



Scriptures and Doctrine :: Christians & War?

Christians & War? - posted by KingJimmy (), on: 2004/5/26 14:10

I just wrote this paper for my Christian Ethics class on what a Christian response towards war should be. It's brief, and I thought it'd make for a good discussion on the forum :) Just a note, this isn't a very formal paper, thus, there is a lack of quotes/footnotes. I was required though to keep the paper to this format.

Current Debates

Most debate about what role Christians should take in war today are focused on two basic positions. One position, called pacifism, says that Christians should never fight in a war. The other position, often identified as the "just war" theory, says that Christians should only fight in wars that are justifiable on ethical grounds.

The term "pacifist" derives itself from the Latin word "pacifici," which is translated as "peacemakers" in Matthew 5:9. Pacifists such as Stanley Hauerwas believe that the teachings of Christ call those who would follow Him to living a life marked by nonviolent love, a love that would overcome the powers of this world not through coercion and force, but through the power of Christ's death. This willingness to not use force is to be a sign of our confidence that we live in a new age, where the wolf can dwell with the lamb. It is to be a demonstration of God's love by a people who have learned not to fear another. In being faithful to this task, the Church shows the world what it means to have true peace under the dominion of Christ in His kingdom.

However, those that believe in the theory of a just war say there are times when the government they are under goes to war, that Christians must take up arms with them. According to Norman Geisler, such wars include those done in self-defense against an invading, aggressive nation. Another type of just war is where one nation seeks to protect another nation who has not done anything to warrant acts of aggression. Such wars waged are done so in the name of justice and love. Those who ascribe to the just war theory say that the pacifists version of love is an "unbiblical, fuzzy, soft-soap view of love" (Geisler, 231). This view charges the pacifist with committing a sin of omission, by just sitting back, and letting injustice occur.

Historical Treatments

The early Church seems to have universally adhered to pacifism. Justin Martyr said, "we...have...changed our warlike weapons, our swords into plowshares, and our spears into implements of tillage." Tertullian believed that if a soldier was converted, they must immediately abandon their military service, which he says many Christians had done, and be prepared to die a martyr. Early church orders and canons officially forbade military service. The soldier was told that he must leave his service, or to be rejected from joining the Church. Eusebius records a case of a 21 year-old by the name of Maximilian from Numidia, who appeared before a proconsul named Dion for induction into the army. Maximilian refused to be inducted, saying that he could not serve as he was a Christian. Dion breathed threats against Maximilian saying that if he refused service, it would cost him his life. To his threats Maximilian replied, "I am a Christian and I cannot do evil ... I shall not perish, but when I have forsaken this world, my soul shall live, with Christ my Lord." As a result of this statement, Maximilian was killed.

However, when Constantine came upon the scene in the fourth century, and the Church was given the position of the official state religion, the Church turned about-face in its stance on war. Interestingly enough, the Council of Arles threatened pacifists with excommunication! St. Augustine writing shortly after would be the first to systematically defend the right of Christians to participate in just wars. His view would come to dominate the middle-ages, with Luther and Calvin following in his steps during the Reformation. It was not until the Anabaptists, and their spiritual descendants (Mennonites, Amish, and Hutterites) that Christians would begin to again adhere to pacifism.

Biblical Statements

Pacifists typically base their views off passages such as Matthew 5:39: "Do not resist one who is evil. But if any one strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also." Also, Paul tells the Christians in Rome to not overcome evil with

evil, but rather "overcome evil with good." (Romans 12:21) Also, Paul says that Christians, "...do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful..." (2 Cor. 10:3-4) Perhaps the most interesting positions argued are based upon the theological concept of the "already...not yet." This position invokes passages from Isaiah of the coming Messianic kingdom, where individuals will "hammer their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not lift up sword against nation, and never again will they learn war." (Isaiah 2:4) Since the kingdom is not simply something in the future, but is experienced in the already, then it is argued that this way of life is to be characteristic of those who "go up to the Mountain of the Lord" (Isaiah 2:3).

Those who adhere to the just war theory find their primary support from Romans 13:4 where the government is said to "bear the sword... a minister of God, an avenger who brings wrath on the one who practices evil." It is then argued that Christians who participate as leaders or soldiers within the military must use the sword to punish injustice, namely, to protect the rights of others, such as killing in self-defense (Exodus 22:2). This view also adheres to verses such as Genesis 9:6 that say if anybody murders another man, then that man must be killed. So, if an aggressive nation attacks another nation without provoke, it is therefore the duty of that nation, or other nations, to invoke the justice God demands in Genesis 9:6.

My Argument

I personally find the "already...not yet" argument that some pacifists employ as a powerful argument that cannot easily be dismissed. Especially in light of the early Christian tradition that seems to have taken up a pacifist attitude, in which believers were martyred for their refusal to take up the sword, and instead chose to hammer their weapons of war into tools used for harvest. However, in the "already...not yet" argument, there is a part that seems to be forgotten. That is, the "not yet" aspect of it. Those who invoke such passages as Isaiah 2:1-4, or Isaiah 11:1-9 seem to forget that the ultimate context these passages speak of are universal in scope, where there is no more threat of war. The reason why the wolf will dwell with the lamb, the leopard with the young goat, the calf with the lion, with a little boy leading them is because in the ultimate realization of this passage, there will be no more reason for them to be enemies, for universal peace will exist, and death will be no more. It is therefore my argument that such passages cannot be used to exclude Christians from participating in war.

The "already" aspect of peace we see from such passages can be found in the diverse and often clashing cultures that come together under the reign of Christ within the Church. No longer is there any reason for the Jew to be hostile with the Gentile. For Christ has now reconciled the two groups in His body, and they have peace with one another in Christ. Often the pacifist selects verses from the Sermon on the Mount to prove that Christ wants us to be pacifists, and is teaching us something radically new and contrary to what was taught in the Old Testament. Such verses Matthew 5:39 which admonishes the Christian to turn the other cheek, can also be found in Lamentations 3:30, "Let him give his cheek to the smiter." When one understands the Sermon on the Mount to be the true interpretation of the Old Testament law, as a correction to the Pharisee's distorted interpretation, then one sees the teaching of Christ in continuation of the Old Testament, which at times calls for war.

Bibliography

Geisler, Norman L. Christian Ethics: Options and Issues. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1989.

Hauerwas, Stanley. The Peaceable Kingdom: A Primer in Christian Ethics. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1983.

Wenger, J.C. "Pacifism and Biblical Nonresistance." Online. <http://www.bibleviews.com/BiblicalNonresist.html> . Retrieved 25 May 2004.

Re: Christians & War? - posted by Agent001 (), on: 2004/5/26 14:42

Would the "Holy War" doctrine (such as that used to justify the Crusades) fall into a third category?

In this case, war is waged because the adherents consider themselves to be the representatives of God, seeking to expand God's kingdom on earth by military force.

The line between "*holy war*" and "*just war*" is sometimes blurred and hard to discern. It does seem to me that some Americans consider the War in Iraq more in terms of fighting a Holy War for God.

On another note, the ethical choice of "just war" theory adherents is still difficult. Christians still have divergent opinions as to whether the Gulf War or the recent War on Iraq is just.

As Christians living in an imperfect world, we still face tough ethical decisions in our everyday lives. Thankfully, the Christian life is not just about following biblical guidelines, but also a dynamic relationship with the Spirit.

My two pennies. :)

Re: - posted by KingJimmy (), on: 2004/5/26 15:03

Quote:

Would the "Holy War" doctrine (such as that used to justify the Crusades) fall into a third category?

...
The line between "holy war" and "just war" is sometimes blurred and hard to discern. It does seem to me that some Americans consider the War in Iraq more in terms of fighting a Holy War for God.

Perhaps that could be a third category. During the middle ages, a holy war was a just war. But not all just wars were holy wars :) I believe the idea that we can expand the kingdom of God through war is a failed interprise. Just because somebody confesses Christ as Lord when the sword is put to their throat does not mean they confessed Him in their hearts. The kingdom of God is expanded when men are dying to be born again, not when they must die if they are not born again.

Quote:

On another note, the ethical choice of "just war" theory adherents is still difficult. Christians still have divergent opinions as to whether the Gulf War or the recent War on Iraq is just.

Indeed. It can be difficult to tell if a war is indeed justified. Though today with the idea of the "free press" it can be a little easier for each person to be convinced in their own mind, as the ability to research the causes for going to war are just a key stroke away. Can you imagine having gone to war 500 years ago, and never knowing why except for what you were told from your military leaders?

Are not all wars just in the sight of the nation that wages them?

I believe the Gulf War was probably just, as we were attempting to protect another nation who was being invaded for no other reason than being taken over for land. It seems perhaps the war on Iraq was just, but I'm still a little fuzzy on exactly why we went to war on them... though I've heard millions of reasons on Fox News and such.

Ultimately, I think it will take insight from God to decide if one should pick up the sword. Personally, I don't believe I could go to war and kill another person. But I don't believe I can denounce those who do.

Re: Christians & War? - posted by Yodi (), on: 2004/5/26 19:23

I'm not a guy and therefore don't think it would be right for me to fight in a war. Me being a girl, maybe I don't have much say on whether Christian men should go to war or not, but I do have an opinion.

First off, have any of you ever seen the old black and white movie "Sergeant York"? He was a real guy that I believe fought in WWI. He had become a Christian and I believe got drafted into the war. He tried to get out of it and didn't believe it was right, as a Christian to kill people. But he was encouraged to borrow a book on our past Presidents and their views on war and to take some time to think about it. So he went up to a mountain, fasted and prayed, and the verse came to his mind about, "Give to God what is God's and give to Ceasar what is Ceasar's." So he fought the war and was very victorious, with God's help. After fighting he concluded that by killing the Germans in the war, he was stopping evil. Therefore, by taking a life, he was saving many more.

I don't know much about what the New Testament says about war, but I do know about the many examples of war told in the Old Testament. I would have to take the "just war" side. Many times when the Israelites fought war, it was to protect themselves from being taken over from ungodly nations that worshipped idols. I totally believe in war fought in self-defense.

As far as the topic of "holy war", I would have to agree with the Scripture the pacifists refer to in Ephesians about our war not being fought with flesh and blood, but with principalities and so forth. I don't know that you can force someone to become Christian or should attempt to. Where does free will come into that? I do believe that God respects free will because that's how He can truly know if we really love Him or not. I don't know that God ever willed for Kingdom culture (Christianity) to take over the cultures on this earth. I think Christianity will dominate once Jesus has come back and God makes a new heaven and a new earth. That will be long after people were given more than enough chances to turn to the Lord.

Re: Christians & War? - posted by Matthew2323 (), on: 2004/6/1 14:40

Quote:

-----Me being a girl, maybe I don't have much say on whether Christian men should go to war or not, but I do have an opinion.

The Scriptures also have an opinion about women in war. Here are a few articles explaining God's view of women in combat.

(http://www.visionforum.com/corner/newsletter/newsletter.asp?id2004_05_28) Newsletter
(http://www.visionforumministries.org/sections/hotcon/ht/womeninmilitary/mama_wears_combat_boots.asp) When Mama Wears Combat Boots
(<http://www.visionforumministries.org/sections/hotcon/ht/womeninmilitary/endingwaronterror.asp>) Ending the War on Terror

If you'd like to find the Sgt. York video that was mentioned, the Vision Forum has it for sale. They also sell a video about Sgt. York from a man who does historical re-enactments.

God bless,
Matthew

Re: - posted by rookie (), on: 2004/6/2 18:03

KingJimmy wrote:

"Though today with the idea of the "free press" it can be a little easier for each person to be convinced in their own mind, as the ability to research the causes for going to war are just a key stroke away."

I have a problem with the words "free press." We often use terms that have been repeated so many times that we actually believe that the condition exists. Someone said in the recent past, "Repeat the lie often enough and it will become the truth." Look to the movement to legitimize homosexuality. We are being bombarded by the opinions of the few to effect the change that they are seeking.

I do not believe we have a free press. I believe the majority of the information that we hear has been spun to effect a general consensus. A case in point, how many times did you hear the words "weapons of mass destruction." Just reflect back on the times leading up to the start of the war.

I am not saying that WMD do not exist in Iraq. What I am trying to point out is the level of saturation that these 4 words created prior to the start of the war. The military industrial complex, will for the sake of national security, promote their belief. Their mission is to form a consensus around the objective that they see as critical to their existence.

Remember we do not fight against flesh and blood, but against Satan. His war is fought in the minds of men. So the question must be asked of us Christians, What are our minds being filled with? Is it man's ways or the Highway of Holiness?

In Christ
Jeff

Re: - posted by Matthew2323 (), on: 2004/6/2 20:36

Jeff,

Is your contention with the war in Iraq or war in general?

I wrote a little about why the Ephesians 6 verse does not negate physical involvement in another thread. It's the second posting in there. (https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/newbb/viewtopic.php?topic_id2139&forum36) Christians & politics?

Thoughts?

Re: - posted by rocklife (), on: 2004/6/2 20:57

King Jimmy, I'm not either one of those (pacifist or just war supporter).

I am open to whatever God wants and that's it.

Re: - posted by rookie (), on: 2004/6/3 12:36

Matthew 2323 wrote:

"Is your contention with the war in Iraq or war in general?"

I see war as a curse. See Deuteronomy chapter 28. War is a result of man disobeying God. The fruit of the Order of Melchizedec is peace and righteousness. Man and Satan contend with God.

"He who sits in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall hold them in derision, He shall speak to them in His wrath, and distress them in His deep displeasure."

Why does God do this? "The kings of the earth set themselves and the rulers take council together **against** His Anointed, saying let us break Their bonds in pieces and cast away Their cords from us." Psalm 2

The Iraq war is just another curse, just like 911. The USA is no different. Are we living under our High Priest? According to Scripture, Israel is the only nation who has a special place in God's plan. All other kingdoms, as far as I understand the book of Daniel and Revelation are against God. Why do we struggle so hard to want to believe our nation is any different. Look to the fruit. We have killed more children in the last 30 years than all the combatants of all the wars we have participated in. Our jails exceed all industrial nations in the percentage of population that is incarcerated. Our educational system is at the bottom of the list of industrialised nations. As Chanin wrote today in another thread, we are full of dead man's bones. If these are the end times, as so many profess, why do we not come to terms with what Scripture teaches us. The economic system, the political system, the church is dead. Period!

In Christ
Jeff

Re: - posted by rookie (), on: 2004/6/3 12:49

Sorry Matthew 2323

I went on a rant, and did not fully address your question. I read your post pretaining to politics. Yes, I believe God calls men to bring to light the darkness of the actions of the rulers of this world. John the Baptist did not fear man, he feared God. John the Baptist died for the truth. It is the word of God that is our weapon. The world hates the light and will not come into the light. And I believe God calls men to shine their light on the dark things of this world.

In Christ
Jeff

Re: Christians & War? - posted by Matthew2323 (), on: 2004/6/3 13:06

Jeff,

Thanks for the post. Yes, wars are generally seen as a judgment of God, however, some wars have been used of God to remove tyrants! The American Revolution is a good example of godly men following biblical principles to end tyranny. The Scottish fight for freedom is similar. (The movie Braveheart didn't capture the essence of Wallace's Christianity.) Here is a good resource about Wallace.

(http://mantleministries.com/cgi-bin/plugins/MivaEmpresas/miva?plugins/MivaMerchants/merchant.mvc+ScreenPROD&Store_CodeMM&Product_CodeDWW&Category_CodeLBLDVD) Wallace DVD

The reason many of us believe America to be special to God is the blessing He has bestowed upon this nation. The Hand of Providence is seen in the history of this nation; the Pilgrims, the Puritans, the two Great Awakenings, the biblical government (as establish, not currently practiced), etc.

Two questions however.

Quote:
-----As Chanin wrote today in another thread, we are full of dead man's bones. If these are the end times, as so many profess, why do we not come to terms with what Scripture teaches us. The economic system, the political system, the church is dead. Period!

What must we come to terms with in regards to what the Scriptures teach?
In light of that response, how then should we live?

Re: - posted by rookie (), on: 2004/6/3 15:44

Hi Matthew,

Quote:
-----The reason many of us believe America to be special to God is the blessing He has bestowed upon this nation. The Hand of Providence is seen in the history of this nation; the Pilgrims, the Puritans, the two Great Awakenings, the biblical government (as establish, not currently practiced), etc.

My point can be illustrated by what God told Ezekiel, "Son of man, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon caused his army to labor strenuously against Tyre; every head was made bald, and every shoulder rubbed raw; yet neither he nor his army received **wages** from Tyre, for the labor which they expended on it. Therefore thus says the Lord God; "Surely I will give the land of Egypt to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon; he shall take away her wealth, carry off her spoil, and remove her pillage; and that will be the **wages** for his army." Ezek 29:18-19

Many have looked to the wealth of the US as being a blessing for our faithfulness. Yet if we study Scripture, God raised

up the wicked nation of Babylon to destroy the nation of Israel. God also used Babylon to destroy Tyre and Egypt. The wealth of those nations were their wages according to Scripture. No where in Scripture is Babyon a righteous nation. So that is why I question the conventional thoughts that are passed around casually about the history of this country.

The framers of our countries constitution where heavily influenced by the Unitarian Universalist church movement that came out of Poland. Words like Providence were used to describe the will of God for man's pursuits.

I believe that God has chosen only Israel as a nation. I am not saying that the Israel we see today is being faithful to God, but there will come a time when that nation will again be grafted in to the Holy trunk.

So what is the truth? Was the war with Britian God's will or man's will. Were conditions of taxation without representatio n legitimate or just cause for rebeling against authority? Someday you and I will know the whole story.

In Christ
Jeff

Re: - posted by ravin, on: 2004/6/3 18:29

Blessed be the lord our god witch teach's my hands to war and my fingers to fight.

"Just War" "Holy WAR" any war has to be the last answer to a bad problem. you only have to be in one to know that war isn't always the answer.

iraq what about cuba then there was rowanda The u.S.A. just stood by and watched as people were being kill.(200,000) wouldn't that be a just war well rowanda didn't have anything that we the u.S needed i pray for this country(u.S.A.) it has 800 broken treatys with the native american's and yes we a killing the unborn for the god of pleasure. god will have to ask forgiveness of sodom and gomorrah if this country keeps the same sex marriage laws as they are . Yes it's time to pray for this nation

Re: - posted by Matthew2323 (), on: 2004/6/4 11:46

Jeff,

You wrote:

Quote:
-----The Iraq war is just another curse, just like 911. The USA is no different. Are we living under our High Priest? According to Scripture , Israel is the only nation who has a special place in God's plan. All other kingdoms, as far as I understand the book of Daniel and Revelation are again st God. Why do we struggle so hard to want to believe our nation is any different. Look to the fruit. We have killed more children in the last 30 years th an all the combatants of all the wars we have participated in. Our jails exceed all industrial nations in the percentage of population that is incarcerated. Our educational system is at the bottom of the list of industrialised nations. As Chanin wrote today in another thread, we are full of dead man's bones. I f these are the end times, as so many profess, why do we not come to terms with what Scripture teaches us. The economic system, the political syste m, the church is dead. Period!

I'm still wondering, what do you propose Christians do if the "Church is dead. Period!?" Your post seems to be lacking h ope. That is why I ask.

God bless,
Matthew

PS Here is a resource to check out. You will find our Founding Fathers were more influenced by Augustine, Calvin and Knox than the unitarian heresy. (Yes some were not saved, like Franklin and Jefferson.)

(<http://www.visionforum.com/booksandtapes/productinfo.asp?number64200&variation&aitem&mitem&ref&refpn>) Christi an Controversies

Re: - posted by rookie (), on: 2004/6/4 18:15

Matthew,

You hear my heart. Sorry for the pessimism. If these are the last days, I look around me and see: "But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come; for men will be lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, **having a form of godliness but denying its power.**" 2 Timothy 3:1-5

I have visited 8 churches in 12 weeks, and this is what I have experienced. A brother on this site has given me a church to check out but that is over 80 miles away.

I have heard on one of the compilations, that John Wesley had 10 rules for the church he founded. The primary rule was that the congregation was to focus on spreading the Gospel, and all other things were secondary. I heard on another compilation that in 1933, Oswald J. Sanders wrote in a book that 7000 churches had been surveyed that year and had had no converts. He continues by extrapolating that 256000 sermons had been preached. He asked the reader to meditate on the amount of effort, money, and other resources that it took to deliver these 256000 sermons. For what do we labor for?

I see a lot of programs, and I was part of it all. There has to be more! I have no answers for you or anyone else concerning is it right to participate in war. Is it right to be involved with politics? I believe God will show each one of us His desire for us. The question is are we too occupied with the cares of this world to hear?

In Christ
Jeff

Re: - posted by Matthew2323 (), on: 2004/6/4 19:17

I understand, it gets frustrating seeing all of the evil in the world and then in the church.

My family was in the same boat not too long ago. In His grace, God allowed us to leave. It was hard. We searched...

Providentially, at a family camp last July, the pastor told us of his friend in Az. We have been at that church almost a year. About half a dozen other families have joined us now (all leaving the same other church). It has been a beautiful time of healing and growth. And yes, the scars from before are still there. Praise the Lord, He is the Great Physician.

All of this is to say, that there are those out there seeking the Lord. Be encouraged. About 3 years ago, the Lord came to our (new) pastor and elders and told them they were "too comfortable" and that they should be out spreading the Good News in the world. They obeyed! This pastor preaches the Word! It is intense!

Secondly, it is also an invitation. I don't know if your work and/or family situation would allow you to move, but I invite anyone hurting and seeking the Lord to attend this church. (Even if you just came for a visit.) Not only has God raised up this church, but we also have a wonderful home Bible study and a men's prayer meeting. God is so good!

I could go on and on, but I need to get going to my son's Little League game (and then to Bible study - the book of Acts).

Pray about it, please.

God bless,
Matthew

Re: - posted by ravin, on: 2004/6/4 19:17

Give to God what is god's. Jesus said my kingdom is not of this world. also be of good cheer I have over come the world . He said before pilate" my kingdom is not of this world else my servants would fight". Luke 24:45 then opened he their understanding,that they might understand the scriptures.

Re: Christians & war? - posted by Matthew2323 (), on: 2004/6/7 16:47

Ravin,

You need to continue quoting the remaining portion of the text. ". . . My servants would be fighting so that **I would not be handed over to the Jews**; but as it is, My kingdom is not of this realm." (Emphasis added)

God commanded Adam to rule over the earth and subdue it. In context, God was referring to nature. In the New Testament we see a corollary. It is the Great Commission, to make disciples of all the earth. This commandment is a continuation of the mandate to take dominion.

It is often said that, culture is religion externalized. This is to say, culture reflects the religion of a society. If we are to make disciples of all nations, then all cultures must change to conform to Christian teachings (2 Corinthians 10:5). When cultures that formerly supported violence, murder, cannibalism, torture, nudity, profanity, etc. become converted, these wicked behaviors are to be eradicated. This is another form of dominion.

Christians are to have dominion in all spheres of life: education, morality, the arts, sports, and yes, even politics. Unfortunately, in a sin-stained world, war is an inevitable evil. I'm not saying it is favorable or desirable. I wish to stress that at times it cannot be avoided!

All activity in the world has a spiritual element to it. As Paul states in Ephesians 6 that the battle is not against flesh and blood. . . These spiritual events have a direct physical corollary. Consider Romans 12 verse 1:

Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies (*physical*) a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your **spiritual** service of worship. (Emphasis mine)

You cannot separate the physical from the spiritual.

In a world of sin where demon possessed tyrants exist; war is an ugly part of that reality. If the doctrine of dominion is true, and it is, we Christians have no other recourse than to take the biblical stance that war can be justified and participated in by believers.

Re: - posted by KingJimmy (), on: 2004/6/7 17:37

Quote:

Yes, wars are generally seen as a judgment of God, however, some wars have been used of God to remove tyrants! The American Revolution is a good example of godly men following biblical principles to end tyranny.

I'm sorry, but I do not believe the American Revolution was a just war. I don't believe the people of a nation have the right to ever rebell against the government except in doing actions that are simply not biblical. I'm no history expert, but it seems the American revolution was fought mostly over the issues of what was deemed as "unfair" taxation. It hardly seems like a godly war on the side of the colonists.

Re: - posted by rocklife (), on: 2004/6/7 18:52

KingJimmy, that's an interesting comment.

Re: - posted by Matthew2323 (), on: 2004/6/7 18:53

Scroll down this thread and in one of my posts I have a link to a CD series entitled, "Christian Controversies". Look at the one entitled, "Patriots vs. Tories". It is well worth your time. I think you will find there was a lot more to the American War for Independence.

Also, if you'd like some of the documents that influenced our Founders try this link:

(http://puritanism.online.fr/pol_thought.html) Documents

Scroll down to Roman numeral two.

Enjoy!

Matthew

Re: Christians & War? - posted by revival9 (), on: 2004/6/16 2:28

www.scrollpublishing.com

The early Christians did not participate in war or killing of any kind. "Love your enemies; pray for those who persecute you." They lived the Sermon on the Mount literally.

Re: - posted by IRONMAN (), on: 2004/7/1 10:19

I'm thinking we should start to prepare ourselves for what is ahead. All is as it should be in terms of the state of affairs. As for our inability to come to terms with the church being dead I think that may have to do with our rebellious nature, being unable to accept the inevitable if you will. Basically I say that we should all ask God 1 thing every day, "God what do you want me to do today?" if we spend our time doing His will there won't be time to concern ourselves with things that we have little or no influence over. The church is dead, but you and I still have work to do, we need to ask God what it is and do it.

Re: - posted by Matthew2323 (), on: 2004/7/1 11:34

Quote:

-----Basically I say that we should all ask God 1 thing every day, "God what do you want me to do today?"

Actually it is wise to ask God, "Lord, What are **you** doing so that I may follow you?"

But He answered them, "My Father is working until now, and I Myself am working." (John 5:17)

It is a subtle but important difference.

Re: - posted by rookie (), on: 2004/7/1 12:12

Matthew 2323,

I found this on another Christian website. These quotes are in reference to your postings on the founding fathers.

Thomas Jefferson:

I have examined all the known superstitions of the world, and I do not find in our particular superstition of Christianity one redeeming feature. They are all alike founded on fables and mythology. Millions of innocent men, women and children, since the introduction of Christianity, have been burnt, tortured, fined and imprisoned. What has been the effect of this coercion? To make one half the world fools and the other half hypocrites; to support roguery and error all over the earth.

SIX HISTORIC AMERICANS,
by John E. Remsburg, letter to William Short

Jefferson again:

Christianity...(has become) the most perverted system that ever shone on man. ...Rogueries, absurdities and untruths were perpetrated upon the teachings of Jesus by a large band of dupes and importers led by Paul, the first great corrupter of the teaching of Jesus.

More Jefferson:

The clergy converted the simple teachings of Jesus into an engine for enslaving mankind and adulterated by artificial constructions into a contrivance to filch wealth and power to themselves...these clergy, in fact, constitute the real Anti-Christ.

Jefferson's word for the Bible?

Dunghill.

John Adams:

Where do we find a precept in the Bible for Creeds, Confessions, Doctrines and Oaths, and whole carloads of other trumpery that we find religion encumbered with in these days?

Also Adams:

The doctrine of the divinity of Jesus is made a convenient cover for absurdity.

Adams signed the Treaty of Tripoli. Article 11 states:

The Government of the United States is not in any sense founded on the Christian religion.

Here's Thomas Paine:

I would not dare to so dishonor my Creator God by attaching His name to that book (the Bible).

Among the most detestable villains in history, you could not find one worse than Moses. Here is an order, attributed to 'God' to butcher the boys, to massacre the mothers and to debauch and rape the daughters. I would not dare so dishonor my Creator's name by (attaching) it to this filthy book (the Bible).

It is the duty of every true Deist to vindicate the moral justice of God against the evils of the Bible.

Accustom a people to believe that priests and clergy can forgive sins...and you will have sins in abundance.

The Christian church has set up a religion of pomp and revenue in pretended imitation of a person (Jesus) who lived a life of poverty.

Finally let's hear from James Madison:

What influence in fact have Christian ecclesiastical establishments had on civil society? In many instances they have been upholding the thrones of political tyranny. In no instance have they been seen as the guardians of the liberties of the people. Rulers who wished to subvert the public liberty have found in the clergy convenient auxiliaries. A just government, instituted to secure and perpetuate liberty, does not need the clergy.

Madison objected to state-supported chaplains in Congress and to the exemption of churches from taxation. He wrote:

Religion and government will both exist in greater purity, the less they are mixed together.

What is the truth? Are we blinded by our desires to belong to something in addition to Christ?

In Christ
Jeff

Re: - posted by Matthew2323 (), on: 2004/7/1 12:32

Would you mind posting a link to this web page, please? Thanks!

"Let a general reformation of manners take place--let universal charity, public spirit, and private virtue be inculcated, encouraged, and practiced. Unite in preparing for a vigorous defense of your country, as if all depended upon your exertions. And when you have done all things, then rely upon the good providence of Almighty God for success, in full confidence that without His blessings, all our efforts will inevitably fail." - John Jay, 1776

Re: - posted by IRONMAN (), on: 2004/7/1 15:32

what is the significance of this difference? I'd always thought that God is always working but my role my change from day to day and so I'd have to get my instructions afresh for each day. And what of times when God is doing work that does not need my involvement? I can't thrust myself into what He is doing but I must see what He wants me to do shouldn't I?

The way of God - posted by Jimm (), on: 2004/7/1 19:48

Hello

I think Farai brings a good point to the table. Consider the following passage- Acts 16:6 They passed through the Phrygia and Galatian region, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia; 7 and after they came to Mysia, they were trying to go into Bithynia, and the Spirit of Jesus did not permit them;

This is truly an example of intimacy with God! Paul had set out on a mission to spread the word of God among the gentiles. Had he been acting of his own accord he would have no doubt entered Asia and Bithynia in his zeal. It is easy to think that our zeal is in line with the will of God especially when it is to do with matters pertaining to the church and the spreading of the word. I think it was Mr. Reidhead who said, "God's things are to be done God's way and in God's time". In his sermon, "God's work to be done God's way" we are exhorted to seek the will of God: From 2 Samuel 6. Although God may honor the world's efforts, his people must only do things the way he has required -- David learned this when he tried to move the ark as the Philistines had, costing Uzzah his life. The Church must never employ the world's methods, for God will only bless the obedience of his people.

James

Re: A Church Near You? - posted by Matthew2323 (), on: 2004/7/2 10:26

Jeff,

Quote:
-----I have visited 8 churches in 12 weeks, and this is what I have experienced. A brother on this site has given me a church to check out but that is over 80 miles away.

Are you near Escondido? Here is a church there you may want to try, if possible, (<http://www.efcc.org/main.asp>) Emmanuel Faith Community Church. We heard the pastor preach at the family camp we attended last year. (We are going again in a couple of weeks and he will be there again.) The Lord spoke to our family through this man! We also met a family in his congregation at this camp and they were very solid.

Please let me know if you are able to go.

God bless,
Matthew

PS Farai/James, let's try a new thread. Perhaps some others will chime in in regards to hearing from God and doing His will.

Re: - posted by rookie (), on: 2004/7/2 12:10

Thankyou Brother Matt,

I checked the address, the church is about 176 miles away. Please do not forget me in my search.

In Christ
Jeff

Re: Church - posted by Matthew2323 (), on: 2004/7/2 12:37

Brother Jeff,

I will indeed remember your search. Our family was there two years ago and have been resting, healing and growing for the last year in our new church home. It is amazing. God is so good! Please don't be discouraged! God will provide!

We will be at camp next week so I'll ask the pastor if he knows anyone in your area. Please email or PM me with your city info and I'll ask him if he knows of any solid churches near you (or have you tried them all...)

God bless,
Matthew

Re: - posted by rookie (), on: 2004/7/2 16:25

Brother Matthew,

I live near Bakersfield which is in the southern part of the San Juanquin Valley.

God Bless
Jeff

Re: - posted by rookie (), on: 2004/8/18 13:54

I posted this in another thread, I thought it might provoke some to meditate on this brother's view.

"Back to Jerusalem" by Paul Hattaway pg 57

In the testimony of Brother Yun I found this thought.

"But that is not the only training they have received. (Back to Jerusalem missionaries) The past fifty years of suffering, persecution, and torture of the house churches in China were all part of God's training for us. He has used the government for his own purposes, molding and shaping his children as he sees fit. This is why I correct Western Christians who tell me: "I have been praying for years that the Communist government in China will collapse, so Christians can live in freedom." This is not what we pray! We never pray against our government or call down curses on it. Instead, we have learned that God is in control of both our lives and the government we live under. Isaiah prophesied about Jesus, "the government will be on his shoulders" (Isa. 9:6). Instead of focusing our prayers against any political system, we pray that regardless of what happens to us, we will be pleasing to God.

Don't pray for the persecution to stop! We shouldn't pray for a lighter load to carry, but a stronger back to endure! Then the world will see that God is with us, empowering us to live in a way that reflects his love and power.

This is true freedom!"

In Christ
Jeff

Re: - posted by philologos (), on: 2004/8/20 7:20

Quote:
-----Don't pray for the persecution to stop! We shouldn't pray for a lighter load to carry, but a stronger back to endure! Then the world will see that God is with us, empowering us to live in a way that reflects his love and power.

This is a wonderful quote particularly in its context. I have often heard preachers refer to the 'unbelief' of some early Christians due to the fact 'that they did not believe that God had released Peter for whose release they had been praying'. It is, however, based on the presumption that they were praying for Peter's release. There is no evidence for this. It is much more likely that they were still praying in the spirit of Acts 4:29,30 And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word, By stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus.

A classic case of building our own standards into biblical narratives.