

without any sympathetic attitude, it is like pouring oil on fire. However, there are some stable countries in Asia which have already become members of the world community. Asian nationalism as a whole, then, can be both compatible and incompatible with the world community for the above reasons. Its hope, however, is to become part of the world community in the future.

STATEMENT FROM THE PASTORS OF GENEVA

addressed to the Protestants of Geneva in the face of current events, and intended for deeper consideration and study in the parishes

THE tragic times in which we live call for great compassion from each one of us for the ever-increasing distress in the world. One can only stress again that the love of Christ toward us must be shown forth in the love of those who own Him as their Lord and Saviour.

However, the emotion which gives rise to these troubles is bringing serious spiritual dangers to Christianity. We are threatened by the temptation to cover up our own weaknesses by making passionate accusations against others. Hypocrisy and self-righteousness are at our door.

We are horrified by injustice, oppression and violence. The indignation that we feel in the face of the acts of aggression or oppression which have been committed recently is a righteous indignation. Every creature of God should be treated in accordance with the dignity of his heavenly calling. But, in condemning the most cruel manifestations of disobedience to God's will, we are inclined to quieten our own conscience by thus diverting our attention from the concealed forms of injustice, oppression and violence which exist amongst us. We have grown accustomed to them because they do not cause open warfare and because they have for so long formed a part of the kind of existence which is ours. But sooner or later we become responsible for the wars and revolutions which are always the outcome of violence and contempt of justice.

Thoughtless Misunderstanding

We declare that we abhor lies and hatred which are so often the cause of strong political feelings and thereby increase the evil in the modern world by scorning the God of truth and love. Yet we fail to do all we could to fight against these influences. We will not undertake to acknowledge the truth if it is contrary to our accepted way of life or threatening to our interests. We do not search for unbiased information. We accept, as a necessary evil, the division of the world into two enemy camps. We even go as far as to rejoice in the things which accentuate the differences, while we should be making untiring effort to come to know and understand all men. Our ignorance is often a voluntary blindness, a cunning result of lies and hatred.

We declare that a political system must respect the liberty of man if it is to safeguard its responsibility toward God. We condemn a government that uses military force or propaganda of an ideology to enslave men's minds and restrain their wills. Yet we often identify Christianity with western civilisation; we attribute a sacred character to essential but relative values (our western culture, our political and economic systems, our national prestige or our army, for example). We identify it so closely that we are tempted to believe that the Christian faith needs armed force to defend itself, or to spread. We are contaminated by the deceiving ideal of the crusade.

Liberty for the Gospel

In particular, it seems to us necessary above all to safeguard the liberty of the Church, for she guarantees man's inner liberty, source of all others. We protest against the persecutions, open or secret, to which Christians or their spiritual leaders are subject. Is our protest inspired solely by concern for the liberty of the Gospel? We are inclined to seek, in the protection of public authorities, a security that we should ask of God alone. We put our confidence into one particular political order, as if God were likely to abandon His Church at the time of her greatest need.

We declare that the constituted authorities, on the world or national scale, are accomplishing a task to which God has appointed them, so long as they realise a relatively just human order and that they seek the common good. This certainly should make active citizens of us all. However, we abandon a good deal of our responsibility towards the authorities each time we allow them to act in a manner that is contrary to justice and the good of all. We share their guilt when they take a wrong course of action. We discredit their authority in not recalling them to their duty. We ruin what we claim to respect by not exercising with discernment and wisdom the duty of resistance which is expressed in the apostle's words: 'It is better to obey God than men'.

The Way of Obedience

Thus we appeal to all our brothers to strive together against the duplicity which, in so many forms, is corrupting us at the very heart of our faith. Let us oppose, with clarity and firmness, all thoughtless enthusiasm, hatred, the spirit of vengeance, fear, self-righteousness, hasty judgments, unjust simplifications and pressure of opinion.

Let us increase our vigilance until we are strong enough to meet the spiritual temptations of the present time, and, for that, let us search again together each day, by prayer, by studying the Word of God and by objective examination of the facts, the way of fidelity to our one Lord Jesus Christ, Who gave His life that the curse of hatred might be broken for all men, without exception.