

RELIGIOUS EMPHASIS DAY † Peoria Area Council of Churches † 2.19.57

"IS THERE AN ALTERNATIVE TO WAR?"

Seminar leader: Willis Elliott; Discussion Leaders: JJHostetler, Jean Morton, Theo. Kenney, Mrs. Conrad Reisner, EHSoderberg.

BIBLE: Old Testament Reading: Isaiah 9.2-6; 11.1-9; New Testament Reading: Jn. 14.27-15.17
 These passages present the following CORRELATIVE IDEAS to peace, LIGHT, JOY, JUSTICE, DISARMAMENT, PRINCE OF PEACE (in that order, in Is. 9); JUSTICE, NON-VIOLENCE, KNOWLEDGE OF THE LORD (in that order, in Is. 11); INNER PEACE, JOY, FAITH, LOVE (in that order, in the Fourth Gospel passage).

"PEACE" is merely the antonym of "war": alternatives of war are all instrumentalities that minister to "total prosperity" (Hebrew "shalom") and "undisturbance" (Greek "eire-ne").

JESUS' main way of speaking about this is the phrase "Rule [or Kingdom] of God" now & later. If you let God rule in your life, YOU are an alternative to war--you yourself an instrument of peace. [Remember the Prayer of St. Francis: "Lord, make me an instrument of your peace."] If you let God rule through your life, you become a MORAL FORCE for peace.

OUR JOINT SPIRITUAL HERITAGE SPEAKS: "Catholic, Jewish and Protestant Declaration on World Peace"... OUR PROTESTANT CHURCHES SPEAK: "A Just and Durable Peace"

AM I AN ALTERNATIVE TO WAR?

1. Do I go around with a chip on my shoulder?
2. Do I enter discussions as problems to be solved or as battles to be won?
3. Am I a good listener (fulfilling my democratic belief in the dignity of man and the rights of others)?
4. How do I stand on race prejudice (what do I think of Martin Luther King, for example)?
5. Have I ever considered going abroad on a Work Camp --or am I interested in studying abroad [student exchange, etc.]?
6. Do I practice the Presence of God, and am I curious about what he wants [for example, about war do I ask such questions as: is God in war? where is he in war? what is he doing in war? is he a God of Wrath, a God of love, or both? and do I participate in such discussions with others?]
7. Have I thought much about the Old Testament Commandment, "Thou shalt not murder"--and our Lord's "Love your enemies"?
8. Do I share (knowing that maldistribution due to selfishness is a basal cause of tension and strife)?
9. Do I witness to what I believe most, or always keep my conversation at the level of chit-chat?
10. Do I try to be an informed citizen about matters everywhere (not just locally or nationally), and so help shape foreign policy--or do I minimize my influence toward the kind of world I believe God wants and man needs?
11. Have I ever considered politics as a Christian vocation?
12. What's my attitude toward the draft--wholly negative, as I think it may "get me"?
13. Am I easily "sold" on military ads and talk of the need to spend half the federal income on war?
14. Do I think all Russians are bad, or communism is all bad, or "the American way of life" is pretty close to what Jesus meant by "the Kingdom of God"? [Do I understand my Christian duty to criticize the status quo in the light of the ideal revealed in Christ?]
15. How do I feel about pacifists (knowing that the Christian conscience comprehends all possible positions other than outright militarism with its dogma that might makes right)?
16. Have I considered the 78 church vocations?

IS MY CHURCH AN ALTERNATIVE TO WAR?

1. Do I know what my communion has said and done about alternatives to war?
2. Have I participated in any way in formulating or discussing these statements and achievements--for example, in youth fellowship?
3. Have I helped my church reduce tension within its own ranks, within its community?
4. Are there some folk--of different racial or national background--whom you would just as soon not have in your church?
5. Do I seriously consider Christian missions as an alternative to war?
6. Do I know about such self-help projects as Frank Laubach's World Literacy, and World Neighbors Inc.?
7. Does my church humbly keep open the channels of self-criticism, and of fellowship with other churches (in local, state, national, and world councils of churches)?
8. Knowing that two-thirds of the people in the world go to bed hungry every night, do I really "dig down" to support Church World Service (with its CROP and "One Great Hour of Sharing") and similar agencies of Christian charity?
9. What about violence: neutral instrument (of good and evil), or perversion?

IS MY COMMUNITY A DEMONSTRATION THAT WAR IS UNNECESSARY?

1. If peace is the presence of brotherhood more than just the absence of war, what have I done to promote brotherhood right where I live--with people I "don't like", and between others?
2. Do I gossip, poisoning the social atmosphere?
3. Do I know about Koinonia, etc.?

WHAT ABOUT MY STATE AND NATION?

1. Do I "keep up" with proposed legislation, "keep in touch" with my representatives, pray for Guidance on leaders in every sphere of life?
2. Am I willing to let Point IV and similar projects for technical assistance die, without voicing my protest?
3. Am I a student of the roots and causes of wars between nations, or do I fall victim to oversimplifications (such as the determinisms)?
4. Do I think my nation has anything to "repent" of?
5. Am I for liberalizing immigration policy, or have I done much thinking about population pressures as incentives to war?

WHAT ABOUT INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS?

1. Do I boost the United Nations Organization, and how much do I know about its war-prevention agencies (UNESCO, for ex.)?
2. Am I for immediate atomic disarmament?
3. How do I feel about the first international army (in Suez)? The World Court, and international law?
4. Am I spectator or participant?

SOME SPECIFIC THINGS I CAN DO: