

# Some Thoughts on the Aftermath of Peace

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## Part I

Did you have a brother, a husband, a very close friend or if you are a parent did you have a son who spent time in the service of Vietnam during the past 10 years of the United States' involvement in the conflict? Did they come back safely? Did you pray many times for them while they were in the service? Not only that God would protect them but that if it were God's will the war would end soon?

If you had a loved one involved in the war, I'm certain that you must have prayed many times for him. Did you also remember in your personal prayers those in authority in our nation, who through several peace conferences were trying to bring an end to this war? You are probably thinking: How can I pray for peace and the President? We never hear that in church!!

For many of us (myself included), the Vietnam war didn't touch our lives very much. Sure, we knew it was raging on and were concerned about men being killed, also innocent women and children, but we really couldn't do much about it. We are so involved with our own life and our problems we didn't give the war too much thought. We excuse our conscience by saying, "O, signs of the times, there shall be wars and rumors of wars," or "Well, God has willed wars." And in effect we say: God will end it when He wants to, we have no control over it.

WELL, it seems that God has willed the end, at least America's involvement is ending, even though at the time of this writing fighting continues. Did you pray for its end? I heard a minister say, "God answered our prayers; the war has ended." No, God in His providence didn't end the war because a few Christians prayed for its end. Once again, God is letting the wisdom of this world think that they are the peacemakers, in gaining peace in the world. How long it lasts we do not know. Well then, you might ask: Why must I pray for the war to end, if God ended it in spite of the prayers anyway? Now that is a good question and I cannot answer it completely, but consider this: It is the Christian's duty to pursue peace always and to pray for those in authority. Implied in that prayer is that God will direct all things to serve His purpose.

Everyone in the church in various degrees is concerned especially when sons of the church are in the Armed Forces. All are happy when their lives are spared and they return. A mere coincidence? No, Divine guidance! Are we thanking God for this? And do we add: "Father I thank you that in your wisdom our nation is at peace again." Notice, I said our nation; not the world. In fact there are war-like conflicts raging in Israel, Northern Ireland and Vietnam yet today. Our nation is no longer engaged in a war. Why not? All things work together for good, for the sake of the church of all ages, isn't that so? Then let us give God our thanks for directing this war through the hands of those in authority to its end. Speak to your friends about this.

## Part II

Let's talk about peace in the world. Sue Terpstra in her excellent article: "The Christian Faces War"<sup>1</sup> makes the following remarks in her conclusions; "This, when the child of God prays for peace on earth, he prays for wicked men and not for the Church and himself. Praying for the peace of worldly men is against God and against His Word." Let's examine these statements for a moment.

First of all, a Christian doesn't pray strictly for the worldly men apart from himself and he doesn't pray for their peace exclusively. How can a distinction or separation be made between the Christian and the worldly man when a Child of God prays for peace, as if he prays for one

and not himself? I agree in part, that a Christian should never make it his solemn prayer that God will send a worldwide peace to all mankind, so that we can all enjoy this life more. This would be against God and His Word. However, part of Sue's statements which I quoted above are based on a fake premise, namely: *When a Child of God prays for peace he prays only for the wicked.* Her conclusion is, that this is against God. Of course it is. However, consider this thought: That praying for peace and consequently tribulation itself, is no different than praying (as we do often) that Jesus will soon return. Because preceding His return, tribulations will come. And the problem which arises, if we hold to Sue's remarks as being true is that we tend to condemn all prayer for peace from war, absolutely. This we cannot do. The real issue is that the Christian's battle is difficult in peace and in war, so he prays that the cause of Christ's kingdom may prosper during both.

You see, if one prays for peace in our churches, he would be quickly criticized. (In fact, you don't hear it.) We try to mold everyone in one opinion and this tends to discourage people, especially young people, to be open and honest in their feelings. They are afraid they might say the wrong thing or that it might not agree with the minister's dogma and as a result society discussions are stifled. Haven't we all experienced this to some degree. Be honest Young People this BEACON LIGHTS is your opportunity to do this. Read the OPEN FORUM in the January issue.

I concluded by saying that a Christian may desire peace and pray for peace from war in which his country is directly involved and especially pray for persecuted Christians which still exist in places like Russia. Peace in our nation and in the world are two different things.

Think of Biblical passages such as: "Pray for those which despitefully use you" and I Timothy 2:1 and 2, "prayers, be made for all men . . . for all that are in authority" and Phil 3:2, "to speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men." Hebrews 12:14, "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." James 3:16-18, "For where envying and strife is, there is confusion . . . and the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace." Many other verses instruct the Christian how to conduct himself towards his neighbor and isn't the world a neighbor in the broad sense of the word? Why would these admonitions apply only in my relationship with my neighbor and brother in the church, but not with my fellow countrymen? Christians should be peacemakers more than anyone else. Why? *Not to pain world peace*, but because it is their duty to live and walk in good works this way.

We do not need a Church sponsored "Peace Celebration" which many observed and it is in reality only a show to gain the world's respect; however every Christian can himself show his thanks to God that our young men of the church can be spared at least for a time the ugly aspects of wars. Do this in your own prayers and in your Y. P. Societies.

Can we sit back and relax now, because peace is here? No, the Christian's battle is all the harder. (Read Sue's article again.) Satan is at work in this world; so arm yourself with God's Word and fight. I Peter 4:7, "The end of all things is at hand: therefore keep sane and sober for your prayers."

<sup>1</sup> See January 1973 BEACON LIGHTS.

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