THE CHERNOBYL INCIDENT AND CHRISTIAN CONCERNS

The recent problem in Chernobyl, gives thinking people cause for concern. As one travels about the world and sees the various atomic energy plants, in England, and on the continent as well as in the United States and Canada, one is left with a feeling of insecurity with reference to safety involving nuclear energy in general. The first alarm was sounded at Three Mile Island in Pennsylvania. Now the Soviet explosion has been considerably worse although it has been played down by the Soviet press and by Premier Gorbachev himself.

What causes concern is the fact that there was a release of radioactive iodine and other substances into the atmosphere to such a degree that children in Poland were given iodine solution by mouth so that there would be a diminished tendency for their thyroid glands to take up the radioactive substance. There is reason to believe that other radioactive substances were also present in the atomic cloud. As these substances fall to the earth with rain and gravitational fallout, there is a resultant contamination of the earth and of the animals and plants as well as human beings. Some contamination has come to the United States and Canada. It would seem that it is to the advantage of the political structure of the Soviet Union and our own nations to downplay the seriousness of this accident. It may well be that there are going to be no long term effects which will influence Canadians and Americans and people in the western world but this is conjectural.

Beyond this there is the question of the chronic and long term contamination of the earth and the waters of the earth as well as the air by the continued use of atomic energy and radioactive materials in industry and in Medicine. The problem of the disposal of nuclear waste becomes a greater concern everyday. Recently there has been proposed an area in North Carolina for the disposal of atomic waste underground. This has caused a considerable consternation and anxiety in North Carolina and neighboring states.

The question remains what is to be done with atomic waste? Beyond this what is to be done with the atomic weapons? What would happen if there were an atomic war striking nuclear plants with horrendous release of radioactive substances. One begins to see with very simple calculations that the world as it is at this present time is in an extremely precarious place. Alexander Solzhenitsyn writing in 1973 in his book "From Under the Rubble" stated unless there was worldwide repentance and a search for spirituality that the world probably only had about thirty years to survive. Thirteen of those years are already past and if anything the world is closer to destruction in every way than it was in 1973.

It may be that atomic energy can be utilized safely in the time to come but in my mind this is a moot question. An American atomic scientist stated that the world has gone ahead with the development of atomic energy plants based upon insufficient technology which should have allowed for the protection of society through the use of this modality of energy production. The plant in Chernobyl was apparently one in which graphite was used and apparently there are many similar plants in Russia using graphite in their reactors. It is also stated that there are similar plants in the United States primarily those which are used in the production of atomic weapons. As the United States and Canada are welded together by the common danger of atomic destruction, we are also welded together in history by our common Christianity. Certainly we are going to either stand or fall together. On this basis, it is my most concerned and loving call to all brother and sister Canadians that they spend much time in the days ahead in fasting and prayer and reading of God’s Word seeking the intervention of Almighty God with reference to the world problem of destructive atomic energy.

Let us begin to pray that a solution can be found to the profound problems which face modern man not only in the area of atomic energy but in the area of misunderstandings and hatreds between nations. Has not the time come for us to repent, to turn from our concerns which have to do with the destruction of our enemies to finding mutual solutions and ways of peace. In doing this our defenses must remain strong against Communist and Marxist atheism but we must have an alternative which is a rediscovery of vital New Testament, Spirit-filled Christianity. This is the basic desire of the Christian laity of the western world. As some clergy call for Marxist liberation theology let us in the body of Christ begin to call for the liberation of humanity through the Lord Jesus Christ. Present day Theology all in all has really let the world down as disastrously as has world geopolitics. The individual person filled with the Spirit of Christ in his own life proceeding out to his family and to his profession and his community is the only answer to the tremendous
problems posed by a world which has lost its sense of direction. The Good Earth can be saved for all humanity and for our children. The answer lies with you and me and our Indwelling Spirit of Christ—guiding and directing us through all the stormy seas of life.

William Francis Reed M.D.

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