

LIGHT

Facts And Action In Applied Christianity

An Occasional Bulletin In Christian Social Ethics

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SPECIAL CHRISTMAS ISSUE: WAR AND PEACE

ORGANIZED DRAFT DODGING

- Editorial Excerpt -

"There is nothing illegal, however, about people marching to express their opposition to the war in Vietnam. If they block troop trains or interfere with the legal rights of others, that is another matter. But those who want the United States to get out of Vietnam have as much right to express that view as those who consider President Johnson soft on Communism because he has made plain this country's readiness to negotiate for an honorable settlement. Freedom of speech and freedom of petition are not exclusively for those who represent the majority sentiment in a democracy.

The antiwar demonstrators would certainly exhibit a great sense of realism if they addressed their calls for peace to the Communist capital and not solely to Washington. But any blunderbuss effort to suppress the demonstrations and to depict all the leaders as Communist wreckers will be to help invest them with the armor of martyrdom so many of the dissenters plainly desire. It will also raise questions about the consistency of American dedication to the very same principles of democracy and freedom which the United States seeks to champion around the world."

-- New York Times, October 19, 1965

ARMS SELLING'S BIG BUSINESS

- Column by Marquis Childs -

"Argentina, teetering for months in a state of economic and political jitters, has just agreed to buy 50 jet attack planes, the A4B, from the Douglas Aircraft Co. at a cost of about \$250,000 each.

This deal says a lot about the competition to sell advanced weapons in underdeveloped countries struggling to overcome grave economic handicaps.

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Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara reacts indignantly to reports of Pentagon arms salesmen persuading the governments of these countries to buy American weapons. Not so, he says. The American objective is to hold down arms budgets in underdeveloped countries to a minimum.

But British, France, German and Italian arms merchants are pushing their wares in Latin America, the Middle East and Africa. The goal of the United States in instance after instance is to sell cheaper and sell less. The theory is that in this way military budgets can be restrained.

With the furious pace of arms research and development among the big powers, weapons become obsolete at an ever more rapid rate. This means ever mounting costs and it means, too, ever increasing pressure on the arms' merchants to unload some of the cost on underdeveloped countries happy for the time being with second or third rate arms that are still part of the jet age." -- Nashville Tennessean, October 3, 1965

PEACE AND WORLD ORDER

(Statements from the General Conference of the Methodist Church, May 8, 1964)

"The Basis for Our Concern -- Let the church remember that the basis for our concern is in Biblical theology and Christian ethics. God's love in Christ has reconciled all men to himself and to each other. Through this reconciliation, we acknowledge God as Father, and all men as brothers. It is God's will that all men should live in intelligent good will with all others.

We have as our heritage the words of the prophets that the nations "shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks" and that the nations shall not "learn war any more."

We who are called to be followers of the Prince of Peace should make the redemptive love that was in Jesus a dynamic and moving force within our society. Unless we are able to relate the deepest ethical insights of our religion to the task of making peace at this moment in history, and unless we are able to deal creatively with the forces that lead to war, then we will have failed God our Creator and Christ our Lord.

Therefore, let us open our lives to the influence of God's will, persistently explore the possibilities of moral force and spiritual power, and seek to become instruments for his peacemaking purposes. Let us use ourselves and our resources of energy, influence and treasure to establish the foundations of peace.

We call attention to the unique opportunities of the church as an instrument of peace, and to the special responsibilities which these opportunities imply:

- a. The church can be objective, since it represents no particular nation, social class, economic theory, or political party.
- b. The church can be a means of communication, since it includes people of many nations and groups.
- c. The church can be a means of reconciliation and unity, since it holds forth a supreme loyalty greater than the lesser causes for which men fight.
- d. The church has, in the proclamations of the prophets, the standards of social righteousness without which peace is not secure.

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e. The church has, in the witness of Christ, the key to achieving needed change without violence.

f. The church can hear and share the Spirit of the Eternal, in which contemporary passions may be seen in true perspective.

The Failures of the Church -- We must frankly face our past failures to be an effective peace-making instrument.

We have too frequently echoed the attitude of the secular institutions of our society instead of sharing God-given spiritual and ethical insights. We have sometimes been happy to follow, after others have demonstrated that it is safe to be for peace. We have allowed ourselves to become too adjusted to the idea of war and preparations to destroy our brothers. We have allowed our consciences to become so calloused that we have often accepted as justified nuclear, bacteriological and chemical weapons of mass annihilation. We have often failed to seek reconciliation between estranged men and nations and to be the redemptive, suffering, serving fellowship that God has called us to be."

" . . . THEREFORE CHOOSE LIFE "

"The political parties men serve, the flags they salute, the fraternities they maintain, the holy books they revere or abjure--all these have suddenly become of intermediate significance alongside the positions men take on the question of war or peace in a nuclear age. For there are only two groupings of ultimate consequence on earth. One grouping consists of those who give thought to the implications of nuclear war and are willing to look and build beyond national sovereignty in order to avert it. The other grouping regards nuclear force primarily as a form of advanced military weaponry at the call of the national sovereign state. All other groupings or parties, whatever their formal designations--Socialists, Communists, Democrats, Republicans, Christian Democrats, etc.--have only limited relevance in the human situation today and, for all their prominence or fury, are rapidly becoming vestigial.

The first grouping knows that the business of peace has become the most important business in the world. Within that grouping is an almost limitless diversity of backgrounds and affiliations. But they constitute a world peace party. The ties that bind them are literally the

strongest ties in the world, for they are concerned with human destiny.

Of all the implications of nuclear force, therefore, none is more compelling and critical to religious leaders than the fact that nuclear war would only superficially be a war between nations. Essentially, it would be a war against God. For it is the work of God and not of man alone that is now in jeopardy. The precariously balanced conditions that make life on this planet possible--not solely human life but life in general--these conditions can now be smashed or altered. Man's works of art, his cities, his cathedrals, and his homes are palpable, personal, replaceable. But his genes and his basic nature belong to a higher design and are not his to expunge or assail.

The rights of the state are many. They include the right to sacrifice human life or to take human life in the defense of the nation. But there is nothing in the political rights of the state or its rulers that includes the right to strike at the very nature of man, or to disfigure the face of man, or to toy with the vital balances that make life possible. For if the state has political rights, man has natural rights. These natural rights should be beyond the reach

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BAPTIST WORLD ALLIANCE RESOLUTION ON PEACE

Miami, Florida, June, 1965

"In these days of tension and concern for the destiny of all mankind, we Baptists appeal to all Christians to join together to preserve peace on earth.

We must answer the call "to seek peace and pursue it." "The things that belong to Thy peace" must be found. No nation wins a nuclear war, all are defeated. As much as one hundred and twenty billions of dollars are being spent yearly on armaments and armed forces by the nations of the world.

We are firmly convinced that with a united effort and the blessing of Almighty God, the great aim of peace and good will upon earth can be reached, to the glory and the joy and happiness of mankind.

We, therefore, the Baptist World Alliance meeting in Assembly in Miami Beach, Florida, U.S.A., call upon the nations of the world to desist from acts of direct or indirect aggression whether they be in Viet Nam, Santo Domingo, Tibet, Berlin, the Middle East, Africa, Asia, Europe, the Americas or in any other parts of the world.

We call upon the nations of the world to use the conference table to settle all international disputes and to use the agencies of the United Nations to this end.

We call on all governments to renounce the use of nuclear arms, to desist from the testing of nuclear weapons for war and to destroy all stock piles of nuclear arms after appropriate safeguards are given and received.

We call upon men of faith and good will in all churches, in all religions and in all nations to use every valid channel, social, political, economic and religious to end all forms of war and to establish a just peace for all mankind.

We call especially upon Christians to be instant in protestations against warfare in this modern age that would inevitably bring human annihilation, and to be urgent in praying and working for world peace.

We proclaim Jesus Christ as the true Prince of Peace and the hope of the world."

-- Baptist World, September, 1965

POMPEII REVISITED

- Editorial Excerpt -

"The nuclear terror will not go away however much we wish that we lived in another kind of world. Unlearning the process of its creation is not a viable option. We opened Pandora's box and we cannot close it. Nor is there presently any hope that the United States or any of the other nuclear powers will voluntarily cease the production or renounce the use of nuclear weapons. Moreover, the hard facts allow little possibility that nuclear weaponry will be transferred from national

to international control. Man appears hemmed in on all sides by the demons he himself released. This is undoubtedly the grimmest situation ever faced by man and the severest test of his adaptability. We do not have the answer and we do not know anyone who does. Of this we are sure: naively optimistic indifference and paralyzing fear are both pathological. In the past 20 years we have rushed down a dead end. If we now surrender to apathy or to panic, we shall not come out alive."

--Christian Century, August 4, 1965

FROM "REPORT ON VIETNAM" BY CLERGYMEN'S
EMERGENCY COMMITTEE, FELLOWSHIP OF RECONCILIATION

"The achievement of a ceasefire and the setting up of peacekeeping machinery are only the prologue to the great work of healing and international cooperation that must follow. Large-scale programs, like the Mekong River development project, and small-scale person-to-person and group-to-group projects, both governmental and non-governmental, are natural steps in this direction. Such programs should be increasingly international in conception and direction and, on invitation from the recipient country, with personnel grounded in the language and customs of the people with whom they will work as equal partners in a common enterprise.

Creation of a peaceful world requires acceptance of the principle of common responsibility and interdependence in the family of nations. War must be totally rejected, but it is not enough to seek peace; we must discover non-military forms of active involvement in the struggle for justice as well.

We have lived too long within the traditional concepts of nation against nation, ideology against ideology, race against race. Today we see the true enemies of man to be what they have always been: injustice, poverty, disease, national pride, the abuse of power, and the hatred and war that are their creatures and creators. To be complacent about these is to deny humanity itself. To focus our attention on these evils rather than to fight within the family of man is to stand with the God of history."

-- Interchurch News, August-September, 1965

CHRISTIAN FAITH AND NATIONAL POWER

- Editorial Excerpt -

"Christianity may exercise a vital and determinative influence in the nation, but only upon its own terms. It is never to be used merely to bolster patriotism, or just to support the political, economic, or military status quo. To think of finite man using the infinite God for his own ends is impious folly. Every nation, the United States included, stands under the judgment of God. It is, therefore, a great and dangerous perversion to consider the Christian faith merely as a kind of national convenience to be turned on when we need it and to be used for our own purposes. Christ is not subject to our direction; he

directs us. God's ways are not our ways, nor his thoughts our thoughts. The power of Christianity in national life is effective only when men submit themselves humbly to God and to his Christ.

This is why churches, ministers, and laymen need to keep their priorities clear in these critical days. Christianity speaks to every aspect of life. It relates inescapably to spiritual and moral questions--and most issues having to do with human beings involve ultimately spiritual and moral issues, because man is a creature not only of time but also of eternity."

-- Christianity Today, July 2, 1965

"WAR -- BEARISH, or BULLISH?"

"During the month one of the country's most respected investment companies, the Arthur Wiesenberger people, came up with an investment report with the latest dope on how the market reflects, as they put it, "war considerations."

"Basically," their report stated firmly, "war is bearish, not bullish. However, a limited war--big enough to stimulate the economy but not large enough to bring controls--can provide a stimulus to the economy and to investor sentiment. To date the war in Vietnam has been in this category."

"But war," the report continued, "is unpredictable. Therefore it still behooves the investor to temper whatever encouragement he may derive from increased activity resulting from the stepped-up tempo of war with the consideration of the deflationary effects a real intensification of the conflict might have." --Cleveland Amory Column, Saturday Review of Literature, October 2, 1965

ECHOES FROM PACEM IN TERRIS CONVOCATION

New York, February, 1965

"I must express a deep skepticism about the utility of peaceful talk without a new impetus to peaceful action. Peace is not something to be inherited by aspirations alone. It will be attained, if at all, by action in its service."

--Abba Eban, Deputy Prime Minister, Israel

"Each side in the Cold War should commit itself to a new act of faith in the ultimate humanity and sobriety of the people on the other side."

--George Kennan, Former U.S. Ambassador to the Soviet Union

"I believe that it is a violation of natural law for half of the people of the world to live in misery, in abject poverty, without hope for the future, while the affluent nations spend on militarism a sum of money equal to the entire income of this miserable half of the world's people." -- Linus Pauling, Nobel Prize Winner in Chemistry and Peace

WAR

"The concern of the gospel is for individual persons. There is not a word of advice in the New Testament about mass communication One of the ingredients in the degradation of modern war is that it has become so completely depersonalized that justice cannot be administered on a basis of individual responsibility, nor can punishment be made to fit the crime. Perhaps even worse, the revulsion against war is diminished because of the failure to realize that people are involved." --Roland Bainton,

Christian Attitudes Toward War and Peace, Abingdon, 1960, p.263.

". . .Therefore Choose Life" (continued from page 3)

and the authority of the state. The good society should exist to serve and protect these rights: "Man has a right to keep himself from being cheapened, debased or deformed. He has a right to creative growth. He has a right to individual sanctity and sovereignty. He has a right to make life purposeful. If these natural rights should die, though human flesh in some form remain, then the survivors will not be the lucky ones."

--Norman Cousins, Papers on Peace, Center For Study of Democratic Institutions

THE CHALLENGE OF PEACE

"In this world threatened by nuclear holocaust, the ideals of the Prince of Peace seem strangely remote. The Bible passages which speak of "wars and rumors of wars" and which prophesy of Armageddon, the moon's being turned to blood, and the heavens melting with a fervent heat seem somehow more timely and more realistic. To the end that the biblical prospect of peace on earth and good will among men may not perish from the earth and to the end that Christians shall not be conformed to this warring world, we make the following affirmations: (1) modern nuclear war between the United States and our Communist adversaries cannot be justified on the basis of the wars between Israel and her pagan neighbors as recorded in the Old Testament; (2) the peace with which the Bible is concerned is the peace that comes from doing the will of the Lord, and national peace or radical peace or economic peace or class peace or international peace are derivatives of this deeper peace; (3) it is not right for Christians who have experienced this peace of God that passes all understanding to rest then at ease in Zion while the world about us stumbles blindly toward genocide; (4) the people of God cannot expect to keep the peace unless we find new and more meaningful ways of giving it away; and (5) this peace does not wait on God but upon God's people who, having their feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, are willing to stand up with courage and conviction for the things that make for peace.

In the light of these affirmations, we express the earnest hope that Southern Baptists will seize what initiative we can to foster peace. (1) We purpose to keep keenly alive in our minds the great goal of peace among men as we proclaim the gospel of the Prince of Peace. (2) As Christian citizens, we are determined to be creatively involved in solving the pressing national and international problems of prejudice, poverty, injustice, and immorality so that we may have a firmer place on which to stand as we seek to work toward peace among nations. (3) The strategy of sabre-rattling and brinkmanship, and macabre terms like "overkill" and "megacorpuses" will never solve the problems of world conflicts at their deeper levels and should not be considered as substitutes for Christian redemption and compassion. (4) We pledge our moral, financial, and political support to those leaders who responsibly positionize themselves against war and for peace. Realism reminds us that arms may have to be employed in the ultimate defense of freedom, but that peace with justice should always be a major goal of the world's political leaders. (5) As Christians, we declare again our firm conviction that it is far better for diplomats to shout at one another in open debate at the United Nations than for soldiers to shoot at one another in open combat on the battlefield and that the political machinery of a world organization such as the United Nations, strengthened and supported, is absolutely necessary if the nations are to learn to live together and work together in peace."

--From Christian Life Commission Report,
Adopted by the 1965 Southern Baptist Convention Meeting

MEASURED

- Editorial -

"THE WRISTWATCH encased in glass silently greets visitors beginning their walk along the corridors of Hiroshima's Peace Memorial Museum. I recently viewed this diminutive timepiece that was sifted out of the city's rubble and ashes soon after the atomic holocaust 20 years ago. Across the charred dial, the tiny hands point to 8:15, the exact time of the furious blast that ushered in a new age and destroyed the city. Man, the measurer and the calculator, had designed two machines--one that would release a new kind of power, the other that would record the moment of release.

There was fearful symbolism in almost all the grim and haunting exhibits in that museum. Horrifyingly depicted are the effects of radiation and heat on those who died and those who survived.

The symbolism of the watch should stir in us a new awareness of our need for carrying the message of Christ's redeeming grace. Hiroshima was a target for death in 1945. The bomb's detonation device had been laboriously and meticulously planned and produced. The timing of the mission was carefully worked out. Mere man, with his incurable addiction to measuring and planning destruction, stood on the threshold of the ultimate.

What happened as a result of all that calculating and measuring is history. The old Hiroshima vanished and a new one has been built. But where is the evidence that they who have known a greater power than all others have planned and measured to take the message of life in Christ?

Hiroshima, rebuilt, stands as a symbol of a second chance for reaching its people with the message and power of God's love. Hiroshima is representative of many places in the world where destruction and death have been--and still go on. May the little charred watch, as a symbol of man's measurement of time, stir us to reach out to all the world in the power of him who said: "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day; the night cometh, when no man can work" (John 9:4)."

--The Commission, Foreign Mission Board, July, 1965

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