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FIRST UNITED CHURCH
320 East Hastings Street
Vancouver, B. C. V6A 1P4

Ministers:
Rev. A. J. Griffin
Rev. M. J. V. Shaver

Organists:
A.M. Mr. Peter Janzen
P.M. Mrs. Eleanor Bush

10:30 A.M.

Morning Worship

Organ Prelude
Call to Worship
Hymn No. 30 (17) "Praise My Soul, the King of Heaven"
Invocation
Choral Reading
Ministry of Music
Scripture
Ministry of Music
Communion Meditation
Communion Hymn No. 343 (297) "Jesus, Thou Joy" (Maryton)
Sacrament of the Lord's Supper
Offertory Hymn
Doxology
Announcements
Hymn No. 282 "I Feel the Winds of God" (Kingsfold)
Benediction
Organ Postlude

The music this evening is presented by members of the Vancouver Youth Chorale under the leadership of Mr. Len Lythgoe.

A warm invitation is extended to everyone to remain for lunch in the gym after this morning's service. The usual coffee hour will follow the service this evening.

Evening Broadcast
(Heard over CKWX at 8:00 P.M.)

7:00 P.M.

Organ Prelude
Call to Worship
Hymn No. 272 "God, The Omnipotent"
Invocation
Solo - Linda Fraser
Scripture Reading
"A Gift of Love" Arr. Hal Hopson
Zachariah 12: 7 - 10
Galatians 3: 23 - 29
Luke 9: 18 - 24
Solo - Jody Corner - I will sing of thy GREAT DEEDS
Prayer & Lord's Prayer (sung) MARYTON
Duet - "Come, Blessed Saviour" - Bach
Sermon "GOD AND NATION" Rev. Jack Shaver
Hymn No. 272 (165) "Lord of Our Life" Iste Confessor
Benediction

--- off the air ---

Offering: Prayer, Offertory, Doxology
Announcements
Hymn No. 370 (214) "Saviour, Again To Thy Dear Name" Ellers
Benediction
Organ Postlude

Next Sunday

10:30 A.M. Rev. Jack Shaver
7:00 P.M. Chapel
8:00 P.M. Broadcast - Mr. Jim Hatherly

FIRST UNITED CHURCHBROADCASTSUNDAY JUNE 29 1980GOD + NATION

The New Lectionary, which so many North American Churches now use, had its origin in the Vatican II Council of the Roman Catholic Church.

However the decision got made to select tonight's readings for the 5th Sunday in Pentecost we can be sure that the decision-makers did not have in mind the week-end closest to CANADA DAY.

I am not sure that many Canadians have it in mind that July 1 is Canada's birthday. It seems to me that as long as I can remember, what Canadians have in mind for July 1 is to look for the country. We are not very self-conscious as a Nation. One way some to look a lot more unconscious than conscious.

However with all the uproning & current threats to our Nationhood I think we are getting the feeling that UNCONSCIOUS is not good enough. In fact I think we can use some Good Talk about Nationhood. We are at a place in our history when theological reflection on nationhood is called-for.

There are some things I don't mean by that
and some things I do mean by that.

A lot of God-Talk about Nation has been bad
news down through the history of the human race.
Nations have made use of God to Champion their
way of life and defend them from their enemies.
This has been a demonic aspect of our history ----
The dividing of the world up into WE + THEY and
~~identifying~~ identifying God with us - and THEY with the enemies
of God.

But we are beginning to realize that
identifying God with some kind of Brother-Sisterhood
of the human race is no improvement - it can
hide an equally demonic state of affairs.

There is something both dull and sinister
about anyone being alike. But more significant
is the fact that any actual vast coalition which
assumes that it has included everybody - inevitably
hides its imperialism. It also establishes a We-They
state of affairs but makes the THEY invisible. This
kind of exclusion is the most vicious kind there is.

We will always need Theological reflection
on Nation because we will always need a word
to the We-They situation we create by
our life together - especially when we
are blind to those situations.

The minute humans live together, something gets organized. Their life together takes structural form of some kind, + structures which hold power over people can do evil things. Political institutions can do fearsome things. Wars are generated by Nation States jealous of their sovereignty or by a people seeking to become a Nation state. Political institutions are used by the powerful to keep others powerless - Political institutions are used to oppress.

However political institutions (institutions for people-organization) are inescapable. ~~People~~ you cannot have people living together without political institutions. What is called for is their proper care not attempts at their elimination.

But there is also a positive note. Institutions are also the way in which justice is done. Although individual rights are properly seen as ordained of God, they are delivered on this earth by political structures. The fact that I am born might entitle me to certain rights, but it is as we organize that I am afforded them. There is the crucial matter. - Nations-states do perpetrate evil but as yet they are the key instruments in the provision and maintenance of justice. The only way oppression can be overcome is through the care of political institutions.

Now to get back to the Scriptures lessons which have accidentally coincided with our National Birthday.

The Zechariah passage is a strange one. Its precise meaning will elude us, as it has eluded every scholar that has sought it. But something about its spirit made this obscure reference stand out for the early Christians:

The passage bears reference somehow to Jerusalem and Judah and David's line. — Clearly a ~~political~~ reference to political institutions. Strange talk in the midst of talk about a Nation's troubles and its survival.

"And on that day The Freebirth will be like David and the house of David. — (uplifting of the ~~poor~~ + the oppressed) and I will pour out on the House of David a Compassion — so that when they look at him whom they have pierced they shall mourn for him — as one weeps over a First-born."

What kind of Nation is that? What kind of political institution is that?

Which strengthens the Freebirth over — makes them like royalty.

Looks upon the one they have pierced —

Compassion is rampant — ~~oppressed~~ one is like a First-born child.

Christian scriptures — linked this passage with the suffering servant passages of Isaiah.

The God whose sovereignty is over all our National sovereignties.

wounded one

identified with the oppressed.

What would happen to a Canada whose elites
looked upon him whom they have viewed

the native Peoples.

The the French

The poor corner

The poor

The poor of all the earth who support
our affluence?

Compassion on those as of our First-born
instead of keeping all this hidden from our foes.

Gospel Reading

Luke's version of Peter's Confession

"You are the Christ of God - MESSIAH"

Jesus accepts the role - not yet

Not until a revolutionary meaning comes to
characterize this National Institution.

Son of Man Revealed.

Suffer at hands of Others

Came for a Political Institution - Revolutionary
of the Role of Messiah:

Role of National Savior - Bear Son

Identified with oppressed

Take upon himself sin of
collective,

Epistle Reading
Neither

Includes Paul's famous passage

Jew nor Greek

Slave nor Free

Male nor Female

For you are all one in Christ Jesus

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6

If we place this text along with our other readings
and especially the whole Biblical tradition

I don't think we can make it mean -

In Christ everybody is the same

In Christ everyone ~~loses~~ his/her peoplehood

The Bible includes the proclamation that God alone is King

- his sovereignty is above all people sovereignty

But it also includes an affirmation that something
special is promised to David's line

Although a super-state is seen as Beast -

the civil authorities are also seen as appointed
by God

I think we have to look harder for the meaning of
this famous passage

In Paul's time the thing about:

Jew & Greek

Slave & Free

Male & Female

IS THAT

one was excluded the other included

one was oppressed the other oppressor

one was up and the other down

In CHRIST the difference in status is eliminated
not simply the difference between them

It seems to me that this ~~points~~ that the proper ~~goal~~
for an exclusive and an exploiting peoplehood
is a mutual recognition of peoplehoods.

This way the oppressed are not hidden

This is closer, I think, to what ~~is~~ meant in the
Bible by reconciliation by ~~God~~.

We need in Canada a WORD

which enables us to have our peoplehood

- which exposes that condition to penetrating judgment
and grace - which therefore enables others
to have their peoplehood, which enables us
to confront each other so that we can
be reconciled by God.

God is calling us to the core of our political
institutions - and we confront his word to us
when we confront those he is identified with,
those we exclude

and oppress - within our national life
and beyond our borders

But the profoundest word of all
it seems to me.

is the word

That when you and I get under the
load of our oppressive institutions.

When we find ourselves bearing the sin
of our collective structures.

~~We are joining God.~~

Calling that sin ours

WE ARE JOINING GOD.