

Tyndale Thought for the Day

16th September 2020



The 'rules-based international order' is under stress. Uighur and Rohingya folk know this, as do Novichok victims and political prisoners, victims of cross-border drone attacks and various beleaguered populations. Whales in the Southern Ocean, elephants in Africa and folk drinking poisoned water in Asia and the Americas know as well. Asylum seekers wish the order was stronger.

The rules are probably being bent often by money-launderers, people-traffickers and criminals; it's a constant battle by governments, police forces and UN agencies to enforce the rules. No doubt some rules are badly written, in need of reform.

But the idea is simple enough – everyone, everywhere, should be subject to the same rules. It's been a long time coming, this order. Over long centuries kingdoms and empires have fought, expanded and declined. Wars have been fought. Religions have clashed and ideas have grown, been debated, shared.

Some Christian groups are worried about the rules-based international order. They see it leading to world government, fear all-powerful dictatorship and the 'anti-Christ'; in New Testament times the power of Rome was international, and imposed a kind of order, even if the rules lacked compassion. Some nationalists are also suspicious of it.

Yet, arguably, in a world of instant communication and money-flow, out-of-control viruses, international criminal networks and an increasing divide between the haves and the have-nots, order that is truly international and based on rules that have emerged after centuries, alone has the potential to make the whole world more, not less, like God's kingdom.

Michael Docker