

Does God Require Suffering for Civilization to Sustain to 2100?

Facilitated by **Joseph Carson, PE** Sat 4 PM | Convo Hall 8

Shelves of books address theodicy – how can an all-good and all-powerful God allow evil and suffering? This discussion will address whether the created moral order requires “suffering persecution for justice’s sake” as necessary to non-violently confront institutional evil, such as corporation or government agency law-breaking. We will consider whether God’s ultimate gamble in creating humanity “in his image” is whether enough “image-bearers” would exhibit supererogatory love of neighbor – where “neighbor” could half-way around the world or 100 years in future – to engage in the self-sacrificing love of neighbor in whistleblowing (instead of bystanding out of self-love) to institutional evil they witness in their employment. Jesus commended and modeled – but does not command – supererogatory love of neighbor in non-violently confronting institutional evil.

Questions for discussion:

1. Is our unprecedented global civilization facing unprecedented collective challenges?
2. How is science underscoring the Genesis 1:26 description of humanity being God’s “image-bearers.” Does that mean we - unlike every other species of life on earth - are God’s stewards of planet earth and its life support systems?
3. What is your opinion of the odds of those born in 2018 getting to die natural deaths - given the facts of nuclear weapons, failed states, global warming, species extinction, growing toxicity of earth’s life support systems, etc., etc.?
4. For civilization to sustain, more or less intact, to year 2100 and beyond, does sustaining civilization’s life support system, natural and manmade, need to become “job 1” for humanity?
5. Should Christian religious professionals and the institutions they lead make explicit that “God’s will on earth” in 2018 and for as long as civilization sustains is something as “Live well and act to protect the ability of future generations to live well?”
6. Did Jesus or the New Testament authors **command** Christians to “suffer persecution for justice’s sake”? See, for example, Matthew 25:31-46?
7. When John the Baptist gave his “career advice” in Luke 3:12-14, did he establish a “strict honor code” for publicans or soldiers?
8. What is commandment about love of neighbor?

9. Did the Good Samaritan put his life or liberty in jeopardy? His professional standing? His economic security? Did he “resist evil”?
10. He did not, as a passerby, run into a burning building to save a crying baby, right?
11. Did Jesus and the Apostles commend and model “suffering persecution for justice’s sake?” Is that “above and beyond” - supererogatory - of “love one’s neighbor as oneself”?
12. So does someone who risks their lives, liberty, professional standing or economic security to protect the life, health and/or safety of others exhibit “supererogatory” love of neighbor?
13. For civilization to sustain to year 2100, do we need trustworthy institutions - institutions comprised of trustworthy - ethical, competent and accountable - humans, who will risk their lives, liberty, professional standing or economic security to “blow whistles” when these institutions break laws in ways that harm people?
14. Do such whistleblowers exhibit supererogatory love of neighbor in their self-sacrificing actions?
15. Could this be God’s ultimate gamble in creating humans “in His image” - would enough people exhibit supererogatory love of neighbor as whistleblowers to keep society’s institutions adequate trustworthy for their essential missions for the common good for civilization to sustain, because it reflects God’s sacred ecosystem?
16. Then why do Christian religious professionals and the institutions they lead bystand to established legal records of corporation or government agency law-breaking that harms or kills people and to well-evidenced claims of such law-breaking?” Why do they treat whistleblowers as lepers?

Joseph P. Carson, PE, is a nuclear safety engineer in the US Department of Energy and a “multiple-time prevailing whistleblower” – he is a deeply concerned Christian, licensed professional engineer (PE), federal agency employee, American, and crew member of planet earth. Joe has been a “living sacrifice” to “the gods” of the suicide machine that our unprecedented global civilization increasing resembles – one’s professional standing and economic security – via his decades of much “suffering persecution for justice’s sake” in resisting and confronting, non-violently, civilization-threatening institutional evil in his profession of engineering, the federal civil service - and the complicit bystanding of Christian religious professionals and the institutions they lead to such institutional evil.

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