



Pastor Enno's Weekly Message

Dear Friends,

Last week, I painted a pretty grim picture of our world and the violence that is within it. I am not saying there is no hope; I truly believe there is hope and the world is actually getting better at working out its differences non-violently. It's just that we aren't there yet. I left the grimness out there because even if we could solve those hot spots this year in 2024, it shouldn't negate the pain and suffering those people are going through now and will continue to endure, as some actions, though there may be reconciliation, still leave scars and wounds and memories not so easily erased.

I found a short video on [Instagram](#) of a rabbi telling the story of Gaza, that in the early 20th century, it was a cosmopolitan city where Jews, Muslims, and Christians lived together peacefully and were good neighbors. The myth or stereotype that the 'Holy Land' has always been in turmoil isn't true. It has had its share of wars and conflict, but most of them have had little to do with religion and almost always to do with kings and men of power who used religion to justify their violence. This can be said of Europe, Asia, Africa, North and South America, and Australia. In our 250-year existence as a nation, we have had less than 20 years of our history where we weren't involved in a violent conflict.

The USSR lasted 50 years. Nazi Germany lasted less than 15 years. The Confederacy in our history lasted 5 years. Evil empires don't last forever. They just can't. Democracies can last if the people struggle to keep them, as was shown in our 2022 elections.

In the beginning of the book of Isaiah, God calls to the nation of Israel (and all nations and peoples) to learn to do good:

Seek justice:
 help the oppressed;
 defend the orphan;
 plead for the widow.

Let us continue to do so.

Peace