

Subject: Sermon Ideas – How Can One Be For Something and Against Nothing?

Special Ministerial Message

by Rev. Charlotte Amant



How Can One Be For Something and Against Nothing?

In his "Sermon by the Sea" given in 1959 at Asilomar, California, Ernest Holmes shared his vision of the outcome of global well-being, the human species and Earth transformed by the consciousness that he had articulated as Science of Mind. He stated:

"It would be wonderful indeed if a group of persons should arrive on Earth who were for something and against nothing. This would be the summum bonum (supreme moral good) of human organization, wouldn't it?"

The first time I read these words of Holmes, I thought how could this ever be? How could anyone not be against poverty, against war, against pollution? If I changed to being "for", what would I be for that would still not have the elements of "against"? I wrestled with this statement of Dr. Holmes for quite a long time.

My personal process to being "for something" (while being against nothing) began when I studied the life of a remarkable woman named Mildred Norman. From 1953 to 1981, this silver haired woman calling herself only "Peace Pilgrim" walked more than 25,000 miles on a personal pilgrimage for peace. She vowed to "remain a wanderer until mankind has learned the way of peace, walking until given shelter and fasting until given food." In the course of her 28 year pilgrimage, she touched the hearts, minds, and lives of thousands of individuals all across North America. She succeeded in inspiring others to treat her with kindness and charity. Her message was both simple and profound. It continues to inspire people all over the world. She said:

"This is the way of peace: overcome evil with good, and falsehood with truth, and hatred with love."

Peace Pilgrim talked about peace among nations, between people, and most importantly Inner Peace. Penniless, walking with no organizational backing, she invited people through compassion and laughter into a consciousness of peace.

Mildred Norman took a total stance for peace. One day, a man driving by stopped and offered her a ride. Peace Pilgrim got in the car, and amiably traveled with him to the next town where she was to meet up with some other people. Later, he wrote her a letter from jail saying that he was a killer, and had planned to kill her. He had been so struck by her absolute trust in him as fellow human being and her total acceptance of him, that he simply could not follow through with his murderous intention. The word “enemy” means “not of me”, and she viewed all of humanity as connected with her. On her part, she didn’t see any enemies anywhere, so how could he not respond positively and harmlessly to her presence of love?

As I continued to study her work, an inner shift began to take place in which I could see a vision of a world that worked for everyone through focusing on spiritual qualities. As I studied, meditated and contemplated spiritual qualities, I began to understand that being for peace was a place of wholeness, complete in itself, linked to no opposite. During this inner shift, I realized that being for peace has a consciousness of compassion and inclusiveness. Being for peace has the quality of spaciousness, which means room for many differing points of view. At some point I found this quote “People have a point of view, while God has points to view” which made sense to me. A spaciousness bloomed in my consciousness where I could hold differing points of view simultaneously.

One day in a counseling session with a married couple in conflict over child rearing methods, I could actually see both the man and woman with cartoon bubbles over their heads. The husband wanted to be more disciplinary, and the wife wanted a more permissive approach. Each of them had a point of view, both were right, and each point of view was looking for a bigger answer. Both of these methods had their merits, but what was asking to happen was a bigger approach than either one was currently taking.

Suddenly, both of their approaches merged and became one. Both were valid and usable. It was a transformative moment for me because I didn’t have to take a point of view that was for or against anyone. I didn’t have to be anti-disciplinary or anti-lenient. My insight was there was something bigger and better to be known here.

The hardest and continuous part of this process is giving up the need to be right and the need to have an enemy. Peace takes no hostages, has no enemies, and has no need to be right. It simply is a quality of God, a spaciousness in which differences can coexist harmoniously.

There are lots of “conflicted marriages” in the world: Palestine and Israel, North and South Korea, Greece and Turkey to name a few. Consider the present war that America is engaged in and how the need to be right and have an enemy is being expressed. As U.S. citizens we are challenged: many are at peace with the war and see it as a necessity; others at war with the war participating in antiwar demonstrations; others are

at war with peace as it appears to be defenselessness; and then there are those who are truly at peace with peace, seeing it as the only solution.

A forum to work out discordant marriages between nations exists -- the United Nations. But as in most conflicted marriages, the healing/revealing process requires a neutral mediator and is often frustrating and time consuming as it challenges the win/lose and need to be right positions.

If we want to work out the “conflicted marriages” in countries, as well as in our homes, we need to carry a vision of peace stemming from our releasing, both individually and collectively, this need to have an enemy and to be right. It cannot be a pretense peace. And I, you , we are required to pray, vision, study, embrace and practice the Peace of God which has no opposites, which simply IS. When we truly embody a peaceful consciousness, both individually and collectively, we are then automatically empowered to create a world truly at peace.

Love and Blessings,
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