

E.

Cutler Williams

“A NON-VIOLENT RESOLUTION IN TODAY’S WORLD”

In today’s world there are many problems that could use a non-violent resolution. All too often the answer to resolving a problem seems to be intimidation, bullying, and violence. In this essay I will discuss how one can learn how to solve disputes in a non-violent way.

In school the last few years there has been a program called “bully-proofing”. The idea is that the use of intimidation and violence to force their way upon others, can be diffused or avoided, and a potentially violent situation altered. It has a great message, but it is very difficult to get everybody to buy into the idea of non-violence.

I think that the best way to put an end to violence is to change a person from within. An example of this can be found in the Book of Mormon. In Alma 31:5, Alma the leader of their church, heads a mission to reclaim a group of people that had fallen away from their church. These people were talking of uniting themselves with another group, who often used violence and conquest to take what they wanted. Alma says, “And now, as the preaching of the word had a great tendency to lead the people to do that which was just- yea, it had had more powerful effect upon the minds of the people than the sword, or anything else, which had happened unto them- therefore Alma thought it was expedient that they should try the virtue of the word of God.” Alma realized that if these people could be taught and truly believe the teachings of their religion they would be changed from within. Their desires and actions would be to obey God’s commandments, which would include treating others with kindness, respect, and fairness.

In my reading of different religions, whether it is Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism, Hinduism, or Islam, (and I know there are many other groups), one idea that they all seem to share is kindness to others.

Here in America we have the golden rule, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." That saying does not have to be of a religious nature. It is common sense to live by the golden rule, if one wants to peaceably live in this world.

On the other side of the coin, when problems are resolved through violence, they are not really solved. In a confrontation, one party will impose its will on the other party. The person, or group, who has been humiliated or beaten, will obey the other as long as the threat of more violence is still there. While outwardly there is compliance, inwardly there is resentment and possibly hatred. That is why Alma said that they had found the teaching of their religion far more effective than forced subjugation, or "the sword", in resolving the conflicts among their people.

I know that non-violent resolutions to problems are a harder road to take initially, but it can be done, with positive results. Two examples of leaders that resolved their conflicts through non-violence are Mahatma Gandhi, and Martin Luther King Jr. Each organized their followers and committed them to protesting for their causes without using violence. By following this plan they were able to stay on the "high moral ground".

When we listen and really try to understand other points of view, we are more likely to solve issues in a peaceful way. I would like to end with a quote by Gandhi, "Non-violence is the law of the human race and is infinitely greater than and superior to brute force. In the last resort, it does not avail to those who do not possess a living faith in the God of love."