

[Bill Samuel's email of January 4, 2009, with links expanded with actual content, & supplemented with an article in Christianity Today that speaks to how God made us, and how we seek to change that, relative to killing]

I am going to offer up some things as grist for the *Discipleship & Pacifism* discussion. In addition to some questions which occur to me, I will put some brief things from various parts of the Christian tradition in this email, and links to some pieces which are a little longer. Because violence is so imbued in our culture, those of you that grew up in mainstream culture may benefit from reviewing some varieties of different perspective.

Some questions:

To what extent are we to live in the Kingdom of God here and now, and to what extent live in accordance with the ways of this world?

Why was the Christian church in the first 3 centuries after Jesus walked the earth so apparently united in the belief that one could not be both a follower of Jesus Christ and a participant in war?

Are the very ways we tend to frame issues related to conflicts consistent with the way Jesus would frame them?

What are the implications of the *agape* love which is supposed to be an earmark of a Christian?

-Bill Samuel

Biblical themes for Peace and Justice ***resources for preaching and teaching***

Biblical themes

- Jesus' own teaching, for example in the Sermon on Mount
- The universal love of God, not just for one community.
 - John 3:16
 - Ephesians 2:13-22
 - Galatians 3:26-28
 - 2 Corinthians 5:17-18
 - Luke 4:24-30
- The prophetic vision of a world of peace and justice for all people
 - Isaiah 2:2-5
 - Isaiah 65:17-25
 - Micah 4:3-5
- Transformation of power from worldly power to Godly power
 - Exodus 14:13-14
 - Kings 6:8-23
 - Kings 7:3-7
 - 1 Samuel 26:8-9
 - Judges 7:1-24

- Ephesians 6:10-17
- 2 Corinthians 10:3-4
- Redemptive suffering, the mystery of the cross
 - Isaiah 53:1-12
 - Luke 9:22-27
 - Philippians 2:5-11

Pathways to Peace

- Truth
 - Be committed to the Truth. John 8:31-32
 - Cease fire. Ephesians 4:26-32
 - Use non-violent means. Matthew 5:9, 39
 - Negotiate in good faith. Matthew 5:8, 37
 - Accept mediation. Matthew 18:15-16
- Justice
 - Fairness, lack of exploitation. Psalm 12:5
- Peace
 - Biblical vision of a society with both truth and justice. Isaiah 65:17-25
 - Psalm 85:10-13

Developed by the Kenyan National Quaker Peace Conference, January 2008

The Early Church and War

The early church was not passive and they took social justice to heart. They opposed the common practice of war, abortion and the abandoning of the frail and the sick by the roadside. They were willing to share their worldly possessions and to reach out to friend and foe alike. Their testimony is powerful! Here is a sampling of what they taught.

"We who had been filled with mutual slaughter and every wickedness, have each one - all the world over - changed the instruments of war, the swords into ploughs and the spears into farming instruments, and we cultivate piety righteousness, love for men, faith and hope which is from the Father Himself through the Crucified One." - Justin Martyr, 100 - 165 A.D.

"Under no circumstances should a true Christian draw the sword." – Tertullian, 155-230 A.D.

"We have come in accordance with the counsel of Jesus to cut down our arrogant swords of argument into plowshares, and we convert into sickles the spears we formerly used in fighting. For we no longer take swords against a nation, nor do we learn anymore to make war, having become sons of peace for the sake of Jesus, who is our Lord." - Origen of Alexandria, 185-254 A.D.

"We, who were formerly slayers of one another, not only do not make war upon our enemies, but, for the sake of neither lying nor deceiving those who examine us, gladly die confessing Christ." - Justin Martyr, 100 - 165 A.D.

"You cannot demand military service of Christians any more than you can of priests. We do not go forth as soldiers." Origen of Alexandria, 185-254 A.D.

"And so, in this commandment of God, no exception at all ought to be made to the rule that it is always wrong to kill a man, whom God has wished to be regarded as a sacrosanct creature... Thou shalt not kill... It is always unlawful to put a man to death." - Lactantius of Bithynia, approx 240-317 A.D.

"And this is at least incredible, inasmuch as even now those Barbarians who have an innate savagery of manners . . . and cannot endure to be a single hour without weapons; but when they hear the teaching of Christ, straightway instead of fighting they turn to husbandry, and instead of arming their hands with weapons they raise them in prayer, and in a word, in place of fighting among themselves henceforth they arm against the devil and against evil spirits, subduing these by self-restraints and virtue of soul. Now this is at once a proof of the divinity of the Saviour, since what men could not learn among idols they have learned from him." - Athanasius, 296-373 A.D.

"I am a soldier of Jesus Christ, the eternal king. From now I cease from this military service of your emperors, and I scorn to adore your gods of stone and wood, which are deaf and dumb images... I cast down my vine-staff and belt... and I refuse to serve as a soldier ... I threw down my arms; for it was not seemly that a Christian man, who renders military service to the Lord Christ, should render it also by inflicting earthly injuries." - Marcellus the centurion, 298 A.D.

[From http://www.thejesusgospel.com/The_Teachings_of_the_Early.html]

From the leading 1st Generation Quaker Theologian

"Whoever can reconcile this, 'Resist not evil', with 'Resist violence by force', again, 'Give also thy other cheek', with 'Strike again!'; also, 'Love thine enemies', with 'Spoil them, make a prey of them, pursue them with fire and the sword', or, 'Pray for those that persecute you, and those that calumniate you', with 'Persecute them by fines, imprisonments and death itself', whoever, I say, can find a means to reconcile these things may be supposed also to have found a way to reconcile God with the Devil, Christ with Antichrist, Light with Darkness, and good with evil. But if this be impossible, as indeed it is impossible, so will also the other be impossible, and men do but deceive both themselves and others, while they boldly adventure to establish such absurd and impossible things." — Robert Barclay, 1678

Roman Catholic Cardinal Ratzinger (now Pope Benedict XVI)

"today we should be asking ourselves if it is still licit to admit the very existence of a 'just war'." (May 2, 2003 press conference)

Pope Benedict XVI – “On the Revolution of Love”

Dear Brothers and Sisters!

This Sunday's Gospel has one of the most typical, yet most difficult, teachings of Jesus: **Love your enemies** (Luke 6:27).

It is taken from the Gospel of Luke, but it is also found in Matthew's Gospel (5:44), in the context of the programmatic discourse that begins with the famous Beatitudes. Jesus delivered this address in Galilee,

at the beginning of his public ministry: It was something of a "manifesto" presented to everyone, which Christ asked his disciples to accept, thus proposing to them in radical terms a model for their lives.

But what is the meaning of his teaching? Why does Jesus ask us to love our very enemies, that is, ask a love that exceeds human capacities? What is certain is that Christ's proposal is realistic, because it takes into account that in the world there is too much violence, too much injustice, and that this situation cannot be overcome without positing more love, more kindness. This "more" comes from God: It is his mercy that has become flesh in Jesus and that alone can redress the balance of the world from evil to good, beginning from that small and decisive "world" which is man's heart.

This page of the Gospel is rightly considered the "magna carta" of Christian nonviolence; it does not consist in surrendering to evil -- as claims a false interpretation of **turn the other cheek** (Luke 6:29) -- but in responding to evil with good. (Romans 12:17-21), and thus breaking the chain of injustice. It is thus understood that nonviolence, for Christians, is not mere tactical behavior but a person's way of being, the attitude of one who is convinced of God's love and power, who is not afraid to confront evil with the weapons of love and truth alone. Loving the enemy is the nucleus of the "Christian revolution," a revolution not based on strategies of economic, political or media power. The revolution of love, a love that does not base itself definitively in human resources, but in the gift of God, that is obtained only and unreservedly in his merciful goodness. Herein lies the novelty of the Gospel, which changes the world without making noise. Herein lies the heroism of the "little ones," who believe in the love of God and spread it even at the cost of life.

Dear brothers and sisters: Lent, which begins this Wednesday, with the rite of the distribution of ashes, is the favorable time in which all Christians are invited to convert ever more deeply to the love of Christ.

Let us ask the Virgin Mary, the docile disciple of the Redeemer, to help us to allow ourselves to be conquered without reservations by that love, to learn to love as he loved us, to be merciful as our heavenly Father is merciful (Luke 6:36).

(midday angelus, St. Peter's Square, February 18, 2007)

Why Seventh-day Adventists Cannot Engage in War

George W. Amadon

Published in the *Review and Herald*, March 7, 1865, p. 109.

1. They could not keep the Lord's holy Sabbath. "The *seventh day* is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God; in it *thou shalt not do any work.*" Ex. xx, 10. Fighting, as military men tell us, is the hardest kind of work; and the *seventh* day of all days would be the least regarded in the camp and field.
2. The sixth command of God's moral law reads, "Thou shalt not kill." To kill is to take life. The soldier by profession is a practical violator of this precept. But if we would enter into life we must "*keep* the commandments." Matt. xix, 17.
3. "God has called *us* to peace;" and "the weapons of *our* warfare are not carnal." 1 Cor. vii, 15; 2 Cor. x, 4. The gospel permits us to use no weapons but "the sword of the Spirit."

4. Our kingdom is not of this world. Said Christ to Pilate, "If my kingdom were of this world *then would* my servants *fight*. John xviii, 36. This is most indisputable evidence that Christians have nothing to do with carnal instruments of war.

5. We are commanded to love even our enemies. "But I say unto you," says the Saviour, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you." Matt. v, 44. Do we fulfill this command when we blow out their brains with revolvers, or sever their bodies with sabres? "If any man have not the spirit of Christ he is none of his." Rom. viii, 9.

6. Our work is the same as our Master's, who once said, "The Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them." Luke ix, 56. If God's Spirit sends us to *save* men, does not *some other* spirit send us to *destroy* them? Let us know what manner of spirit we are of.

7. The New Testament command is, "Resist not evil; but whosoever shall smite thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other also." Matt. vii, 59. That is, we *had better* turn the other cheek than to smite them back again. Could this scripture be obeyed on the battle field?

8. Christ said to Peter, as he struck the high priest's servant, "*Put up again thy sword.*" Matt. xxvi, 52. If the Saviour commanded the apostle to "put up" the sword, certainly his followers have no right to take it. Then let those who are of the world *fight*, but as for us let us *pray*.

A Practical Christian Pacifism

by David A. Hoekema

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Few moral and theological positions are as deeply cherished by their adherents, yet so quickly dismissed by their opponents, as pacifism. The moral legitimacy of using violence is among the most urgent issues of our time, and yet its discussion slips quickly into an exchange of stereotypes. Pacifists are to be commended, even admired—runs the familiar observation in mainline Protestant, Catholic and evangelical circles—but we who know what the world is really like cannot share their naive optimism. The pacifist's reply has become equally familiar: the principles of just war, noble as they may sound, in practice merely pronounce a blessing upon ruling nations and ideologies.

I have grown increasingly dissatisfied with the gulf separating pacifists from defenders of just war. The church in which I was raised, the Christian Reformed Church, is what one draft board, in refusing a friend's request to be recognized as a conscientious objector during the Vietnam war, aptly termed a "war church." Calvinist theology has long been hostile to pacifism, and most

Reformed churches' reflections on war begin by distinguishing justified from unjustified wars. Yet the Reformed perspectives on the nature of the person and of society can actually support a realistic form of pacifism—a version that has received too little attention in either the "peace churches" or the "war churches."

Pacifism need not be politically naive, nor need it place undue faith in human goodness. These may be telling objections to some pacifists, but a careful articulation of the pacifist vision can meet them. By the same token, pacifists ought not deride just-war theory as merely Realpolitik in vestments, for the just-war tradition, when taken seriously, is just as stringent in its demands as is pacifism.

The case for Christian pacifism has been made frequently and fervently by many writers. The Gospel writers record that Jesus called his followers to a way of life in which violence and division are overcome by sacrificial love. We must not return evil for evil, Jesus taught, but must return good for evil; we must not hate those who wrong us but must love our enemies and give freely to those who hate us. These themes in Jesus' ministry were deeply rooted in the Hebrew prophetic tradition, and Jesus' ministry and his sacrificial death were a continuation and a fulfillment of that tradition. Followers of Jesus, Christian pacifists say, must follow both his example and his teachings: they must show love for all in their actions and seek healing and reconciliation in every situation.

The early Christian community understood Jesus' commands to prohibit the bearing of arms. Christians refused to join the military, even though the Roman army of the period was as much a police force as a conquering army. Those who converted to Christianity while in military service were instructed to refrain from killing, to pray for forgiveness for past acts of violence, and to seek release from their military obligations. A striking example of the pervasiveness of pacifism in the early church is the fact that Tertullian and Origen—church fathers who stood at opposite poles regarding the relation of faith to philosophical reasoning—each wrote a tract supporting Christians' refusal to join the military.

A profound change in the Christian attitude toward war occurred at the time of the emperor Constantine, whose conversion to Christianity helped bring the Christian community from the fringes to the center of Western society. From the time of Constantine to the present, pacifism has been a minority view in the Christian church. The just-war tradition, rooted in the ethical theories of Plato and Cicero and formulated within the Christian tradition by Augustine, Aquinas and the Protestant Reformers, defends military force as a last resort against grave injustice. According to this view, when the innocent are threatened by an unjust aggressor and all other remedies have failed, Jesus' demand for sacrificial love may require us to use lethal force.

Pacifism and just-war theory reach different conclusions only in a narrow range of cases: both positions insist that Christians must strive always for healing and reconciliation and must act out of love for all, and both traditions unequivocally condemn the reasons—whether nationalism, territorial or economic gain, revenge or glory—for which nearly all wars have been fought. Yet the differences that exist are both theologically and politically significant. Just-war defenders argue that if all means short of violence have failed and organized violence promises to be a limited and effective means of reestablishing justice, Christians may participate in war. Pacifists

insist that to resort to warfare, even for a moral end, is to adopt a means inconsistent with the Christian's calling.

Why is the pacifist vision of a healing and reconciling ministry of nonviolence not universally embraced in the churches? I would single out five prominent arguments to which pacifists, if they are to make their own position cogent and realistic, must respond.

Pacifism is surrender. "The pacifist viewpoint is appealing in principle, but in practice it means surrendering to the aggressor," is a charge heard often. "Capitulation to the forces of evil cannot be moral."

The problem with this objection is that it equates pacifism with passive nonresistance. Pacifism is not synonymous with "passivism": the pacifist rejection of war is compatible with a great many measures for defense against aggression. In fact, pacifist theorists have urged the development of a civilian-based non-military defense, which would encompass organized but nonviolent resistance, refusal to cooperate with occupying forces, and efforts to undermine enemy morale.

The tendency to equate pacifism with "passivism" and capitulation reflects how little we know of the remarkable historical successes nonviolent tactics have achieved, even in the face of brutal repression. From the courageous Swedish and Danish resistance to Nazism to the transformation of Polish society by the Solidarity labor movement, and from the struggle for Indian self-rule led by Gandhi to the struggle for racial equality in the United States led by Martin Luther King, Jr., and others, nonviolence has been a creative and effective force. Whether nonviolent resistance can always overcome aggression and whether its cost in suffering and death will in every case be less than that of war is difficult to say, but at least it cannot be said that pacifism is merely a policy of capitulation.

Pacifism extolls purity. "The main problem with pacifism" runs a second objection, "is that the pacifist places a higher value on his or her own purity of conscience than on saving others' lives. If we are going to fulfill our obligations, we have to be willing to get our hands dirty and not hold ourselves on some higher moral plateau than everyone else. Pacifists enjoy the freedom that others ensure by their willingness to resort to arms.

This objection rests on two confusions. In the first place, pacifism is an objection to war per se, not merely an objection to personal participation in war. Pacifists do not ask for a special exemption because of their high moral views or delicate sensibilities; they refuse to participate in war because it is immoral. Their exemption from military service is simply the compromise position that has developed in a society in which moral objection to war is not unanimously shared.

A second confusion in this argument is the notion that taking part in war shall be regarded as a lesser evil, rendered necessary by extreme circumstances. Such a claim has no part in traditional just-war theory—or, indeed, in any coherent moral theory. The just-war proponent believes that war is sometimes required by justice, in which case it is not the lesser of two evils but is itself a

good. The issue is whether intentional killing in war is ever a good thing, not whether one ought to grit one's teeth and bravely commit one wrong rather than another.

Pacifism is based on optimistic humanism. "Pacifism links a noble ideal—the avoidance of violence—to naive and implausible assumptions about the inherent goodness of human nature. If I thought that I could trust people and nations to resolve their differences peaceably and fairly, I would be a pacifist too. But history teaches us differently."

This objection brings us near the heart of the theological argument against pacifism. Indeed, it is a telling argument against some forms of pacifism. Gandhi, for example, was sustained by a deep faith in the goodness of human nature, a goodness he thought nonviolent action could call forth. "If love or non-violence be not the law of our being," he wrote, "the whole of my argument falls to pieces" (in *Gandhi on Non-violence*, edited by Thomas Merton [New Directions, 1964], p. 25). Similar optimism about human nature seems to have motivated some Quaker writers and much of the pacifism of American church leaders following the First World War. Such optimism requires a selective and unrealistic assessment of human behavior and human capacities. If pacifism rests on a trust that people have a natural capacity and an irrepressible tendency to resolve their differences justly and harmoniously, then pacifism is a delusion, and a dangerous one.

Such trust is not, however, essential to pacifism. There can be a realistic pacifism, a pacifism that gives due weight to the sinfulness and perversity of human nature.

Pacifists and defenders of just war can agree that every life is tainted with sin, and that evil will inevitably arise, but still disagree about how we ought to respond when it does arise. An essential companion to the doctrine of sin is the doctrine of grace. Though human nature is corrupted by sin, it is also illuminated by God's presence and guidance; God's grace shows itself in countless ways in the lives of Christians and non-Christians alike. In light of this fact, evil demands a response that overcomes rather than compounds evil. Such a pacifist stance differs significantly from a Gandhian or humanistic faith in the capacity of the human heart for goodness, while retaining the conviction that there are other remedies for sin besides war.

It should be noted, further, that realism about human nature cuts two ways: if it undermines a pacifism based on optimism, it also undermines the assumption that weapons of destruction and violence intended to restrain evil will be used only for that purpose. The reality of human sinfulness means that the instruments we intend to use for good are certain to be turned to evil purposes as well. There is therefore a strong presumption for using those means of justice that are least likely to be abused and least likely to cause irrevocable harm when they are abused. An army trained and equipped for national defense can quickly become an army of conquest or a tool of repression in the hands of an unprincipled leader. But a nonviolent national defense force, or a peacekeeping force bringing together citizens of a dozen nations, is of little use except for its intended purpose.

Pacifism confuses moral categories. "The basic confusion of pacifists is their assumption that the principles of Christian morality which we ought to follow in our individual lives can be applied to governments. Only individuals can truly be moral; governments are by their very nature

'immoral,' if we judge them as we would judge individuals. Killing is wrong for individuals, but for states an entirely different standard must be applied."

The notion that morality applies to individuals and not to governments is completely contrary to a central doctrine of Reformed theology which is endorsed, in varying forms, by other Christian traditions as well: that Jesus Christ is the Lord not just of the church, nor of a special sphere of religious activity, but of all of the natural and human world. We are not called to serve God in our religious activities and to carry on as usual in the other areas of life—far from it. We are called to live as followers of Jesus Christ in every human activity. Thus, we must obey God's demands for justice and reconciliation not only as families and churches but as societies. There is no room in Christian social thought for excluding governments from the realm of morality. If Christian ethics permits killing in certain circumstances, then violence is legitimate as a last resort, both for individuals and for governments. But if, on the other hand, Jesus did in fact demand that the members of the new Kingdom he inaugurated renounce all killing, then we must restructure both our personal and our institutional lives to fulfill that demand.

Pacifism is too patient. "To suffer wrong rather than harm another, to return nonviolent resistance for violent oppression, might have been appropriate at an earlier stage in our struggle. But the violence inflicted on us for so long leaves us no choice but to use force in return. We can endure no more; only arms can bring justice now."

This argument, the cry raised in Soweto and San Salvador, is painfully familiar, and it is impossible to hear it without feeling the deep pain of those who make it. I am not sure whether this argument can be answered. Those of us who regard it at a comfortable distance may not know the possibilities that remain to those whose lives have been stunted by violence.

Are there wrongs so grave that only violent means can set them right? I do not believe there are, but I do believe that the historical point at which one faces this question is significant. Nazism would surely have been destroyed by sustained nonviolent resistance had Christians and others not averted their gaze from its evil for so long. But whether Nazism could have been destroyed by nonviolent means in 1939 is a far more difficult question. Similarly, the Christian churches of South Africa, both black and white, could once have ended the policy of apartheid through nonviolent reforms, but today, as the black death toll mounts into the thousands, it is difficult to imagine that the system will fall unless commensurate force is brought to bear against it.

Situations of extreme oppression do not invalidate the pacifist vision of nonviolent change. Active but nonlethal resistance is both theologically and practically defensible even in seemingly hopeless circumstances—as the courageous work of André Trocmé in Vichy France and of several church leaders in South Africa today makes evident. Yet many in such situations turn to violence as their last hope in the struggle for justice. We may dispute their conclusion, but our response should be more one of solidarity than of condemnation.

I have argued that the major objections to pacifism can be met by a pacifism grounded in Christian commitment and realism about human nature. To answer these objections is not to show that pacifism is the only responsible stance that a Christian may adopt. The issue of the justifiability of violence needs to be faced squarely and debated vigorously in the churches, and

pacifists and non-pacifists can learn much from each other in this debate. Nevertheless, I believe that the practical pacifism I have described deserves more serious consideration than it has received in Christian circles, especially since the major alternative to pacifism in Christian ethics, the just-war tradition, has significant deficiencies. Important as the just-war tradition has been in the development of Christian thinking about war and peace, it gives insufficient weight to the central Christian calling to be agents of healing and reconciliation.

Furthermore, the radical changes that the nuclear age has brought to the phenomenon of war make it impossible to weigh means against ends in the way required by just-war theory. War is justified, according to just-war criteria, when its good result—the restoration of justice—outweighs the harm it will cause. But when the possible consequences of war include the destruction of humankind and the permanent defacement of the entire natural and human world, we do not know how to balance benefits against such costs. The just-war tradition cannot guide us in thinking about such a prospect.

What are the practical implications of such a pacifist stance? Several first steps can be clearly identified. The cessation of nuclear testing and of the development of new weapons systems, and the subsequent reduction of existing stockpiles of weapons would stabilize the international balance of terror. If at the same time means of international cooperation were created and international authorities strengthened, the threat of war would begin to hang less heavily over us. To go beyond these preliminary steps to abolish war would require far more drastic attacks on the political and economic roots of war.

No one can consistently call for peaceful alternatives to war without reflecting on the ways in which one personally participates in and benefits from social institutions that cause violence. Some people may refuse to take up arms, others may withhold taxes designated for military ends; and others may renounce jobs or possessions that implicate them in injustice. Here there is an urgent need for more open and honest discussion in the churches, for we are too quick to condemn those who bear witness in a way to which we do not feel called. We ought not to demand the same actions from everyone. Out of more open and honest discussion may come new and still untried ways of putting flesh on a shared vision of peace.

Practical Christian pacifism is grounded in faithfulness and hope, but also in realism. It provides not only a moral basis for dealing with conflicts but a framework within which to carry on the vital task of building structures that can eventually eliminate war and its causes.

1660 Quaker Peace Declaration

A DECLARATION FROM THE HARMLESS AND INNOCENT PEOPLE OF GOD, CALLED QUAKERS, AGAINST ALL SEDITION, PLOTTERS, AND FIGHTERS IN THE WORLD: FOR REMOVING THE GROUND OF JEALOUSY AND SUSPICION FROM MAGISTRATES AND PEOPLE CONCERNING WARS AND FIGHTINGS.

George Fox and others.

Presented to the King upon the 21st day of the 11th Month, 1660.

[Text from the 2 Volume 8th and Bicentenary Edition of Fox's *Journal*, London: Friends' Tract Association, 1891.]

"OUR principle is, and our practices have always been, to seek peace and ensue it; to follow after righteousness and the knowledge of God; seeking the good and welfare, and doing that which tends to the peace of all. We know that wars and fightings proceed from the lusts of men, as James iv. 1--3, out of which the Lord hath redeemed us, and so out of the occasion of war. The occasion of war, and war itself (wherein envious men, who are lovers of them-selves more than lovers of God lust, kill, and desire to have men's lives or estates) ariseth from lust. **All bloody principles and practices, as to our own particulars, we utterly deny; with all outward wars and strife, and fightings with - outward weapons, for any end, or under any pretense whatsoever; this is our testimony to the whole world.**

"And whereas it is objected:

"But although you now say 'that you cannot fight, nor take up arms at all, yet if the Spirit move you, then you will change your principle, and you will sell your coat, buy a sword, and fight for the kingdom of Christ.'

"To this we answer, Christ said to Peter, 'Put up thy sword in his place;' though he had said before, he that had no sword might sell his coat and buy one (to the fulfilling of the law and the Scripture), yet after, when he had bid him put it up, he said, 'he that taketh the when the sword, shall perish with the sword. And further, Christ said to Pilate, 'Thinkest thou, that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?' And this might satisfy Peter, Luke xxii. 36, after he had put up his sword, when he said to him. 'He that took it, should perish with it ;' which satisfieth us, Matt. xxvi. 51-53 And in the Revelation, it is said, 'He that kills with the sword, shall perish with the sword; and here is the faith and the patience of the saints.' And so Christ's kingdom is not of this world, therefore do not his servants fight, as he told Pilate, the magistrate, who crucified him. And did they not look upon Christ as a raiser of sedition? And did he pray, 'Forgive them?' But thus it is that we are numbered amongst transgressors, and fighters, that the Scriptures might be fulfilled.

"That the Spirit of Christ, by which we are guided, is not changeable, so as once to command us from a thing as evil, and again to move unto it; and we certainly know, and testify to the world, that the Spirit of Christ, which leads us into all truth, will never move us to fight and war against any man with outward weapons, neither for the kingdom of Christ, nor for the kingdoms of this world.

"First, Because the kingdom of Christ God will exalt, according to his promise, and cause it to grow and flourish in righteousness; 'not by might, nor by power (of outward sword), but by my Spirit, saith the Lord,' Zech. iv. 6. So those that use any weapon to fight for Christ, or for the establishing of his kingdom or government, - --their spirit, principle, and practice we deny.

"Secondly, as for the kingdoms of this world, we cannot covet them, much less can we fight for them, but we do earnestly desire and wait, that, by the Word of God's power, and its effectual operation in the hearts of men, the kingdoms of this world may become the

kingdoms of the Lord, and of his Christ; that he may rule and reign in men by his Spirit and truth; that thereby all people, out of all different judgements and professions, may be brought into love and unity with God, and one with another; and that they may all come to witness the prophet's words, who said, ' Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more,' Isa. ii. 4., Mic. iv. 3.

"So we, whom the Lord hath called into the obedience of his truth, have denied wars and fightings, and cannot more learn them. This is a certain testimony unto all the world, of the truth of our hearts in this particular, that as God persuadeth every man's heart to believe, so they may receive it. For we have not, as some others, gone about with cunningly-devised fables, nor have we ever denied in practice what we have professed in principle; but in sincerity and truth, and by the word of God, have we laboured to manifest unto all men, that both we and our ways might be witnessed in the hearts of all.

"And whereas all manner of evil hath been falsely spoken of us, we hereby speak the plain truth of our hearts, to take away the occasion of that offense; that so being innocent, we may not suffer for other men's offenses, nor be made a prey of by the wills of men for that of which we were never guilty; but in the uprightness of our hearts **we may, under the power ordained of God for the punishment of evil-doers, and for the praise of them that do well,** live a peaceable and godly life, in all godliness and honesty. For although we have always suffered, and do now more abundantly suffer, yet we know that it is for righteousness' sake; 'for our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our consciences, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world,' 2 Cor. i. 12, which for us is a witness for the convincing of our enemies. For this we can say to all the world, we have wronged no man, we have used no force nor violence against any man: we have been found in no plots, nor guilty of sedition. When we have been wronged, we have not sought to revenge ourselves; we have not made resistance against authority; but wherein we could not obey for conscience' sake we have suffered the most of all people in the nation. We have been counted as sheep for the slaughter, persecuted and despised, beaten, stoned, wounded, stocked, whipped, imprisoned, haled out of synagogues, cast into dungeons and noisome vaults, where many have died in bonds, shut up from our friends, denied needful sustenance for many days together, with other the like cruelties.

"And the cause of all these sufferings is not for any evil, but for things relating to the worship of our God, and in obedience to his requirings. For which cause we shall freely give up our bodies a sacrifice, rather than disobey the Lord: for we know as the Lord hath kept us innocent, so he will plead our cause, when there is none in the earth to plead it. So we, in obedience unto his truth, do not love our lives unto death, that we may do his will, and wrong no man in our generation, but seek the good and peace of all men. He who hath commanded us that we shall not swear at all, Matt. v. 31, hath also commanded us that we shall not kill, Matt. v.; so that we can neither kill men, nor swear for or against them This is both our principle and practice, and has been from the beginning; so that if we suffer, as suspected to take up arms, or make war against any, it is without any ground from us; for it neither is, nor ever was in our hearts, since we owned the truth of God; neither shall we ever do it, because it is contrary to the Spirit of Christ, his doctrine, and the practices of his apostles; even contrary to him, for whom we suffer all things, and endure all things.

"And whereas men come against us with clubs, staves, drawn swords, pistols cocked, and beat, cut, and abuse us, yet we never resisted them; but to them our hair, backs, and cheeks, have been ready. It is not an honour, to manhood or nobility, to run upon harmless people, who lift not up a hand against them, with arms and weapons.

"Therefore consider these things, ye men of understanding: for plotters, raisers of insurrections, tumultuous ones, and fighters, running with swords, clubs, staves, and pistols, one against another; these, we say, are of the world, and have their foundation from this unrighteous world, from the foundation of which the Lamb hath been slain; which Lamb hath redeemed us from this unrighteous world, and we are not of it, but are heirs of a world of which there is no end, and of a kingdom where no corruptible thing enters. Our weapons are spiritual, and not carnal, yet mighty through God, to the plucking/pulling down of the strongholds of sin and Satan, who is the author of wars, fighting, murder, and plots. Our swords are broken into ploughshares, and spears into pruning-hooks, as prophesied of in Micah iv. Therefore we cannot learn war any more, neither rise up against nation or kingdom with outward weapons, though you have numbered us amongst the transgressors and plotters. The Lord knows our innocency herein, and will plead our cause with all people upon earth, at the day of their judgment, when all men shall have a reward according to their works.

"Therefore in love we warn you for your soul's good, not to wrong the innocent, nor the babes of Christ, which he hath in his hand, which he cares for as the apple of his eye; neither seek to destroy the heritage of God, nor turn your swords backward upon such as the law was not made for, i.e., the righteous; but for sinners and transgressors, to keep them down. For those are not peacemakers, nor lovers of enemies, neither can they overcome evil with good, who wrong them that are friends to you and all men, and wish your good, and the good of all people on the earth. If you oppress us, as they did the children of Israel in Egypt, and if you oppress us as they did when Christ was born, and as they did the Christians in the primitive times; we can say, 'The Lord forgive you;' and leave the Lord to deal with you, and not revenge ourselves. If you say, as the council said to Peter and John, 'speak no more in that name;' and if you serve us, as they served the three children spoken of in Daniel, God is the same that ever he was, that lives for ever and ever, who hath the innocent in his arms.

"O, Friends! offend not the Lord and his little ones, neither afflict his people; but consider and be moderate. Do not run on hastily, but consider mercy, justice, and judgment; that is the way for you to prosper, and obtain favor of the Lord. Our meetings were stopped and broken up in the days of Oliver, under pretense of plotting against him; in the days of the Committee of Safety we were looked upon as plotters to bring in King Charles; and now our peaceable meetings are termed seditious. O! that men should lose their reason, and go contrary to their own conscience; knowing that we have suffered all things, and have been accounted plotters from the beginning, though we have declared against them both by word of mouth and printing, and are clear from any such thing! We have suffered all along, because we would not take up carnal weapons to fight, and are thus made a prey, because we are the innocent lambs of Christ, and cannot avenge ourselves! These things are left on your hearts to consider; but we are out of all those things, in the patience of the saints; and we know. as Christ said, 'He that takes the sword, shall perish with the sword;' Matt. xxvi. 52; Rev. xiii. 10.

"This is given forth from the people called Quakers, to satisfy the king and his council, and all those that have any jealousy concerning us, that all occasion of suspicion may be taken away, and our innocency cleared.

George Fox
Richard Hubberthorne
John Stubbs
Francis Howgill
Gerrard Roberts
John Bolton
Leonard Fell

Samuel Fisher
Henry Fell
John Hinde
John Furley Junr.
Thomas Moore

21/11 M

21/11 M/1660

"Postscript. Though we are numbered amongst transgressors, and have been given up to rude, merciless men, by whom our meetings are broken up, in which we edified one another in our holy faith, and prayed together to the Lord that lives for ever, yet he is our pleader in this day. The Lord saith, 'They that feared his name spoke often together' (as in Malachi); which were as his jewels. For this cause, and no evil-doing, are we cast into holes, dungeons, houses of correction, prisons (neither old nor young being spared men nor women), and mad a prey of in the sight of all nations, under the pretense of being seditious, etc., so that all rude people run upon us to take possession. For which we say, 'The Lord forgive them that have thus done to us; ' who doth, and will enable us to suffer; and never shall we lift up hand against any that thus use us; but desire the Lord may have mercy upon them, that they may consider what they have done. For how is it possible for them to requite us for the wrong they have done to us? Who to all nations have sounded us abroad as seditious, who were never found plotters against ally, since we knew the life and power of Jesus Christ manifested in us, who hath redeemed us from the world, all works of darkness, and plotters therein, by which we know the election, before the world began. So we say, the Lord have mercy upon our enemies and forgive them, for what they have done unto us!

"O! do as ye would be done by; do unto all men as you would have them do unto you; for this is the law and the prophets.

"All plots, insurrections, and riotous meetings we deny, knowing them to be of the devil, the murderer; which we in Christ, who was before they were, triumph over. And all wars and fightings with carnal weapons we deny, who have the sword of the Spirit; and all that wrong us, we leave to the Lord. This is to clear our innocency from the aspersion cast upon us, that we are seditious or plotters."

Peace Theology, by Ted Grimsrud (Anabaptist)

An entire book on-line. I give here the address of the Introduction, which gives a good summary. Read more if you have time and the inclination.

<http://peacetheology.net/pacifism-with-justice/1-introduction-01>. **Introduction: Defining Pacifism**

This book will make a case for pacifism. I will describe and illustrate what I mean by “pacifism” throughout the book. I will argue that the term “pacifism” itself is useful, probably the best term for a vision for resisting evil and transforming conflict that in principle refuses the use of violence. However, this term is notoriously difficult to define and is used by many different people in widely divergent ways.

Let's start with a simple working definition with the intent of ultimately arriving at a fuller, more adequate understanding: “Pacifism” is the in-principled unwillingness to engage in lethal violence, including most obviously the unwillingness to participate in warfare.

Pacifism according to its critics

What follows are examples of misunderstanding pacifism.

a. Michael Kelly—pacifism is evil. Some non-pacifists are strongly anti-pacifist. Pacifism for them is seen simply as a refusal to take responsibility for the necessary use of violence to stop evil people in our rough-and-tumble world. Popes Paul VI and John Paul II expressed views equating pacifism with “a cowardly and lazy conception of life” and “peace at any cost,” respectively. (Cited in Yoder, *Nevertheless*, 161—see bibliography below)

The right-wing American pundit, Michael Kelly, wrote a widely circulated op-ed essay for the *Washington Post* shortly after the September 11, 2001, attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon. He asserted that, in relation to the “war on terrorism,” because the terrorists do not want the U.S. to fight back and pacifists also do not want the U.S. to fight, “American pacifists, therefore, are on the side of future mass murderers of Americans. They are objectively pro-terrorist.” Even more, he concluded flatly, the “pacifists’ position...is evil.” (Kelly)

Kelly did not specify whom he had in mind in his characterization of pacifism. He defined pacifism primarily as principled opposition to the use of American military might, including opposition to going to war to resist the obvious evils of “global terrorism.”

So, according to these two Popes and to Michael Kelly, pacifism seems largely to be understood as the refusal to fight back (or even to support fighting back) in the face of evil. As such, it is directly complicit in the furtherance of said evil.

b. Reinhold Niebuhr—pacifism is irrelevant. The great American theological ethicist Reinhold Niebuhr in many ways shared elements of the “pacifism as evil” perspective. In his most direct critique of pacifism, “Why the Christian Church Is Not Pacifist,” Niebuhr differentiates between “heretical” and “non-heretical” pacifism.

The “heretical” version, characteristic of many liberal Protestants in the years between World War I and World War II, according to Niebuhr naively assumed human goodness, rejected the

Christian doctrine of original sin, reinterpreted the Cross so that it stands for the idea that perfect love is guaranteed a simple victory in the world, and rejected all other profound elements of the Christian gospel as hopelessly “Pauline.” (Niebuhr, 5)

While viewing this “heretical” pacifism with contempt, Niebuhr respected what he termed “the pacifism that is not a heresy.” This pacifism, characteristic of the early Anabaptist leader Menno Simons, does not present the effort to achieve a standard of perfect love in individual life as a political alternative. This approach disavows “the political problem and task.” For non-heretical pacifists, setting up “the most perfect and unselfish individual life as a symbol of the kingdom of God” can “only be done by disavowing the political task and by freeing the individual of all responsibility for social justice.” (Niebuhr, 4-5)

This “non-heretical” pacifism “is a reminder to the Christian community that the relative norms of social justice, which justify both coercion and resistance to coercion, are not final norms, and that Christians are in constant peril of forgetting their relative and tentative character and of making them too completely normative.” (Niebuhr, 5)

c. Guy Hershberger—pacifism is worldly. Hershberger, a Mennonite contemporary of Niebuhr's, believed that the message of Jesus forbade all of his followers from participating in warfare. However, he echoed many of Niebuhr's analyses concerning the pacifism characteristic of many mainline Protestants that sought for political influence in moving the world in a peaceful direction. Hershberger rejected the use of the term “pacifism” for the faithful Christian rejection of violence. He preferred the term “nonresistance.”

Like Niebuhr, Hershberger charges “liberal Protestant pacifism” with an unduly optimistic view of human possibilities in the social realm. For pacifism, he asserted, human beings are inherently good, hence they are not in need of personal salvation. Their only salvation is a social salvation. According to this view, Christ is not the redeemer of humankind, but rather simply our example. (Hershberger, 209-10)

Along with this unwarranted optimism about the character of social life in the real world, Hershberger also believed that pacifists are way too accepting of “nonviolent coercion” wherein the one who is wronged places the emphasis on a demand for justice. (Hershberger, 217) In contrast to Jesus' message of turn the other cheek and do not resist evil with coercion, nonviolent resistance is still resistance. Its purpose is to compel the enemy to give up. (Hershberger, 221)

Hershberger, then, rejects pacifism because it is too conformist to a violent world. In its optimism about human possibilities, it minimizes the depth of sin and violence that inevitably characterizes this fallen world. And, it ends up being too comfortable with accepting worldly tactics of coercing others—these tactics ultimately contradict the message of Jesus.

d. Walter Wink—pacifism is passive. Theologian and activist Walter Wink does not reject pacifism because it is anti-war or anti-patriotic. Nor, contrary to Niebuhr and Hershberger, does he believe that social justice compatible with the message of Jesus is not possible in the real world. He affirms the appropriate use of nonviolent resistance by Jesus' followers. So he does not reject pacifism because it is too optimistic or too interventionist.

Rather, Wink rejects pacifism because he defines it as more or less the same phenomenon as what Hershberger would call "nonresistance." He writes, "pacifism must go. It is endlessly confused with passivity. In the nations in which Christianity has predominated, Jesus' teaching on nonviolence has been perverted into injunctions to passive nonresistance, which is the very opposite of active nonviolence." (Wink, "Can Love;" also Kurlansky, 6-7)

For Wink, pacifism is passive; but nonviolence is active. Pacifism is harmless and therefore easier to accept than nonviolence, which is dangerous. Gandhi had utter contempt for nonactive pacifism. He regarded such a passive stance as cowardly, calling inaction "rank cowardice and unmanly," and said he would rather see someone incapable of nonviolence resist violently than resist not at all.

However, the term "nonviolence," preferred by Wink and others of like mind, has its own problems. As nonviolence advocate Mark Kurlansky acknowledges, "nonviolence" is not a proactive word. It is not an authentic concept but simply the abnegation of something else. (Kurlansky, 5) This recognition opens the door to a reconsideration of the term pacifism. Is it possible that this despised term might actually be able to do the work needed so we can convey in a positive sense our commitment to making peace in our broken world?

Defining pacifism

The word "pacifism" has the virtue of being a positive term, connoting the affirmation of peace more than simply the opposition to violence. However, as we have seen from our survey of people who do not like the term and as we would see were we to survey various ways the term is used by those who do like it (Yoder, Nevertheless, cites 29 varieties), there are many "pacifisms." I will not argue for one definitive or normative understanding of pacifism here. Rather, I simply want to articulate one proposal for understanding pacifism as a positive and attractive perspective over against the negative associations summarized above.

The word "pacifism" in English, dates back perhaps only about 100 years. It was not listed in the 1904 Complete Oxford Dictionary. According to the Supplement to the Oxford English Dictionary in 1982, the first occurrence came in 1902 at an international peace conference as a version of the French word *pacifisme*, used to express opposition to war. (Teichman, 1) However, the French term originally had the meaning of "making peace," not simply "opposing war."

The root word is "paci," "peace." If we take the word "pacifism" literally we could define it as love of peace, or devotion to peace. I suggest that we might best think of "pacifism" as the conviction that no other value or necessity takes priority over the commitment to peace. Hence, "pacifism" is more than simply approving of peace. It also includes the conviction that peace stands higher than any other commitment that could justify the use of violence.

The biblical framework

Christian pacifists—believing that Jesus' life and teaching are the lens through which we read the Bible—see in Jesus sharp clarity about the supremacy of love, peacableness, compassion. Jesus embodies a broad and deep vision of life that is thoroughly pacifist.

I will mention four biblical themes that find clarity in Jesus, but in numerous ways emerge throughout the biblical story. These provide the foundational theological rationale for Christian pacifism.

(1) Jesus' love command. Which is the greatest of the commandments, someone asked Jesus. He responds: “‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets” (Matthew 22:34-40).

We see three key points being made here that are crucial for our concerns. First, love is at the heart of everything for the believer in God. Second, love of God and love of neighbor are tied inextricably together. In Jesus' own life and teaching, we clearly see that he understood the “neighbor” to be the person in need, the person that one is able to show love to in concrete ways. Third, Jesus understood his words to be a summary of the Bible. The Law and Prophets were the entirety of Jesus' Bible—and in his view, their message may be summarized by this command.

In his call to love, Jesus directly links human beings loving even their enemies with God loving all people. “I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven: for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous” (Matthew 5:44-45).

(2) An alternative politics. Jesus articulated a sharp critique of power politics and sought to create a counter-cultural community independent of nation states in their dependence upon the sword. Jesus indeed was political; he was confessed to be a king (which is what “Christ” meant). The Empire executed him as a political criminal. However, Jesus' politics were upside-down. He expressed his political philosophy concisely: “You know that among the Gentiles those whom they recognize as their rulers lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. But it is not so among you; whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant” (Mark 10:42-43).

When Jesus accepted the title “Messiah” and spoke of the Kingdom of God as present and organized his followers around twelve disciples (thus echoing the way the ancient nation of Israel was organized)—he established a social movement centered around the love command. This movement witnessed to the entire world the ways of God meant to be the norm for all human beings.

(3) Optimism about the potential for human faithfulness. Jesus displayed profound optimism about the potential his listeners had to follow his directives. When he said, “follow me,” he clearly expected people to do so—here and now, effectively, consistently, fruitfully.

Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, begins with a series of affirmations—you are genuinely humble, you genuinely seek justice, you genuinely make peace, you genuinely walk the path of faithfulness even to the point of suffering severe persecution as a consequence. When Jesus called upon his followers to love their neighbors, to reject the tyrannical patterns of leadership among the kings of the earth, to share generously with those in need, to offer forgiveness seventy times seven times, he expected that these could be done.

(4) The model of the cross. At the heart of Jesus' teaching stands the often repeated saying, "Take up your cross and follow me." He insisted that just as he was persecuted for his way of life, so will his followers be as well.

The powers that be, the religious and political institutions, the spiritual and human authorities, responded to Jesus' inclusive, confrontive, barrier-shattering compassion and generosity with violence. At its heart, Jesus' cross may be seen as embodied pacifism, a refusal to turn from the ways of peace even when they are costly. So his call to his followers to share in his cross is also a call to his followers to embody pacifism.

Core theological affirmations

If we understand "pacifism" as a foundational conviction, one that shapes all our other convictions, and if we affirm that our pacifism follows from our Christian faith commitments, then we must recognize that pacifism links with our core theological convictions.

(1) Trinitarian cues—Jesus as God. One of the distinctively Christian theological affirmations is a Trinitarian understanding of God. God is a unity of three distinct "persons," Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Yet, insofar as Christians retain a commitment to understanding God monotheistically, they recognize that these three "persons" are not independent in will, but are three ways the one God is manifested.

John Howard Yoder asserts that operating from within a Trinitarian framework, Christians recognize that Jesus, in his concretizing of God's nonviolent, persevering love, reflects the very character of God.

"God broke through the borders of our standard definition of what is human, and gave a new, formative definition in Jesus. 'Trinity' did not originally mean that there are three kinds of revelation, the Father speaking through creation and the Spirit through experience, by which the words and example of the Son must be corrected; it meant rather that language must be found and definitions created so that Christians, who believe in only one God, can affirm that that God is most adequately and bindingly known in Jesus." (Yoder, *Politics*, 99)

If Jesus is Lord, if Jesus is God Incarnate, if Jesus is Messiah, if Jesus is the Second Person of the Trinity, "fully human and fully divine," his way of life embodies God's will for all humanity. Pacifism as a core Christian conviction, as a commitment that shapes every conviction we have as Christians, simply follows from a "high" Christology that recognizes Jesus as part of the very being of God.

(2) God's pacifism. The Bible gives us mixed signals concerning the relationship between God and violence. However, our above recognition Trinitarian affirmations challenges us to read the Bible christologically. Insofar as the Bible presents Jesus as the normative revelation of God, and tells the story prior to and after Jesus' life as being in ultimate harmony with the story of Jesus' life and teaching, we are charged to pay close attention to themes in the entire Bible that illumine the message of Jesus.

The challenge of making sense of various Old Testament and apocalyptic portrayals of God being linked with violence deserves our serious reflection and analysis. However, if we do take Jesus as normative, we need not wait to resolve every point of tension before we lift up biblical themes that do make clear that the deepest, most profound, most coherent view of God leads directly to the conclusion that the Christian God is best understood in terms of pacifism. (Grimsrud, "Is God")

Genesis one shows that creation itself reflects the peace that is at the heart of God (especially when we contrast Genesis with other contemporary stories such as the Babylonian account that posits profound violence at the very heart of creation [Wink, Engaging, 13-16]). Though the Old Testament indeed often links violence with God, the basic story line presents God most of all in terms of persevering love.

Jesus presents his Father as characterized by mercy in response to wrong-doing (see, for example, the story of the Prodigal Son, Luke 15:11-32). Jesus turns to God as "Abba," a God worthy of trust and affection. He asserts that we best imitate the character of God, who showers life on the just and unjust alike, when we exercise God-like mercy, even loving our enemies (Matthew 5:43-48).

Paul reiterates this last point in Romans five when he emphasizes how God loves all of us while we are yet God's enemies. This, remember, comes from the former zealot who himself had violently persecuted Jesus' followers in service of the God he worshiped. Only after his life-shattering meeting with Jesus on the Damascus Road did Paul realize that the God he thought served with his violence actually was most definitively revealed in the thoroughly pacifist Jesus of Nazareth, who Paul served the rest of his days.

Pacifism as vision

The language of pacifism, then, is best understood as the basic language of our human vocation, our way of understanding creation and our place in it. The foundational saving event of the New Testament, God raising Jesus from the dead, both vindicates Jesus' own pacifist way of life and reflects in the most profound way possible God's own pacifist way of responding to the worst imaginable human rebellion and violence.

As we turn back to the critiques of pacifism summarized above, we may see that in each case the criticism does not reflect an adequate understanding of authentic pacifism founded on the message of Jesus.

Michael Kelly may be correct in seeing pacifism as opposing American imperialism, but for precisely the opposite reason he cites. Pacifism does not oppose American imperialism because it is American, but because it is imperialism. Indeed we do have a responsibility to resist "evil people." However, we are called to offer such resistance in ways that do not simply add to the spiral of evil.

Pacifism, in contrast to Kelly's caricature, does stand for objective good in opposition to evil doers. This is why pacifists oppose all mass murder, be it the acts of those who flew the planes into the World Trade Center and Pentagon on September 11, 2001 or the killings of hundreds of thousands of Iraqis following the United States invasion in March 2003.

The only ultimately redemptive response to sin and how it profoundly distorts human social life is, as Jesus asserted, to seek to overcome evil with good. The only way successfully to resist violence without simply adding to violence in the world is non-violent resistance.

Contrary to Reinhold Niebuhr, it is possible to affirm human possibilities of living faithfully in response to God's transforming love without positing a naïve and superficial humanistic optimism. Our hope rests on God's promises, not inherent human goodness.

Also contrary to Niebuhr, it is possible to be pacifist and affirm that Christian faith does lead us to political engagement that enters into human history in the "nitty gritty" of real life. We affirm, though, that the "politics of Jesus," while directly involved in human social life, must not be reduced to a balance of power between competing egoisms that requires the use of the sword to be genuinely "political."

In contrast to Guy Hershberger's dismissal of pacifism as unbiblical, pacifism as understood in this book bases itself directly on biblical teaching. From the Bible, we learn of a pacifism that does seek to transform the world and that overtly resists evil and evildoers (albeit nonviolently and with the goal of lovingly transforming the evildoer).

Justice is indeed to be insisted on—though not the retributive, abstract, and coercive justice of thinkers such as Niebuhr. Biblical justice does seek to challenge evil, but not with the threat of punishment but with the possibility of genuine healing and the restoration of broken relationships. Pacifism helps us keep in mind that true justice requires healing both for victim and offender, seeing past the lure of eye-for-an-eye vengeance.

There is a place for nonviolent coercion in pacifism, though following Gandhi's careful thought about coercion, it is used only in ways that do not violate the humanity of the one being confronted. (Bondurant, 9-11) Jesus himself expressed coercive tendencies, for instance in his sharp critique of the Pharisees in Matthew 23 and his driving of the moneychangers from the temple.

Walter Wink presumably would affirm much of what I have said about pacifism, except he does not like the term. Like Wink, I affirm that the follower of Jesus is called to seek social justice and to live as if social transformation is possible in history. This book's pacifism decidedly has nothing to do with "passivity."

The focus of pacifism is positive, constructive, active, and engaged. It seeks to make peace. Hence, the term "nonviolence" simply is not adequate. "Pacifism" encompasses precisely the vision of God's domination free reign that Jesus inaugurated.

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Beyond Just War and Pacifism: Jesus' Nonviolent Way

by Walter Wink (Methodist)

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The new reality Jesus proclaimed was nonviolent. That much is clear, not just from the Sermon on the Mount, but his entire life and teaching and, above all, the way he faced his death. His was not merely a tactical or pragmatic nonviolence seized upon because nothing else would have worked against the Roman empire's near monopoly on violence. Rather, he saw nonviolence as a direct corollary of the nature of God and of the new reality emerging in the world from God. In a verse quoted more than any other from the New Testament during the church's first four centuries, Jesus taught that God loves everyone, and values all, even those who make themselves God's enemies. We are therefore to do likewise (Matt. 5:45; cf. Luke 6:35). The Reign of God, the peaceable Kingdom, is (despite the monarchical terms) an order in which the inequity, violence, and male supremacy characteristic of dominator societies are superseded. Thus nonviolence is not just a means to the Kingdom of God; it is a quality of the Kingdom itself. Those who live nonviolently are already manifesting the transformed reality of the divine order now, even under the conditions of what I call the Domination System.

The idea of nonviolent resistance was not new. The Hebrew midwives, the Greek tragedians, and Jainism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Lao-Tzu, and Judaism were all to various degrees conversant with nonviolence as a way of life and, in some cases, even as a tactic of social change. What was new was the early church's inference from Jesus' teaching that nonviolence is the only way, that war itself must be renounced. The idea of peace and the more general rejection of violence can be found before Christianity and in other cultures, says Peter Brock, but nowhere else do we find practical anti-militarism leading to the refusal of military service.

When, beginning with the emperor Constantine, the Christian church began receiving referential treatment by the empire that it had once so steadfastly opposed, war, which had once seemed so evil, now appeared to many to be a necessity for preserving and propagating the gospel.

Christianity's weaponless victory over the Roman empire eventuated in the weaponless victory of the empire over the gospel. No defeat is so well-disguised as victory! In the year 303, Diocletian forbade any member of the Roman army to be a Christian. By the year 416, no one could be a member of the Roman army unless he was a Christian.

It fell to Augustine (d. 430) to make the accommodation of Christianity to its new status as a privileged religion in support of the state. Augustine believed, on the basis of Matt. 5:38-42, that Christians had no right to defend themselves from violence. But he identified a problem which no earlier theologian had faced: what Augustine regarded as the loving obligation to use violence if necessary to defend the innocent against evil. Drawing on Stoic just war principles, he articulated the position that was to dominate church teaching from that time right up to the present. Ever since, Christians on the left and on the right, in the East and in the West, have found it exceedingly easy to declare as "just" and divinely ordained any wars their governments desired to wage for purely national interests. As a consequence, the world regards Christians as among the most warlike factions on the face of the earth. And little wonder; two-thirds of the people killed in the last 500 years died at the hands of fellow-Christians in Europe, to say nothing of those whom Christians killed in the course of colonizing the rest of the world.

As Gandhi once quipped, "The only people on earth who do not see Christ and His teachings

as nonviolent are Christians." The time has come to look again to the rock from which we were hewn. And the key text remains Jesus' statement about resisting evil.

38You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' 39But I say to you, Do not resist an evildoer. But if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also; 40and if anyone wants to sue you and take your coat, give your cloak as well; 41and if anyone forces you to go one mile, go also the second mile. 42Give to everyone who begs from you, and do not refuse anyone who wants to borrow from you. (Matt. 5:38-42 NRSV; see also Luke 6:29-30).

Christians have, on the whole, simply ignored this teaching. It has seemed impractical, masochistic, suicidal--an invitation to bullies and spouse-batterers to wipe up the floor with their supine Christian victims. Some who have tried to follow Jesus' words have understood it to mean non-resistance: let the oppressor perpetrate evil unopposed. Even scholars have swallowed the eat-humble-pie reading of this text: "It is better to surrender everything and go through life naked than to insist on one's legal rights," to cite only one of scores of these commentators from Augustine right up to the present. Interpreted thus, the passage has become the basis for systematic training in cowardice, as Christians are taught to acquiesce in evil.

Cowardice is scarcely a term one associates with Jesus. Either he failed to make himself clear, or we have misunderstood him. There is plenty of cause to believe the latter. Jesus is not forbidding self-defense here, only the use of violence. Nor is he legitimating the abandonment of nonviolence in order to defend the neighbor. He is rather showing us a way that can be used by individuals or large movements to intervene on behalf of justice for our neighbors--nonviolently.

The classical interpretation of Matt 5:38-42//Luke 6:29-30 suggests two, and only two, possibilities for action in the face of evil: fight or flight. Either we resist evil, or we do not resist it. Jesus seemingly says that we are not to resist it; so, it would appear, he commands us to be docile, inert, compliant, to abandon all desire for justice, to allow the oppressor to walk all over us. "Turn the other cheek" is taken to enjoin becoming a doormat for Jesus, to be trampled without protest. "Give your undergarment as well" has encouraged people to go limp in the face of injustice and hand over the last thing they own. "Going the second mile" has been turned into a platitude meaning nothing more than "extend yourself." Rather than encourage the oppressed to counteract their oppressors, these revolutionary statements have been transformed into injunctions to collude in one's own despoiling.

But that interpretation excluded a third alternative: active nonviolent resistance. The word translated "resist" is itself problematic; what translators have failed to note is how frequently *anthistemi* is used as a military term. Resistance implies "counteractive aggression," a response to hostilities initiated by someone else. Liddell-Scott defines *anthistemi* as to "set against esp. in battle, withstand." Ephesians 6:13 is exemplary of its military usage: "Therefore take the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand [*antistenai*, literally, to draw up battle ranks against the enemy] in the evil day, and having done all, to stand [*stenai*, literally, to close ranks and continue to fight]." The term is used in the LXX primarily for armed resistance in military encounters (44 out of 71 times). Josephus uses *anthistemi* for violent struggle 15 out of 17 times, Philo 4 out of 10. Jesus' answer is set against the backdrop of the burning question of forcible resistance to Rome. In that context, "resistance" could have only one meaning: lethal violence.

Stasis, the noun form of *stenai*, means "a stand," in the military sense of facing off against an enemy. By extension it came to mean a "party formed for seditious purposes; sedition, revolt."

The NRSV translates stasis in Mark 15:7 as "insurrection" (so also Luke 23:19, 25), in Acts 19:40 as "rioting," and in Acts 23:10 as "violent dissension."

In short, *antistenai* means more in Matt. 5:39a than simply to "stand against" or "resist." It means to resist violently, to revolt or rebel, to engage in an insurrection. Jesus is not encouraging submission to evil; that would run counter to everything he did and said. He is, rather, warning against responding to evil in kind by letting the oppressor set the terms of our opposition. Perhaps most importantly, he cautions us against being made over into the very evil we oppose by adopting its methods and spirit. He is saying, in effect, Do not mirror evil; do not become the very thing you hate. The best translation is the Scholars Version: "Don't react violently against the one who is evil."

In the three examples that follow in Matthew, Jesus illustrates what he means.

Turn the Other Cheek

"If anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also." Why the right cheek? A blow by the right fist in that right-handed world would land on the left cheek of the opponent. An open-handed slap would also strike the left cheek. To hit the right cheek with a fist would require using the left hand, but in that society the left hand was used only for unclean tasks. Even to gesture with the left hand at Qumran carried the penalty of ten days' penance. The only way one could naturally strike the right cheek with the right hand would be with the back of the hand. We are dealing here with insult, not a fistfight. The intention is clearly not to injure but to humiliate, to put someone in his or her place. One normally did not strike a peer thus, and if one did the fine was exorbitant. The Mishnaic tractate *Baba Qamma* specifies the various fines for striking an equal: for slugging with a fist, 4 zuz (a zuz was a day's wage); for slapping, 200 zuz; but "if [he struck him] with the back of his hand he must pay him 400 zuz." But damages for indignity were not paid to slaves who are struck (8:1-7).

A backhand slap was the usual way of admonishing inferiors. Masters backhanded slaves; husbands, wives; parents, children; men, women; Romans, Jews. We have here a set of unequal relations, in each of which retaliation would be suicidal. The only normal response would be cowering submission.

Part of the confusion surrounding these sayings arises from the failure to ask who Jesus' audience was. In all three of the examples in Matt. 5:39b-41, Jesus' listeners are not those who strike, initiate lawsuits, or impose forced labor, but their victims ("If anyone strikes you...wants to sue you...forces you to go one mile..."). There are among his hearers people who were subjected to these very indignities, forced to stifle outrage at their dehumanizing treatment by the hierarchical system of caste and class, race and gender, age and status, and as a result of imperial occupation.

Why then does he counsel these already humiliated people to turn the other cheek? Because this action robs the oppressor of the power to humiliate. The person who turns the other cheek is saying, in effect, "Try again. Your first blow failed to achieve its intended effect. I deny you the power to humiliate me. I am a human being just like you. Your status does not alter that fact. You cannot demean me."

Such a response would create enormous difficulties for the striker. Purely logistically, how would he hit the other cheek now turned to him? He cannot backhand it with his right hand (one only need try this to see the problem). If he hits with a fist, he makes the other his equal, acknowledging him as a peer. But the point of the back of the hand is to reinforce

institutionalized inequality. Even if the superior orders the person flogged for such "cheeky" behavior (this is certainly no way to avoid conflict!), the point has been irrevocably made. He has been given notice that this underling is in fact a human being. In that world of honor and shaming, he has been rendered impotent to instill shame in a subordinate. He has been stripped of his power to dehumanize the other. As Gandhi taught, "The first principle of nonviolent action is that of noncooperation with everything humiliating."

Give the Undergarment

The second example Jesus gives is set in a court of law. Someone is being sued for his outer garment. Who would do that, and under what circumstances? The Hebrew Scriptures provide the clues. When you make your neighbor a loan of any sort, you shall not go into his house to fetch his pledge. You shall stand outside, and the man to whom you make the loan shall bring the pledge out to you. And if he is a poor man, you shall not sleep in his pledge; when the sun goes down, you shall restore to him the pledge that he may sleep in his cloak (himatio) and bless you....You shall not...take a widow's garment (himation) in pledge. (Deut. 24:10-13, 17; see also Exod. 22:25-27; Amos 2:7-8; Ezek.18:5-9.) Only the poorest of the poor would have nothing but a garment to give as collateral for a loan. Jewish law strictly required its return every evening at sunset.

Matthew and Luke disagree whether it is the outer garment (Luke) or the undergarment (Matthew) that is being seized. But the Jewish practice of giving the outer garment as a pledge (it alone would be useful as a blanket for sleeping) makes it clear that Luke's order is correct, even though he does not preserve the legal setting. In all Greek usage, according to Liddell-Scott, himation is "always an outer garment...worn above the chiton," whereas the chiton is a "garment worn next to the skin." Consistent with this usage, the Greek translation of the Old Testament (LXX) reads himation in the passages just cited. S. Safrai and M. Stern describe normal Jewish dress: an outer garment or cloak of wool and an undergarment or tunic of linen. To avoid confusion I will simply refer to the "outer garment" and the "undergarment."

The situation Jesus speaks to is all too familiar to his hearers: the debtor has sunk ever deeper into poverty, the debt cannot be repaid, and his creditor has summoned him to court (krithenai) to exact repayment by legal means.

Indebtedness was endemic in first century Palestine. Jesus' parables are full of debtors struggling to salvage their lives. Heavy debt was not, however, a natural calamity that had overtaken the incompetent. It was the direct consequence of Roman imperial policy. Emperors had taxed the wealthy so stringently to fund their wars that the rich began seeking non-liquid investments to secure their wealth. Land was best, but it was ancestrally owned and passed down over generations, and no peasant would voluntarily relinquish it. Exorbitant interest, however, could be used to drive landowners ever deeper into debt. And debt, coupled with the high taxation required by Herod Antipas to pay Rome tribute, created the economic leverage to pry Galilean peasants loose from their land. By the time of Jesus we see this process already far advanced: large estates owned by absentee landlords, managed by stewards, and worked by tenant farmers, day laborers, and slaves. It is no accident that the first act of the Jewish revolutionaries in 66 C.E. was to burn the Temple treasury, where the record of debts was kept.

It is to this situation that Jesus speaks. His hearers are the poor ("if any one would sue you"). They share a rankling hatred for a system that subjects them to humiliation by stripping them of their lands, their goods, finally even their outer garments.

Why then does Jesus counsel them to give over their undergarments as well? This would mean stripping off all their clothing and marching out of court stark naked! Imagine the guffaws this saying must have evoked. There stands the creditor, covered with shame, the poor debtor's outer garment in the one hand, his undergarment in the other. The tables have suddenly been turned on the creditor. The debtor had no hope of winning the case; the law was entirely in the creditor's favor. But the poor man has transcended this attempt to humiliate him. He has risen above shame. At the same time he has registered a stunning protest against the system that created his debt. He has said in effect, "You want my robe? Here, take everything! Now you've got all I have except my body. Is that what you'll take next?"

Nakedness was taboo in Judaism, and shame fell less on the naked party than on the person viewing or causing the nakedness (Gen 9:20-27). By stripping, the debtor has brought the creditor under the same prohibition that led to the curse of Canaan. And much as Isaiah had "walked naked and barefoot for three years" as a prophetic sign (Isa. 20:1-6), so the debtor parades his nakedness in prophetic protest against a system that has deliberately rendered him destitute. Imagine him leaving the court, naked: his friends and neighbors, aghast, inquire what happened. He explains. They join his growing procession, which now resembles a victory parade. The entire system by which debtors are oppressed has been publicly unmasked. The creditor is revealed to be not a legitimate moneylender but a party to the reduction of an entire social class to landlessness, destitution, and abasement. This unmasking is not simply punitive, therefore; it offers the creditor a chance to see, perhaps for the first time in his life, what his practices cause, and to repent.

The Powers That Be literally stand on their dignity. Nothing depotentiates them faster than deft lampooning. By refusing to be awed by their power, the powerless are emboldened to seize the initiative, even where structural change is not immediately possible. This message, far from being a counsel to perfection unattainable in this life, is a practical, strategic measure for empowering the oppressed, and it is being lived out all over the world today by powerless people ready to take their history into their own hands.

Jesus provides here a hint of how to take on the entire system by unmasking its essential cruelty and burlesquing its pretensions to justice. Here is a poor man who will no longer be treated as a sponge to be squeezed dry by the rich. He accepts the laws as they stand, pushes them to absurdity, and reveals them for what they have become. He strips naked, walks out before his fellows, and leaves this creditor, and the whole economic edifice which he represents, stark naked.

[Go the Second Mile](#)

Jesus' third example, the one about going the second mile, is drawn from the relatively enlightened practice of limiting the amount of forced or impressed labor (*angareia*) that Roman soldiers could levy on subject peoples to a single mile. The term *angareia* is probably Persian, and became a loanword in Aramaic, Greek and Latin. Josephus mentions it in reference to the Seleucid ruler, Demetrius who, in order to enlist Jewish support for his bid to be king, promised, among other things, that "the Jews' beasts of burden shall not be requisitioned (*angareuesthai*) for our army" (Ant. 13.52). We are more familiar with its use in the Passion Narrative, where the soldiers "compel" (*angareuousin*) Simon of Cyrene to carry Jesus' cross (Mark 15:21//Matt. 27:32). Such forced service was a constant feature in Palestine from Persian to late Roman times, and whoever was found on the street could be compelled into service. Most cases of impressment involved the need of the postal service for animals and the need of soldiers for civilians to help

carry their packs. The situation in Matthew is clearly the latter. It is not a matter of equisitioning animals but people themselves.

This forced labor was a source of bitter resentment by all Roman subjects. "Angareia is like death," complains one source. The sheer frequency, even into the late empire, of legislation proscribing the misuse of the angareia shows how regularly the practice was used and its regulations violated. An inscription of 49 C.E. from Egypt orders that Roman "soldiers of any degree when passing through the several districts are not to make any requisitions or to employ forced transport (angareia) unless they have the prefect's written authority" --a rescript clearly made necessary by soldiers abusing their privileges. Another decree from Egypt from 133-137 C.E. documents this abuse: "Many soldiers without written requisition are travelling about in the country, demanding ships, beasts of burden, and men, beyond anything authorized, sometimes seizing things by force...to the point of showing abuse and threats to private citizens, the result is that the military is associated with arrogance and injustice." In order to minimize resentment in the conquered lands, at least some effort was made by Rome to punish violators of the laws regarding impressment.

The Theodosian Code devotes an entire section to angareia. Among its ordinances are these: If any person while making a journey should consider that he may abstract an ox that is not assigned to the public post but dedicated to the plow, he shall be arrested with due force by the rural police...and he shall be haled before the judge [normally the governor] (8.5.1, 315 C.E.). By this interdict We forbid that any person should deem that they may request packanimals and supplementary posthorses. But if any person should rashly act so presumptuously, he shall be punished very severely (8.5.6, 354 C.E., ital. added). When any legion is proceeding to its destination, it shall not hereafter attempt to appropriate more than two posthorses (angariae), and only for the sake of any who are sick (8.5.11, 360 C.E.).

Late as these regulations are, they reflect a situation that had changed little since the time of the Persians. Armies had to be moved through countries with dispatch. Some legionnaires bought their own slaves to help carry their packs of sixty to eighty?five pounds (not including weapons). The majority of the rank and file, however, had to depend on impressed civilians. There are vivid accounts of whole villages fleeing to avoid being forced to carry soldiers' baggage, and of richer towns prepared to pay large sums to escape having Roman soldiers billeted on them for winter.

With few exceptions, the commanding general of a legion personally administered justice in serious cases, and all other cases were left to the disciplinary control of his subordinates. Centurions had almost limitless authority in dealing with routine cases of discipline. This accounts for the curious fact that there is very little codified military law, and that late. Roman military historians are agreed, however, that military law changed very little in its essential character throughout the imperial period. No account survives to us today of the penalties to be meted out to soldiers for forcing a civilian to carry his pack more than the permitted mile, but there are at least hints. "If in winter quarters, in camp, or on the march, either an officer or a soldier does injury to a civilian, and does not fully repair the same, he shall pay the damage twofold." This is about as mild a penalty, however, as one can find. Josephus' comment is surely exaggerated, even if it states the popular impression: Roman military forces "have laws which punish with death not merely desertion of the ranks, but even a slight neglect of duty" (J.W. 3.102-8). Between these extremes there was deprivation of pay, a ration of barley instead of wheat, reduction in rank, dishonorable discharge, being forced to camp outside the fortifications, or to stand all day before the general's tent holding a clod in one's hands, or to

stand barefoot in public places. But the most frequent punishment by far was flogging.

The frequency with which decrees were issued to curb misuse of the *angareia* indicates how lax discipline on this point was. Perhaps the soldier might receive only a rebuke. But the point is that the soldier does not know what will happen.

It is in this context of Roman military occupation that Jesus speaks. He does not counsel revolt. One does not "befriend" the soldier, draw him aside and drive a knife into his ribs. Jesus was surely aware of the futility of armed insurrection against Roman imperial might; he certainly did nothing to encourage those whose hatred of Rome was near to flaming into violence.

But why carry his pack a second mile? Is this not to rebound to the opposite extreme of aiding and abetting the enemy? Not at all. The question here, as in the two previous instances, is how the oppressed can recover the initiative and assert their human dignity in a situation that cannot for the time being be changed. The rules are Caesar's, but how one responds to the rules is God's, and Caesar has no power over that.

Imagine then the soldier's surprise when, at the next mile marker, he reluctantly reaches to assume his pack, and the civilian says, "Oh no, let me carry it another mile." Why would he want to do that? What is he up to? Normally, soldiers have to coerce people to carry their packs, but this Jew does so cheerfully, and will not stop! Is this a provocation? Is he insulting the legionnaire's strength? Being kind? Trying to get him disciplined for seeming to violate the rules of impressment? Will this civilian file a complaint? Create trouble?

From a situation of servile impressment, the oppressed have once more seized the initiative. They have taken back the power of choice. The soldier is thrown off balance by being deprived of the predictability of his victim's response. He has never dealt with such a problem before. Now he has been forced into making a decision for which nothing in his previous experience has prepared him. If he has enjoyed feeling superior to the vanquished, he will not enjoy it today. Imagine the situation of a Roman infantryman pleading with a Jew to give back his pack! The humor of this scene may have escaped us, but it could scarcely have been lost on Jesus' hearers, who must have been regaled at the prospect of thus discomfiting their oppressors. Jesus does not encourage Jews to walk a second mile in order to build up merit in heaven, or to exercise a supererogatory piety, or to kill the soldier with kindness. He is helping an oppressed people find a way to protest and neutralize an onerous practice despised throughout the empire. He is not giving a non-political message of spiritual world-transcendence. He is formulating a worldly spirituality in which the people at the bottom of society or under the thumb of imperial power learn to recover their humanity.

One could easily misuse Jesus' advice vindictively; that is why it must not be separated from the command to love enemies integrally connected with it in both Matthew and Luke. But love is not averse to taking the law and using its oppressive momentum to throw the soldier into a region of uncertainty and anxiety where he has never been before. Such tactics can seldom be repeated. One can imagine that within days after the incidents that Jesus sought to provoke, the Powers That Be would pass new laws: penalties for nakedness in court, flogging for carrying a pack more than a mile! One must be creative, improvising new tactics to keep the opponent off balance.

To those whose lifelong pattern has been to cringe before their masters, Jesus offers a way to liberate themselves from servile actions and a servile mentality. And he asserts that they can do this before there is a revolution. There is no need to wait until Rome has been defeated, or peasants are landed and slaves freed. They can begin to behave with dignity and recovered humanity now, even under the unchanged conditions of the old order. Jesus' sense of divine

immediacy has social implications. The reign of God is already breaking into the world, and it comes, not as an imposition from on high, but as the leaven slowly causing the dough to rise (Matt.13:33//Luke 13:20-21). Jesus' teaching on nonviolence is thus of a piece with his proclamation of the dawning of the reign of God.

In the conditions of first-century Palestine, a political revolution against the Romans could only be catastrophic, as the events of 66-73 C.E. would prove. Jesus does not propose armed revolution. But he does lay the foundations for a social revolution, as Richard A. Horsley has pointed out. And a social revolution becomes political when it reaches a critical threshold of acceptance; this in fact did happen to the Roman empire as the Christian church overcame it from below.

Nor were peasants and slaves in a position to transform the economic system by frontal assault. But they could begin to act from an already recovered dignity and freedom, and the ultimate consequences of such acts could only be revolutionary. To that end, Jesus spoke repeatedly of a voluntary remission of debts.

It is entirely appropriate, then, that the saying on debts in Matt. 5:42//Luke 6:30//Gos. Thom. 95 has been added to this saying-block. Jesus counsels his hearers not just to practice alms and to lend money, even to bad-risks, but to lend without expecting interest or even the return of the principal. Such radical egalitarian sharing would be necessary to rescue impoverished Palestinian peasants from their plight; one need not posit an imminent end of history as the cause for such astonishing generosity. And yet none of this is new; Jesus is merely issuing a prophetic summons to Israel to observe the commandments pertaining to the sabbatical year enshrined in Torah, adapted to a new situation.

Such radical sharing would be necessary in order to restore true community. For the risky defiance of the Powers that Jesus advocates would inevitably issue in punitive economic sanctions and physical punishment against individuals. They would need economic support; Matthew's "Give to everyone who asks (aitounti--not necessarily begs) of you" may simply refer to this need for mutual sustenance. Staggering interest and taxes isolated peasants, who went under one by one. This was a standard tactic of imperial "divide and rule" strategy. Jesus' solution was neither utopian nor apocalyptic. It was simple realism. Nothing less could halt or reverse the economic decline of Jewish peasants than a complete suspension of usury and debt and a restoration of economic equality through outright grants, a pattern actually implemented in the earliest Christian community, according to the Book of Acts.

Jesus' Third Way

Jesus' alternative to both fight and flight can be graphically presented by a chart:

- Jesus' Third Way Seize the moral initiative
- Find a creative alternative to violence
- Assert your own humanity and dignity as a person
- Meet force with ridicule or humor
- Break the cycle of humiliation
- Refuse to submit or to accept the inferior position
- Expose the injustice of the system
- Take control of the power dynamic
- Shame the oppressor into repentance
- Stand your ground
- Make the Powers make decisions for which they are not prepared

Recognize your own power
Be willing to suffer rather than retaliate
Force the oppressor to see you in a new light
Deprive the oppressor of a situation where a show of force is effective
Be willing to undergo the penalty of breaking unjust laws
Die to fear of the old order and its rules
Seek the oppressor's transformation

Flight	Fight
Submission	Armed revolt
Passivity	Violent rebellion
Withdrawal	Direct retaliation
Surrender	Revenge

Gandhi insisted that no one join him who was not willing to take up arms to fight for independence. They could not freely renounce what they had not entertained. One cannot pass directly from "Flight" to "Jesus' Third Way." One needs to pass through the "Fight" stage, if only to discover one's own inner strength and capacity for violence. We need to learn to love justice and truth enough to die for them, by violence if nothing else.

Jesus, in short, abhors both passivity and violence. He articulates, out of the history of his own people's struggles, a way by which evil can be opposed without being mirrored, the oppressor resisted without being emulated, and the enemy neutralized without being destroyed. Those who have lived by Jesus' words--Leo Tolstoy, Mohandas K. Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Jr., Dorothy Day, César Chavez, Adolpho Pérez Esquivel--point us to a new way of confronting evil whose potential for personal and social transformation we are only beginning to grasp today. Beyond Just War and Pacifism

Just war theory was founded in part on a misinterpretation of "Resist not evil" (Matt. 5:39), which Augustine regarded as an absolute command to non-resistance of evil. No Christian, he argued, can take up arms in self-defense, therefore, but must submit passively even to death. Nor can Christians defend themselves against injustice, but must willingly collaborate in their own ruin. But what, asked Augustine, if my neighbors are being thus treated? Then the love commandment requires me to take up arms if necessary to defend them.

But Jesus did not teach non-resistance. Rather, he disavowed violent resistance in favor of nonviolent resistance. Of course Christians must resist evil! No decent human being could conceivably stand by and watch innocents suffer without trying to do, or at least wishing to do, something to save them. The question is simply one of means. Likewise Christians are not forbidden by Jesus to engage in self-defense. But they are to do so nonviolently. Jesus did not teach supine passivity in the face of evil. That was precisely what he was attempting to overcome!

Pacifism, in its Christian forms, was often based on the same misinterpretation of Jesus' teaching in Matt. 5:38-42. It too understood Jesus to be commanding non-resistance. Consequently, some pacifists refuse to engage in nonviolent direct action or civil disobedience, on the ground that such actions are coercive. Non-resistance, they believe, only licenses passive resistance. Hence the confusion between "pacifism" and "passivism" has not been completely unfounded.

Jesus' third way is coercive, insofar as it forces oppressors to make choices they would rather not make. But it is non-lethal, the great advantage of which is that, if we have chosen a mistaken course, our opponents are still alive to benefit from our apologies. The same exegesis that undermines the Scriptural ground from traditional just war theory also erodes the foundation of non-resistant pacifism. Jesus' teaching carries us beyond just war and pacifism, to a militant nonviolence that actualizes already in the present the ethos of God's domination-free future.

Out of the heart of the prophetic tradition, Jesus engaged the Domination System in both its outer

and spiritual manifestations. His teaching on nonviolence forms the charter for a way of being in the world that breaks the spiral of violence. Jesus here reveals a way to fight evil with all our power without being transformed into the very evil we fight. It is a way--the only way possible--of not becoming what we hate. "Do not counter evil in kind"--this insight is the distilled essence, stated with sublime simplicity, of the meaning of the cross. It is time the church stops limping between just war theory and nonresistant pacifism and follows Jesus on his nonviolent way.

My Pilgrimage to Nonviolence

Martin Luther King, Jr.

This brief autobiographical statement by one of the greatest souls of the twentieth century gives us a window into King's development into an practitioner of nonviolent direct action. Here he makes clear his debt to and his criticism of Reinhold Niebuhr. The latter worked from an inadequate or even faulty view of nonviolence as nonresistance, repeating the mistake of his theological mentor, St. Augustine. In this article, King, freed from the constraints of addressing a mass audience, is able to give free rein to his own theological reflections. Readers not familiar with philosophical personalism or the writings of Hegel need not fret; for once, let King splash in the fountains of theological discourse, even if only momentarily. (*Fellowship* 24 [September 1958], 4-9)

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Often the question has arisen concerning my own intellectual pilgrimage to nonviolence. In order to get at this question it is necessary to go back to my early teens in Atlanta. I had grown up abhorring not only segregation but also the oppressive and barbarous acts that grew out of it. I had passed spots where Negroes had been savagely lynched, and had watched the Ku Klux Klan on its rides at night. I had seen police brutality with my own eyes, and watched Negroes receive the most tragic injustice in the courts. All of these things had done something to my growing personality. I had come perilously close to resenting all white people.

I had also learned that the inseparable twin of racial injustice was economic injustice. Although I came from a home of economic security and relative comfort, I could never get out of my mind the economic insecurity of many of my playmates and the tragic poverty of those living around me. During my late teens I worked two summers, against my father's wishes--he never wanted my brother and me to work around white people because of the oppressive conditions--in a plant that hired both Negroes and whites. Here I saw economic injustice firsthand, and realized that the poor white was exploited just as much as the Negro. Through these early experiences I grew up deeply conscious of the varieties of injustice in our society.

So when I went to Atlanta's Morehouse College as a freshman in 1944 my concern for racial and economic justice was already substantial. During my student days at Morehouse I read Thoreau's *Essay on Civil Disobedience* for the first time. Fascinated by the idea of refusing to cooperate with an evil system, I was so deeply moved that I reread the work several times. This was my first intellectual contact with the theory of nonviolent resistance.

Not until I entered Crozer Theological Seminary in 1948, however, did I begin a serious intellectual quest for a method to eliminate social evil. Although my major interest was in the fields of theology and philosophy, I spent a great deal of time reading the works of the great social philosophers. I came early to Walter Rauschenbusch's *Christianity and the Social Crisis*, which left an indelible imprint on my thinking by giving me a theological basis for the social concern which had already grown up in me as a result of my early experiences. Of course there were points at which I differed with Rauschenbusch. I felt that he had fallen victim to the nineteenth century "cult of inevitable progress" which led him to a superficial optimism concerning man's nature. Moreover, he came perilously close to identifying the Kingdom of God with a particular social and economic system—a tendency which should never befall the Church. But in spite of these shortcomings Rauschenbusch had done a great service for the Christian Church by insisting that the gospel deals with the whole man, not only his soul but his body; not only his spiritual well-being but his material well-being. It has been my conviction ever since reading Rauschenbusch that any religion which professes to be concerned about the souls of men and is not concerned about the social and economic conditions that scar the soul, is a spiritually moribund religion only waiting for the day to be buried. It well has been said: "A religion that ends with the individual, ends."

After reading Rauschenbusch, I turned to a serious study of the social and ethical theories of the great philosophers, from Plato and Aristotle down to Rousseau, Hobbes, Bentham, Mill and Locke. All of these masters stimulated my thinking—such as it was—and, while finding things to question in each of them, I nevertheless learned a great deal from their study.

The Challenge of Marxism

During the Christmas holidays of 1949 I decided to spend my spare time reading Karl Marx to try to understand the appeal of communism for many people. For the first time I carefully scrutinized *Das Kapital* and *The Communist Manifesto*. I also read some interpretive works on the thinking of Marx and Lenin. In reading such Communist writings I drew certain conclusions that have remained with me to this day.

First I rejected their materialistic interpretation of history. Communism, avowedly secularistic and materialistic, has no place for God. This I could never accept, for as a Christian I believe that there is a creative personal power in this universe who is the ground and essence of all reality—a power that cannot be explained in materialistic terms. History is ultimately guided by spirit, not matter.

Second, I strongly disagreed with communism's ethical relativism. Since for the Communist there is no divine government, no absolute moral order, there are no fixed, immutable principles; consequently almost anything—force, violence, murder, lying—is a justifiable means to the "millennial" end. This type of relativism was abhorrent to me. Constructive ends can never give absolute moral justification to destructive means, because in the final analysis the end is preexistent in the mean.

Third, I opposed communism's political totalitarianism. In communism the individual ends up in subjection to the state. True, the Marxist would argue that the state is an "interim" reality which

is to be eliminated when the classless society emerges; but the state is the end while it lasts, and man only a means to that end. And if any man's so-called rights or liberties stand in the way of that end, they are simply swept aside. His liberties of expression, his freedom to vote, his freedom to listen to what news he likes or to choose his books are all restricted. Man becomes hardly more, in communism, than a depersonalized cog in the turning wheel of the state.

This deprecation of individual freedom was objectionable to me. I am convinced now, as I was then, that man is an end because he is a child of God. Man is not made for the state; the state is made for man. To deprive man of freedom is to relegate him to the status of a thing, rather than elevate him to the status of a person. Man must never be treated as a means to the end of the state, but always as an end within himself.

Yet, in spite of the fact that my response to communism was and is negative, and I considered it basically evil, there were points at which I found it challenging. The late Archbishop of Canterbury, William Temple, referred to communism as a Christian heresy. By this he meant that communism had laid hold of certain truths which are essential parts of the Christian view of things, but that it had bound up with them concepts and practices which no Christian could ever accept or profess. Communism challenged the late Archbishop and it should challenge every Christian—as it challenged me—to a growing concern about social justice. With all of its false assumptions and evil methods, communism grew as a protest against the hardships of the underprivileged. Communism in theory emphasized a classless society, and a concern for social justice, though the world knows from sad experience that in practice it created new classes and a new lexicon of injustice. The Christian ought always to be challenged by any protest against unfair treatment of the poor, for Christianity is itself such a protest, nowhere expressed more eloquently than in Jesus' words: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord."

I also sought systematic answers to Marx's critique of modern bourgeois culture. He presented capitalism as essentially a struggle between the owners of the productive resources and the workers, whom Marx regarded as the real producers. Marx interpreted economic forces as the dialectical process by which society moved from feudalism through capitalism to socialism, with the primary mechanism of this historical movement being the struggle between economic classes whose interests were irreconcilable. Obviously this theory left out of account the numerous and significant complexities—political, economic moral, religious and psychological—which played a vital role in shaping the constellation of institutions and ideas known today as Western civilization. Moreover, it was dated in the sense that the capitalism Marx wrote about bore only a partial resemblance to the capitalism we know in this country today.

Toward a New Social Synthesis

But in spite of the shortcomings of his analysis, Marx had raised some basic questions. I was deeply concerned from my early teen days about the gulf between superfluous wealth and abject poverty, and my reading of Marx made me ever more conscious of this gulf. Although modern American capitalism had greatly reduced the gap through social reforms, there was still need for

a better distribution of wealth. Moreover, Marx had revealed the danger of the profit motive as the sole basis of an economic system; capitalism is always in danger of inspiring men to be more concerned about making a living than making a life. We are prone to judge success by the index of our salaries or the size of our automobiles, rather than by the quality of our service and relationship to humanity—thus capitalism can lead to a practical materialism that is as pernicious as the materialism taught by communism.

In short, I read Marx as I read all of the influential historical thinkers—from a dialectical point of view, combining a partial "yes" and a partial "no." In so far as Marx posited a metaphysical materialism, an ethical relativism, and a strangulating totalitarianism, I responded with an unambiguous "no"; but in so far as he pointed to weaknesses of traditional capitalism, contributed to the growth of a definite self-consciousness in the masses, and challenged the social conscience of the Christian churches, I responded with a definite "yes."

My reading of Marx also convinced me that truth is found neither in Marxism nor in traditional capitalism. Each represents a partial truth. Historically capitalism failed to see the truth in collective enterprise, and Marxism failed to see the truth in individual enterprise. Nineteenth century capitalism failed to see that life is social and Marxism failed and still fails to see that life is individual and personal. The Kingdom of God is neither the thesis of individual enterprise nor the antithesis of collective enterprise, but a synthesis which reconciles the truths of both.

Muste, Nietzsche and Gandhi

During my stay at Crozer, I was also exposed for the first time to the pacifist position in a lecture by A. J. Muste. I was deeply moved by Mr. Muste's talk, but far from convinced of the practicability of his position. Like most of the students of Crozer, I felt that while war could never be a positive or absolute good, it could serve as a negative good in the sense of preventing the spread and growth of an evil force. War, horrible as it is, might be preferable to surrender to a totalitarian system—Nazi, Fascist, or Communist.

During this period I had about despaired of the power of love in solving social problems. Perhaps my faith in love was temporarily shaken by the philosophy of Nietzsche. I had been reading parts of *The Genealogy of Morals* and the whole of *The Will to Power*. Nietzsche's glorification of power—in his theory all life expressed the will to power—was an outgrowth of his contempt for ordinary morals. He attacked the whole of the Hebraic-Christian morality—with its virtues of piety and humility, its otherworldliness and its attitude toward suffering—as the glorification of weakness, as making virtues out of necessity and impotence. He looked to the development of a superman who would surpass man as man surpassed the ape.

Then one Sunday afternoon I traveled to Philadelphia to hear a sermon by Dr. Mordecai Johnson, president of Howard University. He was there to preach for the Fellowship House of Philadelphia. Dr. Johnson had just returned from a trip to India, and, to my great interest, he spoke of the life and teachings of Mahatma Gandhi. His message was so profound and electrifying that I left the meeting and bought a half dozen books on Gandhi's life and works.

Like most people, I had heard of Gandhi, but I had never studied him seriously. As I read I became deeply fascinated by his campaigns of nonviolent resistance. I was particularly moved by the Salt March to the Sea and his numerous fasts. The whole concept of "Satyagraha" (*Satya* is truth which equals love, and *agraha* is force; "Satyagraha," therefore, means truth-force or loveforce) was profoundly significant to me. As I delved deeper into the philosophy of Gandhi my skepticism concerning the power of love gradually diminished, and I came to see for the first time its potency in the area of social reform. Prior to reading Gandhi, I had about concluded that the ethics of Jesus were only effective in individual relationship. The "turn the other cheek" philosophy and the "love your enemies" philosophy were only valid, I felt, when individuals were in conflict with other individuals; when racial groups and nations were in conflict a more realistic approach seemed necessary. But after reading Gandhi, I saw how utterly mistaken I was.

Gandhi was probably the first person in history to lift the love ethic of Jesus above mere interaction between individuals to a powerful and effective social force on a large scale. Love, for Gandhi, was a potent instrument for social and collective transformation. It was in this Gandhian emphasis on love and nonviolence that I discovered the method for social reform that I had been seeking for so many months. The intellectual and moral satisfaction that I failed to gain from the utilitarianism of Bentham and Mill, the revolutionary methods of Marx and Lenin, the social-contracts theory of Hobbes, the "back to nature" optimism of Rousseau, the superman philosophy of Nietzsche, I found in the nonviolent resistance philosophy of Gandhi. I came to feel that this was the only morally and practically sound method open to oppressed people in their struggle for freedom.

An Encounter With Niebuhr

But my intellectual odyssey to nonviolence did not end here. During my last year in theological school, I began to read the works of Reinhold Niebuhr. The prophetic and realistic elements in Niebuhr's passionate style and profound thought were appealing to me, and I became so enamored of his social ethics that I almost fell into the trap of accepting uncritically everything he wrote.

About this time I read Niebuhr's critique of the pacifist position. Niebuhr had himself once been a member of the pacifist ranks.

For several years, he had been national chairman of the Fellowship of Reconciliation. His break with pacifism came in the early thirties, and the first full statement of his criticism of pacifism was in *Moral Man and Immoral Society*. Here he argued that there was no intrinsic moral difference between violent and nonviolent resistance. The social consequences of the two methods were different, he contended, but the differences were in degree rather than kind. Later Niebuhr began emphasizing the irresponsibility of relying on nonviolent resistance when there was no ground for believing that it would be successful in preventing the spread of totalitarian tyranny. It could only be successful, he argued, if the groups against whom the resistance was taking place had some degree of moral conscience, as was the case in Gandhi's struggle against the British. Niebuhr's ultimate rejection of pacifism was based primarily on the doctrine of man. He argued that pacifism failed to do justice to the reformation doctrine of justification by faith,

substituting for it a sectarian perfectionism which believes "that divine grace actually lifts man out of the sinful contradictions of history and establishes him above the sins of the world."

At first, Niebuhr's critique of pacifism left me in a state of confusion. As I continued to read, however, I came to see more and more the shortcomings of his position. For instance, many of his statements revealed that he interpreted pacifism as a sort of passive nonresistance to evil expressing naive trust in the power of love. But this was a serious distortion. My study of Gandhi convinced me that true pacifism is not nonresistance to evil, but nonviolent resistance to evil. Between the two positions, there is a world of difference. Gandhi resisted evil with as much vigor and power as the violent resister, but he resisted with love instead of hate. True pacifism is not unrealistic submission to evil power, as Niebuhr contends. It is rather a courageous confrontation of evil by the power of love, in the faith that it is better to be the recipient of violence than the inflicter of it, since the latter only multiplied the existence of violence and bitterness in the universe, while the former may develop a sense of shame in the opponent, and thereby bring about a transformation and change of heart.

In spite of the fact that I found many things to be desired in Niebuhr's philosophy, there were several points at which he constructively influenced my thinking. Niebuhr's great contribution to contemporary theology is that he has refuted the false optimism characteristic of a great segment of Protestant liberalism, without falling into the anti-rationalism of the continental theologian Karl Barth, or the semi-fundamentalism of other dialectical theologians. Moreover, Niebuhr has extraordinary insight into human nature, especially the behavior of nations and social groups. He is keenly aware of the complexity of human motives and of the relation between morality and power. His theology is a persistent reminder of the reality of sin on every level of humanity's existence. These elements in Niebuhr's thinking helped me to recognize the illusions of a superficial optimism concerning human nature and the dangers of a false idealism. While I still believed in the human potential for good, Niebuhr made me realize its potential for evil as well. Moreover Niebuhr helped me to recognize the complexity of people's social involvement and the glaring reality of collective evil.

Many pacifists, I felt, failed to see this. All too many had an unwarranted optimism concerning man and leaned unconsciously toward self-righteousness. It was my revolt against these attitudes under the influence of Niebuhr that accounts for the fact that in spite of my strong leaning toward pacifism, I never joined a pacifist organization. After reading Niebuhr, I tried to arrive at a realistic pacifism. In other words, I came to see the pacifist position not as sinless but as the lesser evil in the circumstances. I felt then, and I feel now, that the pacifist would have a greater appeal if he did not claim to be free from the moral dilemmas that the Christian nonpacifist confronts.

The next stage of my intellectual pilgrimage to nonviolence came during my doctoral studies at Boston University. Here I had the opportunity to talk to many exponents of nonviolence, both students and visitors to the campus. Boston University School of Theology under the influence of Dean Walter Muelder and Professor Allan Knight Chalmers, had a deep sympathy for pacifism. Both Dean Muelder and Dr. Chalmers had a passion for social justice that stemmed, not from a superficial optimism, but from a deep faith in the possibilities of human beings when they allowed themselves to become co-workers with God. It was at Boston University that I

came to see that Niebuhr had overemphasized the corruption of human nature. His pessimism concerning human nature was not balanced by an optimism concerning divine nature. He was so involved in diagnosing man's sickness of sin that he overlooked the cure of grace.

I studied philosophy and theology at Boston University under Edgar S. Brightman and L. Harold DeWolf. Both men greatly stimulated my thinking. It was mainly under these teachers that I studied personalistic philosophy—the theory that the clue to the meaning of ultimate reality is found in personality. This personal idealism remains today my basic philosophical position. Personalism's insistence that only personality—finite and infinite—is ultimately real strengthened me in two convictions: it gave me metaphysical and philosophical grounding for the idea of a personal God, and it gave me a metaphysical basis for the dignity and worth of all human personality.

Just before Dr. Brightman's death, I began studying the philosophy of Hegel with him. Although the course was mainly a study of Hegel's monumental work, *Phenomenology of Mind*, I spent my spare time reading his *Philosophy of History* and *Philosophy of Right*. There were points in Hegel's philosophy that I strongly disagreed with. For instance, his absolute idealism was rationally unsound to me because it tended to swallow up the many in the one. But there were other aspects of his thinking that I found stimulating. His contention that "truth is the whole" led me to a philosophical method of rational coherence. His analysis of the dialectical process, in spite of its shortcomings, helped me to see that growth comes through struggle.

In 1954 I ended my formal training with all of these relative divergent intellectual forces converging into a positive social philosophy. One of the main tenets of this philosophy was the conviction that nonviolent resistance was one of the most potent weapons available to oppressed people in their quest for social justice. At this time, however, I had merely an intellectual understanding and appreciation of the position, with no firm determination to organize it in a socially effective situation.

When I went to Montgomery as a pastor, I had not the slightest idea that I would later become involved in a crisis in which nonviolent resistance would be applicable. I neither started the protest nor suggested it. I simply responded to the call of the people for a spokesman. When the protest began, my mind, consciously or unconsciously, was driven back to the Sermon on the Mount, with its sublime teachings on love, and the Gandhian method of nonviolent resistance. As the days unfolded, I came to see the power of nonviolence more and more. Living through the actual experience of the protest, nonviolence became more than a method to which I gave intellectual assent; it became a commitment to a way of life. Many of the things that I had not cleared up intellectually concerning nonviolence were now solved in the sphere of practical action.

ChristianityToday

Trained to Kill

A military expert on the psychology of killing explains how today's media condition kids to pull the trigger.

David Grossman

Why are kids shooting their classmates?

David Grossman is a military psychologist who coined the term *killology* for a new interdisciplinary field: the study of the methods and psychological effects of training army recruits to circumvent their natural inhibitions to killing fellow human beings. Here he marshals unsettling evidence that the same tactics used in training soldiers are at work in our media and entertainment. [CT](#) thinks that parents, the church, scholars, and the government must come together to study this question more intensely:

Are we training our children to kill?

I am from Jonesboro, Arkansas. I travel the world training medical, law enforcement, and U.S. military personnel about the realities of warfare. I try to make those who carry deadly force keenly aware of the magnitude of killing. Too many law enforcement and military personnel act like "cowboys," never stopping to think about who they are and what they are called to do. I hope I am able to give them a reality check.

So here I am, a world traveler and an expert in the field of "killology," and the largest school massacre in American history happens in my hometown of Jonesboro, Arkansas. That was the March 24 schoolyard shooting deaths of four girls and a teacher. Ten others were injured, and two boys, ages 11 and 13, are in jail, charged with murder.

My son goes to one of the middle schools in town, so my aunt in Florida called us that day and asked, "Was that Joe's school?" And we said, "We haven't heard about it." My aunt in Florida knew about the shootings before we did!

We turned on the television and discovered the shootings took place down the road from us but, thank goodness, not at Joe's school. I'm sure almost all parents in Jonesboro that night hugged their children and said, "Thank God it wasn't you," as they tucked them into bed. But there was also a lot of guilt because some parents in Jonesboro couldn't say that.

I spent the first three days after the tragedy at Westside Middle School, where the shootings took place, working with the counselors, teachers, students, and parents. None of us had ever done anything like this before. I train people how to react to trauma in the military; but how do you do it with kids after a massacre in their school?

I was the lead trainer for the counselors and clergy the night after the shootings, and the following day we debriefed the teachers in groups. Then the counselors and clergy, working with the teachers, debriefed the students, allowing them to work through everything that had

happened. Only people who share a trauma can give each other the understanding, acceptance, and forgiveness needed to understand *what* happened, and then they can begin the long process of trying to understand *why* it happened.

Virus of violence

To understand the *why* behind Jonesboro and Springfield and Pearl and Paducah, and all the other outbreaks of this "virus of violence," we need to understand first the magnitude of the problem. The per capita murder rate doubled in this country between 1957—when the fbi started keeping track of the data—and 1992. A fuller picture of the problem, however, is indicated by the rate people are *attempting* to kill one another—the aggravated assault rate. That rate in America has gone from around 60 per 100,000 in 1957 to over 440 per 100,000 by the middle of this decade. As bad as this is, it would be much worse were it not for two major factors.

First is the increase in the imprisonment rate of violent offenders. The prison population in America nearly quadrupled between 1975 and 1992. According to criminologist John J. DiIulio, "dozens of credible empirical analyses ... leave no doubt that the increased use of prisons averted millions of serious crimes." If it were not for our tremendous imprisonment rate (the highest of any industrialized nation), the aggravated assault rate and the murder rate would undoubtedly be even higher.

Children don't naturally kill; they learn it from violence in the home and most pervasively, from violence as entertainment in television, movies, and interactive video games.

The second factor keeping the murder rate from being any worse is medical technology. According to the U.S. Army Medical Service Corps, a wound that would have killed nine out of ten soldiers in World War II, nine out of ten could have survived in Vietnam. Thus, by a very conservative estimate, if we had 1940-level medical technology today, the murder rate would be ten times higher than it is. The magnitude of the problem has been held down by the development of sophisticated lifesaving skills and techniques, such as helicopter medevacs, 911 operators, paramedics, cpr, trauma centers, and medicines.

However, the crime rate is still at a phenomenally high level, and this is true worldwide. In Canada, according to their Center for Justice, per capita assaults increased almost fivefold between 1964 and 1993, attempted murder increased nearly sevenfold, and murders doubled. Similar trends can be seen in other countries in the per capita violent crime rates reported to Interpol between 1977 and 1993. In Australia and New Zealand, the assault rate increased approximately fourfold, and the murder rate nearly doubled in both nations. The assault rate tripled in Sweden, and approximately doubled in Belgium, Denmark, England-Wales, France, Hungary, Netherlands, and Scotland, while all these nations had an associated (but smaller) increase in murder.

This virus of violence is occurring worldwide. The explanation for it has to be some new factor that is occurring in all of these countries. There are many factors involved, and none should be discounted: for example, the prevalence of guns in our society. But violence is rising in many nations with draco-nian gun laws. And though we should never downplay child abuse, poverty,

or racism, there is only one new variable present in each of these countries, bearing the exact same fruit: media violence presented as entertainment for children.

Killing is unnatural

Before retiring from the military, I spent almost a quarter of a century as an army infantry officer and a psychologist, learning and studying how to enable people to kill. Believe me, we are very good at it. But it does not come naturally; you have to be taught to kill. And just as the army is conditioning people to kill, we are indiscriminately doing the same thing to our children, but without the safeguards.

After the Jonesboro killings, the head of the American Academy of Pediatrics Task Force on Juvenile Violence came to town and said that children don't naturally kill. It is a learned skill. And they learn it from abuse and violence in the home and, most pervasively, from violence as entertainment in television, the movies, and interactive video games.

Killing requires training because there is a built-in aversion to killing one's own kind. I can best illustrate this from drawing on my own work in studying killing in the military.

We all know that you can't have an argument or a discussion with a frightened or angry human being. Vasoconstriction, the narrowing of the blood vessels, has literally closed down the forebrain—that great gob of gray matter that makes you a human being and distinguishes you from a dog. When those neurons close down, the midbrain takes over and your thought processes and reflexes are indistinguishable from your dog's. If you've worked with animals, you have some understanding of what happens to frightened human beings on the battlefield. The battlefield and violent crime are in the realm of midbrain responses.

Within the midbrain there is a powerful, God-given resistance to killing your own kind. Every species, with a few exceptions, has a hardwired resistance to killing its own kind in territorial and mating battles. When animals with antlers and horns fight one another, they head butt in a harmless fashion. But when they fight any other species, they go to the side to gut and gore. Piranhas will turn their fangs on anything, but they fight one another with flicks of the tail. Rattlesnakes will bite anything, but they wrestle one another. Almost every species has this hardwired resistance to killing its own kind.

When we human beings are overwhelmed with anger and fear, we slam head-on into that midbrain resistance that generally prevents us from killing. Only sociopaths—who by definition don't have that resistance—lack this innate violence immune system.

Throughout human history, when humans fight each other, there is a lot of posturing. Adversaries make loud noises and puff themselves up, trying to daunt the enemy. There is a lot of fleeing and submission. Ancient battles were nothing more than great shoving matches. It was not until one side turned and ran that most of the killing happened, and most of that was stabbing people in the back. All of the ancient military historians report that the vast majority of killing happened in pursuit when one side was fleeing.

"Few researchers bother any longer to dispute that bloodshed on TV and in the movies has an effect on kids who witness it." (*Time*, April 6, 1998)

In more modern times, the average firing rate was incredibly low in Civil War battles. Patty Griffith demonstrates that the killing potential of the average Civil War regiment was anywhere from five hundred to a thousand men per minute. The actual killing rate was only one or two men per minute per regiment (*The Battle Tactics of the American Civil War*). At the Battle of Gettysburg, of the 27,000 muskets picked up from the dead and dying after the battle, 90 percent were loaded. This is an anomaly, because it took 95 percent of their time to load muskets and only 5 percent to fire. But even more amazingly, of the thousands of loaded muskets, over half had multiple loads in the barrel—one with 23 loads in the barrel.

In reality, the average man would load his musket and bring it to his shoulder, but he could not bring himself to kill. He would be brave, he would stand shoulder to shoulder, he would do what he was trained to do; but at the moment of truth, he could not bring himself to pull the trigger. And so he lowered the weapon and loaded it again. Of those who did fire, only a tiny percentage fired to hit. The vast majority fired over the enemy's head.

During World War II, U.S. Army Brig. Gen. S. L. A. Marshall had a team of researchers study what soldiers did in battle. For the first time in history, they asked individual soldiers what they did in battle. They discovered that only 15 to 20 percent of the individual riflemen could bring themselves to fire at an exposed enemy soldier.

That is the reality of the battlefield. Only a small percentage of soldiers are able and willing to participate. Men are willing to die, they are willing to sacrifice themselves for their nation; but they are not willing to kill. It is a phenomenal insight into human nature; but when the military became aware of that, they systematically went about the process of trying to fix this "problem." From the military perspective, a 15 percent firing rate among riflemen is like a 15 percent literacy rate among librarians. And fix it the military did. By the Korean War, around 55 percent of the soldiers were willing to fire to kill. And by Vietnam, the rate rose to over 90 percent.

The methods in this madness: Desensitization

How the military increases the killing rate of soldiers in combat is instructive, because our culture today is doing the same thing to our children. The training methods militaries use are brutalization, classical conditioning, operant conditioning, and role modeling. I will explain these in the military context and show how these same factors are contributing to the phenomenal increase of violence in our culture.

Brutalization and desensitization are what happens at boot camp. From the moment you step off the bus you are physically and verbally abused: countless pushups, endless hours at attention or running with heavy loads, while carefully trained professionals take turns screaming at you. Your head is shaved, you are herded together naked and dressed alike, losing all individuality. This brutalization is designed to break down your existing mores and norms and to accept a new set of values that embrace destruction, violence, and death as a way of life. In the end, you are desensitized to violence and accept it as a normal and essential survival skill in your brutal new world.

Something very similar to this desensitization toward violence is happening to our children through violence in the media—but instead of 18-year-olds, it begins at the age of 18 months when a child is first able to discern what is happening on television. At that age, a child can watch something happening on television and mimic that action. But it isn't until children are six or seven years old that the part of the brain kicks in that lets them understand where information comes from. Even though young children have some understanding of what it means to pretend, they are developmentally unable to distinguish clearly between fantasy and reality.

When young children see somebody shot, stabbed, raped, brutalized, degraded, or murdered on TV, to them it is as though it were actually happening. To have a child of three, four, or five watch a "splatter" movie, learning to relate to a character for the first 90 minutes and then in the last 30 minutes watch helplessly as that new friend is hunted and brutally murdered is the moral and psychological equivalent of introducing your child to a friend, letting her play with that friend, and then butchering that friend in front of your child's eyes. And this happens to our children hundreds upon hundreds of times.

Sure, they are told: "Hey, it's all for fun. Look, this isn't real, it's just TV." And they nod their little heads and say *okay*. But they can't tell the difference. Can you remember a point in your life or in your children's lives when dreams, reality, and television were all jumbled together? That's what it is like to be at that level of psychological development. That's what the media are doing to them.

The *Journal of the American Medical Association* published the definitive epidemiological study on the impact of TV violence. The research demonstrated what happened in numerous nations after television made its appearance as compared to nations and regions without TV. The two nations or regions being compared are demographically and ethnically identical; only one variable is different: the presence of television. In every nation, region, or city with television, there is an immediate explosion of violence on the playground, and within 15 years there is a doubling of the murder rate. Why 15 years? That is how long it takes for the brutalization of a three- to five-year-old to reach the "prime crime age." That is how long it takes for you to reap what you have sown when you brutalize and desensitize a three-year-old.

Today the data linking violence in the media to violence in society are superior to those linking cancer and tobacco. Hundreds of sound scientific studies demonstrate the social impact of brutalization by the media. The *Journal of the American Medical Association* concluded that "the introduction of television in the 1950's caused a subsequent doubling of the homicide rate, i.e., long-term childhood exposure to television is a causal factor behind approximately one half of the homicides committed in the United States, or approximately 10,000 homicides annually." The article went on to say that " ... if, hypothetically, television technology had never been developed, there would today be 10,000 fewer homicides each year in the United States, 70,000 fewer rapes, and 700,000 fewer injurious assaults" (June 10, 1992).

Classical conditioning

Classical conditioning is like the famous case of Pavlov's dogs you learned about in Psychology 101: The dogs learned to associate the ringing of the bell with food, and, once conditioned, the dogs could not hear the bell without salivating.

The Japanese were masters at using classical conditioning with their soldiers. Early in World War II, Chinese prisoners were placed in a ditch on their knees with their hands bound behind them. And one by one, a select few Japanese soldiers would go into the ditch and bayonet "their" prisoner to death. This is a horrific way to kill another human being. Up on the bank, countless other young soldiers would cheer them on in their violence. Comparatively few soldiers actually killed in these situations, but by making the others watch and cheer, the Japanese were able to use these kinds of atrocities to classically condition a very large audience to associate pleasure with human death and suffering. Immediately afterwards, the soldiers who had been spectators were treated to sake, the best meal they had had in months, and to so-called comfort girls. The result? They learned to associate committing violent acts with pleasure.

The Japanese found these kinds of techniques to be extraordinarily effective at quickly enabling very large numbers of soldiers to commit atrocities in the years to come. Operant conditioning (which we will look at shortly) teaches you to kill, but classical conditioning is a subtle but powerful mechanism that teaches you to *like it*.

This technique is so morally reprehensible that there are very few examples of it in modern U.S. military training; but there are some clear-cut examples of it being done by the media to our children. What is happening to our children is the reverse of the aversion therapy portrayed in the movie *A Clockwork Orange*. In *A Clockwork Orange*, a brutal sociopath, a mass murderer, is strapped to a chair and forced to watch violent movies while he is injected with a drug that nauseates him. So he sits and gags and retches as he watches the movies. After hundreds of repetitions of this, he associates violence with nausea, and it limits his ability to be violent.

Every time a child plays an interactive video game, he is learning the exact same conditioned reflex skills as a soldier or police officer in training.

We are doing the exact opposite: Our children watch vivid pictures of human suffering and death, and they learn to associate it with their favorite soft drink and candy bar, or their girlfriend's perfume.

After the Jonesboro shootings, one of the high-school teachers told me how her students reacted when she told them about the shootings at the middle school. "They laughed," she told me with dismay. A similar reaction happens all the time in movie theaters when there is bloody violence. The young people laugh and cheer and keep right on eating popcorn and drinking pop. We have raised a generation of barbarians who have learned to associate violence with pleasure, like the Romans cheering and snacking as the Christians were slaughtered in the Colosseum.

The result is a phenomenon that functions much like AIDS, which I call AVIDS—Acquired Violence Immune Deficiency Syndrome. AIDS has never killed anybody. It destroys your

immune system, and then other diseases that shouldn't kill you become fatal. Television violence by itself does not kill you. It destroys your violence immune system and conditions you to derive pleasure from violence. And once you are at close range with another human being, and it's time for you to pull that trigger, Acquired Violence Immune Deficiency Syndrome can destroy your midbrain resistance.

Operant conditioning

The third method the military uses is operant conditioning, a very powerful procedure of stimulus-response, stimulus-response. A benign example is the use of flight simulators to train pilots. An airline pilot in training sits in front of a flight simulator for endless hours; when a particular warning light goes on, he is taught to react in a certain way. When another warning light goes on, a different reaction is required. Stimulus-response, stimulus-response, stimulus-response. One day the pilot is actually flying a jumbo jet; the plane is going down, and 300 people are screaming behind him. He is wetting his seat cushion, and he is scared out of his wits; but he does the right thing. Why? Because he has been conditioned to respond reflexively to this particular crisis.

When people are frightened or angry, they will do what they have been conditioned to do. In fire drills, children learn to file out of the school in orderly fashion. One day there is a real fire, and they are frightened out of their wits; but they do exactly what they have been conditioned to do, and it saves their lives.

The military and law enforcement community have made killing a conditioned response. This has substantially raised the firing rate on the modern battlefield. Whereas infantry training in World War II used bull's-eye targets, now soldiers learn to fire at realistic, man-shaped silhouettes that pop into their field of view. That is the stimulus. The trainees have only a split second to engage the target. The conditioned response is to shoot the target, and then it drops. Stimulus-response, stimulus-response, stimulus-response—soldiers or police officers experience hundreds of repetitions. Later, when soldiers are on the battlefield or a police officer is walking a beat and somebody pops up with a gun, they will shoot reflexively and shoot to kill. We know that 75 to 80 percent of the shooting on the modern battlefield is the result of this kind of stimulus-response training.

Now, if you're a little troubled by that, how much more should we be troubled by the fact that every time a child plays an interactive point-and-shoot video game, he is learning the exact same conditioned reflex and motor skills.

I was an expert witness in a murder case in South Carolina offering mitigation for a kid who was facing the death penalty. I tried to explain to the jury that interactive video games had conditioned him to shoot a gun to kill. He had spent hundreds of dollars on video games learning to point and shoot, point and shoot. One day he and his buddy decided it would be fun to rob the local convenience store. They walked in, and he pointed a snub-nosed .38 pistol at the clerk's head. The clerk turned to look at him, and the defendant shot reflexively from about six feet. The bullet hit the clerk right between the eyes—which is a pretty remarkable shot with that weapon at that range—and killed this father of two. Afterward, we asked the boy what happened and why

he did it. It clearly was not part of the plan to kill the guy—it was being videotaped from six different directions. He said, "I don't know. It was a mistake. It wasn't supposed to happen."

In the military and law-enforcement worlds, the right option is often not to shoot. But you never, never put your quarter in that video machine with the intention of not shooting. There is always some stimulus that sets you off. And when he was excited, and his heart rate went up, and vasoconstriction closed his forebrain down, this young man did exactly what he was conditioned to do: he reflexively pulled the trigger, shooting accurately just like all those times he played video games.

This process is extraordinarily powerful and frightening. The result is ever more homemade pseudosociopaths who kill reflexively and show no remorse. Our children are learning to kill and learning to like it; and then we have the audacity to say, "Oh my goodness, what's wrong?"

One of the boys allegedly involved in the Jonesboro shootings (and they are just boys) had a fair amount of experience shooting real guns. The other one was a nonshooter and, to the best of our knowledge, had almost no experience shooting. Between them, those two boys fired 27 shots from a range of over 100 yards, and they hit 15 people. That's pretty remarkable shooting. We run into these situations often—kids who have never picked up a gun in their lives pick up a real gun and are incredibly accurate. Why? Video games.

Role models

In the military, you are immediately confronted with a role model: your drill sergeant. He personifies violence and aggression. Along with military heroes, these violent role models have always been used to influence young, impressionable minds.

Today the media are providing our children with role models, and this can be seen not just in the lawless sociopaths in movies and TV shows, but it can also be seen in the media-inspired, copycat aspects of the Jonesboro murders. This is the part of these juvenile crimes that the TV networks would much rather not talk about.

Research in the 1970s demonstrated the existence of "cluster suicides" in which the local TV reporting of teen suicides directly caused numerous copycat suicides of impressionable teenagers. Somewhere in every population there are potentially suicidal kids who will say to themselves, "Well, I'll show all those people who have been mean to me. I know how to get my picture on TV, too." Because of this research, television stations today generally do not cover suicides. But when the pictures of teenage killers appear on TV, the effect is the same: Somewhere there is a potentially violent little boy who says to himself, "Well, I'll show all those people who have been mean to me. I know how to get my picture on TV too."

Thus we get copycat, cluster murders that work their way across America like a virus spread by the six o'clock news. No matter what someone has done, if you put his picture on TV, you have made him a celebrity, and someone, somewhere, will emulate him.

The lineage of the Jonesboro shootings began at Pearl, Mississippi, fewer than six months before. In Pearl, a 16-year-old boy was accused of killing his mother and then going to his school and shooting nine students, two of whom died, including his ex-girlfriend. Two months later, this virus spread to Paducah, Kentucky, where a 14-year-old boy was arrested for killing three students and wounding five others.

A very important step in the spread of this copycat crime virus occurred in Stamps, Arkansas, 15 days after Pearl and just a little over 90 days before Jonesboro. In Stamps, a 14-year-old boy, who was angry at his schoolmates, hid in the woods and fired at children as they came out of school. Sound familiar? Only two children were injured in this crime, so most of the world didn't hear about it; but it got great regional coverage on TV, and two little boys in Jonesboro, Arkansas, probably did hear about it.

And then there was Springfield, Oregon, and so many others. Is this a reasonable price to pay for the TV networks' "right" to turn juvenile defendants into celebrities and role models by playing up their pictures on TV?

Our society needs to be informed about these crimes, but when the images of the young killers are broadcast on television, they become role models. The average preschooler in America watches 27 hours of television a week. The average child gets more one-on-one communication from TV than from all her parents and teachers combined. The ultimate achievement for our children is to get their picture on TV. The solution is simple, and it comes straight out of the suicidology literature: The media have every right and responsibility to tell the story, but they have no right to glorify the killers by presenting their images on TV.

Reality Check

Sixty percent of men on TV are involved in violence; 11 percent are killers. Unlike actual rates, in the media the majority of homicide victims are women. (Gerbner 1994)

In a Canadian town in which TV was first introduced in 1973, a 160 percent increase in aggression, hitting, shoving, and biting was documented in first- and second-grade students after exposure, with no change in behavior in children in two control communities. (Centerwall 1992)

Fifteen years after the introduction of TV, homicides, rapes and assaults doubled in the United States. (American Medical Association)

Twenty percent of suburban high schoolers endorse shooting someone "who has stolen something from you." (Toch and Silver 1993)

In the United States, approximately two million teenagers carry knives, guns, clubs or razors. As many as 135,000 take them to school. (America by the Numbers)

Americans spend over \$100 million on toy guns every year. (*What Counts: The Complete Harper's Index* © 1991)

Unlearning violence

What is the road home from the dark and lonely place to which we have traveled? One route infringes on civil liberties. The city of New York has made remarkable progress in recent years in bringing down crime rates, but they may have done so at the expense of some civil liberties. People who are fearful say that is a price they are willing to pay.

Another route would be to "just turn it off"; if you don't like what is on television, use the "off" button. Yet, if all the parents of the 15 shooting victims in Jonesboro had protected their children from TV violence, it wouldn't have done a bit of good. Because somewhere there were two little boys whose parents didn't "just turn it off."

On the night of the Jonesboro shootings, clergy and counselors were working in small groups in the hospital waiting room, comforting the groups of relatives and friends of the victims. Then they noticed one woman sitting alone silently.

A counselor went over to the woman and discovered that she was the mother of one of the girls who had been killed. She had no friends, no husband, no family with her as she sat in the hospital, stunned by her loss. "I just came to find out how to get my little girl's body back," she said. But the body had been taken to Little Rock, 100 miles away, for an autopsy. Her very next concern was, "I just don't know how I'm going to pay for the funeral. I don't know how I can afford it." That little girl was truly all she had in all the world. Come to Jonesboro, friend, and tell this mother she should "just turn it off."

Another route to reduced violence is gun control. I don't want to downplay that option, but America is trapped in a vicious cycle when we talk about gun control. Americans don't trust the government; they believe that each of us should be responsible for taking care of ourselves and our families. That's one of our great strengths—but it is also a great weakness. When the media foster fear and perpetuate a milieu of violence, Americans arm themselves in order to deal with that violence. And the more guns there are out there, the more violence there is. And the more violence there is, the greater the desire for guns.

We are trapped in this spiral of self-dependence and lack of trust. Real progress will never be made until we reduce this level of fear. As a historian, I tell you it will take decades—maybe even a century—before we wean Americans off their guns. And until we reduce the level of fear and of violent crime, Americans would sooner die than give up their guns.

Top 10 Nonviolent Video Games

The following list of nonviolent video games has been developed by The Games Project. These games are ranked high for their social and play value and technical merit.

1. Bust a Move
2. Tetris
3. Theme Park

4. Absolute Pinball
5. Myst
6. NASCAR
7. SimCity
8. The Incredible Machine
9. Front Page Sports: Golf
10. Earthworm Jim

For descriptions, publishers, and prices for these games, including a searchable database for additional recommendations, check The Games Project Web site at: <http://www.gamesproject.org/>. This list is updated periodically. Others are encouraged to make recommendations in their "Add your favorites" section.

Fighting back

We need to make progress in the fight against child abuse, racism, and poverty, and in rebuilding our families. No one is denying that the breakdown of the family is a factor. But nations without our divorce rates are also having increases in violence. Besides, research demonstrates that one major source of harm associated with single-parent families occurs when the TV becomes both the nanny and the second parent.

Work is needed in all these areas, but there is a new front—taking on the producers and purveyors of media violence. Simply put, we ought to work toward legislation that outlaws violent video games for children. There is *no* constitutional right for a child to play an interactive video game that teaches him weapons-handling skills or that simulates destruction of God's creatures.

The day may also be coming when we are able to seat juries in America who are willing to sock it to the networks in the only place they really understand—their wallets. After the Jonesboro shootings, *Time* magazine said: "As for media violence, the debate there is fast approaching the same point that discussions about the health impact of tobacco reached some time ago—it's over. Few researchers bother any longer to dispute that bloodshed on TV and in the movies has an effect on kids who witness it" (April 6, 1998).

Most of all, the American people need to learn the lesson of Jonesboro: Violence is not a game; it's not fun, it's not something that we do for entertainment. Violence kills.

Every parent in America desperately needs to be warned of the impact of TV and other violent media on children, just as we would warn them of some widespread carcinogen. The problem is that the TV networks, which use the public airwaves we have licensed to them, are our key means of public education in America. And they are stonewalling.

In the days after the Jonesboro shootings, I was interviewed on Canadian national TV, the British Broadcasting Company, and many U.S. and international radio shows and newspapers. But the American television networks simply would not touch this aspect of the story. Never in my experience as a historian and a psychologist have I seen any institution in America so clearly responsible for so very many deaths, and so clearly abusing their publicly licensed authority and power to cover up their guilt.

Time after time, idealistic young network producers contacted me from one of the networks, fascinated by the irony that an expert in the field of violence and aggression was living in Jonesboro and was at the school almost from the beginning. But unlike all the other media, these network news stories always died a sudden, silent death when the network's powers-that-be said, "Yeah, we need this story like we need a hole in the head."

Many times since the shooting I have been asked, "Why weren't you on TV talking about the stuff in your book?" And every time my answer had to be, "The TV networks are burying this story. They know they are guilty, and they want to delay the retribution as long as they can."

As an author and expert on killing, I believe I have spoken on the subject at every Rotary, Kiwanis, and Lions Club in a 50-mile radius of Jonesboro. So when the plague of satellite dishes descended upon us like huge locusts, many people here were aware of the scientific data linking TV violence and violent crime.

The networks will stick their lenses anywhere and courageously expose anything. Like flies on open wounds, they find nothing too private or shameful for their probing lenses—except themselves, and their share of guilt in the terrible, tragic crime that happened here.

A CBS executive told me his plan. He knows all about the link between media and violence. His own in-house people have advised him to protect his child from the poison his industry is bringing to America's children. He is not going to expose his child to TV until she's old enough to learn how to read. And then he will select very carefully what she sees. He and his wife plan to send her to a daycare center that has no television, and he plans to show her only age-appropriate videos.

That should be the bare minimum with children: Show them only age-appropriate videos, and think hard about what is age appropriate.

The most benign product you are going to get from the networks are 22-minute sitcoms or cartoons providing instant solutions for all of life's problems, interlaced with commercials telling you what a slug you are if you don't ingest the right sugary substances and don't wear the right shoes.

The worst product your child is going to get from the networks is represented by one TV commentator who told me, "Well, we only have one really violent show on our network, and that is *NYPD Blue*. I'll admit that that is bad, but it is only one night a week."

I wondered at the time how she would feel if someone said, "Well, I only beat my wife in front of the kids one night a week." The effect is the same.

"You're not supposed to know who I am!" said *NYPD Blue* star Kim Delaney, in response to young children who recognized her from her role on that show. According to *USA Weekend*, she was shocked that underage viewers watch her show, which is rated TV-14 for gruesome crimes, raw language, and explicit sex scenes. But they do watch, don't they?

Education about media and violence does make a difference. I was on a radio call-in show in San Antonio, Texas. A woman called and said, "I would never have had the courage to do this two years ago. But let me tell you what happened. You tell me if I was right.

"My 13-year-old boy spent the night with a neighbor boy. After that night, he started having nightmares. I got him to admit what the nightmares were about. While he was at the neighbor's house, they watched splatter movies all night: people cutting people up with chain saws and stuff like that.

Every parent in America desperately needs to be warned of the impact of TV and other violent media on children. But the TV networks—our key means of public education in America—are stonewalling.

"I called the neighbors and told them, 'Listen: you are sick people. I wouldn't feel any different about you if you had given my son pornography or alcohol. And I'm not going to have anything further to do with you or your son—and neither is anybody else in this neighborhood, if I have anything to do with it—until you stop what you're doing.' "

That's powerful. That's censure, not censorship. We ought to have the moral courage to censure people who think that violence is legitimate entertainment.

One of the most effective ways for Christians to be salt and light is by simply confronting the culture of violence as entertainment. A friend of mine, a retired army officer who teaches at a nearby middle school, uses the movie *Gettysburg* to teach his students about the Civil War. A scene in that movie very dramatically depicts the tragedy of Pickett's Charge. As the Confederate troops charge into the Union lines, the cannons fire into their masses at point-blank range, and there is nothing but a red mist that comes up from the smoke and flames. He told me that when he first showed this heart-wrenching, tragic scene to his students, they laughed.

He began to confront this behavior ahead of time by saying: "In the past, students have laughed at this scene, and I want to tell you that this is completely unacceptable behavior. This movie depicts a tragedy in American history, a tragedy that happened to our ancestors, and I will not tolerate any laughing." From then on, when he played that scene to his students, over the years, he says there was no laughter. Instead, many of them wept.

What the media teach is unnatural, and if confronted in love and assurance, the house they have built on the sand will crumble. But our house is built on the rock. If we don't actively present our

values, then the media will most assuredly inflict theirs on our children, and the children, like those in that class watching *Gettysburg*, simply won't know any better.

There are many other things that the Christian community can do to help change our culture. Youth activities can provide alternatives to television, and churches can lead the way in providing alternative locations for latchkey children. Fellowship groups can provide guidance and support to young parents as they strive to raise their children without the destructive influences of the media. Mentoring programs can pair mature, educated adults with young parents to help them through the preschool ages without using the TV as a babysitter. And most of all, the churches can provide the clarion call of decency and love and peace as an alternative to death and destruction—not just for the sake of the church, but for the transformation of our culture.

*Lt. Col. Dave Grossman, an expert on the psychology of killing, retired from the U.S. Army in February. He now teaches psychology at Arkansas State University, directs the Killology Research Group in Jonesboro, Arkansas, and has written *On Killing: The Psychological Cost of Learning to Kill in War and Society* (Little, Brown and Co., 1996). This article was adapted from a lecture he gave at Bethel College, North Newton, Kansas, in April.*

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