

WORLD ORDER

A Social Document of the
ULCA



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

A Statement of the United Lutheran Church in America, 1950

1950: Adopted by Executive Board. Reported in Minutes, 17th Biennial Convention, ULCA, pp. 555-58.

In the face of new alarms and fresh fears, the Church of Jesus Christ must seek in faith and hope to find the way to achieve God's purposes in human society. In this task, the Word of God is the source of our convictions. We place our reliance upon Jesus Christ as Leader and Guide.

As Christians, we must seek to meet our responsibilities to our fellow men, the whole of human society; because of human limitations of judgment, we may not always be agreed as to the procedures to be followed. This statement does not propose to dictate to Christians: but, because the common witness of the Church is an important guide to the individual conscience, we here present certain principles to impress Christians with their heavy responsibility for world order.

I. Christian Principles

1. *The Sovereign God is the Loving Father of all men and of all nations.*
No nation stands outside God's Law, nor can any nation rightfully demand man's highest allegiance. Human action, if it is to help toward peace among men, must conform to God's righteous will.
2. *As Christians we are further moved by the compulsion of love for our fellow men.*
We must do good to our fellow men and we must avoid policies harmful to any of them, not only from a sense of duty but because we would help and not harm those we love.
3. *Under God's guidance, men have the power to seek peace; self-willed, they may oppose peace.*
Our God-given aspirations are often corrupted by pride, selfishness and a desire for power. Because there is a redemption in Christ, we have hope for peace. So long as sin remains, however, any peace that is attained will continue to be a precarious peace.
4. *War is evil at its roots and in its fruits.*
Although Christians differ as to their right to participate in existing war, there is

no disagreement as to its evil sources and effects. War inevitably tends to corrupt both victor and vanquished. In its destruction of life and property and in its still more serious damage to morals and spiritual ideals, war increasingly menaces Christian character and the Christian way of life. The Christian, therefore, seeks war's abolition, seeing in every war a violation of the spirit and teachings of Jesus. To prevent wars, the Christian hopes, prays and strives for effective peaceful means of settling international disputes and difficulties.

5. *God's love for all men implies a world-wide community in which each man seeks the good of all.*

God has made of one blood all the peoples of the earth. Christ's command of neighbor-love may not be limited to community or nation. It involves obligations which are worldwide. Only under the constraint of love for all men may the Christian determine his attitude to world problems.

6. *The Christian is charged with a duty to maintain and promote the welfare of society.*

Since God wills to rule His earthly realm, and since the presence of His Holy Spirit alone prevents it from falling into chaos, every Christian is constrained in Christ to serve his neighbor, to defend the good and to overcome evil.

7. *There is no place for discouragement, for our confidence rests in God.*

There can be no assurance that our efforts will bring peace in our time. This generation seems destined to live in the midst of turmoil and contention. Nevertheless, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. Our hope is in Christ. With Him is the victory and in Him we trust. He maketh wars to cease.

II. Christian Action

A. Christianity under God must make its contribution to a just and peaceful world order through the Church.

The Church Ought:

1. Promote righteousness, justice and peace in the world by inspiring and aiding each Christian to live Christ's Gospel ever more fully in his world relationships.
2. Recognize that Christian discipleship in all nations holds the greatest promise for international peace.
3. Redouble its efforts toward bringing Christ to non-Christian individuals in all parts of the world. Countries which may be keys to international war or peace should especially receive our intercession and evangelistic efforts. No nation should be neglected on the ground of its hostility, resistance or indifference.
4. Extend Christian fellowship, love and ministrations to all those who accept military service as their duty and to those who hold it their duty to refuse any participation in war.

5. Provide adequate materials for study concerning Christian attitudes, responsibilities and activities in world affairs and stimulate their effective use. The Church may help its members to evaluate practical proposals, but it must reserve to its member the final decision whether such proposals tend to accomplish Christian ends.

B. Christianity under God must make its contribution to a just and peaceful world order through the efforts of individual Christians.

The Christian Ought:

1. Examine himself first and confess contritely his own sins of pride, hate, greed, envy, fear and selfishness -- those sins which on a world scale cause war.
2. Strive to overcome scorn, hatred and bitterness toward other nations and peoples.
3. Forgive for Christ's sake the sins of our fellow men of other nations. This does not preclude reasonable safeguards against threats of future aggression or punishment of individual offenders against recognized laws. It does forbid retaliation or vengeance.
4. Learn all he can about the peoples of all lands so that he may the better understand and appreciate them and may the more graciously manifest Christian brotherhood toward them.
5. Aid, through relief and rehabilitation, those at home and abroad who suffer from the effects of war, and welcome into the fellowship of our own congregations those Christians whose backgrounds and customs may be strange to our communities.
6. Oppose in the spirit of Christ every type of fanatical nationalism or internationalism which seeks to make allegiance to the State or to a materialistic program man's supreme obligation. We should be on the alert to oppose anti-Christian tendencies in our own land as well as in other parts of the world.
7. Support only such proposals for effecting a peaceful world order as conform to Christian principles. If proposals meet this test, they may then be examined for their practical soundness and possibility of acceptance.
8. Recognize the United Nations as our existing instrument for world order. It is a man-made institution; it is not perfect. Despite all jealousies, misgivings and fears, it has accomplished much good and is capable of much greater good. We should seek, by every possible means, to uphold its hands in the hope that it may become a more effective world organization guided by Christian principles.
9. Put his whole trust in the Grace of God and the redemptive power of the Gospel. pride, hate, greed, envy, fear and selfishness those sins which on a world scale cause war.