

My thinksheets well up from some emotion--love, anger, fear-anxiety, disgust, sadness--and are the particular emotion in the process of crystalization. Like salt separating out of oceanism. Yes, most of my thinksheets are more-ways-than-one salty. E.g., this one, bubbling up from my dis-ease at the present peace-movement.

1. Many churches and church-related organizations, especially those of liberal persuasion in a nonliberal time, have been in search of an issue --for their "action" has traditionally been issue-oriented. And many have lit upon "peace" as their current issue: I have been in position to observe the selection-process close up in a number of these cases--e.g., United Church of Christ, Riverside Church (NY), Kirkridge. As for the last in this list, I've been asked to tilt the Kirkridge 1982 "Readings and Intentions" in the peace direction, and I have done so with good but uneasy conscience.*

2. I have good conscience in witnessing and working for peace, for I am a Christian and thus committed to *mal'kuth YHWH* (the Kingdom of God) and thus to *shalom* (the inner-outer-inner "peace-prosperity-joy") of that reign which bodies forth the qualities of that King who is even more Father than King (in Jesus, the domestic governing the political metaphor). [I have decreasing patience with the nutty suggestion that we stop using "King" and "Father" because they are "noninclusive." Non-use of such central biblical terms would result in partial alienation from Scripture and heritage just as non-use of biblical terms in general results in near-total amnesia vis-a-vis the West's spiritual legacy. Alienation is weakening, amnesia is killing. Feminism, yes; inclusive-langulage revisionism, no.]

3. My conscience, however, is uneasy because:

(1) So many of my colleagues have been seduced by ideological non-violence. Every peace statement I've read in recent months has grandmother saying, "Children, don't fight!" When I grew up, I learned that grandmother's main reason for having said that is that children fighting got on her nerves; and the truth is coming home to me stronger now that I myself am beginning to "have nerves" (which does not mean that oldsters must be irritable). How should grandmother know whether the children should fight, or we American Christians know what and how much violence, in any, there should be now in the MidEast? Of course it's another thing if grandma, or the U.S.A., is in position to persuade or force to nonviolence. I was in the MidEast in '58 when our gunboat diplomacy prevented violent destabilization of Lebanon (the marines rushing the beaches): I'm uneasy because I still can't figure out whether letting Lebanon explode would have been a better idea.

(2) There's no decent historical evidence that peace movements are a good idea, and some solid evidence that their influence has sometimes been pernicious. Church should watchdog state (and vice versa), but ignorant meddling is ignorant and often (bad sense) "innocent." Even the fact that peace movements provide an outlet for the frustrated righteous, helping them "feel good that at least I'm doing something"--even that is questionable, indeed morally flawed.

(3) Proximate shaloms have been created by "empires" (i.e., transnational achievements of a monopoly of violence), not by nonviolence. THE FEDERALIST PAPERS argue against letting the Colonies be a loose confederacy like Germany, "attended with slaughter and desolation"; and in 1860 A. Lincoln insisted on crushing S. Carolina's assumption of military state-sovereignty. Military world-federalism makes sense, but it seems improbable that humankind will arrive at that short of global holocaust--so I'm embarrassed by the irrelevance of ludditism against particular weapons.

*For this, I made "a peace lectionary," selecting 216 Scripture passages to cover the range and depth of the Bible's teaching on peace/shalom/eirene.