

Rooted in Christian Hope: The Case for Pacifism

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AS A PACIFIST FOR MY ENTIRE ADULT LIFE, I find the DIALOGUE call for papers too inviting to ignore. During the Vietnam War thirty-five years ago, I came to grips with what pacifism requires of its adherents. I found the prospect of killing other human beings so offensive that I was prepared to go to Canada, if necessary, to avoid the draft, a plan in which my parents supported me. Fortunately, my draft board accepted my application for the status of conscientious objector, and I was not obliged to emigrate.

I first began thinking about the implications of war during college. This was the early Vietnam War era, and it was impossible to avoid the question, even though many tried. I studied that war specifically, but my studies brought me to consider the morality of war itself. After reading the Sermon on the Mount countless times and praying for guidance each time, I concluded that all war was wrong, a conclusion confirmed for me by spiritual witness.

I hope to defend my pacifism in the following essay. I will place pacifism in the long tradition of Christian thinking about war, distinguish it from alternatives, and offer three lines of reasoning which in my view lead to pacifistic convictions. I believe that pacifism is more coherent and morally and politically superior to its alternatives.

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In his classic review of Christian thinking about war, Roland Bainton argued that there are three fundamental approaches to war in the Christian tradition.¹

The first and most troubling is the crusade. In the crusade, Christians used armed force to advance religious or national goals. Second is the just war. In this approach, Christians accept the tragic necessity of war to protect the innocent but try hard to limit both the number of times armed force is used and the violence resulting from its use. The final position is that of the pacifist who rejects war, and especially Christian participation in armed struggle or, as the Anabaptist tradition calls it, "the sword."

Bainton's review is historically accurate, but moral theology or theological ethics has always found the crusade almost impossible to justify. As Bainton shows, even medieval crusaders themselves called their crusades a just war. Hence, in this essay I will bypass the crusade and concentrate on just war and pacifism.

JUST WAR

Just war theory has a long and honorable tradition that includes such late patristic sources as Augustine and such modern concepts as the law of war and limited war.² The essential insight is that, while Jesus commanded Christians not to do violence to others, even as a response to violence, he also commanded Christians to love their neighbor uncondition-

1. Roland Bainton, *Christian Attitudes towards War and Peace: A Historical Survey and Critical Re-evaluation* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1960). Bainton is the best place to start for the history of Christian thinking. Also useful for pacifistic thought is Geoffrey Nuttall, *Christian Pacifism in History* (Oxford: Blackwell Press, 1958). Also important are three works by Peter Brock of the University of Toronto. Brock is especially good on nonreligious pacifism, such as the militant atheist Bertrand Russell exemplified in the twentieth century. See his *Freedom from War: Non-Sectarian Pacifism from 1814-1914* (Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 1991); *Non-Sectarian Pacifism from the Middle Ages to the Great War* (Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 1991); *Pacifism in the United States from the Colonial Era to the First World War* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1968).

2. Still useful is C. J. Cadoux, *The Early Christian Attitude Toward War* (London: Headly Publishers, 1919). The doctrine's development in the Middle Ages is carefully detailed in Fredrick Russell, *The Just War in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge:

ally. Just war theorists hold that, while force in defense of self may never be acceptable, love of others may require force to protect them. For ourselves, we must turn the other cheek, but we are never commanded to turn someone else's cheek. The defense of the weak and the innocent may require more than not turning the cheek.

The use of the sword, however, must be limited by theological and moral commitments lest it degenerate into revenge and lust. As the just war tradition evolved in modern times, especially in the hands of early modern Spanish Jesuits Suarez and Vittoria and Dutch theorist Hugo Grotius, a series of principles developed about (1) the justice of going to war, *jus ad bellum*, and (2) the justice of how a war is fought, *jus in bello*. The first question asks whether fighting a particular war, e.g., Vietnam, is just. The second asks whether a particular way of fighting a war, e.g., mass bombing of cities, is morally permissible.

The first test, *jus ad bello*, requires us to pass a fairly precise series of tests to show that in a specific case we are justified in going to war. These conditions are:

1. There must be a just cause, primarily self-defense or defense of the innocents.
2. The war must be a last resort to achieve the just end.
3. The war must be proclaimed by the highest legal authority (in the United States the president and Congress).
4. There must be a clear announcement of the intention to use force.
5. There must be a reasonable hope for victory.
6. A nation must act with just intent.

Of these principles, the easiest for us to violate are the second and sixth. There are many ways to achieve a just result without going to war. In the first flush of war hysteria, it is very easy to overlook such alternatives as economic blockades, intrusive inspections, civil disobedience, etc. "Last resort" does not require active consideration of every conceivable alternative; but when a nation ignores obviously plausible alternatives or fails to show why they will not work, then such a war cannot be just. Consider the use of nuclear weapons on Japan. The claim is that more people, primarily

Americans, would have died in an invasion. But why did we need to invade? Because in a moment of braggadocio, we had declared that our aim was unconditional surrender. There are, however, two things wrong with this position, even in just war terms. The first is the injustice of the aim of unconditional surrender which will require an invasion that will kill hundreds of thousands or the use of nuclear weapons that will do the same. In either case, the stated aim will cause an immoral use of weapons unless the use of weapons is so inadequate that it violates the principle that a just war must have a reasonable hope for victory. The second is the failure to use other means of containment against Japan such as a blockade. A blockade would have taken longer. But hundreds of thousands of innocent civilians would not have paid for our folly with their lives.

The second great question of the just war tradition, the moral means of fighting a war, can be viewed generally as involving two principles: (1) noncombatant immunity and (2) proportionality. The first principle holds that one may not intentionally target innocent civilians. If the reason for war in the first place is the protection of innocent lives, then such targeting would be contradictory. In broad terms, one may never use weapons (e.g., strategic nuclear devices) or means of war (e.g., mass obliteration bombing), knowing beforehand that this method will kill large numbers of innocent civilians. The best contemporary just war theorists have thus concluded that using strategic nuclear weapons, such as the strategic deterrent initially aimed at the Soviet Union, inevitably entails the intention of killing hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of civilians.³ Hence, using such weapons would be absolutely forbidden by just war theory. At the end of World War II, President J. Reuben Clark Jr. gave eloquent, if angry, voice to the view that the use of nuclear weapons was immoral and a violation of the just war tradition:

3. Of the enormous literature on this topic, the two sides are best represented by William V. O'Brien, *The Conduct of Just and Limited War* (New York: Praeger, 1982) and John Finnis, Joseph Boyle, and Germain Grisez, *Nuclear Deterrence, Morality, and Realism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987). When confronted with a conflict between proportionality and noncombatant immunity, O'Brien holds for proportionality, thus arguing that the preservation of life and liberty may sometimes permit the use of strategic nuclear weapons. For Finnis, Boyle, and Grisez, the intentional killing of innocent citizens can never be tolerated as one of the outcomes because it is inherently contradictory to the position that using the weapons is a means of preserving the life and liberty of the inno-

Then as the crowning savagery of war, we as Americans wiped out hundreds of thousands of civilian population with the atom bomb in Japan, few if any of the ordinary civilians being any more responsible for the war than were we and perhaps no more aiding Japan in the war than we were aiding America. Military men are now saying that the atom bomb was a mistake. It was more than that: it was a world tragedy. Thus we have lost all that we have gained during the years from Grotius to 1912. And the worst of the atomic bomb tragedy is not that not only did the people of the United States not rise up in protest against this savagery, not only did it not shock us to read of this wholesale destruction of men, women and children, and cripples, but that it actually drew from the nation at large approval of this fiendish butchery.⁴

The second *jus in bello* principle is that of proportionality. In general, this is a sort of utility or cost-benefit form of analysis. It requires that the good expected from the use of armed force must strongly outweigh the evil that will result as well. Lives will be lost from enemy fire, from friendly fire, and from collateral damage to civilians. The judgment must be that the defense of the lives and liberty of innocent people outweighs the inevitable and tragic damage.

PACIFISM

Christian pacifism also has a distinguished and honorable history. Historically it is associated with a number of groups coming out of what George Hunston Williams has called "the radical reformation," such as the Anabaptists (e.g., Mennonite, Amish, Brethren) and later the Quakers.⁵ Documents as early as the 1528 Swiss-German Anabaptist *Schleitheim Confession of Faith* articulate a completely pacifistic position, but the core text of Christian Anabaptism is the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5-7; Luke 6:20-49; 3 Ne. 12). Pacifists claim that, for Christians, this sermon is the normative statement of how to live and that this vision is em-

cent. It always violates the principle that we may never directly intend the deaths of innocent civilians.

4. J. Reuben Clark, Jr., "Demand for the Proper Respect for Human Life," *Improvement Era*, November 1946, 689.

5. George Huntston Williams, *The Radical Reformation* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1962).; James Stayer, *Anabaptists and the Sword* (Lawrence, KS: Coronado Press, 1985); Adrian Davies, *The Quakers in English Society, 1655-1725* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); Hugh Barbour and J. William Frost, *The Quakers* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1988).

bodied in the Savior's life. How can one possibly square war, especially modern war, with this template of what human existence should be? Just war thinkers argue that, given the way the world is, war is a tragic necessity. But why should the moral life of Christians be determined by the mores of a corrupt world? Shouldn't our moral teacher be Jesus Christ, not Hobbes and Machiavelli? For example, consider the great American Protestant moralist and defender of just war, Reinhold Neibuhr.⁶ The fact that, at the height of his influence, Neibuhr found common cause with balance-of-power thinkers like Secretary of State Dean Acheson and relativistic Machiavellians like Hans Morgenthau (who called Neibuhr his "Rabbi") is a telling reminder of the dangers which Christian pacifists see from playing with "the sword."

Though Christian pacifists agree in opposing war, they reach that conclusion by two very different theological traditions. The first tradition, largely Anabaptist, stresses human sinfulness and our quickness to impulse, anger, and selfishness. Given this emotional make-up, human beings will inevitably use war as a means of domination and revenge. Christians are called to resist war because, given our sinful nature apart from God, only evil can result.⁷

The other position, with its roots in Quakerism, stresses an optimis-

6. Known as "realism," Neibuhr's view was the classic just war position: justice sometimes requires force, and without justice as a foundation, love is impossible. Three of Neibuhr's books focus on this problem: *Moral Man and Immoral Society* (New York: Scribners, 1932), *Christianity and Power Politics* (New York: Scribners, 1940), and *Christian Realism and Political Problems* (New York: Scribners, 1953). Though Neibuhr laid out the theological grounds for pacifism, he did not systematically develop a just war theory.

7. A leading twentieth-century pacifist theologian is John Howard Yoder, a Mennonite. Three of his works are indispensable: *The Politics of Jesus*, 2d ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1994); *Varieties of Christian Pacifism* (Scottsdale, PN: Herald Press, 1992); *When War Is Unjust* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2001). In some ways, Yoder is a moderate who holds that, while pacifism is required of Christians, other principles of just war may apply to the state. See also Guy Hershberger, *War, Pacifism, and Non-Resistance* (Scottsdale, PN: Herald Press, 1952); Jean Lasserre, *War and the Gospel*, trans. Oliver Couburn (Scottsdale, PN: Herald Press, 1962); and Stanley Hauerwas, *A Peaceable Kingdom* (Notre Dame, IN: Notre Dame University Press, 1982). Hauerwas, a notable Protestant theologian, fiercely defended pacifism even after 9/11.

tic view of human nature in which each human being carries the “light of Christ.”⁸

If people will follow this light, they can live lives of peace and righteousness, avoiding the very impulses toward domination that lead to war. Modern theories for the use of civil disobedience, such as Catholic pacifist Gene Sharp’s theories of “non-violent national defense,” are largely rooted in this tradition. Also important is the work of the American Friends Service Committee, rooted in the Quaker tradition, which provides alternatives to war for current political problems.

THE ANALYTICAL CASE FOR PACIFISM

The case for a truly Christian pacifism is at once analytical, theological, and political. There is a school of nonreligious pacifism, but I am not describing it here because I believe, like the great moral philosopher Immanuel Kant, that pacifism ultimately has to employ religious faith to make it work. The analytical, theological, and political cases are interconnected in that they all lead to a profound conclusion: oppose all war. In my view, you can’t have one approach alone. They work together or not at all.

The first inquiry, the analytical, points to problems and contradictions in just war theory. Just war theory involves a deep and fundamental contradiction. On the one hand, its theorists assert that human beings are so corrupt and prone to injustice that resorting to armed force is sometimes necessary. Yet these same flawed human beings are so capable of enlightenment that they can follow a relatively detailed list of moral principles relating to the prosecution of war. The tension is inevitably too much. The system breaks down. If human beings really are corrupt, then “just war” is impossible and all is permitted. If, on the contrary, we are capable of following a spiritual light, then war is never really necessary. Other alternatives can always be found. What actually happens is that just

8. See the American Friends Service Committee, *In Place of War* (New York: Grossman, 1968); Meredith Weeddle, *Working the Way of Peace* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001). Quaker pacifism is part of a larger theological position. For this broader context, see William Cooper, *A Living Faith* (Richmond, IN: Friends United Press, 2001); Rufus Jones, *The Faith and Practice of the Quakers* (Richmond, IN: Friends United Press, 2001); and D. Elton Trueblood, *The People Called Quakers* (New York: Harper and Row, 1966). Trueblood, however, was not strictly a pacifist.

war theory is used as a patina of respectability covering resorting to war for virtually any reason using any means. When the question is asked how much just war justifies, the answer ultimately is everything. In Eric Burdon's famous song from 1968, the "Sky Pilot" blesses every war and thus condemns none.

This contradiction is most obviously in evidence in the U.S. war with Iraq. The Bush administration argued that the Iraqi regime presented a direct (though not immediate) threat to America because of its possession of chemical and biological weapons and its continuing attempts to acquire nuclear weapons. According to the United States and the United Kingdom, Saddam Hussein was prepared to use these weapons against Western targets and to give them to other terrorist groups. Thus, he had to be stopped.

For just war theorists, this should have been an easy call. As former President Jimmy Carter argued quite elegantly, the last-resort criterion simply had not been met. When the war began, only a couple of hundred inspectors were on the ground in Iraq. Had we even thought of using several thousand inspectors based at multiple sites around the country? Could these inspectors have been backed up by outside armed forces (which just war theorists would certainly approve of) taking them where they wanted to go? Perhaps Saddam Hussein would not have allowed that many inspectors or would have rejected an armed escort. The point, however, was that such a plausible alternative as a much greater number of inspectors was not tried. Was there any evidence that such a move would not have prevented Saddam from using or giving away biological or chemical weapons? The plain answer is no.

In March 2003, President Bush dismissed the pleas of Pope John Paul II and papal representative Pio Laghi for "another way" with the curt response that all other ways had been tried and failed. He was both unenlightened about the idea of just war and simply wrong, or worse, about what had been tried. Some just war theorists have failed to condemn the war in Iraq just as some in the 1980s failed to condemn strategic nuclear weapons, thus violating the minimum requirements of their own theory. In effect, their theory cannot condemn anything, permits everything, and provides no effective moral guidance.

THE THEOLOGICAL CASE FOR PACIFISM

The theological case for pacifism is obvious to anyone who reads the

four Gospels, while a case for armed force must be drawn from tortured readings of the text. Defenders of just war like the late Protestant theologian Paul Ramsey cite Augustine because they cannot very well find what they want from Jesus himself.⁹ The Sermon on the Mount is the foundation of Christian moral life. The version in Matthew calls the peacemakers “blessed”; Jesus promises that they will be called “the sons of God.” As I read it, Christians are called to lives of peace and nonviolence without exception and without any exemptions that would permit war. Returning evil for evil is forbidden: “anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment” (Matt 5:22, NIV). The King James translation reads: “Whosoever is angry with his brother without cause shall be in danger of the judgment.” But intriguingly, the text in 3 Nephi 12:22 reads like the NIV: “whosoever is angry with his brother shall be in danger of his judgment.” (The previous verse makes it clear that “his judgment” refers to God, not to the brother: “whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment of God,” v. 22). There is no caveat, no exceptions. Jesus forbids his followers to manifest anger in action. Christians may not return evil for evil, violence for violence. We are called to return peace for violence. If we are struck, we may not strike back. We must return love for hate, peace for violence. We are people of peace. In Stanley Hauerwas’s phrase and the title of his book, we are a “peaceable kingdom,” at odds with the violence of the world.

The 3 Nephi version of the Sermon on the Mount does not alter these commands. Anger, violence, and revenge are still forbidden to Christ’s followers. Love not hate, peace not violence, is still the command of Jesus to those who would be his.

I believe that Doctrine and Covenants 98 similarly commands us to be men and women of peace, not war. It counsels us to “renounce war and proclaim peace” (98:16). The Lord further instructs us to “bear patiently” (v. 24) violence done to us. When men “smite” us, “revile not against them” (v. 25). When an enemy is delivered “into thine hands,” we are counseled to spare him and “thou shalt be rewarded for thy righteousness” (vv. 29-30). The Lord reminds the Saints: “This is the law that I gave unto mine ancients that they should not go out unto battle . . . save I the

9. Paul Ramsey, *War and the Christian Conscience* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1961) and *The Just War* (New York: Scribners, 1968) are masterpieces that repay close study.

Lord commanded them” (v. 33). The Lord then amplifies the point. The Saints are to offer peace to any opponent three times. If these entreaties fail, then they should bring these testimonies before the Lord who will “fight their battles” (98:37). Combined with the explicit teaching of the Sermon on the Mount from the Bible and the Book of Mormon, I believe that the conclusion is clear: as a community of faith, we should reject war in its entirety.

The Book of Mormon is filled with other strong scriptural resources for pacifism. Alma 24 recounts the story of converted Lamanites who were so repentant of the murders they had committed in war that they foreswore war, buried their swords “deep in the earth,” and refused to fight even in self-defense. Over a thousand were killed. Their example of the pure love of God and true peace so touched the attacking Lamanites that these too eventually threw down their weapons and “would not take them again” (Alma 24:25). The simple act of returning love for violence had changed the hearts of the attackers. About eighty years after this, Samuel the Lamanite prophet cited them as an example of how we should live: “For behold they will suffer themselves that they be trodden down and slain by their enemies and will not lift their swords against them and this because of their faith in Christ” (Hel. 15:9).

There are many modern statements against war by LDS leaders and writers from Brigham Young to Hugh Nibley. Their review is not required here. But one official statement is crucially important, the 1946 First Presidency statement opposing the first peacetime draft in American history, made during the national debate that preceded the passing of the Uniform Military Training and Service Act of 1947. They sent it as a letter to all members of Congress from Utah, and it also appeared in the *Improvement Era*.

The First Presidency, then consisting of George Albert Smith, J. Reuben Clark, and David O. McKay, begins by noting that a draft “carries with it the gravest dangers to our republic.” They explained: “We shall put them (i.e., young men) where they may be indoctrinated with a wholly un-American view of the aims and purposes of individual lives and the life of the whole people and nation which are founded on the ways of peace, whereas they will be taught to believe in the ways of war.” I submit that the conclusion is clear. We will teach “our sons not only the way to kill but also in too many cases the desire to kill.” Such training flatly contradicts

God's moral order. Our brothers will be killers and our sisters will be widows.

Furthermore, "by the creation of a great war machine," conscription and a large standing army constitute a grave threat to our liberty. Standing armies "have always been the tools of ambitious dictators to the destruction of freedom. . . . We shall make of the whole earth one great military camp whose separate armies, headed by war-minded officers, will never rest till they are at one another's throats in what will be the most terrible contest the world has ever seen." The conclusion is clear: "What this country needs and what the world needs is a will for peace not war."¹⁰

This now largely forgotten statement is pregnant with meaning for all time. Any large standing army, whether made up of volunteers or conscripts, poses a threat to liberty. Any army teaches killing, not peace. The training of soldiers, not their manner of recruitment, is the crucial factor. The first Gulf War was waged to defend Saudi Arabia and liberate Kuwait. Take just the first aim. Our large standing army had to flex its muscle in defense of a regime hated by its own people, one which supports terrorism, oppresses women, and promotes a version of Islam that teaches hatred of the United States and virtually everything we stand for. Can this possibly be anything close to a just cause?

THE POLITICAL CASE FOR PACIFISM

The third line of argument opposing war, though political, is nonetheless eminently sound. War always increases the power of government over the lives of citizens. As Robert Higgs has shown in his foundational *Crisis and Leviathan* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), the crucial event in the growth of centralized government of the United States in the twentieth century was World War I. The New Deal of the 1930s pales in significance beside the threats to liberty deriving from that war. Those threats included centralized planning, economic controls, commandeering private property, conscripting citizens, and jailing war opponents like Roger Baldwin of the American Civil Liberties Union and Eugene Debs of the Socialist Party. World War I did not come close to meeting the just war criteria of last resort and just cause.

What happened to American liberties may be judged from the

10. *Improvement Era*, February 1946, 76-77.

memorable account British historian A. J. P. Taylor gave of his countrymen's liberties during that war:

Until August 1914 a sensible, law-abiding Englishman could pass through life and hardly notice the existence of the state beyond the post office and the policemen. He could live where he liked and as he liked. He had no official number or identity card. He could travel abroad or leave his country without any passport or official permission. He could exchange his money for any currency without any restriction or limit. He could buy goods from any other country in the world on the same terms he bought goods at home. For that matter a foreigner could spend his life in this country without permit and without informing the police. Unlike the countries of the European continent the state did not require its citizens to perform military service. An Englishman could, if he chose, enlist in the regular army or navy or the territorials. He could also ignore, if he chose, the demands of national defense. Substantial householders were occasionally called upon for jury service. Otherwise only those helped the state who wished to do so. The Englishman paid taxes on a modest scale . . . rather less than 8 percent of national income. . . . Broadly speaking the state helped only those who could not help themselves. They left the adult citizen alone

All this was changed by the impact of the Great War. The mass of people became for the first time active citizens. Their lives were shaped by orders from above. They were required to serve the state rather than live their own affairs. Five million men entered the armed forces, many of them under compulsion. The Englishman's food was limited and its quality changed by government order. His freedom of movement was limited. His conditions of work were prescribed. Some industries were reduced or closed and some artificially fostered. The publication of news was fettered. Streetlights were dimmed. The sacred freedom of drinking was tampered with: licensed hours were cut down and the beer was watered by order. The state established a hold over its citizens which, though relaxed during peacetime, was never to be removed and which the Second World War was to increase.¹¹

Robert Higgs shows the same loss of liberty occurring in the United States during World War I. Moreover, our current "war on terror" provides an immediate and stunning confirmation of that thesis. The Patriot Act gave the government enormous new powers to track citizens and foreigners who are living here, especially Arab and Muslim people, as if the present world population of 1.2 billion Muslims must be condemned to

11. A. J. P. Taylor, *English History 1914-1945* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), 1-2.

suspicion on our shores by the action of nineteen of them on 9/11. We hold many without bail on mere suspicion, using the time honored statist technique of a material witness warrant. We have American citizens being held incommunicado on suspicion of being enemy combatants. Lawyers are being arrested for carrying messages from clients who are held in isolation. And finally the government is unwilling to let a defendant call witnesses whose testimony the government judges to be a threat to national security. It appears as though liberty must be sacrificed for its own protection. If patriotism is the last refuge of a scoundrel, national security is the last refuge of a statist. To sacrifice freedom for security soon means the loss of both.

CONCLUSION

Pacifism, in my view, fully accepts the reality of a world largely dominated by principalities and powers of the natural man. I am fully prepared to admit that, without God, human beings would create, not *Lord of the Rings*, but *Lord of the Flies*, or, even worse, *Heart of Darkness*. Kurtz, not Frodo, is the natural man. Which of the boys on William Golding's demented fantasy island would you trust to command an army or a police force? Would you want Simon or Ralph in their weakness (a scriptural meekness, perhaps) to protect you? Hardly. What you would want is strength. You would want to trust in the arm of the flesh to protect you. What you would get in return are the sadism and totalitarianism of Jack and Roger. William Golding's truth is scriptural. Man on his own—the natural man—is carnal, sensual, and devilish. We are our own enemies. Given more time, the *Lord of the Flies* will be replaced with Kurtz's human heads on stakes. Without God some of us will turn into Kurtz, and many of us will wind up on his stakes.

The grace of God can touch our hearts and transform us, but we remain incomplete souls, still prone to follow our erotic and vengeful passions, still limited in our knowledge, still struggling to live according to the command of love and the hope of Easter.

Christian pacifism is ultimately rooted in Christian hope. Absolute love of neighbor as embodied in the life of the Son of God is possible only because "he first loved us" (1 John 4:19) enough to die for us and be resurrected for us. It is precisely because our hope is not in vain that we may give our best efforts to live the life intended by God. Ours is the call to a life at odds with the ways of warriors and their masters. We know that the

Master would have it no other way, no matter how common war is. We do not pledge allegiance to anything except Jesus Christ and him crucified and risen on the third day.

Freedom is not free, but it is not to be purchased with the blood of our fellow human beings. To seek the destruction of others entangles us in a net of worldly power that restricts our freedom to those ways of life approved by the powers of this world. This is a poor and limited freedom. We might better seek the freedom experienced in the grace of God. If God loves all equally, even the weakest, the most criminal, or the most violent, can we aspire to anything less? War is always the problem, never the solution. To resort to war is a faithless act of desperation by those who have lost the hope of Easter. If "he is risen" (Matt. 28:6), why should we live lives that seem to assume that he is not?