

From WORDS to WAR:

How now am I / are we to make peace with this war?

I was to lead a discussion tomorrow on "The Bible & the Qur'an: Seeds of Conflict & Seeds of Reconciliation" --but a war has inconveniently intervened, so....

As I write, this photo of four soldiers (3 American, 1 Iraqi) is only hours old. Here, **WRITE** in the order ideas/feelings come to you:



p1 CAPE COD TIMES 3.22.3

ITSUO INOUE/Associated Press

U.S. Marines from the 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit offer water to an Iraqi soldier, one of the nearly 200 who surrendered to the Marine unit just an hour after troops crossed the border into Iraq from Kuwait. Allied commanders also accepted the surrender of all 8,000 soldiers of the 51st Iraqi Infantry Division. Some Iraqi troops were so eager to quit that they surrendered to journalists.

Bible Study on the photo:

Proverbs 25.21-22: "Give your enemies [water] to drink; for you will heap coals of fire on their heads, and the LORD will reward you." (All quotations, NRSV.) Note mix of compassion & (as in 24.17-18) self-interest.

Matthew 5.44: "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you." The divine sanction follows: Be as God (the Creator, in sun & rain) is, namely, indiscriminately compassionate. The Greeky self-interested motive of changing an enemy into a friend is not adduced here; rather, the Jewish "What would God (does God) do?"--which became WWJD ("What would Jesus do?").

The Synoptic parallel (Luke 6.27-28): "Love your enemies [repeated in vs.25], do good to those who hate you...bless...pray for...." Not having print or electronic communications, Jesus said *almost* the same things dozens, scores, probably hundreds of times; note the "persecute"/"hate" difference in these Synoptic sayings.

Matthew 25.35 To the acceptable (those on his right hand), the Son of Man says "I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink." Verse 40: "You did it to me." To the unacceptable, the rejected, the Son of Man says "You gave me nothing to drink." Verse 45: "You did not do it to me."

Romans 12.20-21 Give your enemies "something to drink....Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good."

Now to the question in this Thinksheet's subtitle. Here are the answers of David Torbett, "Finding God in War," Institute for Global Engagement/03: (1) Don't: civil-disobedience RESISTANCE. (2) Do: SURRENDER. Passive acquiescence: apathy seen as piety. (3) Do: PROVIDENCE, trusting in God transcendent (neither against us nor on our side--but both: the former in judgment, the latter in grace). "The world is the theater of God's glory" (Calvin), so minimize evil & maximize good (looking for "redemptive possibilities").

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