

[A sermon of Dr. Gordon H. Clark. Date unknown.]

[Patriotic Sermon]

Memorial Day and 4th July should call attention to Scriptural principles of government.

I. God authorized the State – [as well as family and Church] Rom 13:1-

Not a social contract

Where does majority get the right to coerce?

Leads to totalitarianism

Spengler and others – brute force

If God authorized the State – he is above earthly rulers – therefore government powers are limited cf. Naboth's vineyard.

i.e. inalienable rights

It is not American and certainly not Christian to make the State supreme.

II. Functions of Government: war and taxes

Early Christians not pacifistic, though they opposed emperor worship

Today U.M.T. bad because of gambling, prostitution, and liquor

Cromwell – a godly army

But O.T. definitely commands war

Num. 25:16-17; Deut. 2:24; Josh. 11:20

Does N.T. have a higher morality?

e.g. polygamy?

N.B. - O.T. commands war; does not command polygamy

At any rate cf. Rom. 13:4-

Also taxes: Rom. 13:6

Christ commanded payment of taxes

Mt. 17:27 and 22:21

[As opposed to Fellowship of Reconciliation]

Even though he knew taxes went for war

Same principle for capital punishment

Gen. 9:6

Shows high regard for life, not low

III. But Government has a limited sphere

- a. Communists destroy family and church = totalitarianism
- b. Moses and Peter disobeyed the government
- c. Present danger is all-powerful State

1. Persecution in Columbia, Spain, etc.

Romanism is totalitarian but a totalitarian church and government its instrument.

2. Romanism in this country, New Mexico, by law

Controls newspapers by boycott of advertisers

Wants tax money

3. American judiciary legislation

N.B. – Baptists denied right to be independent. Prayer illegal in Indianapolis parks. What about freedom of religion?

Lincoln – “shall not have died in vain”

Each generation must meet its challenges

Ours is to preserve our liberties for which our government was founded

Especially freedom of religion

July 2 1967

Today it is appropriate to consider our national life from the standpoint of Christian principles.

It is appropriate because the Bible has something to say about national life.

In the Old Testament there are two well-known verses.

Psalm 33:12 “Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord.”

Proverbs 14:34 “Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people.”

These Old Testament verses remind us of the nation’s obligation to God.

The New Testament reminds us of our obligations to the government.

The State is not founded on a social contract, as Rousseau and Locke believed, nor on the consent of the governed. The State is not a humanly ordained institution. Government was ordained by God, and because of this divine ordination God commands us to honor, obey, and pray for our rulers.

The Apostle Paul says, [read Romans 13:1-4]

The Apostle Peter also, says (I Peter 2:13) “Submit yourselves to every ordinance of men for the Lord’s sake [!] whether it be to the king as supreme or unto governors ...”

A few verses below, I Peter 2:17, Peter says, “Fear God, Honor the king”

As the Bible has something to say about nations and government, so the founders of our country had something to say about God. Recall not only the Pilgrims and the Puritans who fled from persecution in England to freedom in Massachusetts, but even nearer home, recall our Scottish ancestors, in the 17th century, fled persecution to find a new home in Pennsylvania where they founded our Reformed Presbyterian Church.

Therefore the hymn writer expresses our sentiments:

O God, beneath thy guiding hand
Our exiled fathers crossed the sea
And when they trod the wintry strand
With prayer and psalm they worshipped thee.

When now we turn from the authoritative Scripture, and from the noble history of our colonial period, in order to consider the present situation of our nation, it might seem that politics begins to intrude in the pulpit.

The Westminster Confession, recognizing that the function of the Church is to preach the Gospel, is not favorable to politics in the pulpit.

Chapter 31, section 4 says, “Synods and councils are to handle nothing but that which is ecclesiastical; and are not to intermeddle with civil affairs which concern the commonwealth ...”

Now, our recent primary elections, in which Lugar defeated Clark and Barton defeated Beatty, and the coming election of a mayor next fall, are so obviously a matter of party politics, and so little concerned with major national, moral, or religious questions, that no excuse can be offered for their introduction in this place.

Nevertheless, at times there are also subjects of such overwhelming national, moral, and religious importance, that it would be most strange and most unfortunate, if a Christian had nothing to say about them. It would be strange and unfortunate because the Bible itself has something to say. We preach the Gospel to be sure, but more explicitly, we preach the whole counsel of God. To do otherwise would be to neglect our duty. In Acts 20:26-27 Paul says, “I am pure from the blood of all men, for I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of

God.” There Paul acknowledges that he would have been guilty of the blood of his audience, if he had omitted part of the divine message.

Now, if we preach all the counsel of God, we are forced to enter a political controversy that is right now raging in our land. This is not a matter of politics in the pulpit. The trouble is that a vociferous segment of society is using anti-Christian ideas in their opposition to the war in Viet Nam. It is the duty of the pulpit, in such cases as these, to oppose the attack on Christianity and to present the Biblical position.

For example, some of these vociferous demonstrators are agents of the Kremlin. Their dependence on Moscow is a known fact. I refer to Gus Hall, Herbert Aptheker and his daughter Bettina, and of course the Communist Party and the many organizations it sponsors. These people seek the overthrow of our government and aim at violent revolution. They oppose anything and everything that is good for the United States. They favor anything that will advance communism.

In addition to the communists there are others who seem to follow the communist policy. The National Council of Churches is an extreme left wing organization. It has for a long time been a severe critic of American policy, and its proposals frequently favor the communist nations. For example it favors the admission of Red China into the United Nations.

Whether it was the National Council, the World Council, or merely some member denomination that brought him to this country, the East German clergyman, Dr. Niemoeller, has been traveling through the United States this spring. Trustworthy reporters tell us of a sinister propaganda device he uses. The claim is that the United States dare not end the war in Viet Nam because it would produce unemployment here at home. The idea is that the war in Viet Nam is merely a way of taking care of our unemployment. Such is one example of the vicious propaganda used by liberal theologians. You can understand therefore why Dr. Niemoeller, a former president of the World Council, was recently given the Lenin peace prize. No wonder he is a favorite of the Kremlin. What we must notice is that he was elected president of the World Council of Churches. The liberal churchmen therefore must be in general agreement with his views, or they would not have elected him president.

In this group that opposes the war in Viet Nam we also find the Quakers and other religious pacifists. For three hundred years the Quakers have been pacifists. Their attitude antedates communism. It is only natural that they should oppose the present war because they

oppose all wars. At the same time it is surprising that some Quaker groups will send aid and comfort to our national enemies but refuse to send aid and comfort to our own soldiers. An honest pacifist might well donate blood to all the wounded, but I do not see how the historic pacifism of the old time Quakers can justify the present policy of siding with the Reds against the United States.

Probably most of you have met this type of person – the pseudo-pacifist who never has a good word for the United States but who can never find anything wrong with communism. It reminds me of an incident that took place in Washington. Senator Fullbright was examining, or harassing Dean Rusk relative to American policy. When it came out, as everyone knew it must, that Hanoi had not and would not respond to the repeated American efforts to commence negotiations, Senator Fullbright bellowed: Well, then there must be something wrong with American policy. Dean Rusk quietly replied: You think there is no possibility that the communists could be wrong? It is distressing that a Senator should hold such a view. It is distressing that a State should elect such a man to the Senate. It is also distressing that so many people in so many states should agree – agree that the communists can never be wrong and that the United States can never be right.

Next, in addition to the card carrying communists, the left wing National Council, and the Quaker pacifists, there is also a large lunatic fringe, not less dangerous because lunatic. Martin Luther King until recently has aimed to appear calm and reasonable. He has disclaimed violence and avoided acting like a lunatic. But his recent attempt to swing the civil rights movement into the defense of the Viet Cong is regarded as near lunacy by more sober Negro leaders. Stokely Carmichael is an irresponsible fomenter of riots. Cassius Clay, the beatniks, and youthful vandals want to make trouble, harm our nation, and ruin as much as they can.

Now, the Bible has something to say about all this, and if we are to preach all the counsel of God, we must preach about war too. Naturally the Bible does not mention Viet Nam, but it does have something to say about war and therefore about pacifism, whether it be the centuries old pacifism of the Quakers or the pacifism of those who recently became pacifists for the duration.

Everybody admits that God not only approved of, but even commanded certain wars in the Old Testament. But some people assert that the New Testament has a different God, one who forbids all wars. This is not so. In Luke 3:14 when certain soldiers came to John the Baptist to be

baptized, he did not tell them to desert the army. He told them to be content with their wages. Furthermore, the New Testament uniformly treats the centurions, the army officers, with honor and respect. But the clinching argument is the New Testament statement about the just powers of government. One of these verses previously quoted from Romans 13:1-4 explicitly assigns to government the power of the sword. The verse says that the civil ruler has the duty to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. This includes both the individual criminal and criminal nations.

You will note that left wing groups opposing our forces in Viet Nam are nearly identical with the people who oppose capital punishment and favor the criminal rather than the law-abiding victim of crime.

An instructive parallel can be drawn between a recent crime in Central Park, New York, and the crimes of the communists. In New York a girl was attacked and murdered. There were witnesses on the spot, but they made no attempt to stop the crime and rescue the girl, they even refused to call the police.

So it is with those who oppose the war in Viet Nam. Cassius Clay rambled over the radio that American soldiers were killing people in Viet Nam. An ROTC student recently dropped out because, as he said, he didn't want to kill anybody. Well, if the rapist and murderer in Central Park cannot be restrained without killing him, is it not better to kill him and save the life of the innocent girl? The left wingers are in the position of trying to prevent the police from stopping the crime. Note well that the communists are criminals. As a matter of policy they have fixed spikes underneath the water in rice paddies so that the peasants would be injured while working their farms. One missionary reports that the Viet Cong surrounded a church while the service was going on. They took out the American missionary and the native pastor. They tied these two to a tree; shut the congregation in, poured gasoline on the church and burned the people alive. I have also read accounts of the communists catching children, peeling off their skin in the sight of their parents, so as to terrorize the village. And then when the Vietnamese implore our help and ask us to save them from terror, torture, and cruelty, our left wing demonstrators take the side of the criminals and howl "police brutality."

Left wing theology produces left wing politics and left wing morality. The crime in our land and the favoritism shown to criminals, and now the riots and the rehearsals for revolution against our government is the result and punishment of this nation's massive rejection of God and his righteousness. The forcible suppression of crime is good and indeed necessary. It is our

Christian duty to support our armed forces in this war. Not only is it wrong to give aid and comfort to the enemy, not only should we disown the agitators who want us to lose the war, beyond this we should pray for victory. At the very least there is no Christian principle that shelters crime and obstructs its suppression.

However, the forcible suppression of crime is not enough. A correct national policy can be maintained only if large enough majorities are personally and individually committed to sound moral principles. Unfortunately a large section of our population has become indifferent to crime and has lost its hatred of sin. Yet it remains divinely true that righteousness exalteth a nation and sin is a reproach to any people. The nation needs a new love of righteousness. The hearts of the people must be changed so that they will no longer view brutal crimes with unconcern. Returning to the standards of our Pilgrim Fathers and our Reformed Presbyterian forebears, we must abjure our present evil ideals and submit to divine revelation. We must return to God; and the only way to return to God is to acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord. The Lord of all, and the Lord of glory.

Almighty God, who hast given us this good land for our heritage, we humbly beseech thee to make us a people mindful of thy favor. Pardon and cleanse our nation of its many sins. Turn aside our secular culture. Exalt thyself in our midst.

Bless us with industry, learning, and purity of life. Preserve us from public calamities, rebellion, and especially from national sins and corruption. Defend our liberties. Endue with divine wisdom those in authority, especially the President of the United States, Lyndon Johnson. Guide the members of Congress; give them a zeal for honesty and righteousness; and grant that our national policy, both domestic and foreign, be in accord with thy Word.

O Lord God of mercy, look down with pity upon the nations now and recently engaged in war. Have compassion on those immediately exposed to peril and death. Comfort the prisoners, relieve the sufferings of the wounded, and show mercy to the dying. Teach the Chaplains thy Gospel that they may minister in thy name; give them a just sense of their responsibility and their opportunity in this horrible situation; and pour out thy Spirit upon all who hear thy Word.

O God, the Strong Tower and refuge of thy people, we entreat thy favor upon the officers and all the enlisted men in our armed services. Use them as thine instruments in the defense of life and liberty throughout the world.

Shorten, we most humbly implore thee, shorten the duration of this war. Put an end to its horrors. Remove in thy good providence all causes and occasions of war. Teach the nations peace. And to this end we humbly pray for total victory over godless communism. Defeat their forces on the field of battle. Eradicate their subversive activities within the peaceful nations. Strike down their wicked rulers. Suppress their crime. Establish righteousness in every nation. And make thy name great among the heathen. Thus establish perpetual peace under the rule of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.