
On The Bomb

Not Our Only Hope

by Kenneth Harvey Hopp

This special issue was about "Adventists and the Bomb." The word "Adventist" refers to our belief in the second coming of Christ. Not only is there no mention of his coming, there is no mention of a number of passages of Scripture that bear most strongly on the subject of this special feature.

I have no objection to making this world as fair and safe and comfortable as possible during its last few years. What I object to is looking to this world as our only hope, and not seeing the events we deplore as the fulfillment of Bible prophecy.

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What More Should We Do?

by Michael Scofield

Mr. Dybdahl's article is unclear as to just what audience he is addressing with his admonition of trust in God. Is his audience perhaps those nominal Christians who, he claims, "trust the bomb?" Or is he accusing the readers of *Spectrum* of worshipping "national gods" (or the "sin" of "acknowledging" them) by paying taxes (which he calls "giving them our money," emphasis mine), and voting? Is he accusing the readers

of *Spectrum* of looking to nuclear deterrence as the source of their salvation?

Mr. Dybdahl appears to base his article on a premise that the reader (or whomever his admonitions are directed to) is a hypocritical Christian, fails to trust God, and worships both the state and the bomb. Are we Christian citizens of the United States guilty of such "worship" when we "render unto Caesar that which is Caesars'," or recognize the "divinely ordained" authority of the state? Mr. Dybdahl fails to address concepts posed in Romans 13:1, 2; nor does he assist us in resolving the seeming conflict between Romans 13 and his own apparent concept of the illegitimacy of the state. Rather, he makes us feel guilty to be citizens of any country.

Perhaps because he gives the state no legitimacy, he therefore fails to make a distinction between the morality of the individual and the morality of the state, and further fails to distinguish between the appropriate actions of the individual and the allowable actions of the state. Because he fails to make these distinctions, he further appears to assume (incorrectly) that the enemies of the state are recognized by the Christian to be his own enemies (whom the Christian may later learn to "love").

While an individual Christian may choose to "lay down his weapons" and love his personal enemies, or even enemies of the state, he will inevitably be at odds with many of his neighbors (Christian or otherwise) who feel that military might is necessary for the survival of the state. Pacifism has been expounded by the personal actions of many Christians (and some Adventists) through several wars. What impact did such actions make on Christian "hawks" or agnostic army of-

ficers? Very little, it would appear.

The theme which appears to be behind his entire article is that nuclear weapons are, in fact, so powerful and such a threat that they must be (in a sense) “opposed.” He fails to suggest what conscientious Christians ought to do in “combatting” the spread of nuclear weapons. He talks about what would happen if Christians in America renounced the bomb. What does he mean by “renouncing the bomb?” And how many Christians would be necessary to form a “critical mass” for such a spiritual “impact?” Surely many Christians in America already deplore the growth of nuclear weapons. Specifically, what more should we do?

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No Threat to Eternal Security

by Tim Crosby

I was disappointed by Dybdahl’s article on nuclear weapons. Besides the arrogance of asserting that advocates of nuclear deterrence are denying the cross, Dybdahl’s logic does not convince.

Dybdahl’s implicit premise that the state should live by the rules of the church is as illegitimate as the premise that the church must live under the control of the state. The kingdoms of this world will not be gradually transformed into the kingdom of God, nor do they operate by the same rules Christ placed upon the church.

The use of military force is one of the approved methods of deterrence under the Old Testament system where the church is the state, and, even in the New Testament, Romans 13 is quite clear that there is a justified use of force by the state to deter evil, whether it employ the sword or a modern equivalent. Saying that America should dismantle its nuclear arsenal is like

saying that all policemen should surrender their guns. The same arguments apply. If nuclear weapons are wrong, so are 500-pound bombs, hand grenades, and guns—which have killed many times as many people as nuclear weapons have. But is a gun in the hands of a policeman an instrument of death, or is it an instrument of peace? Is a cruise missile in the hands of a peace-loving nation an instrument of death, or an instrument of peace?

Rather than worry about some hypothetical future catastrophe, is it not better to rid the earth of the evils at hand—say, tobacco and (erstwhile) slavery, to take two issues that are mentioned by Dybdahl and Walden—which have resulted in much greater suffering than nuclear weapons ever have?

Unlike smoking and owning slaves, being the victim of a nuclear attack carries no threat to one’s eternal security (and hence it is not “a threat to the temple of the Holy Spirit at least equal to smoking,” as Walden posits). Indeed, Dybdahl has given the strongest argument against his own position: “Nuclear weapons, despite their massive power of destruction, are not truly powerful. They may kill millions, but they cannot defeat a single person who trusts in the crucified Christ and follows his example.” Exactly. Yet there are other moral problems that *can* defeat a person by preventing him from trusting in Christ and following his example; by comparison with these problems the issue of nuclear weapons is trivial.

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If Not Christians, Then Who?

by James W. Walters

Kudos for the special section “Adventists and the Bomb” (Vol. 14, No. 2). You managed to run three mutually exclusive