

"I did not come with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring to you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified" (1 Corinthians 2:1-2).

Who Are the Peacemakers?

The following letter was sent to me recently. We live in a time of great debate and polarization about how to resolve the global conflicts we find ourselves invariably facing. There *are* answers, which come from neither the "right," nor the "left," but from above.

The letter from Frank:

The life and deeds of Daniel Berrigan, a Christian peacemaker from the Catholic tradition, have inspired me over the years.

And as the US warmakers and their born-again-Christian Commander in Chief George W. Bush carry out horrible crimes in Fallujah and across Iraq, support the murderous actions of the Israeli Occupation Forces in Palestine, support the Colombian military and their paramilitary death squads, carry on a so-called war against terrorism, neglect the needs of the poor and children and women struggling for a decent life, and offer nothing but militarism to a world that wants genuine peace and justice and reconciliation and a human rights revolution, I offer Daniel Berrigan's challenging words for your careful consideration.
~ Frank Kromkowski

(These words of Daniel Berrigan have been selected from a variety of sources . . .)

"The military method is finished... [We must take on] peacemaking as the form of our lives...

I am responsible, not to the warmakers and purveyors of violence, but to the community of peacemaking resistance...

Our profitless task is our "No," uttered at the shabby door of a civilization where today and tomorrow, the rape of the innocent is in progress and murder is the hourly outcome.

We are filled with hope for our world and for our children as we join this act of resistance...

I have had to go beyond, to strike out on my own. His ways, as I hope. And this, to indulge in the understatement of the century, has not been well received. But at some point [about 40 years ago, around 1965], a question put itself to my soul, without trouble or anguish (though there had been of both, long before):

Was I to follow the old way, of consultation, dependence, delay, filtering my conscience through five or ten coolers -- or was I to seek different counselors, in effect a different way?...

The world showed me its heart... What we are asking of one another is that Mars be transformed into Christ. That our species be so transformed: neither victims nor

executioners. That conversion of heart leads to conversion of structures; as they inevitably do.

This at least the Christians have to offer, as the warmakers claim the political day, and the multicorporate ties strengthen and thicken like the cable of a gigantic noose and bind humanity in one bundle of terror...: "Come to me all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you peace. Take up my yoke, learn of me; I am meek and humble of heart. You will find rest for your souls, for my yoke is easy, my burden light." In Jesus we learn of the modesty of God... In our action we draw upon a deep-rooted faith in Christ, who changed the course of history through his willingness to suffer rather than to kill."

Paul's reply:

Hi Frank,

What are we to make of war? When the dust settles on all the platitudes about peace, what are we left with? More war. You have asked for consideration of these sayings of Daniel Berrigan. I will answer your conclusions about the current state of affairs in the world and how we should react to them. You appeal (through Berrigan) to Jesus Christ as justification of your position of pacifism, and give counsel accordingly to all. What, in fact, does the Lord Jesus Christ Himself have to say about all this, and where does He stand? That is the general topic of this letter.

To bring peace to this world, Berrigan says we must be transformed into Christ. In this, he is partly right. I say partly because while an individual can be reconciled to God, and will thereby have true peace within, by no means does this mean that this same person (nor any other) can then go about to accomplish world peace by their own works. None of the apostles or saints of the past accomplished this; Jesus Christ Himself did not do this when He walked the earth as a man. Why, because He could not? No, the answer is simply because it was not yet time for that. It was not His mission, nor has it been the mission of the saints. Paul did not preach world peace, but rather repentance to every person towards God through Jesus Christ. Paul was sent by God in the person of Christ, to reconcile others to God, or in other words, to bring them to peace with God. Only when the individual has peace with God can he or she have peace with another. Without Jesus Christ reigning in the hearts of men there will never be true peace. All must turn, not just in word, but firstly in their hearts, unto obedience in all things to the Prince of Peace.

Otherwise, you may as well try to sprout wings and fly to the moon, as try to bring peace to men and the world. Without repentance there will be no new heart by which true peace is possible. Does that mean there is no hope? Not at all. Everything happens according to the will of God, and in the fullness of time we all will see His glorious reign of peace and righteousness. Jesus put His trust in God's sovereign will, and not in the ability of men to be good. Jesus did not entrust Himself to men because He knew what was in them (John 2:24). They wanted to make Him king right there and then, but He denied them. Jesus did not allow that man, in his own will, could bring about the Kingdom of Heaven (peace) on earth. He did not even trust men who *seemingly* were looking to, and honoring Him.

So what is our duty? How are we to love God and our neighbor? How can one have peace

within, anyway? Berrigan gives no idea how to accomplish this. I should say that you also provide no thought or direction on this. You assume the desire for world peace makes one righteous. And, coupled with the imitation of what you suggest is Christ's primary message and mission of being an example of non-violence to the world, you expect man's willpower is sufficient to bring true peace. You imply that we can transform the world. You imply that men can will themselves to be as God. If that were so, Jesus Christ would not have died for all mankind. If we could imitate Him, He would not have shed His blood. You presume that all men are good. You stand in direct opposition to Jesus Christ, Who says, "...none is good, save one, that is, God" (Luke 18:19).

Both you and Berrigan, as well intentioned as you might be, are confused, and wrong.

You expect that this world can transform itself into the Kingdom of God by men's good intentions. It has not happened and will not happen. Yes, the world will change when the Kingdom of God comes to reign in men's hearts, but never before. And the Kingdom can only come by the will of God. Men cannot decide when they will believe. It is God Who must give this to all.

Jesus said He came not to bring peace to this world (Matt 10:34). He said His Kingdom is not of this world. He said, "If My Kingdom were of this world, then My servants would fight so that I might not be delivered to the Jews. But now My Kingdom is not from here." (John 18:36).

Those who believe and follow the living, risen Lord and Savior Jesus Christ have not been trying or fighting to change the world, any more than Jesus did. At least they will learn soon enough not to. Instead, they learn to submit to His Lordship, walking in obedience to Him by His grace and power, to be transformed to be as He is and to be where He is (present in heaven). They are in the world, but not of it. The world loves it own, and its own try to save it. God comes and says it all must end, to make room for the new. When He comes it is the **end of this world**, as we know it. You cannot have both. You do not sew a new patch on an old garment. The new, which is the Kingdom of God, is the change that causes war to cease. It comes from within, and is accomplished by the Spirit of God, and fire. Those called of God are not called to embrace the world, but to forsake it. He now calls on all men everywhere to repent. It is time.

James 4:1-4

(1) "What leads to strife (discord and feuds) and how do conflicts (quarrels and fightings) originate among you? Do they not arise from your lusts that are ever warring in your bodily members? (2) You are jealous and covet and your desires go unfulfilled; you become murderers. You burn with envy and anger and are not able to obtain, so you fight and war. You do not have, because you do not ask. (3) You do ask and yet fail to receive, because you ask with wrong purpose and evil, selfish motives. Your intention is to spend it on your lusts. (4) You adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that being the world's friend is being God's enemy? So whoever chooses to be a friend of the world takes his stand as the enemy of God."

It is surely then not a matter of promoting and embracing peace measures with this world's governments. Since when have any of those worked? Nor is it a matter of trying to force

governments to change. Since when has that worked? It is not a matter that we can put our trust in man to resolve. It is rather a personal and inner issue; it is about taking up our own crosses and being changed from within. Jesus was not calling for demonstrators to try to change this world, but for doers of His word that become the change themselves that the world needs. He compared true believers to salt. You don't see salt when it is applied to food, but its effects are there, needful and good. So are His people which walk in Him. They are not lovers of the world, trying to save it in its unregenerate state, which is what you are calling for. The people of God know that all must come to repentance. Every mountain will be leveled, and every valley will be raised. Whoever loves his or her life will lose it, but whoever loses his or her life for Christ's sake, the same will gain it. You must die. You must go down, and come up again into new life, born of God.

In the wisdom of God, there is a time for everything.

Ecclesiastes 3:1-8

"(1) To every thing there is a season, and a time for every purpose under the heavens: (2) a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pull up what is planted; (3) a time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; (4) a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance; (5) a time to throw away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing; (6) a time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to throw away; (7) a time to tear, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak; (8) **a time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace.**"

Until men's hearts are changed, it is a vain thing to protest war. (And when men's hearts are changed there will be no need to protest war, because men will no longer take up arms.) In fact, you who protest are even found opposing God Who has sent these wars as judgments on mankind, for correction of confidence in man's knowledge, goodness, independence, and self-importance.

Revelation 6:4

"And another, a red horse, went out. And power was given to him sitting on it, to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another. And there was given to him a great sword."

When God takes away peace, who can restore it? Who will fight with God? Frank, you are, in your ignorance, warring against God's judgments. You fight against Him, and His wisdom. You are not a peacemaker at all. You trouble others with a burden they are neither able nor required to carry. You trust your own righteousness rather than the righteous judgment of God. You cannot end war. First you need to be delivered yourself of the evil within. You must repent. Then you will praise God for His works of evil, such as the sending of wars, as well as His works of good, in ending them, when their work is done. All these things serve a higher purpose, a greater purpose, and an eternal purpose, which is good.

When will peace come? An oft-quoted Scripture speaks of that wonderful day. However, the full context is not considered. Listen:

Isaiah 2:1-5

"(1) The Word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. (2) And it shall be, in the last days the mountain of Jehovah's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow into it. (3) And many people shall go and say, Come, and let us go to the mountain of Jehovah, to the house of the God of Jacob. And He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths. For out of Zion shall go out the Law, and the Word of Jehovah from Jerusalem. (4) And He shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks. Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. (5) O house of Jacob, come and let us walk in the light of Jehovah."

People must turn to the house of the God of Jacob, where He has established His Name. In this they will be turning to the Lord, not religion, nor theories, nor philosophies, nor role model Jesuses, nor idealized Jesuses, nor their own power, but to the Mount Zion God has raised up. Then they will hear His word, and Law. When His righteous judgment flows from Zion nations will no longer learn war. Not until then. Who among us will presume to do this? Who can make this happen? It is not peace, but this Mount Zion that you need, Frank. Do you know where it is?

God is in full control and does not depend on the help of man. From Heaven He rules over all, determining the times, and bringing in the age of peace when it is time:

Acts 15:16-18

"(16) After this I will return and will build again the tabernacle of David which has fallen down; and I will build again its ruins, and I will set it up, (17) so those men who are left might seek after the Lord, and all the nations on whom My name has been called, says the Lord, **Who does all these things.** (18) All His works are known to God from eternity."

He knows the end from the beginning. He doesn't need your works; He wants your heart. Repent from your own works; worship God and not man.

Until the time is fulfilled, the Lord determines wars to judge the world:

Joel 3:9-13

"(9) Proclaim this among the nations: Prepare war, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near; let them come up. (10) Beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruning hooks into spears. Let the weak say, I am strong. (11) Gather yourselves and come, all you nations, and gather yourselves together all around; cause your mighty ones to come down there, O Jehovah. (12) Let the nations be awakened and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat; for there I will sit to judge all the nations all around. (13) Put in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe. Come, come down; for the press is full; the vats overflow, for their wickedness is great."

To tell the world it can have peace without repentance from sin is to condone sin. It is to approve of and to love this wicked world. A person loves this wicked world because he or she is unrepentant themselves, and is yet in sin. You can't imitate Jesus in the flesh to get around this. He is not of earth, but of Heaven. You don't even know what He is like. You

make Him in your own image when you presume to portray what He represents. What you make is a false image, which the Bible calls an idol, and is really no god at all. That is why all these efforts fail, because your gods are powerless. The true God and Jesus Christ, however, does not fail.

Frank, you have set up an altar to peace, to a strange god, and not to the Lord Jesus Christ, Whose Name you co-opt for your gods. There is no peace to the wicked, He says. You must repent before any peace will come. May God have mercy on all. Surely there is no other hope or chance for good to come, except He does have mercy.

I have not even gotten into the matter of supporting religious institutions such as the Catholic Church as a platform to promote world peace. You could hardly find an organization with more blood on its hands. The Catholic Church has slaughtered many brothers and sisters of Christ, besides multitudes of others found opposing or inconvenient to her plans of world domination. Who is she to criticize and lecture others to be peaceful?! What a work of self-deception! You say, "We are different now, the Pope apologized." By so saying you admit you are the children of those who persecuted the true followers of Christ. In truth, prostitutes will preach against extramarital sex before the Catholic Church preaches against war. When each repents, each will no longer be known by their former titles, either.

The Scriptures declare that the problem, Frank, is not Bush, or corporations, or evil men. It is YOU. Because you are yet in your sins you are blind to the Whore, which you are one with, and the blood on her hands is also on yours. "And in her (man's religious works) was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth" (Rev. 18:24).

Until men completely put away these religious works, ceasing to trust in their own righteousness, there will be conflict with God and between men. Only when men put their entire trust in God, Who alone is righteous, and Who has made Himself known to all by Jesus Christ (Whom we preach), can and will there be peace. He Who has paid the price will also bring this to pass. Blessed be His Name forever!

Paul Cohen

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