

Peace & Justice SUPPORT NETWORK

Jesus inspired creativity



I've benefited greatly over the past several months from reading the work of Mennonite theologian Gordon Kauffman. I'll be honest, I'm not sure I understand everything he wrote, or agree with it all, but the idea of creativity being a central component of God's work in the world

through Jesus is exciting.

Especially these days as we live in a world that can seem like one endless news cycle, with outrage and disagreement being recycled daily, a call to look ahead, think new thoughts, and attempt new things is refreshing.

This type of creativity isn't about following the latest fashions or fads, which evaporate over time, leaving no impact. This is a creativity that is built on the solid foundations of the life and teachings of Jesus. It's creativity with an eye toward shalom for everyone, with designs to build just relationships among all people.

I struggle, like many people, I imagine, with balancing the excitement of embarking on new ventures with the fear of failure. It's one thing to recite the Scriptures of Jesus calling his disciples to new ways of living—and another to live in new ways.

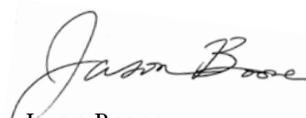
Kauffman has inspired me to see 2019 as an opportunity to try new creative ideas for the Peace and Justice Support Network. Our mission is still the same—we exist to support, encourage and strengthen peace and justice across Mennonite Church USA. And the issues we engage with may be familiar. But this year we want to embark on new ways of approaching them.

(These new initiatives will be shaped by the feedback you gave me last year. Read about the results of your feedback in this issue of *Dove Tales*).

I believe that this direction is right—we need new ways to respond to our times. You've always been supportive and gracious to me personally and to PJSN. I ask for your continued support as we work out these new initiatives and ideas. Let's see where this path leads us.



Peace,



Jason Boone
Coordinating Minister
Peace and Justice Support Network

Beyond the divide

The divisive nature of partisan politics has seeped into almost every aspect of our society. Political views and affiliations often determine who we associate with, even who we worship with. There's a deep desire in our church for tools that can help us talk productively with people with whom we disagree politically. It might be co-workers, family members, or even church friends.

This year, PJSN will begin to work with Better Angels (www.better-angels.org), a movement to reduce political polarization in the United States. By bringing liberals and conservatives together, they aim to build understanding beyond stereotypes, form red/blue community alliances, teach practical skills for communication across political differences, and make a strong public argument for depolarization. Here are five basic skills that Better Angels uses in their work. You can begin to apply these in your relationships today!

1. Listen to understand rather than to prepare your rebuttal. If you couldn't accurately summarize what the other person just said, you haven't listened.
2. Be curious ("Why do you see it this way?") rather than argumentative ("How could you possibly see it that way?").
3. Make sure you understand the other's view before you disagree with it ("Let me see if I understand what you are saying ...").
4. Use "I" statements ("This is how I see it.") more often than truth statements ("This is how it is."). If you are citing facts, give your source rather than just saying it's true.
5. Avoid characterizing the other side's position in your own terms rather than theirs ("Your side sees immigration as a threat to the country." "Your side is for open borders.").

We'll be offering ways for you to learn more about Better Angels, the skills they teach and opportunities they offer to engage, hopefully and peacefully, with others. Stay tuned to future issues of *Dove Tales* and www.pjsn.org for more!

Peace & Justice SUPPORT NETWORK

DoveTales is a publication created by the Peace and Justice Support Network of Mennonite Church USA to resource individuals and congregations in their pursuit of Christian peacemaking and justice seeking. Ideas, articles and reports can be submitted to the editor. **PJSN advisory council:** Dominique Chew, Goshen, Indiana; Jeff Hochstetler, Berlin, Ohio; Dave Hockman-Wert, Corvallis, Oregon; Erica Littlewolf, Albuquerque, New Mexico; Rachelle Lyndaker Schlabach, Washington, D.C.; and Jennifer Davis Sensenig, Harrisonburg, Virginia. **Editor:** Jason Boone, coordinating minister for the Peace and Justice Support Network, PO Box 370, Elkhart, IN 46515-0370; 1-866-866-2872, ext. 23065; Peace@MennoniteUSA.org. **Copy editor:** Karen Hallis Ritchie. **Designer:** Cynthia Friesen Coyle. **PJSN website:** www.PJSN.org. Opinions expressed in *DoveTales* are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official positions of Mennonite Church USA or the Peace and Justice Support Network.



Calling all artists!

At the Mennonite Church USA Convention in Kansas City this coming summer, PJSN needs your help to put peacemaking in the spotlight.

We're calling for submissions of paintings, drawings, graphic arts or sculptures that inspire and challenge us to greater acts of peacemaking.

We'll display these works at our booth in the

convention hall throughout the convention. A silent auction of the artwork will operate, with proceeds going to support peacemaking across our church.

You don't have to be a professional to participate! Like the priesthood of all believers, this art show is open to everybody!

Visit pjsn.org/art for more details.





DoveTales

Peace and Justice Support Network
Mennonite Mission Network
PO Box 370
Elkhart, IN 46515

NON-PROFIT
US POSTAGE

PAID
PERMIT NO.7
SOUTH BEND,
INDIANA

Thank you!

Last year, I asked for your input on how PJSN can be most helpful in supporting peace and justice across our church. Thanks for taking time to respond. This information will shape what and how PJSN works over the months and years ahead. Here's a brief rundown of responses:

What topics or issues would you like to see PJSN address?

Militarism, peace education, economic justice, undoing racism, conflict resolution.

What types of resources would most likely be used by you and those in your congregation or community?

- Printed study guides for Sunday school classes and small groups.
- Video-based study guides for Sunday school classes and small groups.
- Worship resources (litanies, visuals, sermon starters).

As we look ahead to Mennonite Church USA Convention in 2019, what types of opportunities would you like to see PJSN offer there?

Seminars and workshops were by far the most popular responses.

Peace and Justice Support Network is a partnership with Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Mission Network.