

Just Policing, Not War

An Alternative Response to World Violence

Gerald W. Schlabach, editor

with

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Foreword by

Jim Wallis



A Michael Glazier Book

LITURGICAL PRESS

Collegeville, Minnesota

www.litpress.org

A Michael Glazier Book published by Liturgical Press

Excerpts from Second Vatican Council documents are from *Vatican Council II: The Basic Sixteen Documents*. A Completely Revised Translation in Inclusive Language. Edited by Austin Flannery, O.P. Northport, NY: Costello Publishing Company, 1996. Used with permission.

A version of Glen Stassen's chapter first appeared in the *Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics* 24, no. 2 (Fall/Winter 2004): 171–91, entitled "Just Peacemaking as Hermeneutical Key: The Need for International Cooperation in Preventing Terrorism." Permission to reprint material from that article is gratefully acknowledged.

Earlier versions of Gerald Schlabach's chapters appeared as "Just Policing: How War Could Cease to be a Church-Dividing Issue," in *Just Policing: Mennonite-Catholic Theological Colloquium 2002*, ed. Ivan J. Kauffman, Bridgefolk Series, no. 2 (Kitchener, Ontario: Pandora Press, 2004), 19–75; and in the *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 41, no. 3–4 (Summer-Fall 2004): 409–30 (copyright © by the Journal of Ecumenical Studies). Permission from Pandora Press and the *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* to reprint this material is gratefully acknowledged.

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1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Schlabach, Gerald.

Just policing, not war : an alternative response to world violence /
Gerald W. Schlabach . . . [et al.].

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN-13: 978-0-8146-5221-3

1. Peace—Religious aspects—Christianity. 2. War—Religious aspects—Christianity. 3. Pacifism—Religious aspects—Christianity. 4. Just war doctrine. 5. Christianity and international affairs. I. Title.

BT736.4.S335 2007

261.8'73—dc22

2007001371

Dedicated, with gratitude,
to the peacemaking legacies of
John Howard Yoder
and
John Paul II

All these factors force us to undertake a completely fresh appraisal of war.

Second Vatican Council, *Gaudium et Spes*, §80

Defining effective international government in this way is of course setting an idealistic goal; but it is less idealistic than the idea that military action could be truly an instrument of justice.

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agreement concerning war. Along the way, the chapter locates the “just policing” proposal in relationship to denominational affirmations of both just war and active nonviolence, as well as the just peacemaking initiative by Christian ethicists of various traditions who identified shared normative practices that would render war increasingly obsolete.

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Foreword

Jim Wallis

In the twenty-first-century world, many threats to peace are proving far graver than conventional wars between states: ethnic conflicts, states that violate the rights of their citizens to the point of genocide, and terrorist violence. Increasingly, this reality challenges the traditional Christian doctrines of pacifism and just war. Having debated the ethics of war for decades, Christians who seek effective means to combat terrorism sense that their traditional pacifist and just war positions both have limitations. A pacifism that refuses to recognize the reality of evil and stands above responding to the terrible violence of terrorism and genocide is not morally acceptable. And a pacifism that simply objects to war, but has no alternative answers to the real threats of violence—whether sponsored by international networks of terror or by states—isn't very helpful. Nor is classical just-war doctrine particularly relevant; it simply isn't enough to offer endless academic scrutiny of criteria for fighting war, especially when the arguments usually end up justifying wars, rather than actually preventing any. Just-war thinking has few answers to new forms of violence that are not as vulnerable to traditional war-fighting methods.

Recent examples are illustrative.

Following the attacks of September 11, 2001, the U.S. administration immediately turned to war against Afghanistan as its response. While Afghanistan's Taliban regime was certainly providing an operating base for al Qaeda, the solution to defeating the *tactic* of terrorism is not primarily military. Drying up the financial resources of terrorists, coordinating international intelligence, and relying on international law and institutions reinforced by a multinational policing force would have been far more effective. As we now see six years later, the battle against the Taliban continues and terror networks have simply spread around the world.

In Iraq, Saddam Hussein was indeed a brutal dictator, but war was not the answer. The establishment of an international tribunal (or the International Criminal Court) could have indicted Hussein and others of his regime, sought their capture, and put them on trial. A preemptive war of choice, fought against overwhelming world opinion and without the support of the United Nations Security Council has led instead to the current disaster in Iraq. Almost universally, Iraqis now view the United States as an occupier rather than liberator, while levels of violence and terrorism continue to grow.

Darfur raises another set of questions. In the face of a genocide that has killed as many as 400,000 people, the U.N. Security Council has demanded that the government of Sudan accept a peacekeeping force that can protect the people. Yet the government flatly refuses, and the United Nations appears unable to respond.

The common thread is that a new world order must be based on multilateral rather than unilateral action, international law rather than military power, and the deliberations of the community of nations rather than the sole decisions of the world's largest superpower. The dangers that terrorists and dictators pose certainly require opposition. It is a mistake to underestimate the threats they present to world peace. Resisting them requires a commitment to real multilateral action—an effective international court of justice, perhaps the development and funding of sizable multinational peacekeeping forces prepared to intervene to protect human rights, a broad-based commitment to selective but consistent economic sanctions, and a strong preference for genuinely international solutions. This will not be easy. It will mean strengthening international institutions and the rule of law that the United States often resists, perhaps in order to preserve its superpower position.

It also means a commitment to exploring alternatives other than war to resolve international conflicts.

Specifically, the creation of a much stronger international court could be central to resolving many of these conflicts. War criminals could be indicted for their crimes, and international warrants issued for their arrest. Bringing the full weight of international opinion to bear against criminal behavior would be much more effective if there were legal and institutional mechanisms to do so. The international community could then isolate the perpetrators and undermine their power without attacking their people.

To back up such judgments with more than symbolism, it would be necessary to create an international police force with adequate backing,

sufficient funding, and extensive training in conflict resolution. Such a force should be genuinely international, using personnel from the regions where conflicts occur as well as those from other countries. Lightly armed—or unarmed, as Gandhi suggested—this force would bring the physical presence that the resolution of conflict usually requires, but without the military provocation that can easily escalate a crisis. If the full and legal weight of world opinion were behind such a force, petty dictators would have to think twice about attacking it.

Clearly, however, those of us committed to nonviolence must also examine the moral question of the potential use of lethal force by police action. As far back as 1972, theologian and ethicist John Howard Yoder wrote about a difference between the unrestrained violence of war and the potential for lethal force in policing. Since then, various conferences and publications have taken up this discussion. Gerald Schlabach now brings together in this volume a series of helpful essays that deepen the conversation.

In his introduction, Schlabach reviews the changing nature of war that led the Second Vatican Council to say that “these factors force us to undertake a completely fresh appraisal of war.” He then raises the key question that the remaining essays in the book address: “Is policing different enough from war that something *more* like policing (humanitarian military intervention) could possibly constitute a practice for abolishing war?”

In the first section of the book, “Things that Make for Peace,” Ivan Kauffman presents a short history of the church’s response to war through the centuries, and the dilemma they faced after 9/11 as the Bush administration proceeded to launch a war against Afghanistan. Unable to strongly condemn the war because of the need for justice, but also unable to support it without violating basic moral beliefs, the majority of Christians accepted it as a necessary evil. The moral crisis that ensued, he suggests, is leading to a new understanding of peacebuilding in which just policing could play a central role.

Glen Stassen then recounts the development of just peacemaking theory, with a combination of initiatives that can both prevent conflicts from beginning and end them after they have begun. He offers a number of useful examples in which practitioners have employed these initiatives and made a difference.

Schlabach, in the book’s two central chapters, initiates the fundamental discussion. He examines policing and the just war tradition, with a detailed moral examination of the significant ethical differences between

war and policing. He also examines policing and the pacifist tradition, suggesting that the question here may be a vocational one rather than a matter of core principles. Finally, he reviews the convergence of the developments in nonviolent action and the framework of community policing, offering suggestions specifically for Mennonites and Catholics that could continue those trends.

The remainder of the book consists of responses and dialogue around these proposals from Mennonite and Catholic scholars. Margaret Pfeil engages an intra-Catholic debate over whether retributive justice or restorative justice provides the proper grounding for just war thinking. Tobias Winright explores more deeply the emergence of community policing as a paradigm for international relations in a model of “social peacekeeping.” Reina Neufeldt discusses the concept of just policing in relation to fundamental theories of international relations—internationalism, realism, globalization, and constructivism. John Paul Lederach brings his experience as an international conflict mediator, noting trends toward policing in post-accord settings, nonviolent peacekeeping, and community peace zones. Drew Christiansen describes the changes that have occurred in both Catholic and Mennonite understandings of the church, and the further changes that each tradition would need to make in order to accept the concept of just policing.

One standard response to those who question war because of their principles is to affirm their moral integrity but then dismiss them under the assumption that war remains both necessary and unavoidable as a response to real evil. Alternatives to war may garner admiration for their principles, but assumed wanting in their effectiveness. Seldom does war receive comparable scrutiny to evaluate its actual effectiveness in responding and resolving the reality of evil. The utter failure of the war in Iraq, as a response to evil, could help us change such thinking.

It is time to put aside the assumption that war is the most effective response to real evil. It is time to subject the methodology of war to the same scrutiny that its alternatives have received. In the case of Iraq, the option of war has arguably made everything it portended to solve even worse. And the consequences are now visible for all to see. Other alternatives might have produced a far preferable result. They include a preference for international rather than preemptive solutions, the use of international law more than military force, a many-faceted response of carrots and sticks, and a robust peacekeeping force with the authority and capacity to enforce the demands of the international community—yes, including the use of force, but very targeted instead

of indiscriminate. In the Christian tradition war has always been suspect at the point of moral principle. It is only fair to demand that the methodology of war also submit to vigorous examination of whether it is really even effective, and that other methods receive consideration and development

In that important discussion, this book could play a critical role. It is time to explore an alternative to war—not just because modern warfare fails to meet ethical standards, but also because it is failing to resolve the genuine threats of real evil in our time. We must find a better way.

Jim Wallis is author of *God's Politics* and president of Sojourners/Call to Renewal.

Acknowledgments

As an agenda for Christians divided over appropriate means of peace-making in a violent world, just policing resides at the confluence of multiple disciplines and conversations. Christian ethics, ecumenism, journalistic assessment of “the signs of the times,” policy analysis, peace and conflict studies, international relations, and political science have all flowed into the concept of just policing—along with attention to emerging trends in community policing and restorative justice. As author of three core chapters in this volume and editor for the entire project, I am grateful above all to the friends and colleagues who have brought expertise from their own fields to the task of exploring, testing, and filling out the concept of just policing. Drew Christiansen S.J., Ivan Kauffman, John Paul Lederach, Reina Neufeldt, Margaret Pfeil, Glen Stassen, and Tobias Winright do not all concur with every one of my own arguments concerning warfare and policing. But that leaves me all the more grateful for their contributions here, and for their concurrence that just policing is a concept and a conversation worth pursuing.

In the form that I first proposed it, at least, the concept and the agenda of just policing emerged against the background of two major historic conversations. One of these is well known. It is no accident the broad outline of my argument—that pacifist and just war traditions must each come clean on the place of policing in their ethical systems, but must do so in conversation with each other—came to me in a rush one Sunday morning at Eucharist in the fall of 2001. Much else was rushing and focusing the minds of many in the weeks and months following September 11.

Yet another less frantic conversation of historic proportions had quietly been taking place for three years, and it provided the occasion for an initial paper on just policing. The first-ever international dialogue between the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity (PCPCU)

and the Mennonite World Conference (MWC) had begun in 1998. Though I have never been a participant in this dialogue, and am acquainted with only a few of its delegates, Ivan Kauffman and I were following its progress closely and had convened a colloquium of Mennonite and Catholic scholars to provide unofficial background papers that might be useful to the delegations. I thus wish to thank the scholars in the colloquium who first responded to my paper: Joseph Capizzi, J. Denny Weaver, and Stanley Hauerwas. Likewise, I wish to thank the leaders of the international dialogue who were receptive toward our outside input: co-chairs Helmut Harder and Bishop Joseph Martino, as well as Larry Miller of the MWC and Monsignor John Radano of the PCPCU.

Two groups of friends and colleagues have taken special interest in this project as it has continued to develop. Bridgefolk is a grassroots movement for dialogue and unity between Mennonites and Roman Catholics that I have helped lead since its inception in 1999; it is with special affection that I acknowledge the friendship and support of Bridgefolk Board members over these years: co-Chairs Marlene Kropf and Abbot John Klassen O.S.B., Sheri Hostetler, Susan Kennel Harrison, Father Rene McGraw O.S.B., Weldon Nisly, Father William Skudlarek O.S.B., Regina Wilson, and (again, significantly!) Ivan Kauffman.

Since 2001 I have also had the privilege of serving on the Peace Committee that advises the international program of Mennonite Central Committee. As a setting that brings together academics, practitioners, and church representatives, the MCC Peace Committee is a particularly fruitful venue for a Christian ethicist who might otherwise attend mainly to scholarly debates. Though I have not asked and would not expect a group of historic peace church representatives to endorse just policing whole cloth, MCC and its Peace Committee have provided a set of resources and conversations that have greatly enriched this work. Of special note are my fellow team members in the MCC Peace Theology Project, which conducted a series of consultations in 2003 and 2004, resulting in the book *At Peace and Unafraid: Public Order, Security, and the Wisdom of the Cross* (Herald Press, 2006): Duane Friesen, Lydia Harder, and Pamela Leach, along with MCC staff members Robert and Judy Zimmerman Herr.

Finally, two of my former professors at the University of Notre Dame deserve special mention. Todd Whitmore was not able to contribute a chapter to this volume, but indirectly was a major contributor. An extended conversation he and I had over lunch a couple years after I graduated may mark the chronological start of the just policing project.

I hope that he will yet find opportunity to lay out his own proposals for the kind of institutions and practices that the Catholic Church needs if it is to receive just war teaching in fact and not just in theory.

And looming behind all of this is the presence of the late John Howard Yoder. The many references and footnotes to Yoder in my chapters only begin to indicate my debt to him, not only with regard to the question of policing but in his theology of Christian pacifism and his analysis of the just war tradition. I cannot attribute every idea I might owe to Yoder, not only because my reading of his work spans thirty years, but because I learned his analysis of the just war tradition less from his writing than from a doctoral seminar on that topic at Notre Dame. If I could hand Yoder a copy of this book, it would be with the expectation that I would shortly receive one of his characteristically trenchant multi-page critiques. Nonetheless, it is my most fervent hope that he would recognize here an outworking of hints and suggestions he left us, done with something of the care and rigor he taught us, located in a context of “believers church” discernment and ecumenical collaboration, which he showed us can converge.

Gerald W. Schlabach

INTRODUCTION

Just Policing and the Reevaluation of War in a Less Divided Church

Gerald W. Schlabbach

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

That, in a nutshell, is the twofold thesis of the “just policing” proposal. What it calls for is not a grand convergence right now—or a mere compromise ever—between just-war and pacifist traditions. Rather, what it proposes is an agenda for mutual, mutually challenging, and self-critical conversation that explores the conditions for the possibility of further convergence. It notes that in the long-standing Christian debate between pacifist and just war positions, the moral status of policing has received surprisingly little attention. And it holds out hope that joint attention to this unmapped territory might open up a new horizon in which the possibility of agreement concerning war might come into view. Just as importantly, it calls forth greater faithfulness and coherence on both sides—whether or not further convergence becomes possible.

In other words, the concept of just policing *suggests* that Christians divided over war *might* be able to converge sufficiently that war would cease to divide them. But it *insists* that both sides *must* come clean about their respective views on policing.

“All of These Factors . . .”

At the beginning of the twentieth century, only five percent of war casualties were civilians. By World War II, sixty-five percent of casualties were civilians. As the turn of the twenty-first century approached, according to a United Nations report, ninety percent of casualties in war were civilians, and of these, roughly half were children.¹

Perhaps the horror of war in the modern era has numbed us to the horror of war in the modern era. Or perhaps we suffer from a deeper complacency. As the influential American Protestant theologian Reinhold Niebuhr once remarked: “Contemporary history is filled with manifestations of man’s hysterias and furies; with evidences of his dæmonic capacity and inclination to break the harmonies of nature and defy the prudent canons of rational restraint. Yet no cumulation of contradictory evidence seems to disturb modern man’s good opinion of himself.”²

If Niebuhr’s assessment of modern self-complacency in the face of human horrors is all too apt, it is not uniformly so. When Roman Catholic bishops gathered from around the world in the early 1960s for the Second Vatican Council, modern war did disturb them deeply. True, in promising that the church’s role was to accompany humanity on its journey as a generous friend rather than a stubborn adversary, the bishops put forward a fresh and markedly hopeful opinion of the modern world.³ Yet honest friendship, as well as solidarity “especially [with] those who are poor or afflicted,”⁴ also required a frank naming of modern griefs, anxieties, and violence. Christian love of neighbor carried an “inescapable duty to make ourselves the neighbor” to the weak and defenseless, which in turn required the council to name “all offenses against life itself” as nothing less than “criminal.” Prefiguring Catholic moral concerns that would grow prominent in coming decades, the council identified abortion and euthanasia as examples—but also named genocide, torture, “subhuman living conditions, arbitrary imprisonment, deportation, slavery, prostitution,” and “murder.”⁵

When warfare fails to meet the “prudent canons” needed to qualify as just war, it really can bear no other name than a “type of murder.” But war should be infamous rather than numbing in other ways besides. Throughout human history even putatively just wars have carried with them many of the *other* “infamies” on the council’s list too, such as torture, arbitrary imprisonment, enslavement, and prostitution. War has often left in its wake “subhuman living conditions”—even for the victors and for those they claim to protect.

Longtime *New York Times* war correspondent Chris Hedges has poignantly described the devastating effects of war even on its victors and heroes. War is an addiction, he insisted in a 2002 book with a title tinged in darkly subtle irony, *War is a Force that Gives Us Meaning*. Hedges has seen its narcotic effect at work in warriors, correspondents, and civilian populations alike. However well a war may have been justified for the protection of a people and its culture, “in warfare the state seeks to destroy its own [authentic] culture” in order to forge a war culture with an ironclad cohesion capable of destroying the enemy’s culture.⁶ Mythmakers of all sorts peddle its mystique of heroism, camaraderie, and the opportunity to rise above ourselves.

But war’s reality leaves actual warriors deeply scarred. However graphic the media portrayals of warfare may be, they still leave out the throat-grIPPING reality of fear. Outside of actual battle, all portrayals are sterile and safe. “We do not smell rotting flesh, hear the cries of agony, or see before us blood and entrails seeping out of bodies. We view from a distance the rush, the excitement, but feel none of the awful gut-wrenching anxiety and humiliation that come with mortal battle.”⁷ Though society now has a name for the effect of long-haunting memories from war, post-traumatic stress syndrome, such clinical language can become one more mechanism for shielding ourselves from war’s reality. With modern weapons in “the universe of total war,” wrote Hedges, soldiers “can kill hundreds or thousands of people in seconds . . . [and] only have time to reflect later.” But “by then these soldiers often have been discarded, left as broken men in a civilian society that does not understand them and does not want to understand them.”⁸

To subject oneself to such scarring of body and mind—perhaps this simply reflects how heroic is the self-sacrifice of warriors who give themselves in the defense of others. Perhaps a growing recognition of the complex and lasting psychological scars that war inflicts even on its victors can demonstrate just how much they have been sacrificing all along. Perhaps. Many families tell of aging veterans who have lived lives of pained silence, never speaking their experiences except reluctantly, when prompted, if at all. Family members and fellow citizens naturally desire to honor their soldiers, assuring both themselves and those they honor that their warriors’ sacrifice has meaning. To countenance the possibility that the horror of war had no larger meaning or just purpose can seem even more horrible than war itself. In rituals private and public, therefore, the protected cultivate a gratitude that takes on a life of its own, quite apart from the gains and losses of the wars fought in their name, for their protection.

Here, however, we face another problem: The very distinction between protector and protected has been eroding at least since the French Revolution. If the percentage of civilian casualties in war has risen from five to ninety percent in the last century, that is but a cold statistical marker for this grim reality. Consider the following phenomena, and note what they all have in common:

- **Mass armies:** When French revolutionaries invented the citizens' army and Napoleon showed its power by marching across Europe in record time, they also created the expectation that any civilian, at least all males in the prime of life, were potential combatants. If war had once been the affair of gentlemen and nobles or aspirants to their class this has not been the case for two centuries. Military conscription has been one result. And in many wars, the targeting of all males except the oldest and youngest has been another result.
- **Industrial mobilization:** To be sure, modern militaries may now depend less on mass conscription than they once did, but they depend on technology all the more. The need to design, produce, and pay for military technology turns entire industries—no, entire economies—into military machines. Legally, manufacturers and workers may be noncombatants. But strategically, they become decisive targets.
- **Threat of nuclear annihilation:** In the ultimate example and symbol of modern warfare, these first two phenomena converge. The destructive potential of scientific and industrial warfare reaches an absolute. Discriminatory targeting that would distinguish between combatant and noncombatant all but disappears. The likelihood of nuclear escalation in fact puts the entire planet at risk. Actual weapon deployment may require only a handful of soldiers, aviators, or sailors, but that is because entire academic, economic, and industrial sectors have prepared the high-tech weapon. The inherent purpose of such weapons is at worst to incinerate and at best to terrorize entire populations.
- **Guerrilla warfare:** None of this means, of course, that all war in the modern world is high tech. Nations and insurgents who are too poor for high-tech weaponry can still acquire conventional and cast-off second-hand weaponry that richer nations put up for sale. To compensate for their disadvantages, guerrilla movements have sought to marshal and blend into the very populations they have claimed to liberate and hoped to rule.

- Low-intensity warfare: Recognizing the power of guerrilla warfare, even nations and militaries with the greatest available firepower have found that their most effective counter-measure is often to engage in their own guerrilla-style, low-level warfare. Generally such efforts can only be successful when coupled with another tactic from the guerrilla's playbook, projects aimed at "winning the hearts and minds" of the civilian population.
- Terrorism: Since September 11, 2001, many have claimed that the threat from non-state terrorist networks represents a qualitatively new phenomenon. If there is any truth to that claim it is overwrought. Terrorist networks simply recombine elements of the above in the context of a borderless globalized culture: They blend into some populations like guerrillas; they savvily appropriate the technologies of industrialized societies against them; they terrorize entire populations with biological, chemical, and suicide devices that some call "the poor man's nuclear weapons." Above all, they hope to extend their causes not by vanquishing the governing apparatus of any state but by imploding the psychological confidence, cohesion, and support within society that make the policies and very existence of a governing state possible.
- And on and on: In the early twenty-first century, military and civilian functions are becoming intermeshed in still other ways. In the U.S. war in Iraq, military functions have been "privatized" in unprecedented fashion through subcontracts for support services and security details. On the other hand, post-Cold War militaries of many nations find a new *raison d'être* as they lead or assist in the delivery of humanitarian aid in the wake of natural disasters.

By now the common thread running through these otherwise disparate phenomena should be clear. National leaders, armies, guerrillas, and terrorists alike all compete not so much against each other on the field of battle as they do for the power that resides in civil society. It is the middle sector of social organization that lies between the individual or the family and the state that has become the decisive arena of struggle. At great risk to civilian populations and cultures, militaries have entered this arena. But in doing so, they have acknowledged in backhanded ways that real and decisive power is social and political, not violent.

The blurring of distinctions between combatants and noncombatants can certainly pose a serious dilemma for all who seek to curtail militaristic

policies or propose alternatives to war. The basic distinction between combatants and noncombatants is the cornerstone of all international law concerning warfare. Under their breath, antiwar activists might consider “The Law of War” an oxymoron, yet every time they call for respect of human rights in zones of conflict, or appeal to Geneva Conventions to make their case, they are relying on its principles and precedents. Likewise, the work of non-governmental relief organizations such as the International Red Cross and Red Crescent, Doctors Without Borders, or leading church agencies often depends on their ability to aid noncombatants on all sides without drawing charges from any side that they are aiding and abetting that side’s enemies.

The dilemma is this: Some of these same groups are seeking to articulate an understanding of security that would rely far less (if at all) on military strategies; when they do so they themselves identify civil society as the decisive arena in which to contest social arrangements and political power. A document, *Vulnerability and Security*, by the Church of Norway’s Commission on International Affairs urges us, for example, to conceive of security as pertaining to far more than sovereign states; the commission proposes “human security” as a broader but more accurate concept in light of the most pressing contemporary threats to life and well-being we actually face. While a well-run state structure contributes to human security, so too do all non-state efforts to enhance environmental and economic conditions.⁹ Similarly, a study commissioned by the Peace Committee of Mennonite Central Committee sought to move beyond the “national security bubble” to a more inclusive conception of security based in the resourcefulness of societies themselves. As the study noted, however, this makes “especially important” the work of “non-governmental voluntary organizations and citizens’ groups that bring together people from a wide variety of . . . backgrounds who seek to address the common good.”¹⁰

So those who oppose militarism have an unmovable stake in maintaining distinctions between combatants and noncombatants. And yet the more convincingly they argue that civil society is its own source of security, the more incentive they provide for militaries to merge into civilian sectors after all in order to coordinate their efforts. Are we then at an impasse?

**“ . . . these factors force us
to undertake a completely fresh appraisal of war.”**

When the Second Vatican Council explicitly turned to survey the issue of war and the prospects for peace in the modern world, its assessment of the “state of humanity” was anything but cheery and optimistic. In fact, it was nothing short of “deplorable.”

Even though recent wars have wrought immense material and moral havoc on the world, the devastation of battle still rages in some parts of the world. Indeed, now that every kind of weapon produced by modern science is used in war, the savagery of war threatens to lead the combatants to barbarities far surpassing those of former ages. Moreover, the complexity of the modern world and the network of relations between countries means that covert wars can be prolonged by new, insidious and subversive methods. In many cases terrorist methods are regarded as a new way of waging war. . . . The most infamous [of all crimes against humanity] is the rationalised and methodical extermination of an entire race, nation, or ethnic minority. . . .¹¹

The bishops were hardly prepared to disavow the right of nations to defend themselves, though they did voice a new level of official ecclesial respect for Christian pacifists who renounced such rights for themselves. War that “[seeks] to conquer another nation” is clearly illicit, however. And so too are wars that surpass “lawful self-defense” simply because modern weaponry has become so indiscriminate.¹²

Clearly the bishops were alluding to nuclear armaments, but that was not all. The opening of the Second Vatican Council had coincided with the Cuban missile crisis, in which the United States and the Soviet Union came as close as they ever did to decimating the planet with nuclear weapons. Yet saturation bombing of entire cities during World War II had already demonstrated the indiscriminate character of modern warfare, even before the advent of the atomic age.¹³ Pointedly, the bishops did not limit their exceedingly grave assessment of modern warfare to nuclear arms, even as they wrote:

The proliferation of scientific weapons has immeasurably magnified the horror and wickedness of war. Warfare conducted with such weapons can inflict immense and indiscriminate havoc which goes far beyond the bounds of legitimate defense. Indeed, if the kind of weapons now stocked in the arsenals of the great powers were to be employed to the fullest, the result would be the almost complete reciprocal slaughter of one side by the other, not to speak of the widespread devastation that would follow

in the world and the deadly after-effects resulting from the use of such weapons.¹⁴

Thus the bishops gathered in solemn council from around the globe joined with recent popes Pius XII, John XXIII, and Paul VI in condemning total war: "Every act of war directed to the indiscriminate destruction of whole cities or vast areas with their inhabitants is a crime against God and humanity, which merits firm and unequivocal condemnation."¹⁵

But if war is wrong, what is right?¹⁶ For all its historic prominence in Catholic deliberation over the ethics of war, the just war theory had never been promulgated as an official *doctrine* or dogma in the Catholic Church, and if ever there was a moment to do so, the Second Vatican Council was it. Insofar as just war principles simply reflect a mode of reasoning, reason itself does not require promulgation nor can it be rescinded. Nonetheless, a system of thought can certainly benefit from explicit endorsement. Although the bishops inevitably employed many just war principles in the key Vatican II section on war, and although they stated that "as long as the danger of war persists" governments have a "right to lawful self-defense," the bishops held back from endorsing just war reasoning as the church's preferred approach to war, much less as doctrine.

No, instead of either endorsing *or* renouncing, the bishops made a lateral move. They were, after all, pastors of a worldwide community that had just recommitted itself to accompanying all people in solidarity and friendship. As such they first needed alternatives that would provide the security to vulnerable peoples that military action has long claimed it could guarantee, but was evidently failing to do.

“. . . a completely fresh appraisal of war.”

When the Catholic Church speaks at its highest levels, as it did in the Second Vatican Council, it hardly ever makes pronouncements unless they represent settled understandings that have formed through a long and careful deliberative process. It is all the more striking, therefore, that on the matter of war the Second Vatican Council departed from longstanding practice and deeply Catholic sensibilities in order to *launch* a church-wide process of discernment instead. After surveying the growing violence and potential for catastrophe wrought by modern warfare, the bishops famously declared: "All these factors force us to undertake a completely fresh appraisal of war."¹⁷

That re-evaluation has not only continued in the forty years since; if anything it has grown more poignant. Catholics, and indeed all Christians for whom Vatican II was a historic watershed and source of hope, can be grateful for the courage by which the bishops opened up the question of peace and war for creativity and discernment. This implies that all of us throughout the whole “people of God” are responsible to discover and develop alternatives to war. But with every looming or protracted war, the unfinished business of re-evaluating war has divided Christian communities in painful debates.

Emblematic of the challenge that the Vatican council articulated not just for Catholics but for all Christians, and indeed the world community, is the plea that Pope Paul VI made on his first visit to the United Nations, and that Pope John Paul II made his own through frequent repetition. As John Paul II put it in no less weighty a document than his 1991 encyclical *Centesimus annus*,

“Never again war!” No, never again war, which destroys the lives of innocent people, teaches how to kill, throws into upheaval even the lives of those who do the killing and leaves behind a trail of resentment and hatred, thus making it all the more difficult to find a just solution of the very problems which provoked the war.¹⁸

Thus, as John Paul also explained on various occasions, “war is a defeat for humanity.”¹⁹ Such a conviction has led to strenuous diplomatic efforts on the part of the Vatican to avoid particular wars, and even to pointed declarations that wars such as the U.S. invasion of Iraq would be unjust. Yet it has also prompted hasty clarifications that neither the pope nor the Holy See is “pacifist.”²⁰

From loyal Catholics to jaded journalists, the question thus arises: Just what are we to make of this? A nuanced theological explanation for the position of John Paul and other modern popes is certainly possible. But Catholic teaching commends policy-makers and lay people for their active nonviolence, social justice activism, military service, or governmental leadership in the world alike, and they all have reason to feel puzzled.

That theological explanation? Because Catholicism does not understand human sin to have altogether destroyed human dignity and solidarity, human beings have the capacity to order their affairs without recourse to violence. Hence: “*Never again war!*” But because human sinfulness has joined with modern ideologies and technologies to produce some of the most systematic human rights abuses that the world has ever seen, the

pope has not ruled out the need for humanitarian military interventions to halt egregious human rights abuses. Hence: “The pope is not a pacifist.” Nonetheless, warfare as we know it exceeds the bounds of police action, killing innocent civilians, destroying social infrastructures, weakening international law, creating fresh resentments, and thus sowing the seeds of further conflict. Hence: “War is always a defeat for humanity.”

Still, a nuanced theological explanation of this sort does not solve the practical problem. Until Christian leaders can propose or endorse politically viable alternatives to war, ordinary Christians and observers from outside the Christian community may be forgiven for wondering whether their church is trying to have it both ways on war. More to the point, they may be forgiven their puzzlement. For what are they to *do*?

Actually, virtually every Christian tradition is trying to have it both ways on war. This may be a sign of honest puzzlement, or it may be a sign of diplomatic fudging. But if nothing else, it is surely one sign of unfinished agenda.

Often, today, the two-track approach to war, peace, violence, and non-violence is quite explicit. The Catholic Church has long been custodian of the Christian tradition of just war deliberation, which began when Saints Ambrose and Augustine used arguments from Roman thinkers like Cicero in order to justify some wars while disciplining all wars. Since the Second Vatican Council, however, the Catholic Church has also given a new level of recognition to vocational pacifism, at least.²¹ In the early 1980s, U.S. Catholic bishops writing on *The Challenge of Peace* explicitly paired the traditions of just war and pacifism or active nonviolence as legitimate Christian responses to war:

Catholic teaching sees these two distinct moral responses as having a complementary relationship, in the sense that both seek to serve the common good. They differ in their perception of how the common good is to be defended most effectively, but both responses testify to the Christian conviction that peace must be pursued and rights defended within moral restraints and in the context of defining other basic human values.²²

Three years later, Methodist bishops in the United States made a similar affirmation of both traditions in their statement *In Defense of Creation*, insofar as each serves “as a partial but vital testimony to the requirements of justice and peace.”²³

Even where not explicit, a two-track approach to warfare sometimes operates in subtle ways. Historic peace churches (Mennonite, Church of the Brethren, Society of Friends) certainly do not recognize the legiti-

macy of just war thinking with an easy reciprocity that would mirror statements by “mainstream” Christian traditions. Yet in their own way, peace churches have found that they too must “have it both ways” by acknowledging the need for someone, somewhere, to use potentially lethal violence to preserve order in a fallen world. In the formative years of the sixteenth-century Radical Reformation, the Schleithem Confession of 1527 gave this recognition classical expression for Mennonites by speaking of “the sword” as “an ordering of God outside the perfection of Christ;” accordingly, “secular rulers” are “established to wield” the sword that “punishes and kills the wicked” but “guards and protects the good.”²⁴ Though conservative rather than activist Mennonites are most likely to quote the Schleithem Confession today, many of the very Mennonites who most sought to oppose the “war on terrorism” looming in September and October of 2001 found themselves reflecting the logic of Schleithem nonetheless. How? In order to press their case for less violent responses, they called for alternative, international, judicial responses to terrorism that still would require some military or police force to apprehend the criminals.

Even when representatives of just war thought and pacifism have collaborated and discovered how much they already agree upon, the difficulty of having it both ways may remain and actually become more striking. A case in point is the “just peacemaking” initiative that gathered twenty-three Christian ethicists annually during much of the 1990s and articulated “ten practices for abolishing war.”²⁵ The twenty-three scholars found much consensus by bracketing debates over theory or principles and instead identifying practices that are obligatory for all Christians. For those identified with just war teaching these are practices that Christians must seriously engage before resorting to warfare if any claim of “last resort” to military action is to be meaningful. For pacifists, these are practices that require positive engagement lest the “non” in “nonviolence” imply passivity at worst or mere protest at best.

With its focus on concrete practices, the just peacemaking approach offers a major precedent for the approach we are exploring in this book. Yet at one point their consensus proved particularly fragile. According to the introduction to *Just Peacemaking: Ten Practices for Abolishing War*, all participants agreed that among their “ten practices” they should include humanitarian military invention to halt egregious human rights abuses, yet not all were sure they could actually affirm it.²⁶ The problem, one suspects, was that for the pacifists in the just peacemaking initiative to affirm such a practice unambiguously would seem to have meant assent

to a stringent, limited, and thus rectified just war approach—but a just war approach nonetheless.

To be sure, the just peacemaking initiative certainly moves us forward in at least three ways. First, by focusing on practices, the initiative reminds us of the path by which many Christians are already creating “conditions for the possibility” of convergence concerning war and peace, and how they should continue to do so. Second, attention to practices may further offer a way to deal constructively with remaining differences without underestimating or suppressing them. After all, if Christian practices cannot or should not be identical (insofar as every Christian community thrives on a diversity of gifts and callings, according to St. Paul), then we will need to pay close attention to what Christian communities must actually do in order to discern authentic vocations from God. And that may in turn allow us to reduce the differences in practice among currently divided Christians to vocational differences.

But third, even as the just peacemaking initiative has revealed its point of weakest consensus it has also marked out a continuing point of agenda: Is policing different enough from war that something *more* like policing (humanitarian military intervention) could possibly constitute a practice for abolishing war?

However fruitful, a point of agenda does not yet represent a clear path forward. To date, the just peacemaking initiative stands as one of the best efforts to transcend a centuries-old impasse between Christians working from pacifist and just war convictions. But when we get down to the toughest questions about how to practice love of neighbor and enemy alike amid tragic and violent situations, even Christians who think hardest about the challenge continue falling back into, and debating from, just war or pacifist categories. Meanwhile people around the world die violently.

Impasse as Cause for Hope

Sometimes, though, an impasse can give cause for great hope. Recall our first impasse, whereby peace activists and researchers argue that civil society is its own source of human security, but thereby invite militaries to merge into civilian sectors in dangerous ways that threaten to blur the crucial distinction between combatants and noncombatants. If we step back to survey “all of these factors” from an even wider historical angle, what we are dealing with at every juncture turns out to reflect

an impasse in “the war system” itself, as international analyst Jonathan Schell calls it.²⁷ For if war is increasingly being waged within the civilian sphere, that is tragic evidence—but evidence nonetheless—of the very truth that Mahatma Gandhi helped the twentieth century to discover, and that the global movement for participatory democracy also reflects: *True power is social, not violent.*

As Schell has analyzed and retold the story of the twentieth century, four massive tectonic shifts have occurred.²⁸ (1) *Military might has rendered itself increasingly obsolete* as a tool for nations to promote their interests on the world stage. For centuries, but climaxing in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, nations were in an escalating race to “adapt or die,” that is, to increase their military might before other nations beat them to it.²⁹ Always they dreamed of reaching a finish line in which absolute military power would guarantee their security absolutely. But when they actually achieved the absolute destructive capability of nuclear weaponry, it proved unusable. The “Great Powers” could then only confront one another indirectly through proxy wars and in the “realm of appearances” where world leaders publicly threatened but privately hesitated to use “the bomb.”³⁰

Meanwhile, around the edges of the international system, (2) “*people’s war*” reflected the need of colonial populations and emerging nations to develop other forms of power. Waged in the name of a wide range of ideologies but always for self-determination, these movements could not compete with imperial nations in terms of sheer firepower. To be sure, the phenomenon of “people’s war” has often been as locally bloody as nuclear war threatened globally to be. Yet even so, it pointed toward a way out of the impasse of the war system. A leader as ruthless and totalitarian as Chinese Communist Chairman Mao, for example, had to articulate the key strategic shift that people’s war represents: In the decisive phase of a revolution, everything else is subordinated to politics—to winning the support of the population at large.³¹ When one looks through the mythologized fog of violence, it turns out that nearly every revolution is won before it is “won,” when the population withdraws consent from the *ancien régime* and shifts loyalties.³²

Again providing evidence, albeit tragic evidence, people’s wars thus mark a halfway point out of the impasse that war has become. Nuclear weaponry and the self-determination movements that often waged people’s war were each paralyzing the war system and rendering it unable to serve as final arbitrator in global affairs.³³ Yet the genius of people’s war was its rediscovery of social power—a.k.a. politics—in the

very midst of battle; this has inadvertently raised the question of whether revolutions had to be violent at all.³⁴

In showing that a revolution did not need violence, Mahatma Gandhi was also pointing toward a way through the impasse in the war system: For (3) *nonviolent revolution* “was proving the existence of a force that now could arbitrate” in global affairs.³⁵ Yes, the Gandhian alternative relies on *satyagraha* or the force of truth, as he preferred to name what others have unhappily called nonviolence. (The standard term “non-violence” is an unhappy one because the term only says what it is not, not what it is, and lends itself to rejection as merely passive.) And yes, Gandhian nonviolence insists that no truly liberating victory can come except through means that are morally consistent with the ends being sought. But as Schell insists, “Gandhi’s politics was not a politics of the moral gesture. It rested on an interpretation of political power and was an exercise of power.”³⁶ Gandhi was the first to found “a thoroughgoing program of action” upon the belief that political philosophers had been developing for centuries: that governments rest upon the consent of the people. “The central role of consent in all government meant that non-cooperation—the withdrawal of consent—was something more than a morally satisfying activity; it was a powerful weapon in the real world.”³⁷ In the years since the independence movement in India, nonviolence has repeatedly demonstrated the power to face down terrorism and overthrow tyrannical regimes of all sorts, from Jim Crow segregation backed by KKK paramilitaries in the U.S. South, to military dictatorship in the Philippines and South America, to apartheid South Africa, to the Soviet Empire.

Gandhian precedents for the (4) *global movement of participatory democracy* that so dramatically altered Cold War international relations amid the 1989 Revolution in Central Europe have too often gone unnoticed. But in fact the two phenomena are mutually interdependent and reinforcing. Schell argues that the liberal democratic state represents the systematizing of nonviolence, for when successful “a country’s constitution and its laws become a hugely ramified road map for the peaceful settlement of disputes, large and small.”³⁸ Prior to 1989, of course, nearly everyone believed that a totalitarian regime so entrenched as the Soviet one was impervious both to nonviolent resistance and democratic transformation from within. Yet this “universal conviction” proved “stupendously wrong” precisely because it rested on faulty assumptions, beginning with the foundational belief that violent “force was the final arbiter in political affairs.”³⁹ The weakness of the totalitarian Soviet regime, as

well as the assumptions about power that the West widely shared with it, is evident in the way that Eastern European activists employed core Gandhian strategies though only dimly aware of their precedents. They set for themselves only modest, immediate goals that would create zones of freedom within the Soviet structure. And they simply did what playwright, activist, and future Czech President Václav Havel called “living the truth.” But this was enough to bring down the empire and end the Cold War through a social rather than nuclear chain reaction. As Schell has put it: “It was the equivalent of a third world war except in one particular: it was not a war.”⁴⁰

So, humanity may have come a lot farther in the violent last century than we often think. Based on one of the most thorough compilations of data to date, the Human Security Centre at the University of British Columbia reported in 2005 that the number of wars, genocides, and human rights abuses had finally begun to decline dramatically in the fifteen years since the end of the Cold War.⁴¹ If most people think otherwise, the researchers argued, that is because news media focus on dramatic exceptions like Rwanda or Iraq, while largely leaving unreported the hundred or so conflicts that have quietly ended since 1988. Also, while the outbreak of war is always pointed, the work of peacebuilding is usually diffuse. One source of the global decline in armed conflict is the unheralded work of United Nations diplomatic missions and peacekeeping operations, which draw little attention precisely because they succeed far more often than they fail. Likewise contributing are the cumulative efforts of international lending institutions, donor states, regional organizations, and thousands of non-governmental organizations. “Taken together,” insists the Human Security Centre, “their effect has been profound.”⁴²

All of this makes the topic of just policing more rather than less timely. For one thing, despite its surprisingly optimistic assessment of global data, the Human Security Centre has rightly warned against complacency.⁴³ For another thing, even a less war-ridden planet must face the problem that nonviolent peace activists often wait far too long to anticipate, but that quickly presses upon societies and regions faced with the promise of a transition away from armed conflict: *What do you do if you actually win?*

It should stand as a warning that Gandhi’s independent India quickly built its own military, became embroiled in decades-long stand-offs with neighboring Pakistan and China, thus fueled militarism, and is now a nuclear power. If nothing else, societies at peace continue to need domestic

policing and should take care that their police avoid the brutality that comes with militaristic “crime-fighting” models. For even the sorts of de-militarized societies for which peace activists work would still need some kind of police function, though surely less violent and perhaps even nonviolent. As we will see, the very arguments that historic peace churches and antiwar activists have made since September 11, 2001 for responding to terrorism under a strengthened rule of international law—thus treating acts of terror as *crimes* against humanity rather than launching a *war* on terrorism—suggest a greater rather than lesser need for attention to policing. Implicitly, the goal of peace church activists and stringent just war policy makers alike becomes just policing—just policing, not war.

Just Policing as a Proposal, a Conversation, but Still a Call

While just policing finds its place within this broad historical and global background, the reader may find it helpful to know that it first emerged as a proposal within a very particular context. What occasioned my first paper on just policing was, to be sure, the manifold debates among citizens and Christians following 9/11, but also one very specific dialogue. The first international dialogue between representatives of Mennonite World Conference and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity was roughly midway through its initial five-year cycle at the time.⁴⁴ Though not a participant in the official dialogue, I had already moderated two rounds of unofficial dialogue by a group of a dozen or so scholars we called the Mennonite-Catholic Theological Colloquium; the MCTC had formed to provide background resources for the official delegations should they find our work helpful. Knowing that peace theology and practice would be the focus of a meeting of the international dialogue late in 2002, I wrote “Just Policing: How War Could Cease to be a Church-Dividing Issue” in order to launch a third round of the colloquium.⁴⁵

In the intervening years the concept of just policing has gained far wider circulation,⁴⁶ and the pressing need for non- or less-violent ways of providing security in a jittery world has always loomed large in the hearts of my colleagues and myself. Still, the prospect that just policing suggests “how war could cease to be a church-dividing issue” has never been absent. While casting an eye to other conversations among other Christian traditions and, indeed, in the international community, the

contributions and concerns of the Mennonite and Catholic faith communities inevitably receive special attention in this book.

Precisely here, though, a reassurance bears repeating. In the context of ecumenical relationships between just war and pacifist Christians, just policing is a proposal, yes, but not for some grand convergence right now. Nor does it propose a mere and premature compromise requiring that churches give up confessional beliefs that are integral to their identities. Rather, it proposes a conversation over the status of policing in Christian ethics and practice that will challenge both sides (or every side) to greater faithfulness. If further convergence on the ethics of violence becomes possible in the Christian community, what will prepare the way will be greater coherence and more consistent practice in every tradition.

The just policing conversation cannot move very far forward unless both sides embody their arguments through lived communal practices. Churches that have traditionally affirmed the possibility of just war have no chance of moving pacifists with their arguments unless they do a far better job of showing *in practice* that they can render their “exceptional” use of lethal violence truly exceptional, in effect turning just war just into policing. Churches that have traditionally affirmed the moral requirement of nonviolence even in the face of grave injustice have no chance of moving just war folks unless they do a far better job of showing *in practice* that they have ways to participate in governance that can be as effective as they claim to be faithful.

To these ends, and for the common good of neighbors around the globe, may we not only talk but work together. For potential victims of violence around the world, after all, Christians do not have to be fully united around issues of peace and war. For Christ’s church simply to be less divided may be quite enough.

Notes

1. Graça Machel, *The Impact of War on Children*, a review of progress since the 1996 United Nations Report on the impact of armed conflict on children (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 1. Also see Save the Children, *Mothers & Children in War & Conflict*, State of the World’s Mothers 2002 (Westport, CT: Save the Children USA, 2002), 8–9; United Nations Development Programme, *Millennium Development Goals: A Compact Among Nations to End Human Poverty*, Human Development Report 2003 (New York: UNDP, 2003), 45; Save the Children, *Protecting Children in Emergencies: Escalating Threats to Children Must be Addressed*, Policy Brief, vol. 1, no. 1 (Westport, CT: Save the Children USA, 2005), 1. These statistics are receiving scrutiny from a major new initiative housed in the Human Security Centre at the University of British Columbia in Canada. One source of contention, however, comes

from differing definitions of civilian casualties, depending on whether the data is limited to battlefield deaths and injuries, or expanded to include indirect deaths from disease or malnutrition that would not have occurred in the absence of war. See Human Security Centre, *Human Security Report 2005: War and Peace in the 21st Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 2, 4–5, 17–21, 29–31. The Centre promises that the indirect costs of war will receive major attention in its 2006 report (7).

2. Reinhold Niebuhr, *Human Nature*, vol. 1 of *The Nature and Destiny of Man*, reprint, 1941, The Scribner Lyceum Editions Library (New York: Scribner's, 1964), 94.

3. See especially the opening pages of *Gaudium et spes* [*Pastoral constitution on the Church in the modern world*] (1965), which identify the church as a companion to “the people of our time” on their journey, sharing their “joys and hopes” in solidarity §1.

4. *Ibid.*

5. *Gaudium et spes*, §27. This section is also quoted at length in John Paul II, *Evangelium vitae* [*The gospel of life*], encyclical letter (1995), §3. Also on the list of infamies were “degrading working conditions where people are treated as mere tools for profit.”

6. Chris Hedges, *War is a Force That Gives Us Meaning* (New York: Public Affairs, 2002), 3, 62.

7. *Ibid.*, 83–84.

8. *Ibid.*, 86.

9. Commission on International Affairs in Church of Norway Council on Ecumenical and International Relations, *Vulnerability and Security: Current Challenges in Security Policy from an Ethical and Theological Perspective* (2002), <http://www.kirken.no/english/engelsk.cfm?artid=5850>.

10. Duane K. Friesen and Gerald W. Schlabach, ed., *At Peace and Unafraid: Public Order, Security and the Wisdom of the Cross* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 2005), 60–61, 89–90, cf. 104–8. Quotations are from pp. 89 and 60, respectively.

11. *Gaudium et spes*, §79 The council's summary description of the state of humanity as “deplorable” vis-à-vis modern warfare also appears in this section.

12. *Ibid.*, §§79–80.

13. Cf. John C. Ford, S.J., “The Morality of Obliteration Bombing,” *Theological Studies* 5 (September 1944): 261–309. Published as it was while World War II was still raging, Ford's article had initially been a “voice crying in the wilderness,” but became increasingly influential in the decades to follow.

14. *Gaudium et spes*, §80.

15. *Ibid.* A footnote specifies previous papal condemnations of total war: From Pius XII, an allocution on September 30, 1954 and a radio message of December 24, 1954; from John XXIII, his 1963 encyclical letter *Pacem in terris*; from Paul VI, a speech before the United Nations on October 4, 1965.

16. Title of Ivan Kauffman's chapter two in the present book.

17. *Gaudium et spes*, §80.

18. Pope John Paul II, *Centesimus Annus* [*On the Hundredth Anniversary of Rerum Novarum*], encyclical letter (1991), §52. The pope continued: “Just as the time has finally come when in individual States a system of private vendetta and reprisal has given way to the rule of law, so too a similar step forward is now urgently needed in the international community. Furthermore, it must not be forgotten that at the root of war there are usually real and serious grievances: injustices suffered, legitimate aspirations frustrated, poverty, and the exploitation of multitudes of desperate people who see no real possibility of improving their lot by peaceful means.” Available December 11, 2006. www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_01051991_centesimus-annus_en.html.

19. E.g.: Message for the World Day of Peace, January 1, 2000; address to diplomatic corps, January 13, 2003.

20. ZENIT News Agency, "Pope Isn't a Pacifist, Says Vatican Spokesman," February 13, 2003; ZENIT News Agency, "Holy See Is Not Pacifist But Peace-Making, Says Cardinal Sodano," February 18, 2003.

21. "[W]e cannot but express our admiration for all who forgo the use of violence to vindicate their rights and have recourse to those other means of defence which are available to weaker parties, provided it can be done without detriment to the rights and duties of others and of the community." *Gaudium et spes*, §78.

22. United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), *The Challenge of Peace: God's Promise and Our Response* (Washington DC: United States Catholic Conference, 1983), §74.

23. The United Methodist Council of Bishops, *In Defense of Creation: The Nuclear Crisis and a Just Peace*, Foundation Document (Nashville: Graded Press, 1986), 33, 88.

24. John Howard Yoder, ed. and trans., *The Schleithem Confession*, introd. by Leonard Gross (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1973), art. 6.

25. Glen Stassen, ed., *Just Peacemaking: Ten Practices for Abolishing War* (Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 1998). More recently, see Stassen's refinements and responses to critics in "The Unity, Realism, and Obligatoriness of Just Peacemaking Theory," *Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics* 23, no. 1 (2003): 171–94.

26. The introduction closes with a page and a half of lingering differences and unfinished business. Only one sentence on those pages broaches a matter so fundamental that it might have meant crossing off one of the "ten practices" to make them nine: "We do not all agree with [the] affirmation of humanitarian [military] intervention" to halt egregious human rights abuses, "but we think it should be included." (Glen Stassen, *Just Peacemaking: Ten Practices for Abolishing War*, 26.) This refers to "practice" number eight, which called for strengthening the United Nations and other international peacekeeping forces—military ones—in order to halt genocide and other egregious human rights abuses. Cf. Michael Joseph Smith, "Strengthen the United Nations and International Efforts for Cooperation and Human Rights," in *Just Peacemaking: Ten Practices for Abolishing War*, ed. Glen Stassen (Pilgrim Press, 1998), 146–55. Lisa Sowle Cahill has also noted that the just peacemaking consensus is weakest around the ethical justification of coercion; see her "Just Peacemaking: Theory, Practice, and Prospects," *Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics* 23, no. 1 (2003): 195–96, 200–204.

27. Jonathan Schell, "No More Unto the Breach," two-part series, *Harper's*, March and April 2003, 33–46, 41–55; Jonathan Schell, *The Unconquerable World: Power, Nonviolence, and the Will of the People* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2003).

28. Or as Schell put it: "Even the briefest review of the efforts of peacemakers from that time [August 1917] forward reveals that quiet but deep changes, both in the grand architecture of the world and in its molecular processes, have profoundly altered not only the shape of the global structures of violence but also the resources available for replacing them with something better." Schell, "No More Unto the Breach," I:36.

29. Schell, "No More Unto the Breach," I:42.

30. *Ibid.*, I:38–40.

31. *Ibid.*, I:42.

32. The Chinese case is by no means unique. In his longer work, Schell shows that in their critical phases, revolutions in Britain, the American colonies, France, and Russia all turned not on military force but on shifts in popular support that required revolutionaries to exercise restraint, even when their ideologies told them that military power would be decisive. Though only some revolutionaries would go on to concede the point, and few

would fully recognize its import, in every case the revolutions were won (through social mobilization) before they were “won” (through violent insurrection). See chapters five and six of Schell, *The Unconquerable World*.

33. Schell, “No More Unto the Breach,” II:42.

34. *Ibid.*, I:43.

35. *Ibid.*, II:42.

36. *Ibid.*, I:44.

37. *Ibid.*

38. *Ibid.*, I:46.

39. *Ibid.*, I:44.

40. *Ibid.*, I:46.

41. Human Security Centre, *Human Security Report 2005*. For an overview, see pp. 1–11. The report is available online at <http://www.humansecurityreport.info>.

42. Human Security Centre, *Human Security Report 2005*, 9.

43. *Ibid.*, 9–10.

44. The final report of the international dialogue is now available; see “Called Together to be Peacemakers: Report of the International Dialogue Between the Catholic Church and Mennonite World Conference, 1998–2003,” *Information Service* 2003-II/III, no. 113 (2004): 111–48. The report is available online at www.bridgefolk.net/theology as well as at www.mwc-cmm.org/MWC/dialogue and www.prounione.urbe.it/dia-int/e_dialogues.html.

45. The initial version has been published with responses in Ivan J. Kauffman, ed., *Just Policing: Mennonite-Catholic Theological Colloquium 2002*, Bridgefolk Series, no. 2 (Kitchener, Ontario: Pandora Press, 2004). For a further refined version, see “Just Policing: How War Could Cease to be a Church-Dividing Issue,” *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 41, no. 3–4 (Summer–Fall 2004) 409–30. I have also provided certain comments and clarifications of special importance to historic peace churches in “Just Policing and the Christian Call to Nonviolence,” in *At Peace and Unafraid: Public Order, Security and the Wisdom of the Cross*, eds. Duane K. Friesen and Gerald W. Schlabach (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 2005), 405–22.

46. See Gerald W. Schlabach, “Just Policing, Not War,” *America* 189, no. 1 (July 7–14, 2003): 19–21; and the best-selling book by *Sojourners* editor Jim Wallis, *God’s Politics: Why the Right Gets It Wrong and the Left Doesn’t Get It* ([San Francisco]: HarperSanFrancisco, 2005), 165–68. A reference to just policing also appears in World Council of Churches, *Vulnerable Populations at Risk: Statement on the Responsibility to Protect*, approved by the 9th assembly, February 14–23, 2006, document no. PIC 02–2 (Porto Alegre, Brazil), §17.

PART I

**Things that Make for Peace:
Reconsiderations**

If War is Wrong, What is Right? The New Paradigm

Ivan J. Kauffman

We have entered a new epoch in the church's history. It began in the ashes of World War II, after Christians had slaughtered each other by the millions in two wars that could have been avoided. It came to maturity in the forty years of cold war that followed, the war that could not be fought because the weapons available were too terrible to be used. And it gained its final shape at the hands of Mahatma Gandhi, who developed entirely new methods for combating injustice.

When Gandhian techniques brought an end to the cold war, Christians everywhere realized a new option existed and that their ethical argument was no longer between just wars and pacifism. For centuries the question had been, "What should Christians do when war breaks out?" But the Gandhian successes raised a fundamentally different question: "What are the alternatives to warfare? How do we prevent wars and end them once they have begun?"

These new questions do much more than simply restate the issues Christians have debated for centuries. They raise fundamentally new issues, and they require us to think in entirely new ways. They constitute a genuine paradigm shift.

The magnitude and reality of this historic shift in Christian thinking was clearly apparent in the statements church leaders issued in response to the attacks of September 11, 2001. Together they provide a revealing

snapshot of current Christian thinking on warfare, which one can summarize in this way:

- The just war theory no longer guides Christian thinking on the morality of warfare. It was notable for its absence in the churches' post-9/11 statements. But despite this, the churches as a whole have not abandoned their belief that Christians bear responsibility for the order of society.
- The Christian churches as an international community are almost unanimously committed to peace. But despite this, few Christians would describe themselves as pacifists.
- Christians as an international group believe that practical alternatives to conventional military action exist. However, they can seldom describe these alternatives in politically viable terms.

These statements, and those that church leaders issued two years later in voicing their virtually unanimous opposition to the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq, mark a turning point in the churches' position toward warfare. But despite their clarity and unanimity, government leaders ignored them. Poll data indicated that lay Christians largely ignored them as well.

The situation these events reveal is a genuine crisis, both political and ecclesiological. Lacking clear moral guidance from their leaders, most lay Christians, both as voters and as government officials, have reverted to a pre-Christian doctrine of necessary war in some form. They appear to have concluded that it is impossible to apply Christian ethics to the often difficult decisions governments must make, and so they no longer attempt to do so.

Only by offering a positive and practical alternative to warfare, and offering it in politically viable terms, can that belief be changed.

Historical Perspectives

We can only appreciate the magnitude of the current shift by viewing it in historical perspective. We cannot change the past; it is whatever it is. But we can understand the past and learn from it. That is how we make progress, not by rejecting history, but by interrogating it.

Jesus

To understand our history we must first understand Jesus' history. An immense amount of historical and biblical research has taken place in the past century that provides us with a much clearer picture of the political context of Jesus' ministry than the church has possessed since its early centuries. John Howard Yoder's *The Politics of Jesus* in particular has opened new perspectives on Jesus' ministry that continue to attract wide attention throughout the Christian community.

Unfortunately, we do not yet have an equivalently deep understanding of the five centuries of Yahwist and Judean history that preceded Jesus' life. This is the period that began with the return of Judean exiles in the late sixth century B.C.E., and continued through the Greek and Roman Empires. It ended with the construction of a grand new Jerusalem temple shortly before Jesus' birth.

This colonial period was a vivid contrast to the four centuries that had preceded it. Then, Jerusalem had been a thriving and independent city-state, founded by King David and governed by his descendents. In the centuries immediately prior to Jesus' birth there had been attempts to restore the Judean city-state to independence by military action, the third-century Maccabean revolt being the most significant. In Jesus' time guerrilla bands inspired by the Maccabeans were still active.

Jesus' attitude toward this historical legacy was complex, and has been difficult for subsequent Christians to understand. On the one hand Jesus accepted the fundamental assumption of his tradition, that Yahweh intended to create a new kingdom centered in Jerusalem. But he rejected what most of his contemporaries considered to be an equally basic part of that tradition, the assumption that the Yahwist kingdom would be governed as David's had been, by military power.

Jesus' decision to go to Jerusalem to confront the political establishment of his time was not accidental. It was a carefully considered action, one intended to inaugurate a new kingdom in which he and his followers would rule. But Jesus' decision to confront the political establishment of his time with nonviolent power was equally intentional. Jesus' actions at the end of his life completely redefined what it means to be a kingdom and what it means to be a king, and by his death and resurrection he supplied the power that has allowed that new vision to become an historical reality.

To spiritualize the concept of kingdom, as many Christians have done, completely distorts Jesus' message. Jesus clearly taught us to pray for

a kingdom on earth, where Yahweh's will is done. But in the twenty centuries since Christ's birth his followers have tended either to believe that Christ's kingdom is like any other kingdom, and therefore must be governed like any other kingdom, or else to believe that Jesus' use of the word "kingdom" is simply a metaphor for something non-political and exclusively spiritual.

Christians through the centuries have tended to divide between those two aspects of Jesus' political witness. Pacifists have championed Jesus' nonviolence, but have for the most part ignored his sense of responsibility to inaugurate a new political order. Just war Christians have focused on Jesus' recognition of the need for a new political order, but have in effect sided with Jesus' executioners in assuming that political structures can only be created and maintained by means of religiously legitimated violence.

The Early Church

For a few weeks after the Resurrection, Jesus kept the infant Christian community alive by appearing to its members in his resurrected body. But with Pentecost those appearances ended, and the first generation Christians, who numbered at best in the thousands, were left with a truly daunting task. Jesus had commissioned them to communicate the almost incredible story of his life, death, and resurrection to a civilization whose values and practices were profoundly incompatible with that story.

It quickly became clear that Jesus' followers would meet the same opposition he had, and recognition of this reality fills pages of the New Testament. Nonetheless, the early Christians responded exactly as Jesus had—nonviolently. There is not a single incident known to us in which the early Christians responded to violence with counter-violence.

Their heroes were the martyrs, whose memories they revered and remembered in much the same way they remembered Jesus' life. The martyrs' influence in early church history was so great that it eventually became the cult of the saints that still exists.

Outside the church, meanwhile, the martyrs' witness had such great impact they earned the name "seed of the Church." Within only two hundred years, what began as a tiny sect had become a major international religious institution with its own organizational structures, liturgical practices, writings, and doctrines, as well as a growth rate that continued century after century. Persecution continued on a sporadic and local basis, but after each episode the church emerged stronger, and with more members.

The church's vitality was in marked contrast to the Roman Empire, which was crumbling under the huge and endless costs of maintaining an army to defend the empire against its numerous enemies, especially along its northern borders. By the end of the third century, Roman government had become chaotic, with military strongmen ousting one another on almost a yearly basis. One of them, Diocletian, finally established order and he determined to use his power to eradicate the church once and for all. His persecution was the most violent to date, but it also failed and left the church triumphant. Diocletian's successor, Constantine the Great, himself became a Christian and ended the Empire's persecution of the church.¹

Constantine opened a new era in the church's political life. Christians no longer faced the challenge of surviving political hostility. Now their challenge was converting existing political structures into something compatible with Christian belief. The first battle had been an epic one that changed human history. This second would be no easier, nor its impact on human history any less.

Charlemagne

The centuries immediately following Constantine were characterized above all by Christian evangelism, and the success of this evangelism eventually resulted in the spread of Christianity throughout the Mediterranean and the area now called Europe. Early Christians believed it was their mission to convert all humans to Christianity, and as Christian evangelism continued to succeed in one culture after another, it became clear that the final result would be societies where everyone was Christian, and therefore everyone in authority was Christian.

But how were Christians to govern themselves? That question became very real when the western half of the old Roman Empire collapsed in the fifth century. This produced political chaos in Italy, southern France, the Rhine Valley, and England, all the places where Christianity had first taken root.

In the newly evangelized Frankish and Germanic territories, people were still in a tribal stage of political development. Here the church was dealing with ethnic groups that had lived on the periphery of the Roman Empire for centuries, enjoying many of its benefits but never experiencing the rule of law that made those benefits possible.²

In the Greek-speaking East, the area where the imperial capital was now located, Christians faced a different but no less difficult challenge.

Here deeply embedded traditions that had been in place for millennia virtually demanded a fusion of religious and political authority.

What made things even more difficult everywhere was that newly converted Christians often had only a rudimentary grasp of what it meant to be a Christian. Their immediate and understandable inclination was to view Christianity as simply another in the long line of polytheist religions they had always known, and not as a way of life.

From this powerful and intense interaction of political, cultural, and religious forces a new civilization emerged in the eighth and ninth centuries. The leader of this epochal development was Charlemagne, one of history's greatest political geniuses. Charlemagne came to power in a situation of almost unparalleled chaos, and by his death had bequeathed to subsequent generations the foundations on which European civilization rests to this day.

Charlemagne's civilization was based on a partnership between the warrior class, which he led, and the intellectual class that had emerged from the growing network of monasteries in Europe. Charlemagne incorporated the monks' intellectual skills into his government structures, thus making efficient and honest administration possible, and in turn the monks lent their considerable moral authority to Charlemagne's vision of an empire based on Christian belief—what would eventually be called Christendom.

This new political partnership was phenomenally successful. It eventually established a rule of law that greatly decreased political disorder throughout Europe, and it made education and spiritual development available to ordinary people, producing an unusually productive, inventive, and self-reliant citizenry.

But despite its great success, this partnership contained within itself a defect that plagues western civilization to this day. Charlemagnian governments could maintain order internally, essentially by adapting Roman political institutions to Celtic traditions, but they had no way to establish peace along their borders, just as the Romans had not been able to do.

So long as there was strong central power there was reasonable peace within Europe, but there was rarely someone of Charlemagne's abilities available to govern his empire and it increasingly disintegrated into a patchwork of competing warlords, each with his own castle—what subsequent historians would call feudalism.

Crusades

In the eleventh century, 250 years after Charlemagne, the great spiritual leader Bernard of Clairvaux advocated a solution to the problem of feudalism. It was to enlist Europe's numerous warriors into a single grand army dedicated to defeating the Muslim Empire that then occupied many formerly Christian territories, above all the area surrounding Jerusalem, which Christians regarded as "the Holy Land."

The Crusades were a failure militarily, but they initiated a process that eventually produced a system of more or less cohesive European nation states. The Crusades and the emerging nation states left their deepest and most permanent mark on European civilization by providing a theological validation for violence. The widely held argument was that if Christians allowed error to go unopposed, they were responsible for the damage it might do both to individuals and to society.

A more attractive rationale for "redemptive violence" can hardly be imagined, allowing the Crusaders to put on baptismal garments with a cross emblazoned on them and go off to kill people, thinking it a saintly act. In turn, the same theological arguments that supported the Crusades would later be used to support the Inquisition, in which religiously legitimated violence became part of the church's permanent structures.³

The Reformation

Today the theological rationale for the Crusades and Inquisition is widely regarded as a terrible error. But in the sixteenth century the Reformation gave it even greater legitimacy. The idea of national churches was central to sixteenth-century Protestantism, and it was only a short step from belief in legitimated violence to belief in the autonomous nation state, whose self-interests were the basis for all moral consideration.

As a result, both Catholic and Protestant Europe came to accept as a fixed principle that all conflicts could ultimately be resolved only through violence. This principle led in the sixteenth century to something that had never before taken place, at least not on a broad scale, the systematic persecution of Christians by other Christians.⁴ In the seventeenth century the acceptance of this principle would produce a series of religious wars, both civil and international.

After two centuries of inter-religious warfare, Europe would turn to rationality as the way to international order. In the eighteenth century, diplomacy and negotiated treaties came to be the preferred alternative to warfare. But despite this development, the theological legitimation

of warfare that had been developed to justify the Crusades retained its unquestioned validity. Resort to warfare thus became routine.

The Just War Theory

Beginning in the medieval period there had been a significant effort to subject warfare to the rule of law, and this effort gained force in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Although the ultimate source of this legal theory had been the theological writings of St. Augustine, the just war theory of the Modern Era was essentially a legal rather than religious theory, developed primarily by legal theorists. This development was an important part of an effort to subject international conflict to rational control.

The just war theory never succeeded in achieving the goal of its authors, however. Instead it evolved into an autonomous intellectual theory that could be used to legitimate any military action that any sovereign state chose to undertake. Rather than limiting warfare to just cases fought by just means, it increasingly came to justify warfare under all circumstances.

That fact would have immense and profound impacts in the twentieth century, when the Western nations would devote large proportions of their political and economic resources to conducting warfare against one another.

The Post-War Era

Witnessing millions of Christians being killed by other Christians in World Wars I and II raised profound moral questions. But these wars would be followed by two equally significant meta-events,⁵ which would intensify the crisis the Christian world now faces. These meta-events were the development of nuclear weapons, and the development of non-violent techniques for resisting political injustice. Both were fundamental changes, not merely an extension of previous trends, and together they would play the major role in bringing about the paradigm shift now taking place in the Christian community.⁶

The use of nuclear weapons by the United States in World War II impacted Christian attitudes toward warfare as nothing else in recent history has done. The just war theory, which had reigned virtually unchallenged for centuries, now came under increasingly skeptical scrutiny not only by Christian theologians and ethicists, but also by bishops and pastors and by lay Christians everywhere in the world.

Only three years after World War II ended the World Council of Churches declared, at its founding meeting in 1948, that war is a sin against God and humanity. Fifteen years later the world's Catholic bishops, convened at the Second Vatican Council by Pope John XXIII, called for "a completely fresh appraisal of war" in a groundbreaking document that removed the just war theory from the place of unquestioned authority it had long held.⁷

Forty years after World War II the Catholic bishops of the United States issued a pastoral letter in 1983 that questioned whether nuclear weapons could ever be used. "We are living in a global age with problems and conflicts on a global scale," they said. "Either we shall learn to resolve these problems together, or we shall destroy one another."⁸

A few years later the European churches—Protestant, Orthodox, and Catholic—issued a united statement confessing that the European churches "have caused wars and have failed to use all opportunities" to prevent them. "We have condoned and often too easily justified wars," the seven hundred leaders said. "We strongly affirm the importance of nonviolent political means as the appropriate way of seeking to bring about change in Europe," they said. "There are no situations in our countries or on our continent in which violence is required or justified."⁹

But despite the strong questioning of the just war tradition that took place after World War II, no significant new Christian pacifist movement developed. Many church leaders regretted their involvement in the pacifist movements of the 1930s, believing their efforts to prevent Western nations from going to war had the unintended consequence of strengthening the Nazi government. In their view, pacifists of the 1930s had encouraged Germany to invade the nations on its borders, under the assumption that Western democracies were so constrained by the pacifist movement they would not interfere. The acquiescence of Chamberlain's government to Hitler's invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1938 certainly supported that view.

Leading the reaction against pacifism was Reinhold Niebuhr. Niebuhr had himself been a pacifist before World War II, and he argued with a convert's fervor against what he had come to believe was its naive utopianism. In an essay entitled "Why the Christian Church Is Not Pacifist," he said of his former colleagues, "They merely assert that if only men loved one another, all the complex, and sometimes horrible, realities of the political order could be dispensed with." What they failed to see, he said, is that "their 'if' begs the most basic problem of human history." Since humans are by nature sinful, justice can be achieved only "by a

certain amount of coercion on the one hand and resistance to coercion and tyranny on the other hand.”¹⁰

Niebuhr’s analysis produced what he acknowledged to be “a frank dualism in morals.” In a book entitled *Moral Man and Immoral Society* he argued that Christians must distinguish between “what we expect of individuals and of groups.” The highest ideal for Christians as individuals is unselfishness, but for nations the rules are different. “Society,” he wrote, “must strive for justice even if it is forced to use means, such as self-assertion, resistance, coercion, and perhaps resentment, which cannot gain the moral sanction of the most sensitive moral spirit.”¹¹

With the advantage of hindsight it is now obvious that Niebuhr had completely missed the significance of what was happening in India during his lifetime. This was so despite all his intellectual power, his admirable realism about the reality of evil, and his appreciation for the differences between individual morality and political ethics. His contemporary Mohandas K. Gandhi was an equally profound thinker, but one who held a very different view of human nature and of political power. And he was leading a historic political movement for Indian independence that would call into question much of what Niebuhr had uncritically assumed to be axiomatic.

Niebuhr of course was not alone. In the 1950s and even into the 1960s virtually all Western observers regarded Gandhi’s success as a political aberration, brought about by a unique combination: an oriental holy man, India’s ancient culture, and the English people’s unusually high moral standards. However, in the decades following Gandhi’s death the world would witness a series of similar liberation movements, all based on Gandhian techniques and all successful.

First was the U.S. Civil Rights Movement, led by Martin Luther King, Jr., who had traveled to India to study Gandhi’s techniques. This was followed in the 1980s by similar liberation movements in the Philippines, Korea, and Haiti, all achieved despite very powerful military opposition. And following all these victories was an even more amazing event, the victory of the Solidarity movement in Poland that in turn brought an end to the Soviet occupation of Eastern Europe. The next year the deeply entrenched apartheid regime in South Africa also fell, once again nonviolently.

This completely unexpected process culminated in the collapse of the Soviet Union itself in the early 1990s, and in the establishment of a democracy in Russia. All this happened virtually without military combat, using only techniques that Gandhi had developed. No prece-

dent in human history exists for these events. The Christian churches strongly supported all these movements, and were often involved in their leadership.

We are still too close to these events to understand them. Indeed we often find it difficult to believe they actually happened (despite our having witnessed them) and we have only begun to chronicle their detailed history. Still, their existence is beyond question, and it is forcing us inescapably to a profound paradigm shift, a questioning of things that human beings have taken for granted for thousands of years. It is very difficult for us to imagine conducting our political affairs if these old assumptions are not true, but it is clear we must find a way to do so. This is equally true for persons who have held just war beliefs and those who have been pacifists.

9/11

Our increasing awareness that there is a third option is very different from the ability to apply it to specific cases, as the churches' leaders were to learn following the terrorist attacks of 9/11.

Within hours of the attacks church leaders in the United States began issuing statements, and they would continue to do so in a more or less steady flow for the next ten weeks. These statements came from every part of the world, and from every major Christian group, with the exception of the independent Evangelical churches, which lacked the institutional capacity to issue statements that represented an entire body of believers.¹²

As a group these statements provided something of a snapshot of the churches' current thinking in regard to warfare, and what this snapshot reveals is both hopeful and disturbing.¹³

It is symbolic of these statements that the ones issued by the Mennonite Central Committee and by the Episcopal Bishops of the United States are in many ways indistinguishable. Although Mennonites have historically rejected the just war theory's reliance on consequential arguments, one of their major 9/11 statements relies heavily on such predictions. "A military strike against Afghanistan risks massive human suffering," the Mennonite Central Committee statement said. "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."¹⁴

The Episcopal bishops of the United States have traditionally rejected pacifist arguments based purely on theology, but their 9/11 statement is filled with them. "We come together also in the shadow of the cross," the bishops declare; the cross is the "unequivocal sign that suffering and death are never the end." They describe Jesus' death and resurrection as a "radical act of peace-making" that had as its goal "nothing less than the right ordering of all things," a world organized "according to God's passionate desire for justness," a world in which "the full flourishing of humankind and all creation" takes place. This project, in which all Christians participate "by virtue of our baptism," involves "reordering and transforming the patterns of our common life."¹⁵

Indeed virtually all the statements issued after 9/11 combine just war and pacifist arguments, often in the same paragraph, as some of the statements candidly acknowledge. But despite this melding of what had once been considered incompatible, none of the statements attempted to explain how it had become possible to combine pacifist beliefs and the just war theory into a single coherent viewpoint.

Despite this uncertain rationale, the statements do present a virtually unanimous opposition to U.S. government policy. Not a single statement by a major church body anywhere in the world offered blanket support for a military campaign against Afghanistan. Catholic and U.S. Lutheran leaders were willing to provide a reluctant and highly qualified acceptance of it as a regrettable but necessary evil, but they were alone even in this tenuous support. There was an historic consensus throughout the international church that a military response to the 9/11 attacks was mistaken and should be avoided.

In this regard the qualitative difference between U.S. leaders' statements and those from elsewhere in the international community is quite striking. When the bombing campaign began in Afghanistan, the presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America wrote that although Christians are obligated to "act to prevent wars and seek alternatives to them," now that the war had begun his church understands that "under certain circumstances there may be no other way to offer protection to innocent people."

But the next day the general secretary of the Lutheran World Federation, of which the ELCA is a member, issued a statement that was harshly critical of the U.S. action. "The United States must, henceforth, play a new and different role" it said, becoming a "team player" that listens to other nations and works with them. The "globalized world" that is coming into being cannot simply be "a stage for free competi-

tion"; it must be based on a common search for "humankind's common future."¹⁶

Not only were other church leaders much more critical of U.S. government policy than their American colleagues, they also differed with them about the causes of the conflict.

Metropolitan Kirill, speaking for the Russian Orthodox Church, spoke for his colleagues throughout the Middle East and Asia when he said he feared the September 11 attacks were the beginning of a "civilization war." A new global civilization is being constructed, based entirely on "western liberal values" he said. "I wish all of us, including Americans, understood that it is impossible to build a mono-polar world," the Orthodox leader said. "Humanity can't live according to one standard, no matter what standard it is—western liberal, Islamic, Catholic or Orthodox." The terrorist attacks took place because people couldn't find any other way "to fight against the order imposed on them."¹⁷

Most Western leaders assumed that the conflict with Islam was caused by the disparity in economic standards, whereas Christian leaders in the Middle East and Asia believed that it was caused by the West's lack of respect for other cultures and civilizations.

The statements also reveal a widespread consensus that nonviolent alternatives to military action exist. The head of the Presbyterian Church (USA) urged that "every non-violent alternative be employed before there is a resort to the use of violence." The national leadership of the United Church of Christ called on the U.S. government to "use the even more massive non-violent power available to us to address those chronic conflicts that destabilize the world."

The Catholic bishops of Asia issued a statement that was explicitly Gandhian: "The Bishops of Asia have known for long years the brutal reality of violence and the depth of inhumanity it can reach," they said. Quoting Gandhi's observation that "An eye for an eye leaves everyone blind," they declared that he was speaking "in the spirit of the Sermon on the Mount" in saying this. "Hatred is not quenched by hatred, but by compassion and love," they added. "The Church is deeply committed to the summons of Jesus to peace-making," and joins with "all people of good will in . . . building a just, nonviolent, and peaceful world."¹⁸

Both the quantity and the quality of these statements is impressive. They reveal an historic consensus in the Christian community, one that has profound implications for the future. But suddenly they ended.

In the ten weeks following 9/11, more than seventy-five official statements by the leaders of major bodies were issued, on average more than

one per day. But when the military invasion of Afghanistan succeeded in mid-November and newspaper and television reports began to suggest that the Afghan people as a whole were pleased to see the fundamentalist Taliban government defeated, along with the largely foreign al Qaeda military organization, the flow of church statements came to an abrupt halt. After November 18 there would be none.

Why? Why did the churches have so much to say while the war was going on, but nothing to say after the Afghan invasion was successful?

One obvious reason was that the negative consequences which virtually all church leaders had predicted turned out to be mistaken, at least in the short term. The bombing campaign had caused far fewer civilian casualties than critics had expected. The refugee crisis many experts had predicted did not occur. And rather than producing widespread hunger, as many critics had predicted, the U.S. military action allowed the U.N. Food Programme to move massive grain shipments into Afghanistan.

But this was only the beginning. How could the churches criticize a policy that appeared to have succeeded when they had nothing to offer as an alternative? The result was that the churches, along with all the opponents of the Afghanistan invasion, were left with the appearance of being sideline critics, or what was even worse, critics whose information was faulty and whose judgment was naive.

And there was a third factor: it had never been clear exactly what motivated the churches' opposition to the invasion of Afghanistan. Was it based on pacifism or the just war theory or something else? Pope John Paul instructed his press secretary to tell reporters, "The pope is not a pacifist. . . . If someone has done great harm to society, and there is a danger that if he remains free he may be able to do it again, you have the right to apply self-defense for the society which you lead, even though the means may be aggressive."

"The pope understands the difficulties of a political leader who has to respond to such issues," the press secretary said. But he added that if the pope is not a pacifist neither is he a militarist. "Some people in Europe would like to present the pope as a pacifist," he said, "and some people in America would like to see him as someone who wants to see the application of justice by any means. Both are wrong."¹⁹

That important statement surely left many, including numerous Catholics serving in the military, wondering what official Catholic teaching on warfare now was.

Two years later when an invasion of Iraq was being debated, it became clear the churches' post-9/11 experience had been far more than an

embarrassment. Having discredited themselves by making predictions that were inaccurate, and by failing to present credible alternatives or even to offer a clear moral vision, church leaders found themselves being ignored in the great debate that led to the invasion of Iraq.

What was most alarming was that church leaders appeared to be ignored by their own members. Polls in this period indicated that the more frequently people attended church services, the more likely they were to support the Bush administration, presumably including its foreign policy. A Lutheran pastor from South Dakota said that after 9/11 there was “a chasm” between the churches’ leaders and the people in the pew. “We need prophetic leadership that acknowledges the pain and anger but moves us in a new way,” he said. The need for that leadership became clear following the Iraq invasion.

Increasingly it has become apparent that the American public, both Christian and non-Christian, has adopted a theory of necessary war that owes much more to Darwin than to Christ. A letter writer in the *New York Times* stated this with great candor shortly after 9/11: “The children who have lost parents suddenly and violently suffer equally, in America and Afghanistan,” she wrote. “We, however, must now 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.”²⁰

No Christian leader would endorse such an argument, but what were the alternatives? Christian leaders from all denominations and traditions faced the same dilemma: they could not condemn the war because they recognized the need for justice, but neither could they support it without violating their most basic moral beliefs.

The Christian community wanted peace, but it had to permit war. It wanted to forgive its enemies, but it had to protect innocent people from further attacks. It was deeply aware that injustice—much of it caused by the West—provided an incentive for terrorism, but it could not excuse terrorism under any circumstances. It knew that U.S. military action would inflame the already strong anti-Western sentiments in the Islamic world, and it knew a war would put the tiny Christian communities there in grave danger, but it did not know what else to do. We wanted to follow the Sermon on the Mount, we wanted to be faithful to Jesus’ teachings, but we did not know how.

And so in the end the vast majority of Western Christians accepted the U.S. military campaign in Afghanistan as a necessary evil, a violation of Christian ideals, but nevertheless necessary to prevent an even greater evil.

Faced with the choice between passivity and violence we chose violence, although with extreme reluctance. We knew no other way.

Just Policing and the New Era

Ultimately the only convincing argument against the theory of necessary warfare is an action that by its success proves that warfare is not in fact necessary. Fortunately the Gandhian Revolution has provided us with that proof. Pope John Paul observed shortly after the fall of the Communist Empire, that although it had appeared the Soviet occupation of Eastern Europe "could only be overcome by another war" it was instead "overcome by the nonviolent commitment of people, who, while always refusing to yield to the force of power, succeeded time after time in finding effective ways of bearing witness to the truth."²¹

What we now know, based on incontrovertible evidence from conflicts in more than a dozen large nations on every continent, is that injustice of all kinds can successfully be resisted without employing politically legitimated violence.²² Equally important, it has demonstrated that non-violent techniques can replace unjust political structures with successful democracies.

The long debate between just war and pacifism is over, and the winner is neither St. Augustine nor St. Francis, neither John Howard Yoder nor Reinhold Niebuhr. It is Mohandas K. Gandhi and his followers: Martin Luther King, Jr. and the African-American churches; Benigno and Corazon Aquino; Lech Walesa and Cardinal Wojtyla; Nelson Mandela and Archbishop Tutu. To continue the moral debate as though their experiences did not exist, or were of only minor significance, would itself be immoral. It would be immoral not only because it would be dishonest, but even more because it would have the practical consequence of lending the theological community's de facto support to the theory of necessary evil.

The success of Gandhian techniques utterly transforms the ethical debate from one about philosophical and theological principles to one about political practices. The issue is no longer what is necessary, or what is right, or what is acceptable, but what is possible in actual human affairs.

The task of moral theology now is to listen to those Christians who have participated in successful Gandhian campaigns and to identify the reasons for their success, and then to describe these successful techniques in replicable terms, so that they can become the moral standards for other Christians in the future.

We must learn to think in entirely new ways, resolutely turning our backs on the old ways and committing ourselves courageously to an entirely different way of thinking. We must acknowledge the essential defect in the just war theory, which is its assumption that violence can somehow achieve justice. And we must with equal courage acknowledge the essential defect in pacifism, which is its assumption that justice can somehow be achieved simply by opposing violence.

In recent decades we have come to understand that peace is more—much, much more—than the absence of conflict and violence. Instead we have come to see that peace is the secondary result of something far more basic, something we have difficulty even conceptualizing, much less naming.

In the Hebrew Scriptures this basic reality is called *shalom*, but we have no word in our Greek and Latin-based languages that corresponds to that ancient Semitic word. The very concept of an integrated wholeness that this word represents is so alien to our analytical way of thinking that we can comprehend its meaning only with great difficulty, and then only imperfectly.

What has emerged in the Western theological community to fill this need is a consensus that peace must be made, and that peace can only be made by creating the conditions that do not require conflict. Pope Paul VI summarized this view with his oft-quoted words, “If you want peace work for justice.” Pope John Paul II raised it to a new level of prominence by promoting the vision of a “Civilization of Love,” which he advocated on numerous occasions since 1994, and made a cornerstone of his social teaching.²³

In the United States this new understanding of peace has produced the concept of *peace building*. This phrase is in stark contrast to two older ones, *peacekeeping* and *peace advocacy*, the first favored by just war adherents and the second by pacifists.

The concept of peace building reflects a growing realization that peace cannot be kept if the conditions necessary for large-scale social and political harmony do not exist. Attempting to keep the peace where no real peace exists simply adds additional layers of violence to those that already exist. It is ultimately self-defeating, as the United States learned at great cost in Vietnam, and is re-learning in Iraq.

But neither can pacifists advocate peace when the conditions necessary for peace do not exist. To advocate peace in situations where injustice is taking place without some realistic action for dealing with that injustice is simply to ask those who are suffering to do so in silence so that others can have the benefits of peace.

Peace building requires personal involvement from everyone. We cannot say, "Let the army do it," nor can we claim the moral high ground by simply saying, "Let's protest what the army is doing." We must instead ask ourselves three very simple questions: "What is the problem causing this conflict?" "What is the solution to that problem?" and "What can we do to contribute to that solution?" Then we must act on the answers to those questions. If we do not we are part of the problem, which is largely caused by what human societies have failed to do.

Action is absolutely central to the paradigm shift that is taking place, for this new paradigm counters violence with nonviolent alternatives. It is as much a political theory as it is a theological one.

How do we begin to implement this new paradigm? This book is itself an encouraging and concrete step in that direction. That it is a collaboration between scholars from both just war and pacifist traditions is a real sign of hope.

The concept of just policing clearly places the focus on achieving justice in human society, rather than on simply reacting to war when it breaks out. It is inherently proactive. And it takes seriously the need to have a practical means to respond to injustice when it occurs, as inevitably it will in a world filled with inherited evil. But by combining the concepts of policing and justice, this new concept subjects policing itself to the very standards it tries to enforce.

Just policing's most hopeful potential as a concept is its ability to provide a common base on which Christians on both sides of the political spectrum can join forces. Just policing is something both liberals and conservatives can support. There will of course be vigorous debates over precisely what constitutes just policing, and how best to carry it out in specific cases, but that is as it should be. We will never have truly just policing on any level in society without the contributions of everyone involved. What is essential is that the need for policing and the need for it to be done justly both be acknowledged.

The new epoch that has opened before us is a major opportunity, one of the most important in all Christian history. Let us accept it as a gift, and move forward in humility and in strength.

Notes

1. The history of Constantine has been a major point of contention between those inclined to the pacifist and just war doctrines. Pacifist groups tend to regard his reign as the “fall of the Church” whereas supporters of the just war doctrine tend to regard it as “the triumph of the Church.” The first view is summarized by Franklin Littell in *The Origins of Sectarian Protestantism: A Study of the Anabaptist View of the Church* (New York: Macmillan, 1964); and by Donald Durnbaugh in *The Believers’ Church* (New York: Macmillan, 1968). Hermann Dörries, *Constantine the Great* (New York: Harper & Row, 1972) contains a history of the history of Constantine. Recent scholarship is summarized in Michael Grant, *Constantine the Great: The Man and His Times* (New York: Scribner’s Maxwell Macmillan International, 1994).

2. Richard A. Fletcher, *The Barbarian Conversion: From Paganism to Christianity* (New York: H. Holt and Co., 1998).

3. These developments are richly documented by Frederick H. Russell in *The Just War in the Middle Ages*, Cambridge Studies in Medieval Life and Thought, 3rd Ser., vol. 8 (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1975). The neglect this important work of scholarship has been met with is difficult to understand. The information it contains is essential to understanding the crisis in Christian moral and political theology the church now faces.

4. Brad S. Gregory, *Salvation at Stake: Christian Martyrdom in Early Modern Europe*, Harvard Historical Studies, vol. 134 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999).

5. The word *meta-event* is used to refer to events of large scale, wide impact, and long duration which shape the cultures in which they take place, in contrast to events of lesser magnitude that can be absorbed into that culture without requiring fundamental structural change.

6. Jonathan Schell documents this development in considerable detail in “No More Unto the Breach.”

7. *Gaudium et spes*, §§33–39. The phrase quoted is from §80.

8. National Conference of Catholic Bishops (NCCB), *The Challenge of Peace*. The phrases quoted are from §244.

9. This document was issued by a conference that took place in Basel, Switzerland in May 1989. The seven hundred delegates present included more than forty Catholic bishops, as well as the European leadership of the World Council of Churches, and numerous Orthodox bishops. Every European nation except Albania was represented, including those under Soviet domination, even though the fall of Communism would not take place until later in the year.

10. Reinhold Niebuhr, *The Essential Reinhold Niebuhr: Selected Essays and Addresses*, ed. Robert McAfee Brown (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), 109.

11. Reinhold Niebuhr, *Reinhold Niebuhr: Theologian of Public Life*, ed. Larry L. Rasmussen (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), 69, 77.

12. For a less charitable explanation, see the analysis of University of Virginia religious studies professor Charles Marsh, “Wayward Christian Soldiers,” *New York Times*, January 20, 2006. An Evangelical himself, Marsh nonetheless concludes by attributing Evangelical support for the recent U.S. wars to having “isolated ourselves from the shared faith of the global Church,” while making a “Faustian bargain for access and power.”

13. The documents cited below are available on the Internet, either at www.wfn.org, or at the issuing body’s own website.

14. Mennonite Central Committee Executive Committee, September 22, 2001.

15. "On Waging Reconciliation." Statement of the Episcopal Bishops of the United States, September 26, 2001.

16. Rev. H. George Anderson, Presiding Bishop, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, October 7, 2001; Dr. Ishmael Noko, General Secretary of the Lutheran World Federation, October 8, 2001.

17. Metropolitan Kirill of Smolensk and Kalingrad, chairman of the Dept. of External Church Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate, text of a television interview issued by the Russian Orthodox Church and reported by www.zenit.org, October 5, 2001.

18. Statement of the Federation of Asian Bishops Conferences, October 26, 2001.

19. Sharon LaFraniere, "Vatican Says Use of Force by U.S. Can be Justified," *Washington Post*, September 25, 2001.

20. *New York Times*, November 1, 2001.

21. John Paul II, *Centesimus Annus*, III, §23.

22. This is not to say that all violence can be avoided. In virtually every conflict where Gandhian techniques have been used a certain number of persons have suffered injury and other violations, and a few have died. But these casualties have been relatively few in number—miniscule in comparison to those that occur in warfare—and they have in nearly every case involved persons who voluntarily chose to undergo violence rather than inflict violence on others, so that instead of being casualties of war they became martyrs.

23. The *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, compiled by the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace at Pope John Paul's initiative and published by the Vatican in 2004, concludes with a section entitled "For a Civilization of Love." A comprehensive collection of statements on the vision of a "Civilization of Love" by both John Paul and his predecessor, Paul VI, is available at www.civilizationoflove.net.