

On The Relationship Of World Law & Religion

(Excerpts from a Sermon by the Rev. Mr. John Zunes)

"... The decisions that guide our everyday activities, whether they be political, economic, religious or social must be based on God's moral law. In the Christian Church we often emphasize the fact that God is love, and we forget that he is also a God of law. We have ample evidence in the Scriptures and in the world around us that God has created an orderly universe based on law.

"We see God's physical laws of nature in action all around us. The planets in their courses around the sun, and the invisible electrons moving with the speed of light in the storm, all move according to physical laws established by God when He created them. When we plant a seed in the ground, we see it sprout, and grow, and flourish and bear fruit. It happens every year and we can count on it for our food. This is because it follows the laws of growth set up by God.

"Man has been able to harness the forces of nature for his own good because they are predictable. They follow orderly patterns so that we are able to know what will happen next. Even before he was able to explain scientific laws, man was conscious of the orderly workings of nature under God's physical laws.

"God has also laid down certain laws to govern the affairs of men. These are the moral laws of God that govern man's conduct in relation to his Creator and to his fellow men. When these laws are observed, man lives in peace and harmony within and without. When these laws are violated, there is both internal and external strife. The basic law of God is the law of love. This is a creative outgoing love that seeks the fulfillment of God's creativity in every individual.

The first specific rule for the conduct of God's people was handed to Moses on Mt. Sinai in the form of the Ten Commandments. This was later expanded by the Deuteronomic writers and applied to everyday life by the great Hebrew prophets.

"These moral laws were given by God because He knew, as our Creator, that we would enjoy a more abundant life if we followed these laws. When these laws are ignored, personal greed and social unrest result. Because these moral laws are violated, individuals, groups, and nations find themselves opposed to each other, and try to resolve their differences by going to war.

"Since God has founded the physical world on a basis of law and intends for our moral and spiritual relationships to be founded on law, surely He intends for our political relationships to be founded on law. Evidence of this, too, can be seen in the Scripture and in the world around us. In the passage from Exodus . . ., we heard the advice of Jethro to his son-in-law, Moses. He was to be the judge of the people in their civil and political disputes. And, he also appointed men to be rulers of thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens. In other words, Moses shared the responsibility of judging the people with others so that the job would not overwhelm him.

"Ever since man first came together in social groups, there has been law to govern his relationships. In the family each was delegated his responsibility and was expected to abide by it. When he failed to do so, he was punished. I am told that in the past, when there was no deputy in the vicinity of N. Cooleemee, it was not safe for people to walk in this section at night. On the state and national levels, we have the State and Federal Bureaus of Investigation to enforce the laws made to prevent violence among the citizens.

"Soon after the thirteen colonies were settled, it became evident that some kind of law regulating commerce and preventing aggression between the various states was necessary. So, the Articles of Confederation was established. Shortly, however, it was obvious that this was not adequate for the task, and the Constitution of the United States was adopted. As means of transportation and communication were made better, it was necessary for the national government to assume more authority in regulating these. Today, the nations of the world are closer together in terms of communication and transportation and possibility of armed aggression—than were the 13 states when the Constitution was adopted. AND YET, WE HAVE NO LAW ON THE LEVEL OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS TO PROTECT THE CITIZENS OF ONE COUNTRY AGAINST THE AGGRESSIONS OF ANOTHER. The world community is the only level where violence and mass slaughter is still the usual, accepted way of settling problems and conflicts. And this way will continue until there is established enforceable law on the world level so that differences may be settled by peaceable means.

"The churches have worked 2,000 years to build real social peace and the will for peace. If the fruits of that work are to be preserved, it would seem that the churches must now give more attention to obtaining the kind of world organization through which the will to peace can be utilized and made effective."

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Quotes From:

"The Nature Of Nuclear Warfare" (Continued from Page 2)

"If one could look back at the present period a hundred years from now, this enterprise of establishing, in some difficult and unforeseeable way, a world order which excludes war, will appear as the one and most important accomplishment of our age.

"All this cannot be accomplished in complete safety. We will have to continue to live, at least for some time, in a dangerous world. But, after all, life has been on this planet for 500 million years, and each individual has so far died, or faces inevitable death sooner or later. For the past few thousand years we have been living with the knowledge that each of us must die and that any one among us may be hurt—and fatally hurt—at any time.

"This world is not secure, and for the individual, probably will never be secure. The fact that it has become insecure in other ways must be considered as a great challenge, which, in my mind, cannot be resolved easily. It can be resolved eventually if we have intelligence and courage and understanding for people—not only for our own kind of people, but for other people as well."