



***This Messenger article highlights
"the Brethren Connection" with the
Better World book of Peace stories:***

- 12% of the stories finally selected for the book are from authors with Brethren connections, including:
 - ~ Dr. Florence Crago
 - ~ Sylvia Boaz Leighton
 - ~ Dr. Andrew Murray
 - ~ Rev. Gilbert Romero
 - ~ Barbara Smythe
 - ~ Michael Stern
 - ~ Linda K. Williams

* 11 of the Volunteer story readers and raters were from the Church of the Brethren

* One outstanding volunteer from the La Verne CoB devoted thousands of hours to the book

"Chicken Soup for the Soul," Peacemaker Style

by Audrey Osborne Mazur, From the September, 2005 issue of "The Messenger"

Ever wonder if nonviolence is a real solution for real-life problems? Linda Williams knows that it is. And she has more than 1,000 stories, songs, and poems to prove it.

As word spread from friend to friend and eventually around the globe that she and others were collecting stories about peacemaking, Williams says her biggest problem "was selecting from over 1,000 dynamic stories . . . sharing extraordinary experiences of their nonviolent reactions to threatening situations, and about their inner peace under fire." One hundred and one of these stories now appear in the newly released book, Chicken Soup for the Soul: Stories for a Better World.

After the murder of an elderly relative and the Columbine school shootings in 1999, Williams --- a member of San Diego First Church of the Brethren --- felt compelled to take action. She was convinced that a Chicken Soup for the Soul book would be the best possible way to bring a message of nonviolence into mainstream culture. Williams proposed the idea to the publishers of the famous series of books and, along with her three co-authors --- Dr. Candice C. Carter, Susanna Palomares, and Dr. Bradley Winch ---has been hard at work birthing this book ever since.

Health Communications Inc., publisher of the Chicken Soup for the Soul series by Jack Canfield and Mark Hansen, calls this a "celebration" book and grants it a place of honor as the 101st book in a series known for books that each contain 101 heartwarming, inspirational stories.

Williams' hope for the book is that "these stories will help all of us imagine how we can make our world a safe place for our children, help us learn ways to resolve conflicts without violence, and inspire all of us to strive for a world where every individual is treated with respect and compassion."

Inspired by her passion for peace, Williams has written and recorded more than 100 songs on themes related to conflict resolution and inner peace, and has co-authored a curriculum called "Caring and Capable Kids." She has compiled resources for educators and parents and makes them accessible through **BetterWorld-Resources.com** <http://www.betterworld-resources.com/>. Her respect for children and their capacity as peacemakers shapes her daily interactions as a first-grade reading specialist in an inner-city school. Williams shares her life with her husband, Rob, and daughter, Cherilyn.

Williams may be known most widely from the popular bumper sticker that borrows a line from one of her songs: "When Jesus said, 'Love your enemies,' I think he probably meant don't kill them." (**BrethrenPress.com** Go to "**When Jesus said**" in search box)

Many people in Williams' home congregation helped and encouraged her through the Chicken Soup book process, which also benefited from the work of volunteers across the denomination. Those volunteers read and rated stories during

the four-year selection process. They helped to narrow down more than 1,000 original submissions to 160 stories from which the publisher then chose 101 for publication. Brethren volunteer readers included Florence Crago, Evelyn Frantz, Susie Glass, Meagan Harlow, Sally Kurzdorfer, Laura Miller, Vernon Mitchell, Jennie Ramirez, Victoria Turner, Cherilyn Williams, and Christine Wills.

One outstanding volunteer, Barbara Smythe of the La Verne, Calif. CoB, gave thousands of hours to the project. A gifted writer, Smythe submitted her own stories; served as a ghost writer for others' taped interviews; and edited, re-wrote, and polished numerous stories. At one count, Williams' in-box contained more than 560 project-related e-mail messages from Smythe, who provided crucial support throughout the arduous journey to final publication.

Authors with Brethren connections whose stories appear in the final version of the book are Sylvia Boaz Leighton, Dr. Florence Crago, Dr. Andrew Murray, Rev. Gilbert Romero, Barbara Smythe, Michael Stern, and Linda K. Williams. Their stories comprise a significant 12 percent of the book.

Other authors include well-known peace activists and educators George Lakey, James McGinnis, President Jimmy Carter, Howard Zinn, and Thich Nhat Hanh. The majority of stories, however, are by lay people who have found creative and transformative ways to respond to violence in everyday life.

Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Desmond Tutu wrote a prayer specifically for inclusion in the book. He provides this endorsement: "What a splendid anthology of stories that tell so eloquently how each of us can make a difference as a peacemaker, sometimes spectacularly on the international level, but more often no less spectacularly on an intimate, personal level."

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She is a member of Black Rock Church of the Brethren in Glenville.*

NOTES AND NO-COST RESOURCES ADDED APRIL 2023
by Linda K. Williams LKW_BetterWorld@yahoo.com :

Page #'s for authors with Church of the Brethren connections:

p.'s 195, 237 Sylvia Boaz Leighton
p. 9 Dr. Florence Crago (the story of how Heifer Project / International began)
p. 112 Dr. Andrew Murray
p. 244 Rev. Gilbert Romero
p.'s 41, 53, 114, 244, 294, 318 Barbara Smythe ("as told to...")
p. 226 Michael Stern
p. 110 song lyrics, p. 278 story Linda K. Williams.

Chicken Soup for the Soul: Stories for a Better World – PDF's of 5 Sample Stories

<https://lkwbetterworld.files.wordpress.com/2021/05/5-17-21-csbw-5-sample-stories-w.-songs-bonus-resources-and-list-of-other-stories.pdf>

These stories are provided to print out and use / share. Also offered are numerous Bonus Resources and List of other Stories connected with songs -- e.g., connected with the story about Heifer Project / International, links are provided for 2 songs by Andy Murray, plus 3 songs about hope and empowerment, and 3 children's books about Heifer International.

CaringandCapableKids.com 52 songs with Circle Topics –“Think and Share Invitations”-- and Bonus Resources

<https://lkwbetterworld.files.wordpress.com/2021/05/5-21-21-caring-and-capable-kids-portal-document.pdf>

Songs of Hope, Faith, and Peacemaking (including Biblical references)

<https://songlyricsbylindakwilliams.files.wordpress.com/2021/09/songs-of-hope-faith-and-peacemaking-10-1-21.pdf>

Community Building Songs to Support the Kingian Nonviolence Curriculum

27 songs with Circle Topics –“Think and Share Invitations” – and 6 Song Videos

<https://betterworld.bandcamp.com/album/community-building-songs-to-support-the-kingian-nonviolence-curriculum-link-below-for-pdf-of-all-lyrics-think-and-share-invitations>

Niños Cariñosos y Capaces Cantado por JK Keller, Grabado por Andy y Terry Murray

4 Songs recorded in Spanish – Includes PDF of all lyrics and Circle Topics in Span. & Eng.

<https://betterworld.bandcamp.com/album/ni-os-cari-osos-y-capaces-cantado-por-jk-keller-grabado-por-andy-y-terry-murray-pdf-of-all-lyrics-and-circle-topics-in-span-eng-now-available-link-in-lyrics-of-each-song>

Compassionate Comprehension with the Common Core: For Restorative Practices and Justice with a Trauma-Informed Lens --
Combining Reading Comprehension with Empathy and Compassion

<https://lkwbetterworld.files.wordpress.com/2017/07/7-9-17-revisions-cc-cc-8-p-master-doc.pdf>