

Just Policing, Responsibility to Protect, and Anabaptist Two-Kingdom Theology

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Mennonites committed to Anabaptist two-kingdom theology do not need to fear that the agenda I first proposed in 2002 for a threefold conversation within and between pacifist and just-war Christians concerning the ethics of “just policing” will require them to compromise their deepest convictions about Jesus’ call to follow him through a consistently nonviolent love of enemies.¹ The most common misunderstanding of the “just policing” proposal has been just this, that it assumes Christians are ready for a grand compromise – as though they could settle their long-standing differences over war and the use of lethal violence if only they would quickly agree on a common ethic of domestic and international policing.²

In fact, the proposal calls each tradition to greater faithfulness to its stated convictions, both through greater internal coherence (“coming clean” about the status of policing within their respective ethics) and through lived practices. Lived practices constitute embodied arguments, and are the only way either that one side might conceivably convince the other or that together they might perhaps develop some new consensus. Meanwhile, whether or not the two traditions ever do converge, the just policing proposal gathers up conceptual tools for responding to those tough ethical challenges of genocide, and ensuing calls for humanitarian military intervention, that have led to a new international doctrine of “the responsibility to protect” (R2P). These tools are not only compatible with nuanced versions of Anabaptist two-kingdom theology but can help Mennonites frame, name, and guide their responses to the cluster of issues surrounding R2P.

How to Proceed: Embodied Arguments, Middle Axioms

The very fact that I was asked to contribute to the present issue of *The Conrad Grebel Review* on R2P may reflect misconceptions about just policing, at least as I have presented it. R2P and just policing do not necessarily come in the same package; they are not two proposals under different names for

what would be essentially the same thing – a new international system that all Christians supposedly could support, in which potentially lethal force is used only to apprehend those who perpetrate crimes against humanity and go unpunished by their own nation states, either because those states harbor such criminals or are failed states, or because the leaders of those states are the perpetrators. To be sure, advocating and working for the international rule of law along these lines is a perfectly legitimate way for just-war Christians to respond to my proposals as they to seek to insure that the use of potentially lethal force is truly an exceptional last resort. For, if they do that, it is possible that “what once was claimed to be ‘just war’ would finally be just because it would just be policing not war.”³

But that is only half the story, half the agenda. And if a slowly developing international regime based on the rule of law is possible, it is primarily the responsibility of just-war Christians (and of course their counterparts in the secularized just war tradition also known as the domain of international law) to help demonstrate this through the lived arguments of their own practices. Christian pacifists can and perhaps should remain agnostic about the prospects for such a project, supporting it only as a “middle axiom.” A middle axiom, in this case, is a thesis urging those who live by a different ethical system that, if they cannot find it within themselves to do what pacifists believe to be right, non-pacifists should at least live up to their own highest stated moral commitments.⁴

The proper response of pacifists to the agenda of just policing is not to compromise, therefore, but to bring to the ecumenical table concrete historical examples and developing contemporary practices that show how it is possible to protect vulnerable peoples in nonviolent ways. This *does* require Christian pacifists to recognize that all communities, including the church, need to exercise the police function in some way.⁵ But once pacifists make the mental adjustment that allows them to realign their vocabulary with actual best practices, historic peace churches can point to examples ranging from Amish and conservative Mennonite disciplinary practices, to the unarmed peace officers and conflict mediators who functioned in Mennonite colonies of the Chaco when the Paraguayan state apparatus remained distant, to the pilot project in civilian-based defense that constitutes Christian Peacemaker Teams at its best.⁶

The closest thing to a compromise that the just policing agenda asks of Christian pacifists, then, is a willingness to work in appropriate coalitions whereby parties with distinctive moral commitments cooperate to achieve those more-and-less limited objectives they hold in common, while preserving their respective identities – doing so in part by reserving the right to pull out of such coalitions if conscience requires. But such coalitions are already happening and have happened for a long time. Whether working in Vietnam in the 1960s or Iraq in the 2000s, Mennonite Central Committee has had to form limited coalitions with civil and even military authorities in order to do its relief and development work, even while struggling to define those limits in such a way that their Christian witness would not be eclipsed or confused with American imperialism.⁷

Back at home, peace church Christians have entered into coalitions with stringent just-war Christians who sometimes bear labels like “nuclear pacifist” or “modern war pacifist” because they resist some wars and certain kinds of weapons precisely on just-war grounds. World War II-era conscientious objectors who famously exposed the degradations of the mental health system and then went on to careers as reform-minded mental health professionals, sometimes working in government, can be thought of as working in coalition. The restorative justice practitioners who invented victim-offender reconciliation programs and negotiated their way into the criminal justice system now work in coalition in much the same way. A Mennonite pastor, voluntary service worker, or active neighbor in a violence-ridden urban setting who cooperates, where conscientiously possible, with community-wide efforts that give young people alternatives to drug dealing and gang life – but also involve police cooperating under the rubric of “community policing” – is working in coalition. The point is that all I have done in proposing the agenda of just policing is to draw on domestic examples to give international examples an analogical name: international “community policing.”

The practical sandals-on-the-ground question before us is whether this historic peace church pattern of forging alternatives and forming coalitions can extend the peacemaking witness into the face of active genocides and hot wars in which egregious human rights abuses are endemic. The field of peace and conflict studies, with peace church theorist-practitioners playing leading

roles, has done much to demonstrate what can and must be done to prevent the outbreak of violence. But even if we agree that violence prevention is the most important work that any society, church, or peacebuilder can do, and should thus receive the bulk of our attention, sometimes it is still too late. Stopping, and *not only preventing*, such violence is a challenge that remains and is the toughest nut to crack for *all* ethical systems that take up the problematics of violence.

The involvement of non-pacifist Christians in efforts to break through scruples against intervening in the internal affairs of other sovereign nations is part of the response of conscientious just-war thinkers to this toughest of moral challenges. The scruples in question were built into the Westphalian international system until very recently, when the United Nations conceptually grounded sovereignty in the responsibility of governments to protect all those subject to their rule.⁸ The core principle of R2P is that a government's legitimate claim to sovereignty is based on its responsibility "to protect its populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity." A government that fails to do so, or itself becomes a threat to the security of those within its borders, thus forfeits its claim to sovereignty; the international community is then not only permitted to intervene but has a duty to intervene.

Elegant and ground-breaking as this formulation is, it is not yet entirely clear whether or how it will work. Informed by the Realist school of international relations, one key objection from a rightward direction is how a nation or nations will marshal political support for spending "lives and treasure" where national self-interest is not immediately at stake, however noble the cause. Informed by histories of colonialism and Western domination, one key objection from a leftward direction is how a universal obligation to intervene, anywhere around the globe anytime egregious human rights violations are occurring, can possibly translate into anything short of an imperialist project. Perhaps, for the sake of those vulnerable peoples who oblige Christian neighbor love and will benefit from somewhat less violence, pacifists may share in a very guarded hope that just-war thinkers and international diplomats will be able to square these circles. Simply articulating the responsibility to protect, however, is not yet to have operationalized it.

Meanwhile, any pacifist alternative or nonviolent version of R2P would require some very sophisticated strategic thinking, thoroughgoing training, and courageous mobilization. Practitioners would need to know when to use a conflict resolution model and when to use a Gandhian interventionist model, being trained in both. And in the context of genocides and hot wars, at least, the Gandhian interventionist model is barely off the drawing boards – not so much because it is utopian as because it suffers from a classic chicken-and-egg problem. It is realistic to imagine that with enough international (not just Western) peacebuilders, religious leaders, and wise elders flying into a Rwanda or Kosovo at a critical juncture – unarmed except with moral power and sociopolitical finesse – disaster could have been averted. But until this happens a time or two, what no one has quite figured out is how to recruit the critical mass of courageous soldiers of nonviolence needed for such a venture. While such a practice and the institutions needed to effect it are desperately needed, are imaginable, and can build on pieces already in place, nonviolent R2P – that is, a responsibility to protect nonviolently – may not be utopian delusion but it is clearly not yet operational either.

So, how do we live and act in the gap between imaginable possibility and currently operationalized resources? Precisely because just policing is a multi-level agenda for mutually informed discernment, not a developed proposal for international policing as an alternative to war (and thus not the same thing that R2P is or aspires to become), it invites different traditions to respond to these challenges in their own ways and offers a few pointers for doing so. That includes peace church people who are not prepared to sign on to “just policing” if it merely constitutes a rectified version of the just war tradition. And it even includes the Mennonites among them who ascribe to nuanced versions of Anabaptist two-kingdom theology.

Anabaptist Two-Kingdom Theology Today

Before elaborating upon this claim, however, it is worth noting that pacifists who do not hold, or do not think they hold, or have not even heard of Anabaptist two-kingdom theology are functionally in pretty much the same boat. Anabaptist two-kingdom theology frankly recognizes that in the overlap between Jesus’ inauguration of God’s Reign and a coming fullness of God’s Reign, societies-at-large simply are not prepared to live according

to Jesus' ethic of nonviolent love but Christians are called to begin doing so anyway. It does this without ascribing either to a Manichaean dualism that sees divergent ethics of war and peace as perpetually inevitable or to a Lutheran two-kingdom theology way of legitimating divergent ethics for the same people as they fulfill different roles. The nuance in what I am calling "nuanced two-kingdom theology" is necessary for Christian pacifists who believe that the demands of neighbor love and witness to God's Reign disallow any contentment concerning this gap between Jesus' ethic and the dominant ethics of "the world" and thus require them to work for justice and peace even in systems that do not recognize Jesus or his way. To do so, after all, requires sophisticated translation skills in order to propose the good (or at least the better) in terms accessible to others without buying into all of their values and presuppositions.

Even a pacifist who is more optimistic than Mennonites have traditionally been about the possibilities of reform or revolution – the liberal pacifist, or the Gandhian peace activist, or the secular student of Gene Sharp, who charted a course for nonviolent civilian-based defense⁹ – is going to have to operate within the framework of some duality, which will not be unlike the one that Anabaptist two-kingdom theology tries to navigate. Even without a Christian eschatological theology in which Jesus' proclamation of the Reign of God is what maps the overlap between a coming "not yet" and a present "already," anyone who believes that wholly nonviolent ways of protecting vulnerable peoples are possible¹⁰ is also going to have to figure out how to live "between the times." Such a person will have to navigate through what John Howard Yoder called "duality without dualism"¹¹ in *some* way in order to advocate less-than-complete policy solutions as next steps toward their distant but imaginable future, and do so in terms comprehensible to others but without selling out their deeper hopes and convictions. And in some cases they may need the honesty and fortitude to be silent, admitting that for some situations they do not now (right now! – in time to save *these* lives) have operationalized nonviolent solutions ready to roll out.

In 1997, the Peace Committee charged with providing theological guidance especially to international programs of Mennonite Central Committee faced this harsh and tragic prospect forthrightly.¹² After struggling mightily with all the issues at play here, the committee concluded:

We will not call for humanitarian military intervention. We appreciate that there may be tragic situations where we have no alternative course of action to suggest. This could be either because our understanding is incomplete or because we cannot see a possible nonviolent solution. In situations like these, we may choose to publicly neither oppose nor support an international intervention. We would remain silent, not to disengage or to avoid action or to legitimate violence, but in recognition of the tragic and ambiguous nature of the situation.

Being “silent” in such a case was as much a spiritual discipline as a literal silence. For, as the statement continued, the committee did promise to speak, albeit in the mode of commentary rather than either support or opposition:

Governments, however ... are required to act. Part of our responsibility at such times is to stretch the imaginations of both those who must act and those who can choose whether to act or not. In this light, we will frequently comment on humanitarian military interventions that governments or international bodies decide to take.

Still, if some would expect these well-placed representatives of a historic peace church to actively oppose every last war, the committee did not simply refrain silently; it bravely added: “We acknowledge that such interventions can, in some situations, save lives.”

Actually, an un-nuanced, stark Anabaptist two-kingdom theology espoused by a certain kind of conservative Mennonitism would have no problem being silent and, in a way, no problem affirming a “responsibility to protect” on the part of governments. By one reading, after all, this is simply Romans 13. Indeed, whatever the mechanism and the sense in which God ordains or institutes or places into order the “governing authorities” (NRSV), they clearly are at their best when they are not a threat or “a terror to good conduct, but to bad” – and by logical implication are at their worst when they instead protect bad conduct or even become a terror to the good conduct of vulnerable innocents themselves.

But of course matters are not quite so simple in Mennonite social

ethics today, for at least three reasons: First, R2P presents a problem to nuanced two-kingdom theology that it would not necessarily have presented to an older, starker, two-kingdom theology. This is the case precisely because more activist socially-engaged Mennonites have been nuancing their position for decades now with hopes and biblical truths that were already at home in various versions of what some of us have lumped together as “one-kingdom theology.” The Protestant Social Gospel, Calvinist social ethics, liberation theology, and Catholic social teaching have all reminded Mennonites that this is still God’s world, that God is still at work in it, and that God calls Christians to participate in its redemption within history even if God alone can bring that redemption to its fulfillment in the eschaton. All the problems of how to do this work – as followers of Jesus who prioritize God’s work through the church rather than either the state or progressive social movements, but who do not dismiss God’s work outside of the church either – follow from what is arguably an attempt not just to be ecumenically generous and open to the truths of other Christian traditions but also to be more, not less, biblical.

Second, the formulation of “middle axioms” by which nuanced two-kingdom thinkers seek to articulate their policy recommendations faithfully but in the idiom of someone else’s ethic is, like any translation, very hard work. On the one hand, one must keep one’s ethical moorings, always remembering the pre-eminently Christian reasons one has entered into the public policy realm in the first place. On the other hand, if the object is to communicate in terms accessible to those acting out of other motivations and reasons, then for the sake of elegant communication, one must strip one’s message somewhat of one’s own reasons and presuppositions. (Standing before God in the domain of conscience, one may be like math students who are obliged to “show their work” on a test. But standing in the public domain, one often needs bullet points for an “elevator speech.”) And then, still others may wonder if one has sold out, and no doubt there is always a danger that one will sell out. In every case, the formulation of middle axioms requires clear communication, with careful attention to a variety of audiences, who nonetheless may overhear the discourses meant for others, at every turn.¹³

Finally, a third reason that R2P and the challenges surrounding it are

more complicated for a nuanced two-kingdom theology than for a stark one is a reason that the MCC Peace Committee had the courage to name. In the face of truly tragic situations in which the preventive work of peacebuilding has been absent or has come too late, we may simply not know what to say, much less do. (And if all were honest, the “we” here could no doubt include just-war thinkers, not just pacifists.)

Humanitarian Military Intervention in this Light

My call for attention to “just policing” has anticipated this eventuality from the beginning, however. In a way that I regret not elaborating upon, the very first sentence of the first version of my initial paper on just policing deliberately left an opening for an Anabaptist two-kingdom appropriation of the just policing agenda:

If the best intentions of just-war theorists were operational, they could only allow for just policing, not warfare at all; if Christian pacifists can in any way support, participate, *or at least not object* to operations with recourse to limited but potentially lethal force, that will only be true for just policing. [Emphasis added.]¹⁴

To *not object* to a humanitarian military intervention as the MCC Peace Committee said it might not always do, and to have even less reason to object to a humanitarian intervention through the operation of international policing, is a double negative. It is not a positive endorsement. In pure mathematics a double negative may equal a positive, but within the contingency of social affairs it is rarely if ever the same thing.

In this case the double negative maps the very nuance required for a nuanced two-kingdom theology. For, simultaneously, the concept of “just policing” offers a “middle axiom” that Christian pacifists can take to non-pacifists while also providing pacifists with a criterion for deciding when not to object at least to some “operations with recourse to limited but potentially lethal force.” It says to just-war Christians and to public policy-makers: If you are not yet able to engage in a process of transarmament that develops nonviolent forms of civilian-based defense and nonviolent intervention, at least turn your putatively just wars into just policing. And it says to pacifists: The difference between policing and warfare may not be clean enough for

us to participate in the first though not the second, but there are enough differences that the more a military action looks like a police action, the less objectionable it becomes.¹⁵

In fact, even if the MCC Peace Committee had not ventured to admit that in some situations Christian pacifists may not support but nonetheless cannot object to certain military actions, people in their position would sometimes have to make exactly these decisions. Because here is what has happened: Over the course of the last five decades or more, the intellectual and bureaucratic leadership of the largest and most prominent Mennonite denominations in North America¹⁶ has come to a rough consensus not only that some kind of public witness concerning war and social injustice is compatible with their call to follow Jesus in the way of nonviolent love, but that Christian discipleship may positively require it. How deeply to engage the social order, which social issues should take priority, whether and at what level Mennonites should carry that witness into corporate and government office, what to do next if society actually attends to a prophetic witness and asks for help in institutionalizing the changes called for – any and all of these questions remain subject for ongoing debate, but are intelligible only within a consensus that *sometimes it is* appropriate for Christians to witness not only through the pattern of their lives but by speaking out in the public realm.

But *sometimes* implies *not always*. Not on every issue. Probably not where Mennonites bring no specific expertise – the kind of expertise they have brought in the case of conscientious objectors working in mental health facilities in World War II, or when MCC workers have returned from any number of underreported regions around the world.¹⁷ And not with a blanket opposition to every last war through efforts that would squander time, energy, resources, political credibility, or Christian hope. The reason is not that Mennonites can positively support any war, or that any war can be compatible with Jesus' Kingdom ethic, or even that international policing can be anything more than a provisional improvement, but rather that it is foolish to act as though “the kingdoms of this world [are just about ready to] become the Kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ” (Rev. 11:15, KJV).

In other words, once Mennonites have abandoned a stark two-kingdom theology and the strictly “sectarian” sociology it implies in favor

of a nuanced one (which is neither to abandon the witness of a distinct sociology nor to rule out the possibility of conscientious “withdrawal” from some systems and some institutions), then they will have to make some prudential judgments. Advocacy offices in Ottawa, Washington, the United Nations, and for that matter Kinshasa or Bogota will have to decide where to invest the resources and staff time that are always too scarce in the face of the injustices of a fallen world. Congregations will have to decide which issues are priorities to place before potential volunteers and to program into Christian education hours. Whether cautious and pessimistic about the prospects for public witness, or zealous and optimistic, then, as soon as Mennonites recognize that public witness is *sometimes* appropriate, they will have to recognize the need to decide when it is *not*.¹⁸

Commenting on the US-led, UN-sanctioned intervention in Somalia in 1992-93 from within an implicitly two-kingdom framework, Mennonite ethicists Ted Koontz and J. Richard Burkholder took exactly this approach in an article widely reprinted in the Mennonite press.¹⁹ They emphasized that the church’s primary calling is “positive peacemaking” which responds to injustices in a way that builds “just and nonviolent social structures that make for peace.” “Negative peace,” by contrast, is simply the absence of armed conflict: “While positive peace is much preferable, negative peace is a ‘good’ thing when compared to injustice and chaos.” Pacifist Christians who insist their vocation is “working nonviolently toward positive peace” and never to engage in military action do not need to deny that “[s]uperior military force can, in fact, bring about the end of armed conflict, leading to negative peace.” To be sure, they should resist every “illusion” that military intervention “will really bring any kind of lasting peace.”

Nonetheless, wrote Burkholder and Koontz, “We recognize . . . that one task of government is to keep negative peace. A limited and controlled peacekeeping operation is something for which to be thankful, relatively speaking, when we consider the ways troops have been used in [the] past – or the much more destructive purposes for which they have been trained.” Anticipating what the MCC Peace Committee would say a few years later, Koontz and Burkholder suggested that for Mennonites it might be “a time for silence” in which they would “neither condemn nor advocate this particular use of military force” – though it was no less “a time for action” in the form

of redoubled support for positive peacemaking efforts.

I want to be clear: Humanitarian military interventions to stop egregious human rights abuses should not get a blank check. Such actions will need scrutiny and “comment,” as the MCC Peace Committee put it, to test whether they really are humanitarian rather than guises for imperial expansionism or simply new expressions of a misguided “white man’s burden.” Likewise, if the new international doctrine of responsibility to protect is part of the slow construction of an international order based on the rule of law in which nation-states increasingly limit their threat and use of armed violence to actions that look more and more like policing, the process will require plenty of scrutiny and critique simply to succeed on its own terms. We know from domestic policing, after all, that not all forms amount to just policing, that “crime-fighting” models are themselves perniciously militarized, and that community policing models are often fragile at best.²⁰

But insofar as humanitarian interventions do approximate what they claim to be – especially insofar as they avoid blunt-force military strategies while seeking to attain the greater precision of accountable police actions that succeed at using the least amount of armed force needed to apprehend war criminals – it will be an act not only of foolishness to oppose them but of ideological hubris. For none of us, neither pacifist nor just-war, has good non-tragic answers to these toughest of cases. If just-war Christians really can help nations operationalize their claim that violence may be limited to these toughest exceptional cases, pacifists should not wish them to fail. And in the meantime, the real-even-if-still-too-fuzzy distinction between warfare and policing that comes with the very *notion* of just policing can help guide pacifist prudential judgments about when to “oppose” and when to practice the discipline of “silence.”

Yes, if just-war Christians ever succeed at rendering war so exceptional as to approximate the best practices of policing, Mennonites and other Christian pacifists will have one fewer reason to remain pacifist. Since there are other quite biblical reasons to be pacifist, the loss of this essentially consequentialist argument for pacifism (namely, that the just war tradition has not consistently achieved its stated objectives anyway) may not be decisive, even if we see an improved track record for just-war-turned-just-policing. In any case, the question is one that pacifists can defer until

just-war Christians do their own difficult work. Somehow, though, simply to have imagined out loud the prospect that pacifists might someday face the crisis that this question would conceivably provoke seems to have unnerved a few Mennonites, for whom the preservation of group identity is never a distant anxiety. All I can do is repeat: There is another way that just-war and pacifist Christians might continue moving closer to one another, in the hope that war could cease to be a church-dividing issue. That is for historic peace churches to do their own work, arguing through their own embodied practices, to show that nonviolent ways of policing and protecting vulnerable peoples either exist or can be invented.

An ideological skepticism insisting that non-pacifist Christians can never succeed at their side of the just policing agenda, thus rectifying the “just war” tradition so that it *just* allows for policing, is uncharitable and a distraction. Pacifists have enough of their own work to do. Arguing that their just-war counterparts must inevitably fail, perhaps so that pacifists can feel more secure in their peace church identities – or even (God forbid) self-righteous – will lead neither to their own church’s faithfulness nor to a larger church unity. And that would be an *avoidable* tragedy.

Notes

¹ My initial article aimed at a limited audience – a handful of scholars involved in what we called the Mennonite Catholic Theological Colloquium, which in turn aimed to make its work available to the delegations from the Mennonite World Conference and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity engaged in a bilateral international dialogue from 1998 to 2003. That initial draft is available as “Just Policing: How War Could Cease to be a Church-Dividing Issue,” in *Just Policing: Mennonite-Catholic Theological Colloquium 2002*, ed. Ivan J. Kauffman, Bridgefolk Series, no. 2 (Kitchener, ON: Pandora Press, 2004), 19-75. A revision of that article appears under the same title in the *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 41. 3-4 (Summer-Fall 2004): 409-30. I have since expanded this material into the three chapters under my byline in Gerald W. Schlabach, ed. and lead author, *Just Policing, Not War: An Alternative Response to World Violence*, with Drew Christiansen, S.J., et al. (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2007).

² No doubt some of the responsibility for this misreading has been my own. In hindsight, my initial 2002 essay could have been clearer, and in successive revisions I have tried to say more forcefully that “the just policing proposal” is a proposal for two distinct conversations within historic peace church and just war affirming churches respectively, though within hearing range of one another, so that we might goad one other to our respective forms of faithfulness through a third overarching conversation. Further, a self-reflective scholar

inevitably sorts out “what was I thinking?” through ongoing debates with other scholars, and this too has happened for me. Still, though I might wish to have been clearer at some points, I do believe that from the beginning, the structure of my arguments has been such that readers in both traditions have been invited to do their own homework first, before pressing for a grand compromise.

³ Schlabach, *Just Policing, Not War: An Alternative Response to World Violence*, 70.

⁴ For further elaboration on the notion of middle axioms, see John Howard Yoder, *The Christian Witness to the State*, Institute of Mennonite Studies Series, no. 3 (Newton, KS: Faith and Life Press, 1964), 31-33, 39-44, 71-73; Duane K. Friesen, “In Search of Security: A Theology and Ethic of Peace and Public Order,” in *At Peace and Unafraid: Public Order, Security and the Wisdom of the Cross*, ed. Duane K. Friesen and Gerald W. Schlabach (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 2005), 59-60. Friesen goes on to put the notion into use on 68-75.

⁵ Gerald W. Schlabach, “Just the Police Function, Then,” *The Conrad Grebel Review* 26. 2 (Spring 2008): 50–60.

⁶ Efforts such as the latter are particularly important if historic peace churches are to meet, in practice, the important objection that Reinhold Niebuhr would raise if he were to write *Moral Man and Immoral Society* today, namely that even if nonviolent policing is possible in face-to-face communities, it could never become the norm in complex industrialized societies or in international affairs.

⁷ I hope I do not invite controversy by describing matters this way. I am only observing that to work at all in some places where the need is greatest (as NGOs like to say when they solicit charitable donations) one must have some relationship with governing authorities, even or especially when these are occupying forces whose occupation one does not approve of. Precisely because social and physical infrastructure in these cases is broken down, strained, or threatened, basic activities such as travel and food importation are all the more likely to require cooperation with authorities, the worse the situation. Objectively even if impolitely, this must be labeled a coalition of sorts.

⁸ United Nations Security Council Resolution 1674, adopted by the UN Security Council on 28 April 2006, endorsing a formulation of the principles of R2P by a World Summit meeting, 12-14 September 2005.

⁹ Gene Sharp, “Civilian-Based Defense as a Peace Strategy,” *Peace & Change* 7. 4 (Fall 1981): 53-58; *Making Europe Unconquerable: The Potential of Civilian-Based Deterrence and Defence* (Cambridge, MA: Ballinger Pub. Co., 1985); Gene Sharp and Bruce Jenkins, *Civilian-Based Defense: A Post-Military Weapons System* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1990).

¹⁰ Or would become possible if only societies invested in them with even a portion of the resources invested in military solutions.

¹¹ Yoder, *Christian Witness to the State*, 31.

¹² Quotations to follow are from MCC Peace Committee, “Principles for Relating to Peacekeepers,” discussion summary from 11-12 April 1997 meeting, *MCC Peace Office Newsletter*, May-October 1997; 14-16, http://mcc.org/system/files/PON_1997-02.pdf. Other articles in this issue of the newsletter are taken from presentations during the meeting and thus lay out various positions in debate. Note that the MCC Peace Committee reaffirmed

this 1997 statement in 2005, with additional commentary and addenda; see MCC Peace Committee, “MCC Peace Committee Meeting,” discussion summary from 13-15 October 2005 meeting, *MCC Peace Office Newsletter*, July-September 2006, 2-5; http://mcc.org/system/files/PON_2006-03.pdf.

¹³ I must confess that the reception of my work on just policing has itself made me acutely aware of these difficulties. The relevant domain here has been interchurch dialogue rather than direct public engagement, but the task of talking across Christian traditions has all the same dynamics. I have always conceived of the project as a complex exercise in formulating middle axioms first to facilitate conversation across traditions but inevitably to facilitate the public witness of Christian churches as well. But I have also had to plead that it would be tiresome to say at every turn that this or that use of the just war tradition by me, a Christian pacifist, is a middle axiom. Inevitably, some have wondered where I finally stand. All I would add is that both my formation as a believers church theologian and my later commitment to practicing theology by thinking with the wider catholic whole of the church have left me with the conviction that where I stand does not really matter. Accountability concerning one’s arguments and presuppositions matters, of course, but is penultimate. What ultimately matters, and what the theologian merely services, is the church’s communal discernment and witness.

¹⁴ Schlabach, “Just Policing: How War Could Cease to be a Church-Dividing Issue,” 19.

¹⁵ Schlabach, *Just Policing, Not War: An Alternative Response to World Violence*, 72-77, 82-84.

¹⁶ I say this as precisely as I know how to do, because Mennonite Church USA and Mennonite Church Canada are not the largest bloc of Anabaptist-Mennonite groups in North America, even though they like to think of themselves as such. Conservative non-conference Mennonites, Amish, and Hutterites added together would have larger numbers, but do not have denominational prominence simply because they are not organized as denominations in the first place. The balance would not shift if one added the Mennonite Brethren to the first bloc; also, since Mennonite Brethren have identified increasingly with North American evangelicalism, I am frankly unsure how to generalize about them. Meanwhile, I will not contest the objection that all of this is North America-centric. Again, I cannot claim to generalize about global Anabaptist-Mennonite churches, though what I write here would probably hold for European Mennonites, albeit with different features and a more complicated time line. All this is important to recognize because a very legitimate worry about the entire R2P agenda is that it is premised on Western, North Atlantic assumptions of power in the first place – power both to shape policy within our nations and then by intervening around the world. I am not convinced that this is altogether the case, but it certainly requires transparency and self-criticism.

¹⁷ Cf. Keith Graber Miller, *Wise as Serpents, Harmless as Doves: American Mennonites Engage Washington* (Knoxville, TN: Univ. of Tennessee Press, 1996).

¹⁸ Obviously those who are already theologically cautious will be ready to recognize this. But those who sense a strong vocation for activist peace and justice work are not exempt, and if nothing else will be concocting a recipe for burn-out if they think otherwise.

¹⁹ J. R. Burkholder and Ted Koontz, “Keeping Our Calling Clear: When Armed Force is

Used to Make Relief Work Possible,” *Gospel Herald* 12 January 1993: 6-7. With variations in the title, the article was also printed in *Mennonite Weekly Review*, *The Mennonite*, and *Mennonite Reporter*.

²⁰ Tobias Winright, “Community Policing as a Paradigm for International Relations,” in *Just Policing, Not War: An Alternative Response to World Violence*, ed. and lead author Gerald W. Schlabach (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2007), 130-52.

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