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Book Reviews

Foreword

Tuesday, September 11, 2001 was the first day of classes in the fall semester at University of Waterloo. At Conrad Grebel University College, students and professors alike began the day anticipating new encounters and a fresh exchange of ideas. As news unfolded of the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon, academic agenda was put aside as people gathered around televisions, internet, and also together in discussion and prayer. Little did we know that the exchange of ideas, opinions, and emotions through the school year to come would be shaped by the horrific events in the United States that Tuesday morning.

As this special issue of *The Conrad Grebel Review* goes into production, people around the world are anticipating the first anniversary of 9/11. Undoubtedly, a new wave of analysis, reflection, and commemoration will happen at that point. Most of the writing in this issue was produced in the months immediately following September 11. In our Call for Papers, we offered as a theme "Responding to Terrorism: Does Nonviolence Work?" And so most of the essays in some way reflect on the dilemmas of a pacifist or nonresistant stance in light of the enormity and closeness (to North Americans) of the September 11 terrorist violence as well as in light of the organized state violence in Afghanistan that followed.

The essays in this issue have approaches that are multi-varied — philosophical, historical, autobiographical, biblically-rooted, for instance. We were struck by the fact that the pieces submitted did not easily fall into the regular categories of scholarly article, reflective essay, or creative writing. The table of contents without our regular sections reflects this blurring of the boundaries in genres of writing. The Literary Refractions in poetry and prose are found throughout the issue. The books reviewed are also relevant to the theme.

This issue is my last as editor of *The Conrad Grebel Review*. Beginning with the Fall 2002 issue, a new editorial team will be in place, consisting of Stephen Jones as Managing Editor, and C. Arnold Snyder as Supervising Editor. Arthur Boers will continue as Book Review Editor and Carol Lichti as Circulation Manager.

We hope this issue stimulates your mind and spirit.

Marlene Epp, *Editor*

Cover: *Computer artwork by Christopher Tiessen. Chris is a 2002 graduate of Conrad Grebel University College at the University of Waterloo.*

Roots of Violence, Seeds of Peace

Grace M. Jantzen

It was a good piece of land, about half an acre, well drained, gently sloping, and sheltered from the east wind: perfect for growing vegetables and a few raspberries. I was gradually making my way as an academic in London University, but I had come from a prairie farm in Saskatchewan and love the soil and all growing things. Working a vegetable patch would be a perfect balance to long hours at my desk. There were some weeds and a coarse grass growing on the patch, but it was autumn; I would have until spring to prepare it for seeding. So whenever I could take a break from my books I spent an hour or two pulling up the weeds and digging in a load of farmyard manure. As I turned the soil over I noticed long white root systems from the coarse grass: I pulled up what I could, and chopped up what was left with my spade, carefully burying it as I went along. After some weeks I was rewarded with a lovely clean plot of land ready for spring planting. But when spring began to arrive, long before any seeds could go in, the plot was covered in virulent coarse grass. It was, of course, couch grass; by chopping up the roots and burying them I had propagated it in just the way it likes best, and I had all to do again.

In the years since then, as the world has continued its escalating spiral of hatred and violence, the labyrinthine system of that couch grass has come to be a metaphor of buried violence always ready to spring up and stifle the fruitfulness of the earth. In this essay I propose to look again, not so much at the particular outbreaks of violence, worrying as they are, but at its root system, the labyrinth of aggression and violence which springs up in destruction and warfare. In the discourses of modernity, aggression has been taken as

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"natural," an innate feature of what it is to be human. If that is the case, then non-violence cannot work; since what is innate will always find a way to erupt into expression. I wish therefore to show how violence has been naturalized and how it can be denaturalized, exposing its tangled roots to make way for seeds of peace.

Underground: The Cultural Habitus

Pierre Bourdieu, a French sociologist, devoted his efforts to developing a logic of practice, an account of how people in a culture develop a "practical sense for what is to be done in a given situation."[1] He calls this shared practical sense the *habitus*. The habitus is the common sense world as it appears to, and is inhabited by, its participants. As children, we acquire a sense of how to behave: a whole range of attitudes, tastes, and values acquired and absorbed through our upbringing develop within us a sense of "how things are done" in the multiple situations, trivial and complex, which make up our daily life. It is this complex of tastes and preferences and learned behaviour patterns, this habitus, that enables us in most situations to know spontaneously what to do: we have a sense of what is needed or appropriate and how to do it. And it feels completely natural or even instinctive: indeed *not* to behave in accordance with the habitus — to wear beach clothes to a funeral or to eat stew without cutlery — could only be done with deliberate forethought and to achieve some (perhaps shocking) objective. The habitus makes social life possible: within a fairly limited range of possibilities we know what sort of behaviour is expected in various social roles and contexts, and can give our attention and energy to putting our own distinctive personal style on the ways in which we fill these roles and encounter new situations.

Because the habitus is the disposition formed by the internalization of cognitive structures and past experience and training, actions and attitudes that spring from this disposition feel entirely natural: they are not perceived as unusual or against the grain. As Bourdieu puts it, "the *habitus* — embodied history, internalized as a second nature and so forgotten as history — is the active presence of the whole past of which it is the product. As such, it . . . produces history on the basis of history" and the social norms that are thus reproduced and perpetuated "tend to appear as necessary, even natural."[2] "Natural," here should be taken in its strong sense, that is, as part of the laws

of nature. There are, of course, endless illustrations of this: women have been seen as "naturally" the ones who should look after the young; boys are "naturally" better at math and woodwork while girls take "naturally" to sewing and cooking; same sex attraction is "unnatural" or "contrary to nature;" Blacks are "naturally" superior in sports and dance . . . . Above all, men[3] are "naturally" violent: aggression is part of human nature. But is it?

Because the habitus is largely below the level of consciousness, it is entirely possible for a society to be in the grip of a dominant symbolic system without bringing it to critical scrutiny. When this is the case, then not only will individuals "naturally" act in accordance with it, but society, ranging from its choices of expression and entertainment to its policies and structures, will also reflect and reinforce it. Culture will be filled with symptoms of this habitus; its master discourses will frame and be framed by it; the everyday functioning of systems and individuals will be in accordance with it — and yet it may never be critically scrutinized. Indeed, there may be a strong resistance to bringing it to consciousness, since critical awareness could feel like a challenge to human nature itself and would certainly be a challenge to "common sense." Thus history will be produced on the basis of history, patterns will repeat themselves ever and again.

Violent Rhizomes

My suggestion is that the habitus of the west is violent, and that western history, including its most recent history, is a re-enactment of this violence which has been internalized to such an extent that in any situation requiring response, violence seems natural, the only alternative. Violence has so colonized our habitus that we have collectively lost the capacity to imagine other sorts of response. In the global context this is regularly expressed in military terms: from the Gulf War to Bosnia, from Kosovo to Afghanistan, the alternatives are presented as either "doing nothing" or military bombardment. Since there is a felt moral and political need to do something, the west, claiming God and goodness on its side, goes to war.

Yet it is not war, worrying though that is, upon which our attention should be focused. Many thoughtful people deplore war — sometimes all wars, sometimes specific wars, as unjustifiable morally or tactically — and would hold that the values of western society are and should be fundamentally

peaceable. But if I am anywhere near right, war is no more than an explosive exportation of the systemic violence which spreads its underground tentacles throughout our cultural habitus. Susanne Kappeler, in her book *The Will to Violence,* puts this point starkly:

> War does not suddenly break out in a peaceful society; sexual violence is not the disturbance of otherwise equal gender relations. Racist attacks do not shoot like lightning out of a non-racist sky, and the sexual exploitation of children is no solitary problem in a world otherwise just to children. The violence of our most commonsense everyday thinking, and especially our personal will to violence, constitute the conceptual preparation, the ideological armament and the intellectual mobilization which make the 'outbreak' of war, of sexual violence, of racist attacks, of murder and destruction possible at all.[4]

Once we are alert to it, we can see violence everywhere, expressing and reinforcing our habitus in ways that seem entirely natural, taken for granted. Consider for example language itself, saturated with images of war even in contexts where a moment's thought shows the inappropriateness of metaphors of violence: the *battle* against homelessness, a *fight* against cancer (or AIDS, or child abuse), *war* on want, the *weapons* of effective argument, an *arsenal* of antibiotics . . . if our choice of words expresses and reinforces our habitus, a look at the vocabulary of any newspaper (and even many a sermon) should give us pause.

When we move from language to wider cultural manifestations, violence is similarly endemic. Science and technology, the emblems of western rationality, are skewed in many western countries to a major focus on military research and development, and the economies of these countries is heavily dependent upon the manufacture and trade of arms. From theater and film to novels and music, from video games to children's toys, we are a society which consumes violence, taking for granted its "entertainment" value, reproducing and naturalizing violence. My argument is not that we become more violent (or that children learn violence) by watching violent television and playing violent video games, though that may well be so. Rather, I am pointing to some symptoms of the endemic violence of our cultural habitus, spreading its

underground roots through every area of our social and cultural life and springing up wherever opportunity offers. None of this is new; I rehearse it only to give substance to my claim about the violence of our habitus.

The Master Discourses: Violence Naturalized

But what if violence is inevitable, a part of the human condition that cannot be escaped? If this is so, then we can work against this or that manifestation of violence, but violence will always break out again because it is part of human nature. It goes deeper than our habitus, deep as that goes. The habitus is ingrained by linguistic and cultural conditioning so that responses *seem* instinctive, but actually they are not: with different conditioning we could learn to behave otherwise. But perhaps violence not only *seems* but *is* rooted in human nature: in original sin, perhaps, or in testosterone, or in an externalized death drive. In this section I will survey some of the major narratives of western modernity and show briefly how each of them naturalizes violence, giving it a place as part of human nature and thus as having explanatory value. My contention is that none of these theories is correct; they assume rather than prove that violence is essential, and in so doing are further manifestations of the violent habitus of western modernity. As such, however, they produce history on the basis of history: by naturalizing violence they render it theoretically inevitable and practically repeated. What is necessary is to dig up the roots of these master discourses and expose them for what they are, in order that more creative alternatives may find room to grow. Here I can only offer the briefest of sketches of these discourses. What follows should therefore be taken as programmatic, an initial indication of how the master discourses that shape the habitus of western modernity naturalize violence.

Theological Discourse

In theological discourse violence is frequently taken to be inseparable from human nature, especially "after the Fall": with original sin, violence is naturalized. To choose one example from many in recent theology, Marjorie Suchocki in her study of original sin entitled *The Fall to Violence* writes that

> a tendency toward aggression is built into human nature . . . we are by nature an aggressive species with a history of physical and

> psychic violence . . . . The capacity for violence is built into our species through aggressive instincts related to survival. When that violence is unnecessary and avoidable, it is sin.[5]

Unnecessary to whom? For what? In the Darwinian terms underlying these assertions, presumably Suchocki sees violence as sometimes necessary and therefore justifiable — not sinful — for the survival of the fittest. I will return to Darwin below: here I want only to point out how violence is naturalized in standard theological discourse, even (as in the case of Suchocki) discourse that considers itself progressive and in tune with modern science.

Earlier theologians, more concerned with fidelity to patristic sources than to scientific speculation, were just as willing to naturalize violence. John Calvin, reaching back to Augustine and forward to the various Protestant theologies of modernity, asserts baldly, "Original sin . . . may be defined a hereditary corruption and depravity of our nature, extending to all parts of the soul . . ." from which proceed such works as "theft, hatred, murder, revellings . . . ." Even infants, though they have not yet done these deeds, are "polluted." "Nay, their whole nature is, as it were, a seed-bed of sin, and therefore cannot but be odious and abominable to God."[6] In Calvin's uncompromising view, the violence which the Bible attributes to God — the genocide of the flood or of the Egyptians at the Red Sea — is labelled divine justice and power, while the violence of humanity is sinful and an abomination.

Karl Barth, standing in the Calvinist tradition, shows how a more subtle reading is possible. Barth says,

> In most of us the murderer is suppressed and chained, possibly by the command of God, possibly by no more than circumstances, convention, or the fear of punishment. Yet he is very much alive in his cage, and ready to leap out at any time . . . *Homo homini lupus* [Man is a wolf to man]. There exists in every man a very deep-seated and almost original evil readiness and lust to kill. The common murderer or homicide is simply the one in whom the wolf slips the chain.[7]

Yet Barth backs away just slightly from the Calvinistic naturalizing stance: the lust to kill is "almost original" — but not quite. Barth continues: "Moreover, the point has also to be considered that no single man and therefore no criminal

is identical with the indwelling wolf. It is not his nature. It belongs to the corruption of his nature."[8] Barth thus allows himself an escape from the idea that violence is part of human nature as created by God; nevertheless, because of original sin and the resulting bondage of the will, the "indwelling wolf" is the prevailing reality of human interaction. We will meet this wolf again.

Political Discourse

The political discourse of modernity, in its early phases much influenced by Christian teaching,[9] similarly founds itself on aggression and violence as inherent in human nature and the structure of society. This is most overt in the social contract theory of Thomas Hobbes. According to his portrayal of humanity in the "state of nature," human appetites and aversions keep people in constant competition: "they are in that condition called Warre; and such a warre, as is of every man against every man."[10] Two fundamental facts structure this situation: (1) death is the evil most to be feared; (2) "nature hath made men so equal" that it is within the power of anyone to kill anyone else: "the weakest has strength enough to kill the strongest, either by secret machination, or by confederacy with others . . . ."[11] Unless some remedy were found, human beings would destroy one another: in Hobbes's most famous phrase there would be "continuall feare, and danger of violent death; And the life of man, solitary, poore, nasty, brutish, and short."[12] In order to avoid this miserable situation people join together in a social contract, one which in Hobbes's formulation involves giving up mutual violence and ceding the right of violence to a sovereign in return for protection from enemies and a rule of law. The aggressive impulse has not gone away; violence is still natural; but nature is subordinated to a political arrangement which each participant recognizes to be for their own good.[13]

Subsequent social contract theorists like Locke and Rousseau modified Hobbes's position: Locke, for example, in his *Second Treatise on Government* described the state of nature as "a state of perfect freedom" and "equality" in which the law of Nature prescribes mutual respect for one another's lives and property.[14] Violence is justifiable only when one's property (including the property one has in wife, children, and one's own life) is under threat. But for all the urbanity of Locke's account, the "murderer" is never far away;[15] the

social contract is still the forcible suppression of violence and tyranny which even in Locke is endemic in human nature.[16]

Biological Discourse

Of all the discourses naturalizing aggression and violence, perhaps the most influential upon late modernity is that of Darwin and his followers. According to Darwin's account in *The Origin of the Species*, the variety of flora and fauna have come about by a principle of natural selection working over vast periods of time. All of life is a struggle for existence, species against species but also often individual against individual. Applying Malthus's theory of the increase of populations if left to reproduce without check, Darwin argued,

> A struggle for existence inevitably follows from the high rate at which all organic beings tend to increase . . . . As more individuals are produced than can possibly survive, there must in every case be a struggle for existence, either one individual with another of the same species, or with the individuals of distinct species, or with the physical conditions of life.[17]

Darwin's reference here to "physical conditions of life" makes clear that the struggle for existence should not be equated with aggression and violence: it might equally be the enhanced ability to manage with little water in a dry place. Nevertheless, Darwin lapses easily into the language of war. In a restatement of his theory in his later book, *The Variation of Animals and Plants under Domestication*, Darwin returned to the Malthusian idea of population increase, and said:

> The inevitable result is an ever-recurrent Struggle for Existence. It has truly been said that all nature is at war; the strongest ultimately prevail, the weakest fail … the severe and often-recurrent struggle for existence will determine that those variations, however slight, which are favourable shall be preserved or selected, and those which are unfavourable shall be destroyed.[18]

In a situation where "all are at war" aggression will be an advantage for survival, and it is therefore consistent with natural selection to assume that aggression will be bred into those who survive as central to their nature.

In fact, that conclusion goes beyond what Darwin himself said, and perhaps beyond what he would be happy with, but it was taken for granted by the proponents of Social Darwinism from Herbert Spencer onwards, who were willing to use Darwin's theory of the survival of the fittest to validate every sort of conquest from the colonial appropriation of Africa to the unification of German states under Prussia. It became taken for granted that aggression and violence are hard-wired into the human psyche. Moreover, (in something of a reversal of Darwinian theory which would imply that aggression should increase over time as a selective advantage) aggression became associated with primitive cultures. The rise of civilization involved finding ways of dealing with aggression in ways that did not harm society: sports like football and fox hunting; vicarious participation in violence through film, video, and games; and from time to time the necessary blood-letting of war.[19]

Philosophical Discourse

In his famous account of the lord and bondsman in his *Phenomenology of Spirit* Hegel set the agenda for modern and postmodern philosophical discourse. In Hegel's usage the question is the emergence of subjective consciousness, in relation to the material world and to other people. As Hegel presents it, in the encounter between the self and the other "each seeks the death of the other" and to that end stakes his own life: only through such a life and death struggle can they gain the freedom of self-consciousness.[20] The struggle is for recognition: each attempts to force it from the other in this "trial by death." The one who finally chooses to give way rather than die becomes subservient, the other becomes the lord.

But just when the lord seems to have achieved his desire, things turn out differently. The lord puts the bondsman to work for him, work in the material world, where the bondsman's strength and skill are taxed in a new struggle, this time with physical reality. In this struggle, which the lord has spared himself by requiring it of the bondsman, the latter comes to a self-understanding that would never have been possible had he not done battle both with the material and with his own limitations in relation to it. Therefore, "through work . . . the bondsman becomes conscious of what he truly is," a self-awareness not available to the lord and superseding his own self-consciousness.[21]

Many following Hegel made this multi-faceted struggle and its implicit or explicit violence central to their understanding of social reality. Marx and Engels famously took it over as an account of class struggle in the development of modern capitalist economics. Their *Communist Manifesto* begins:

> The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles. Freeman and slave, patrician and plebian, lord and serf, guildmaster and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended, either in a revolutionary reconstitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes.[22]

Marx's theory of the emergence of a communist society is based on this naturalization of violence, drawn explicitly from his radical reading of Hegel but compatible also with Social Darwinism. But the naturalization of violence belongs as much to the right as to the left. The entire basis of the free market economy is the competitive struggle for survival, the competition which seeks to vanquish and eliminate rivals. Even the language of economics — the *hostile* take-over bids, the *conquest* of markets, and the *dominance* or *defeat* of one company by another — institutionalizes aggression.

Psychoanalytic Discourse

The master discourse that has become perhaps the most effective in inscribing violence as natural is that of psychoanalysis. Sigmund Freud, in his *Civilization and its Discontents*, says this:

> . . . Men are not gentle creatures who want to be loved, and who at the most can defend themselves if they are attacked; they are, on the contrary, creatures among whose instinctual endowments is to be reckoned a powerful share of aggressiveness. As a result, their neighbour is for them not only a potential helper or sexual object, but also someone who tempts them to satisfy their aggressiveness on him, to exploit his capacity for work without compensation, to use him sexually without his consent, to seize his possessions, to humiliate him, to cause him pain, to torture and to kill him. *Homo homini lupus.*[23]

Re-enter the wolf. Freud was deeply influenced by Darwin.[24] For Freud, ultimately biology and psychology were inseparable; and at their heart lies the instinct of aggression, as primary and inescapable as instincts of self-preservation. Violence and mutual hostility are as inevitable as eating, sleeping and sex: "the inclination to aggression is an original, self-subsisting instinctual disposition in man."[25]

Freud, therefore, considers how this aggressive instinct is to be satisfied without destroying humanity. Aggression turned inwards, in guilt or depression, is unhealthy. But if the aggression is turned outwards, "the organism will be relieved and the effect must be beneficial" — at least for the organism itself. Because of its instinctual nature, moreover, "there is no use in trying to get rid of men's aggressive inclinations."[26] The only question is how they can be diverted in such a way as to be containable within civilization; whether the instinct of Eros, which stands in the balance against this destructive death instinct (Thanatos), will be strong enough to enable humanity to sublimate their destructive impulses.

Denaturalizing Violence

In the face of such unanimity in modernity's master discourses, it must at first seem foolish to resist the claim that aggression is innate and violence inevitable. The best we could do is try to channel it into the least destructive ways; though even that is an endless and possibly unachievable task. If aggression is instinctual, on a par with the need for food or sex, then pacifism is at best like virginity: perhaps a few can choose it, with varying quotients of liberation and personal cost, but it is neither possible nor desirable for humanity as a whole. Social conditioning can teach us to eat with a knife and fork, and to behave sexually within socially sanctioned parameters, but it would be futile to forbid eating or sexual expression. If the urge to violence is similarly natural — an innate part of human nature — then it is just as futile to bewail it. We would do better to find a "knife and fork" for aggression, a channel for its expression which does the least amount of damage.[27]

Against all of this, I suggest that it is false that violence is natural. My claim is rather that violence saturates the western habitus, and that those who see violence as innate — Hobbes, Darwin, Freud and the rest — have not made their case. Rather, they have reflected their violent habitus, built it into

their theories, and thereby reinscribed it in western thinking and practice. It is a classic example of Bourdieu's theory of history being produced on the basis of history, the habitus reinscribing itself at an ever deeper level. To substantiate this claim, consider the following.

1. Each of the discourses cited is of course vast; there are whole libraries of theology, evolutionary biology, psychoanalysis, and the rest, in which their claims and implications are carefully scrutinized. However, perhaps just because of this vastness, their accounts of human aggression are seldom all considered together. But such a juxtaposition reveals an intriguing pattern. Each discourse asserts the centrality of aggression to human nature (and, in the case of Darwin, to our animal ancestors as well), and uses this claim as the basis of their larger theory. The innateness of violence is an *assumption*, not the conclusion of an argument. That assumption is then pivotal for the theory that follows. So, for example, *because* Hobbes takes the state of nature to be "the war of all against all," he devises the theory of the social contract; similarly, Hegel *assumes* that a struggle to the death is the only way in which the desire for recognition can be gratified.

But where is the evidence? The claim that aggression is innate or natural is presumably meant to be an empricial claim. As such it can ground the theory that is built upon it. But it can only do so if it is itself true; and its truth is dependent upon evidence that confirms it. Yet not one of the theorists I have cited evaluates the empirical evidence for the premise that aggression is natural. What they do instead is look around them at all the aggression and violence in the world, and move directly from its perceived ubiquity (sometimes, like Barth or Freud, acknowledging that they find it in their own hearts also) to the assumption that it is innate. Granted, the world is full of human-produced violence, and it is important not to pretend otherwise. But if the question is whether that violence is rooted in innate aggression or better understood as a result of social formation, an expression of our habitus, then simple appealing to the sheer prevalence of violence proves nothing one way or the other. So far, the evidence is compatible with either hypothesis. It is therefore unwarranted for the theorists of modernity simply to assume that violence is innate.

2. What happens, if instead of jumping to either conclusion we take more time over the evidence itself? We might begin with the simplest question: *Who* is violent? It is immediately apparent that violence is much less equally

distributed in the human population than is the instinct for food or sex. In the first place, violence is strongly gendered. When Hobbes or Locke write of the state of nature, it is the *men* who come together to form the social contract to preserve their property; in psychoanalytic theory aggression is *masculine*, connected to the boy's Oedipal phase; in Marxist accounts the capitalists and the workers are assumed to be *male*. The masculine pronouns and the supposedly generic 'man' in their writings turn out to be specific and accurate.

By and large it is men who make war; men who commit violent crimes such as rape or murder; even men who play football or engage in other aggressive sport-substitutes for violence. This is not to say that women are never violent: some of them are. Neither is it to argue that women are morally superior to men. There are other moral evils besides violence; some of them arguably worse. But the incidence of *violence* is heavily skewed to the male.

The implication is obvious. One can hardly allege in one breath that violence is part of human nature but in the next breath say that it applies to only half of humanity: think of the parallel with food or sex. If women are very much less aggressive than men, then aggression cannot be a human instinct or innate to human nature. At most it could be argued that aggression is instinctive to *male* human nature. The theorists whose views I have presented notoriously do not even consider women in their master discourses: they take for granted that *male* nature is *human* nature, or putting it another way, they take the male as normatively human and render the female invisible.

Now, one response is to retreat to essentialism, either biological or psychological. The biological version links aggression to testosterone; the psychological to the way a little boy must negotiate his Oedipal complex. In either case, aggression is or becomes rooted in the male body or psyche in a way that does not apply to females. But again the logic does not stand up to scrutiny. For the argument to be persuasive, it would have to be possible to measure testosterone levels (or grade the negotiation of the Oedipal complex) and correlate the findings with violent behavior over a large experimental cohort, complete with a control group. Only if the correlates were strong could the hypothesis have credibility. Once again the argument is based on assuming the very thing that is in question: the innateness of aggression. First it is assumed that men are violent by their very nature, and then some gender-specific explanation for that violence must be found.

3. Moreover, not all men are violent. Very many men are gentle and abhor aggression. That is observably true of many individual men in western societies; it is also true of whole societies and cultures in other parts of the world. The aboriginal peoples of Australia and North America, for example, seem to have lived in relative peace before European contact, as did many Asian and African peoples. Some, but by no means all, tribes and peoples have been warlike. Once European contact generated insecurity and introduced alcohol, guns, and measles, the propensity for warfare increased, though even then it is noteworthy how hard many aboriginal peoples tried to keep their peace-loving ways.[28]

Because so much of what counts as history has traditionally been written by European men for whom wars and conquests have been of central importance, less notice has been taken of peaceable societies in which "nothing happened"; but this is yet another inscription of a violent habitus. The case should not be overstated or romanticized: it is certainly not true that all precontact societies were peaceable (or indeed that war is the only kind of violence). Nevertheless, it is demonstrable that the idea of the "savage" was largely a European invention, projected onto peoples who were being subjected to European behavior much more deserving of that term.[29]

The existence of largely non-violent societies and of non-violent men in western society drives a coach and horses through the argument that violence is part of (male) human nature. Of course it is always possible to narrow the argument: one can move from "violence is part of human nature" to "violence is part of male nature" to "violence is part of a sub-group of male nature," but this dwindles to the claim that violence is innate to those who are violent, and only the violence itself can be adduced as evidence. Although modernity's master discourses naturalize violence, the arguments for such naturalization simply do not hold water.

Taking Responsibility for Peace

But so what? Even if I am right that violence should not be naturalized, there is still the same amount of actual violence in the world. How does theorizing help? When it comes down to the conflict between Palestinians and Israelis, or the so-called "war against terrorism" that is used as a mantra to justify whatever violence strong states wish to unleash, what difference does it make

whether violence is inherent in human nature or not? No amount of theory, however logical and correct, can take the place of practical peaceable action. But neither should theory be underestimated. If as individuals and as a society we tend to act out of our violent habitus, then it is important to understand that habitus in such a way as to effect change. Our actions reflect our assumptions: better to bring them to consciousness and critical assessment. In that way we can take fuller responsibility for our actions and attitudes than if they are left at the level of uninvestigated "common sense."

I suggest that naturalizing violence has precisely the effect of undermining such responsibility. If violence is "only natural," if gendered aggression can be shrugged off with the comment that "boys will be boys," if war is taken as inevitable, then ultimately non-violence cannot work: the wolf will at best be chained and sooner or later will break loose. Of the theorists whose discourses were sketched above, only Freud looked for ways in which civilization might sublimate aggression; and even he conceded that periodic blood letting was inevitable and probably healthy. We see in his writings a theme latent in much modern thought: if violence is naturalized it is partly justified; if it can't be helped, it must be condoned.

If, however, the assumption that violence is natural is destabilized, then so also is that justification. We have no choice but to take responsibility for it, no shirking from the critical evaluation and re-formation of our habitus. The assumptions that form our habitus and the violent language, practices, and theories which entangle it must be brought to light, not left buried underground to spring up into new batches of war and terror. Only by patient removal of the roots of violence in our habitus can there be a clearing for the seeds of peace. Only then can non-violence work.

Notes

[1] Pierre Bourdieu, *Practical Reason: Or the Theory of Action* (Cambridge: Polity, 1998), 25; cf. his *The Logic of Practice* (Cambridge: Polity, 1990).

[2] *Logic of Practice,* 56, 53.

[3] I use the masculine deliberately, and will discuss its implications later in the essay.

[4] Susanne Kappeler, *The Will to Violence: The Politics of Personal Behaviour* (Cambridge: Polity, 1995), 9.

[5] Marjorie Hewitt Suchocki, *The Fall to Violence: Original Sin in Relational Theology* (New York: Continuum, 1994), 85.
[6] John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion,* trans. Henry Beveridge (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1957), Vol. I, Bk. II, i. 8, 217.
[7] Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics,* Vol. III. 4: *The Doctrine of Creation* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1958), 413.
[8] *Ibid.,* 414.
[9] Note the extent to which both Hobbes's and Locke's political writings are saturated with Biblical references. Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (London: Penguin, 1985); John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government* (London: J.M. Dent, 1924).
[10] Leviathan I. 13, 185.
[11] *Ibid.,* 183.
[12] *Ibid.,* 186; Cf. Alan Ryan, "Hobbes's Political Philosophy" in Tom Sorell, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Hobbes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 208-245.
[13] To be fair, Hobbes was presenting this movement from a state of nature to political stability as a logical rather than a historical account. Moreover, it can be argued that "when Hobbes talks about human nature, he usually does not mean to be saying something that he thinks true of each and every human being, but only something that holds for a significant portion of the human population . . . ," Bernard Gert, in Sorrel, 166. Neither of these points affects my central argument.
[14] Locke, *Second Treatise on Government* II. 4, 6; 118-120.
[15] *Ibid.,* 122.
[16] Cf. Richard Ashcraft, "Locke's Political Philosophy" in Vere Chappell, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Locke* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 226-51.
[17] Charles Darwin, *The Origin of Species* (London: Penguin, 1968), 116-17.
[18] Charles Darwin, *The Variation of Animals and Plants Under Domestication* (London: John Murray, 1868), I. 5-6.
[19] Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994), 156-68; Stephen Mennell, *Norbert Elias: An Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), 57-59, 140-58.
[20] G.W.F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1977), B. IV. A. 187; 113-14.
[21] *Ibid.,* 118.
[22] Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 3.
[23] Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and its Discontents* in *Civilization, Society and Religion.* The Penguin Freud Library, Vol. 12. (London: Penguin, 1991), 302.
[24] Cf. Lucille B. Ritvo, *Darwin's Influence on Freud: A Tale of Two Sciences* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1990).
[25] *Ibid.,* 313.
[26] "Why War?" in *Civilization, Society and Religion,* 358.
[27] This is, of course, what Freud, Elias, et al. advocate.
[28] For an instructive view of the variations, and the responses to European contact, see Ronald Wright, *Stolen Continents: The "New World" Through Indian Eyes* (London: Penguin, 1993).
[29] Cf. Olive P. Dickason, *The Myth of the Savage and the Beginnings of French Colonialism in the Americas* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1984).

Bread Not Bombs: Social Justice in a Fractured World

Senator Douglas Roche, O.C.

It is commonly said that the terrorist attack of September 11 has changed the world. Has it changed our thinking? Will this tragedy wake up society so that, finally, we rise up and make of God's planet the peaceful, just home for humanity that so many long for? That is the essential question I want to address tonight. But first I must deal with the war now being waged in the name of fighting terrorism.

Of course, the terrorists who committed these terrible acts must be hunted down just as the police capture a criminal in our own neighborhood. It will take military action to do this, but the action must be proportionate, so that the culprits are caught without inflicting more death on innocent civilians. In fact, the number of deaths of innocent civilians is mounting. The relentless bombing of Afghanistan is worsening an international catastrophe in one of the most desperate and vulnerable regions of the world. Thousands fleeing the bombs are massing at the Afghanistan-Pakistan border. UNICEF warns that the crisis "is threatening the lives of millions of women and children," and that "1.5 million children may not make it through the winter." The starving population of Afghanistan was not complicit in the terrorist actions of New York and Washington, yet it is they who are suffering the "collateral damage" from the bombardment.

Canada should now take the lead in calling for cessation of the bombing and the commencement of a comprehensive program of aid to the suffering civilians of Afghanistan. We must use this terrible period we are passing through to think and act beyond the immediate crisis to find an enduring solution to

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terrorism, not just one that momentarily gives us the satisfaction of responding in kind to an attack.

During the worst days of World War II, the Allied leaders met to plan the ways to lift the world away from the scourge of war. The result was the birth of the United Nations — now the recipient with Kofi Annan of the Nobel Peace Prize — to provide a strengthened basis for peace, development, equity, and justice. That was a turning point for the world, which saw for the first time that the common management of problems was a better route to peace than reliance on militarism.

Now the world is at another turning point when aggressors have found a new way to attack humanity — not on the battlefield far away but in our offices and institutions at home. We must find ways to end forever this aggression. Shocked as we are at the horrific attacks, we must — just as was done in the midst of World War II — lift ourselves up and recognize something more than bombing and the other methods of warfare is necessary to build human security.

It is not good enough for the Government of Canada to send our armed forces, ships, and planes into military action in the perceived battle zone surrounding Afghanistan. It is not good enough for the government to introduce anti-terrorism legislation and spend more than $280 million in an effort to make Canadians safer from the ravages of terrorists. It is not good enough to rush through a bill tightening regulations dealing with immigrants and refugees in the hope that this will make our borders secure against the incursion of unwanted people.

What is also called for today, at this moment of trauma for the world, is an all-out attack on the causes of terrorism. It is not just the criminals who perpetrated these heinous acts who must be caught and brought to justice. It is the de-humanizing economic and social deprivation that terrorists exploit that must be stamped out. Let it not be said that I am insensitive to the victims, their families, and friends who suffered the horrors of September 11. I went to New York and saw with my own eyes the tangled wreckage of the twin towers and the grieving of the people who stood silently watching the firemen and policemen trying to find survivors. Let it not be said that I am falling into what is known as “moral equivalence,” in which the actions of the terrorists are explained away by the injustices of the world. The September 11 terrorists are

criminals guilty of attacks against humanity and do not deserve the comfort of those who seek to understand them. Let it not be said that I do not understand that it is only the power of militarism that can make us safe. I understand all too well that the instant recourse to warfare in the name of curing aggression has in the past, and will in the future, only lead to more violence and more suffering.

Terrorists can potentially come from anywhere, live anywhere, and strike anywhere that opportunity exists. Their cover lies in the society in which they live; their weapons are tools taken from everyday life, and their targets are the people and institutions of society. Their power is to disrupt through fear, to provoke repression, and to sever the links of peaceful commerce, setting state against state, nation against nation, race against race, and people against people. Living among their victims, they present targets that cannot be eradicated with the firepower of conventional armed forces. Other means must be explored.

The road ahead must be trod with great caution with respect to reliance on the military approach. Much greater emphasis must be placed on non-military measures that will lay the foundation for a world free of the terrorist threat.

What we need is a global initiative to deter and punish terrorist acts in the present and future. This means developing an effective system of international criminal law in which individuals are held accountable before an impartial tribunal such as the International Criminal Court. A prosecutor with strong powers of investigation and prosecution will be needed. It also means strengthening international treaties dealing with terrorism and developing the machinery for their effective implementation according to the due process of law. This will require a strengthening of the United Nations and its ability to define and shape the actions which are taken for the enforcement of international law, and to monitor and verify these actions so that they are done proportionately and in accordance with the UN Charter and international humanitarian law.

* * *

Terrorism, the epitome of hate, feeds on the hatreds and resentments that have been built up in the rest of the world against Western society. We do not like to hear this, CNN does not broadcast it, the political processes do not

want to deal with it. Nonetheless, more conflict is coming because people who are downtrodden are rising up against a West they perceive as rich, arrogant and powerful. Anyone who has traveled widely, as I have, through the villages, teeming cities, refugee camps, and slums of Asia, the Middle East, Africa, and Latin America knows these words to be true.

It's time for Canada to listen to a high-level panel of experts, headed by former President Ernesto Zedillo of Mexico, who issued a UN Report on Financing for Development in June 2001. The panel said that half the world's people are still living in abject poverty, with 80 percent of the global population living on less than 20 percent of the global income. Too many people in too many countries lack the freedom to take advantage of the new opportunities of modern technology and are consequently left on the sidelines of the globalization process. People lack freedom when they lack food, education, training, health, basic human and political rights, security, and employment opportunities. Increasing polarization between the haves and have-nots has become a feature of our world, the panel said. And then this sobering warning:

> Reversing this shameful trend is the preeminent moral and humanitarian challenge of our age. For people in the rich world, elementary self-interest is also at stake. In the global village, someone else's poverty very soon becomes one's own problem: of lack of markets for one's products, illegal immigration, pollution, contagious disease, insecurity, fanaticism, terrorism.

We fool ourselves if we rely on militarism to curb terrorists and do not take a gigantic step to "reverse this shameful trend." The high-level panel issued a list of recommendations ranging from making the World Trade Organization more equitable to recommitting the donor countries to the international target of 0.7 percent of GNP for official development assistance to an international tax organization to benefit the development process.

It is not only individual measures, important as they are, that are called for in the present crisis. It is a whole new strategy for the survival of humanity. This is what UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan is calling for. Commenting on the anti-terrorism resolutions already adopted by the Security Council, the Secretary-General said:

> To defeat terrorism, we need a sustained effort and a broad strategy to unite all nations, and address all aspects of the scourge we face. The cause must be pursued by all the States of the world, working together and using many different means — including political, legal, diplomatic and financial means.

How much better for peace and security in the world it would be for governments to put their full weight behind such an effort.

If we are worried about developing proper relations with Islam, if we are worried about how to cure the hate and racism that feeds evil acts, if we are worried about our own safety inside the borders of Canada, then let us act today to raise up our society and its political discourse to project out into the international community the values that have made Canada a great country. These are the values that the Catholic Bishops of Canada recently called for in promoting interfaith dialogue in a common reach for international peace and justice for all.

* * *

An honest dialogue must pinpoint the double standards in political priorities today.

• Governments plead that they have little money for social programs, yet they are currently spending $800 billion a year on military expenditures, which is 80 times more than the $10 billion they spend on the entire United Nations system. Half of the world's governments spend more on defence than health care. There is always money for war. In the 20th century, known as "the century of megadeaths," at least 110 million people were killed in 250 wars, six times as many deaths per war as in the 19th.

Having said in 1990 at the UN Summit on Children that they had little money for the children's agenda, governments the next year found $70 billion to prosecute the Gulf War. Last year, international arms sales jumped 13 percent to $37 billion, with the United States accounting for half of all sales. The "legal" arms trade spills into illicit channels feeding guerilla armies, networks of terrorists, and drug traffickers. In the 1990s, 65 percent of world arms deliveries were sold or given to developing nations, where lingering conflicts

and societal violence scare away potential investors. In 2000, 40 armed conflicts were fought on the territories of 35 countries. There are 500 million small arms in circulation around the world, which kill 500,000 people each year.

• There are now more than 22 million refugees looked after by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). These are migrants forced out of their homes by armed conflict, political persecution, or environmental disasters. An equal number are known as "internally displaced" because of armed conflict or persecution in their own countries. These numbers have never been higher, yet UNHCR has been forced to cut its budget, shed staff, and close offices (including seven in Africa) because governments have cut back on their funding. Similarly, Official Development Assistance (ODA), despite a time of unprecedented prosperity in the donor countries, has dropped to an all-time low of just 0.24 percent of GDP, a long way from the 0.7 percent target set by the UN decades ago. Meanwhile, developing countries continue to lose up to $150 billion annually in potential income from trade as a result of protectionist measures by developed countries.

• The planet's over-arching problem, nuclear weapons, continues even though the media seldom focus on this threat to civilization itself. More than a decade after the end of the Cold War, there are still 30,000 nuclear weapons in existence, 5,000 of them on "alert" basis, meaning they could be fired on 15 minutes' notice. The world's nuclear arsenals have so far cost $8 trillion, and the United States still spends $100 million a day to maintain its 10,500 nuclear weapons, most of which are many times more powerful than the bomb that destroyed Hiroshima. The major nations refuse to negotiate the elimination of nuclear weapons even though they are legally obliged to do so under the Non-Proliferation Treaty. Weapons of mass destruction are spreading. The threat of "nuclear" terrorism is real. The coming U.S. missile defence system will undermine existing arms control and disarmament treaties, and is the first step in the weaponization of outer space.

Of course, there have been positive gains for humanity in the past few decades. However, those who enjoy the gains are for the most part those who are already strong, and the gap between them and the dispossessed grows wider. It ill serves truth to gloss over the immensity of the violations to social

justice, which are breeding grounds for future conflicts.

U.N. Secretary-General Annan has issued a dire warning:

> The century just ended was disfigured, time and again, by ruthless conflict. Grinding poverty and striking inequality persist within and among countries even amidst unprecedented wealth. Diseases, old and new, threaten to undo painstaking progress. Nature's life-sustaining services, on which our species depends for its survival, are being seriously disrupted and degraded by our own everyday activities.

The world's population will increase by two billion over the next 25 years, and 95 percent of that growth will occur in lands that are already weighted down with poverty, wars, and environmental deterioration. The rich-poor gap, the proliferation of weapons large and small, the ethnic hatreds, the environmental destruction, the forced migration of peoples — all this is not sustainable. We must understand where these negative trends are leading. They are leading to more conflict, calamitous suffering, widespread social disorder, and ruination of whole sections of the planet.

* * *

For me, this assessment of the world and its future is not just a matter of statistics and abstractions. My view of the world has been shaped by my experiences. I have walked through disease-ridden slums and shantytowns of Africa, Asia, and Latin America. I have held a dying Indian baby in my arms. I have seen the gaunt bodies, despoiled lands, the wreckage of Hiroshima. But I have also been in villages of Bangladesh where child deaths were wiped out by UNICEF's oral rehydration program. I have been part of international negotiations where inch-by-inch progress towards disarmament was made. I have been lifted up by the soaring rhetoric of world leaders calling for a better world, only to be deflated by the absurd skewing of governmental priorities that emphasize preparations for war while starving the processes of peace.

So there is within me an outrage at the political duplicity of the powerful, who espouse equality and peace while using military means to maintain control over the resources of the planet. I am critical of the hypocrisies that justify a

political and economic system that spends countless sums on endless wars but cannot feed and put every child in the world into a classroom. It is not right to spend $60 billion on a needless and unworkable missile defence system, when that same amount could provide adequate water and sanitation to the two billion people who have neither.

Railing against injustice does not accomplish much. But what accomplishes even less is closing our eyes to massive discrepancies and assuming that the status quo is sustainable. Our attitude to the status quo must change, for peace is not possible in a world where the rich get richer and the poor get poorer.

* * *

A distinguishing feature of our time is that morality and pragmatics have intersected. What we have long known that we *should* do for our brothers and sisters on the planet, we now know we *must* do if we are to survive without the most wrenching dislocations in our lives. It is not news that moral teaching emphasizes the core values of respect for life, liberty, justice and equity, mutual respect and integrity. It is news that technology has brought us to the point where we all stand on one planet, breathe the same air, are affected by one another's problems, and possess the power to decimate all life. The physical integrity of all human life today demands political policies that enhance life, not diminish it. The common good requires policies that promote sustainable and socially equitable development and peace in all regions of the globe.

I want a world that is human-centered and genuinely democratic, a world that builds and protects peace, equality, justice, and development. I want a world where human security, as envisioned in the principles of the United Nations Charter, replaces armaments, violent conflict, and wars. I want a world where everyone lives in a clean environment with a fair distribution of the earth's resources and where human rights are protected by a body of international law.

I do not feel alone in such desires, for this is the precise agenda advanced by the People's Millennium Forum held at the United Nations last year. The rise of civil society groups defining their claim to a more just world is another sign of the times. The work of committed NGOs has undoubtedly strengthened

the UN's ability to develop programs of many kinds — education for all, better health and nutrition for children, protecting the environment, human rights, reproductive health, poverty eradication, the advancement and empowerment of women, human settlements, and arms control in several categories. Civil society has been instrumental in the Campaign to Ban Landmines and the development of the International Criminal Court.

When the Millennium Summit of world leaders was held, a Declaration was adopted, establishing priorities for the UN: to overcome poverty, put an end to conflict, meet the needs of Africa, promote democracy and the rule of law, and protect the environment. Governments alone will never fulfill this vision. The active partnership of informed civil society is essential.

The essence of the new agenda is to improve the conditions for human security, whose advocates have aimed their criticism at the globalization process. They want globalization to bring a new understanding of the world as a single community. Globalization must mean more than creating bigger markets. In short, globalization must use the sweeping power of technology to raise all of humanity to higher levels of civilization.

Do not doubt that the core of creative, active people working in their own ways for a better world is expanding. The Dalai Lama recently noted: "We are witnessing a tremendous popular movement for the advancement of human rights and democratic freedom in the world. This movement must become an even more powerful moral force, so that even the most obstructive governments and armies are incapable of suppressing it."

The best of civil society movements is to be found in such enterprises as the Hague Appeal for Peace. In 1999, 7,000 people of 100 nationalities gathered at The Hague to challenge the assumption of today's skeptics who have given up on the essential UN idea that succeeding generations can be saved from the scourge of war. The Hague Appeal launched a citizens' "Agenda for Peace and Justice in the 21st Century," in which citizen advocates, progressive governments, and official agencies work together for common goals.

* * *

The agenda I have described is the minimum requirement for a world of peace with social justice. A new global ethic of caring and sharing is required to

achieve it. No one religion can claim the agenda; it is the work of all. In fact, the holistic nature of religious teaching helps reinforce the understanding that solutions will be most effective if they address disarmament, development, and environmental protection together. The new ethic can be expressed sharply, succinctly, and irrefutably, as the World Parliament of Religions states: "Every human being must be treated humanely!"

This is what it comes down to. Do enough people care about the conditions of the world to demand change? Finally and inescapably, do I care enough? Do I love my neighbor enough? This is a spiritual question, because the world crisis we face today is essentially spiritual. It is not only human rights we need to address, it is also human responsibility. The great strategies, plans, proposals, and dreams will amount to little if I myself — and the millions like me — do not take some responsibility for the continued peaceful development of God's planet.

At this transformation moment in world history, we must ask ourselves: Are disarmament, economic and social development, and environmental protection achievable? Is racism so entrenched in the human character (the recurrence of violence in the Middle East, Northern Ireland, and African states are depressing examples) that it cannot be ended? Can the forces of power, greed, and corruption ever be overcome? Prayer, poetry, art, rhetoric, while all necessary to the full expression of our humanity, have not in the past spared the world from wars and catastrophes. What will actually motivate us to action for 21st century human security?

The New York/Washington catastrophe should serve to energize the political systems to provide social justice in a shrinking — and much more dangerous — planet. My own hope lies in the blossoming of intelligence about ourselves as a human community in a world that is inter-connected in every sphere of activity. This is an empowering discovery, capable of lifting up the public policy formation process. But we must first adopt an attitude that we *can* make a difference.

For me, hope is a verb. It must connote an active desire with the expectation of fulfillment. Hope cannot guarantee that we will get what we long for, but it activates us in the search and provides a pathway from vision to reality. Hope, weaving itself like an essential thread through thoughts and experiences that speak of the human condition, is the greatest motivation. The

bigger the dream for peace with social justice, the stronger must be the hope. Through hope, we overcome.

Note on Sources: The statistics I have used here are found in *Human Development Report 2001*, published for the United Nations Development Program by Oxford University Press; *State of the World 2001*, the Worldwatch Institute, W.W. Norton & Co.; *Vital Signs 2001: The Trends That Are Shaping Our Future*, W.W. Norton & Co.; *The Report of the High-level Panel on Financing for Development*, U.N. Report A/55/1000, 26 June 2001. I have also drawn on the analyses I presented in my book, *Bread Not Bombs: A Political Agenda for Social Justice* (University of Alberta Press, 1999).

Garnets and Pomegranates

Raylene Hinz-Penner

These days I want to rail against the way that Americans seem to me to be wallowing in our September 11 "tragedy" — experienced by far too many others in this world before us, and to a much larger degree, with respect to the loss of human life. Yet, last night when I flipped through the television channels and landed on the Westminster Dog Show honoring New York's search and rescue dogs, I wept again at their goodhearted heroics. Strangely, I have watched too many of these televised tributes and wept often in the past months. I was not tempted, however, to see the opening ceremonies of the Winter Olympics in Salt Lake City; waving our own torn flag when we should be serving as gracious hosts to the nations of the world seems ill-suited and maudlin to me.

Americans have, apparently, been recommending to one another helpful reading material these months since September. Novelist Anne Landsman, in the last issue of *Poets and Writers*, takes comfort in the fact that she encounters a subway reader of *Pride and Prejudice*, and indeed, finds others reading old favorites, perhaps with new eyes.[1] I thought of my own habits in recent months: retreats into Emily Dickinson, the Psalms, favorite contemporary poems, familiar words. And suddenly, I longed deeply for the great myths of the human race — stories larger than myself or my own culture, my own age, my own country, my own century, my own religion.

I want, in these times, to think of the cosmic, the over-arching, the transcendent, and that desire sends me back to someone like Joseph Campbell, with his ability to bring together, in his search of mythologies, conflicting religions — to see underneath differing translations the universal human longing for God. "One thing that comes out in myths, for example, is that at the

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bottom of the abyss comes the voice of salvation. The black moment is the moment when the real message of transformation is going to come. At the darkest moment comes the light."[2]

In January, my birth month, I pull out again my tiny hoard of garnets, my birthstones. This year they seemed precious, carrying weight beyond what they had held for me before as simple gifts of thoughtfulness from family members. I reveled in their strong, ruddy, brown-red color, their refusal to pale. And I read for the first time that the *garnet* gets its name from the *pomegranate*, for their resemblance in color.

I have been hoarding a pomegranate since Christmas — about the only time we can buy them in Kansas — not eating it, for they dry beautifully and last! — just holding its tough garnet leathery skin for comfort, rubbing its dimpled lobes where a thumb feels so at home, remembering its mythological connections. The lingering uses of the Demeter/ Persephone myth come to mind: the lament of my poet friend, the ex-nun, anguishing over her adolescent daughter's behavior: "She is eating of the fruit of the dead, and she will pay with a stay in hell!" — or Eavan Boland's poem "The Pomegranate" from *In a Time of Violence*, which begins,

> The only legend I have ever loved is
> the story of a daughter lost in hell.
> And found and rescued there.
> . . . .
> And the best thing about the legend is
> I can enter it anywhere.[3]

Remember Demeter, bringer of seasons, life-sustainer, the Olympian "who most loved mortals and the earth that fed them"?[4] Remember her daughter Persephone, lover of the flowering fields of Sicily, free-roaming beauty snatched by the god of the underworld? Remember how eating the pomegranate seed condemns the beloved daughter to spend a portion of her life in Hades, condemns us all to the season of winter?

Ah, the cursed pomegranate, Eve's apple, "the fruit of the dead," symbol of fertility (packed with its many jeweled seeds), inhabitant of modern-day Pakistan, whirling dervish of contradictory associations! You can pull up on the website of Archaelogical Sites of Israel the picture of a tiny thumb-sized pomegranate recently acquired by the Israel Museum inscribed with the words

"sacred donation for the priests of the house of Yahweh," and believed to have once decorated the scepter used by a temple priest in Solomon's temple. The pomegranate was a favorite motif of the temple and one of the seven fruits with which Israel was blessed (Deut. 8:8).

So what has this beautiful pomegranate here on my desk, this cursed jewel, to do with September 11? It is a reminder of the dilemma of human history, the long experience which is forever the loss of innocence, Persephone's loss (and gain). I think of the American loss of "innocence" September 11, perhaps an experience of "growing up" to reality which was destined to happen. It reminds me too, of my status as an American, between my miserable tears of pain and my longing to put it behind for new life. I am caught in my loyalties between Israel and Palestine (or Pakistan); between Greek and Hebrew beliefs — between Demeter's control of a world and her powerlessness; between my sense of my own country's life-sustaining potential and a war of retribution; between humanity's heroics and sinful commitments of atrocities; this dark "winter of our discontent" and the potential for something new in Afghanistan, perhaps even healing and new life. What a crazy ride it is: one day tears, the next day anger, the next day solace, marveling at the human spirit. The flow of words, words, words, and then utter silence.

I have always thought there is no more perfect capturing of our human blessedness/cussedness than Theodore Roethke's "In a Dark Time" referred to in the above-mentioned Joseph Campbell/Bill Moyers interview. "In a dark time, the eye begins to see," Roethke begins, and lists then the perplexing paradoxes which constitute human existence, before he ends:

> A fallen man, I climb out of my fear.
> The mind enters itself, and God the mind,
> And one is One, free in the tearing wind.[5]

That time after a fall is a time, *mythically*, for a great learning. I thought I sensed something of that maturity, for example, this past summer in Cuba. The Cubans have withstood through recent decades the fallout from their associations with two Super Powers — Russia and the U.S., and have risen to a new understanding of who they are as a people. I remember how innocent and naïve I felt, as an American, upon my return to this country from Cuba early July, summer of 2001 when I wrote this poem:

Returning from Cuba

for July 4 in Kansas, I am home for the fountain
fireworks of the golden raintree, the lizard-green
spray and stream of its too-soon-tawny bleeding
hearts—already dimpling, brown-spotted, fizzling
in the heat. We have spent our nation's youth
in a swagger, an apple-green innocence we feign
before we explode (again and again) in bombast.

Here, under the golden raintree, I remember
the long tired soul of the Cuban people, their African
rootedness — the cagey laughter which pulls them up
onto the floor for the all-night Rumba they know shakes
down all this world's mad politics: these last forty years'
economic leveling, a hundred hungers, the snubs and rumbling
of both Cold War Monsters — while they drum on, on, on,
their bodies holding the dance, unto the day of feasts.

If September 11 is our loss of innocence, may we learn from it a longer view; may we in the U.S. see the world as a much bigger place than we have in the past; may we hold a more mythic understanding of who we are in the larger scheme of things.

Notes

[1] Anne Landsman, "What Writers Are Reading: After the Attack," *Poets and Writers* 30 (Jan/Feb, 2002): 21.

[2] *Joseph Campbell, The Power of Myth, with Bill Moyers*. Interviews edited by Betty Sue Flowers. (New York: Doubleday, 1988), 39.

[3] Eavan Boland, *In a Time of Violence* (W.W. Norton & Co., 1994), 26.

[4] Donna Rosenberg, *World Mythology,* Second Edition. (Lincolnwood, IL: NTC Publishing, 1994), 15.

[5] Theodore Roethke, "In a Dark Time," in *Contemporary American Poetry*, Fifth ed., A. Poulin, Jr., ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1991), 499-500.

Nonviolence Works — If Somebody Does the Work

Ivan J. Kauffman

Recent history has answered the question "Does nonviolence work?" with an unambiguous and categorical "Yes." In every case over the past half-century where there has been a sustained effort to pursue justice by active nonviolent means,[1] it has not only been successful, it has also resolved long-standing conflicts that appeared to be intractable, and has resulted in the creation of much more stable and humane political structures.

The question is not whether nonviolence works, but how it works, and on this question we still have a great deal to learn. Despite having witnessed more than a dozen successful national-scale nonviolent movements in the past fifty years, the scholarly and political communities have only begun to accept the implications for both ethics and practical politics represented by these epochal events. Our descendents a century or two in the future will likely not be astonished so much by the triumph of nonviolence in the late twentieth century as by our hesitation in recognizing it. For them the superiority of active nonviolence will be obvious and widely recognized. What will astonish them will be the evidence that we continued to use the old methods for dealing with international conflict, even after the power of nonviolence had been demonstrated beyond any question, above all in the defeat of the Soviet Empire.

This disconnect between our experience and our political actions was rather clearly evident in the fall of 2001 when the Christian churches struggled to respond to the September 11 attacks on the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon in Washington. What this response revealed was that

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the Christian churches as an international community very much wanted to deal with this crisis nonviolently but were unable to do so. This essay describes the international churches' responses to the September 11 attacks, and then analyzes the reasons the churches were unable to propose a nonviolent solution.

The Churches' Response to September 11

In the ten weeks following September 11, more than seventy-five statements dealing with the terrorist attacks were issued by heads of denominations or denominational boards, or by heads of national or international associations of churches.[2] As a group these statements indicate the churches were engaged in this crisis very deeply. Christians throughout the world felt deeply involved, and their leaders' statements convey a widespread consensus that September 11 was a major event for both the world and the churches — perhaps even a turning point. "This is a tragedy of tremendous proportions with unforeseeable consequences for the entire world," said Archbishop Demetrios, head of the Greek Orthodox Church in America.[3] "The terrorist acts of September 11, 2001, and the days and weeks to follow will shape the future of the United States," said the National Association of Evangelicals.[4] Pope John Paul called September 11 "a dark day in the history of humanity."[5] The head of the National Council of Churches in the U.S. called the day's events "the worst attack on U.S. territory since Pearl Harbor."[6]

Within two days after the attacks some twenty major religious leaders had issued statements. All were either pacifist in tone or at least sought to avoid a military response. "Many are speaking of revenge," wrote the primate of the Episcopal Church in the U.S. But, he said, "never has it been clearer to me than in this moment" that Christians "are called to be about peace and the transformation of the human heart, beginning with our own. I am not immune to emotions of rage and revenge," he added, "but I know that acting on them only perpetuates the very violence I pray will be dissipated and overcome."[7] "Let us not engage in ethnic, religious, or national stereotyping for what may be the acts of a few irrational terrorists," said the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops.[8] "We urge all Americans . . . to refrain from rushing to judgment against whoever may have committed these heinous crimes," said the United Methodist Board of Church and Society's general secretary.[9]

At a time when the U.S. government was vowing to respond to the attacks by using its full military force, the nation's religious leadership was almost unanimously calling on the American people to "resist the impulse to respond to violence with violence," as the president of the United Church of Christ put it.[10] "We must renounce violence as a means of imposing the will of some upon all," said the president of the Disciples of Christ.[11] "While others will choose the weapons of war and destruction in the pursuit of reprisal and revenge, we know that it is in the Cross that we will find the strength to stand firm, to keep vigilant in prayer, and to turn the hearts and minds of men and women to the ways of God's justice and righteousness," asserted the head of the Anglican Communion in London.[12] "As Baptists, who have long suffered as a religious minority from religious persecution, we call upon our people to pray and work for peace. We must never raise the sword," said the general secretary of the Baptist World Alliance.[13]

Two days after the attacks Pope John Paul II made a statement that summarizes the position of virtually all his colleagues in the world's Christian leadership. "I pray that this inhuman act will awaken in the hearts of all the world's peoples a firm resolve to reject the ways of violence," he told the U.S ambassador to the Vatican. He urged the United States government "to combat everything that sows hatred and division within the human family, and to work for the dawn of a new era of international cooperation inspired by the highest ideals of solidarity, justice and peace."[14]

But polls indicated 85 percent of the U.S. population expected war, and more than two-thirds said they were willing to support a war even if meant U.S. battlefield casualties in the thousands. President Bush, who announced he intended to carry out a vigorous military campaign against those responsible for the attacks, received some of the highest approval ratings in recent history. It quickly became apparent that the churches' leaders and their members in the local congregations and parishes held very different views.[15]

The result was a great debate in the churches, pitting what can be called consequential pacifism against the doctrine of necessary war. The consequential argument is based on the belief that military action is usually ineffective and always produces negative effects, both short-term and long-term. The necessary war argument holds that only military action can maintain international order,

and the good derived from such order outweighs the violence involved in achieving it.[16]

The consequential pacifist position was clearly evident in a joint statement by the five major Canadian Protestant church leaders shortly after the attacks. "In the past, a single-minded campaign against communism in Afghanistan helped create conditions of terror in Afghanistan, including support to the now accused Osama bin Laden," the Canadian leaders said, blaming the crisis on that past policy. "It spawned the Taliban, and it contributed to enormous instability in Pakistan," they added.[17] The leadership of the United Church of Christ in the U.S. took a similar view. "In recent years military campaigns in countless places have destroyed lives and threatened a whole generation of children while leaving in place oppressive regimes," said their statement. "Short-term solutions have sown the seeds of future catastrophe as we ally ourselves with the enemies of our enemy, only to discover that we have fed and armed those who would terrorize the innocent." [18]

Even the historic peace churches based their opposition largely on consequential arguments. A Mennonite Central Committee statement said that Mennonites throughout their history have opposed "a culture of violence" by "witnessing against war preparation, enemy demonization and the use of military force to solve difficult international problems." But the statement concludes by basing its opposition to military action in Afghanistan on predictions that such action will have negative consequences. "We speak from years of experience in the regions of the Middle East and Asia, where decades of suffering and struggle, including a history of intervention by Western countries, have led to feelings of suspicion and anger," the MCC statement says. "A military strike against Afghanistan risks massive human suffering. In an area of the world where almost half the population is below the age of fifteen years, this experience will shape attitudes and emotions for generations to come."[19]

U.S. Catholic and Lutheran bishops were the major exponents of the necessary war position. After the U.S. military began bombing Afghanistan on October 7 the presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America said, "we understand that under certain circumstances there may be no other way to offer protection to innocent people except by use of military force."[20] The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops said, "The dreadful deeds of

September 11 cannot go unanswered." The United States "has a moral right and a grave obligation to defend the common good against mass terrorism." That response must be multi-faceted, but includes "the legitimate use of force." But they added, even though military action may be "necessary" in some cases, "because of its terrible consequences" it must "always be undertaken with a sense of deep regret," even when it is justified and carried out with great care.[21]

Outside the United States there was little support for the necessary war position. The World Council of Churches was especially vigorous in arguing the pacifist case. Its general secretary sent a letter to WCC member churches in the U.S. calling on the United States to reverse its course, "rejoining the global community in a common pursuit of justice" and setting aside "its reliance on military might at whatever cost."[22] After the bombing began the WCC said, "We do not believe that war, particularly in today's highly technologized world, can ever be regarded as an effective response to the equally abhorrent sin of terrorism." The United States should "bring a prompt end to the present action."[23] The South African Council of Churches issued a statement saying that U.S. military strikes in Afghanistan did not meet the requirements for a just war.[24] The Church of Scotland issued a similar statement,[25] as did the Catholic bishops of Australia.[26]

But in the end it was neither the legal standards of the just war tradition nor the pacifist tradition's moral principles that determined the outcome of this debate. The question was not whether U.S. military attacks on Afghanistan were moral — on either Just War or pacifist grounds — but whether they were necessary. This debate involved practical politics rather than theological or moral principles, and as it became increasingly clear the available political options were either to do nothing or to attack the al Qaeda militarily in Afghanistan, the vast majority of the U.S. population chose to support a military attack. Many in the churches did so reluctantly, but they did so nonetheless—and even those who remained silent, neither supporting nor opposing the war, in fact lent their support to it.

The doctrine of the necessary war has never been described as such by theologians, nor officially adopted by any church, but it is widely held in the churches nonetheless, especially among the laity. Early in the war a *Washington Post* reporter, writing as "a Christian believer" said he believes any war leader's

primary responsibility is to win, and the most any leader can hope for "is to be on the better side, morally and spiritually, of what will always be a bad business . . . . If he is fortunate, his duty during war will not be the occasion for too many sins, nor too grave. But that is not his primary concern until after it is all over. He can worry over that in retirement and plead his case come Judgment Day."[27]

Later a Washington-area pastor wrote in the same newspaper, "Until Sept. 11 I would have described myself as a pacifist. I grew up inspired by the nonviolent teachings of Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr., and my preaching consistently opposed the use of violence." But he has now concluded that in "an imperfect world . . . resisting evil through violence may sometimes be a necessary evil."[28] A letter to the *New York Times* stated this view — that violence for some benefits humanity as a whole — very clearly: "The children who have lost parents suddenly and violently suffer equally, in America and Afghanistan," the writer acknowledged. But, she added, we must "fight for our survival with total dedication. If we let ourselves get caught up in sympathy for the enemy, we will lose this war, and untold numbers of children throughout the world will suffer even more."[29]

In the end this position was the one adopted by the great majority of churches in the United States, although with great reluctance. Even those who continued to believe that military attacks in Afghanistan would only worsen the situation were silenced by the sudden collapse of the Taliban regime only six weeks after the military campaign began. Predictions that U.S. military action would produce a Vietnam-like result were almost completely discredited by that unexpected outcome, and the flow of church statements, many of them based on consequential arguments, came to an abrupt halt. Before November 18 there had been on average more than one statement per day by a major church leader. After that date there would be none.[30]

There was no gloating among those Christians who had supported the necessary war position. They too were troubled by the position they had taken. They too would have preferred a nonviolent approach; they too knew there was a better way, that supporting violence violates our most basic Christian principles; that we were not following the example of Christ. But they also knew the United States had to do something. And so, believing the choice was between passivity and violence, they chose violence.

Why Did Nonviolence Fail?

Statements issued by church leaders after September 11 contain numerous indications that had a politically viable nonviolent response to the terrorist attacks existed it would have had the religious community's strong support. Ever since the 1960s religious leaders have provided strong support for nonviolent movements, beginning with the U.S. civil rights movement, and continuing with the anti-Apartheid movement in South Africa, the Solidarity movement in Poland, and the nonviolent movements in Central America, the Philippines, and Korea in the 1980s. The clearest indication of the churches' readiness to engage in nonviolent action in this case was the Episcopal bishops' decision to commit themselves and their churches to "waging reconciliation" as their response to the September 11 attacks.[31]

But there was no nonviolent movement for the churches to support in the post-September 11 situation. Why was this so? Several factors emerge, all of which have considerable significance for the future.

The most obvious is that nonviolence works only when a committed group of people have created an organization able to make it work. In all previous cases where nonviolence has been successful, these organizations have been created by people who were otherwise powerless and had no other way to seek justice. But this case was very different. The party seeking justice was the United States government — an exceptionally strong military power. For nonviolent techniques to have been employed in this situation, it would have required the United States to voluntarily give up the right to defend itself militarily — something that has never before been done. The churches could only urge the U.S. government to act nonviolently if there was some effective nonviolent process that could be offered as an alternative to military action, and at this point in time no such institutional alternative exists.

The major obstacle that prevents the churches from creating enabling institutional structures for successful nonviolent action is that nowadays the churches tend to see themselves as reactive in the political realm, not proactive. The churches take it as their primary role to criticize what others do, not to promote their own policies. For the most part church statements in response to September 11 involved criticism of actions taken by the various governments involved. There were a few suggestions for actions to be taken, but they tended to be tentative and general. This tendency to equate social justice with

calls for action by other persons and institutions, particularly governments, has marginalized the churches politically. The democratic process greatly privileges those who have a positive agenda, even if a flawed one, over those whose agenda is essentially negative, even if that agenda is valid.

This problem is compounded when nonviolence is being advocated, since in the present stage of political development governments capable of military action do not consider nonviolent action to be a viable option. Successful nonviolent actions to date have all been carried out by non-governmental movements — movements that had clearly defined, positive agendas to offer, as contrasted to only opposing the regime in power. Simply to oppose injustice, no matter how valid that protest may be and how committed the protesters are, often only compounds the evil being protested by giving people in the middle of the political spectrum — the sensible center, who make virtually all political decisions in a democracy — the impression that the only alternative to what is being opposed is anarchy.

A third factor preventing the churches from engaging in nonviolent action is the absence of appropriate leadership. At present the religious community's leadership is almost entirely theological and pastoral. These people's skills, great and necessary as they are, are not what is needed to fashion a successful nonviolent response to an event like September 11. Unfortunately, we do not have persons in the religious community, with a few notable exceptions, who are commissioned, trained, and empowered to provide leadership in situations of international conflict. This is equally the case in all the churches — Protestant, Evangelical, Catholic, and Orthodox.

A substantial community within the churches is committed to nonviolence and expertise in its techniques, but that community is now quite fragmented. It consists largely of people dedicated to specific causes rather than to the nonviolent process itself. These various movements contain great energies, but there is currently no way to focus these energies on a single effort. If there had been an organization dedicated to promoting and developing nonviolence it would have had a major impact in the post-September 11 situation. All successful nonviolent movements of the past have involved such an organization — the Congress Party in India, the SCLC in the U.S. Civil Rights Movement, Solidarity in Poland, the ANC in South Africa, etc.

A fourth factor that prevented the churches from acting nonviolently is disunity. So long as each denomination acts independently, speaking for itself, political leaders can easily listen only to those who support positions they have already adopted, and ignore those with whom they disagree. Even the Catholic Church, which prides itself on its internal discipline and its ability to speak with a single authoritative voice, showed great divergence in how its bishops responded to this crisis. The clearest example occurred on November 14, when the Catholic bishops in the United States issued a statement supporting U.S. military policy in Afghanistan, and the same day the Australian Catholic bishops issued a statement declaring that U.S. military policy violated all but one of the six conditions in the just war doctrine and was therefore unjust.

Another major obstacle to successful nonviolent action that became apparent in the post-September 11 period was the divergence between the churches' leaders and lay members. At a time when church leaders in the U.S. were either opposing government policy or trying to soften it, the vast majority of the U.S. population — approximately half who attend worship services regularly — were indicating that they fully supported the government. Successful nonviolence requires popular support, and in this case that did not appear to exist. Instead, nonviolence appeared to be largely a leadership position.

We cannot solve problems we do not understand, but understanding a problem in itself does nothing to solve it. Theological leaders have an indispensable contribution to make, but they can only do so by entering into intense, ongoing, practical dialogue with persons involved in action — politicians, military leaders, business leaders, ordinary citizens. Successful nonviolent movements of the past have demonstrated such dialogue is possible, and by engaging in it workable alternatives to military action emerge. For nonviolence to succeed people must be offered real solutions to the real problems of their lives — solutions that provide concrete, immediate benefits, not utopian ideals.

It also became obvious post-September 11 that the information the churches were receiving via the secular media was incomplete and frequently misleading. Leaders who based their statements on this information, especially those who took a consequential position, were seriously discredited when the Taliban regime collapsed almost immediately. Yet there are numerous people in the churches with extensive expertise about the Islamic world. Many are

affiliated with the various churches as missionaries, aid workers, and scholars; others are in secular positions. Nothing is more essential to successful nonviolent action than accurate information. The churches must become much more intentional about gathering and disseminating information available through its worldwide web of relationships if it wishes to offer viable nonviolent alternatives to the political community.

There was also an evident disconnect between the churches' spirituality and their political activities. The churches' major source of power in the political arena comes from their moral authority, which in turn is derived from their spiritual power. However, most church-based action after September 11 involved advocating positions based on political considerations, not on their core religious beliefs. This had the effect of reducing the churches to merely another voice among those of the many political interest groups seeking to make their views heard.

What Happens Next?

There will be another crisis. It will not be exactly like September 11; it may be worse, possibly a biological or nuclear attack. But whatever form it takes, the churches will be faced with the same dilemma again. If nothing is done to prepare for that next crisis, it is virtually inevitable that the necessary war rationale will prevail once again in the western Christian community.

There is really only one convincing argument against the necessary war position, and that is a successful demonstration that war is unnecessary — that there are other ways, equally and in fact often more successful in bringing order to human affairs. Nonviolence is not the political equivalent of an ATM card that we can insert into an ideological bank whenever war occurs, expecting instant peace to be dispensed. It must be demonstrated in actual practice if it is to be taken seriously.

If nonviolence is going to be taken seriously by political leaders, the churches must take the initiative. We cannot wait until another emergency occurs to prepare; that is the major lesson the nonviolent movement learned in the post-September 11 period. The military had a large establishment ready to respond to the attacks of September 11, and since it was the only institution prepared, it was the one used. The religious community must institutionalize the nonviolent option in a politically relevant way.

What exactly that means remains to be seen, but this much seems clear: If nonviolence is going to work we are going to have to do what is necessary to make it work — including creating institutions that make it a viable political option. If we do not do this, we have helped to make war necessary, by failing to provide an alternative.

Notes

[1] Active nonviolence is understood in this essay as an attempt to achieve political change without using military coercion. Such actions may result in violence of some sort, but those engaged in nonviolent action limit themselves to initiating actions that do not depend on violence to achieve their purpose. This form of political activity was first demonstrated on a national scale by M. K. Gandhi in India, and has since been used successfully in the United States by Martin Luther King, Jr., and in numerous other nations since.

[2] Full texts of these statements with summaries are available on the author's website: *www.ReligiousCommunityInitiative.net*.

[3] Statement of Archbishop Demetrios on behalf of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, Sept. 11, 2001.

[4] News Release, National Association of Evangelicals, Sept. 12, 2001.

[5] Pope John Paul II, General Audience, Sept. 12, 2001.

[6] Rev. Dr. Robert W. Edgar, General Secretary, National Council of Churches, and Rev. John L. McCullough, Executive Director, Church World Service, Sept. 11, 2001.

[7] Most Rev. Frank T. Griswold, Presiding Bishop and Primate, The Episcopal Church, Sept. 11, 2001.

[8] Administrative Committee, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Sept. 11, 2001.

[9] News Release, "Church agency supports punishment, not in-kind retaliation," United Methodist News Service, Sept. 13, 2001. The official quoted is Rev. Jim Winkler, General Secretary of the United Methodist Board of Church and Society.

[10] News Release, "UCC leaders respond to terrorist attacks with online forum and call for peace," United Church of Christ Communication Office, Sept. 11, 2001.

[11] Rev. Richard L. Hamm, General Minister and President, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Sept. 11, 2001.

[12] News Release, "Message from the Secretary General of the Anglican Communion," Anglican Communion Office, London, Sept. 12, 2001. Rev. John L. Peterson is the Secretary General of the Anglican Communion.

[13] Statement by Dr. Denton Lotz, General Secretary of the Baptist World Alliance, Sept. 12, 2001.

[14] Pope John Paul II, Address to James Nicholson, United States Ambassador to the Vatican, Sept. 13, 2001.

[15] "Public Voices Overwhelming Support for the Use of Force Against Terrorism," *New York Times*, Sept. 17, 2001; "Poll Finds Americans Support War and Fear for Economy," *New York*

Times, Sept. 25, 2001; "Public is Unyielding in War Against Terror; 9 in 10 Back Robust Military Response," *Washington Post*, Sept. 29, 2001; "Public Support is Overwhelming; Poll Finds 94% Favor Bush's Ordering Strikes on Afghanistan," *Washington Post*, Oct. 8, 2001.

[16] These terms are used purely in a descriptive sense, not with any reference to the debates among ethicists and philosophers on these topics. Both positions being described are consequential, in that both base their ethical arguments on the predicted outcomes of certain actions.

[17] "To the members of our churches after the tragedy in the United States," Rev. Dr. Ken Bellous, Executive Minister, Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec; The Rev. Stephen Kendall, Principal Clerk, Presbyterian Church in Canada; The Right Rev. Dr. Marion Pardy, Moderator, United Church of Canada; The Most Rev. Michael G. Peers, Primate, Anglican Church of Canada; Bishop Raymond L. Schultz, National Bishop, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada; Sept. 21, 2001. The officers of the Canadian Council of Churches addressed a letter with similar views to the leaders of the Canadian government on Sept. 27, 2001.

[18] Joint statement of Dale Bishop, Executive Minister, Wider Church Ministries; Edith A. Guffy, Associate General Minister, Office of General Ministries; Bernice Powell Jackson, Executive Minister, Local Church Ministries; John H. Thomas, General Minister and President, Office of General Ministries; United Church of Christ, Oct. 12, 2001.

[19] Executive Committee, Mennonite Central Committee, Sept. 22, 2001.

[20] The Rev. H. George Anderson, Presiding Bishop, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Oct. 7, 2001.

[21] United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, "A Pastoral Message: Living With Faith and Hope After September 11," Nov. 14, 2001.

[22] Rev. Dr. Konrad Raiser, Pastoral Letter to the World Council of Churches member churches in the USA, Sept. 20, 2001.

[23] Statement by World Council of Churches Acting General Secretary George Lemopoulos, Oct. 8, 2001.

[24] South African Council of Churches, National Executive Council, "Statement on the 11 September Tragedy," Oct. 25, 2001.

[25] Church of Scotland, Church and Nation Committee, "Statement on the military campaign in Afghanistan," Nov. 1, 2001.

[26] Bishop William Morris, Acting Chairman, Australian Catholic Social Justice Council, Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, "ACSJC Position Paper: The Bombing of Afghanistan," Nov. 14, 2001.

[27] David Von Drehle, "A War President Shouldn't Ask What Jesus Would Do," *Washington Post*, Sept. 30, 2001.

[28] *Washington Post*, Nov. 25, 2001.

[29] *New York Times*, Nov. 1, 2001.

[30] There were of course subsequent statements by Church leaders that referred to Sept. 11, but none known to me that were written specifically to address the Sept. 11 attacks and their aftermath, as the previous statements had been.

[31] "On Waging Reconciliation," Statement from Bishops of the Episcopal Church, Released by the Office of the Presiding Bishop, Sept. 26, 2001. The statement was jointly adopted by the 135 bishops of the Episcopal Church at their annual meeting in Burlington, VT.

Autumn, 2001

Judith Miller

under the tortured steel
of girders of death
torn and twisted
men and women weep

they weep sorrow
anger
and utter exhaustion as they dig inch by inch
into rubble
into a nightmare of flaming caves and rivers of fire
at the centre of a city
that used to laugh

sturdy men and women
who know love and loyalty and working together
search for companions
they are not willing to concede
to death and destruction
they stop only to console a child
or to gulp water

they are moving a mountain
while people all over the world
wait for the news they bring
out of that heart of fire

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Engaging "Terrorism": The Case of Palestine/Israel

Alain Epp Weaver

What counts as terrorism? A young Palestinian man enters a pizzeria on Jaffa Road in West Jerusalem, explosives strapped around his waist, and blows himself up, killing with him twenty Israelis: this horrific act is routinely named terrorism by media outlets and government officials. But how about the following: five boys from Khan Younis are walking home from school when one of them kicks a metal object by the side of the road. The object turns out to be a bomb planted by the Israeli military; it explodes, and all five children die. Was the Israeli decision to plant an explosive device in an area frequented by civilians an act of terror? Or consider the case of three-month-old Iman Hijo, also of Khan Younis, killed by a stray bullet from indiscriminate fire from Israeli military outposts guarding colonies in the Gaza Strip: terror victim or collateral damage? And what about pregnant Palestinian women trying to reach a hospital but turned back by Israeli soldiers at a checkpoint? When the baby dies, is she a victim of terror?

Terrorism, as a particular form of violence, is notoriously difficult to define. As with the case of pornography, it's hard to reach a consensus definition of terrorism, but also like pornography, people think they know it when they see it. For a pacifist to enter into the debate about what constitutes terrorism is particularly challenging, as it requires the pacifist to differentiate between species of a genus, violence, which must be categorically rejected as wrong, as sinful.

In this paper I undertake two interrelated tasks: first, examining the case of the Palestinian *intifada* (uprising, shaking off) against Israeli occupation, I describe how the discourse of terrorism as produced by government institutions, think-tanks, and the media serves ideological interests by delegitimizing the violence of one group as terrorism while justifying the violence

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of another group as counter-terrorism; second, rejecting the easy moral equivalence suggested by the phrase, "One person's terrorist is another's freedom fighter," I suggest that pacifist Christians can make moral distinctions among types of violence while simultaneously maintaining our conviction that *all* violence is a rebellious turning away from God, a failure to worship God properly. Making such distinctions, I suggest, is part of the pacifist Christian's responsibility to use "middle axioms" (appeals to standards recognized by non-Christian actors) as we encourage states and revolutionary groups which aspire to statehood to place limitations on the sin-laden enterprise of war and revolution.[1] Even as we make these distinctions, however, and even as we promote practical alternatives to the politics of violence, the case of Palestine/Israel should prove a healthy reminder that our witness on behalf of the nonviolent politics of the Lamb will often appear foolish when measured against the ruling wisdom.

The Deceptive Discourse of "Terrorism"

The way in which the discourse of terrorism can be deployed to serve ideological interests can be clearly seen in how it is routinely used to describe the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.[2] Israeli academics and military officers make up a significant percentage of the world's self-proclaimed "experts" on terrorism, pundits who present their purportedly objective and scholarly analysis over talk show airwaves and in the pages of newsweeklies. Foremost in this group is former Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu. A self-made terror "expert," Netanyahu routinely expounds the view that terrorism presents a unique threat directed against the West from fanatical stateless groups; the notion that states might be purveyors of terror does not fit into Netanyahu's conceptual scheme.[3] For Netanyahu, Israeli government officials, and pro-Israeli apologetes generally, all violence directed against Israel qualifies as terrorism. Not only, then, is the indiscriminate killing of Israeli civilians inside Israel proper by a suicide bomber terrorism, but so are attacks on settler-colonists and Israeli military personnel in the occupied territories.

While the delegitimizing of all Palestinian resistance to the military occupation has been a standard trope of Israeli discourse for decades, it gained new vigor since the attacks on the United States on September 11, 2001, with the Israeli government not-so-subtly seeking to use the U.S.-led "war on terror"

for its own ends, namely, to tar all Palestinian resistance with the brush of terrorism. Now perhaps Americans will understand the daily reality of Israelis, several pundits opined. Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon repeatedly described Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat as "our Bin Laden," with the implication that it would be hypocritical for the United States and its allies to criticize Israel for its actions in the occupied territories, as Israel was simply engaged in a similar form of counter-terrorism to that of the United States in its battle against al-Qaeda and the Taliban.

Gideon Samet observes that the Arafat equals Bin Laden equation dominates the Israeli security establishment, and notes that this rhetorical move has had some effect in Washington. For example, at an Israeli conference on security in Herzilya in December 2001, former CIA director James Woolsey described Israel as a greater victim of terrorism than the United States, calculating Israeli casualties since the beginning of the intifada as at least three times the Twin Towers disaster (when measured by percentage of victims relative to the overall population of each country).[4] [Woolsey passed over in silence the Palestinian casualties of the intifada, which at the time were well over ten times the casualties of the New York attacks, again when calculated relative to the percentage of the overall population.]

I will return later in this paper to discuss what this discourse omits: specifically, a) any acknowledgment of the indiscriminate, punitive, and retributive character of Israeli violence in the occupied territories and the human toll this has exacted on Palestinians; and b) any nuanced appraisal of the forms of violence deployed against Israel. For now, I will limit myself to two points.

First, the Israeli discourse of terrorism is flexible enough to stigmatize *all* Palestinian resistance, even unarmed civilian (i.e., nonviolent) resistance. Dov Tamari, a former Brigadier-General in the Israeli Defense Forces, recently observed that in 1982 while serving in Lebanon, he found that the term "terrorist infrastructure" was so vague that it essentially meant the entire people: "To 'dismantle' it you have to start killing people en masse, and if you don't want to do that you should just give up the idea."[5] If entire political movements are labeled as terrorist (say, for example, the political factions within the PLO) because of actions carried out by the military wings associated with those movements, then all activities conducted by those movements become terrorist

activities. Thus, for example, a health clinic operated by an NGO whose board members are predominantly affiliated with the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine becomes a terrorist institution because of attacks by the PFLP's military wing deemed to be "terrorist" attacks. When the Palestinian Authority does not succeed in securing absolute calm in the occupied territories, then it, too, becomes a terrorist organization, or at least an entity which "harbors" terrorists. This rhetorical move of guilt-by-association can be taken to comical lengths: Uzi Landau, Israel's Internal Security Minister, defended his decision to ban a reception in Jerusalem for foreign diplomats to mark Eid al-Fitr, the feast at the end of the Muslim month of Ramadan, on the grounds that it was organized by Sari Nusseibeh, holder of the Jerusalem file for the Palestine Liberation Organization and was thus a "terror-related" activity.[6]

The second initial point to make is that the case of Palestine/Israel confirms a broader thesis, articulated most pointedly by Edward Herman, that the news media manufacture consent to state policy, particularly military policy, by presenting only certain forms of violence as terrorism; violent resistance by stateless groups is stigmatized as terrorism, while violence carried out by states, regardless of the extent of "collateral damage" to civilians, is justified as a legitimate attempt to secure order and justice.[7]

The Difficulties of Defining Terrorism

The ability of the discourse of terrorism to legitimize certain forms of violence while stigmatizing others depends, Herman suggests, on a specific definitional move, namely that of excluding states from the possibility of engaging in terrorism. Once one questions the givenness of this definitional move, then it becomes clear that states often engage in violent acts similar in nature and scope to those classified as terrorism, save for the fact that the actors are the state and its representatives rather than non-state actors. As the similarity between the violence perpetrated by state and non-state actors becomes apparent, the temptation becomes great for the pacifist to pronounce a pox on everyone's house and dismiss all talk of terrorism as ideological attempts to justify one form of violence over another; the cynicism with which particular governments (say, the United States and Israel) use the discourse of terrorism increases this temptation. While understanding the appeal of this temptation, I suggest that, despite the ideological distortions to which the discourse of

terrorism is prone, the word "terrorism" can minimally suggest to us that certain forms of violence, regardless of the actor, are worse than others. Perhaps the word "terrorism" itself is too emotive and prone to ideological distortion. John Rempel, director of Mennonite Central Committee's liaison office to the United Nations in New York, states that "'terrorism' is not a neutral concept. One person's terrorist," he continues, "is another's freedom fighter."[8] While Rempel captures an important truth, I suggest that Christian pacifists should learn from an engagement with the discourse of terrorism to be nuanced about the forms in which violence can manifest itself: all violence embodies a sinful turning away from God, but not all violence is thereby of the same scope and quality.

But to jump into the question of whether or not the word "terrorism" can be used with integrity is to get ahead of ourselves. Let us begin, rather, by noting some standard definitions of terrorism and the forms of violence which these definitions exclude. The U.S. State Department defines terrorism as "premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets by subnational groups or clandestine agents, usually intended to influence an audience."[9] Three elements in this definition are particularly noteworthy: (1) terrorism is violence which targets civilians, or noncombatants; (2) the definition does not include acts committed by a state's military forces (although a state's "clandestine agents" could, apparently, implicate a state in terror); (3) terrorism is designed to "influence an audience," presumably by generating enough fear to motivate a change of policy. The U.S. Defense Department's definition sounds the same three notes: "terrorism is the unlawful use or threatened use of force or violence by a revolutionary organization against individuals or property, with the intention of coercing or intimidating governments or societies, often for political or ideological purposes."[10] More clearly than the State Department definition, the Defense Department's construal of terrorism excludes states from the ranks of those who perpetrate terror. The potential victims of terrorism in Defense Department's definition, however, form a broader group than in the State Department's definition: not only noncombatants, but individuals generally (presumably this could include soldiers) and property can be terror victims.

What is significant for our purposes here is how both definitions view terrorism as predominantly, if not exclusively, an activity carried out by stateless,

revolutionary groups; states are thus not terror agents. That states would have a vested interest in such a definition should be obvious: after all, states routinely engage in activities meeting all of the other criteria of the two definitions, engaging in violence or threatening violence against individuals (including noncombatants) for political and ideological purposes. Not only do these limited definitions betray states' self-interest, they also reflect outmoded social scientific analyses of war. Dov Tamari notes that wars between "a state and non-state entity" have not been properly analyzed in standard social science research, as they do not "fit the idealized criteria of Clausewitz." Anything which doesn't fit the model of two states at war is then often lumped "under the simple-minded label of 'terrorism.'"[11]

At the international level, no consensus exists on what constitutes terrorism. Eyal Gross, an expert on international law at Tel Aviv University, insists that no obvious reason exists for excluding states from the purveyors of terror: "When a bomb explodes in a school and 20 children are killed — that is terror, but when a plane bombs the same school and the same children are killed — it is referred to as a military action. These things should be said," he continues. "According to the various international conventions, there is no legal differentiation between the attacks on the Twin Towers and the bombing of a school in Kabul. Why is an attack in Ma'alot [a town in northern Israel] considered terror, while an attack on Lebanese soil not terror? Why are the acts now being committed by the Palestinians called terror, while Israel's actions in the territories are not? There is terror committed by organizations and then there is state terror," he concludes.[12]

Gideon Levy, echoing Gross, pointed in November 2001 to the planting of an explosive charge along the roadside in Khan Younis as an example of Israeli state terror: "A state places explosive charges where children are likely to pass and then claims that only the other side practices terrorism?" Levy asked indignantly. "We have to admit that an act of this kind can be considered an act of terrorism because it strikes at the innocent and doesn't discriminate between the victims, even if the intention was not to kill and even if the goal was the war on terrorism . . . Israel must direct the demand for a cease-fire and for a cessation of terrorism not only at the Palestinians but, to a certain degree, to itself, too."[13] Two months later, following the destruction of over fifty homes in Rafah by Israeli military bulldozers, Levy returned to this theme:

"A country that opposes terrorism against civilians cannot demolish homes of innocent civilians and then claim that what it did is not an act of terrorism."[14]

In his condemnation of Israeli military actions, Levy's implicit definition is clear: terrorism is violence against civilians, violence which does not discriminate between the "innocent" and others. It appears that his understanding of "innocence" involves non-participation in military confrontations or in other attacks against Israel. In other words, terrorism is violence motivated by ideological purposes that does not discriminate between combatants and non-combatants; both states and revolutionary groups practice it, under this definition.

This understanding of terrorism forms the foundation of the mainstream Palestinian consensus that while attacks on civilians should be avoided, attacks on Israeli targets in the occupied territories are legitimate. Thus, the shooting of an Israeli soldier near Nablus would not be a terrorist act under Levy's working definition, while a gunman opening fire at a bat mitzvah in Herzilya would be. Or, to take another example, when Hizbullah (repeatedly cited by the United States and Israel as a terrorist organization but viewed throughout the Arab world as a liberation movement) attacked Israeli military targets during Israel's occupation of southern Lebanon, this did not constitute terrorism, while the firing of a Katyusha rocket at Kiryat Shmona could be viewed as a terrorist act.[15]

Levy's working definition has, I believe, much to recommend it: it captures our moral repugnance for attacks on civilians while not masking the fact that states routinely engage in such objectionable acts. Before accepting this definition, however, let us consider some objections. For one thing, there is a significant moral difference between the killing of thousands of civilians in the Twin Towers and the killing of thousands of civilians in Afghanistan as part of the "war against terror." Binyamin Netanyahu recently articulated this position, lauding the United States for firmly establishing "a moral differentiation between terrorism and self-defense through military action that could inadvertently affect civilians." Netanyahu went on to stress "the importance of victory, namely . . . the end justifies the means."[16] If the end justifies the means in this war against terror and unlimited collateral damage is acceptable, then it becomes very difficult to see how Netanyahu proposes to establish his firm "moral differentiation" between terrorism and counter-terrorism. Both

aim for particular visions of peace, of world order, and both, if the end justifies the means, are willing to sacrifice noncombatants to secure those visions.

A second challenge to Levy's working definition involves the observation that both states and revolutionary groups maintain that distinguishing between combatants and others is difficult-to-impossible. The Israeli government, for example, staunchly defended the demolition of fifty-plus homes in Rafah on the grounds that gunmen shot from between the homes and that Palestinians had dug tunnels underneath the homes to smuggle weapons. Regardless of the fact that most international and human rights organizations dismissed these explanations as propaganda, viewing the demolitions as collective punishment for the killing of four Israeli soldiers the day before, what is important here is that the Israeli justification blurs the distinction between combatant and non-combatant. If some civilians are killed and injured and their property damaged, that simply constitutes "collateral damage," an incidental, perhaps even regrettable, effect of a military action against military targets. The Palestinian death toll during the current uprising against the occupation shows that the level of "collateral damage" has been quite high. Of the 686 Palestinians killed from September 29, 2000 to September 29, 2001, 59 percent died when no Palestinian-Israeli clashes were underway, 36 percent died in unarmed (i.e., stones, not guns) clashes, while only 5 percent died in armed clashes.[17]

Stanley Hauerwas, meanwhile, has observed that "terrorist" organizations offer strikingly similar justifications for attacks which indiscriminately affect civilians. "From the 'terrorist' point of view," he notes, "distinctions between combatants and non-combatants are not easily maintained."[18] A crowd of people along Jaffa Road in West Jerusalem will mostly consist of unarmed people, but how many of these people contribute to the successful functioning of the violent military occupation of the West Bank, East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip, serving as military officers, paying taxes, etc.? Hauerwas acknowledges that "those called terrorists" do not necessarily attack non-combatants, "but if they do," he suggests, "they are not without some moral response. Such an attack may be an attempt to make clear the kind of war they understand they are forced to wage — namely a war of the desperate that must use selective targeting in non-selective ways." A bus bombing "may be tied to policy objectives that may even make such a bombing analogous to the defense of civilian deaths on just war grounds of indirect effect; for alleged terrorist

strategies are meant — like war itself — to make people prefer peace, or at least order, rather than continue the conflict."[19] Israeli military personnel who demolish homes and carry out various types of attacks (shelling from tanks and helicopters, sniper fire, shooting into a crowd, assassinations) can claim (often cynically) a just intention — the apprehension or killing of a gunman, for example, or creating the conditions in which Palestinians will accept the "peace" of permanent Israeli control over the occupied territories — even as its actions have the indirect effect of significant civilian casualties. A Palestinian "terrorist," meanwhile, even a bus bomber, could claim that his actions are framed by a just intent, one which aims for a different form of peace.[20]

The justifiable war tradition, of course, claims that constraints can and should be placed on the waging of war so that, for example, civilians are not targeted; acts traditionally labeled "terrorism," meanwhile, disregard such constraints. The unspoken assumption in efforts to distinguish between the violence of stateless groups and the violence of state armies is that states can and do place more effective constraints on the use of violence. Any distinction between "terrorism" and war, observes Hauerwas, "gains its moral warrant from the assumption based in just war theory that there is continuity between the police function of the state and its war-making potential." This assumption, he continues, is unwarranted, for "war lacks exactly the prior institutions and practices that limit the violence intrinsic to the police function of the state and, at least to some extent, make such violence less arbitrary."[21] States may claim that they limit violence and wage just wars, but, Hauerwas poignantly suggests, the constraints of the justifiable war tradition regularly break down during war time, proving ineffective at placing controls and limits on the military.

Pacifist Responses Amidst the "Terror" of Palestine/Israel

Defining "terrorism" is an ambiguous enterprise. Definitionally excluding states from being terrorists appears purely arbitrary, given that both state and non-state actors engage in similar types of violent actions, in quality and scope. Even a bare-bones definition of terrorism as violence against noncombatants proves hard to sustain, as both states and revolutionary groups often blur the distinctions between combatant and noncombatant. If, finally, we cannot offer a universally acceptable definition of terrorism, we must nevertheless grapple with how to respond as Christian pacifists to a conflict which has seen its

share of horrific violence, whether or not one calls that violence "terrorism." In what follows I propose five tasks for Christian pacifists living and working in the midst of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, with its varied forms of violence and its charges and counter-charges of terrorism.[22]

1. Unmasking Deceptive Language

Christians must not fall prey to the deceptive use of language which stigmatizes certain forms of violence while legitimizing others. As I suggested above, the discourse of terrorism routinely functions in this deceptive manner, both generally and particularly in the case of Palestine/Israel. We must exercise healthy suspicion of claims by states that they dispense justice (even "infinite justice"!). Ya'ir Hilu, an Israeli conscientious objector, succinctly pointed to the similarities shared by Palestinian and Israeli violence when he refused to serve "in the Israeli army or in any other terrorist organization."[23] A critical reading of history, meanwhile, will remind us that, in the case of Israel, yesterday's "terrorists" are today's statesmen: retired U.S. diplomat Phil Wilcox, former head of the State Department's unit on terrorism, recently observed after reading an article on events in Mandate Palestine between 1946 and 1948 that he was "struck by how much the role of the Jewish terrorists, principally from the Irgun (Etzel) and Stern Gang (Lehi), sounded like Islamic Jihad and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, and how much the Zionist leadership sounded like Arafat, in its unwillingness to cooperate with the British in apprehending them."[24]

2. Naming Forms of Violence

Suicide bombings, gunmen opening fire in a pedestrian mall: these are the dramatic forms of violence in Palestine/Israel routinely covered in the Western media. Christians must unquestionably deplore such violence and lament its victims. At the same time, however, we must also lament the many and varied forms in which people exercise violent power in Palestine/Israel. Not only have hundreds of Palestinians been killed during the past eighteen months — most of them, as noted above, civilians, and many of them children — and not only have thousands upon thousands of Palestinians sustained injuries, many permanently disabling: in addition to this violence one must add many

other manifestations of violence, acts rarely captured on radio and television newscasts. "Aren't massive land expropriations, systematic house destruction, the uprooting of orchards and groves, also a form of violence?," asks Gideon Levy pointedly. "Isn't cutting off entire towns and villages from their source of water a type of violence? Isn't limitation on freedom of movement by slicing whole areas of the population off from each other and denying medical attention to the residents — even when it's a matter of life and death, as painful as highway shootings? The humiliations and beating, and the settlers' own violence against Palestinians — what should that be called?"[25] Christians from the United States, for that matter, should remember their complicity in violence as the U.S. government provides billions of dollars per year to Israel in military assistance. Referring to the unseen violence on which Israel's occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip depends and to U.S. aid to Israel, MCC worker Ed Nyce cautions that "the violence which we see will not cease until the violence which we do not see ceases. In the meantime, telling Palestinians to stop their actions, given our own military might, is presumption enough. Selling and giving Israel weapons and technology and providing training assistance simply adds to the audacity."[26]

3. Appealing for Limits to Violence

At one level, all violence shares notable characteristics. Lee Griffith correctly says that at the spiritual level terrorism and counter-terrorism are strikingly similar, both partaking in the assumption that striking fear in one's opponent can generate significant change.[27] All violence, one could argue, is a form of terror, aimed to instill fear, to disrupt the status quo. Theologically, all violence represents a rebellious turning away from God, a failure to worship God properly.

Recognition of these similarities, however, should not prevent us from recognizing the impulse behind the emotive and ideologically-fraught discourse of terrorism to declare certain violent practices unacceptable. Establishing universal consensus on which practices these are would probably prove elusive: judgments on what constitutes unacceptable violence in a war-time or revolutionary situation will vary from context to context. Nevertheless, the fact that different peoples routinely make such contextual judgments provides pacifists with a point of appeal to warring parties to limit their violence. These

appeals, to standards recognized by parties engaged in armed conflict, are what the late John Howard Yoder called "middle axioms." Appealing to Israelis and Palestinians, for example, to refrain from attacks on noncombatants would use Palestinian and Israeli leaders' own self-proclaimed standards for the basis for that appeal.

Using the world's (admittedly ambiguous and context-relative) standards for what constitutes unacceptable violence would not only push us to protest and lament suicide bombings, but also indiscriminate Israeli fire, extra-judicial killings (assassinations), house demolitions, and sieges on Palestinian population centers. More and more in the Israeli peace camp, one hears vocal protests against Israeli military actions in the occupied territories, protests that these actions go beyond the acceptable use of force. Adi Ophir of Tel Aviv University declared at a symposium organized by the Israeli Peace Bloc (Gush Shalom) that "The army in the Occupied Territories is involved in war crimes . . . . The problem is to find tribunals where those responsible can be tried."[28] Former Israeli Minister of Education Shulamit Aloni echoed Ophir's assessment, urging fellow peace activists that "We have to call a spade a spade. We have to say out loud that our government is committing war crimes, to say it clearly and explicitly and repeat it again and again. And, yes, the time has come to start compiling dossiers on the war criminals!"[29] Insisting that Israel respect the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention to regulate its behavior in the occupied territories would be a concrete example of appealing to the world's self-proclaimed limits on violence (limits which Israel has officially acknowledged but which it denies have relevance in the occupied territories) in an effort to curb death and destruction.

4. Promoting Nonviolent Alternatives

The myth that violence can bring security grips too many Israelis. The myth that violence can secure liberation captivates too many Palestinians. These myths exercise a powerful hold on people's imaginations, constricting the sense of the possible and blinding people to the ultimate impotence of violence. Christian pacifists must expand the sense of the possible, both raising questions about the effectiveness of violence and encouraging alternatives to violent struggle.

In both instances, Western Christians would not speak in a vacuum, but would join their voices to those of Israeli Jews and Palestinian Christians and Muslims. Even as the military-security mentality reigns supreme within Israel, many question it, recognizing that no military solution exists to Palestinian "terror." "All of the anti-terror measures which we've implemented during the past year can be compared figuratively to trying to empty the sea by using a spoon," said a senior Israeli security officer. An internal Israeli Defense Forces study admits that the siege network of roadblocks and checkpoints which severely constrict Palestinian movement do not enhance Israeli security. A former chief of Israel's internal security services, the Shin Bet, Ami Ayalon acknowledges that "You cannot kill ideologies by killing leaders. It's easy to prove that under circumstances of negotiations and political hope and expectation, selective killing of a terrorist will lead some away from the terror side, and bring them to the discussion sphere. But when there is no political expectation [of a peace agreement], assassinations do the opposite."[30] When even those within Israel's security establishment acknowledge the ineffectiveness of the occupation's violence at suppressing "terror" attacks, it comes as no surprise that a growing number of Israelis assert that real security will only come from justice, from a real end to the occupation, from a real withdrawal from all of the occupied territories.

Palestinians, for their part, while unwilling to accept imposed solutions which would perpetuate Israeli control over the occupied territories and would create a Palestinian quasi-state, or Bantustan, increasingly question the militarized character of the current intifada against the occupation. The Palestinian Center for Rapprochement between Peoples in Beit Sahour, the Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center, the Palestinian NGO network all in different ways promote nonviolent resistance against the occupation as not only the most moral but also the most promising path of struggle. Palestinian Christian lawyer Jonathan Kuttab highlights the ineffectiveness of violence in a confrontation with Israel. During the first intifada against Israel, says Kuttab, "the nonviolent struggle highlighted the justice of our cause, which rests on morality, international solidarity and international law rather than on brute force and overwhelming military superiority. To insist on waging the struggle only in the military sphere," he continues, is "doubly foolish because it deprives

us of our natural advantages and allows the conflict to play out in an arena of military violence where our enemies are vastly superior."[31]

5. Embracing the Foolishness of the Cross

Mennonites have in recent years developed a professional identity as peacebuilders. Establishing graduate programs in conflict transformation, cultivating expertise in mediation and conciliation, organizing activists to intervene in Haiti and Hebron: no longer the quiet in the land, Mennonites are ready to offer the world solutions. The laudable commitment to peace which drives such activities, however, can easily be deformed into a prideful conviction that, armed with adequate training (and a diploma), we can manage tensions, defuse conflicts, make history come out right. As much as we are called to cry for justice, transform conflicts, "build" peace, we must not become peace technocrats, promoters of one more technique by which to regulate and manage the world, but must rather confess that ultimately it is not we, but God, who builds peace, who has built and builds the Kingdom, and that God's way of peacebuilding goes through the cross. Sometimes, at a *kairos* moment, our critiques of the politics of violence will resonate with our neighbors and our suggestions for nonviolent alternatives will strike a chord. But other times, perhaps most times, our colleagues and neighbors will find our witness to a politics of nonviolence jarring, foolish, even infuriating. We must be ready to sound foolish to our neighbors; this is a difficult discipline, as few among us wish to appear foolish.

In the whirlwind of occupation and resistance in Palestine/Israel, witness to a nonviolent politics, be it by Palestinian, Israeli, or expatriate, is often drowned out by the deafening storm of voices clamoring for retribution. We can maintain this witness only if our lives are grounded in the seemingly foolish history of God's work in the world, joined to God's life through prayer and sacrament. May God grant us the courage to embrace the foolishness of the cross and the wisdom to deconstruct the world's knowledge of violence.

Notes

[1] The term "middle axioms" comes from John Howard Yoder, *The Christian Witness to the State* (Newton, KS: Faith and Life Press, 1964), 72-73, 158. I discuss Yoder's middle axioms in my article, "After Politics: John Howard Yoder, Body Politics, and the Witnessing Church," *The Review of Politics* 61/4 (Fall 1999): 669-71.

[2] Space allows me only to direct the reader to Avi Shlaim, *The Iron Wall: Israel and the Arab World* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2000); Ilan Pappe, ed., *The Israel/Palestine Question* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999); Roane Carey, ed., *The New Intifada: Resisting Israel's Apartheid* (London and New York: Verso, 2001). For discussion of Mennonite Central Committee's work with Palestinians, see Alain Epp Weaver and Sonia Weaver, *Salt and Sign: Mennonite Central Committee in Palestine, 1949-1999* (Akron, PA: Mennonite Central Committee, 1999).

[3] Benjamin Netanyahu, *Fighting Terrorism: How Democracies Can Defeat Domestic and International Terrorists* (New York: Noonday Press, 1987).

[4] Gideon Samet, "The Rogue Bull and the Gods' Blessings," *Ha'aretz English Edition* (Wednesday, December 19, 2001), 5.

[5] Dov Tamari, excerpts from remarks made at Gush Shalom symposium on war crimes, "Israel on the Way to the Hague," January 9, 2002, in Tel Aviv. English translations from this remarkable symposium quoted in this paper come from an e-mail summary distributed by Gush Shalom. For a full transcript of the symposium, where the translation differs only in phrasing, see http://www.gush-shalom.org/archives/forum_eng.html/.

[6] Clyde Haberman, "Juice and Cookies Trip Alarms in Jerusalem," *International Herald Tribune* (Tuesday, December 18, 2001), 4.

[7] Edward S. Herman and Gerry O'Sullivan, *The Terrorism Industry: The Experts and Institutions that Shape Our View of Terror* (New York: Random House, 1990) , and Edward S. Herman, *Real Terror Network: Terrorism in Fact and Propaganda* (Boston: South End Press, 1998).

[8] John Rempel, "Terrorism, International Law, and International Justice," available at http://www.mcc.org/respub/un/2001/10_Oct/terrorism.html. The Reuters news service refuses to use the word terrorism, declaring it too emotive and subjective.

[9] Quoted in Gershom Gorenberg, "The T-Word: Its Use and Misuse," *The Jerusalem Report* (January 28, 2002): 21.

[10] Quoted in James Tunstead Burtchaell, *The Giving and Taking of Life: Essays Ethical* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1989), 213.

[11] Remarks at Gush Shalom symposium. See footnote 4.

[12] Quoted in Nitzan Horowitz, "Terror — It's All in the Eyes of the Beholder," *Ha'aretz English Edition* (November 18, 2001). Lev Grinberg, director of the Humphrey Institute at the Ben Gurion University of the Negev in Israel argues in fact that state terror, at least in Palestine/Israel, is worse than the terror perpetrated by non-state actors: "Suicide bombs killing innocent citizens must be unequivocally condemned; they are immoral acts, and their perpetrators should be sent to jail," he says. "But they cannot be compared to State terrorism carried out by the Israeli Government. The former are individual acts of despair of a people that sees no future,

vastly ignored by an unfair and distorted international public opinion. The latter are cold and "rational" decisions of a State and a military apparatus of occupation, well equipped, financed and backed by the only superpower in the world. Yet in the public debate, State terrorism and individual suicide bombs are not even considered as comparable cases of terrorism. The State terror and war crimes perpetrated by the Israeli Government are legitimized as "self-defense", while Arafat, even under siege, is demanded to arrest "terrorists." —Lev Grinberg, "Israel's State Terrorism," distributed via e-mail by the Palestinian Center for Rapprochement between Peoples in Beit Sahour, April 3, 2002.

[13] Gideon Levy, "On the Way to School," *Ha'aretz English Edition* (November 25, 2001): 5.

[14] Gideon Levy, "A Crime against the Innocent," *Ha'aretz English Edition* (January 13, 2002): 5.

[15] Attacks on soldiers can appear less objectionable than attacks on non-combatants because soldiers are thought to have a degree of choice about being put into conflict's way. Israeli settler-colonists in the occupied territories form an ambiguous group. Palestinians tend to view them as armed paramilitary groups, part and parcel of the military occupation; Israelis tend to view them as noncombatant civilians. The 10-month old girl Shalhevet Pass killed in Hebron must be considered a noncombatant. One obvious reason the Fourth Geneva Convention prohibits an occupying power from settling its civilian population in occupied territory is to keep civilians out of harm's way; adult settlers and the Israeli government choose to ignore and violate the Fourth Convention, placing civilians in a territory where armed resistance to a military occupation should not be unexpected.

[16] Quoted in Amnon Barzilai, "Netanyahu: Iraq is Next U.S. Target," *Ha'aretz English Edition* (Wednesday, December 19, 2001), 2.

[17] Figures from http://www.electronicintifada.net, compiled from Palestinian Red Crescent Society and the Union of Palestinian Medical Relief Committees.

[18] Stanley Hauerwas, *Sanctify Them in the Truth: Holiness Exemplified* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998), 180. Hauerwas observes that the "state of Israel was brought into power by an extended and very well organized terrorist campaign" (179).

[19] Hauerwas, *Sanctify Them in the Truth*, 181.

[20] Peace meaning here a particular type of order with an absence of conflict. Clearly, different visions of "peace" in the earthly city compete with one another; most, if not all, of these visions, will also stand in tension with the peace which the church is called to embody and proclaim.

[21] Hauerwas, *Sanctify Them in the Truth,* 180.

[22] These tasks might have relevance in other conflict situations. "Christian pacifists" in Palestine/Israel include some Palestinian Christians, such as Zoughbi Zoughbi of the Wi'am Conflict Resolution Center and Rev. Naim Ateek of the Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center.

[23] Ya'ir Hilu, "A Statement of Refusal on Grounds of Conscience," *Challenge: A Magazine Covering the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict* No. 71 (January-February 2002): 11.

[24] Quoted in Akiva Eldar, "Counting the Days — and the Dead," *Ha'aretz English Edition* (Thursday, January 24, 2002), 4.

[25] Gideon Levy, "Defining Violence," *Ha'aretz English Edition* (March 12, 2001), 5.

[26] Ed Nyce, "My Friends are Not Terrorists," e-mail update, May 22, 2001, available from MCC Palestine (mccwb@palnet.com).

[27] Lee Griffith, *The War on Terrorism and the Terror of God* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2002).
[28] Remarks made at Gush Shalom symposium; see footnote 4.
[29] *Ibid.*
[30] Amos Harel, "Security Brass: Targeted Killings Don't Work; No Military Solution to Terror," *Ha'aretz English Edition* (Wednesday, December 19, 2001), 2.
[31] Jonathan Kuttab, "Nonviolence: A Powerful Alternative," Dec. 19, 2001, distributed by Common Ground News Service.

A New National Anthem: the Morning Shower Version

David Waltner-Toews

I sing of myself in the shower
the water tumbling like an ad
for soapless soap and tropical fantasies.
I celebrate my armpits, the grassy gullies
of my upstretched arms, voices splashing
down my chest and belly. I sing
to the rabbit in my loins,
to your body next to mine, the hillocks
and the warren door.

I sing in tears of love
of my germanic heritage, four-part,
six-part multi-hearted harmony:
beethoven, bach, my grandparents,
adolf hitler, dietrich bonhoeffer and albert einstein,
the millions who were massacred,
and the millions who made us who we are
because they lived. I celebrate the mennonites
who would not kill and the anarchists who killed them.
We are a cornucopia of history's compostibles.
recycled rage, wisdom, control, chaos, a choir
of ayatollahs, borks, falwells, herzogs,
netanyahus, arafats, stalins, maos, john-pauls,
binladens, guevaras, mandelas, ghandis, mother theresas;

David Waltner-Toews is a veterinary epidemiologist who teaches at the University of Guelph. His most recent collections of poetry are The Impossible Uprooting *(1995) and* The Fat Lady Struck Dumb *(2000).*

I sing of roots, equality, peasants, pageantry,
leaves, earth, & never again
from generation to generation.

Ah, we are the witty ones, so scathing in our freedom,
so beautifully tired of being moral,
of caring, of castro, of kids, of anyone-not-us,
so smartly anti-correct, essayists and bums and
goldie movie stars with cigarettes we are,
cigars and no-cigar, and all that other junk and dazzle
that ties us to skeletal children
half a world away, so happy to give their meagre
beans or rice to grow tobacco and foreign exchange,
dying with pleasure just to know that we exist,
leaning so cool
against the coke machine.
We are the wonders
of the world.

I hug my arms around me in the shower
to bring you close, bring into me old
wrinkled men and blue-skinned girls,
the raped and the rapists,
the free traders and the prostitutes, those with sad
livers and despairing immune systems,
the starving mothers, the alcoholic glue sniffers
the bank presidents who make them possible.

Oh the delight of our efficiencies! I sing to
the weary oil workers of shell and exxon,
the otter-slickers who give us jobs,
and the sleek auto-makers who take us to them.

Praise to the nigerians and arabs we sacrifice
with firing squads. Praise to the desert storms
that swirled our skirts up to new self-
indulgent heights.

I waltz buck naked with clasping tree-huggers,
with lumbermen who cannot grasp the import
of all this, with tight-wad men in slick suits,
with honest-muscled tree-cutters
selling their children for another year
of labour lost.
I hum of the saws and the green chain,
my sleepless body, my aching back,
the teachers paid from this store
of fallen trees,
the students at the wooden desks,
the poets scribbling wisdom and garbage
on these sacrificial leaves,
the grandchildren who will inherit
our silt.

Praise to the righteous
who remind us with guns and crosses
of god within and without.
Praise to the preaching neo-Darwinists
who snort to us of non-God
from logical pulpits.
Death comes to us all,
and life, illogically.
Praise to the french for
underground nuclear tests to protest,
for wine to help us forget,

for arrogance to make us feel humble.
Praise to the nazis the stalinists the taliban the 700 Club
for making us seem like the good guys.
And oh the chinese japanese
javanese how can I thank you enough
for the wonders of your orchids your walls
your sand beaches your stereo sets your batik
the rain forests you have devastated
the gold and nickel and oil
that enrich and enrage us
the jaundiced jokes you have given us?

All that I am is thanks to you.

I shout white is fine and
black is beautiful.
I belt out the happy blues of the half breed,
the dilly-dallying sperm, the twisted tongue,
the sugar babies franglophones métis
flat germans mulattoes creoles.

Let us create a movement and call it
one-quarter chinese one-eighth black
some part indian-semitic-arab a pinch of aboriginal
some russian mongolian a bit of monkey
and a little white
is beautiful.

Let us wiggle our butts,
sing our faith and the delights of our impurity.
Let us dance our despair.
Let us love ourselves,
all of us, in the deluge,
in the shower.

Sing now, at last,
to the lambs we were,
what we lost sight
of, have become,
little tygers, burning bright
our might undone, down
on our knees

as we step out,
the sky a shivery blue clean,
in the next room the cracked sun,
sunny side up,
sizzling, watching, waiting Ra Ra
for another
good morning.

Growing Up in a Violent World: Narrow Escapes and the Call to Peacemaking

Fred Guyette

1955-1960: Popeye the Sailor and Hound Dog Missiles

There was a four-year-old boy who lived in Pensacola, Florida. When he wasn't playing outside under the sunshine and God's big blue sky, he was watching Popeye cartoons on the family's black and white television. While he waited for his father to come home from work, Popeye would fight with Brutus. Brutus had the advantage in the beginning, because he always started the fight. It was often a close call, but Popeye always won. Always.

The boy's father worked at Eglin Field on a giant airplane, the B-52. The B-52 carried a missile, the Hound Dog. What little boy would be afraid of a "hound dog," with its floppy ears and its wagging tail? But later in life he learned that *this* Hound Dog carried a weapon, a nuclear bomb.[1] It was a forerunner of today's Cruise Missile. It was poised to kill millions of people in faraway lands. Not just soldiers, but fathers, mothers, children. The boy couldn't have known this, and if told, he couldn't have understood. But this much he knew and understood very well: Popeye and his father were on the same side.

1960-1965: Combat Theatre and Getting Baptized

As he grew older, there were more movies on TV. On Saturday night it was Combat Theatre. Twelve O'Clock High, The Flying Tigers, From Here to Eternity, On a Wing and a Prayer. "Those dirty Krauts." "Those stupid Japs." Those were familiar lines. When he went to Cub Scouts, too, they wore uniforms and often talked about God and Country. They seemed to be the same big thing — both "high and lifted up." "Onward Christian Soldiers" was

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his favorite hymn at church. He always asked for it when they took requests. It sent shivers of pride and glory up and down his back when they sang it together. "Christ, the Royal Master, leads against the foe. Forward into battle — see his banners go." When the boy was baptized, no one told him the Messiah, the Prince of Peace, might lead him to choose a different path.[2]

That same summer he was baptized, his family made a pilgrimage of sorts to the Air Force Museum in Ohio.[3] They walked through a B-17 from World War II, looked through the Norden Bomb Site, and sat where the tail gunner sat. There was a P-51, the plane they called the Mustang. The P-47 Thunderbolt was there, and the Lightning, the P-38. He learned them all, their numbers, their names. He knew the stories of the pilots who had flown them and how many enemy planes they had shot down. They had exhibits dedicated to "Fat Man" and "Little Boy," the atomic bombs they had dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The Nagasaki B-29 was there, too, the one named "Bock's Car." But where were Sadako and her thousand paper cranes? The Air Force Museum hadn't heard about her story. The boy only learned about Sadako much later in life.[4]

That Christmas, he memorized the Sears catalog. He made a list of what he wanted, and most of his wishes came true on Christmas morning. A Civil War set, with Lincoln and Grant leading the Union. Lee and Davis led the Rebels. A machine gun. A combat helmet. Toy grenades. GI Joe was there under the tree, too.[5] He knew in a dim way that GI Joe was protecting someone important, and that was Barbie. Not that they were meant for each other — Barbie had Ken, after all. But more to the point, he couldn't imagine Joe and Barbie getting along together. Joe's virtues were meant for battle and he could never have settled down to the life Barbie enjoyed — a world of fashion and dating, where prettiness counted.[6] Joe probably wouldn't be any good on a date. He had too many things he had to blow up and too many things he had to shoot down. But somehow the world needed a lot of guys like Joe, so Barbie's seamless and predictable world would be possible. Joe seemed to understand that, and if it bothered him, he never let it show.

1965-1975: Vietnam, Armageddon, and the Gospel of Matthew

When the boy was thirteen, his father died of cancer. Everyone said how young the boy's father was. Only 35 years old. At church, he learned to tell

the story of his life — BEFORE, when Dad was there, for fishing and for baseball. AFTER, when their little world collapsed. And LATER, when following Jesus seemed to make life bearable again. He remembered how his heart was pounding when he told the story in church for the first time. They called it "giving testimony" and "letting your light shine before men." It took some time to make the pieces fit together, but he couldn't think of anything that could ever be truer about his life.[7]

In Israel, there was fighting and a war that lasted only six days, they said. But then there was more killing and more retaliation — it never seemed to stop. The two sides seemed to hate each other, and there wasn't anyone who wanted to make peace. Haven't they read the Sermon on the Mount? That was what the teenager thought. They are living the Old Testament ethic of an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth — if they only would listen to Jesus, and turn the other cheek! Don't they believe what he says about peacemakers being blessed? [8]

At school, there was a prayer group that met before classes started in the morning. There was a preacher who came and talked about Israel and he added a new key to the story: The Battle of Armageddon. It seemed to take the chaos of the news and reshape it so that it had a theme. There was another war in Vietnam that was part of the same big picture. The preacher said there was a lieutenant, William Calley who accidentally killed some people in a village called My Lai. He was being court-martialed for doing his duty over there, and he needed our help. Signatures were needed on a petition to show that patriotic Americans supported him and didn't want him to go to jail. At the shopping center, the boy asked strangers to sign the petition, and a lot of them did. He gave the list to the preacher, who seemed to know where it should be sent to do the most good. As he grew older, that was something he couldn't forget. Ever.[9]

There was an ROTC unit at his school. He wore a uniform once a week and saluted the older guys who had rank. He was dreaming about learning to fly and the F-15 was the plane he wanted. It was faster and better than what the Russians had. But he learned that his eyesight wasn't good enough — he had to wear glasses, and pilots couldn't wear glasses. That was a roadblock to a promising career. If the recruiters could have seen into his heart, they would know how much he wanted to be a pilot, and they would

have made an exception to get him into the cockpit. But they couldn't see his motives, and they didn't make exceptions — not for anyone.

Meanwhile, at church, there was a lesson on Jesus outsmarting the Pharisees in Matthew, chapter 22. "Bring me a coin," he said. "Whose picture is on it? Caesar, you say . . . . Then, render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." He loved that story. And that, too, was something he never forgot.[10]

1975-1985: Liberation Theology and the Kingdom of God

Now I have to confess that this little boy — the one who loved to play war — he and I are the same person. But I was beginning to change and want a different kind of life from the one in the Air Force for which I had been preparing. Was God "calling" me? Those were the words used in our church: God "called" this person or that one to the ministry. I wasn't "hearing" the "call" in the way my church seemed to know about, but I was reading the scriptures on my own and starting to find a different way of life described there.

When I went away to college, we had a wonderful professor of philosophy who encouraged us to read Plato and Aristotle. He taught theology, too, and talked about the Christian Platonism of C.S. Lewis and the struggle between good and evil in the world of Tolkien. Dr. Patteson could weave a spell in class, and you would forget about the outside world for hours. We needed that in 1975. I dated a girl whose brother had volunteered to go to Vietnam; he had died when he jumped on a grenade to save his friends. She seemed to have a sadness that I couldn't reach, in spite of my good intentions. In the news the sailors were pushing helicopters off the decks of the aircraft carriers into the ocean. That seemed bad, too, but we were learning about something more important, something that might even be unnameable. God was there in our classroom conversations. Some scientists and historians had him penned up, they thought, and they were preparing a final assault to get rid of him. But Dr. Patteson seemed to know that God was bigger than that and that the scientists would ultimately fail. God was also judging our way of life and our selfishness, he said. Dr. Patteson admired Martin Luther King Jr., too, and he was the first teacher I knew who said so openly. King was a peacemaker, though some people accused him of being a troublemaker. I couldn't understand why in our church we didn't hear sermons like those that he used to preach.[11]

In such a place, Dr. Patteson couldn't last, and the college soon got rid of him. Soon I would be leaving, too, with the thought of making a new life for myself once again. For the first time, I was certain that it would not be a military life. Through our new church we "adopted" a Vietnamese family. They had been "boat people" who escaped from Vietnam in 1975.[12] After an uncertain status for several years in Hong Kong, they came to America. As refugees they had been through untold dangers. I tried to see America through their eyes when we had Thanksgiving dinner together. I was also thinking more and more of a baby who was almost killed by a king's soldiers in Israel long ago, and the Flight into Egypt, where the little family found safety. My wife and I had our first child about that time, too, and I was praying for families everywhere who had lost a father or a son or a brother in war. God did not send souls to earth for this.

Next, at a large university I studied "Liberation Theology." Gutierrez and Bonino were writing about "doing" theology. That seemed strange — people "doing" rather than "thinking" theology. But did they mean by this, *killing* people? The question of violence was always coming up in their books — a spiral of violence, as they described it. Violence that on the one hand was already imposed on them in Latin America. Violence again with respect to this question: How could they hope to be free without first killing their oppressors? They loved the story of the Exodus, and I thought they were right to do so. But I was also thinking — the Hebrews didn't do the killing at the Red Sea — God did that. "The horse and the rider He has thrown into the sea . . . ." I couldn't see that Christians armed with guns, killing the rich, was anything close to New Testament discipleship. But then, weren't there Christians in our military, too, blessed by chaplains and the prayers of faithful people at home? It seemed to me that Reinhold Niebuhr's view of war and violence were often used to justify America's policies, and that liberation theology had made the mistake of applying his thought to their own situation rather than to North American policies. The North American rejection of Latin American theology seemed hypocritical to me in that light — a way of saying "Our violence is justified — yours is not." Yet my heart wasn't satisfied with one side or the other. [13]

There was a fellow named William Stringfellow who came to our campus. I went to hear him speak. He said that for far too long we had been

"reading the Bible Americanly" rather than "reading America Biblically."[14] That was for me a thunderbolt and a flash of lightning of a different sort altogether. When I began to take Stringfellow's words more and more in earnest, it set me apart from old friends. But I remembered what the disciples said in Acts: "We must obey God rather than men." God was calling me to a life that didn't involve killing, even for the sake of righting injustice. This was very hard to explain to others, and in the end I didn't try to explain it anymore. It was hard to understand how Americans could read the same Bible that I was reading and come to such different conclusions. Another teacher quoted from Tertullian's commentary on Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane: "When Jesus told Peter to put away his sword, he disarmed every Christian."[15] Later, when Pilate asked Jesus in John 18:36 whether he was a king, Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world." I knew people who used that verse to argue for a strong military, one which *could* rule in this world. But I couldn't make myself hear it that way any longer.

Three images stand out in my imagination from these years. They were important for confirming these peacemaking convictions in my heart. First, in Kurt Vonnegut's novel, *Slaughterhouse-five*, Billy Pilgrim has a vision — it is like watching a movie about World War II, but the film is being run backwards. The bullets are magically sucked from broken bodies, the bombs rise up toward the planes, which capture them and fly backwards to England. They land, then turn off their motors, and send the bombs back to be dismantled carefully by women in factories, and sent back to mines, where the metal is put back into the earth and hidden.[16] Secondly, at the end of *All Quiet on the Western Front*, Erich Maria Remarque's soldier is weary of war and is killed when he reaches out from his protected position to touch a butterfly. His longing for beauty cannot exist in that world of hate and destruction.[17] And thirdly, from the televsion series M*A*S*H*, Radar meets a disoriented bomber pilot who believes he is Jesus. The pilot has killed over and over from a distance, but the enormity of what he has done has finally caught up with him, and his mind can't take it in.[18] These images helped me see that I was moving in the right direction, and that following Jesus in the way of peace was the best kind of life that a person could live.

1985-2001: John Howard Yoder, the Book of Common Prayer, and Rumors of War

As an adult, my reading of the Bible owes more and more to John Howard Yoder's *The Politics of Jesus*.[19] This puts me at odds with many of the people I worship with in the Episcopal Church. In the *Prayer Book*, we have "The Thirty-Nine Articles." Articles 37 and 38 are especially troublesome for a Christian pacifist. Article 37 states: "It is lawful for Christian men, at the commandment of the Magistrate, to wear weapons and serve in the wars." Article 38 is about property: "The Riches and Goods of Christians are not common, as touching the right, title, and possession of the same, as certain Anabaptists do boast."[20] This is not what draws me to the Episcopal church, I can promise you that. What keeps me there is the eucharist, which is altogether bigger than Articles 37 and 38. The eucharist is about something so huge that no statement can capture it — the life that God is calling us to with Jesus.

This is what I think President George Bush never understood in the Gulf War of 1991, and what our current President George W. Bush doesn't understand about war in Afghanistan and the Middle East. If they had been thinking of God's call and his claim on their lives, they would have been following Deuteronomy 17:16-19.[21] Deuteronomy tells any leader to meditate on God's law all the days of his life. No leader has time for war if he's following that command. Nor is he allowed to acquire "horses" which will be used as weapons in war. What does Psalm 146 say? "Put not your trust in princes . . . . And Psalm 46? "He breaks the bow, shatters the spear, and burns the shield in the fire."[22]

American hearts were broken when terrorists crashed airplanes into the towers in New York City. It was more than any of us could bear, as the mayor of that city said. Every fiber of our souls, it seemed, cried out for vengeance, or at least the kind of military strike that would make us safe again. So many Americans wanted to be like the sniper, Jackson, in *Saving Private Ryan.* Jackson prays from the Psalms continually while aiming his gun at the enemy. "In Thee have I put my trust. Let me never be ashamed" (Psalm 31), he prays as he defends his unit. Many Americans have also prayed Psalm 140 in these last few months, which asks God to "Preserve me from violent men, who devise evil things in their hearts."[23] These are heart-felt prayers — my aim is not to criticize them, but to probe a little more deeply. My own deepest thoughts,

which come to me through these same Psalms, are something more like this: When you start down that path of bloodshed, where will you stop? There's no reason to stop. There's no country big enough to make you stop. There are violent men in every country on earth. Will you go after them all so as "to be done with it," while you've got the momentum and the clear moral advantage? Then, won't there be prayers offered up by your victims in which you are the violent person devising evil plans?

America's military campaigns make perfect sense from an Augustinian point of view. Just war is meant to restrain evil doers, after all, and there are plenty of them out there.[24] Only, to do it, you've got to circumvent God's command not to kill. That's what John Book comes up against in director Peter Weir's film *Witness*.[25] Is he going to kill these violent men as he's always been taught and trained to do, before they kill him? Or, is he going to try a different way? What saves him in the end and grants him a narrow escape from the shedding of blood? It is a child ringing a bell, one very much like a church bell, summoning the believers to his aid. Part of what's at stake is the future of the boy he's trying to protect. Isn't it that way for us too?

Notes

[1] A photo and brief description of the missile (now obsolete) can be found at http://www.wpafb.af.mil/museum/annex/an8.htm

[2] That this hymn has caused others to search their consciences can be seen in an article by James Wall, "Marching to War with the Hymn Critics: 'Onward Christian Soldiers'" *Christian Century* 103 (July 2, 1986): 603-604.

[3] Our family's visit was in 1965. The museam's website is http://www.wpafb.af.mil/museum/

[4] *Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes* is the name of Sadako's book, which is significant for Peace Studies. An article describing her project is Takayuki Ishi, "The Girl of the Paper Cranes: The Effort of Sadako Sasaki to Overcome Her A-Bomb-caused Leukemia Became a Legend in the Peace Movement" *Christian Social Action* 8 (July-Aug 1995): 25-27.

[5] For an early protest against war toys see Albert H. Yee, "Toys, Children, and a Crisis in Values: Examining What Military and Other Toys Teach" *International Journal of Religious Education* 43 (Dec. 1966): 4-5,40. More recently see Daphne White, "Violence Is Not Child's Play: Parents Fight an Uphill Battle in Teaching Nonviolence to their Children" *Christian Social Action* 12 (June 1999): 30-32. Also Patrick M. Regan, "War Toys, War Movies, and the Militarization of the United States, 1900-85" *Journal of Peace Research* 31 (Feb. 1994): 45-60.

[6] Gloria Borger, "Barbie's Newest Values: The Real Problem with the Barbie Doll is Not Her Unrealistic Physical Proportions, But Her Snobby, Materialist Values" *U.S. News & World Report* 123 (Dec. 1, 1997) p. 40.

[7] Paul Ricoeur, "The Hermeneutics of Testimony" *Anglican Theological Review* 61 (1979): 435-61, is much closer to my mature view of "giving testimony."
[8] An important collection of sermons on peacemaking can be found in *Preaching on Peace*, edited by Ronald J. Sider and Darrel J. Brubaker, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982).
[9] A useful source of information on this incident is James Stuart Olson, *My Lai: A Brief History with Documents* (Boston: Bedford Books) 1998. Today I am horrified that I didn't have enough moral insight to resist the request to participate in this petition drive. Youth leaders will take note, I hope, and not make a similar mistake with their young people.
[10] A good summary of the history of interpretation of these verses is Charles Homer Giblin, "The Things of God" in the Question Concerning Tribute to Caesar: (Lk 20:25; Mk 12:17; Mt 22:21) *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 33 (Oct. 1971): 510-527.
[11] Martin Luther King Jr., *A Knock at Midnight: Inspiration from the Great Sermons of Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr.* (New York: Warner Books, 1998). Also available online http://www.stanford.edu/group/King/sermons/contents.htm
[12] See *Voices of Vietnamese Boat People: Nineteen Narratives of Escape and Survival*, ed. Mary Terrell Cargill and Jade Quang Huynh (Jefferson, NC: McFarland and Company, 2001).
[13] Gutierrez, Gustavo. *A Theology of Liberation* (New York: Orbis Press, 1973), and Jose Miguez-Bonino, *Doing Theology in a Revolutionary Situation* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974). For an overview of many of these issues see Richard B. Miller, "Christian Pacifism and Just-War Tenets: How Do They Diverge?" *Theological Studies* 47. 3 (Sept. 1986): 448-72.
[14] This theme can be followed in William Stringfellow, *An Ethic for Christians and Other Aliens in a Strange Land* (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1973).
[15] This quotation is from Tertullian's *Treatise on Idolatry* 19. It can be read in a widely available edition of the *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, 3:73, or online at http://www.ccel.org/fathers2/ANF-03/anf03-07.htm#P815_331177
[16] Kurt Vonnegut, *Slaughterhouse-five; or, The Children's Crusade, a Duty-dance with Death* (New York: Delacorte Press, 1969).
[17] Erich Maria Remarque, *All Quiet on the Western Front* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1958, c. 1930).
[18] An unofficial episode guide to MASH lists this story as episode 81, from season 4, with the title "Quo Vadis, Captain Chandler?"
[19] John Howard Yoder, *The Politics of Jesus: Vicit Agnus* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972).
[20] *The Book of Common Prayer and Administration of the Sacraments and other Rites and Ceremonies of the Church: Together with the Psalter or Psalms of David According to the Use of the Episcopal Church* (New York: Seabury Press, 1979).
[21] For an excellent Biblical account of the ideal king, see Walter Brueggemann, *The Land* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977), 73-79.
[22] Robert McAfee Brown, "The God Who Stamps Out War, Psalm 46" in *Preaching on Peace* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982), 45-51.
[23] Among countless possibilities for understanding the Psalms, see Kathleen Norris, "Why the Psalms Scare Us" *Christianity Today* 40. 8 (1996): 19-24.
[24] John Langan "The Elements of St. Augustine's Just War Theory" *Journal of Religious Ethics* 12. 1 (1984): 19-38.
[25] See Kimball, Doug. "Peter Weir and the Theme of Salvation" at http://www.thefilmforum.addr.com/columns/990626.html

Responding to September 11 — and October 7 and January 29: Which Religion Shall We Follow?

J. Denny Weaver

The events of September 11 shocked the world, and as the towers of the World Trade Center tumbled, the United States seemed shaken to its very foundations.[1] Most Americans felt themselves to be personally offended and attacked by the suicide pilots on planes in New York, Pennsylvania, and Washington, D.C.[2] The American public called overwhelmingly for a military response, and voices were also raised to say that this unprecedented series of events challenged our categories of pacifism and justifiable war, and that the peace church may need to rethink the meanings of peace and nonviolence in this new world.

For people not committed to nonviolence, the questions What would you do about bin-Laden? or What would you do about 9-11? have become the virtual equivalents of the perennial questions What would you do about Hitler? and What would you do if a crazed person came after your mother/wife/daughter with a gun? In each case, the questioner assumes that these are the ultimate situations for which the only possible answer is to use violence. People committed to nonviolence also pose these questions, often wistfully wishing for nonviolent answers when there appear to be none.

However, when we examine the September 11 events in historical perspective, there is a profound sameness in both the U.S. president's policy direction and military response to September 11, and the public's patriotic response and support for him. And the sameness reveals that this particular challenge to the peace church is not a new challenge; it is merely a new form of the same old arguments. Although George W. Bush likely does not recognize it, he is following a script that prescribes his words and actions as he leads the nation in this so-called "war against terrorism." So too, without recognition of it, the American public follows the same script as they sing in the choir that the

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president is leading. This essay sketches the script by means of a brief overview of American civil religion, and provides a realist nonviolent response to the events of September 11.

American Civil Religion[3]

The script that both George W. Bush and the American people are following comes from what is known as American civil religion. American civil religion consists of a "set of sacred persons, events, beliefs, rituals, and symbols," all the elements of religious tradition. These elements imbue the United States with a divine identity and divine agenda.[4] The purpose of this civil religion is to associate the American nation with the divine, to infuse the nation with a sense of divine chosenness and a belief that it has a sacred mission in the world. Civil religion teaches that the U.S. is God's country, and that carrying out its national mission is to do God's work.

These sacred connotations about the American nation are derived from a founding myth. According to this myth, oppressed peoples from Europe came to America seeking freedom, which was then vouchsafed and forged in revolutionary fashion by a war against England in 1776. The righteousness of this war was anchored in an appeal to God, as the Declaration of Independence put it, in "a firm Reliance on the Protection of Divine Providence." This founding myth becomes the story of every American, even recent immigrants sworn in as citizens, who learn that their newly acquired freedom comes from George Washington's defeat of the evil British in 1776. A central feature emerging from this myth is the idea of the nation's chosenness. This idea comes from the Pilgrims and Puritans who settled in Massachusetts beginning in 1620. Shaped by predestinarian Calvinism, they believed themselves to be God's new, chosen people, making an exodus from evil England parallel to ancient Israel's escape from Egypt, and now destined by God to inherit the promised land of the new world. As a "new Israel," they intended to base their civil laws on God's revealed law, the Bible, and believed that to disregard that law threatened the new society's special destiny. This was an established church, with religious beliefs linked to political structures.

A fundamental dimension of an established church is the assumption that Christian faith encompasses the social order. There is one structured church for the state, because Christianity has become identified with and

encompasses all of the social order. And when Christianity does that, the church as "people of God" has become identified with a society, an ethnic group, or a political entity. Church no longer consists of those who respond in faith to the call of Jesus Christ, but instead consists of the mass of the population, identified by geography, politics, or ethnicity. Modern terminology for this amalgam of church and state is Christendom or a "Christian society."

Later versions of the mythology kept the Puritan world view but translated being a divinely ordained society into secular language. In the Declaration of Independence of 1776, for example, the Christian God of the Puritans became Nature's God, the Creator, Supreme Judge of the World, and divine providence. Laws were no longer based on God's revealed law, but protected 'inalienable rights,' a secular way shaped by the deistic thinking of the Enlightenment to identify innate rights without mentioning God. In the nineteenth century, the sense of being a predestined, chosen people eventually became a "manifest destiny" for European settlers to possess the continent and displace the native inhabitants. Thus modern American civil religion is a contemporary expression of an ancient idea, with the American nation replacing the church in being called to carry out a divine mission.

Closely linked to the sense of divine chosenness is the belief that this chosenness is vouchsafed by the success of the nation's endeavors. On the *Arrabella* as the Puritans were appoaching landfall, Governor John Winthrop said, "Now if the Lord shall please to heare us, and bring us in peace to the place wee desire [the North American coast], then hath hee ratified this Covenant and sealed our Commission."[5] Winthrop and his flock assumed that arriving without shipwreck would be God's ratification of their endeavor. In the Declaration of Independence, this claim of divine approval became an appeal "to the Supreme Judge of the World for the Rectitude of our Intentions," which takes place "with a firm Reliance on the Protection of divine Providence." The claim of divine blessing warranted through success continues in the pervasive American need to display divine favor by being the richest and strongest country in the world both militarily and economically, to be first to the moon, to control space, to win the most Olympic medals, to function as the world's policeman, *ad nauseam*.

The founding myth is built on war. War gave birth to the divinely sanctioned people and inaugurated their entry into the new era. War preserved

the Puritans from the indigenous population whose land God was supposedly giving them. In 1776, war supposedly freed the colonists from the clutches of the evil British. As the supposed supreme event in the nation's founding, the story of this war is placed in school curricula to teach that war is the basis of freedom and that without it there will be no freedom.

Participants in the original founding myth are the "saints" of civil religion: George Washington, who led the armies in 1776; Thomas Jefferson, who penned the foundational documents of the nation; and Abraham Lincoln, who supposedly preserved the unified nation and freed the slaves through the Civil War, and then paid the price of unity with his own blood. National holidays such as the Fourth of July and Memorial Day — the holy days of civil religion — celebrate the link between violence and freedom. On these occasions, the president as the "high priest" of civil religion leads the nation in celebrating past wars and honoring the people who fought them. As the high priest, he is expected to personify the nation's virtue, which explains why Bill Clinton's sexual philandering attracted great opprobrium, while even more blatant sexual offenses are tolerated or ignored for entertainment and athletic idols.

Civil religion portrays its version of religion in primarily civil or secular terms. In the Declaration of Independence, the God of civil religion is referred to in rather vague, distant terms — Supreme Being, Supreme Judge, Providence, and so on. More recent usage has employed additional imprecise terms for God — such as Richard Nixon's profession of his great faith in "Something Else" in a televised Billy Graham crusade. Such vague references are intentional. They both allow and presume that every religious group and denomination will include itself as a smaller subgroup under the umbrella of the wider or higher national civil religion. Each denomination then becomes a particular representation of the national religion. American flags in churches symbolize this union.

American civil religion has lifted a specific political philosophy (one-person, one-vote democracy), and a specific economic philosophy (neoliberal capitalism) to the level of ultimate, unquestioned belief. Alongside these social doctrines stand a number of individual rights, also given ultimate — that is, inalienable, by right of birth — significance: the freedoms of speech, press, assembly, and so on. The ultimacy of these social and individual beliefs becomes clear when one notices that the nation reserves for itself the right, in

the name of these beliefs, to invoke the supreme sanction — death — on people and nations that challenge the U.S. version of ultimate beliefs.

Millennial Outlook

American civil religion has a distinctly future-oriented or millennial outlook — the belief that a past or present evil is on the point of being overcome, so that the nation stands perpetually on the verge of the millennium — a new era of unprecedented opportunity, goodness, and prosperity.[6] For the early Puritan settlers, the golden age would be the new epoch in God's history they planned to create. A few decades later, the idea of standing on the verge of a new epoch was translated into secular terms, and became the "novus ordo seculorum" or new order of the ages, as proclaimed on the great seal of the United States. Former president George Bush may have been unaware of the myth-shaped, theological tradition he was continuing when he announced that the 1990 war against Iraq would produce a "new world order."

Restatement and reenactment of the myth of the looming millennium has followed a cyclical pattern which is well depicted in William McLoughlin's *Revivals, Awakenings, and Reform*.[7] A given cycle starts with an assumption that the society should be unified. When the fragmentation is perceived, blame for the break-up must be placed somewhere. Finally, an enemy is found that can represent all the evils which appear to threaten the fragmented society, the last obstacle between the present circumstances and the realization of the new order. Suddenly it seems that a rapid, violent elimination of the enemy will speed the process of creating unity and usher in the new age.

That cycle has repeated itself several times. As previous wars removed the Native Americans, who stood between European Puritans and their destiny, the war in 1776 eliminated the British, who held back later colonists from their destiny. Then came the Civil War, supposedly fought to eliminate the sin of slavery and to preserve the sacred unity of the nation. In the twentieth century, wars were supposedly fought to eliminate the Kaiser and "make the world safe for democracy," and to eliminate the scourge of Hitler and the Axis powers. Ronald Reagan's arms build-up and his rhetoric about the Soviet Union as the "Evil Empire" clearly fit the paradigm. Some readers may recall Reagan's joke when he spoke into an unexpectedly open microphone, saying "I've outlawed the Soviet Union — the bombing starts in five minutes." However,

the Soviet empire collapsed without a great conflagration, and it remained for George Bush to proclaim the war that was supposed to inaugurate a "new world order" by eliminating the last evil, namely Saddam Hussein. In all of these examples, war was good. It was always also a crusade, fought in the name of a good cause with the blessing of divine power, and wrapped in the terminology of the mythical model of the last war before the dawn of the golden age — the millennium.

The Shaping Power of the Myth

The myth of the American nation founded in revolutionary violence shapes the understanding of United States history. It makes war one of the nation's most important endeavors, virtually an ultimate good. The result is a public ethos and a system of values that predisposes particular individuals as well as American society in general to choose violence and war as a means of solving problems, even as individuals — whether as private citizens or politicians in the public sphere — fervently profess and believe themselves to support peace and to oppose war.

A few additional facts reveal the myth's power to reshape both past and present reality. Its shaping power makes it convenient to forget that in 1776, only a third of the population actually supported the rebellion, and that the taxes colonists resented paying were being collected to pay debts incurred in the war only thirteen years earlier when they had considered Britain their savior from the heinous French. The myth of war as the way to purge the nation's sin led the nation to pretend it had solved the race problem with the Civil War. The same mythology leads modern people to forget that possession of great quantities of armaments was a principal cause of World War I, that the harsh settlement imposed on Germany after that war produced resentment that came to fruition in the Second World War, and that this latter war was not really fought to save the Jews.[8]

The Vietnam war was traumatic because it did not fit the mythical pattern. It showed that the nation was not invincible, an idea unthinkable if God had given America a special destiny. Atrocities brought home via the televised evening news disproved mythical assumptions about national goodness, purity, and selflessness. The war's end ushered in no new era in which the nation could take pride. On the contrary, it gave birth to a time of

suspicion and distrust of government, and to serious doubts about national direction. Because this war did not fit the mythical formula, it troubled the United States greatly for the last quarter of the twentieth century.

The traumatic experience of Vietnam played a role in the U.S. rush into the Gulf War of 1991, as well as its interpretation afterward. As the spokesman for war and as the civil religious high priest for the divinely called nation, it was important that president George Bush let it be known he had spent time in prayer with Billy Graham before declaring war. When the president addressed Congress to announce the end of hostilities, he told war stories that supposedly showed the true character of Americans — their compassion. A very significant Bush comment was his declaration that "we have excised Vietnam." The Gulf War allowed the U.S. once again to reclaim its status as the invincible and selfless force on the side of freedom anywhere in the world. On the other side, the myth has in effect caused the nation to ignore some very sad dimensions of the Gulf War — the 100,000 Iraqi battle-related casualties, hundreds of thousands of children dead from food shortages and epidemics caused by the massive destruction of water and sewage disposal systems, considerable ecological damage, and uncounted millions of barrels of oil wasted by this war to secure American control of the flow of oil to Japan.

The United States' national mythology requires an enemy to blame for its problems. After all, how could the elect, invincible, and righteous nation have fundamental problems of its own making? For fifty years, the Soviet Union and its satellites in Eastern Europe served well in the enemy role. Since the demise of the Soviet Union and the tearing down of the Berlin Wall, the national mythology required creation of a new enemy. Iraq has done service as the enemy of choice but has needed periodic augmentation in that role from both the Clinton and current Bush administrations. With external enemies difficult to sustain in recent years, until September 11 some of the search for an enemy had also turned inward. Those blamed for the nation's ills included illegal aliens, the poor, criminals, and homosexuals.

In the understanding of Robert Bellah, whose 1967 article has stimulated discussions for a third of a century, civil religion was a phenomenon arising spontaneously from the people and was a creation of culture. For Bellah, the product of this spontaneous creation could perform two salutary functions. One was to promote national unity. Since each particular religious or cultural

group could be a version of the national civil religion, Bellah saw it as a unifying agent for a culturally diverse population. The second function was prophetic critique. Since civil religion arose spontaneously from the culture and was independent of government, and since it allegedly represented a divine mission and the nation's highest values, it should function as critic and judge, reminding the nation of its need to act justly and challenging it when it did not. Bellah used civil religion as a critique of the nation's involvement in Vietnam.[9]

In a recent book, Marcela Cristi has distinguished two models of civil religion, one offered by Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who first used the term, and the other from Emile Durkheim. Although Rousseau is the writer whom Bellah and most other scholars reference for the beginning of modern discussion of civil religion, Cristi points out that Bellah's description actually follows Durkheim's account.[10] Her emphasis on Rousseau's concept interjects an important element into the discussion here. In contrast to Durkheim, Rousseau pictured civil religion as the creation of the ruler, used by him to establish and maintain social order, and to impose and legitimate his program on the population. The difference between Durkheim's and Rousseau's concepts is significant. For Bellah, one unifying myth can bring together a diverse society. But from the perspective of Rousseau's understanding, competing cultural versions of civil religion can and do exist, and more than one cultural myth can strive to be the unifying factor. And with myths being created and used by rulers, it is apparent that the myth functions both to shape the views of the population and to express those views.

Civil Religion and the American Response to September 11

Since September 11, George W. Bush has been calling the nation and the world to a supposed last great war to rid the planet of the last great evil. Bush's manner of interpreting the horror of September 11 and of justifying the subsequent "war against terrorism" is strikingly consistent with, and a continuation of, the American myth depicted thus far. In both presidential rhetoric and the apparent view of the overwhelming majority of the public, all the elements of American civil religion appear front and center. Quite obviously there is a newly-identified enemy — an ultimate evil — to eliminate. And the nation pictures itself as the aggrieved innocent victim of this intrinsically evil person who hates the United States because of its virtues, values, and goodness.

As President Bush encourages citizens to resume their daily lives and enjoy the freedoms of America, the scenario being pictured is removal of the last real obstacle to the nation's realization of its true destiny. Already forgotten in this rhetoric is that little more than a decade ago, there was another ultimate evil, namely Saddam Hussein, whose defeat would bring in the "new world order," and before him Ronald Reagan's designation of the Soviet Union as the evil empire.

War, the sacred act, was the only response to September 11 actively considered. When measured against the foregoing sketch, it appears that both the violent response and the language in which it is couched come directly from the civil religion script. The only real questions were how soon and how big the response would be. As the leader of civil religion, the president has benefited from his position as its spokesman — his popularity has risen to the highest level of any sitting president in U.S. history. This event has generated its own holy days — as I write, there are still commemorations on the 11th of each month.[11] The response — to root out terrorism once and for all wherever it is found anywhere in the world — fits the millennial outlook of the United States, namely to exercise its sacred calling to rid the world of the last great evil through one last war to speed the arrival of security and prosperity for peace-loving people everywhere.

The myth is also shaping the interpretation of the events and of the response. One example is the description of the installation of Hamid Karzai as head of the new interim government in Kabul. For days before Karzai's installation there was an extensive American bombing campaign, and Americans gave considerable assistance to armies of the Northern Alliance in a drive to oust the Taliban. Yet after all this military activity and bloodshed, when Karzai was installed, James Dobbins, the U.S. Special Envoy for Afghanistan, called it "the first peaceful transfer of power in decades if not in centuries" in Afghanistan. Without attributing the idea to any particular spokesperson, newspaper accounts of the installation began "In the first peaceful transfer of power in Afghanistan for decades, . . ." Under the shaping power of the myth, the extensive military action, massive bombing, and violent removal of the Taliban was almost magically transformed into a "peaceful transfer of power." I heard no mention of this irony anywhere in the public media.

Under the power of the myth, other things seem to become invisible. An example is the report in the foreign press of the publication of a book[12] that claims to document negotiations between the administration of George W. Bush and the Taliban early in the Bush administration. According to the published account, the Bush administration slowed down FBI investigations of al-Qaida and terrorism in Afghanistan in order to make a deal with the Taliban for an oil pipeline across Afghanistan. As late as a month before September 11, the Bush administration was apparently willing to deal with people it now claims to know are wholly evil. Although this book was mentioned in a CNN interview, the major American media have ignored the story, as it does not fit with perceptions of an innocent nation and a fearless leader in a transcendent battle with evil.

The transformative power of the national myth apparently renders both president and population incapable of recognizing possible American contributions to the events of September 11. The foremost issue concerns the indifference of American foreign policy to the plight of Palestinians living under increasingly brutal military occupation, coupled with the overwhelming financial and military support that the U.S. provides to Israel. This aid stands officially at approximately $3 billion per year. The figure is actually much higher, since an equivalent amount is given as guaranteed loans — and to date, all such loans have been forgiven. This combination of indifference and support has undoubtedly contributed to the depression and hopelessness in a lot of people. It is people without hope, without a sense of a future, who do desperate things like undertake suicide missions. Violence is never right, and this analysis is in no way a justification of the events of September 11 or any other terrorist acts. Rather, the purpose here is to point out an issue that needs to be part of the discussion when deciding how to respond, particularly in a way that will undercut the possibility of such future terrorist acts.

Beyond the Israeli-Palestine conflict, another issue here concerns American wealth and influence in the world. The United States takes pride in its standard of living and in being the world's wealthiest country. The U.S. has 4.5 percent of the world's population while consuming about 40 percent of the world's resources. And the nation considers it an inalienable — God-given — right to consume more than its proportional share. On top of that over-consumption, there is also the fact that the United States is parsimonious in

terms of contribution and assistance to poorer nations. According to figures from the World Health Organization, among the developed nations the U.S. "ranks dead last, well behind far poorer countries such as Portugal and Greece" in terms of gross national product given in foreign aid.[13] It requires little imagination to suspect that such attitudes and actions contribute toward resentment of the U.S. in which terrorism could fester.

These observations belie the idea of the United States as only innocent victim. And they render rather laughable the presumed innocence in the Bush administration's move to engage Charlotte Beers at the level of Undersecretary of State to develop an advertising campaign to present the American case in the Arab world. As an innocent victim, the administration claims, America does not need to change. The problem is rather that America has been misunderstood in the Arab world — a misunderstanding that can be remedied by advertising. Here American civil religion is fostering appalling ignorance on the part of both official Washington and the public. The focus on victims and victimization also underscores the presumption of innocence of the *nation*. A victim is both blameless and helpless, one who suffers through no fault of herself or himself. The nearly 3,000 people who died on September 11 are clearly innocent victims. They were living their daily lives and just happened to be at the wrong place on that fateful day. But Americans have extended and transferred that innocent victimage to the nation itself.

The difference between the approaches to civil religion in Durkheim and Rousseau seems visible in the public responses to September 11. One has only to observe the ubiquitous American flags to know that a lot of spontaneous, grass-roots expressions of patriotism — civil religion — have emerged since that day. These expressions have generated a renewed sense of national unity, and a manifest desire to rally behind the president. Gone from view is the controversy about Bush's election by less than a majority of the votes cast, and the claims that the election was handed to him by the Supreme Court. Much transformed under this sense of national unity was the rising controversy about the disappearance of the budget surplus, and the massive tax rebate and tax reduction that primarily benefited the most wealthy (top 1%) of taxpayers. Bellah's sense, in the Durkheim line, that civil religion arises spontaneously and has the potential to promote civic and national unity is certainly evident here.

However, there are elements of control through civil religion that recall Rousseau's philosophy. President Bush's defining the conflict as wholly good versus complete evil, and the declaration that other nations as well as individuals are either "with us or against us," are clear attempts to manipulate public opinion through assertion of the myth of American chosenness and goodness. This manipulative effort continues with Bush's declaration of an "axis of evil" — despite the fact that Iraq's military was destroyed in 1991, that Iran and North Korea have both made overtures about normalizing relationships with the U.S., that soon after September 11 there were even reports that Iran was being supportive of the U.S., and that early in the administration of George W. Bush his father had counseled him not to condemn North Korea because such condemnation undercut American ally South Korea's efforts at reconciliation with North Korea. Another example of control through use of civil religion is the abridgment of individual freedoms proclaimed in the new policies of Attorney General John Ashcroft — trials in military tribunals where legal protection need not be followed, approval of more invasive and secretive search procedures, monitoring of communication, and more.

A Nonviolent Response to September 11

The mythology of United States history poses a powerful challenge to would-be peace people. The temptation is to believe that violence, or structures and movements of violence, are the ultimate moral agents in God's world, and that by serving those agents one advances the purposes of the reign of God. The events of September 11 have made this always present temptation more acute, particularly because those events are unique in United States history. Even people who generally resist the American myth can find themselves asking whether this series of events is finally an instance where a violent response is the only realistic and responsible one and thus requires a suspension of our nonviolent commitment "just this one time."

Returning to the standard What-about-Hitler and now What-about-bin-Laden questions intended to ensnare pacifist arguments, does a pacifist or nonviolent response merely leave the door wide open for future terrorist acts to take more (American) lives? Can there be a nonviolent response to September 11 that is fully cognizant of the situation in the so-called "real world," and that

would act to avoid more victims and to prevent future terrorism? Has this terrorist event changed the answer for those committed to nonviolence?

A necessary part of a response is recognizing that the What-about question now in the bin Laden form is not usually an open question. Like the previous What-about questions, it is really an assertion in the form of a question, a rhetorical device that assumes only one possible answer. As usually posed, the question assumes that the pacifist has been confronted with the ultimate example of why nonviolence is unworkable and violence is necessary. John Howard Yoder's *What Would You Do?* provides an answer for the wife/mother/daughter question. The following discussion draws on analysis from that book, as well as other Yoder comments, and on material from Walter Wink's *Engaging the Powers*.[14]

The first part of an answer is to establish a starting point or frame of reference. I am writing as a Christian who believes that Jesus's rejection of the sword is intrinsic to his life and work; I write as a Christian pacifist. Establishing the meaning of Jesus, or developing theology about Jesus, without making visible his rejection of the sword, poses an inadequate, incomplete statement of who Jesus was and what he calls us to today. Positing Jesus as intrinsically nonviolent is a faith commitment, not an assertion of a political philosophy founded on supposedly neutral claims generally accessible to anyone. That is, I am a Christian pacifist because I identify with the nonviolent story of Jesus, not because nonviolence can be validated by appeal to a neutral or universal or universally accessible and authoritative norm. At the same time, if one begins with the assumption that nonviolence is true (because it is a reflection of the reign of God made visible in Jesus), it is possible to make a coherent argument for nonviolence in the *real* world that God created. What follows attempts to illustrate that argument.

The What-about-bin-Laden question is unfair to pacifists in at least two ways. 1) It is unfair to assume that pacifists, who did not create the long build-up of frustrations that produces people with a feeling of hopelessness who do terrible things, can now be dropped into the middle of it with an instantaneous solution. Similarly, it is equally unfair to plunge pacifists into the middle of World War II and ask them to "stop Hitler" when they did not engineer the humiliation of Germany in the Treaty of Versailles after World War I that created the climate in which Hitler and the Nazi party could fester and grow.

2) The question is also unfair because it assumes that there are very few pacifists, and that these few would be helpless in stopping terrorism/bin Laden/ et al. The usual assumption is that because I and perhaps a few Christian Peacemaker Team (CPT) reservists cannot parachute into a situation and resolve the problem on the spot, pacifism is proved irrelevant and misguided.

For the "What-about" question to be fair, pacifists need equal time to prepare and equal numbers of people involved — say, three peace academies (parallel to the Naval Academy, West Point, and the Air Force Academy) graduating several hundred men and women each year highly trained in nonviolent techniques, plus standing reserve companies of thousands of men and women trained in nonviolent tactics, all of whom have access to billions of dollars to spend on transportation and the latest communications equipment. Merely observing that compared to national military preparedness, the nation spends practically no money on nonviolence and has no structures in place even to think about it, makes it glaringly obvious that no serious attention was given to anything but violent responses to September 11. The nation's response was far from a calculated decision based on careful consideration of a range of options. Quite transparently, it was shaped by — and is the current expression of — the national myth that shapes American identity. Both for government policy and in the mind of the public in general, violence was the only option considered, anticipated, and prepared for. Peace people, people committed to nonviolence, ought not to be deceived that a clear consideration of options reveals this specific situation as different, as calling for an abandonment of the commitment to nonviolence. In fact, these observations should make it clear that October 7, when the American "war against terrorism" began, and January 29, when the president's State-of-the-Union address conjured up the existence of the "axis-of-evil," are part of the violence problem.

Alongside analysis of the source of the response to September 11, we should apply some *realism* to the violent approaches. Ask how often violence *really* works. First, note that in any violent conflict, *both* sides assume that violence works. This conflict is no different. Someone has said that the only way to get Americans to see reason and change their behavior was to use violence. The Americans are responding on the same basis — that the only way to deal with the perpetrators of September 11 is to use violence. Every war and violent conflict proceeds on the assumption that violence works. But

since each side believes this, violence is guaranteed to fail half the time. In fact, since the "winning side" also experiences losses, and outcomes are often less than clear cut, violence actually fails more than half the time. Contrary to the assumptions in the "What-about" questions, on a *real-world* scale, violence cannot always work. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict constitutes an obvious example. If violence and retaliation always worked, either Israel would be the most secure state in the world, or Palestinians would be free of Israeli occupation and enjoying an independent state.

For another striking indication of how frequently violence fails, take note of this list of countries that the United States has bombed and/or used military force against for political reasons since the 1940s: China (1945-46), Korea (1950-53), Guatemala (1954, 1960, 1967-69), Cuba (1959-60), Congo (1964), Laos (1964-73), Vietnam (1961-73), Cambodia (1969-70), Grenada (1983), El Salvador (1980s), Nicaragua (1980s), Panama (1989), Iraq (1991-present), Sudan (1998), Afghanistan (1998), and Yugoslavia (1999). Although each of these countries was subjected to military action by the United States, in no case did a democratic government respectful of human rights develop as a result of that action.

While it is too soon to make definitive statements, indications to date point to a similar result in Afghanistan. After several weeks of sustained bombing and ground maneuvers, the Taliban have been expelled and a supposedly friendly coalition government installed. This coalition, however, is composed of formerly warring factions who previously lost out in the civil war in Afghanistan, and whose earlier removal from government was greeted with joy by Afghans when the Taliban first took control. Buried on the inside pages of our newspapers are stories of already renewed fighting among these factions.

While the American government keeps assuring its people that the war is going well and that progress has been made, people are actually feeling less rather than more secure because of the bombing, and other problems have arisen *because* of the bombing. As of this writing, it seems highly likely that Afghanistan is once again joining the list of countries where U.S. bombing and military action has not achieved the promised results. Application of realism is very definitely called for. Even though obedience and faithfulness to Jesus Christ ought to be the first premise for a Christian pacifist response to violence, we can also call for *realism* about bombing's historic ineffectiveness. Violence/

bombing has a verifiable past *on the record*, showing that bombing and retaliation do not work. At the same time, Christian pacifists need to remember that realism should be a middle axiom, not a first or final premise.

If not bombing and other military activity, what can the peace church recommend as a response to September 11, and October 7, and January 29?

Sources of Anger

A first element is to recognize and develop better understanding of the basis of the anger expressed in the terrorist activity. Its sources are multiple. A beginning list might include: 1) Frustration with Westerners encroaching on Islam and the Arab states. There is a pattern of Western action that dates from the medieval crusades. For centuries, the predominant face that many Muslims and Arabs have seen of Christianity and the West is a military face. Christians and Westerners were the people who come from elsewhere to take their land, redraw their boundaries, establish a colonial presence, and tell them who their allies were supposed to be and what kind of government they could have. After close to a millennium of this encroachment, the Arab and Muslim world has some intrinsic suspicion of Europeans and North Americans. 2) The overwhelming US support for Israel, to the tune of $3 billion each year, plus an equivalent amount in guaranteed loans that have all been converted into grants.[15] Israel receives more U.S. foreign aid than any other country, perhaps a third of the entire budget for such aid. This support is a specific instance of the more general point about the imposition of a Western, colonial presence in the heart of the Arab world. 3) The continued humiliation of Iraq after its defeat in the Gulf War. While American academic historians acknowledge that the humiliation of Germany after World War I prepared the soil for the seeds of Hitler's agenda to sprout and flourish, there has been virtually no recognition that Iraq's continued humiliation establishes similar resentment in much of the Arab and Islamic world. 4) The fact that the US has 4.5 per cent of the world's population but consumes about 40 per cent of the world's resources; the fact that a lot of people have too little, because the United States has too much, has produced hostility in locations around the world.

Pacifists cannot drop into the middle of the situation and "do something about bin Laden and terrorism" overnight. However, if pacifists had been making the primary decisions for the past several decades, the problems

identified in 1) through 4) would have a very different shape, and the bitterness and hostility that produced the terrorism of September 11 would not exist. Thus the primary focus of a nonviolent response to September 11 should focus on changing the context in order to remove the conditions that cultivate terrorism. Many possible avenues might lead toward changing the equation that produces terrorism. To "do something" about bin Laden and terrorism would mean to do something about the items enumerated above. "Doing something" would mean challenging and changing the context of injustice that has produced a great deal of hostility in the world. The number of possibilities is virtually infinite. A few suggestions follow.

Doing Something . . . a Few Suggestions

(1) Withhold a portion of the total of $6 billion per year given to Israel until Israel develops a humane policy toward Palestinians, including cessation of settlement expansion and of house demolitions, and withdrawal from occupation. While the United States waits for that response, it could give the withheld money to Palestinians to develop a viable economy and to rebuild dwellings and infrastructure demolished by Israel. This suggestion is not one of turning against, undercutting, or overthrowing the state of Israel. On the contrary, Israel would be in a stronger position if Palestinians had a secure state, which would eliminate many conditions provoking the hopeless feelings that feed terrorism.

(2) Afghanistan had a large refugee problem (estimated at 3 million persons) even before the beginning of the American assault. With bombing and other military operations halted, aid workers accompanied by large numbers of unarmed, nonviolent activists could travel to Afghanistan to distribute food to the more than 3 million people dependent on that food. (This real aid would be a clear contrast to the insulting, self-congratulatory "humanitarian" dropping of yellow-colored food packages by US bombers.)

(3) With just a fraction of the more than $100 billion that the United States Congress has pledged for the war, it would be possible to build dwellings for most of the current refugees in Afghanistan.

(4) It would still be possible to convene an international conference of Islamic religious leaders and Arab political leaders, and *ask them* what the United States should do about bin Laden and terrorism, ask what help they

could provide. "Asking" is not the same as President Bush's efforts to send Donald Rumsfeld or Colin Powell to Arab countries to inform them what will happen if they fail to support U.S. desires. If the United States had already begun to engage in such steps as suggested here, both religious and political Islamic leaders might now be willing to help. When they see that the U.S. is genuinely interested in their help and in dealing with problems in their areas, these leaders might take steps to control bin Laden. It would be in their own interests to control him, since his actions would threaten the good things starting to flow from the United States.

These suggestions are not policy proposals so much as an exercise in imagination, an effort to "think outside of the box." They challenge the imaginative horizon of American civil religion that can visualize only a violent response, and they are no less realistic than the conventional belief that dropping daisy cutters and other ordnance on Afghan villages will promote freedom and democracy.

This analysis reveals several things about the ongoing public response to September 11 and the assumptions behind the What-about questions. For one thing, it displays that in the public mind and in the expressed national myth, responses to September 11 will almost always be violent. Such responses only contribute to a continuing cycle of violence that is fostered by the American myth. Rather than contributing to that cycle, working to eliminate terrorism should mean working to change the circumstances that foster terrorists. The situation that produces tension is not fundamentally changed if the American response focuses only on expelling the Taliban, exterminating Al Qaeda, and installing an American-controlled regime in Afghanistan. Rather than helping the situation, it only sows the seeds for future retaliation.

People committed to nonviolence should look at this situation through the lens of *restorative* justice, rather than through the retaliative lens of *retributive* justice that has shaped almost all national responses. Retributive justice thinks in terms of retaliation as punishment for an evil deed. When an evil deed has caused pain and suffering, retributive justice assumes that justice is done when an equivalent amount of pain and suffering is inflicted on the perpetrator. In this quid-pro-quo, violence on one side requires violence on the other. In terms of the "war on terrorism," it is a never-ending cycle with each side supposedly inflicting punishment on the other after each round. And

since each side sees itself as right, each feels vindicated by inflicting violence on the other. In contrast, restorative justice looks for ways to change the situation so as to bring a halt to the violent cycle. Suggestions made above can be considered steps to change the equation and begin a process of restorative justice.

Changing the equation under a philosophy of restorative justice in no way means ignoring evil deeds. Restorative justice would have a place for sanctions against bin Laden as have rightly been put in place. But such sanctions are not merely punitive. Although difficult to visualize it in specifics, the goal would be to bring the perpetrator to acknowledge harm caused and to develop a desire for reparations, rehabilitation, and restoration. If bin Laden is wealthy, his wealth could be used to work for restoration of damage. Working to rehabilitate him and to have him participate in restoration would not be as exciting as killing him, and would not satisfy the seeming blood lust in American calls for vengeance, but rehabilitating him with the help of the Islamic and Arab world would certainly make the world much safer than continuing the military occupation of Afghanistan. This goal may seem unrealistic, but it is not any less so than the idea that a change of regimes in Afghanistan, Iraq, and North Korea will finally once and for all eradicate terrorism in the world.

Patriotic supporters of the American myth and of the violent response to September 11 can easily scoff at much of what is written here. So be it. But the argument has exposed the fact that the United States has barely, if at all, looked for any but military solutions driven by retaliation and retribution. The argument has at least demonstrated that the violent response was far from a last resort. This point matters, since one criterion for a just war is that it be a last resort. This point also matters for peace people who may question whether September 11 is the one case where violence is the only response. By demonstrating that the nation's violent response was far from a last resort, I am also calling peace people to resist the temptation to believe that this particular opting to war merits support because it was a rational decision reached after all other options proved fruitless.

My proposal is not an argument for withdrawal. Even through we are called to identify first of all with the reign of God, we are also part of the present social order and we seek the peace of our earthly city. One dimension of my argument is a concern for American society. That society would be

safer (along with Afghanistan and other nations under attack by the United States) with a different kind of response to September 11. My proposal appears to be irresponsible withdrawal only if one assumes, in line with the American myth, that the only relevant and responsible response is a violent one. Otherwise, my proposal accepts responsibility — both for the future safety of American society and for the safety of Afghans, Palestinians, Israelis and more. Further, what I have proposed is a call for engagement at all levels. It might begin with speaking to the patriotic neighbor across the street and pass through witnessing to co-workers, supporting CPT and other nonviolent organizations, through political involvements all the way to the highest reaches of government. Whatever level we occupy, my call is for us to act out of a nonviolent impulse rather than a violent one. My engagement in a society with a proclivity to violence aims at moving it in a less violent direction. That intent can be engaged in at any level.

Some Christian pacifists may argue that my suggestions offer a response in terms of contemporary politics that lacks a nonviolent Christian witness. The American government and the vast majority of the American people would obviously not respond to an appeal to Christian pacifism. Much of my argument is based on what John H. Yoder once called "middle axioms,"[16] using elements that American society can recognize in an attempt to move the agenda in the direction of peace. For example, undercutting the myth of redemptive violence by arguing that violence is guaranteed to fail half the time when both sides use it is not explicitly an argument from biblical pacifism, but from data available to anyone. But it does not contradict pacifism, and it does have the capacity to challenge policies that are even farther from being biblical. At the same time, the final criterion of how Christians committed to nonviolence should respond to September 11 and October 7 and January 29 is faithfulness to the reign of God made present in Jesus Christ.

Our calling is to work in the world in ways that witness to and make present the reign of God. It is not a matter of whether to be involved in the world. It is rather a question of whose religious criteria we allow to shape our involvement — those that come from American civil religion and the American myth, or those that come from the peaceable reign of God.

Notes

[1] Even though I risked not accepting some of their suggestions, I am grateful for comments made on earlier drafts of this paper by Gerald Biesecker-Mast, Perry Bush, James Satterwhite, and Daniel Wessner.

[2] While the designation "American" properly applies to anyone living in North or South America, for ease of reference this essay follows conventional usage that identifies citizens of the United States as "Americans."

[3] This analysis of civil religion is a revised version of comments on civil religion in a presentation to the Hanover Steinbach Historical Society, 26 February 2002, and published in *Preservings* no. 20 (June 2002).

[4] Russell E. Richey and Donald G. Jones, eds., *American Civil Religion* (New York: Harper & Row, 1974), 6. An extensive literature is available on civil religion. The recent, widespread use of the term was stimulated by Robert N. Bellah's article, "Civil Religion in America," *Daedalus* 96.1 (Winter 1967), 1-21. This watershed article has been reprinted several times, including in Richey and Jones, *American Civil Religion*, 21-44. This book remains one of the best introductions to the topic. See also Robert N. Bellah, *The Broken Covenant: American Civil Religion in Time of Trial* (New York: Crossroad, 1975); Sidney E. Mead, *The Nation with the Soul of a Church* (New York: Harper & Row, 1975); Catherine L. Albanese, *Sons of the Fathers: The Civil Religion of the American Revolution* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1976); William G. McLoughlin, *Revivals, Awakenings and Reform: An Essay on Religion and Social Change in America, 1607-1977* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978); John F. Wilson, *Public Religion in American Culture* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1979).

Among writings that have shaped my critique of civil religion are: Donald B. Kraybill, *Our Star-Spangled Faith*, intro. Martin E. Marty (Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1976); John Howard Yoder, "Civil Religion in America," in *The Priestly Kingdom: Social Ethics as Gospel* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 1984), 172-95; John A. Lapp, "Civil Religion is but Old Establishment Writ Large," in *Kingdom, Cross and Community: Essays on Mennonite Themes in Honor of Guy F. Hershberger*, ed. John Richard Burkholder and Calvin Redekop (Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1976), 196-207; Stanley Hauerwas, *After Christendom? How the Church is to Behave If Freedom, Justice, and a Christian Nation Are Bad Ideas* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1991); Marcela Cristi, *From Civil to Political Religion: The Intersection of Culture, Religion and Politics* (Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2001).

[5] John Winthrop, "A Modell of Christian Charity," in *God's New Israel: Religious Interpretations of American Destiny*, ed. Conrad Cherry (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 40.

[6] McLoughlin, *Revivals, Awakenings and Reform*.

[7] For a summary of the repetitions of the cycle, see chapter 1.

[8] For such alternative perspectives on United States history, see James C. Junhke and Carol M. Hunter, *The Missing Peace: The Search for Nonviolent Alternatives in United States History* (Kitchener, ON: Pandora Press; co-published with Herald Press, 2001); James W. Loewen, *Lies My Teacher Told Me: Everything Your American History Textbook Got Wrong* (New

York: Simon & Schuster, 1995); Louise Hawkley and James C. Juhnke, eds., *Nonviolent America: History Through the Eyes of Peace*, Cornelius H. Wedel Historical Series, no. 5 (North Newton, KS: Bethel College, 1993); John M. Swomley, *American Empire: The Political Ethics of Twentieth-Century Conquest* (New York: Macmillan, 1970).

[9] Bellah, *Broken Covenant.*

[10] Cristi, *From Civil to Political Religion*, 1-13. The remainder of the book then develops this comparison in conversation with a great deal of the literature on civil religion.

[11] I have read one newspaper columnist who asked when it might be legitimate to take down the omnipresent flags and stop memorializing the 11th of the month without appearing to be unpatriotic.

[12] Published in Paris as Jean-Charles Brisard and Guillaume Dasquie, *Bin Laden, la verité interdite* ("Bin Laden, the forbidden truth").

[13] Data from WHO cited in Paul Krugman, "The Scrooge Syndrome," *The New York Times*, 25 December 2001, A27.

[14] John H. Yoder, *What Would You Do?: A Serious Answer to a Standard Question* (Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 1983); Walter Wink, *Engaging the Powers: Discernment and Resistance in a World of Domination*, The Powers, vol. 3 (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992).

[15] Shirl McArthur, "U.S. Tax Dollars at Work: Calculating Foreign Aid to Israel," *Information Brief*, no. 54 (27 November 2000), http://www.palestinecenter.org/framecpap.html (Accessed 2/14/02).

[16] See John H. Yoder, *The Christian Witness to the State*, Institute of Mennonite Studies, no. 3 (Newton, KS: Faith and Life, 1964).

tempera tantrum

Anna Martin

on competing news networks
leaders fight with paint guns

a tempera-ed response

the soluble bullets
a practical consideration
of course
so that the stain
can be washed out
the enemy reconstituted
useful
again

Anna Martin, an alumna of Conrad Grebel University College, graduated from Osgoode Hall Law School this spring. Beginning in September, she will article with a criminal defence firm in Toronto.

revolution

Anna Martin

i don’t know much
though i like to pretend

but the world revolves
spins
turns
on an axiom

what goes around
comes around

jesus was a pragmatist

do unto others
the golden rule
of a new realpolitik

Peace and Polyphony: The Case for Theological and Political Impurity

Scott Holland

Introduction

I was answering yet another e-mail about the war when the phone rang. I was greeted by the welcome voice of the old flyer calling from his home in Goshen. He had the current issue of *The Christian Century* and was eager to talk about what my colleague David Johns had said in an article on the Historic Peace Churches' response to the American military action against the Taliban and the al-Qaeda network in Afghanistan.[1] Johns, a Quaker theologian, had expressed a conflicted and qualified "support of military action" in response to the terrorist attacks of September 11th.

The real, historical tensions between what Johns identified as the peace of Christ and the political possibility of a unilateral disarmament or pacifism in a violent world have preoccupied the old flyer for his entire career. Whether flying humanitarian missions for the United Nations, teaching social ethics at Harvard, or speaking from the president's office at Goshen College, J. Lawrence Burkholder has called religious pacifists to be painfully honest about these tensions, wherever their theologies or political theories might lead them. "I see little acknowledgement of the real historical dilemma we face in any of the Mennonite, Brethren, and Quaker protests of this war," Burkholder complained. I agreed as we talked about the loss of a nuanced two-kingdom theology and the apparent modern pacifist desire for one kingdom.

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Do they really think they can simply make an Anabaptist pacifism into a universal ethics, Burkholder and I wondered aloud over the phone that afternoon. Sharing his concern about the contemporary naïveté around the unmediated and uncompromised imposition of a particular religious confession onto a pluralistic, public, body politic, I sighed with ironic exasperation, "We are all Muslims now." In this essay I will address why I as a preacher and theologian from the Anabaptist heritage must place the values of pluralism, tolerance, freedom, and democracy above the value or ideal of pacifism in my own political discourse and public theology.

My editorial work for the journal *Cross Currents* took me to New York City only five days after the terrorist attacks on the Twin Towers. There was so much sorrow in the city. We at *Cross Currents* and the Association for Religion and Intellectual Life lost our financial account manager when *jihad* warriors crashed the hijacked airliner into the South Tower. Ron Breitweiser, along with ninety-seven of his coworkers at Fiduciary International, perished on the 104th floor. The sense of shock, loss, and grief in NYC that week was unspeakable. Yet before the victims' photographs of loved ones and personal papers scattered by the blasts could be gathered from the city streets, religious peace activists far removed from the scene were writing prophetic and prescriptive missives demanding that the United States not respond with any expression of lethal force.[2] There was, however, a concern expressed that the perpetrators "be brought to justice."

When the bombing campaign against the terrorist network in Afghanistan began, the letters and calls from agencies and institutions in the Historic Peace Church circle intensified, demanding the cessation of bombing without offering any viable nonviolent alternative for the execution of justice and for a sustained protection of the innocent. My Mennonite and Quaker colleagues can analyze and critique their own post-September 11 statements, but I must make a critical comment about my own denomination's response. This criticism extends to my reading of several Mennonite and Friends statements.

The letter from the Church of the Brethren General Board, our denominational headquarters in Elgin, Illinois, is not crafted as a mere confessional statement offering counsel or comfort to our membership; indeed, it addresses the United States government.[3] However, it is filled with citations

from the New Testament and it is heavy with righteous, religious language speaking on behalf of the Brethren God to the president and to America as a pluralistic nation. In this explicitly religious tone it demands "the immediate cessation of military action." This is not the statement of democrats but of liberal theocrats. It seems to work out of a simplistic theocratic longing that collapses the plurality and ambiguity of our late modern geopolitical realities into a hazy vision of a new, one-kingdom theology.

The Christian theological imagination has a long and diverse tradition of thinking about God, world, self, and others within the contexts and categories of a two-kingdom theology. Although the theological constructions of Tertullian, Augustine, Luther, the Anabaptists, Bonhoeffer, or Niebuhr differ greatly on how the kingdoms of this age and the Kingdom of our Lord and God might be imagined in their interrelationships, a productive theological and political tension between the two kingdoms remains in these diverse proposals. This tension helps guard against all easy theocratic temptations by reminding the faithful that although the world is blessed, it remains broken. It likewise signifies that although God's kingdom has in one sense come into history, it also remains a future hope waiting for fulfillment, inviting the believer to live in the creative tension of "the already but not yet" eschatological reality of God's presence — and absence — in space and time. Classical Christianity in its many denominational expressions can thus proclaim a vision of the reign or kingdom of God with a surplus of meaning: "The kingdom has come; the kingdom is coming; the kingdom will come." This assertion functions as a creative limit-language, reminding us that no historical theology or political theory can contain the fullness of God's kingdom. All doctrines, ideologies, and institutions are thus subject to a process of constant critique and revision.

The historic Anabaptist-Pietist theological imagination giving rise to various Mennonite and Brethren groups was at home in a particular kind of two-kingdom theology that had implicit political implications. There was a recognition that the emperor or the state was granted by God the legitimate use of the sword to punish evil and to protect the good, according to civil authority's function as a "minister of God" as outlined in Romans 13 and other New Testament texts. This understanding found early expression in the Swiss Anabaptist Schleitheim Confession, whose sixth article states: "We are agreed as follows concerning the Sword: The Sword is ordained of God outside

of the perfection of Christ. It punishes and puts to death the wicked, and protects the good."[4] The Anabaptists were following a classical theological understanding in recognizing the necessary, if tragic, place of the sword or physical force in maintaining civil society.

However, for these early Anabaptists, the phrase "outside the perfection of Christ" was central to their political and theological understanding. Although they did not protest the emperor's police actions or just wars, unlike their Reformed or Catholic neighbors they could not themselves participate in such physical force or violence, because they followed one who was meek and lowly in heart. Yet their Christ was not a mere pacifist; rather, he was one who embodied a separatist nonresistance in all things. This Christ and his Anabaptist disciples were separated not only from the emperor's armies but also from his politics, economics, education, religion, and morality. He was a king of an upside-down kingdom. The nonviolence of early Swiss Anabaptism, which influenced other expressions of Anabaptism and Pietism, was a refusal to fight drawn not from an isolated doctrine of peacemaking, nor from an ethics of pacifism, nor even from a philosophy of the sanctity of life. Instead, it was a biblical nonresistance funded by a more comprehensive counter-cultural theology of separation from the majority society.

It was the Mennonite-scholar-turned-Episcopal-priest, Orley Swartzentruber, who first called this separation motif in early Anabaptism a type of "married monasticism."[5] These Anabaptists in some ways modeled a kind of Benedictine community and spirituality. They functioned as an alternative religious society with commitments and convictions that separated them from those with a mere earthly citizenship. Much like priests, monks, and nuns, who would not handle any sword of government magistracy and thereby defile themselves with such mundane but necessary matters of the flesh, so the "married monastics" practiced a purist, separatist spiritual and ethical life in the midst of great but fallen societies. Their citizenship was in heaven. They desired to live within the perfection of Christ. Their only sword, according to Schleitheim and other confessions, was the ban of excommunication to separate the one who sinned from the faithful, disciplined community without putting that member to death. Such a theology assumed both a sociological and a theological — if not an ontological — dualism between the gathered community of faith and the mass of fallen humanity.

Indeed, growing up in northeastern Ohio I knew many older Mennonites and Brethren who admirably articulated and practiced a rather consistent theology of nonresistance. Since they could not fight in the emperor's wars as soldiers, neither could they sit in the magistrate's court as jurists, they reasoned. Refusing to conform to the materialism, individualism and arrogance of mainstream religion and culture, they attempted to follow the way of Jesus — simply, peacefully, and together in an alternative community. They would not dream of imposing their Christian discipleship as a moral norm or political agenda onto a fallen world outside of the perfection of Christ. Their theology of nonconformity and nonresistance functioned relatively well when practiced within the context of a rural or small town, a separate, peasant culture life of faith and practice. But what happens when those with such a vision become artists, citizens, and philosophers living in the midst of the troubles and pleasures of the modern public square?[6]

The decision or the historical necessity to become more personally and professionally engaged in broader cultural expressions of life creates an intellectual and spiritual dilemma for most modern sons and daughters of Menno Simons, Alexander Mack, and George Fox, especially around the ideal of pacifism. Many find it intellectually dishonest to live happily in the company of the mass of humanity with the full benefits of citizenship, and then pretend to be "married monastics" only when it comes to the doctrine of pacifism. One cannot live fully in the midst of the art, industry, education, institutions, and civility of the common weal and then retreat to a cultural-linguistic cave to drag out a sectarian, nonresistant deity to speak on behalf of a pacifist public ethics. Many are finding such a strategy for voicing their peace concerns and witness increasingly irrelevant, even irresponsible.

Modern religious pacifists who dial 911 and call the police to protect them from the occasional robber or rapist roaming the placid, tree-lined streets of Goshen, Bluffton, Richmond, or Waterloo quickly understand the dilemma. Likewise, many members of the Historic Peace Churches faced a similar dilemma during the Second World War. A "dilemma," in ethical discourse, presents a choice between alternatives that are equally undesirable. It is the recognition of the limits of perfection and purity in most of our moral choices, especially when we move in our ethical reasoning from the personal to the public, or from the individual to the institutional. When the terrible consequences

of the rise and spread of fascism and totalitarianism became evident, a military response and resistance seemed politically and perhaps even morally justifiable, even to many religious pacifists. However, a number of Quakers, Mennonites, Brethren, and other war resisters of draft age, whose religious convictions made it impossible for them to fight, instead entered Civilian Public Service and did alternative work for the public good in hospitals, agriculture, and forestry. This was in fact alternative *service*, signifying that these peace-loving members of the CPS corps indeed had some *responsibility* to the common weal. Perhaps in terms of their ecclesiology they were not "of the world," but they were living "in" it and thus had some social responsibility as neighbors and citizens. Other pacifists during the WW II era chose different paths as alternatives to military service.

Burkholder, Yoder, and Social Responsibility

J. Lawrence Burkholder was the pastor of a Mennonite congregation in northern New York state as the winds of war were blowing. He was a deferred conscientious objector, but his conscience was not at all at peace. As an astute observer of international politics, he concluded that Hitler was utterly evil and had to be stopped. As a pastor and emerging theologian in the Peace Church tradition, Burkholder had to conclude that turning the other cheek would not shame Hitler and the Nazis into goodness. He saw no viable nonviolent option for stopping the terror of the Third Reich. Thus he had to hope that the war effort would allow the Allies to prevail against Hitler. While Burkholder could preach against war in general, he could not preach against this particular war, nor could he attempt to dissuade his Catholic and mainline Protestant neighbors from supporting it. Further, Burkholder had to ponder his own responsibility to love the neighbor. If Hitler were to prevail, would he as a pacifist not share some responsibility for the death of many people and for the end of humane institutions and a just social order?[7]

Burkholder could not reduce the tension of being a religious pacifist in face of what seemed a justifiable war by retreating into the separatism of a Schleitheim-like form of Christianity. He found Schleitheim's approach to social and cultural life naïve as well as dangerous. It was naive because it assumed that faithful Christians could oppose the general stream of cultural history yet still look to civil society to be provided with an unambiguous,

stable social order in which to live out their daily, domestic lives of devotion to another kingdom. It was dangerous because its pure biblicism, moral perfectionism, and preoccupation with the idea of the Kingdom of God tended to identify God's Kingdom in history with one cultural form of the church.

Neither could Burkholder in good conscience simply become a soldier, because of his spiritual formation as a Christian pacifist. He believed that those who could not fight because of their religious or moral convictions, as well as those who felt that they had to fight to protect just and humane social orders, were both caught in a dilemma, and both were in need of forgiveness. He writes, "I could not assign clean hands to either solders or pacifists. Both need the grace of God. In this respect, my experience was not typically Mennonite."[8]

Eventually, the tension between Burkholder's pacifism and the public case for military protection of innocent people and democratic values became unbearable. He could not live in the tranquility of his pastorate while the world was on fire. In 1944 he read a *New York Times* piece by Theodore White that described in graphic, heartbreaking language the starvation and cannibalism in Honan Province, China, due to the war. Burkholder signed up as a young pilot to fly humanitarian relief missions of food, warm clothing, and medicine into China. He first worked with Mennonite Central Committee and later for the United Nations.

Although Burkholder risked his personal safety as an ethical and honorable expression of alternative humanitarian service, he admits indulging in romantic images of Charles Lindbergh, who had flown supplies into China during the Yellow River Floods of the 1930s. Burkholder confesses that his sense of Christian and ethical obligation to the freezing, starving, and suffering Chinese intersected with a desire for drama, danger, risk, adventure, and heroic sacrifice. How could it be otherwise for one whose heart and mind were awake? The theological reality is always grounded in the human reality.

Burkholder carried this same spirit into his theological reflections as he brought his Mennonite heritage into engaging conversations with others in face of the terrors and tragedies of the war and its aftermath. He contends that Christian *agape* or love cannot be structured unambiguously in society without some compromise, and he argues that "*agape* punctuates, but does not constitute, organized life."[9] At a time when zealous Muslims and Christian

pacifists seem to want to impose their particular vision of God's pure and perfect will onto society, Burkholder's insights on the difference between the ethics of personal relations and corporate or public responsibilities are timely. Indeed, when love confronts the real terrors of history, it does not turn its gaze away from tragic necessity and faithful compromise to some pure, disembodied ideal. His reflections on the classic theology of *simul justus et peccator* — we are at the same time justified and sinners — are also a welcome relief from much of the moral perfectionism and unblemished, prophetic zeal of the contemporary peace church culture. However, I will address only Burkholder's critique of what he has called "a universal christological nonviolence."

An increasing number of people in the Historic Peace Churches, especially since the 1960s, assume that because nonviolence is an absolute principle based on the teachings of Christ, "governments must be told that all policies presupposing violence must be abandoned."[10] Apart from the ugly theocratic temptations inherent in such a theology, Burkholder notes that this position pretends to be politics but is really prophecy. This theology of universal christological pacifism is a shift away from historic teachings of biblical nonresistance, yet it remains entangled in that earlier Anabaptist culture of separation. John Howard Yoder's *The Politics of Jesus* has done much to promote this confusion between prophecy and politics, according to Burkholder. Yoder and his followers such as Stanley Hauerwas insist that we are not to feel responsible for the outcome of history. We are called to be faithful, not necessarily to be effective. But is this politics?

My old teacher John Howard Yoder made "irresponsibility" a virtue. For him, we are not called to be socially responsible or effective but to be faithful to the politics of Jesus. Burkholder charges that Yoder's "politics" is really a euphemism, because Yoder, in Swiss Anabaptist fashion, rejects participation in the formulation of law, legislation, and its enforcement. In this model of politics, we can and must speak in a morally clean voice but cannot dirty our hands by actually governing. Burkholder asks sharply, "What right has one to prophesy without accepting responsibility for decision-making, management, and accountability?"[11] He is not questioning the so-called pacifism of Jesus but whether Jesus presents us with a real political agenda.

Much like a normative Anabaptist, Burkholder offers a Christology which holds that all human relationships must be judged by their approximation

to *agape*. Yet unlike normative Anabaptists, he insists that in the reality and ambiguity of every historical situation, the ideal of pure love can never be realized absolutely; it must be realized proximately. The Anabaptist academic guild of the 1950s firmly and fiercely rejected both Burkholder and his Princeton Ph.D. dissertation on social responsibility, because he argued for the necessity and importance of *compromise*.[12] Even today, religious radicals, whether of the Christian or Muslim type, will not tolerate this ethical category.

Perhaps one of Burkholder's most helpful yet controversial contributions to our theological thinking about social and political responsibility is found in his realistic christology. He reminds us that simply looking to Jesus as a normative model for politics will not resolve our current historical dilemmas and difficulties, for at least two reasons. First, Jesus was not limited as we are. According to the Gospel narratives, he transcended natural limits. When faced with a food shortage, for example, he performed a miracle. When necessary he could walk on water, and at his command a sick and suffering child was made whole. Second, and more important, Jesus was not representative of normal life; indeed, he was not even representative of ordinary Christian life. He never married or had children, and thus was free from the many responsibilities of family life. He never ran an institution, and therefore he did not have to report to a board or answer to a constituency and negotiate and compromise, which of course is the art of politics. His formal public ministry was short and he died young.

Even as many liberal Christians must smirk at how so many conservative pastors and evangelists make Jesus the champion of American, middle-class family values, some of us Anabaptist realists must shake our heads at how our more radical friends and colleagues so easily extract an international, pacifist politics from this same life. The Jesus of history, it seems, often wrecked domestic life, setting father against son and wife against husband for the sake of God's kingdom. Likewise, this same peasant-poet messiah failed to give the Emperor concrete political advice on how the Roman Empire could be transformed into something that looked more like the kingdom of God, short of becoming an official civil religion (Constantine was to move Christendom in that direction). In contrast, Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world."

It is now hard to escape the popular Christian mantra, WWJD — What would Jesus do? From its earliest expression in Charles Sheldon's *In His Steps*

to its contemporary restatement on evangelical buttons, through its thunder in some peace activists' prophetic cries, this mantra misses the point of a realistic Christology. The ethics of Jesus, whether in his "hard sayings" with a prophetic edge or in his more theopoetic words from the Sermon on the Mount, presupposed one-to-one, face-to-face relationships in specific local situations of first-century Palestine. The relational ethics and spiritual ideals of Jesus cannot be placed like a public law onto the current, complex geopolitical struggle against international terrorism. What would Jesus do? Some of us must confess that we really don't know.

When faced with this question during the Second World War many Mennonite, Brethren, and Quaker church members discovered that a more profound and prudent question of Christian agency and conscience was, "What must *I* do?" Some had an intellectual understanding, others only an intuitive sense, that the Jesus story had to be mediated and translated to allow it to intersect with their own personal stories of existential and ethical struggle. Some chose the honorable path of pacifist alternative service. Many, many more chose to join the armed forces: as few as twenty percent of Brethren, fifteen percent of Quakers, and fifty percent of Mennonites registered as conscientious objectors.[13]

Some Peace Church historians and theologians conclude that members who served in the military during WW II were merely "moving with the mainstream" with little conscience or conviction. Some were. However, my studies of veterans with roots in the Peace Churches reveal a great deal of conscientious struggle and decision with the hard realities of their historical dilemmas. Several stated that the nonconformity or separation motif that informed their parents' pacifism or nonresistance no longer seemed meaningful for their own more culturally immersed lives. Further, some who experienced the stinging paradox of personal pacifism and public responsibility within their own hearts confessed, "If we felt it was a good thing for Hitler to be stopped with the guns of war, could we also feel it was a good thing for our Lutheran neighbors to risk their lives stopping him while we remained safe here stateside?"

This question was asked by many in my own family. My father and my uncles, as well as several family friends, many of whom had their earliest spiritual training in Canton, Ohio's Maple Avenue Church of the Brethren, became flyers in the B-24 Liberators of the United States Army Air Force. I

was named for an uncle — the artist, intellectual, and peacemaker of the Holland family — who fell in Germany from a sniper's bullet as he was moving in to liberate one of Hitler's camps. I come by my political and theological impurity honestly.

Personal Passion and Public Discourse

During the present war against terrorism, some commentators have been remembering what Studs Terkel called "The Good War," the war against Hitler. My colleague David Johns was not the only Quaker to go public in offering qualified support of American military action against the terrorist network. Fellow Quaker Scott Simon offered stronger, unqualified support. Simon, the host of National Public Radio's "Weekend Edition," argued in a commentary that aired on October 11, 2001 that even pacifists must support this war.[14] He criticized those protesting it, charging that their marches reminded him of a Halloween parade protesting the last war rather than confronting the realities of this one. The protestors, according to Simon, put on old, familiar looking masks in opposition to American imperialism, oppression, and violence. Yet what they were protesting bore no resemblance "to the real demons haunting us now."

Scott Simon worked for many years as a war reporter in Central America, Africa, and the Middle East. Most of the conflicts he covered confirmed his Quaker convictions that war was "rotten, wasteful and useless." But in the 1990s he covered the Balkans. In Sarajevo, Srebrenica, and Kosovo, he confronted the logical, fatal flaw in nonviolent resistance: "All the best people can be killed by all the worst ones."[15] Simon believes this hard truth is what led so many Quakers to enlist in WW II, believing that although pacifism offered wise and strategic solutions for the resolution or transformation of many conflicts, it could not defeat Hitler and his cohorts. Indeed, all the best people would be killed by all the worst ones.

Since most American pacifists understand that Osama bin Laden and the Taliban have a theology that demands a unitary religious state, excludes women from education and work, denies civil and human rights to those who dissent from extremist Islam, and longs to export this theocractic community through *jihad*, Simon asks pacifists what they would propose. Would they want to live in the kind of world the terrorists envision? Would they really hold

the ideal of pacifism above the values of free democratic institutions? With the smoke from the destroyed World Trade Center still rising, he declared, "It is better to sacrifice our ideals than to expect others to die for them."[16]

Although my Christian faith and Anabaptist-Pietist heritage have given me a personal predisposition toward pacifism, I agree with Scott Simon's political analysis. In this connection I recall a conversation I had at the end of the Vietnam War with Jane Fonda, who despite protesting Vietnam had defended her father Henry's service in WW II. I was an eighteen-year-old innocent Anabaptist kid, ready to witness to her on the necessity of a pure and consistent pacifism. I announced, "According to Jesus, all war is sin!" The actress was very gracious and said something like, "That may be, sweetheart, but not all wars are the same." I have come to agree with her. All war might be sin, but not all wars are the same. In fact, all sin might be sin, but not all sins are the same. I sometimes wonder if mature religious leaders who can proclaim pure moral principles without a trace of ambiguity or compromise have tricked themselves into a perpetual state of adolescence in the name of God.

Religious absolutists or puritans, whether Christians, Muslims, or Jews, refuse the art and exercise of discretion. For them, purity of heart seems to mean that the devout must believe only one thing. However, the classical Christian tradition, in reminding us to love God with our minds as well as with our hearts, has given us a mandate as moral agents to make creative and complicated ethical judgements and philosophical distinctions as we reflect upon the dynamic interrelationship of texts, traditions, and embodied human experiences.

I am not suggesting that Christians must be silent or uncritically compliant with the war in its evolution and expansion.The question is about how we enter into public discourse. Do those of us who are Americans enter political dialogue and debate as citizens of a pluralistic democracy, or as religionists representing a God's-eye-view and command? Unless we are prepared to be a kinder, gentler, Anabaptist Taliban, I contend that we must enter the public conversation as *citizens*. Hence, it is important to make an artful distinction between our personal loves and convictions and our public responsibilities. Any easy declaration from religious or political special interest groups that "the personal is the political" is an invitation to violence. Indeed, for many mullahs, the personal must be the political. The imaginative ability to divide the personal from the public in a worldview that makes up in aesthetic coherence

what it sacrifices in moral consistency might be the best hope for a just peace in our world of radical plurality and ambiguity.

Philosopher Richard Rorty addresses the tension between our personal loves and our public responsibilities in his autobiographical essay, "Trotsky and Wild Orchids."[17] There he tells the story of his boyhood love of wild orchids and his left-leaning commitment to social justice. How could self-indulgent love for flowers and commitment to the poor be reconciled? At first Rorty believed he needed either to discover or construct a philosophical, theological, or metaphysical system that would neatly harmonize his personal passion for orchids with a public program to ease human suffering and ensure liberty and equality for all. He finally concluded that he need not harmonize the personal and the public.

This is not to say that at times the personal and the public cannot and do not come together in satisfying ways. They do. Personal, passionate acts of self-creation certainly do influence the shape and substance of our public, communal participation. Nevertheless, Rorty suggests it is good to resist the temptation to reconcile our private obsessions with our public responsibility to others in a pluralistic democracy. For him, a rejection of grand, comprehensive systems is the best way to promote social tolerance and protect against cruelty. He turns to the hopes of a secular, liberal, pluralistic democracy to ensure that all people are treated with civility and that cruelty is minimized through an increased tolerance for diversity. In this model, it really doesn't matter if your fellow citizen shares your particular botanical or moral or theological loves or aversions. In private, one is free to follow one's bliss, enter one's obsessions, or tend to one's personal ethic of self-creation. However, in public, one needs to honor a separate, broader set of ethical distinctions and political obligations to others and to social institutions. In the end, Rorty is convinced that "the ultimate synthesis of love and justice may turn out to be an intricately textured collage of private narcissism and public pragmatism."[18]

My own work in "public theology" has argued that we must be discrete in moving from our ecclesial confessions to social ethics. Christian theology had its origins when Greek questions were first asked about a Hebrew narrative. Thus, it is never static and it is always culturally contextual. It is never pure. Although its confessions are deeply personal and very particular cultural-linguistic expressions of distinctive, gathered communities of faith, it does not lack public significance. But there is a difference between a theology for the

church and a theological interpretation of culture. As a theologian in the Anabaptist-Pietist heritage I have been formed and informed by the narratives, root metaphors, and practices of my tradition and worshipping community. The gospel of peace has shaped how I view the world. However, as a Christian *and* a citizen, I cannot bring my spiritual vision into productive, public conversation with others in a pluralistic society without some translation, mediation, and compromise. One way to imagine the movement from ecclesial confession to public ethics is through "middle axioms."

A middle axiom is a value that seeks to find some common ground with others, in public life, between one's understanding of "the perfection of Christ" and the complexity of a blessed but fallen world of plurality and ambiguity. It does not impose a confessional gospel upon a polis of multiple confessions and diverse narratives. It is marked by compromise. It is intellectually and spiritually audacious enough to compromise or sacrifice its own purity or high ideals for the possibility of an impure, public peace. Because of our desire for purity and faithfulness, I fear that we as members of the Historic Peace Churches miss many opportunities to join other people of good will around middle axioms in the work for peace and justice. Not all who recognize the limits of pacifism embrace the excesses of American arrogance and self-interest. Many have hopes for international cooperation and community. Since we are no longer married monastics, our public theology must, with risk and adventure, enter into the dilemmas of living and loving in this blessed fallen world.

Theology as Coherence

Much of the intellectual energy in this essay predates September 11. It has its origins in the crisis of Kaduna, Nigeria in February 2000 — a bloody clash between Muslims and Christians that left churches, mosques, schools, libraries, homes, and businesses burned to the ground. At the end of several days of bitter fighting as many as three thousand people, both Christians and Muslims, were dead in the streets. In the aftermath of Kaduna, I was invited to Nigeria in January of 2001 to address a pastors' synod through lectures and sermons on peace, pluralism, and tolerance.[19]

Drawing from the best of my Anabaptist heritage theology of separation of church and state, as well as from secular, democratic political theories of pluralism, I offered proposals for a public theology that would make strategic

distinctions between personal confessions and public responsibilities. This, I suggested, was the best hope for a lasting peace. In public discourse, one must resist all totalities, whether political or religious. They invite only endless ideological conflict and violence. A respectful, thoughtful distinction between the functions of a spiritual mosque or church and a secular state was the most promising way to seek the shalom of the city. This is why, because of my commitment to peacemaking, not in spite of it, I must place the impure values of pluralism, tolerance, freedom, and democracy above fidelity to any pure ideal or absolute, even the ideal of pacifism. Religious prophecy must embrace and kiss the best expressions of social pragmatism when it enters the public square.

Freedom from purity — from the purity of pacifism — frees us from predictability. It can free us from the predictable responses of both religious pacifists and patriotic militarists. Neither offers artful, discriminating agendas for what will undoubtedly be a long, international struggle against terrorism in this century. Good religion, like good art, must be both world confirming and world disconfirming. Religion, like its nearest analogue, art, invites us into spaces of transcendence that allow us to imagine ourselves and our world differently and otherwise. These occasions of self-transcendence are equally important for personal pleasures and for public peace because, in the end, we live only what we dare to imagine.

My theological work in recent years has attempted to bring ethics and aesthetics together in the challenge of naming ourselves and rendering God's name in history. I have become convinced that theology is more about coherence than consistency. The theologian must recognize, with poet Wiilliam Blake, that he who made the peaceful lamb also made the roaring tiger.[20] Blake's striking lamb-tiger imagery is not a child's parable of good and evil but a more complicated theopoetic vision of life's "fearful symmetry." In coming to terms with that symmetry I have also been drawn to the final writings of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who ultimately moved from a theology of discipleship grounded in moral commands to a theology of improvisation founded by the musical metaphor of "polyphony."[21] Theology, he suggested, drawing analogies from both his training as a classical pianist and his experience in Harlem's jazz culture, is not a neat harmony nor a mere symphony but a polyphony — a musical piece in which two or more different melodies come together in a satisfying way. They do not harmonize — but they do cohere.

Notes

[1] William Vance Trollinger, Jr., "Nonviolent Voices," *The Christian Century* 118.34 (December 12, 2001), 18-22.
[2] For an intelligent, elegant essay on the lack of appropriate lamentation and a rush within the religious peace community to speak prescriptively, see David Johns, "The Silence of Holy Saturday," in *Friends Journal* (March 2002).
[3] "A Resolution on the Events and Aftermath of September 11," by the Church of the Brethren General Board. Available from the General Board Offices, 1451 Dundee Avenue, Elgin, Illinois 60120-8039.
[4] James M. Stayer, *Anabaptists and the Sword* (Lawrence, KS: Coronado Press, 1972), 120-21.
[5] A. Orley Swartzentruber, "Reflections from the Concern Movement," *The Conrad Grebel Review* 8.2 (Spring 1990): 193-200.
[6] General Conference Mennonite theologian Duane K. Friesen offers one possible theology of Anabaptist cultural engagement in his *Artists, Citizens, Philosophers: Seeking the Peace of the City* (Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 2000).
[7] Rodney J. Sawatsky and Scott Holland, eds., *The Limits of Perfection: A Conversation with J. Lawrence Burkholder* (Waterloo, ON: The Institute of Mennonite Studies and Kitchener, ON: Pandora Press, 1993).
[8] *Ibid*., 5.
[9] *Ibid*., 8-10.
[10] J. Lawrence Burkholder, "Mennonites on the Way to Peace," *The Gospel Herald* (February 19, 1991): 3.
[11] *The Limits of Perfection,* 47.
[12] Burkholder's dissertation was finally published decades after its defense: J. Lawrence Burkholder, *The Problem of Social Responsibility from the Perspective of the Mennonite Church* (Elkhart, IN: Institute of Mennonite Studies, 1989).
[13] For a more complete discussion of this, see my "New Starting Points in the Ecumenical Peace Dialogue," *The Journal of Ecumenical Studies* (Summer 2000).
[14] Scott Simon,"When We Must Fight," October 11, 2001 on National Public Radio's "Weekend Edition with Scott Simon" (Copyright 2001, Dow Jones and Company).
[15] *Ibid*.
[16] *Ibid*.
[17] Richard Rorty, *Philosophy and Social Hope* (New York: Penguin Books, 1999), 3-20.
[18] Richard Rorty, *Objectivity, Relativism and Truth: Philosophical* Papers, *Volume 1* (New York: Cambridge University Press), 209
[19] For an essay describing my work in Nigeria, see my "The Gospel of Peace and the Violence of God," *Cross Currents* (forthcoming, Spring 2002).
[20] David V. Erdman, ed., commentary by Harold Bloom, *The Complete Poetry and Prose of William* Blake (Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1982), 25. Blake asks, "Did he who made the Lamb make thee [the Tyger]?" and also, "What immortal hand or eye, / Dare frame thy fearful symmetry?"
[21] For an extended treatment of this move from *Nachfolge* or discipleship to the metaphor of polyphony, see my "First We Take Manhattan, Then We Take Berlin: Bonhoeffer's New York," *Cross Currents* 50.3 (Fall 2000): 369-82.

Pastors, Prophets, and Patriotism: Leading Pastorally In These Times

Arthur Paul Boers

At age 19, I was baptized in Lake Ontario where the Niagara River empties into that Great Lake. From where I was baptized, I could see US and Canadian soil and historic military forts in both countries. In that cold, turbulent water I stood apart from both countries and their military agenda. My baptism was on the border of two countries, the periphery of both nations. Baptism reminds us that our citizenship is not on earth but in God's Reign.

The most difficult part of becoming Mennonite was the peace position. Yet I became convinced that peace and reconciliation are at the heart of the Christian gospel, not just a quirky idea of Mennonites and other fringe believers. It was the peace position that my family found most offensive and even scandalous. My parents and grandparents lived through the Nazi occupation of the Netherlands. My father and grandfathers were active in the Underground Resistance. My great-grandmother died as a result of a Nazi evacuation. After the Second World War, my father volunteered for the Dutch army and fought in Indonesia. Until the end of his life, that experience haunted him. Questions of war, militarism, and resistance are deeply important to my family. They were not impressed when I embraced the peace position, but embrace it I did.

And that position deeply informs my pastoring. September 11 provoked pastoral care issues. Some of my rural Ontario parishioners feared that they might be victims of a terrorist attack. Gifted and hospitable people named a new fear and even hatred of Muslim neighbors. So on Sunday, September 16 we faced how to respond in our worship. An important decision was to proceed with a regular service, with the usual order of worship. Early in our service we had a special prayer to respond to the horror and grief of September 11 and to lift up our longings for peace; this freed people from preoccupations and

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released them into God's hands. It was our custom to share concerns and petitions later in the service. During this time, much appropriate attention was given by people to unfolding events.

In the sermon, I did not choose my Bible text especially for that service but preached the first verses of Jonah, something planned months before. I drew lively connections to current world events. Many colleagues (especially lectionary preachers) found that God spoke more powerfully when the preacher did not choose a new text but allowed the [prescribed or previously selected] text to speak. That service functioned as Christian worship is intended. It reoriented people to God's Reign. It grounded them in God's purposes. It reminded us not to be shaped, formed, or molded by what the world tells us is true and important. Amid the clamor of calls for war and revenge, we were invited to hear God's still, small voice urging us towards healing and reconciliation.

Some say preachers should deal only with comforting and consolation. But comforting is not the same as making comfortable. And as politicians and the media rushed to exploit the terrible events as a call to war and revenge, it would have been poor pulpit stewardship to avoid addressing such concerns.

Many spoke to me of that worship service. I heard a common refrain: people felt alone and vulnerable. As friends, family, co-workers, and neighbors called for revenge, our people were often afraid to ask questions or offer other perspectives. They did not know where to turn, even as in their hearts they knew that there was something very wrong with what they were told. They looked forward to Sunday worship, because they knew that there they would be called to pay attention to God's perspective. They could proclaim their faith. They would be heartened and encouraged to stand for God's values. Many people said, both that day and subsequently, "There was no place I would rather be than at church."

For many this was the *first* time and place they felt at home. They looked for a different perspective than that offered by media and acquaintances. They found it at church, which is exactly where we should find it. At church they were renewed and inspired. They found resources, resonance, reinforcement, and a resting place when much around them felt unsafe and dangerous. This is music to a pastor's ears. But there was also a profound theological truth.

Meanwhile, esteemed friends at Christian Peacemaker Teams suggested churches cancel or interrupt Sunday worship or create alternative services and possibly attend a protest in order to make clear how serious the issues were. I admire CPT, but I was troubled. In times of serious trouble, Christians belong in worship. To cancel worship is to let the bad news of the world and the world's ways set our primary agenda.

Our church recognized that worship is the place where we most needed to be. In the aftermath of September 11, many people were glued to TV and completely taken in by what others said was real or of ultimate value. It was never more important or radical *not* to be ruled by the media's priorities and portraying of realities. At such times, one of the most faithful things we can do is immerse ourselves in worship and prayer. As John called believers to worship in the Book of Revelation, even and especially in the light of Roman oppression, drawing them to focus on God's ultimate reality, we must do same.

The gospel is all about God's first-strike disarmament strategies and initiatives at reconciling us to God and calling us to be reconciled to one another. Temptations of nationalism and vengeance, or of blessing the death-dealing prerogatives of Caesar, or of forgetting the primacy of God's Reign have tempted Christians for centuries, even millennia. These were issues at the heart of Constantinianism, and issues when Anabaptists were asked how they would respond to state enemies, and issues repeatedly in twentieth century.

Churches, Christians, and Christian leaders were coopted for the American war effort in World War I. "Holy war" and "crusade" terminology were adopted. Christian leaders said: "It is neither a travesty nor exaggeration to call this war on the part of America, a truly Holy War"; "The man who is disloyal to the flag is disloyal to Christianity; the State must be obeyed under pain of incurring the guilt of mutiny against God"; "We must keep the flag and the Cross together, for they are both working for the same ends."[1] Churches contributed to wartime hysteria, many peace societies collapsed, and war brought a revival of religion. Sound familiar? German opponents of course at the same time wore belts with logos that read "God with us."

This "Great War," a "war to end all wars," was a major cause of the Second World War. There, in this "Good War," churches were tempted to set aside the gospel. Many Mennonites in both North America and in Europe

supported National Socialism. A former parishioner confessed to me shamefacedly how he and other Russian Mennonites long thought that Hitler was doing great things.

In each war, we are told that this one is just and holy. Each time, governments withhold truth or even lie. And each time the church goes along, we corrupt the gospel. Nonviolence, unilateral reconciliation, and the rejection of violence are at the center of the gospel. They are not negotiable, not a petty idea or a Mennonite frill. Christians throughout history have been tempted by coercion, whether it is the coercion of state (which so many Christians in the sixteenth century used against our ancestors) or the coercion of the church itself.

Strangely enough, I took heart recently in Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*. For all its battles, it decries illusions of effectiveness, ends justifying means, might making right. In a story of world-scale wars and unmitigated evil, the small, humble, peripheral, and weak are crucial because they know their role. This book believes in hope in the small and least powerful, in the power and fruitfulness of small acts of faithfulness. An elf ruler says: "The road must be trod, but it will be very hard. And neither strength nor wisdom will carry us far upon it. This quest may be attempted by the weak with as much hope as the strong. Yet such is oft the course of deeds that move the wheels of the world: small hands do them because they must, while the eyes of the great are elsewhere."[2]

Tolkien sounds like Jeremiah (or numerous other Original Testament prophets): "Do not let the wise boast in their wisdom, do not let the mighty boast in their might . . . ." (Jer. 9.23) Mennonites can understand this vision and embrace it *as Christians*. We are not called to win at all costs or to lend our support to killing and evil means. Indeed, the ethical center of *Lord of the Rings* is a cautionary tale that even well-meaning folks must not use the Ring of Power, even for well-meant ends.

When we tell unpopular stories we fear for the effectiveness of our evangelism. I understand that; I have been a pastor, even a church planter. But I refuse to compromise our faith for other ends. More than that, I testify that God can use our truth-telling fruitfully.

For the first Sunday after the Persian Gulf War bombing began, I decided that though I am cautious about politics in the pulpit, it was crucial to present

a Christian voice. I pulled out all the stops in that sermon. The congregation was a small fragile church planting, longing for growth. I wished he had come the week before or after. That war was so popular. Why did he have to hear the most scandalous and offensive part of the gospel on his first Sunday? I was tempted to temper my words, but did not. Then, wonder of wonders, he kept coming, studied the Scriptures with me, and became more involved. After a long while I asked about that first Sunday. This is what he told me. Just prior to that Sunday, he had been laid off and spent entire days watching television, seeing the same old battle and bombing scenes over and over. He did not question what he saw or heard. But in our church worship, for the first time, he heard a different point of view. Our worship pulled him from the mesmerization of the media. He saw things differently.

In the same church an older Dutchman, Steve, started attending and took catechism. He was bitter about his young brother being killed by the Nazis in the Second World War. In catechism, we finally came to questions of nonviolence. He was resistant. I wished I could avoid it; it was like arguing with my parents. Besides, we could always use another convert in our little church. But I persisted and he wrestled hard. Eventually, he asked for baptism into the faith. Last June, Steve was buried. We heard many testimonies from his life. One was the importance that he put on his difficult conversion into nonviolence, even learning to forgive those who had killed his brother.

In every church I served, people came precisely *because of* our commitment to the gospel, our lifting high God's priorities of peace and justice on earth as in heaven. Such stories hearten me into faithfulness, although I would urge truth-telling even without such successes.

What does it take for our churches to proclaim and live (as Paul said) "by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship"? How do we honor Paul's call: "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God — what is good and acceptable and perfect"?

We need to worship — for reasons I discussed above. We need community. It is impossible to counteract larger trends and persuasive forces on our own. My Bloomingdale, Ontario folks gained courage in counteracting

rumours of war's necessity because of their fellowship, study, and worship together. We need mentors, saints, and models; we need to know and tell stories of integrity, where actions and practices mesh with convictions. We need witnesses and testimony. I was heartened by the PBS special, "The Good War and Those Who Refused to Fight It," the story of World War II conscientious objectors. We would be wise and do well to tap those in our congregations who lived through wars and to learn from them. They know what it means to be different and to suffer as a minority. It is also time to engage Old Order siblings and learn from them about ways and strategies of being separate from world, embracing again opportunities of nonconformity.

We need strategies for the media, including critical questioning, developing other media, selective engagement, and at times fasting and abstinence. Too easily our hearts and minds are shaped by false urgencies and destructive hates. It is a pastoral duty to resist. Our souls are at stake. People's hearts are being eaten up by retaliation, revenge, idolatry, and anxiety. Given the strong and seductive powers of the media, a strong counter-witness is needed.

Thomas Merton was a monk when monks were not allowed to know daily news. He and his confrères did not learn about Hiroshima and Nagasaki until months later. He never followed daily news, yet was an incisive visionary on matters of nuclear weapons, race, and all manner of social issues. His prayerful distance from the media helped him see better. We are called to the same.

We need to be people of prayer and discernment, so that what Jesus' words would be true of us: "My sheep hear my voice. I know them, and they follow me." Not only are spiritual disciplines waning, we may be losing our capacity for them. Technology forms us to be intolerant with anything that takes time, is difficult, or is not easily accessible because of depth of meaning. Accustomed to being bombarded by a host of images and information, we resist disciplines that demand patience and focus. The spiritual life is obviously at risk.

Yet rather than acting from, or being driven by, desperation and fear, or being mesmerized into hate and violence whether in our daily lives or reflecting on larger world events, we can act — from and live in, and with — conviction, deliberation, discernment, compassion, and discipline "on earth as in heaven."

As the West makes war in the East, I remember a legend about Saint Francis. During the crusades, Francis, a former soldier, was horrified by the conflict between Christians and Muslims. So he crossed battle lines to meet the enemy. He met the Muslim leader, Al-Kamil. By the end of their time together, Al-Kamil said that he would be willing to be baptized and be a Christian if he ever met another Christian like St. Francis. "But that will never happen," he was sure.

Sometimes when I am discouraged by dealing with conflicts — whether congregational or denominational or in the wider world — I am tempted to utter a dismissive curse: "A pox on both your houses." But reflecting on the violence, evil, hurt, suffering, and tragedy on all sides, the Christian response should be to offer a blessing. That is the Christian — and the pastoral — thing to do. So I urge us rather to work for this Benedictine blessing: "A *pax* on all our houses."

Notes

[1] Ray H. Abrams, *Preachers Present Arms* (Scottdale, PA: Herald Press 1969), 50.
[2] J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Fellowship of the Ring* (Toronto: Methuen, 1971), 181, 283.

peace piece

Patrick Friesen

rain comes down that sparse night rain in october you feel
 the sad rhythm of fall
not sad not quite an irregular rustling in the leaves as if
 something might be alive

your mother playing "traumerei" on the piano and singing you
 into dream with "wiegenlied"
you remember that desire to sing to meet the need in her
 voice to find the words

it's a trap of course there's not a damned thing you can do
 but reach for the notes
what you want is to sing anonymously you want to sing as if you
 are the voice of the world

now you listen to "peace piece" thinking it's rain on the leaves
 inside your head
thinking there's not a false note there's no presence outside
 the playing and no player

Patrick Friesen, author of numerous volumes of poetry, including, most recently, Blasphemer's Wheel *(1994),* St.Mary at Main *(1998), and* Carrying the Shadow *(1999), lives in Vancouver. "peace piece" is from his forthcoming collection, entitled* the breath you take from the lord *(Harbour Publishing, 2002).*

you imagine his hands hovering over the keyboard anticipation
what is held back
what is released his fingers thinking to the bottom of the note
what can't be sustained

yes it's rain on poplar leaves on a wooden bench rain on a
shed's tin roof those variations
it's a falling of rain and you're inside it and no it's not his song
it's never his song

and this touches on what matters doesn't it not how you think
about the clearing but how you enter
this is about how you live here your mind moving without
thought in this home

Book Reviews

Donald B. Kraybill and Linda Gehman Peachey, editors, *Where was God on Sept. 11? Seeds of Faith and Hope*. Scottdale, PA & Waterloo, ON: Herald Press, 2002.

As a pastor I felt almost overwhelmed trying to find ways to help our congregation respond meaningfully to the events of Sept. 11, 2001. Even in Canada we felt that we could not "worship as normal." Feelings ran all over the map. People did not want shallow clichés. But neither were they ready immediately for a more in-depth analysis. Some wanted only to grieve; some wanted to express their anger and their fear. Some wanted to examine the root causes of the attacks. Some felt very angry when U.S. foreign policies were included in these root causes — "You are blaming the victims." I can only imagine that my colleagues in the United States faced all these issues and feelings and people in a far more intense way.

Then, along came *Where was God on Sept. 11? Seeds of Faith and Hope*. The book's scope is wide. It gives voice both to a spectrum of theological longings and personal feelings, and to some of the complex currents and counter-currents that were overwhelming me in September. Initially I was dissatisfied as I started reading. I had hoped for a more systematic treatment of theological, Biblical, and political perspectives. What I was reading were pieces, wonderful pieces but pieces none-the-less. Many pieces, almost too many. Most, but not all, were by Mennonites and North Americans. Most were too short for what I craved.

But as the pieces accumulated, I was drawn in emotionally as well as intellectually. And there did emerge a direction, a point of view, a "system," which in the end felt like it had a lot of depth after all. This direction is well described by the editors: "Many people, understandably, swelled with anger and rage. Some hungered for retaliation; others were paralyzed with fear. These essays offer a third track, another way of responding, a search for nonviolent alternatives in the midst of rage and despair" (11). The many voices rising in these essays are not uniform or consistent, but they do clearly speak for this third track. Read together, they become powerful.

The book is organized around seven chapters. 1) God Amid the Terror? 2) Jesus and the Way of Peace, 3) Revenge, Justice, or Forgiveness? 4) Will Violence Bring Peace? 5)Voices from Our Global Family, 6) Citizens of Two Kingdoms, and 7) Another Way of Responding. Some seventy writers search in different ways and for different angles of God's non-violent voice.

Along the way I was gripped by a number of the stories told and the images developed. One question that stays with me was posed by Nancy Good Sider: "Which wolf do we feed?" Sider tells the story of a Native American grandfather talking to his grandson. "I feel as if I have two wolves fighting in my heart. One wolf is the vengeful, angry, violent one. The other wolf is the loving, gentle, compassionate one." "Which wolf will win the fight in your heart?" asked the grandson. "The one I feed," replied his grandfather.

This book helps feed the "peace" wolf in us. It does so in a compelling, powerful way.

Gary Harder, Pastor, Toronto United Mennonite Church, Toronto, ON

Peter Ackerman and Jack DuVall, *A Force More Powerful: A Century Of Nonviolent Conflict*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000.

Peter Ackerman, an authority on nonviolent action, and Jack DuVall, a veteran writer, offer here a compassionate and triumphant review of popular movements of the past century that used nonviolent action to overthrow dictators, obstruct military invaders, and secure human rights in country after country. This long overdue book explores not the wars of one nation against another, nor even of a nation against itself, but rather the warfare of the ruling elite against those who comprise the vital backbone and even rightful center of a society. In *A Force More Powerful: A Century of Nonviolent Conflict*, this approach to social and political change is placed front and center, exemplifying the carefully crafted and excellently executed successful methods utilized to combat the despotic ruling elite. The world-wide spread of democracy in the twentieth century, documentary writers Ackerman and DuVall maintain, "would not have come to pass without the power of ordinary people who defied oppressive

rulers not by the force of arms, but by nonviolent action"(6).

A Force More Powerful is about popular movements battling entrenched regimes or military forces with weapons very different from guns and bullets. In many of the conflicts covered in this volume, strikes, boycotts, or other disruptive actions were used as sanctions, as aggressive measures to constrain or punish opponents and to win concessions. Protests such as petitions, parades, walkouts, and demonstrations roused public support for the resisters. Forms of non-cooperation such as prohibitions, resignations, and civil disobedience helped subvert the operations of government. And direct intervention such as sit-ins, nonviolent sabotage, and blockades frustrated many rulers' will to subjugate the people.

By way of example, Ackerman and DuVall articulate these successful methods — from the collapse of the Argentine military regime following peaceful protests by the mothers of men and women who had been murdered by the secret police; the eventual undermining of the Polish Communist regime by the nonviolent Solidarity labor movement; the refusal of the Danish people to comply with the laws of their Nazi occupiers during World War II; and the exemplary work done in India (and earlier, in South Africa) by Mohandas Ghandi, who took great pains to emphasize that nonviolence does not imply passivity. In all, twelve of the past century's most exhilarating cases are extensively documented, from the "The People's Strike" of 1905 in Russia to the democratic tide engulfing Eastern Europe, China, and Mongolia. Current events in Burma, Serbia, and Kosovo are further evinced to highlight today's inspiring climate of change.

Ackerman and DuVall effectively exhibit that the greatest misconception pertaining to conflict is that violence is always the ultimate form of power and that no other method of advancing a just cause or defeating injustice can surprise it. Yet, Russians, Indians, Poles, Danes, Salvadorans, African-Americans, Chileans, South Africans and many others have proven that one side's choices in a conflict are not foreclosed by the other side's use of violence, and that other, nonviolent measures can be a force more powerful(8). This is perhaps best exemplified by the work of Ghandi, who for decades dedicated his life to the absolute enfranchisement of all Indian people. For him, nonviolent resistance was more than the product of belief. He conceived of it as a kind of

science, with laws to be applied, yielding power that was predictable(5).

A Force More Powerful masterfully correlates past nonviolent movements across space and time. Nationalist leader Ghandi was inspired by the Russian Revolution of 1905; Martin Luther King, Jr., and other African-American leaders travelled to India to study Ghandi's tactics; and when Chileans organized against the dictatorship of General Pinochet in the 1980s, they were heavily influenced by Richard Attenborough's motion picture *Ghandi*.

Rather unfortunately, however, the authors fail to include, or even take note of, movements where peaceful action was also accompanied by civilian violence. In case examples such as Chile, South Africa, and the American civil rights movement, mention of violent activity is kept to an extreme minimum, suggesting that aggressive, physical revolt was non-existent or at the very least ineffectual on the eventual outcome. This is increasingly complicated in the case of the (first) Intifada, in 1987-88: descriptions of events in the West Bank and Gaza Strip alternate between pacifistic activities and armed struggle. Well-organized and valuable methods of defiance such as protests, strikes, non-cooperation, and a improvised shift in home economy are contrasted by "stone throwing," Molotov cocktails, and other means of "limited violence"(409). Nevertheless, most accounts as retold through the authors' interpretations are fair and accurate, without the spin doctoring often accompanying comparable studies.

A Force More Powerful is a requisite for any political and social activist, or even for a casual reader interested in such issues. This contextual book provides a sampling of how to achieve success against the greatest of odds; it also provides stimulus and optimism for people around the world who continue to persist in their own struggles for self-determination and a minimum standard of human rights. Readers intrigued by the concepts discussed by Ackerman and DuVall would also be wise to view their supplementary six-part PBS series of the same name.

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James C. Juhnke and Carol M. Hunter, *The Missing Peace: The Search for Nonviolent Alternatives in United States History.* Kitchener, ON: Pandora Press, 2001; co-published with Herald Press.

As its authors point out, "This book is an invitation to a fresh look at United States history from the viewpoint of peace values" (269). They recount in considerable detail the violence which has characterized US history, including not only well-known facts but also numerous lesser-known episodes and statistics. They challenge the prevailing self-image of Americans, who see themselves as using violence for redemptive purposes — gaining "freedom," establishing democracy and peace, and overcoming injustice, crime, and even violence itself. US reliance on violence has tended to lead to the further glorification and use of violence, bringing in the present highly-militarized political system, which subverts democracy, justice, community, care for the environment, and prospects for a viable world order.

Nevertheless, with every expression of violence in US history, voices have spoken out clearly against violence, arguing for peaceful alternatives and often taking vigorous nonviolent actions. The authors document this alternative, largely overlooked, history, urging it be given a prominent place in American consciousness. Well before the War for Independence, for example, Americans were employing creative, nonviolent means of protest and defiance against British oppression that could well have succeeded without any need for war, thereby establishing a radically different precedent for American self-understanding.

Unfortunately, the European settlers arrived in North America with strong proclivities for violence, which were soon expressed in conflict with each other and with native peoples, and in the beginnings of slavery. Americans generally understand now that native peoples were not the violent savages they were long depicted to be, but that the colonists' treachery and violence against them provoked counter-violence. But few know about the powerful peacemaking traditions of the native peoples, which Juhnke and Hunter describe and see as crucial to these peoples' ability to survive, thrive increasingly in our day, and equip them with resources that could richly contribute to the type of community life we need.

The decades-long struggle by abolitionists to overcome slavery is rather well known, although access to details provided by the authors are useful. Not so familiar are the views of those who opposed resorting to the Civil War. Quite unfamiliar is the authors' argument that conflicts between North and South, including those about slavery, might have been overcome gradually without this extremely violent, destructive war. The bitterness it engendered was expressed in the violence of Reconstruction, and in the exploitive, brutal institutions of segregation which were "as violent and vengeful as the old system of slavery" (135). The nonviolent transformation of relations between blacks and whites by the civil rights movement, however, brought into effective reality a highly creative alternative strain of nonviolence in American history. The authors note that the most potent expressions of nonviolence come from those who have experienced most repression — native peoples, blacks, labour, and women.

Juhnke and Hunter argue that, when Woodrow Wilson led the US into World War I, justifying it as the way to achieve such idealistic goals as making the world safe for democracy, he failed "because he chose to join in using means which contradicted his ends" (195). The war fostered a potent, vengeful spirit which prevented the establishment of an effective League of Nations, and sowed the seeds for the most destructive war yet — World War II. The authors challenge the prevailing notion that this was the "Good War." In opposing the evils of the Fascist and Nazi regimes, along with Japanese imperialism, the US and its allies participated in saturation bombing of civilian populations. The unnecessary, tragic use of atomic bombs on Japan promoted the nuclear arms race which, even after the Cold War, threatens the entire world with annihilation.

This book is a provocative, informative alternative to conventional histories of the US — a much needed antidote to American illusions about the redemptive power of violence. It provides rich detail in extensive endnotes but the sparse index unfortunately fails to do justice to the authors' thorough documentation. Nevertheless, this volume is a valuable resource for advocates of nonviolence.

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Lee Griffith, *The War on Terrorism and the Terror of God*. Grand Rapids, MI / Cambridge, U.K.: Eerdmans, 2002.

Griffith's book is timely, to understate the matter. Written in large measure before the attacks of "9/11" in response to the bombing of Sudan and Afghanistan in 1998, it required, sadly, very little adaptation to fit the post-9/11 event, one which presumably "changed our world forever."

With a nod to Karl Barth, who insisted Christians should read the Bible and the newspaper together, Griffith adds to them a third item — history. Each of his five chapters is thus organized around a dialogue between "newspaper," church history, and Bible, roughly in that order. Griffith provides a remarkably elegant, profound, and moving exploration of the meaning and experience of terror and its underpinnings as he guides readers through contemporary places of violence (e.g., Vietnam, Rwanda, Iraq, Kosovo, Afghanistan, Lebanon, Palestine, the militia movement in the US), history (e.g., the French Revolution, the origins of anti-Semitism, the abolitionist movement in the US, great peacemakers such as Leo Tolstoy, Dorothy Day, and Desmond Tutu), and the Bible (e.g., Job, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and, fittingly, if to many surprisingly, Revelation). The chapter titles give a hint of the range of topics examined: The Meaning of Terror, Terror and the Death of Community, The Ethics of Terrorism, The Terror of God, and Beyond Terror and Counterterror.

Griffith claims not to be an expert (xiv), but he is an expert wordsmith, often finding startling ways of capturing the heart of an issue, providing pleasure in the reading even as he forces a deep consideration or reconsideration of issues related to terrorism. Who other than an expert could successfully bring together Bonhoeffer, Simone Weil, Niccolo Machiavelli, and Huck Finn in a mold-shattering discussion of hell as a realm God invades with the terror of his love? He is an expert at engaged analysis and reflection, fuelled by a prophet's passionate hope-filled protest, a practitioner's keen sense of reality, and a scholar's sharp gift of discernment and analysis.

At the heart of Griffith's study are several key issues: all terror is finally of the same species, whether perpetrated by "terrorists" or by states practicing "counterterror." All terrorism is rooted in a deadly ethical dualism which demonizes the other while masking "our" terror as "just war." Griffith brilliantly

unmasks the hypocrisy of states whose "freedom fighters" become "terrorists" when "we" become the target, who feign horror at terrorism while continuing to stockpile weapons of mass destruction as a safeguard against "rogue states." God's judgment falls on all such violence. But, and this is a central feature of Griffith's book, judgment must never itself be identified with violence, whether terror or war. God's "terror" comes to fullest expression in a persistent love that pursues the enemy to hell in the interests of reconciliation. "This is the terror of God from which we cannot hide because, in Jesus, God invades not only the earth but hell itself. God is the one who decides to go to hell. Hallelujah and amen" (185). Nowhere is such love clearer than in the "terror" of resurrection, which spells the death of death. "Resurrection deprives Empire of its only power, the power of death. […] It is the slaughtered Lamb who conquers. It is this resurrection terror of God that marks the imminent demise of earthly terror" (214).

With a deliberately monotonous drumbeat, the Postscript lists ways in which the world did *not* change on 9/11: the ideological and culturally entrenched reflexes which feed the spiral of violence are not only still in place but have only grown more predictable; the innocent still bear the brunt of terror and counterterror; now, more than ever, it's "us" versus "them;" terrorists and counterterrorists still learn from each other, eventually becoming indistinguishable in their clutching dance of death; and there is no change in the prevalence of seeing God as a tribal deity ("our" God), visiting vengeance on "them" — the "evil ones" (271-76).

Griffith's prophetic protest does not end there. Despair does not have the last word. Hope does. But like the biblical prophets he listens to so well, Griffith knows that hope is tethered not to human progress, to yet another liberal strategy for betterment through education, but to the God who has visited us in the slaughtered and resurrected lamb, to the God who "marks" the first terrorist Cain not for death, but for life (276), to the God who is present with us still in the faithful "remnant" of peace witnesses. "Take hope," are thus fittingly the two last words in the book (278).

This profound book amply rewards repeated readings. I am less sure than Griffith that we can know the full shape of God's sovereignty in this world wracked by violence and terror, that we can know that violence is never in some mysterious sense a feature of God's judgment in the world. It is the

Bible Griffith reads so attentively that makes me cautious. But Griffith's book makes me want to read the Bible yet again in its light. I am less sure than Griffith that the meaning of God's "terror" is exhausted by Easter. But Griffith is more right than wrong on that point, that God's "terror" must finally be nothing other than a frontal assault on all terror, all violence, all despoiling of the earth and its vulnerable inhabitants, callous participants or not. And "terror" it is to those who have made their pact with death. Griffith has been gripped deeply by the persistent, suffering, and powerfully transforming love of God, and that makes him an important partner in the search for a biblical peace theology. Lee Griffith and his book are one part of the reason we can "take hope."

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