammates, we should want to help each other be better.”

Peacemakers are problem solvers.

One of our goals is to help our kids develop strong problem-solving skills. Teaching your children to be peacemaking problem solvers can be intense, but be assured that the peace in your home will be well worth the hard work. To help my kids learn peacemaking, I generally start with a series of leading questions:

Did you try to solve the problem yourself?

The goal is to have my boys think about what a peacemaker would do, to consider all their options. And if they haven't tried to solve a conflict on their own, I give them a chance to do so before involving me.

Not long ago, my son Owen came to tell me some important news: "Mom, Brennan is watching a show on TV that we aren't allowed to watch."

"Did you try to solve the problem with Brennan first?" I asked.

"Um, no."

"So what could you do now?"

"I could tell Brennan that we aren't allowed to watch this show."

"Good idea. Encourage Brennan to make good choices. If he doesn't listen, you may ask for my help."

What is the problem, and how do you feel?

If the kids are not successful at solving their problem without me, I walk them through a basic problem-solving process. Yes, they need direction and guidance with this approach, but with a little practice and persistence, they often work things out by themselves.

I ask both children to state what

happened by identifying the problem or incident that occurred as well as the feeling that resulted. I also ask them to start their sentences with "I" because then they cannot start by pointing the finger. This allows them to identify the role that they played in the situation and how they contributed to the problem.

How can you solve the problem?

Once both children have heard the other's version of the problem and the feelings that resulted, I ask both children to think about what a peacemaker would do. Based on the solutions they come up with, I've learned that the stated problem is rarely the real problem. Rather, the problem was sparked by a selfish attitude, a desire to simply see a sibling get in trouble, or a feeling of being wronged by the other person. This provides a precious opportunity to encourage my kids to think about what's going on in their hearts. Indeed, the solutions that we choose for peaceful resolutions should always address the heart first.

How would you like to be treated?

Seeking a peaceful resolution often involves reminding the boys to treat one another as they would want to be treated. I may ask, "Cal, how do you feel when Brennan yells at you when you do something he doesn't like? Is there a better way you could have communicated your frustration with him?"

Throughout this guided process, we equip our kids with the essential skills of compromise, teamwork, and empathy—skills they can implement in solving future problems with others. ■

PEACE ON EARTH

NOTABLE
QUOTES



Peace is the father of friendship.—**African proverb**

We look forward to the time when the Power of Love will replace the Love of Power. Then will our world know the blessings of peace.—**William Ewart Gladstone**

If we have no peace, it is because we have forgotten that we belong to each other.—**Mother Teresa**

Peace cannot be achieved through violence, it can only be attained through understanding.—**Ralph Waldo Emerson**

You cannot shake hands with a clenched fist.—**Golda Meir**

Let there be peace on earth,
And let it begin with me.
—**Seymour Miller & Jill Jackson**

Yes, we love peace, but we are not willing to take wounds for it, as we are for war.—**John Andrew Holmes**

If only peace were the surname of all mankind.—**Terri Guillemets**

A warless world will come as men develop warless hearts.—**Charles Wesley Burns**

For peace is not mere absence of war, but is a virtue that springs from force of character...—**Baruch Spinoza**

Five great enemies to peace inhabit with us: avarice, ambition, envy, anger, and pride. If those enemies were to be banished, we should infallibly enjoy perpetual peace.—**Francesco Petrarck**

