



# Point of View

Dear Marketplace Friend,

Thank you, men and women who have worn the uniforms of the Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force or Coast Guard. On Memorial Day, we honor the fallen; on Veteran's Day, we honor the living - who have given their time, talent and forsaken the pursuit of treasure to defend our country and advance its values. My electronic applause is directed to them on this day set aside to recognize them...

"The never ending battle for truth, justice, and the American way." That's the way Superman was introduced to us every week when I was growing up, back in the '50's and '60's. He was the model for a life given to service - the strong intervening for the weak. Why would one drop the suit and put on the uniform? It was all about something intangible, bigger than one's self; it was a battle that was only fought, never won. The forces against truth, justice and the American way would present themselves to every generation... and the critical need for someone to step into the phone booth and change from civilian to guardian would be frequent.

We all long for peace... but the history of civilization is the chronicle of wars. There has never been a year of global peace; conflict is always raging, somewhere. We live in the reality that employment and deployment will always coexist, real-time. When you are



the sole Super Power, that power is never at rest. Power breeds threats and attacks, and both call for reaction. Candidates run on a platform of peace, but leaders are assigned the commission to be Commander in Chief.

When you come to the community of faith, one expects to be sheltered from the realities of war. Sorry: that isn't likely. As soon as you invite the Sovereign to speak, He reveals His agenda: *"Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword."* (Matthew 10:34) Why the military rhetoric?

God knows that peace is the ultimate objective, but it isn't possible as long as there is opposition that exists to destroy: *"Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour."* (1 Peter 5:8) God's enemy - and, since our adoption into His family, our enemy - isn't disarming. Satan - the devil's formal name, on the wanted poster in

Heaven - isn't shooting to wound, he aims to kill.

We live in a world at war. The greatest conflict isn't in Iraq, or Afghanistan, or any other "hot spot;" rather, it is in the invisible spiritual dimension, manifesting itself anywhere that Satan gains a foothold. He can work through governments, he can work through cultures; he most loves working through false religion, that gives its advocates a sense of spiritual foundation putting their effort on an even more dangerous level of devoted pursuit. How do you compete with that?

Paul the Apostle felt no reservation against recruiting his adopted offspring on the front line. In a letter to his son-in-the-faith, Timothy, he wrote: *"You then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others. Endure hardship with us like a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No one serving as a soldier gets involved in civilian affairs - he wants to please his commanding officer."* (2 Timothy 2:1-4) Practical advice for the defender of Truth, Justice and the Heavenly Way.

Can't we opt-out? Is there a deferral for "conscientious objectors?" Do God's children really have to fight? *"For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to*

*make it obedient to Christ."* (2 Corinthians 10:3-5)

It seems that America is going to be at war... because we're under attack. It's sure that Christianity is at war - spiritually - because we're under attack. Thank God for the American defenders. Thank God for the defenders of the faith, as well...

Bob Shank

*Bob Shank is Founder and Chief Mentoring Officer of The Master's Program (TMP).*

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