



Michael G. Long
Author



Peacemaking Through the Spoken & Written Word

September 7, 2021

Following up on Mike's video reflection from yesterday, consider the following insights and questions:

"Part of the writing process is to recognize my limitations in writing about the subjects that I do and inviting other people not only into the conversation, but into the writing process as well. And allowing them to help shape my voice as together, we tell the stories. ... The writing process itself reflects peace. Peace is always a collaborative process and so is justice. Even racial justice is a collaborative process. People of color and white people like me need to work together to get to racial justice. Not just one of us, not just one group, can get to racial justice alone. It's always a collaborative process if we are to do it with justice and peace. I try to make sure my writing process reflects that."

Mike emphasizes the importance of collaboration in both writing and peacemaking. When have you tried to write something and needed help? How does your creative process reflect the collaboration process needed for peace and justice?

"For me, peace is the impossible dream that is worth chasing and worth fighting for nonviolently. It's that time and place when we are no longer violent toward one another and it's that time and place where social justice will reign supreme. Given those two characteristics, I'm not quite so sure we will ever get there ... but I also believe the evidence in our families and our communities and our nations does give us evidence that we can establish peace."

What do you think of Mike's understanding of peace? Do you think peace is achievable? Where do you see evidence in your own life that peace is achievable?

Call to Action: Pick one of your favorite books and consider how it explores the themes of peace. Research the author and see how peace and collaboration are reflected in their writing process.

Michael G. Long has written books for all ages on civil rights and peacemaking in mid-century America, including the stories of Martin Luther King Jr., Bayard Rustin, Jackie Robinson and Mister Rogers. His latest children's book, ["Three Lines in a Circle: The Exciting Life of the Peace Symbol,"](#) is available from [Flyaway Books](#).

Proverbs 18:20: "Words satisfy the soul as food satisfies the stomach; the right words on a person's lips bring satisfaction."



Rev. Lee, Hun-sam
Pastor, Junim Presbyterian Church
(Seongnam, Korea)



Peacemaking Through the Spoken & Written Word

September 9, 2021

Following up on Rev. Lee, Hun-sam's video reflection from yesterday, consider the following insights and questions:

"The biblical image that comes to my mind when we ask for peace is the reconciliation between Jacob and Esau. In order to avenge Jacob, the enemy of heaven and earth, Esau gathered 400 soldiers to attack Jacob. There is no possibility that his brother's mind will change over the night. So, Jacob wrestles with the angel of God all night long. Even with the pain of his hip bone breaking, he does not let the angel go. The day after this desperate prayer, Esau, who ran up to punish Jacob, instead hugged Jacob's neck and in tears reconciled with him. This is peacemaking. I hope this miracle will happen to us today, too. Jacob and Esau's story is very similar to the story of North and South Korea. Humans' limited understanding makes it difficult to believe peace and reconciliation are possible. But this is why we need to believe in God and ask for God's salvation and grace. The key to reconciliation from the Christian perspective is prayer: prayer asking for God's help, because reconciliation is not something humans can do alone."

How do you think reconciliation relates to peace? Can you think of other biblical images of reconciliation? And what do you think the role of prayer is in peacemaking?

"Peace and reunification is not something that can be done just with the will alone of South Korea and North Korea. It's terribly difficult to overcome a reality where the scars and hatred of war remain. So, our first act for peace is to pray. It may seem impossible because of the international politics or the historical situation on the Korean Peninsula, but I believe that nothing is impossible if the God of Peace gives us grace. If you pray with us in this belief, someday God will answer and establish peace on the Korean Peninsula, then South Koreans and North Koreans and Christians around the world who participated in this prayer will be able to experience that God is alive and listens to our prayers."

Rev. Lee, Hun-sam states that reaching peace does not only involve those in conflict. The prayers of all are also important. Can you think of interpersonal, national or international situations that you could include in your prayers for peaceful resolution?

Call to Action: Say a prayer today using the [Aug. 15 Joint South-North \(North-South\) Prayer for Peace and Reunification](#).

Rev. Lee, Hun-sam is former staff to the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea (PROK) General Assembly Headquarters and at the National Council of Churches in Korea (NCCK). He is currently the pastor of Jumin Presbyterian Church in Gyeonggi Presbytery of the PROK. Jumin has a rich legacy of advocating for peace and reunification on the Korean Peninsula.

Psalm 19:14: "Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer."



Lee Catoe
Managing Editor, Unbound
Associate for Young Adult Social Witness



Peacemaking Through the Spoken & Written Word

September 11, 2021

Following up on Lee's video reflection from yesterday, consider the following insights and questions:

"I do believe that being who God made you to be and being that creation throughout everything we do is a true goal in writing. Authentic writing breaks down Western ideals of writing theories and grammars and it opens us up to different perspectives, voices, styles and language."

Many people enjoy reading as a way to expose themselves to new ideas and perspectives. What authors, genres and prose formats do you read to educate yourself? Have you tried writing something in order to "open yourself up" to new ideas? How could writing become a part of your peacemaking witness?

"For me, God's peace is a peace like a sword that cuts by getting down to the root causes and not the symptoms of systems of oppression. God's peace is like Jesus at the marketplace outside the temple, flipping over tables and pouring out money from money exchangers. God's peace is liberation from pharaoh and at the same time a trip through a wilderness. It is active, outlandish, in-your-face and prescriptive."

Typically, nonviolent language is used to describe peacemaking. Yet, Lee uses the metaphor of "peace like a sword" to describe God's call for us to address root causes of injustice. What do you think of this understanding of peace?

Call to Action: Write a letter to your Congress person on one of many justice and peace issues using the PC(USA)'s Office of Public Witness [Action Alerts](#).

You can find Lee's writings on [Unbound](#) or catch him on video at the [Just Talk Live and the Unbound YouTube channel](#).

Proverbs 18:4: "A person's words can be life-giving water; words of true wisdom are as refreshing as a bubbling brook."



Peacemaking Through Song, Music & Dance September 14, 2021

David LaMotte
Musician, Speaker & Author

Following up on David's video reflection from yesterday, consider the following insights and questions:

“As a musician, I find that ‘harmony’ is a more potent synonym for peace than ‘unity.’ Unity is when we are all singing the same note. Harmony is when we are singing different notes that resonate beautifully together. Real peace doesn’t require agreeing. It requires love and respect and celebration of our difference, while we seek a way forward together.”

How have you experienced “harmony” in your own life? How do we come together and celebrate our differences, even while navigating moments of conflict?

“I was dealt nearly all of the traditional privilege cards: U.S. passport, native English speaker, cisgender, white, straight, male, Master’s degree, middle class family and Christian. I can’t choose to be anyone other than who I am. But I do have choices to make about what I do with that. One analogy to music is if you are in a band with somebody that never stops playing a solo, that’s a problem. They may be really good at soloing, but if they don’t know how to step back, it completely ruins the song. We have to hand off and lift up your bandmates because we are all in the band together, and everyone’s part matters. I’m trying to discern how I amplify other voices, given that I’ve been given more platform than I deserve, partly just based on the skin I’m in.”

When have you been in situations where someone tries to always “have a solo”? Where have you seen examples of artists using their platforms to lift up other, less heard, voices? How can you do the same?

Call to Action: The next time you sing a song or hymn, consider why singing that song with others is meaningful and how you can share the mic with those who don’t have access to it.

You can find David’s music, performances with his group [Abraham Jam](#), his sign project [Let’s Be Neighbors](#), and his antiracist children’s book, [White Flour](#), on his [website](#).

Psalms 149:3: Let them praise his name in the dance: let them sing praises unto him with the timbrel and harp.



Ryu Bok-hee, Jeong Seon-nyeo, & Kaia Vereide
Peace Activists, Gangjeong Village (Korea)



Peacemaking Through Song, Music & Dance

September 16, 2021

Following up on yesterday's video reflection with the Gangjeong Village peace activists, consider these additional insights and corresponding questions:

"It seems like it's the first time for so many Korean people to struggle against a Korean military base. Many people in South Korea think it is necessary to have a military to defend against North Korea. Many people can and have joined our struggle against this navy base because our methods of resistance are nonviolent. We have continued this nonviolent resistance over the last 10 years to challenge the idea that we need a military. Nonviolent resistance is effective because it changes people's assumptions about the need for a military. And the nonviolent methods give us strength to carry on." -Ryu Bok-hee

Ryu Bok-hee mentions the importance of nonviolence in their activism. Where else have you seen nonviolent resistance methods be successful?

"As Christians, it's not just special people who are working for peace. It is something that anyone and everyone must do. Even if they don't do anything big, just the small act of singing and dancing together at the human chain is something that people can do together. I hope that many Christians can come to Gangjeong and see that it is a Christian's role to be here." -Ryu Bok-hee

Dancing and singing are accessible ways to raise our voices for peace. Have you ever used these artistic mediums to engage in peacemaking? What are other accessible ways to stand up against injustice?

"I do mass every day. When we read the Scripture, I can see that the Gospel is alive here. Many people have come to join mass and shared that, compared to when they join mass in usual churches, their experience is more alive when they hear the gospel in Gangjeong. They bring us energy when they visit. They also take with them this new sense of the gospel being alive." -Jeong Seon-nyeo

Why do you think people find the gospel to be more alive in Gangjeong? In what physical and spiritual contexts have you felt closer to God or a sense of the Spirit urging you to engage in peacemaking?

Call to Action: The next time you sing a song, consider the peace that you feel internally. Then find someone to join you in that song and share that peace with them.

Ryu Bok-hee, Jeong Seon-nyeo and Kaia Vereide will continue their peaceful resistance of the navy base in Gangjeong Village. Marching, singing and dancing every day. Learn more about their efforts [here](#).

Ecclesiastes 3:1: For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven: a time to be born, and a time to die ... a time to break down, and a time to build up; a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance ...



Michele Slone
Music Educator & Musician



Peacemaking Through Song, Music & Dance

September 18, 2021

Following up on Michele's video reflection from yesterday, consider these additional insights and corresponding questions:

“Peace is that time when people who are not alike, and who may never make music together again, collaborate and demonstrate that sense of peace, that feeling of joy, that time of no conflict, that time of stillness or of loud and exciting sounds. They can even be moved to tears, forgetting everything else, and providing that sense of peace to others who watch and hear!”

Michele emphasizes the sense of feeling “together” and the collaborative nature of music as essential to peacemaking. In fact, the memory of making music with others is just as valuable for peacemaking as the music itself. Have you experienced these moments of peace through music? Are there activities that bring you a similar sense of peace?

“It doesn't matter how well you sing or if you can or cannot sing ... but just the joy of doing it and that those who feel they can't sing ... don't hesitate to sing in that moment.”

Michele names an important aspect of music that is also relevant for peacemaking: You don't have to be the best; what matters is that you participate and give yourself, your heart and voice to the cause. Have you ever been nervous about singing or engaging in peacemaking work? Why? What has kept you from adding your voice?

Call to Action: The next time you sing a song, consider the peace that you feel internally. Then find someone to join you in that song and share that peace with them.

Michele Slone has been a public school music educator for 26 years, a camp conference volunteer for 30 years and a lifelong Presbyterian. When not teaching, creating music, or doing camp and conference ministry, Michele enjoys walking, running, gift wrapping, raising chickens and ducks, spending time with her family, and watching her son experience the peace and joy of making music and participating in camp and conference ministry!

1 Corinthians 14:15: What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also.



David Barnhart
Filmmaker & Associate for Story Ministry
Presbyterian Disaster Assistance

Peacemaking Through Visual Arts
September 21, 2021

Following up on David's video reflection from yesterday, consider the following insights and questions:

“In our film ministry, we are invited to work alongside communities who have been silenced and oppressed by systems and structures. We don't come with an agenda. We try to start every film with an open slate and listen and learn from each interview and conversation — so the ‘voice’ in the film comes from those communities and conversations.”

David emphasizes the importance of maintaining the integrity of the community's stories and voices in his filmmaking. What films have you seen that do this? Why do you think this is important?

“Some powerful media outlets tend to simplify issues for profit or ratings, which focus on fear and polarization and to completely ignore the complexities, layers, nuances and the humanity/life that is at the heart of these issues. In this context, what is the role of the church? The church has been called to gather us around stories that challenge the structures, systems and ways that we dehumanize others. Gathering around film and story is a return to our fundamental Christian roots to live as a community grounded, formed and transformed by story.”

Where have you seen examples of media outlets focusing on fear and polarization? How have you witnessed the church helping to overcome polarization and build community?

Call to Action: Watch one of David's [films](#) with members of your congregation. Reflect on the film's message using the corresponding screening kits and study guides.

David Barnhart is a filmmaker for Presbyterian Disaster Assistance's [Story Ministry](#). He produces, directs and promotes documentaries for PDA for the purpose of tracking and sharing stories of disaster relief and recovery.

Exodus 35:35: “He has filled them with skill to do every sort of work done by an engraver or by a designer or by an embroiderer in blue and purple and scarlet yarns and fine twined linen, or by a weaver — by any sort of workman or skilled designer.”



Ann Laird Jones
Artist & Theologian



Peacemaking Through Visual Arts

September 23, 2021

Following up on Ann's video reflection from yesterday, consider the following insights and questions:

"Active peacemaking is not just about spoken language. It's about imagining something together, or making something together. It's really fun to give people a verse of Scripture and a ball of clay, and then watching them visually translate Scripture into something beautiful that is in itself an expression of God's word, the joy of community, and the possibility of peace, together. Collaborative visual dreams of peace don't always depend on words!"

What are ways that you have seen people come together, even without a common language? How have you experienced this?

"People gather to work with clay and something magical happens. They initially come to the table with their defenses up: "Oh, I'm not an artist!" But then in the act of working with clay, the most forgiving substance of all, they are able to let go of their fear and their differences, and their defenses go down. If the piece doesn't work out at first, you squish it up and start again! Jeremiah 18: 'Come, let us go down to the potter's house, and there I will let you hear my words!' We are all great artists, with so many gifts for visualizing peace! In working with our hands in clay, it's easy to imagine our hands touching around the table. In working with our hands in clay, it's easy to imagine all people all around the world sitting together at table, creating beauty. In working with our hands in clay, it's easy to imagine God's hands holding all of us together as one vessel."

Why do you think it is so hard for us to "let our defenses down"? What are other ways that we can practice being vulnerable and honest with each other?

"Once the pottery is fired in the kiln, it cannot go back to mud. Instead, it is transformed forever. The whole molecular structure is changed. I think when we find strength to create beauty with form and function, together, we are transformed forever as a people of peace!"

How do you understand the form and function of peacemaking? How do you see the relationship between peace and beauty?

Call to Action: Consider taking a pottery class or making something with your hands with other people. Imagine what you can visualize and create to represent the peace you wish to see in the world.

Ann Laird Jones is a Presbyterian (PCUSA) pastor, artist and director of arts ministry for [Montreat Conference Center](#). She enjoys exploring the conversation between the arts and theology. For her, clay is a link to the world around her, to God and to peace.

Isaiah 64:8: "But now, O Lord, you are our God; we are the clay, and you are our potter; we are all the work of your hand."



Sue Rheem
Representative to the United Nations
Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations

Peacemaking Through Visual Arts
September 25, 2021

Following up on Sue's video reflection from yesterday, consider the following insights and questions:

"At the United Nations, peace means cessation of conflict, but I think it is much more than that. Peace is where there is unity, oneness of self and community and the world. I think about Psalm 133: 'How very good and pleasant it is when kindred live together in unity!' and where peace brings about the flourishing of the world."

What do you think of Sue's definition of peace? How can such unity be achieved? What works of art have you seen that represent the oneness and unity that we are called to achieve?

"It's very heartening for us that the U.N. artworks use Scripture, which we can draw on for inspiration as we do the work of peace. It provides a foundational meaning for all of us."

Did you know that the U.N. uses so much art based on Scripture? Are you surprised? What other important places have you seen art based on Scripture? How does this art contribute to creating a peaceful atmosphere and environment?

Call to Action: Consider using the Presbyterian Ministry at the U.N.'s wonderful [Sunday School Resource](#) and [Devotional Guide](#) oriented around the [Sustainable Development Goals](#) for personal or congregational reflection. These resources cover issues of international peace, justice, poverty and climate change.

Sue Rheem is the Representative to the United Nations for the [Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations](#). In her work, Sue advocates the policies of the PC(USA) General Assembly at the U.N. She also educates and informs Presbyterians about international matters and policies at the U.N.

Isaiah 2:4: "And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore."



Peacemaking Through Action, Advocacy & Service

September 28, 2021

Alonzo Johnson Coordinator Self-Development of People

Following up on Alonzo's video reflection from yesterday, consider the following insights and questions:

"As an advocate, peace is a goal. The goal to help foster wholeness and justice in communities and in Creation. I envision peace as something much larger and fuller than the 'opposite of war.' Peace is about equity and fairness. In an advocacy sense, peace means that fear, insecurity, greed, nihilism, oppression, cynicism and violence are not the last words in our world and culture."

What do you think about Alonzo's suggestion that peace is not simply the opposite of war? What is your understanding of peace and its relation to violence and justice?

"Ask yourself, 'Why are you doing this? Why is this important?' because sometimes we romanticize advocacy. When people think of advocacy, they think of the civil rights movement, or what John Lewis describes as 'good trouble,' but also may think of potential violence. I think people are scared of that. They are also scared that if they become an advocate, that automatically makes them a 'left wing person.' People need to listen, pray and discern what God is calling them to do and know they are not alone in this work."

Have you ever felt any of the fears that Alonzo describes? How have you managed them? Do you know someone who is engaged in advocacy work to whom you could talk about your particular fears so that you can become more active on an issue that matters to you?

"For any church or group doing advocacy, relationships with communities affected by injustice are key. Relationship building sometimes takes a while and is a process. And we learn from those relationships. We are better able to understand our role. Maybe we are not called to do what we think we are called to do. And we learn who we are 'in relationship to.'"

Where have you seen good examples of relationship building in advocacy? Where have you seen poor examples? How would you go about building good relationships?

Call to Action: Research an organization or group doing advocacy in your community on an issue you are passionate about. Study their mission, purpose and ways of building relationships. If their goals and methods align with yours, and with those outlined by Alonzo, sign up to take part in an advocacy opportunity.

Alonzo Johnson is the Coordinator for the [Presbyterian Committee on the Self-Development of People](#) (SDOP). He promotes and interprets the ministry of SDOP to congregations, mid councils, ecumenical and community partners.

Psalm 82:3: "Defend the weak and the fatherless; uphold the cause of the poor and oppressed."





Erika Funk
Director of CROSS Missions
Myers Park Presbyterian Church



Peacemaking Through Action, Advocacy & Service
September 30, 2021

Following up on Erika's video reflection from yesterday, consider the following insights and questions:

"Where there is a community lamenting together in a public way, where there is an expression (verbal or through art) and we invoke the name of God, that is a prayer station to me. We are being called into action. We are lamenting. We are recognizing the suffering of others. Whether or not a minister gets up there and says, 'Let's now join in prayer,' there are people praying in that space. You can count on it."

Based on Erika's description of a "prayer station," where have you seen activities or art that would qualify as a prayer station in your own life? How was art involved? What was the occasion, event or need surrounding it? How did it impact you?

"Peace is knowing what God is asking of us and feeling like we are equipped to do it with others. I hope the prayer stations can help people feel a deeper sense of who God is and what God is asking of us, and a sense of feeling equipped to do something."

What activities have you engaged in that helped you feel "equipped" to do what God was asking of you? What was the context? Have you ever felt equipped to do peacemaking or advocacy work? How did you respond to that sense of feeling equipped?

"Through prayer stations, we can say the things we normally wouldn't say aloud, or write down feelings that we normally wouldn't express through a public prayer. But we feel we can do it by writing a few words on paper, or crumpling up a piece of paper, or lighting a candle. It's a public act but not everyone has to know what you specifically meant by it. I could write the word 'victim' on a piece of paper and I know what that means, and it says enough to the community that it is shared. It is a shared prayer."

Erika describes a unique situation in which personal feelings and experiences can be expressed in meaningful, public ways. Have you ever participated in an activity like this? If so, what was shared by the participants and how did you feel in response?

Call to Action: Consider how a prayer station could be done in your congregation. Outline the purpose it would serve, the artistic elements it would incorporate, and the materials needed to create it. Contact others in your congregation to plan when and how to use it.

Erika serves as the Director of [CROSS Missions](#) at Myers Park Presbyterian Church in Charlotte, North Carolina. She has used prayer stations in worship and public spaces at various events and conferences.

Proverbs 31:8–9: *"Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy."*



Bryan Miller
Executive Director
Heeding God's Call to End Gun Violence



Peacemaking Through Action, Advocacy & Service

October 2, 2021

Following up on Bryan's video reflection from yesterday, consider the following insights and questions:

"Art attracts eyes, so advocates can meet and converse with people about the issues that concern them. If people are attracted, then media responds, providing many more eyes and ways to educate. Art inspires, bringing new people into activism. Art goes hand in hand with contemplation and worship, dignifying a cause."

Bryan provides an interesting insight into how art is the beginning of conversation and inspiration that leads to activism. Where have you seen good examples of art used to bring people into activism? What types of art would make you more excited or interested in participating in peacemaking efforts?

"People have mixed understandings of whether 'Memorials to the Lost' are 'honoring' or 'advocacy,' per se. But most people have been thrilled to find someone is honoring their loved one who was lost to gun violence because generally, this doesn't happen. If anything, they get a little blip in the back pages of the Philadelphia Inquirer."

Do you think "Memorials to the Lost" are a form of advocacy? Remembering Erika Funk's reflection earlier this week, do you think memorials could be considered a prayer station? Why or why not?

"In our gun violence prevention advocacy work, we try to be as positive and determined as possible. We talk about what we will achieve and what our goals are in a positive and appealing way. We don't talk about what the other side's goals are and we don't use negative language and concepts. Taking a nonconfrontational, positive approach gets you in the door with folks to be able to have a conversation."

Bryan mentions the importance of positivity and positive language in advocacy work. Do you have positive associations when you think of advocacy? Why or why not? How could advocacy be done differently to be considered a more positive action?

Call to Action: Consider reaching out to Bryan and *Heeding God's Call* about hosting a "Memorial to the Lost" in your community. If gun violence isn't an issue you are interested in, consider how your community could host a similar type of artistic activity.

Bryan Miller is the Executive Director of [Heeding God's Call to End Gun Violence](#). Heeding is a faith-based and grassroots organization headquartered in Philadelphia, but active throughout the Mid-Atlantic, that is devoted to ending gun violence, with a particular focus on murder committed with illegal guns.

Proverbs 29:7: "The righteous care about justice for the poor, but the wicked have no such concern."