

“A Christian’s Place in the World Today”

The Reverend Dr. Girard Lowe

Many of us have lived through two world wars. In 1917, some of us went to war to make the world safe for democracy. We believed that, even if we had to lay down our lives – and many did – it would be a worthy sacrifice.

Again in 1941, our nation was plunged into another world conflict and still more men and this time women, too, went to war. It was to be a war that would end war. All made sacrifices; some in the armed services. Those of us who were at home suffered many inconveniences; the restriction of the freedom of our movements and the purchase of things we wanted and often thought we needed. Some received those dreaded yellow slips beginning, “The government regrets to inform you...” Men were maimed for life and many died.

This war came to a conclusion, and, being a peaceful nation, we quickly settled into our peaceful pursuits. We scrapped our war materials and disbanded our large military personnel.

Now, after less than five years, we find ourselves again at war, facing all of the horrors, sacrifices, sorrows and tensions.

I. We must face the fact that this war is different from either of the others

1. In the first World War, it was Germany seeking economic equality or domination. They wanted more colonial possessions and to become a larger influence and power in the world.

2. In the second World War, it has a slightly different motive. Two nations declared the superiority of their races over all other peoples in the world. The Germans declared they were the supreme race and, believing so, declared it their bounded duty to rule the world and set out to perform that they claimed to be their destiny. The Japanese believed they were the direct descendants of the gods and so were the ones to rule and they, in turn, set about to conquer the world and rule over it. Of course, these two ideologies only appealed to the peoples of these two nations. But the reminder of the world had to go to war to restrain them.

3. But this present conflict is of vastly different conditions from the last. There are two great world ideologies in conflict and in sharp conflict – such sharp conflict that many doubt that both can continue to exist on the earth at the same time. And many believe that one or the other will have to be obliterated from the earth. What are these two conflicting systems?

4. The conception of us here in the United States and of some other free peoples is that we live in a spiritual world, and politically the thing which dominates this conception is the dignity and worth of human individuals. We conceive of man as having a soul of inestimable worth. We believe that each individual soul should have the right to develop

his personality in the way and manner he shall choose. By that we mean that each man should be allowed freedom as to where he works and where he lives and to a marked degree what he shall do with his life. We believe that governments should exist to protect all men in this pursuit of happiness and that no government, or any other organization for that matter, has any right to coerce man. In other words, we believe the government exists for the benefit of mankind.

5. The Russian or communistic conception is the exact opposite of this. They deny the spiritual and so, of course, deny God, or, if you please, you can reverse that statement; they deny God and so deny the spiritual aspect of life. They contend that human beings are only bodies – animals, if you please, and that, instead of the government's existing for them, they exist purely and simply for the government. When our system allows men freedom to be different – that is to think differently and to act differently – the communistic system says men must not be different; that all must think alike and all act alike. So we have regimentation where all people are required to think as their government tells them they must think and they must act as their government tells them they must act. They have no right or freedom of thought or action which is contrary to their government's wishes. In other words, the greatest crime for one living under the communistic system is to dare to be different.

John Foster Dulles, in an address before the graduating class of Vanderbilt University, in June of this year, called the communistic system the "flat iron" method. He declared that that method was to make it hot and make it heavy and iron out all the wrinkles. "They," he said, "establish a precise pattern of thought and action and then use dictatorial power to compel all others to conform to this pattern. Any individual who does not succumb to the combined impact of intensive propaganda and terrorism are liquidated." They call this harmony and to obtain this harmony in the lands they dominate they have liquidated literally thousands and they believe it is their task to extend this harmony all over the world by any method at their disposal. They have already brought one-third of the population of the world into this kind of harmony and you can rest assured they will not quit until they are forced to or until they have harmonized the other two-thirds of the population. Their methods are unscrupulous. They kill anyone who gets in their way. They will do anything to undermine other governments. They do this by propaganda methods which have no regard for truth or veracity. They send their emissaries into nations to stir up strife and, if necessary, civil war. Let me remind you, because I believe all I need to do is remind you, that they are using these very methods here in our own nation and even in our own state and the sad thing to me is that there are intelligent, highly educated people who should know better who are being used by them.

II. We must realize that these two vastly different conceptions are at war now. We have been in a cold war, but now we are in a shooting war.

1. We are vastly different in our conceptions of mankind. As I have said, to us he has a freedom to be different; to communists, he is to be poured into a mold. Or, putting it another way, we believe in freedom of individuals while communism holds to the theory of the slavery of individuals by the government.

2. We believe in the principle that the government is to protect the rights of individuals while communism holds that individuals have no rights whatever unless you call it a right to yield body and soul to a government to be made a slave.

3. Our methods are vastly different.

a. We believe in allowing each nation their freedom to choose their manner of life and type of government.

b. Communism believes it is their duty to tolerate no government on the face of the earth which does not conform to their pattern of thought and action.

4. These two systems are now at war in Korea and whether that war will spread is something no one can answer unless it be the rulers of Russia. They can stop it there or they can issue orders and spread it around the world.

5. But some ask can we not sit down with the leaders of Russia and reach some kind of an agreement? Is there not some kind of compromise which could be worked out? There are times when compromises can be made. If it were a matter of territory or trade or debts, then one might be able to compromise. But this war is not over territory or debts; it is not even a war over Korea. It is a war of two different ideologies. One of these ideologies says if you Russians desire to live under the communistic system there, that is your privilege and we will not disturb you. But, on the other hand, the other system says you have no right to live under your chosen system and we will not stop until all the world thinks as we think and lives under our system. How can you compromise with any such idea?

a. More than that, on various occasions we have had agreements with the Russian government and they have signed these agreements in what our American statesmen thought was good faith and then without any provocation at all, have broken these solemn agreements. How, I ask you, can anyone reach an agreement with such people or talk peace to any such nation. For years now they have been talking peace and all the time dedicating 40% of their total production to materials of war. They are not at war; they have simply ordered one of their dominated nations whom they have equipped and trained for aggressive warfare to start war and they sit back and cry "peace." How, I ask you again, can you deal with such a nation?

III. What can be done about this tragic situation?

1. We must prove that we genuinely believe in this conception of life which we claim to believe in.

2. We know that the communist believes in his way. He or she will do anything they are commanded to do. They will go anywhere; will stoop to any low or debased action or will murder to further their cause.

a. I do not say that we should use their methods, but I do say we need their zeal.

3. We must, by our lives and actions, prove we believe in our system.

- a. By our patriotism – and patriotism is something deeper than curtsying before the flag or standing bare-headed while the band plays the National Anthem – we can prove our conviction.
 - b. We stand now when our patriotism demands expression.
 - c. We must do something.
 - d. We must be willing to sacrifice; be willing to forego hoarding and higher profits. We must be willing to surrender our pleasures and luxuries and even some of our necessities, if need be, for the sake of our nation and its principle of freedom.
4. We may not have to match Russia gun for gun, but we must demonstrate to her that we believe in our system and show her that we are willing to sacrifice for its continued existence.
5. We have that opportunity now.
- a. Our government is giving us an opportunity to demonstrate our patriotism by freely cooperating with their war efforts. They do not know whether we will respond or not and I am not sure. But, if we do not, then the government will have to step in and regiment us and communists will cry, “See, your government has to force you to cooperate; your system does not work.”
 - b. Whatever others may do, let us here this morning give a demonstration of our patriotism by not profiteering and not hoarding and trying in every way possible to do what our government asks us to do that they may not have to force us to do it.

IV. But the thing I especially want to talk to you about is “A Christian’s Place in the World Today.”

1. Let me say that we Christians must realize that we are to be the leaders. Surely people are looking to us today to see how we face this tense situation; how we as Christians are going to react to this crisis.
- a. They will look rather than listen. They will judge by what we do, not by what we say.
2. We must be leaders in the patriotic movement which will mass a force of which the Russians can say, “Those people believe in their spiritual conception of life and they will sacrifice for their freedom.”
- a. You who are Christians, let it not be said of you that you say God will care for you and yet you hoard all you can get your hands on or your purse will allow you to buy.
 - 1. Do you not realize that what you have above the allowed amount will have to be returned or you will have to lie about having it? Let us be Christians.
 - b. You businessmen, who call yourselves Christians, here is an opportunity for you to demonstrate that fact. You stand now when you can secure most any price for your merchandise. You can put large profits into your cash register or you can

say, "I am a Christian and I will not take advantage of my fellowmen and I will refuse in this emergency to make more than a fair profit."

c. In these simple realms we can be Christians.

3. We have an almost unprecedented opportunity to demonstrate our faith in God.

a. Do we really trust Him?

b. You parents; those of us who have loved one – have we committed it all to Him?

c. Will we whine and weep or will we demonstrate our faith?

d. I know it is hard, but it is our opportunity.

4. We cannot allow pessimism to control our thinking and our lives.

a. The Christian Bible is the only published document which holds out any hope for peace.

b. Christ is the only Teacher which promises it.

c. Do we believe it?

d. We may be called upon

1. To sacrifice

2. To suffer

2. To be sorrowful

e. But we can be sure that out of it all, "The Lord God Omnipotent reigneth!"