

# SCA International Newsletter



**DECEMBER, 2017**

Dear Friends and Supporters of SCA International:

*“Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!”*

Luke 2:14' New King James Version (NKJV)

## **Almost 2000 year later, Where's the peace?**

Surrounded by wars and threats of war, we have every right to ask, what were the angels thinking as they sang to the shepherds shivering around the campfire?

Today, we face a North Korea now apparently capable of dropping an atomic bomb unto the USA, a China with a growing navy to protect the islands they built in a sea claimed by other nations and facing the shutdown of our internet and massive North American wide electricity grid by foreign military hackers who may have implanted undetected computer code set to activate, along with a terrorist attack.

We are no closer to peace then the cold night the angels first rang this message out.

But you and I can change that.

First, when does war start? A history exam might want you to write, “When the first gun is fired” but the Bible teaches us war is declared when we harden our heart toward someone: Matthew 5<sup>21</sup> *“You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, ‘You shall not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.’<sup>22</sup> But I tell you that anyone who is angry with a brother or sister will be subject to judgment.”*

I vividly remember being late for a very important meeting. I was stopped at the light, while the pedestrians leisurely strolled across the intersection blocking my progress. I wanted to run them over.

At that point in time I had no love in my heart for them. When we close our heart to someone - when we harden our heart - we are preparing for war. We then go on to think poorly of them and are likely to repeat to others our justification of our closed heart, thereby damaging their reputation and their ability to accomplish God purpose in their life through the help and cooperation of others.

Are we expected to have an open heart to everyone in the world, even \_\_\_\_? (Fill in the blank.) The answer is yes. That open heart does not mean a foolish mind. Love is never to be stupid and sometimes needs to be “tough”. But it does mean we are never given permission by Christ to stop caring about the well-being of anyone.

How does peace break out in our life? We must open our heart to those around us who have “caused” us to close it. Did a person treat you in a way that did not give you the respect you think you deserve? Did someone bitterly disappoint you? Our response should be Ephesians 4:32. New International Version (NIV). *“Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.”* Our hurts or our offenses can come out of our unmet expectations: The Apostle Paul admonishes us to, *“Think about others as better than yourself.”* Romans 12:3 New International Version (NIV) *““ Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you”.*

What gives me the right to assume my opinion matters? Every restaurant, hardware store, gas station, hotel etc. I enter, Google asks me for my opinion. But you’re not me and I’m not you. I’m not aware of all the circumstances that are at work as you live life or run your business or ministry. Was I too curt with you? Do you know what I was in the middle of \_\_? Or, when I tried to make conversation with you, and you were uninterested, perhaps a sick daughter was at the top of your mind.

Let’s be tender-hearted.

Did someone disappoint you? The Jewish people hearing this message of hope for the first time were excited to hear that after hundreds of years of abuse by the Romans, a King had been born to free them. This King grew up to walk on water, feed thousands without a Costco membership and make dead people come back to life. But then He left them with the repressive army still intact. They had every right to be disappointed. Do you have a bigger disappointment than that? Has your friend been killed for preaching the Gospel? Have you been given 40 lashes for sharing your faith? Perhaps you lost someone precious to disease or a personal dream died.

Jesus does not minimize these hurts. Indeed He asks that we open our heart to Him- let Him anoint our wounds with His healing oil. And then He asks us to extend that healing through the greatest of all concepts, Grace - an acknowledgment that I’m not so perfect and have no right to close my heart to the person who hurt me.

In fact, the closer we draw to Christ over our lifetime the more we are aware of how far we fall short. As the Apostle Paul’s life was ebbing toward the end he called himself the “worst of sinners” (1 Timothy 1:15 New Living Translation (NLT)). Being critical of others can be indicating that we are not so spiritual ourselves. And whatever standard we set for ourselves, we fail.

Reconciliation is absolutely what the entire Bible is about. Genesis to Revelation. Reconciliation- God to mankind and person to person. Jesus emphasizes this in Matthew 5 and Matthew 18. (And the Apostle Paul throughout his writings). In Matthew chapter 5: <sup>23</sup> *“Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, <sup>24</sup> leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift.”* (NLB) Radical! A church doesn’t want your money if you have a hard heart toward someone. In Matthew chapter 18: <sup>15</sup> Jesus says, *“If your brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over. <sup>16</sup> But if they will not listen, take one or two others along, so that every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses. <sup>17</sup> If they still refuse to*

listen, tell it to the church; and if they refuse to listen even to the church, treat them as you would a pagan or a tax collector. “ Jesus is saying that there are standards for Christian living. If there is an offense that Grace can’t cover, we are to confront it, not bury it or mumble about it to others.

When we re-read what the Angels really sang to the shepherds, we realize the words weren’t for the armies of the world, but those willing to open their hearts to the message of Christ: The New Living Translation (NLT) phrases it as: “Glory to God in highest heaven, and peace on earth to those with whom God is pleased.” Luke 2: <sup>14</sup>

Let God be pleased with our hearts this special time of the year.

We invite you to visit our website: [scainternational.org](http://scainternational.org) for our various programs and opportunity to give.

**If you would like a 2017 Official Income Tax Receipt, please take note of the following:**

If you are donating:

1) By **CHEQUE**. Please make your cheque payable to: **SCA INTERNATIONAL**.

IMPORTANT: your donation must reach our office address: SCA International,

12-17665 Leslie Street, Newmarket, ON, L3Y 3E3, **with the envelope**

**post-marked no later than December 31st.**

2) By **CREDIT CARD**, please call our office at: 905-868-8004 or Toll Free at: 1-877-474-2689 and supply us with your Credit Card information: **no later than December 29<sup>th</sup> @ 3:00 P.M. EST. Our office will be closed from December 29<sup>th</sup> 2017 @ 3:00 P.M. EST TO January 1<sup>st</sup> 2018.**

3) You may go **Online** at: <http://scainternational.org/donate/> and donate through

**Canada Helps.**

We accept US\$ donation by **US cheque only** and you **will receive a US Income Tax Receipt** as well.

On behalf of the Board and staff of SCA International, A very Blessed Christmas to you and your family and may the Peace and Joy that Jesus came to bring, rest upon you throughout the coming New Year.

With Kind Regards,

*B. Keith Neely*

SCA International, Vice-Chairman

