

Peace Begins With Me

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We have met the enemy and he is us – Pogo

On a global scale, a monster is on the loose. This monster called “conflict” is running uncensored across the length and breadth of our world, permeating every aspect of our lives, leaving devastating legacies in its wake in the form of: Broken relationships, increased animosities, abuse of human rights, disease migration, hatred, pain and sundry other consequences of the destructive disruptions of normal human activities by this monster that has become man’s unending affliction... a gorgon that threatens to halt human evolution.

Man’s tendency to seek redress for perceived wrongs through means that are everything but humane is min-bending. Individuals, groups and nations who had been living cordially for some time can in moments of madness become the worst of enemies seeking the most horrible means to decapitate and denigrate one another and inflict the most terrible of pains on themselves in the process. The question is, “is man incapable of coexisting peacefully with his fellow man”? Why do we fight one another? Is the hatred of our fellow men embedded in our genes? What attempts have we made at peace and how effective have they been? Is peace an elusive utopia? Is there hope for peace in the world?

In attempting to find lasting solutions to this seemingly unending, malignant affliction of man, several actions, counter-actions, perspectives and paradigms have been put forward by the academia, statesmen, heads of religions, citizen diplomats, activists and even the casual observer, through research, legislations, sermons and agitations with varying degrees of successes and failures. Organizations like the League of Nations, United Nations Organization (UNO) and sundry other global, regional and sub-regional organizations were conceived by men of the most altruistic intentions. But the inability of these bodies to fully put checks on the tendency of men to constantly hurt one another stems largely from a misplacement of priorities; a failure to locate the true cause of human conflicts. So why can’t we live in peace?

The true answer to that question is that man has failed to put checks on conflicts because he has refused to accept the basic reason and cause for war- nor will he accept the cure for this basic cause. The Bible says: “From whence comes wars and fighting among you? Come, they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members? Ye lust, and have not: Ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war; yet ye have not... (James 4:1,2KJV).

Locked inside the innermost recesses of the human heart is a selfish, self-centered nature, the source of what God calls sin. Sin basically means a self-centered approach to live, devoid of the guidance of God. This selfish nature with which we were born is a major reason why we can’t co-exist peacefully with ourselves, family, neighbor, or, on a wider scale, with other nations. A man once asked, “What is wrong with world?” And answered himself candidly,” I am wrong with the world”.

God's altruistic intention towards man was for him to have constant fellowship with him. This companionship was so crucial that man without it was like a rudderless ship sailing against a roaring tempest. God pointed out the rules of His relationship with man, with emphasis on the consequences of disobedience to the terms of this sacred union. But man blew it all when he fell from the grace of plenty to the grass of depravity. He became lost, a ship without a compass, destined to capsize.

Thus, man has become his own enemy; self-seeking and estranged from his life source. No matter the amount of fame, material wealth or power he acquires, his appetite remains insatiable. This is because he can no longer fill the void once occupied by his maker with anything from the world of matter. In frustration, he fights with himself, his family, his neighbor, his friends, and other nations. What a pity! So what is the way out?

Positive Peace in all its ramifications is achievable. It is not a utopia. But it can only rear its head when men begin to change their hearts. The advent of Christ on earth was to purposely return men back to fellowship with God, and to subsequently effect the transformation of their hearts (I Peter 3:18). Jesus paid the penalty for our sins in order to mend fences between God and us. The resultant redemption of our soul gives us a new heart; an obedient heart that is filled with love for our God, neighbor, family friends, and for other nations. This cannot be achieved by any system of government, education, psychology, or outer environmental changes. It can be done by a personal invitation of Jesus into your heart and an acceptance of the gift of forgiveness he gave his life to provide. Right wherever you are now, as you read this article, you can make this decision in the quiet of your heart. I believe there is hope for peace. It simply begins with YOU and ME!