

# THE UPWARD CALL

*Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet;  
but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead,  
I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God*

**IN CHRIST JESUS.**

(Philippians 3.13-14 NASB)

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## **GOD, COUNTRY, GUNS, WAR #2**

To reiterate, in the first issue, I referred to a candidate running for local office who claimed his campaign was about God and guns, as if the two go together.

It seems that in the US the phrase *God and guns* is often identified with those called conservative Christians, as if God is pro-gun. Further, it seems that to some, perhaps many, Christians the right to bear arms in accordance with the Second Amendment of the US Constitution is a good thing, a right and necessary thing, even a God-given right. But is God pro-gun when guns and all sorts of other weapons are used to break His command against murder? The argument is often made that guns do not kill, people do; and that there are other uses for guns, such as hunting and target practice. I won't argue that there are other uses for guns, but do God and guns go together, as if the two are wrapped up in our faith? Taking this one step further, do God, guns, and war go together? Some might answer that they do, for we must destroy evil. But is this truly the job of Christians? We are to hate evil and to defeat it with good. But are we to attempt to destroy it directly with the means of the flesh? I don't think so!

Again, we need to heed our Lord's command about loving our enemies.

**"You have heard that it was said, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR and hate your enemy.' "But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? "If you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect."** (Matthew 5.43-48 NASB)

We are to be perfect as our heavenly Father is perfect, and He is perfect love. By the way, if we love, we forgive; and forgiveness is one of the true signs of one who conquers through Him who loves us.

Now, to this third point about guns and war, I need to add this thought: Christians who are strong on guns and war are **warriors that are fighting by the physical sword and not the sword of the spirit**. Instead of taking up the sword of the spirit to defeat evil, they have taken up the physical sword of man, which is the sword of the flesh.

Why have some Christians taken up the physical sword and not the sword of the spirit? I believe the answer lies with the whole distorted concept of an eternal **hell** into which billions of people created **to be** in the image of Elohim are cast, only to be tormented and tortured with literal fire and worms, with absolutely no way out of this eternal torture chamber. God, who loves the world and every person born into the world, has been made into the worst kind of torturer in the history of mankind. In fact, the **God is love** has been made into the image of a cold and heartless god who has failed miserably up to this point and will ultimately fail miserably in the end to woo the heart and will of all mankind. This god is a god in the image of fallen man.

I realize that some people will recoil at such a notion and say that I am “going to hell” for such a belief. Let me assure you that I would never wish such a destiny on the most heartless and cruel person that ever lived on the face of the earth. We are commanded to love our enemies as our Father loves them.

We need to be reminded of the word of one who described himself as a nobody (2 Corinthians 12.11) and the foremost of sinners (1 Timothy 1.15). **But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain; but I labored even more than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me** (1 Corinthians 15.10 NASB). I am often reminded: There go I but by the grace of God!

We need Paul’s perspective on the mighty work that God is doing through His Son: **Yet all is of God, Who conciliates us to Himself through Christ, and is giving us the dispensation of the conciliation, how that God was in Christ, conciliating the world to Himself, not reckoning their offenses to them, and placing in us the word of the conciliation** (2 Corinthians 5.18-19 CV). For a discussion of the word *conciliation*, I refer you to issue #02-0820, April 4, 2008. Simply, it means that God has waved the olive branch of peace to all mankind and is calling all into His peace. If God has brought us into His peace, do you think that He cannot and will not eventually bring all mankind into His peace, even the most hardened enemies of the cross?

Thus, we are to not only love our God, but we are called to love our enemies, and this includes all our enemies in this present day, regardless of their race, ethnicity, color, nationality, or religion.

Don’t misread what I am about to say, for I love my country and thank God that I was born here; but I believe, as a nation comprised of a majority that claim to be Christian, we have lost sight of our calling. As a prosperous and obviously blessed nation in many respects, we have a great obligation to the rest of the world, not to export guns but to export **love, kindness, peace, mercy, and generosity**. I am not stating that we have not done some of this, but we seem to have fallen so far short of it because we have also become warriors of the physical sword. Consider this one fact: The US is the only nation in history that has ever unleashed the horror of nuclear bombs. To end WWII in the Pacific, the US bombed Hiroshima and Nagasaki with nuclear bombs that killed an estimated 220,000 people. As a nation, we have also engaged in twelve major wars, including the one that birthed the nation and the one that almost tore us part.

Lately, the word that keeps ringing in my ear is this: **If anyone is destined for captivity, to captivity he goes; if anyone kills with the sword, with the sword he must be killed. Here is the perseverance and the faith of the saints** (Revelation 13.10 NASB). I present the full verse, but the part that keeps coming to me is **if anyone kills with the sword, with the sword he must be killed**.

We have been a nation that lives by the sword. Will God not judge us, a nation that often proclaims, “*In God we trust,*” and that asks God to bless us every time something bad happens? Will God not judge us as we have meted out justice to others? **For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you** (Matthew 7.2). Will He have to answer to Sodom and Gomorrah and all the other judged cities and nations if He does not judge us? I realize that some might respond that I am selling out America and undermining her greatness. Far from it; I am trying to point out the glory that we are missing by not following God’s righteous way.

I am running out of space to express what is burning in my heart, so it will have to wait for the next issue. I conclude with this thought, to be taken up later: I place the responsibility for the attitude of war that has driven our nation at the feet of Christians. We, speaking in general terms about Christians, have been acting like we are ancient Israel under the old covenant. Instead of trying to win hearts by the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God, we have repeatedly taken up the physical sword, not to change hearts but to defeat and destroy them.