

Views from the Pews: The new weaponry of war

Historically, countries have fought wars using armaments such as guns and tanks. Over time these have morphed into arsenals of missiles and drones enabling wars to be waged with increasing force and stealth (from a distance), and unprovoked annexation of territories.

More recent developments have been wars of a different kind, expressed in torrents of hostile and ingenuous words. These are 'fought' very much in the public limelight of social media where, not only venomous, power-laden words, but slogans and mantras, are intended to cause ambiguity, threaten or provoke. Money, embargos and sanctions are now the iron fist, coupled with blatant, military power. The resulting influences are divisive, wreaking havoc with economies and loyalties, and loss of livelihoods, rather than, human life. Another equally destructive weapon is 'cancelling', a social media phenomenon, employed to 'dispose' of those who hold differing opinions and therefore must be eliminated.

Even our democratically founded institutions, such as parliament, are subject to such distortions. On our screens, we witness licence taken with foul language, threatening body stance or inappropriate actions such as tearing up of members' bills, and waving of lassos, in the debating chamber. The recent Oxford Union debate, purportedly one of the last bastions of free speech, waged an intellectual war of words, reflecting ideological opinions, that should have been given a tolerant hearing, yet caused so much offense to some hearers, they saw fit to protest.

Closer to home, we witness irreparable damage to families who wage war with abusive words and obscenities. The Scriptures (Psalms and Proverbs, James 3:1-12; Matt 15:1-20.) inform us that what comes out of mouths reflects what is in our hearts and to be careful in speech. Should the need arise to speak the truth, it needs to be done 'in love', cognisant of the ever-present log in our own eye. Matt 7 :3-5

In both the liturgy and God's word we are exhorted to always build each other up, to encourage, speak in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs and to give Him the thanks, praise and worship, due His name. Eph 5:19; 1 Cor 14:26; Col 3:16; Ps 95:1-2. The same mouth speaks both, therefore, there is no place for demeaning speech.

Let's all take up arms and wage 'war', employing words as God intends. What a 'climate change', would be seen in lives, families and the world around us, when hearts are set to this end.

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