

The Princeton Theological Review

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THEOLOGY AND GLOBAL CONFLICT: BEYOND JUST WAR

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PROLEGOMENA

Theology and Global Conflict: Beyond Just War

Han-luen Kantzer Komline
General Editor

The prophet Jeremiah interpreted the three Babylonian invasions of Judah leading up to the destruction of the temple in 587 BCE as God's judgment. God's people had committed "two evils" (Jer. 2:13): they had forsaken their God and they had turned elsewhere for sustenance and security. Jeremiah's lament over the fate of his disobedient people is still ours today: "We look for peace, but find no good, for a time of healing, but there is terror instead" (8:15). Each of the contributions in this issue on *Theology and Global Conflict: Beyond Just War* offers a perspective on current situations of global conflict. What unites these pieces is their effort, in the tradition of Jeremiah, to challenge human thought, behavior, and structures in light of the word of God.

Daniel Bell, in his article "The Labor of Communion in a Capital Age," concentrates his critical analysis on the structure of capitalism. Bell argues that Christians must resist the global extension of capitalism (built on conflict and war) in favor of pursuing the kingdom of God (built on communion with God and neighbor). Mary-Jane Rubenstein focuses her critical lens on the American military. In "A Certain Disavowal: The Pathos and Politics of Wonder," Rubenstein provides a whirlwind philosophical history of the term "wonder," advocating the recovery of wonder as "a ceaseless attunement to and critique of the uncanniness of the everyday." Rubenstein connects this kind of wonder with the biblical notion of fear of the Lord, characterized in Job and Proverbs as the beginning of wisdom, and opposes it to the deifying of the human subject as the source and object of wonder that drives "Shock and Awe" tactics. Gordon Brubacher, professor of Old Testament at Messiah College, addresses the ethical perplexity of the Old Testament witness on war in his article "Just War and the New Community: The Witness of the Old Testament for Christians Today," suggesting, as indicated by the title of his article, how this witness may be instructive for Christians faced with contemporary global conflict.

W. Travis McMaken's interview with George Hunsinger explores how a theology rooted in the biblical witness may be brought to bear on situations of global conflict. In this interview Hunsinger discusses some of the theological under-

pinnings of his activism against the U.S. government's use of torture, and offers advice to the next generation of ministers as to how they might best equip themselves and their congregations to respond to issues of political and global conflict. Reflections by two ordained ministers, Hyun-Soo Kim and Mark Winward, further broaden the contexts in which the theme of theology and global conflict is addressed in this issue. Kim, an ordained pastor in the Presbyterian Church of Korea, analyzes the Korean-Japanese conflict over the Japanese colonial government's abuse of Korean "comfort women." Critically appropriating philosopher Vladimir Jankelevitch's writing on forgiveness, Kim proposes a biblically grounded way forward in this international dilemma. United States Navy chaplain Mark Winward addresses an entirely different context in a reflection entitled "How Can a Pastor Serve in the Armed Forces?" Winward answers this question by explaining the theological convictions motivating him to minister to those involved in armed global conflicts. Finally, W. Travis McMaken examines the meaning of Jesus' statement "I have not come to bring peace, but a sword" (Matt. 10:23) in his reflection, "The Sword that Christ Came to Bring: An Instance of Canonically Theological Exegesis."

Jeremiah's lament in chapter eight, "We look for peace, but find no good, for a time of healing, but there is terror instead" (v. 15), could today be the lament spoken by victims of an unjust economic system, innocent civilians who become the casualties of war, prisoners tortured by American intelligence networks, battered Korean "comfort women" seeking justice, or even by soldiers in combat. Jeremiah's lament does not go unheard. In chapter thirty he receives another word: "Thus says the LORD: We have heard a cry of panic, of terror, and no peace" (v.5). God promises to respond: "For I will restore health to you, and your wounds I will heal, says the LORD" (v.17).

In this advent season we remember the birth of the child born to be our Prince of Peace. May the readings that follow help us take to heart his words of encouragement to us: "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid" (John 14:27).

The Labor of Communion In a Capital Age

Daniel M. Bell

When we think of global conflict today, it is hardly surprising that the global war on terror comes immediately to mind. Since 9/11, we have been fed a steady diet of war and told that such will be our fare for the foreseeable future. As significant as this global conflict is, however, it has not succeeded in squelching all other forms of conflict. Indeed, from time to time, flashes of another global conflict have poked through our television screens and pierced our iPod-secured solitude. Occasionally we glimpse a skirmish in the conflict over globalization. That, of course, is a misnomer, for what is at issue is not simply an interdependent world versus an imaginary isolation or nostalgic localization. Rather, what is contested is a particular regime of globalization, a particular way of ordering relations, both human and non-human, on a global scale. Specifically, what is at issue is the global extension of capitalism. What is resisted is what some have celebrated as “the end of history” and others have denounced as the imperial advent of a virulent nihilistic capitalism.¹

In what follows, I will suggest why Christians cannot join in this celebration, why we cannot but work for the end of the empire of capital, and why we hope and pray that this capital time, this capital age, does not in fact mark the end of history.

I. CAPITALISM AND COMMUNION

The typical debate over the moral legitimacy of capitalism in Christian circles tends to revolve around questions of its efficacy or lack thereof in addressing and eliminating poverty. Does capitalism reduce poverty and elevate the standard of living of the poor or does it perpetuate and exacerbate the suffering of the destitute and impoverished? This standard of evaluation makes theological sense. It makes sense, not the least because the biblical witness consistently puts precisely this question to individuals and economic orders. Unlike many contemporary accounts

1. Francis Fukuyama, “The End of History?” in *The National Interest* 16 (1989), 3-18; Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge: Harvard, 2000); Franz Hinkelammert, *El Grito del Sujeto*, 3rd ed. (San Jose: DEI, 1998), 227-45.

of justice, which reduce economic justice to its commutative or contractual dimension or even deny that there is such a thing as social justice,² Christianity has consistently proclaimed that economies should be so ordered that they are especially geared toward succoring the poor. Indeed, it is for this reason that both capitalism’s Christian advocates and critics agree that God opts for the poor and so should we. As Amy Sherman, a Christian advocate of capitalism, observes, “For Christians, opting for the poor is not optional; it is a clear command of Christ.”³

Unfortunately, debates regarding the efficacy of capitalism in alleviating poverty are as endless as they are fruitless, which

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is not to say that they do not have answers, only that the answers and evidences proffered in such discussions rarely, if ever, prove persuasive. Of course, recent geo-political developments shed some light on at least one dimension of this discussion with which it is difficult to

argue: Whatever the merits and faults of capitalism – and everyone, even the staunchest Christian proponent of capitalism, recognizes capitalism falls short of the kingdom – Marxist socialism is dead.⁴ The framing of the theological debate between socialism and capitalism has been rendered moot.

What are People For?

The interminable character of the empirical debates combined with the utter failure of socialism prompt us to pursue

2. See, for example, Friedrich A Von Hayek, *Law, Legislation and Liberty, Volume 2: The Mirage of Social Justice* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1978).

3. Amy Sherman, *Preferential Option: A Christian and Neoliberal Strategy for Latin America’s Poor* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 219.

4. I am careful to qualify my dismissal of socialism this way because there are supernatural forms of socialism – by which I do not mean Christianized Marxist socialism – that avoid this critique and actually comport with my constructive argument. See, for example, John Milbank, *Being Reconciled* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 162-186 and D. Stephen Long, *Divine Economy* (New York: Routledge, 2001).

the question of capital from another angle that begins with the seemingly innocuous question, “What are people for?” Why are we here? What is our end or purpose? Augustine captured the Christian tradition’s answer as well as anyone when he said, our hearts are restless until they rest in God. Or as Aquinas said, our end is beatitude, blessedness, which is nothing less than friendship with God. We are created to glorify and enjoy God. We are created for friendship, for communion. Of course this friendship is not merely a matter of me and Jesus or me and God. Scripture reminds us we cannot be friends of God if we hate our neighbors (1 Jn 3:17; 1 Jn 4:20-1); hence, the commandments are summed up in “Love God and neighbor” (Mt 22:35-40).

What, then, is the problem? Why are our hearts so clearly not at rest? Why can’t we all just get along? If we are created for friendship, why do we have to pray for our enemies? Why do we live in fear of our neighbors and constantly look over our shoulder at the stranger? The Christian tradition accounts for this in terms of the Fall, i.e., sin. We were created for friendship with God and one another, yet in sin we struggle, fight, compete (cf. Gen. 4-11). Now, sin is not merely a matter of disobedience or breaking commandments. Rather, as the early church taught, sin is a matter of division, of the breach or rupture of communion. As Origen declared *ubi peccata, ibi multitudo* and Maximus the Confessor observed, our postlapsarian condition is such that “now we rend each other like wild beasts.”⁵

What has this to do with the so-called free market economy, with capitalism? Everything, for capitalism deforms and obstructs our friendship with God, with other humans, and with the rest of creation. In other words, the problem with capitalism is not simply that it may not facilitate the ordering of material goods to their universal destination – the succoring of the needs of all and especially the poor (cf. John Paul II, *Centesimus Annus*). The problem with capitalism is not simply that it may not work, but that even if it does increase aggregate wealth, it is still wrong and to be opposed on the grounds of what it does to humans and human relations. As Alasdair MacIntyre has noted, “although Christian indictments of capitalism have justly focused attention upon the wrongs done to the poor and the exploited, Christianity has to view any social and economic order that treats being or becoming rich as highly desirable as doing wrong to those who must not only accept its goals, but succeed in achieving them. . . . Capitalism is bad for those who succeed by its standards as well as for those who fail by them, something that many preachers and theologians have failed to

5. Cited in Henri DeLubac, *Catholicism* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1988), 33-4.

recognize.”⁶⁶ This is to say, capitalism is problematic not simply because it fails to work but because of what it does when it succeeds. The problem with capitalism is that where it succeeds human relations are ordered agonistically; they become a matter of struggle, conflict and competition – all antithetical to the friendship or community to which we are called and for which we were created.

The Agony of Capitalism

The agony of capitalism can be exposed by considering the kind of subject capitalism forms. Capitalism’s success hinges upon the formation of a particular kind of human subject, one that relates to its environment in a certain way. For example,

as Michael Perelman has shown, capitalism’s emergence was hindered by a largely agrarian and cottage industry peoples’ refusal to permit their relations with others, with the land, and with themselves to be reordered in capitalist fashion.⁷⁷

Its Christian defenders often laud capitalism for the kind of subject it fosters and describe that subject in terms of cre-

ativity, inventiveness, independence, the self-interested pursuit of personal happiness devoid of envy, cooperation, and so forth.⁸⁸ This rather rosy portrait is painted of what is widely acknowledged as the anthropological center of capitalism: *homo economicus*.⁹ Where it succeeds, capitalism forms human subjects as individuals who are fundamentally self-interested, whose relations (to themselves, creation, others and God) are competitive, conflicted, and contractual.

Homo economicus is first and foremost an individual – independent, autonomous, and self-made. Consider the shibboleths of capitalist culture: No one can tell me what to do or think. Dependency is a bad thing. The highest value is freedom as license, as sheer naked choice. Examples of this abound, from commercial jingoism like “have it your way” and public policy debates that, for example, revolve around not the *quality* of health care

6. Alasdair MacIntyre, *Marxism and Christianity*, 2nd ed. (London: Duckworth, 1995), xiv.

7. See Michael Perelman, *The Invention of Capitalism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2000).

8. See, for example, the work of Michael Novak.

9. See Albert Hirschman, *The Passions and the Interests: Political Arguments for Capitalism Before Its Triumph* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981); and Milton L. Myers, *The Soul of Modern Economic Man* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983). See also Samuel Gregg, *Economic Thinking for the Theologically Minded* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2001), 12-3.

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but only whether or not *I* get to *choose* my doctor, to the not-so-subtle hostility directed toward “greedy geezers” who prove incapable of adhering to the strictures of *homo economicus*.

One must be careful, however, not to misconstrue the individualistic nature of the capitalist subject. No one is finally autonomous; we are all intrinsically interdependent and social and capitalism’s advocates know this. So they argue that capitalism is about cooperation and community, albeit cooperation and community of a peculiar sort – namely, the corporation.¹⁰ Thus, when capitalism produces individuals it is not producing isolated or solipsistic monads but subjects who relate to other subjects in a particular way. To be an individual is to relate to others in a particular, problematic manner, something that will become clearer momentarily.

The capitalist subject is not only an individual, but is fundamentally self-interested. Indeed, *homo economicus* is an interest-maximizer.¹¹

Here we might recall the well-known line from Adam Smith that it is not from the benevolence of the butcher, brewer or baker that we expect our dinner, but from their regard for their own interest. There is no substantive common good or shared purpose (i.e., one more substantial than the utilitarian claim that the good of all is served by self-interested individuals pursuing their discordant private goods) that unites us. And it should be noted, Pareto optimality and market equilibrium are not the equivalent of a substantive *common* good. Furthermore, efforts to discern and advance a thick common good can only result in disaster and tyranny. Thus, in a capitalist culture we are constantly reminded to look out for #1, businesses are increasingly run with an eye not toward public service but toward increasing the value of the top executives’ stock holdings, our youth respond to queries about why they want to do what they want to do with the mantra, “to make money,” and worship is framed in terms of how it can meet my needs and what I get out of it.

Here we come to the heart of the matter. How does capitalism construct human relations? How do capitalist subjects relate to one another? It is not difficult to imagine the interac-

10. See Robert Bellah, et al. *Habits of the Heart* (New York: Harper & Row, 1986); Robert Putnam, *Bowling Alone* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2001). See also the vast body of literature on rational choice, game theory, and institutions. When discussing these matters with a former very successful manager at a large national corporation, she laughed and said that the corporation was indeed a kind of community – one where even the office plants were distributed according to a competitive logic, a sentiment that I have heard repeated many times from business persons.

11. Proponents of what is called “satisficing” in rational choice theory dispute the maximizing character of the capitalist individual, but thus far they have not succeeded in dislodging the dominant anthropology with its interest maximizing.

tion of these interest-maximizing individuals quickly degenerating into Hobbes’ war of all against all. Here the oft-repeated boast of capitalism’s advocates that economy tames bellicose passions is pertinent. While one would be hard-pressed to make a cogent empirical case that capitalism has reduced either the frequency or ferocity of war, it is true that capitalism does redirect the clashing interests of *homo economicus* by means of the

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competitive agony that is the “free” market. This is to say, capitalism does not promise an end to the agony of conflict but rather diverts the clash of self-interested individuals in accord with the golden rule of production for the market. Capitalism, to play on Clausewitz’s well-known aphorism, is war by other means.

Under the sign of utopian capitalism – capitalism with a human face that at least gave lip service to promoting the common good of human development – it was perhaps possible to overlook this global conflict as it slowly engulfed the world, a possibility conveniently aided and abetted by the infamous abstraction of the discipline of economics. Yet, with the advent of nihilistic capitalism, of capitalism shorn of its human face, this commercial war is ever more evident.¹² We are now submerged in an economy that is no longer concerned with the fiction of a mutually beneficial comparative advantage. The charade of mutual advantage is dropped; instead, we seek competitive advantage.¹³ All that matters is winning the war.

12. It should be noted that this economic or commercial war is not entirely distinct from traditional shooting wars, as the war on terrorism has made clear. For more on these matters, see Andrew J. Bacevich, *American Empire* (Cambridge: Harvard, 2002); Franz Hinkelammert, “La caída de las torres,” *Pasos* 98 (Nov/Dec), 41-55; Hinkelammert, “La proyección del monstruo: la conspiración terrorista mundial,” *Pasos* 101 (May/June 2002), 33-5; Germán Gutiérrez, “El ALCA y la guerra antiterrorista de George W Bush,” *Pasos* 98 (Nov/Dec 2001), 22-31; Germán Gutiérrez, “Fundamentalismo y sujeto,” *Pasos* 103 (Sept/Oct 2002), 17-28.

13. See Michael Porter’s work, *The Competitive Advantage of Nations* (New York: Free Press, 1990) and *On Competition* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard, 1998). Porter makes the perfunctory and standard claim that modern economics is not a zero-sum practice. The importance of the shift from comparative to competitive advantage is subtle. Comparative advantage rested on the principle that one should forgo an absolute advantage in favor of comparative advantage, thereby preserving the opportunity of others to pursue and benefit from their comparative advantage in precisely those areas where one may have an absolute advantage but comparative disadvantage. Competitive advantage no longer preserves the space for the other’s comparative advantage. Indeed, Porter is clear, attaining a competitive advantage may mean persisting in what under the older vision was a comparative disadvantage. In other words, competitive advantage no longer privileges and reserves a space of mutually advantageous comparative advantage. The practice of some “big box” retailers of selling certain products at a loss in order

And this war is total war. As the capitalist market has become total and totalitarian, as it has succeeded in penetrating every aspect of human life,¹⁴ everyone and every relation is submerged in unending conflict that is capitalist market relations. Thus, while we may not all succeed as consumers under global capitalism – many are merely trying to survive – we all become competitors, competing even with our closest relations for resources, employment, market share, assistance, for the time for family and friends and prayer.

One of the clearer indications of the capitalist distortion of human relations along these lines is the way in which everything and everyone increasingly is treated like a commodity – a fungible good valued only in terms of how and how long it satisfies my interests. Thus, marriages are seen as (short-term) contracts, children become consumer goods or accessories, and our bodies are treated like so much raw material to be exploited for pleasure or manufacture.¹⁵ And those objects rendered worthless as commodities by obsolescence – the old and infirm – are discarded (warehoused or euthanized).

Capitalism not only distorts the human subject and its relations with others, it also distorts the character of God and God's relation with humanity. On the one hand, God's involvement in history is reduced to the workings of the market. This is to say, God is not involved in history now sanctifying or *redeeming* humanity from sin; rather all God is doing now is *managing* sin in the hope that self-interest and the pursuit of private goods works out in the long run at least for the benefit of the majority. Indeed, some of capitalism's Christian defenders come within a hair's breath of a deistic conception of God.¹⁶ On the other hand, we

to eliminate local competitors comes to mind here.

14. See C. B. Macpherson, *The Rise and Fall of Economic Justice and Other Essays* (New York: Oxford, 1987).

15. On marriage, see Gary Becker's reflections on marriage and children in his *The Economic Approach to Human Behavior* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1976). On children as consumer goods, see Milton Friedman, *Capitalism and Freedom* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1982), 33. With respect to the reference to bodies as mere raw material for manufacture, I am thinking both of recent debates over stem cells as well as supreme court rulings that life forms are simply chemical compounds that can be patented like any other manufacture.

16. In defense of this claim, I offer one of the more blatant examples, from Michael Novak: "The point of the Incarnation is to respect the world as it is, . . . and to disbelieve any promises that the world is now or ever will be transformed into the city of God. . . . The world is not going to become *–ever–* a kingdom of justice and love. . . . The single greatest temptation for Christians is to imagine that the salvation won by Jesus has altered the human condition." *The Spirit*

are told that God did not create enough. Scarcity is a constant threat. In this way, the God of capital becomes a cosmic sadistic Easter bunny, creating insufficient goods in order to prod or stimulate the competitive juices that undergird our creativity and productivity. In other words, God hides stuff from us so that we – at least those who survive – will grow in the process of competing and struggling to find and create it.

In sum, the problem with capitalism is that it construes our relations with one another and God in a manner that precludes genuine friendship and communion. Under capital, we relate

to one another competitively, agonistically, and God, far from befriending us, far from seeking to deliver us from the sin-induced agony that is this struggle, instead presides over it like a prison guard staging a gang fight. Thus, even if capitalism works, it is still wrong because the agony it fosters and perpetuates among people and with God is antithetical

to the true communion for which we were created, to which we are called, and which Christians are empowered to proclaim and embody. To this communion, this economy, this ordering of God's household, we now turn.

II. THE LABOR OF COMMUNION

The good news is that the civil war initiated with the Fall, and perpetuated by capital, has come to an end. Friendship with one another and with God is again possible. The name for this friendship is the kingdom of God, where those who build inhabit, and those who plant harvest and eat, and all are filled as we gather together – friends – at the heavenly banquet. The problem is that we continue to pray, "Thy kingdom come," which is but an acknowledgment that this kingdom is neither fully present now nor is it finally something we can construct.

The Divine Gift Economy

Does this mean that friendship is not possible, that the best we can hope for are capitalist relations as a kind of lesser evil? No, for the kingdom's being not yet fully present is not synonymous with its simply being absent. For unlike the God of capital, who is either an absentee landlord or a sadistic Easter bunny, Christians confess the living God who even here and now in the midst of the old age is actively inaugurating a new age, redeeming humanity from sin. The kingdom is *already* present. In this secular time between the times, this divine friendship appears in the community called church. There we are befriended by God

of Democratic Capitalism (New York: Touchstone, 1982), 341-3. Although this may be one of the more extreme examples, Christian advocates of capitalism all share a similarly constrained account of the difference Christ makes here and now.

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in Christ in a manner that (already) foreshadows the (not yet) consummation of the world's befriending. There, through the means of grace, we are redeemed and sanctified. There, under the influence of Word and water, bread and wine, *homo economicus* dies and a new creation, a new subject is Spirit-formed. Unlike its capitalist counterpart, this is a corporate, ecclesial subject that is neither self-interested nor relates to others as commodities in an endless (business) cycle of competition and conflict driven by scarcity but instead participates in the divine gift economy of abundance and ceaseless generosity.

This redeemed subject is not an individual. It is rather a constellation of persons in communion, a corporate, ecclesial subject called the body of Christ. Moreover, this subject is creaturely, which means that it is fundamentally dependent on God and others. Manna spoils; food cannot be stored in barns; goods rust; the Eucharist is our daily bread. Dependency upon and responsibility for others is a principal characteristic of this subject (Gal. 6:2).

The concomitant of this mutuality is the shared love or common good that unites these persons in communion. Specifically, this ecclesial subject seeks a common, shared good that is nothing other than the friendship of all in the blessed Trinity. In this regard, the Christian subject is not fundamentally self-interested. After all, the gospel is clear that we can do nothing to advance our interest; we are saved by grace. Indeed, until recently the Christian tradition was uniform in denouncing the seeking our own advantage as sin (1 Cor. 10:24; Phil. 2:3-4; Rom. 12:1-2.). Instead, as a recipient of the gift of life in Christ, the Christian is freed to live life as a surplus, as Christ to one another, as Luther had it. The Christian subject lives life as a gift to be given freely to and for others, without fear finally of loss (Luke 9:24, Matt. 22:39; Mark 12:31).

It is important to note that the ecclesial subject can live this way because we confess a God who provides, who sustains, who created enough. In other words, scarcity is not a natural condition, much less a God-ordained goad to competition; it is the contingent consequence of sin. In Christ we receive all that we could possibly need – even the power of resurrection – such that we are indeed freed to live life as a gift, ceaselessly giving to (and receiving from) others.

All of which means that capitalism is not realistic, but nihilistic – denying God's sanctifying presence here and now – and that human relations need not be a matter of war, of struggle and conflict (barely) managed by the capitalist market. Rather, in Christ we have an opportunity to live in peace. In Christ, hu-

manity is invited to participate in the divine gift economy where we are redeemed from the agony of sin and human relations are renewed in a christological pattern of offering, sharing, gift-giving, cooperation, and ceaseless generosity. In Christ, we can be friends, giving, and receiving the gifts that sustain life.

The Works of Mercy

At this point, one might press this account of Christian opposition to capitalism to flee from the abstraction that is known to plague economics and get concrete. That is to say, what concretely does this divine gift economy look like? Is it simply opposed to the business of the production and marketing of goods? The answer is “no.” Christian opposition to capitalism is not a matter of categorically rejecting the production, distribution, and consumption of goods, nor does it entail the rejection of the market *in toto*.¹⁷ To the contrary, the economy constituted by the life of the ecclesial subject outlined above encompasses all of those practices. And contrary to the commonplace that one cannot discern an economy in Scripture, in fact Scripture is replete with practices that constitute this divine economy. From the prohibition of interest, to gleaning and the jubilee years, from the expectation of a living wage to hospitality to the community of goods, to the exhortation to labor, and so forth we see the contours of the divine economy.

While a detailed study of Scripture would take us far in discerning the shape of this divine economy and merely repeat the promising work of others, I want briefly to call attention to a set of economic practices that are not as well known, particularly in Protestant circles, that grew out of the biblical witness and have been sustained through the ages, namely, the Works of Mercy.

The Works of Mercy, consisting of seven corporal and seven spiritual works, provide an outline of an economic way of life, a way of ordering material goods, that nurtures the friendship or communion of all in God. In other words, in these practices and in the life of the community that sustains such practices, we see an economy that is neither predicated upon nor sustained by endless conflict. This is an economy inhabited by the ecclesial subject whose form was traced above. It is an economy of gift-exchange that is made possible by friendship – first and foremost God's befriending us, but also our befriending one another – and whose goal is the extension of that friendship to include

**Under the influence of the
Word and water, bread and
wine, *homo economicus* dies and
a new creation, a new subject is
Spirit-formed.**

**The Christian subject is not fundamentally
self-interested. After all, the gospel is clear
that we can do nothing to advance our interest;
we are saved by grace.**

17. See Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1957), for a brief history of the market. See also Macpherson, *The Rise and Fall of Economic Justice and Other Essays*.

(all) others.

Granted, under the pressure of modernity, which privatizes and individualizes such works, practices like feeding the hungry, harboring the stranger, admonishing the sinner, and bearing wrongs patiently, hardly appear to constitute an economy. At best, they look to us modern capitalist subjects like a hobby called philanthropy. But with a little (redeemed) imagination, we might begin to see how a community that engaged in such practices would in fact be about economic things and how these acts would entail systemic and not just individual practices. Indeed, although they often pass “under the radar,” this economy exists even now, even in the midst of the global capitalist economy, in a variety of forms, from intentional communities and cooperatives, to efforts to explore and enact alternative markets and business models, to efforts like the Jubilee campaign to resist and reorder global capital.

If this seems far-fetched, consider that Adam Smith, in his *Wealth of Nations*, observed that it was the church’s practice of the Works of Mercy (specifically charity in the form of almsgiving and hospitality) that posed the greatest threat to the emergence of the so-called free market and he rejoiced that capital was able to break the back of the church, rendering its charity

more sparse, thereby undercutting its spiritual and temporal authority.

* * *

We are told by the secular lords and their priests that the end of history has come upon us in capitalism, even the nihilistic capitalism that, apart from the cynical propaganda of those same lords’ speech writers and the pages of those same priests’ treatises, no longer even bothers with the pretense of the utopian dream of mutual benefit. But these lords and their priests are too late and their words can gain no traction, for the end of history has already appeared. As Paul announced long ago, we are the ones on whom the ends of the ages have come (1 Cor. 10:11). In the church, the body of Christ, the divine economy is making its way in this world. Through this ecclesial subject’s labor of mercy announcing and enacting the possibility of a community of goods, a communion where all are sustained by the eternal generosity of the divine bounty, *homo economicus* is being redeemed from the fetters of the “free market” and the agony of endless war. So, even now capitalist globalization is giving way before the catholicism of grace that is mercy’s gift and labor.

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A Certain Disavowal: The Pathos and Politics of Wonder

Mary-Jane Rubenstein

At this moment, three years into the latest military campaign calculated to decimate “the cradle of civilization,” it seems appropriate to take a moment to reflect upon the broad phenomenon of filial ambivalence. The most infamous student of the violence exacted upon origins is, of course, Sigmund Freud, who culled together diverse literary, clinical, and ethnographic resources in order to describe a puzzling tendency—for him both phylogenetic and ontogenic—to destroy and incorporate gods and fathers. In this article, however, I would like to call attention to a particularly controversial *affective* ancestor, and to some implications, both theological and political, of its own disavowal and introjection at the hands of its offspring.

* * *

It is a familiar scene: Socrates poses a characteristic “what is” to a bright young pupil, who responds with a number of theories that each turn out to be philosophically insubstantial. Suddenly, the interlocutor realizes he does not know the first thing about concepts he had thought he understood instinctively—like wisdom, justice, virtue, or, in the case of a young man named Theaetetus, knowledge itself. “I have a small difficulty,” Socrates tells Theaetetus, “which I think ought to be investigated.”¹ Socrates confesses that while he continues to gain knowledge of music, geometry, and astronomy, he “can’t get a proper grasp on what knowledge [*epistēmē*] really is” (145e). In response to Socrates’ persistent questioning, Theaetetus sets forth a few common-sense definitions of knowledge, but the “midwife of the mind” judges none of these ideas to be worthy of being born, because each relies upon a prior understanding of knowledge, which remains undefined.

Like so many other Platonic dialogues, this one remains

1. Plato, *Theaetetus*, trans. M. J. Levett and Myles Burnyeat (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, 1992), 145d. Subsequent references to this translation of the *Theaetetus* will be cited internally. References to other translations will be noted.

The idea behind Shock and Awe is to demonstrate that it would be *as impossible to refuse to comply with the United States military as it would be to resist the shatterer of worlds, or to switch gods, to reject a commandment given in a pillar of cloud and fire.*

unresolved, concluding with Socrates telling Theaetetus that at least he will have learned the good sense to “not think you know what you don’t know” (210c). All told, this dialogue does little more than slip away from itself ... and this seems to be the whole idea. The point is that there is no point; that knowledge rests on something fundamentally unknowable, because its object, also its condition of possibility, is totally inscrutable. Knowledge cannot know what it is to know. It is enough to drive a person mad.

Socrates is well aware of this, telling Theaetetus that his midwifery frequently reduces otherwise intelligent, manly young men to “get savage with [him], like a mother over her first-born child. “Do you know,” he continues, “people have often before now got into such a state with me as to be literally ready to bite when I take away some nonsense or other from them” (151c). Theaetetus, however, is different. During the course of his conversation with Socrates, he provides three perfectly respectable *doxai* concerning the essence of knowledge, only to witness their inexorable dissolution under maieutic scrutiny. Everything Theaetetus thought he knew about knowing becomes strange and insubstantial, but rather than get angry or violent, he exclaims, “By the gods, Socrates, I am lost in wonder when I think of all these things, and sometimes when I regard them it really makes my head swim” (155d).²

The word for “I wonder” here is *thaumazō*, whose infinitive is *thaumazein*, which is often nominalized in English into

2. Plato, *Theaetetus*, trans. Harold North Fowler, in vol. 7, *Works: Plato, with an English Translation*, The Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996), 155c. The Greek text is: *Kai nē tous theous ge, ô Sôkrates hyperphuôs ôs thaumazô ti pot esti tauta, kai eniote ôs alêthôs Blepôn eis auta skotodiniô*. Because of its retention of Theaetetus’ invocation of the gods, as well as the sense of disorientation (rather than glee) that it conveys, the Fowler translation is preferable, at least for these purposes, to Levett’s and Burnyeat’s, which reads, “Oh yes, indeed, Socrates, I often wonder like mad what these things can mean; sometimes when I’m looking at them I begin to feel quite giddy.”

wonder, awe, astonishment, or amazement. Wonder strikes Theaetetus as he loses his grasp on notions that had seemed utterly self-evident, sending him reeling, his head spinning. At least as it takes shape throughout this passage, then, wonder has very little to do with the calm pleasure with which contemporary usage tends to associate it. Rather, it is a dizzying, vertiginous, and destabilizing experience. And rather than telling Theaetetus to gird up his loins and get back to the work of clear thinking, Socrates says that this bodes well for the young man's future career as a philosopher. "For this is an experience which is *characteristic* of a philosopher, this wondering," he exclaims, "this is where philosophy begins and nowhere else" (155d).³

As it turns out, philosophy's beginning in wonder is both a curse and a blessing for anyone who would go about trying to figure out what wonder is. For while "the origin of all philosophy" would seem to make a perfectly respectable object of philosophical inquiry, it has a tendency to launch its interrogator immediately into a pseudo-tautological questioning of how philosophy, which is not itself *without* wonder, is supposed to go about examining the very wonder that gets it going in the first place. Following Socrates's lead, it has always been the work of philosophy to ask "what is." So, as John Sallis has pointed out, the problem with asking what wonder is, is that "the question comes too late. For when one comes to ask the philosophical question 'What is...?' ('*ti esti...*?'), one moves already within the opening [of philosophy]; and wonder has already come into play in prompting that opening."⁴ How does one ask, "what is wonder," when it is wonder that prompts one to ask "what is" in the first place? This sort of puzzle, to make matters even more complicated, is precisely the sort of dilemma that gives *rise* to wonder. Whatever it *is*, it strikes when the understanding cannot master that which it presupposes; that which lies closest to it.

To appeal to everybody's favorite example, one tends to think one knows what a table is. But the minute a good Buddhist philosopher asks what a table is—whether a table has four legs, or whether it can have two legs, or one, or twelve; and how a table is different from a stool; and whether this table would still be a table if I cut half of it off, or removed the top, or flipped it upside-down—one comes to realize one has no *idea* what a table is. Thinking finds itself lost in wonder when it suddenly becomes impossible—and for that reason, imperative—to understand something totally ordinary: like a table. Like knowledge. Like wonder.

3 *ou gar allê archê philosophias ê autê, kai eoiken ho tèn logein.*

4 John Sallis, "A Wonder that One Could Never Aspire to Surpass..." in *The Path of Archaic Thinking*, ed. Kenneth Maly (New York: SUNY Albany, 1995), 255.

But among all the inscrutable objects, concepts, and processes one might name, wonder is singularly elusive, and for two reasons. First, there is the above-mentioned problem of wonder's irreducible anteriority. Wonder's sheer designation as "origin" provokes a certain degree of epistemological tail-chasing, as thinking tries to think that which gets thinking going in the first place. But there is something at once less lofty and less ridiculous at work as well, which is quite simply that wonder is *uncomfortable*. One tends to have a fairly low threshold for it: I can spend perhaps five minutes desubstantializing any given table, but then would generally prefer just to put my coffee cup down on it and get on with the day's work.

In fact, depending on its source and duration, wonder can be not only unsettling, but downright *terrifying*: to turn for a moment from Athens to Jerusalem, one might think of the "signs," "wonders," and "great terrors" that God performs to deliver the Israelites out of Egypt.⁵ God turns the Nile to blood; sends frogs, gnats, flies, boils, hail; and finally kills the Egyptians' first-born sons, all in order to teach the Israelites to "fear" God. Unfortunately for the Egyptians, it is only after the ten plagues, the parting of the Red Sea, and the drowning of the Pharaoh's

army that Exodus tells us, for the first time, "and the people feared the Lord."⁶ The word for "fear" in this context is *yare*; the noun derived from it is *yir'ah*, and it designates that particularly biblical combination of awe, reverence, and abject horror in the face of a God who totally exceeds—yet at the same time constitutes—human understanding. In a moment of astonishing consonance with Socrates, the books of Proverbs, Job, and the Psalms all designate this terrified wonder as the beginning of wisdom (*chokmah*, which becomes *sophia* in the Septuagint).⁷ Yet as the Hebrew Bible teaches again and again as God's chosen people fail to fear God properly (making idols, gathering too much manna, kvetching about how hot and dry the desert is) this particular complex of emotion is marvelously difficult to sustain. Intellectually, emotionally, and spiritually, it is easier to run from wonder, or to close it down, than to remain with it.

Back in Athens, even Socrates domesticates wonder from time to time, most notably at the very moment he introduces wonder as the origin of all philosophy. "This is an experience which is *characteristic* of a philosopher, this wondering," Socrates tells Theaetetus, "this is where philosophy begins and nowhere else." The quotation continues, "And the man who made Iris the child of Thaumias was perhaps no bad genealo-

5 Deuteronomy 4:34. The words in Hebrew are 'owth, mowpheth, and mowra', a derivative of *yare*, which designates a complex of fear and awe.

6 Exodus 14:31.

7 Proverbs 1:7, Psalm 111:10, Job 28:28.

Wonder has very little to do with the calm pleasure with which contemporary usage tends to associate it. Rather, it is a dizzying, vertiginous, and destabilizing experience.

gist—But aren't you beginning to see... the explanation of these puzzles, according... to Protagoras?" (155d). All of a sudden, Socrates leaps from the genealogy of Thauomas, or "wonder," the sea-god, to the game-theory of Protagoras. This strange gap, marked in a number of translations by a dash—seems to indicate that Socrates is leaving something out of his genealogy. And in fact, he is.

According to Hesiod's *Theogony*, Thauomas the wondergod is the son of Gaia (earth) and Oceanus (sea). Thauomas marries Electra, and their union produces Iris (rainbow), who races between the divine and human realms as a sign of the favor of the gods. Socrates commends this part of the story. What Socrates does not say, however, is that Iris is not the only child of this union. The passage in Hesiod reads as follows: "And Thauomas married deep-flowing Ocean's/ Daughter, Elektra, who bore swift Iris and/ The rich-haired Harpies, Aello and Oypetes,/ Who keep pace with stormwinds and birds/ Flying their missions on wings swift as time."⁸ When Socrates tells Theaetetus that wonder gives birth to Iris, then, he neglects to mention that Wonder's *other* daughters are the Harpies. Like their sister, these winged creatures are employed as inter-cosmic messengers, carrying humans off to the underworld. Hesiod himself does not convey any particularly repellent characteristics in relation to these creatures, but by Plato's time, classicist David Kravitz tells us that the Harpies were thought of as "ugly bird-like *monsters* with large claws."⁹ Apparently, they smelled revolting, and when they weren't hauling people off to Hades, they were sent upon unwitting humans to peck at them and steal their food, as a sign of the gods' *disfavor*. Even in the process of claiming wonder as the origin of all philosophy, then, Socrates only avows half of wonder's progeny, excluding the ominous for the sake of the amazing, and then covering his tracks by changing the subject.

If thinking were to dwell in the pathos of wonder, then, it would have to give up all efforts to purify itself of horror; to open itself to rainbows and Harpies, the redemptive and the ruinous, alike. Following the philo-theological traces of wonder's awesome, awful primordiality, thinking finds itself in the ambivalent nether-regions of Burke's (and Kant's) sublime, Pascal's abysmal awe, Otto's numinous, Blanchot's disaster, Lacan's real, Kristeva's abject, Kierkegaard's *horror religiosus*. The question of wonder opens the fascinating/repulsive, creative/destructive, astounding/horrifying, heirophanic/monstrous excess against

8 Hesiod, *Theogony*, trans. Stanley Lombardo, in *Works and Days and Theogony* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1993), 68.

9 David Kravitz, "Harpies," in *Who's Who in Greek and Roman Mythology* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1975), 111.

which more "proper" philosophy takes pains to secure itself.

And it takes *considerable* pains. After all, especially as European thought makes its way into the early modern period, it is philosophy's job to *know*—to categorize, systematize, separate good from evil, find criteria of truth—and wonder's persistent attunement to the bottomlessness of knowledge severely inhibits any such projects. As the origin of philosophy, however, it is wonder that sets these projects in motion in the first place. So the Western philosophical tradition develops a *staggeringly* ambivalent relationship to this mood. A bit of wonder is necessary

to get thinking off the ground, but too much of it begins to look like ignorance, or childishness, or worse, femininity. The self-professed heirs to Plato and Socrates therefore devise various strategies to ensure that wonder is eventually overcome by the philosophy it engenders.

A simultaneous avowal and disavowal of wonder can be found as early as Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, which concedes

that the philosopher begins by wondering at simple things, but insists that the moment he learns the cause of each puzzling phenomenon, his wonder at it will cease. The philosopher progresses from an initiatory wonder into what Aristotle calls "the better state, as is the case in these instances when men learn the cause,"¹⁰ proceeding in this wonder-eclipsing fashion up to the stars, through the intellects, and ultimately to certain knowledge of the First Cause. Aristotelian *thaumazein*, one might say, seeks the very resolution that Socratic *thaumazein* struggles to resist; for all the way up the ontological chain, causal knowledge gradually replaces the very wonder that conditions its possibility.

Perhaps the most fascinating working-out of this filial ambivalence comes from René Descartes. Descartes has fallen out of favor among contemporary continental philosophers and theologians alike, thanks to his installation of an autonomous, thinking "self" and a bloodless, conceptual "God" as reflexive stop-gaps, meant to keep the philosopher's clear and distinct ideas from draining into some vast sea of doubt and unknowing. In a treatise called *The Passions of the Soul*, Descartes categorizes every major human emotion, and locates the origin of all of them in wonder, or *l'admiration*.¹¹ Wonder is afforded this privileged position not only because Descartes is a good son of the ancients, but also because it is the only passion that *precedes* the distinction between good and evil. Descartes calls wonder a "sudden surprise of the soul," which strikes a person before he

10 Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, in *The Complete Works of Aristotle: Revised Oxford Translation*, vol. 2, ed. Jonathan Barnes (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 983a.

11 René Descartes, *The Passions of the Soul*, trans. Stephen H. Voss (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, 1989).

**As both Descartes and Augustine
demonstrate, the self can only
gather itself together and become
a godlike, noetically inviolable
monad once wonder is
out of the way.**

has the chance to discern whether the wondrous object is helpful or harmful—whether it is out to save or destroy him. Once this judgment is made, wonder gives way to anger, joy, hope, love, or fear. But wonder itself remains a passion of and for the indeterminate.

Descartes is therefore insistent that we free ourselves of *l'admiration* as quickly as possible, using it only as a temporary goad toward certain knowledge of things. He admits that a bit of wonder is “useful” insofar as it exposes the soul to something unknown. In fact, he goes so far as to say that those who are not at all disposed toward wonder “are ordinarily very ignorant.”¹² That having been said, Descartes believes that too little wonder is a far smaller problem than too *much* wonder, which he calls astonishment (*l'estonnement*). “Astonishment,” Descartes writes, “is an excess of wonder which can never be anything but bad.”¹³ Descartes therefore recommends that young philosophers calculate the causes of everything that strikes them as marvelous, so that their wonder might be closed off into the kind of certainty that secures the sovereign subject, in God’s sovereign image.

Such a practice was not limited to young Cartesians. As it happened, the amassing and cataloguing Descartes recommended was being performed in earnest response to the influx of wondrous things from the trade routes into the so-called New World, Asia, and Africa. This collection of curiosities was systematized by Francis Bacon, who called wonder a kind of “broken knowledge,”¹⁴ dispatching a small army of scientists to collect and discover the causes of every bizarre object and creature in the world. As a young man, Bacon told an imaginary prince in a moot court that the best way to gain sovereignty over his people was to keep a collection of wondrous objects, and *to learn their secrets*, so that “when all other miracles and wonders cease by reason that you should have discovered their natural causes, yourself shall be left the only miracle and wonder of the world.”¹⁵ Similarly, Descartes assures us that once “we” have physically and noetically mastered all that is wondrous, “we” will become “masters of ourselves...like God in a way.”¹⁶

12 Ibid., A70, A75.

13 Ibid., A73.

14 Francis Bacon, *The Advancement of Learning*, ed. Michael Kiernan (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000).

15 Bacon, cited in Daston and Park, *Wonders and the Order of Nature: 1150-1750* (New York: Zone Books, 2001), 290.

16 Descartes, *Passions*, A152.

Twelve centuries earlier, St. Augustine had warned against precisely this sort of self-deification among those who seek to appropriate wonder. Augustine was particularly concerned with the work of astrologers who, unwilling merely to marvel at the celestial bodies, set out to chart and predict their courses. Augustine admits that God has given them this ability in the first place. The problem is that they themselves admit this, attributing to themselves the power and wisdom that belongs to God alone.¹⁷ By mastering the most mysterious realm of creation, those who examine the stars make themselves into gods—not only in their own estimation, but also in the eyes of the common people who are “amazed and stupefied” by the astrologers’ foresight, and who proceed to direct toward human beings the wonder (*admiration*) of which God alone should be the object.¹⁸

As well-trod a critical path as this is, it is important to highlight once again the persistent symmetry between the self-identical, self-mastering self and its self-identical, other-mastering God. Furthermore, as both Descartes and Augustine demonstrate, the self can only gather

itself together and *become* a godlike, noetically inviolable monad once wonder is out of the way. So with subjectivity, and indeed divinity, in the balance, it is not surprising that Western philosophy can’t quite handle the wonder that gets it going. Wonder, after all, reveals the fundamental instability of all the would-be objects of *cogitatio* from which the thinking self would get its

bearings, its certainty. Yet origins die hard, and so philosophy does not so much *excise* wonder as it does *internalize* it, making itself the source and object of wonder. “Like God in a way.”

* * *

The question that remains, then, is this: what would it take to *sustain* the wonder that is inimical to the formation of the sovereign human subject—to remain with the wonder that Western philosophy has fled for so long? What would it mean to keep thinking *within* the sort of shocked unknowing that sets it in motion in the first place? And, perhaps most pressingly, would a sustained philosophical wonder even be a good idea?

The narrative offered far too quickly here, of wonder’s death-by-internalization at the hands of its progeny, is certainly not without its exceptions. Like everything thinking represses,

17 Augustine, *Confessions*, trans. Henry Owen Chadwick (Oxford: Oxford Press, 1998), 5.3.5; emphasis added.

18 Ibid., 5.4.4.

What is the use of trying to re-open the wonder that metaphysics closes if wonder blinds thinking to the everyday world?

While a certain shock with- stands the sudden departure of everything that is, awe watches, in the midst of the impossible, for the arrival of the unexpected.

the ghost of *thaumazein* has haunted this progressively masterful tradition, returning now and again at the bidding of some poet, mystic, or misfit to rattle the floorboards of the house of philosophy. Hildegard, Eckhart, Bonaventure, Kierkegaard, Goethe. But it could be argued that the one such conjurer who finally got Western thought to listen to and for the ghost of *thaumazein* was a Catholic theologian-turned secular philosopher named Martin Heidegger, who famously locates a kind of parricidal tendency within Western metaphysics. For Heidegger, the entire heritage built upon the question “what is” hasn’t got a clue what “is” is. Rather, for the last twenty-three or -four centuries, a progressively objectifying thought has been stockpiling bits of calculable knowledge about beings, closing itself off to the incalculable event of being itself. The reason philosophy does not question being is that it thinks it has already mastered it. After all, the word is used all the time—I am, you are, the table is—who (aside from a disgruntled philosopher or disgraced politician) would ever think to *ask* what “is” is? So for Heidegger, restoring thinking to its proper purview is a matter of getting thinking to realize that the amassing and cataloguing of objects only further estranges them from that which *is-es* them in the first place. Or, as Heidegger puts it in his later work, that being has abandoned beings to the forces of calculation and representation.

Above all else, Heidegger is concerned to get back behind this state of affairs to a thinking attuned to the being that abandons it. While his style (not to mention his vocabulary) makes a number of dramatic shifts, Heidegger is looking in each of his writings for a *mood* that might place thinking back into being’s furious withdrawal and hold it there. And insofar as this mood will have to recognize and endure the sudden strangeness and indeterminacy of being—the most common stuff of all—the best candidate for the job looks a lot like wonder. But before announcing the advent or withdrawal of some “wonderstruck philosophy,” or worse yet, a “philosophy of wonder,” it might be prudent to ask whether or not wonder is a good place for thinking to be lodged, primordial or not.

In the *Theaetetus*, Socrates characterizes typical philosophers as perfectly hopeless in daily affairs. A philosopher will simply have to be excused, Socrates says, if he has no idea how to get to the marketplace, or where the courts are, or who is running for public office, or how to make a bed. He goes on to tell the story of the philosopher Thales, who was in such deeply contemplative awe of the stars above him that he fell into a well under his feet. Socrates says to Theodorus, “the same joke applies to all who spend their lives in philosophy” (174a-b). And two thousand years later, the political philosopher Hannah Arendt applies it to Martin Heidegger.

In an essay written for Heidegger’s eightieth birthday, Arendt ranks Heidegger with the greatest philosophical giants of all time, even likening him to Plato. She goes on to say that those of us who would like to follow such powerful thinkers hit considerable stumbling-blocks when we realize they often make disastrous political decisions. Akin to, but far worse than, Plato’s attempt to teach philosophy to Dionysus, the tyrant of Syracuse in 362 B.C.E., was Heidegger’s commitment in 1933 C.E. to National Socialism, a commitment which Arendt, interestingly enough, attributes to an excess of wonder. Wonder, she argues,

Holding itself back in *Verhaltenheit*,
thinking exposes itself to the sudden
uncanniness of everything it thought it
knew: ideas, objects, and the thinking
self itself. This vertigo then gives way
to a kind of awe that anything can be
at all.

is just supposed to be a temporary goad—a “leaping spark”—that disorients the thinker momentarily in order to set her on a course to surer knowledge. Heidegger’s mistake, she explains, was his “taking up and accepting this faculty of wondering as [his] abode.”¹⁹ Had he only taken his vision away from the philosophical clouds, she suggests, he would have seen the dangers beneath his all-

too-human feet. But he was too hell-bent on the coming of some metaphysical revolution to notice the deportations, the storefronts, the yellow stars, the burning of the temples. Heidegger, she says, is like the would-be philosopher-king of Plato’s cave, hauled out of the everyday into the dazzling world of the Forms only to return to the cave with his eyesight ruined, unable to re-adjust his vision to the dark.

At the risk of sounding glib, this poses a serious problem. Drawing a line of direct causation between Heidegger’s wonder and Heidegger’s Nazism, Arendt’s critique leads this reader, at least, to wonder whether Aristotle and Bacon and Descartes knew what they were doing when they reigned in *thaumazein* to secure the thinking self. What is the use of trying to re-open the wonder that metaphysics closes if wonder blinds thinking to the everyday world?

It might at this point be instructive to look to Heidegger’s own understanding of wonder. While he re-formulates *thaumazein* a number of times throughout his authorship, a particularly compelling rendition can be found in a concept Heidegger thought too dangerous to discuss openly, deleting it from his lectures and only addressing it directly in work he knew would be published posthumously. In these materials, Heidegger entreats anyone who knows about it to stay silent about it; so at the risk of incurring the wrath of the last god, the mood is called *Verhaltenheit*, holding back-ness, usually translated as restraint or reservedness.²⁰ Two movements constitute this rhythm: *Er-*

19 Hannah Arendt, “Philosophy and Politics,” *Social Research*, 57, no. 1 (Spring 1990): 97.

20 Most of the material on *Verhaltenheit* can be found in Martin Heidegger, *Basic Questions of Philosophy: Selected*

schrecken, a kind of shock, or even terror; and *Scheu*, or awe. Holding itself back in *Verhaltenheit*, thinking exposes itself to the sudden uncanniness of everything it thought it knew: ideas, objects, and the thinking self itself. This vertigo then gives way to a kind of awe that anything can *be* at all. So if *Erschrecken* registers that that which *is* cannot possibly be, then *Scheu* sees that it nonetheless *is*; if shock recoils at the abandonment of being, awe marvels that being, impossibly, gives itself through this withdrawal—that beings cannot be, and yet beings are. Which is to say being *happens*, where being cannot possibly happen. It is at this point that *Verhaltenheit* gains an almost prophetic valence. Maintaining itself in the terrifying wake of being's withdrawing self-donation, awe not only attends to that which, impossibly, is, but also awaits the appearance or non-appearance of that which, impossibly, might yet be: something that might actually change the violent, objectified, being-abandoned state of things. While a certain shock withstands the sudden departure of everything that is, awe watches, in the midst of the impossible, for the arrival of the unexpected.²¹

Understood along these lines, a sustained wonder would require a ceaseless attunement to the uncanniness of the everyday, akin to Socrates' tireless questioning of the ordinary. If, in other words, wonder were truly wonder, it could not lead to the neglectful other-worldliness Arendt attributes to it, because bluntly put, there can be no shock at the sudden senselessness of the everyday without attentiveness to the everyday. To be sure, Heidegger himself was unable to sustain the vigilant holding-backness to which he calls thinking, falling instead into the lure of unquestionable party-lines and slogans. Were it possible, however, genuinely to hold oneself in wonder's frightful oscillation, it would neither allow a capitulation to uninterrogated doctrines, nor open an escape-hatch into some stratospheric other-world. It would rather transform the wonderer's relationship to *this* unusually usual world, revealing the extraordinary *through* the ordinary, precisely by revealing the ordinary as extraordinarily strange.

This would pertain especially to the so-called subject, Descartes' *fundamentum inconcussum*, "like God in a way." By holding the one who wonders in a place where her very self seems strange, wonder would obstruct the consolidation of the

'Problems' of 'Logic', trans. Richard Rojcewicz and André Schuwer (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994), and in idem., *Contributions to Philosophy (from Enknowing)*, trans. Parvis Emad and Kenneth Maly (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1999).

21 This includes Heidegger's enigmatic figure of "the last God." See, for example, *Contributions*, 12.

isolated, onto-epistemological subject that is sure it *is* what it *is* because it knows what it knows, or that it knows what it knows because it is what it is. Existing in the rhythm of *Erschrecken* and *Scheu*, the self could never become that transcendental subject for whom nothing is ultimately shocking or wonderful—the Augustinian astronomer, Cartesian *cogito*, or Baconian prince who proclaims his godlike self-sufficiency. Rather, selves would be left open, interdependent, vulnerable.

* * *

What, then, has any of this got to do with global conflict? What does it mean to offer a reflection on some primordial attunement to indeterminacy at this particular historical juncture?

It could be argued, at least provisionally, that the most dangerous theo-socio-political knots currently strangling the globe stem from the positing, and conflict, of inviolable certainties.

The will-toward-mastery that asserts itself by obliterating uncertainty has had unspeakably violent effects on all sides of the so-called "clash" of the Mesopotamian-sprung "civilizations," with everyone absolutely *sure* he is *right*. It could in this context be suggested that the impulse to domesticate

The impulse to domesticate and internalize wonder by making the Philosophical Subject into wonder's very source and object -- like God in a way -- has been perhaps most ironically incarnated in contemporary American strategy.

and internalize wonder by making the Philosophical Subject into wonder's very source and object—like God in a way—has been perhaps most ironically incarnated in contemporary American military strategy. In particular, we have seen it animate the pretensions of "Shock and Awe," first deployed to launch the "Operation Iraqi Freedom" offensive of 2003.²²

The treatise that outlines this tactic was written in 1996 by Harlan Ullman and James Wade, who describe Shock and Awe as an effort to amaze the enemy to such an extent that "it" will give up all hope of resistance. The aim of Shock and Awe is therefore not mass murder, so much as it is complete "psychological dominance," defined as "the ability to destroy, defeat, and neuter the will of an adversary to resist."²³ Shock and Awe

22 It should be noted that while this tactic composed the initial war plan, many have argued that it did not work, and some have insisted that it was not properly executed in the first place. See Eric Schmitt, "Top General Concedes Air Attacks Did Not Deliver knockout Blow," *The New York Times*, 26 March 2003, and Paul Sperry, "No Shock, No Awe, It Never Happened," *World Net Daily*, 3 April 2003.

23 Harlan K. Ullman and James P. Wade, Jr., *Shock and Awe: Achieving Rapid Dominance* (Washington, DC: The Center for Advanced Concepts and Technology, 1996) <http://purl.access.gpo.gov/GPO/LPS29021>, "Introduction to Rapid Domi-

entails, among other maneuvers: massive bombardment with conventional bombs (they suggest 300-400 in a day), the destruction of military *and* civilian infrastructure (access to power, roads, food, communication, and supplies), and calculated circulation of “misinformation” or “disinformation.”²⁴ Ullman and Wade have likened the force of Shock and Awe to that of “tornadoes, hurricanes, earthquakes, floods, uncontrolled fires, famine, and disease,” and have also called it “the non-nuclear equivalent of...Hiroshima and Nagasaki,” which disarmed all Japan’s suicidal resistance efforts by producing “a state of awe.”²⁵

Equating Shock and Awe not only with the disasters one tends to call “acts of God” (and find in Exodus), but also with the psychological effects of the atomic bomb, Ullman and Wade unwittingly justify Augustine’s concern about the idolatrous imposition of wonder upon others. J. Robert Oppenheimer infamously linked nuclear, natural, and divine force upon channeling Krishna in New Mexico: “If the radiance of one thousand suns were to burst into the sky,” Oppenheimer said upon seeing the blast, “that would be like the splendor of the Mighty One.” Moments later, he intoned, “I am become Death—shatterer of worlds.”²⁶ The idea behind Shock and Awe is to demonstrate that it would be *as* impossible to refuse to comply with the United States military as it would be to resist the shatterer of worlds, or to switch gods, to reject a commandment given in a pillar of cloud and fire. “The punishing air attacks rocked the Baghdad night Friday,” one report put it, “with thunderous explosions that filled the skies with flames and huge clouds of smoke.”²⁷ What

nance.”

24 “Rapid Dominance must be all-encompassing...It will imply more than the direct application of force. It will mean the ability to control the environment and to master all levels of an opponent’s activities to affect will, perception, and understanding. This could include means of communication, transportation, food production, water supply, and other aspects of infrastructure as well as the denial of military responses. Deception, misinformation, and disinformation are key components in this assault on the will and understanding of the opponent” (Ibid). See also “Iraq Faces Massive U.S. Missile Barage,” *CBS News*, 24 January 2003, and *The “Shock and Awe” Experiment: Compilation, Analysis, and Discussion of Available Information on the Pentagon’s “Shock and Awe” Plan for Iraq*, www.notinourname.net/war/shock_awe.html.

25 Ullman and Wade, Appendix A, Introduction.

26 Cited in “J. Robert Oppenheimer, Atom Bomb Pioneer, Dies,” *The New York Times*, 19 February 1967.

27 “Massive Firestorm Targets Iraqi Leadership,” *CNN.com*, 21 March 2003.

could be the aim here but to provoke the kind of *yir’ah* that the Israelites express once the plagues have come, the sea has parted, and the Egyptians are dead on the shore: “Who is like thee, O Lord, among the gods?/ Who is like thee, majestic in holiness,/ terrible in glorious deeds, doing wonders?”²⁸ One had better give in to the force that can so wonderfully, awfully, light up the sky.

Shock and Awe, then, is the most extreme contemporary expression of the modern super-powerful ego’s internalization of wonder, a wiping away of the whole horizon that, I have argued, stems from a refusal of all indeterminacy. Rather than undergo the awful uncertainty of wonder, the autonomous subject—or nation—masquerades as the only wonder in the world, ultimately *imposing* wonder, in the most terrifying ways, upon others. “Achieving Shock and Awe rests in the ability to deter and overpower an adversary through the adversary’s perception of fear of his vulnerability,” write Ullman and Wade, “and our own invincibility.”²⁹

And so, one might understandably argue, why not just get rid of wonder? Find a different mood for thinking, preferably one that’s a bit less dangerous? But this leads us back to the problem, and the promise, of wonder’s irreducible anteriority. It won’t, much like any other ancestral ghost, just go away; in fact, the harder one tries to expunge it, the more disastrously it asserts itself. More positively stated, rather than imposing it on others, metaphysically or militarily, what if it were the task of thinking to remain *with* the wonder that keeps it vulnerable and unsure of itself?

Presumably, such a remaining-with would prevent the formation of the usual protective ontological bulwarks: the Cartesian subject, the God of the philosophers, and so on, not only restraining the destructive will toward the mastery they undergird, but also keeping the wonderer exposed to otherness, to the arrival of the unanticipated in the midst of the ordinary. To be sure, wonder puts thinking on the side of the vulnerable, rather than the invincible. Opening itself to the wondrous, thinking opens itself to the most horrifying of all, but there may be no other way to expose philosophy, or politics, or religion, to the possibility of the transformative than to expose it at the same time to the possibility of the devastating. And so nothing could be less escapist or other-worldly. For it would be through the attunement to that which is most awful and most amazing that thinking might keep itself attentive to the way ordinary things tend to slip away from thought, and watch for the possible emergence of something strange within the unthinkable beautiful, or monstrous, or indeed enraging wonder of the everyday.

28 Exodus 15:11.

29 Ullman and Wade, Chapter 2.

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Just War and the New Community: The Witness of the Old Testament For Christians Today

Gordon Brubacher

I. INTRODUCTION

Recently I received the following assignment from the editors of *Princeton Theological Review*:

War is a common theme in the Old Testament, but for all its narrative treatment, the portrait of Israel as a light to the nations in a context of political conflict remains theologically complex, and, at least at first glance, ethically perplexing. How does this portrait given to us by the OT witness shed light on how God's chosen people may live out their vocation as Christian witnesses in situations of global conflict today?

Naturally, such a challenging topic generates many thoughts, and I am grateful for encouragement from the editors to stimulate discussion among their readers.¹ I propose to take all aspects of the assignment seriously, including the two most difficult, namely: (a) the OT witness on war, on its own terms,² in all its ethical perplexity; and (b) the usability, if any, of this OT witness for the church today.³

II. DEVELOPING A HERMENEUTIC: THINGS THAT DID NOT WORK

A. What, or Where, is the OT Witness?

First, we need to establish a usable OT hermeneutic, and to my mind this begins by looking where the OT points, and going on that journey. For there is no such thing as *the* OT witness. That is to say, the OT does not present a single, flat, monolithic "witness" to be extrapolated by balancing or synthesizing its various elements as found throughout. Instead, the OT presents an extended narrative journey, in which the destination is more important—more authoritative and normative—than the beginning or the middle of that experience. It presents a God who has

1. The writer wishes to acknowledge the work of Ruth Kitchin, Research Assistant, especially for global conflict and for war in the Old Testament; the role of my colleague Mike Cosby for a fine critical reading; and good conversation partners who have included my colleagues Rhonda Brubacher, Sharon Baker, and Eric Seibert.

2. Rather than, for example, merely pointing to the teaching of Jesus to "Love your enemies. . ." (Matt 5:44), asserting that this supersedes war in the OT, and closing in prayer without further ado.

3. This study will focus on those two elements, rather than presenting an analysis of politicized global conflict *per se*. Hopefully, the results (on the witness of the OT relating to Just War) can in turn be employed as a guide for responding to political and global conflict.

singular expectations for the people of God, yet who faithfully travels with those people through all vicissitudes, in sickness and in health, for better or for worse, without any qualifications such as parting by death.

We, in turn, can learn by joining that journey and following the story of that process. We are invited to participate in that journey, to learn from the mistakes and wrong turns as portrayed, to take seriously the considerable list of side roads that did not work out as expected. We can follow the Divine leading to the creation of a new community, a new people of God, leaving the old behind, and living and showing a new way for all. That new land, that destination for the journey, is proclaimed especially in a group of passages in Second Isaiah and in other, related, prophetic witness, as a new way of life for a new community of faith and practice.

In short, a major portion of the OT witness presents a sustained show-and-tell lesson on where not to go and what not to do, or at least on what is no longer the first choice, because it has not worked. It then goes on to describe the new way which is expected of the people of God instead. It is precisely that new way which constitutes the normative OT witness for us, the people of God today.

B. Jesus and the OT

Furthermore, the NT witness seems to point in the same direction, to the same final, normative OT witness. The Gospels report that Jesus of Nazareth specifically indicated that same OT description of the new community as his starting point for mission and ministry, and as his expectation for the people of God (e.g., Luke 4:16-22, quoting Isa 61:1-2; Matt 12:17-21, quoting Isa 42:1-4, 9; Matt 11:4-6, quoting or citing Isa 29:18-19; 35:5-6; 42:18; 61:1). Precisely because the Evangelists pointed to the latest OT witness, the Gospel witness is inextricably connected to it.

As a result, we can take Jesus as guide for deciding *which* stage of the OT journey constitutes the OT witness for the church today. There is nothing Marcionite about this hermeneutic. Rather, it is more organic, growing from within the biblical witness, following the signals given in the text itself.

As a further result, we now have two different signposts for the journey, both pointing to the same destination. One is located in the OT witness, and one in the New. From our position, with two such verified points of reference, we can specify the location of our destination through triangulation, and we will soon go there to explore. But first, we need to do two things: (a) develop further the hermeneutics of earlier and later OT wit-

ness; and (b) travel through the prophetic critique of militarism on our way to arriving at the new community which no longer engages in war.

C. Revision and Updating Within the OT Witness

That the later OT witness takes precedence over the earlier has certain hermeneutical implications for the church today:

1. Avoid applying anything that has been changed or left behind, such as sacrifices, or the Joshua Conquest, or human kingship, *even if* God commanded it, or God worked with it, at one time.

2. In such cases (things that have been changed), the hermeneutical issue is not whether God ever commanded or approved or worked with something at some time in the past. Instead, the issue is whether something like that is still operative (for outmoded things, see below the list of “Things That Did Not Work”).

3. In other words, for each subject or issue, the hermeneutical imperative is to ascertain what is the most recent, updated will of God for us, the new community of God’s people.

4. This hermeneutic implies a clear conclusion: the whole Bible is not equal. That is to say, the whole Bible is not equal in authority and application for followers of Jesus Christ. If it were, we would still sacrifice a lamb in church every Sunday morning. Paul was right in Galatians 5:3: it is all or nothing.

5. Given a significant contrast between the teaching of Jesus and something else in the canon of Scripture on the same subject, the teaching of Jesus takes hermeneutical priority. That is to say, the teaching of Jesus takes precedence and has greater authority.

6. When an issue is unclear, give priority to the prominent, dominant, timeless, major principles found in the biblical witness as a whole. For example, the love, mercy and forgiveness of God are prominent and dominant; so also is the almost irrational faithfulness of God no matter how badly people go wrong; also the relentless redemptive work of God no matter how improbable the apparent odds are for success; and so on.⁴

D. Things That Did Not Work

The hermeneutic outlined above implies that some things in the divine dealings with humanity appear to have been altered. Indeed, one can actually compile a list of such things which, at some point in the biblical story line,

a. God commanded, or approved, or accepted, or worked with;

b. *but* God changed, or dropped, or left behind, or su-

perseded, or they did not work out, at some point along the way.

The list includes sacrifices and offerings, kingship, temple, Jerusalem, the Mt. Sinai covenant, earlier prophetic oracles using the Mt. Sinai Covenant as the criterion, promised land, chosen people (in the exclusive sense for salvific purpose), probably war, and perhaps other matters as well.

Again, the implications for Justified War in the witness of the OT for the church seem evident.

a. If the main instances in which God commanded or accepted or worked with warfare occur earlier in the storyline;

b. and if, in the final portion of that storyline, the new people of God are expected to end warfare and all other forms of conflict;

c. *then it follows that the OT witness on the subject of Justified War can be summarized in two words: “No more.”*

This is indeed where the OT witness ends up on the subject of Justified War or any other type of war, as I hope to show below. But on the way it passes through some interesting transitional territory, namely, a prophetic critique of militarism which does not altogether prohibit warfare but which seriously undermines both the ethics and the practicality of the enterprise. Our journey now goes through that terrain.

III. ANTIMILITARISM IN THE PROPHETIC CRITIQUE

“Choose life,” said the prophet Jeremiah as a superpower attacked Jerusalem. “Do not fight—just surrender. Save lives.”

Thus says the LORD: See, I am setting before you the way of life and the way of death. Those who stay in this city shall die by the sword, by famine, and by pestilence; but those who go out and surrender to the Chaldeans who are besieging you shall live and shall have their lives as a prize of war. (Jer 21:8-9)⁵

Critique or rejection of the military option constitutes a running strand throughout prophetic thought. Bearing some affinity to the new community idea of ending warfare, and found in various forms, it includes the thoughts and theses outlined below. Most, if not all, of this critique was itself proclaimed specifically in the context of political conflict—in real life situations of war, siege, threat, or national security policy, whether in the making or the failing. Collectively, this anti-military theme in the prophets constitutes an important part of the OT witness on war and therefore on the doctrine of Justified War.

This calls for a word on the prophets and the political realities of the day. One cannot say outright that “the prophetic critique is uniformly against war.” However, the stream of anti-militarism within prophetic thought seems to prepare the way for, or function as a transition to, the “no more war” requirement laid upon the new people of God in the later OT witness.

5. Bible References are to the *NRSV* unless otherwise indicated.

4. Marvin Tate makes a somewhat similar point within a more limited framework: “. . . if we search for the basic will of Yahweh for Israel, we discover that he does not direct them to be a violent people. . . . The Divine Warrior does not seek a people who are warriors,” in “War and Peacemaking in the Old Testament,” *Review and Expositor* 79 (1982): 593.

A major and constant need was national security, that is, physical security against hostile armies, and the big question was: “Where should we place our trust?” The standard answers, along with some prophetic alternatives, may be outlined as follows.

A. Trust God, Not the Idolatry of Military Power

One answer to the national security question was found in strong armies and chariot forces which could take the field against invading armies. In ancient Israel this was rarely realistic—only under David, perhaps Solomon to some extent, a few others for short periods. This method belonged to empires.

Isaiah criticized Hezekiah for trusting arms buildup instead of the creator (Isa 22:8-11). Hosea 10:13 says war will destroy the Northern Kingdom because it trusted the army. In fact Isaiah 2:7-8 lists military power and idolatry together; Micah 5:10-15 includes war horses and chariots in the same list as idols which God will “cut off.” Micah 1:13 calls war horses and chariots the beginning of sin for the Jerusalem rulers, citing this as the sin of the now destroyed Northern Kingdom (cf. Mic 6:16). The superpowers are no exception: the transgression of Babylon is viewing its military might as its god (Hab 1:11).

B. Trust God, Not Fortress Cities for Defense

A second answer to the national security question was found in major defensive fortifications at selected sites. This was the standard answer in ancient Israel in the period of the monarchy, as witnessed in the archaeological remains today. The fundamental theory was to hole up behind safe walls and wait until the besieging army went away, or was driven away by the approach of a stronger army allied to those inside.

When we realize that “cities” in the world of the OT were primarily the equivalent of hilltop fortress castles, some of the prophetic passages which critique the cities (see below) make more sense. Surrounded by massive walls and entered through a heavily defended gate complex, they provided for storage of food, water, and weapons and were inhabited primarily by the ruling class. (To date virtually no normal houses for the general population have been found inside the walls.) The resulting picture is that the so-called cities were centers of power and wealth, injustice and oppression, and trust in human defenses for security. (Such “security” was only for those within the walls.)

That problem had started earlier, in Bronze Age Canaan. With the worship of Baal, religious ethics and the socio-economic structure worked hand in hand. In Canaanite mythology, Baal had fought his way to kingship over the gods, and the texts

reflected a belief that in war he could protect his own. Baal was the god of kings and aristocracy, of palace and temple and fortress city, of priests and leaders and powerful land-owners, of the whole system of advantage for those with power. In short, he was the god of the privileged minority inside the walls, the god of those who used power as they wished. Bronze Age (Canaanite period) excavations have revealed a system of fortified cities that functioned as fortress castles for that ruling class, who

controlled and exploited the great majority—those outside the walls.

The social ethics of this system contradicted everything taught at Sinai and learned by experience in the desert. The so-called conquest and settlement narrative pictures the Israelites terminating this system in Canaan, by attacking the oppressive kings and

their fortress capitals (e.g., Josh 12), and liberating the general population in the process. The latter could then join the Israelites at Joshua’s covenant renewal ceremony if willing to jettison their former gods (Josh 24).

But Solomon essentially restarted the Canaanite fortress system and its values (1 Kgs 9:15-19). By organizing an administrative system to use forced labor and collect heavy taxes, he virtually enslaved his own people (1 Kgs 4:7-19, 22-28; 5:13-16; 10:15, 26; 12:4, 13), all as the prophet Samuel had warned (1 Sam 8). Solomon began a trend—the way of death—which led to the fall of both the Northern and Southern Kingdoms.

This system, created and sustained by military force in the name of national security, is what drew the prophetic critique. Amos 3:10 summarized the systemic problem:

They do not know how to do right, says the LORD,
those who store up violence and robbery in their strongholds.

Hosea 8:14 said Judah has “forgotten his Maker” by multiplying fortified cities, and predicted (correctly) that they would be destroyed by war (cf. 10:14). Micah 5:10-15 included cities and strongholds in his list of things constituting idolatry. Isaiah 22:8-11 described the Jerusalem defensive walls and military water system enclosing them (Hezekiah’s tunnel and the Pool of Siloam) as a failure to trust God.

Jeremiah predicted the fall of Jerusalem as well deserved for its sins of oppression (6:6-8) and arrogance (21:13-14), and he proved to be right.

C. Trust God, Not Military Alliance

A third answer to the national security problem presented itself in arranging outside help, and this, too, was often planned

National security seemed so fragile
precisely because the various human
efforts to secure it usually failed. Were
there no alternatives? There were, but
they were difficult choices because
they required giving up control.

and relied on in ancient Israel. Strategic treaty or alliance, hopefully with the superpower which would win next time around, was a common method of defense in the biblical world. Like the fortified city method, to which it was usually linked, these alliances tended to fail also, and this was one reason that the prophets boldly denounced them on many occasions. For example, Isaiah 30:1-3 called alliance with Egypt rebellion, sin, and against God's will:

Oh, rebellious children, says the LORD,
 who carry out a plan, but not mine;
 who make an alliance, but against my will,
 adding sin to sin;
 who set out to go down to Egypt
 without asking for my counsel,
 to take refuge in the protection of Pharaoh,
 and to seek shelter in the shadow of Egypt;
 Therefore the protection of Pharaoh shall become your
 shame,
 and the shelter in the shadow of Egypt your humili-
 ation.

In other examples, Isaiah 10:3-4 said no outside help would avail; or again that Egypt would fail to deliver (20:1-6); and again that trusting Egypt instead of God would fail (31:1-3). Hosea (5:13; cf. 7:11), who at times appeared to be diplomatically challenged, called the seeking of alliance acting like a silly dove—fluttering between Egypt and Assyria.

Jeremiah 2:13-19 called such alliances “two evils,” namely, abandoning their God, and trusting other powers instead. Ezekiel 17:17-19 predicted that Pharaoh, for all “his mighty army” (v. 17), would not help the Jerusalemite puppet king. Lamentations 4:17 conveyed the pathos of eagerly watching for help that would never come.

It seems that ancient Egypt in particular was notorious for failure to help, for many of the above references are to that nation. The cynical observations on this point, set in the mouth of an Assyrian commander, were probably quite realistic (2 Kgs 18:19-25).

D. False Prophets Support the Military Option

Do not listen to the words of the prophets who are telling you not to serve the king of Babylon, for they are prophesying a lie to you. I have not sent them, says the LORD, but they are prophesying falsely in my name, with the result that I will drive you out and you will perish, you and the prophets who are prophesying to you. (Jer 27:14-15)

“What brought that on?” one might ask. Human nature, likely. Given that military power itself has attractions, and that

pleasing those in power also has its attractions, one might expect to find voices claiming to speak for God supporting the powers that be in general, and the military option in particular. Because this happened, the prophetic critique of militarism had to counter the false prophets who supported militarism and other aspects of the power structure in various ways.

For example, in the Northern Kingdom, King Ahab's court prophets assured the king that God would give him victory in his proposed military venture. This opinion was, however, opposed by the lone voice of Micaiah son of Imlah, who not only said the opposite but correctly predicted the death of Ahab in battle (1 Kings 22).

Jeremiah in particular was forced into continuous conflict with falsely-prophesying opponents. One form of false message which he encountered and countered was the proclamation that all was well and would stay that way with regard to the state of national well-being (Jer 6:13-14; 23:14, 17). In the process, he said, the false prophets “strengthen the hands of evildoers” (23:14).

Another form of false prophecy specifically proclaimed a false sense of reality regarding national security and the use of military defense. In countering this form Jeremiah sometimes had to be explicit about the destructive consequences (Jer 5:12-13, 30-31; 27:14-15). In this regard the dramatic scroll-burning

scene functioned something like false prophecy in that it denied a true but unwanted message about national security and foreign policy.⁶

Particularly intriguing is an apparent contrast between good news messages, which

are to be viewed as inherently false, versus bad news messages which are more likely to be true. For example,

But listen now to this word that I speak in your hearing and in the hearing of all the people. The prophets who preceded you and me from ancient times prophesied war, famine, and pestilence against many countries and great kingdoms. As for the prophet who prophesies peace, when the word of that prophet comes true, then it will be known that the LORD has truly sent the prophet. (Jer 28:7-9)

Does this not seem an odd set of criteria for distinguishing true from false? Apparently there was no need for a message from God in times of well-being, for that was the norm and the divine will for all people. But in times of crisis, of unfolding blunder and folly, divine messages of guidance were most needed for action in the crisis. As a result, prophetic messages proclaiming that all was well in the immediate situation (“peace”) were inherently suspect (cf. “‘peace, peace,’ when there is no

6. Also relevant are scenes in which otherwise true prophets delivered a false message or action in the name of God. For example, Nathan initially did so regarding David's plan to build a temple, and his error had to be corrected by a true message (2 Sam 8:1-17).

peace” in Jer 6:13-14).

One might wonder if religious leaders in all times and places who proclaim the divine will to use military force for national security or well-being are functionally operating in the mode of false prophecy. Is it a form of false prophecy to “make wrongful use of the name of the Lord” (traditionally, to “take God’s name in vain”; Exod 20:7; Deut 5:11)? Possibly yes, in that it refers to promoting a given action on grounds that it is desired or supported by God when in fact it violates the revealed will, or nature, or “name” of God. This might apply whether it refers to the later OT witness, or any other period since then.

E. Do Not Choose Death: It Did Not Work

For all practical purposes, the military option was the way of death.

Because you have trusted in your power
and in the multitude of your warriors,
therefore the tumult of war shall rise against your people,
and all your fortresses shall be destroyed,
as Shalman destroyed Beth-arbel on the day of battle
when mothers were dashed in pieces with their children. (Hos 10:13-14)

“Those who trust the military will perish by the military,” might have been a prophetic aphorism at the time. Certainly, this is a fundamental idea preserved in the witness. For example, Amos 6:1-3 offered a vivid object lesson to this effect from previously destroyed kingdoms. Isaiah 31:1-3 lamented the coming fate of a Southern Kingdom which trusted in the Egyptian chariot force instead of the Holy One of Israel (v. 1), because the helper and the ones receiving help “will all perish together” (v. 3).

In fact, the prophets were correct. The military defense option was indeed characterized by illusion, in view of the fact that it rarely worked despite the massive resources invested. A determined attacking army usually succeeded in the end. The fact that even the powerfully fortified cities of the Northern and Southern Kingdoms fell to attack and thus failed in their purpose is a matter of record in the archaeological remains.⁷ In

7. The remains of biblical Gezer, Megiddo, Hazor, Dan, Lachish, and Jerusalem, to cite a few examples, are dominated by massive perimeter walls, gate complexes and towers, grain storage silos, and systems for bringing the water source inside the walls. Nevertheless, they failed, again and again, as witnessed by the many layers of destruction at each site.

See, for example, Amihai Mazar, *Archaeology of the Land of the Bible, 10,000-586 B.C.E.*, Anchor Bible Reference Library (New York: Doubleday, 1990), chaps. 9-11, esp. chap. 11, 463-502; Zeev Herzog, “Settlement and Fortification Planning in the Iron Age,” in *The Architecture of Ancient Israel*, edited by Aharon Kempinski and Ronny Reich (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1990), 231-74; Yigal Shiloh, “Underground Water Systems in the Land of Israel in the Iron Age,” in the same volume, 275-93; Zeev Meshel, “The Architecture of the Israelite Fortresses in the Negev,” in the same volume, 294-301. Neighboring fortified cities of course suffered the same

addition, refusal to surrender caused even more harm and suffering, and therefore constituted the greater of two evils, in the process of resistance. This is vividly witnessed by the frequent and important linking of the terrible and devastatingly real sequence of “sword, famine, and pestilence” in the biblical world.⁸ For example,

Those who stay in this city shall die by the sword, by famine, and by pestilence; but those who go out and surrender to the Chaldeans who are besieging you shall live and shall have their lives as a prize of war. (Jer 21:9)

The sequential link was primarily causal. War destroyed the food supply (or it was consumed during siege), and also killed those who produced it, thereby causing famine for the unfortunate survivors.

War also left large numbers of unburied corpses, famine caused malnutrition with its consequent lowered resistance to disease, and siege conditions eventually generated an extreme lack of hygiene, thereby contributing to the conditions which promoted plague.⁹

It is important therefore to realize that both starvation and war were closely linked to pestilence, and it is no accident that the ancient Near Eastern gods of plague were gods of war as well. Words on paper can hardly convey the horror of such circumstances or the helplessness and vulnerability that people of the time experienced, whether they lived within the walls or outside.

fate. For example, Iron Age Bethsaida/Tzer, which was probably the capital of the kingdom of Geshur (located on the southern Golan between Aram and Israel), experienced catastrophic destruction at the hands of Tiglath-Pileser III (744-727) of Assyria in 732 BCE. (The writer has been privileged to work on this excavation since 1995. In June 2006 we continued to uncover the layer containing this very destruction, at the main gate complex and the causeway leading to it.) See Rami Arav, “Toward a Comprehensive History of Geshur,” in *Bethsaida: A City by the North Shore of the Sea of Galilee*, Bethsaida Excavations Project Reports and Contextual Studies, Vol. 3, edited by Rami Arav and Richard A. Freund (Kirksville: Truman State University Press), 14-15; John Green, “Tiglath-Pileser III’s War Against the City of Tzer,” in the same volume, 63-82.

8. Sixteen times in Jeremiah alone, e.g., 14:12; 21:7; 24:10; 27:8; also Deut 23:23-25; Ezek 6:11-12; 7:15; 14:21; Rev 6:8. Extra-biblical examples also abound, e.g., in the campaigns of King Ashurbanipal of Assyria (668-633 BCE): “Irra the Warrior (i.e., pestilence) struck down Uate, as well as his army, who had not kept the oaths sworn to me. . . .Famine broke out among them and they ate the flesh of their children,” in *Texts from Hammurabi to the Downfall of Assyria: Historical Documents*, trans. by A. Leo Oppenheim, *ANET*, 299-300, Col. ix; Biridiya, prince of Megiddo, c. 1350 BCE, reports on siege and famine in the city to his Egyptian overlord Akh-en-Aton, “. . .we are not able to go outside the gate in the presence of Lab’ayu, . . .Verily, the city is destroyed by death from pestilence and disease,” in *The Amarna Letters*, trans. by W. F. Albright and G. E. Mendenhall, *ANET*, 485, EA, No. 244.

9. N. Zilber and S. Kottek, “Pestilence in Bible and Talmud: Some Aspects Related to Public Health,” *Koroth* 9 (1985): 254.

F. Instead, Choose Life:

Trust, Repentance, Justice, and Enemy Well-Being

1. Trust God: an option based in faith. National security seemed so fragile precisely because the various human efforts to secure it usually failed. Were there no alternatives? There were, but they were difficult choices because they required giving up control.

One alternative was to trust God, submit to the foreign power, and pay tribute, in which case the invading armies did little harm. This option would avoid the terrible human costs of siege and total war. And so the prophet Jeremiah brought the word of the Lord to his king:

Bring your necks under the yoke of the king of Babylon, and serve him and his people, and live. Why should you and your people die by the sword, by famine, and by pestilence, as the LORD has spoken concerning any nation that will not serve the king of Babylon? Do not listen to the words of the prophets who are telling you not to serve the king of Babylon, for they are prophesying a lie to you. (Jer 27:12-14)

The value here was on human life rather than on ego, or on some ephemeral appeal to “freedom.” Also, by implication, the value was on re-allocating massive defense budgets and human resources from military use to the well-being of the general population. However, this option did not come naturally to people in power, for it had a certain cost in treasure, humility, and loss of face. Moreover, this response took no little faith or trust in God, no small commitment to obedience despite the cost. So it was easier said than done and rarely tried at all, whether in the biblical world or in any other place or time.

2. The road to security is repentance. Like Robert Frost, Hosea offered a final choice between two roads diverging on the yellow-brown deserts of the Middle East, and leading to two very different fates.

The words “way,” “road,” and “path” in the OT (as in Middle Eastern idiom to this day) often represented way of life, that is, habitual actions with attention to consequent moral status and ultimately to the fate or consequences to which these habitual actions lead (see, for a few examples, Pss 1:1, 6; 16:11; 119:35; Prov 2:18; 4:14, 18; 6:23; 7:27; 14:12; 16:25; Jer 21:8).

Background to this imagery is an important survival need in the desert, where taking the wrong path can be fatal because it

will not bring one to the next water source in time. Hence the Bedouin proverb, “The path is wiser than the one who walks upon it,” meaning the path was made by survivors who knew where they were going. So follow them. The same thought lies behind the pithy Bedouin proverb: “Shorter path, shorter life.” That is, do not get ideas about shortcuts—they tend to be fatal. The same symbolic usage occurs in the Qur’an, starting with the Bismillah, “Guide us on the right path” (Sura 1:5 and passim).

For Hosea, choice one of the two roads was destruction (chap. 13), not preventable by depending on military leaders or fortress cities (v. 10). Choice two was repentance for the idolatrous sin of trusting Assyria and military power:

Return, O Israel, to the LORD your God,
for you have stumbled because of your iniquity.
Take words with you
and return to the LORD;
say to him,
“Take away all guilt;
accept that which is good,
and we will offer
the fruit of our lips.
Assyria shall not save us;
we will not ride upon horses;
we will say no more, ‘Our God,’ to the work of our
hands.

In you the orphan finds mercy.” (Hos 14:1-3)

Remarkable for its humility, in contrast to the hubris of trusting military force, this proffered liturgy for repentance ends by identifying the nation as an orphan, an image of total dependence and vulnerability. The assured divine response, should Israel so repent, was not only healing and forgiveness (v. 4) but also a promise that God would make the nation flourish with well-being, which was surely the goal of the erroneous national security policy in the first place (vv. 5-7). The prophet then reminded his audience of the final choice between idolatry and trust (v. 8). The book ends with an editorial colophon of good advice: “Be smart: choose the right road” (v. 9).

That there might still be time to repent before it is too late was an emphatic part of the prophetic witness (e.g., Am 5:15; Isa 30:18; 55:6-8; Jer 3:11-14).

3. The road to security is social justice. Yet another variation on the theme of national security was the social justice prerequisite. As the Assyrian threat grew, Amos 5:4-15 proclaimed

The OT witness for the people of God
today expects us to work for an end to all
war. Such a hope and expectation shines
like a clear light across a darkened
global community in bondage to conflict
of every kind. It illuminates the path for
this difficult, yet required, and utterly
worthwhile journey.

that the nation would survive if, and only if, it would establish or reestablish social justice.

Isaiah 1:27-28 brought the unwelcome message that Zion would be redeemed or rescued, rather than destroyed, by engaging in social justice, repentance, and right actions. Again, the presence of social justice would produce “peace,” that is, overall security and well-being (32:16-18).

Jeremiah carried this message all the way. Even in the endgame, with Jerusalem under siege by Babylon, Jeremiah was adamant on this point. Instead of a message like “a miracle is coming” (as requested by King Zedekiah; Jer 21:1-3), he proclaimed this word from the Lord:

Execute [social] justice in the morning,
and deliver from the hand of the oppressor
anyone who has been robbed,
or else . . . (Jer 21:12)

Unfortunately, his audience did not heed his words, and the “or else” is what happened.

4. Seek the well-being of your enemy. Incredibly, the message of Jeremiah about the well-being of his own people included the well-being of the enemy:

But seek the welfare of the [enemy] city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the LORD on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare. For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Do not let the prophets and the diviners who are among you deceive you, and do not listen to the dreams that they dream, for it is a lie that they are prophesying to you in my name; I did not send them, says the LORD. (Jer 29:7-14)

Understandably, this message encountered opposition from false prophets, because it would seem to run counter to human nature. Nonetheless, the message stands, and with a practical element implied: working for the well-being of the enemy is ultimately a win-win situation. Moreover, given that “love” in the Bible primarily means commitment, especially to the well-being of its object, the message of Jeremiah sounds suspiciously like “Love your enemies.” The later giver of that message also worked in the prophetic tradition, as we are about to see.

IV. JESUS IN THE PROPHETIC TRADITION

The Gospels seem to portray Jesus of Nazareth as working self-consciously in the prophetic tradition. For example, “Do not resist [or fight back against]¹⁰ an evildoer” (Matt 5:39), would seem to echo Jeremiah’s message, “Do not fight—just submit” (Jer 21:8-9; 27:12-14). And again, “love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you” (Matt 5:44) sounds much like Jeremiah’s “seek the welfare of the [enemy] city . . . and pray to the Lord on its behalf” (Jer 29:7). Also, “all who take the sword will perish by the sword” (Matt 26:52) sounds simi-

lar to the theme of “those who trust the military will perish by military force,” found in Hosea 10:13-14, Amos 6:1-3, and Isaiah 31:1-3, as outlined above.

Jesus’ awareness of working in the prophetic tradition is indicated by the way he includes this as an aspect of his own mission: “Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfill” (Matthew 5:17). “Fulfill” means to finish, or bring to completion, what they had started. So the teaching of Jesus in these matters might not be entirely in the form of radical new ideas. To some extent it represented the divine will already revealed through the prophets and now reiterated and reinforced with the expectation that it should be obeyed. In short, some of the apparently more radical teachings of Jesus about nonviolence were not all that new or radical except insofar as he apparently insisted that these ideas were required by the new community of God’s people and were to be carried into action. In addition, first century examples of Jewish nonviolent resistance to Rome were available as actual models, so the teaching of Jesus was not far-fetched even at the time.¹¹

Like Isaiah and Jeremiah, Jesus apparently applied the doctrine of nonviolence to Jerusalem in its own political situation in his day. Having just declined the Maccabean option of leading an armed revolt (Luke 19:35-40), he went on to predict, with eminently practical realism, that such a revolt would constitute a catastrophic blunder:

As he came near and saw the city, he wept over it, saying, “If you, even you, had only recognized on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. Indeed, the days will come upon you, when your enemies will set up ramparts around you and surround you, and hem you in on every side. They will crush you to the ground, you and your children within you, and they will not leave within you one stone upon another; because you did not recognize the time of your visitation from God.” (Luke 19:41-44)

“You seem blind to the realities,” might be a way to paraphrase part of that message in its political context. “You simply do not realize what makes for well-being. Trying to create well-being by military force will only lead to destruction by such force.”

As things turned out, Jesus of Nazareth was right, as the Great Revolt (66-71 CE) and the Bar Kochba Revolt (132-135 CE) showed, though one cannot blame the rebels for trying. After all, the Maccabean Revolt (165-134 BCE) had seemed to “work,” at least initially, in that it did succeed in throwing off foreign rule and establishing an independent Jewish state for a time. Like Martin Luther King, Jr., but in reverse, many of Je-

10. Walter Wink, *Engaging the Powers: Discernment and Resistance in a World of Domination* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992), 185.

11. E.g., Judas the Galilean and tax resistance in 6 CE (*Wars* 2.118; *Ant* 18.3-9, 23-25); Pontius Pilatus and the Roman standards in 26 CE (*Wars* 2.9; *Ant* 18.3); general strike in 36-37 CE, with support from the Syrian Legate Petronius, against Caligula’s demand that he be worshipped (*Wars* 2.10; *Ant* 18.8).

sus' contemporaries had a dream: "We did it once, we'll do it again." But the dream became a nightmare of brutal suppression, slaughter, and the Diaspora. "Lived by force, perished by force" could have been the epitaph on that terrible sequence and its consequences.¹²

The OT witness to the nonviolent option, reiterated and reinforced by Jesus of Nazareth, might actually make sense in a world of global conflict. In closing comments on the Sermon on the Mount, which included uncompromising emphasis on the nonviolent option (Matt 5:44), Jesus emphasized the importance of acting on those words:

Everyone then who hears these words of mine and *acts on them* will be like a wise man . . . (Matt 7:24; emphasis mine)

"Be smart!" said Jesus, echoing the colophon to Hosea. "Implement the way of the new community. In doing so you will choose life." Or to paraphrase: "I am the way . . . live like me, doing what I say and do. That is the road to life" (cf. John 14:6).

V. THE NEW COMMUNITY IN PROPHETIC THOUGHT

A. A New Way of Life

What if the OT witness were serious and literal about expecting the people of God to implement immediately ideas like "no more war"? Would that not bring significant bearing on the matter of Justified War for the people of God today? I think this is exactly what we find.

The latest or final OT witness to the divine will contains prophetic calls for a new community, a new people of God, and in fact a new order of things among the nations. These oracles constitute a group of passages which together convey a cluster of themes and emphases not found previously in such concentration in the OT witness. It's a different atmosphere in these passages; in fact, it feels like a whole new world.¹³

As a result, these passages seem worthy of treatment as a new development in that witness, and this is an idea I want to present for consideration now. The primary texts include Isa 65:17-25; 11:1-9; 9:1-7; 42:1-9; 61:1-4; 2:2-4; Mic 4:1-5; Jer 31:31-34; cf. Zech 9:9-10. The main features of this new com-

munity are as follows:

1. Divine initiative. The new community is God's idea and initiative, not a humanly conceived Utopia (*passim*).

2. Something new. Creation of this new community is described as a new initiative, like a new creation, or a new heavens and earth (e.g., Isa 65:11-18; 42:5, 9; 43:18-19; 48:6-8; Jer 31:31-34). In fact, the Isaiah collection explodes with newness; about half the OT references to creation outside Genesis are in Isaiah (15 out of 31). This discourse also cautions against clinging to the earlier terms of divine expectation (e.g., Isa 65:17; 42:9; 43:18; Jer 31:32). One can make an instructive list of the contrasts between "earlier" and "new," that is, between the themes which characterize earlier prophetic oracles and those which describe the new community.¹⁴

3. Different kind of covenant. The new relationship between God and humankind is described in one place as a "new covenant," which seems to imply that Mt. Sinai has been somehow changed or replaced (Jer 31:31-34). The changed covenant now functions as a "light to the nations" (Isa 42:6), whether that covenant refers to the new community (so *NJPS*) or even the new leader himself (so apparently *NRSV*).¹⁵

4. New ruler, new methods. The new community is led by a new kind of ruler, a chosen and anointed one, a servant (e.g., Isa 42:1-7), using a new kind of leadership method:

a. with emphasis on teaching, thinking, knowing, understanding, counsel, instruction, and persuasion, in contrast

14. For example, some of the contrasts can be illustrated by comparing Jeremiah 22:1-9 (earlier style) to Isaiah 42:1-9 (newer style):

1. Earlier: Absolute standards from the past (Mt. Sinai Covenant), requiring sanctions if violated (Jer 22:5-8). New: New standards for conduct (Isa 42:7).

2. Earlier: "Shape up, or else," with retributive justice for contract violation (Jer 22:4-7). New: Virtually absent, or restorative justice (including between God and the nations), or "remember sin no more" (Isa 42:1-4).

3. Earlier: Obey the covenant, or else. That is, you are on your own to do it, and you will suffer consequences from God if you fail (Jer 22:5-9). New: Divine help is offered and available—the Spirit of God (Isa 42:1, 5).

4. Earlier: Human leadership (mainly the kings), mostly failing a mission impossible, yet held accountable (Jer 22:1-9). New: A form of divinely-endowed leadership, capable of leading by teaching or example (Isa 42:1-4).

5. Earlier: Still trying to make a failed system work, right up to the Exile (Jer 22:1-9). For an example beyond the Exile in the Return, see Ezra's attempt to divorce and expel non-Israelite wives (Ezra 9-10) based on a strict interpretation of Lev 18:24-30 and Deut 7:3-4, with the gratuitous insertion of a hardline clause, "and never seek their peace or prosperity" (Ezra 9:12); this in turn was criticized by the prophet Malachi on grounds that these divorces amounted to violence (Mal 2:13-16). New: Moving on to a new system, as if in a new creation (Isa 42:9).

15. Lit. "covenants of a people"; the meaning of the Hebrew is unclear to me at this point.

12. I had the privilege of working with the Cave of Letters excavation team from 1998 to 2000. The cave is believed to contain the material remains and some of the skeletons of some final survivors and their families of the Bar Kochba Revolt. One vivid memory for me in the 2000 season is excavating the skeletons of men, women, and children in a subcave, the Niche of Skulls, employed as a burial place for those unfortunate individuals. (The 2000 season preliminary report by Carl Savage is available at <http://users.drew.edu/csavage/cavereport.pdf>.)

13. Paul Hansen goes part way in a similar direction, but develops the implications somewhat differently in a very thoughtful and constructive manner in terms of shalom versus chaos, in "War and Peace in the Hebrew Bible," in *Interpretation* 38 (1984): 352-59.

to coercive force, such as military power (e.g., Isa 11:2, 4; 2:3; 42:2-4);

b. with the result that this kind of leader will cause no harm (Isa 42:2-3).

5. Social justice. Justice is mainly social, i.e., caring for all, rather than juridical or punishment-oriented (e.g., Isa 42:3-4).

6. Restorative justice. Justice for dealing with wrong actions is more restorative, while retributive justice is virtually absent (e.g., Isa 2:4; 11:3; cf. 61:1-2).

7. No more war. The new community neither engages in warfare nor prepares for it, and in fact it envisions converting a militarized economy to food production (e.g., Isa 2:4; Mic 4:3; Isa 9:5; Zech 9:10).

8. No more conflict. Conflict is absent even from nature, which is no longer red in tooth and claw. Predators and former prey sleep together; carnivores turn into herbivores; lambs and toddlers are safe (e.g., Isa 65:22-25; 11:6-8). Almost certainly this language is hyperbolic and symbolic, intending to convey the idea of no more conflict among humans.¹⁶

9. Extent: whole earth. All peoples and nations are invited or expected to join (Isa 2:2; 11:8; 42:1, 4; Zech 9:10). Jerusalem and Mt. Zion are only rarely mentioned, and seem to be symbols for the new people of God, rather than the literal Judahite capital (Isa 2:2-3; 65:25).¹⁷

16. Biblical and Middle Eastern idiom carries a literary tradition of representing powerful and warlike aggressors as lions or other powerful animals. For lions, see, e.g., Pss 10:9; 35:17; 57:4; Isa 5:29; Jer 2:15; 5:6; 50:17; Joel 1:6.

17. Still needed is a study on the role of the temple in the new community. On the whole it seems absent, or at least its normal use receives little mention. The “mountain of the Lord’s house” in Isa 2:2 is symbolic, not literal, in its Everest-like description as “the highest of the mountains.” The house and holy mountain in Isaiah 56:5-7 and 66:1 are unclear in various aspects. The holy mountain in Isaiah 66:20 is an object of international pilgrimage; Isaiah 66:20 describes people from all nations arriving there “as an offering to the Lord” in symbolic language reminiscent of Romans 12:1-2. On the one hand, this absence of the temple may seem a surprise in view of the stress laid on rebuilding the temple in some post-Exilic texts like Ezra-Nehemiah, Haggai, Zechariah 1-9, and Malachi. On the other hand, this absence may come as no surprise in view of Jeremiah’s temple sermon (Jer 7:1-15; 26:4-6), and also in view of the international character of the new community (Isa 2:2; 11:8; 19:23-25; 42:1, 4; Zech 9:10). One almost gets an impression that the usefulness of the temple, which was not God’s idea to begin with, had pretty much played out or at least was no longer a priority in the divine planning and activity. Malachi’s poignant wish, “Oh, that someone among you would shut the temple doors . . .” (Mal 1:10) would seem to indicate considerable disenchantment with the rebuilt temple in practice. What about the elaborate plan for building a temple in Ezekiel 40-48? As Stephen Cook points out, “This section of Ezekiel does not prophecy a literal future for the Temple; rather, it offers a Temple plan as an embodiment of the community’s values. Though it has never actually been built, Ezekiel’s ‘literary temple’ has proved more enduring than the physical temples of both

10. Inclusive faith basis.

a. Membership and activity are strongly faith-based rather than based on mere human initiative and resources (*passim*).

b. Worship and other relationships to God seem primarily nonsectarian and nonexclusive, rather than requiring specific adherence to a central religion (e.g., Isa 19:23-25). In fact, forming a new international people of God apparently calls for a new hymnal.¹⁸

11. Implementation: divine-human partnership.

Whose job is this? Implementation is described as a partnership, a combination of two things:

a. Divine initiative and power (*passim*).

b. The new people of God contributing willing hands, rather than sitting back and waiting to let God do it some day (Isa 2:3).

12. Spirit of God. A special initiator, and indeed a considerable force for change and implementation, is the Spirit of God, active and powerful in making things happen or empowering the people of God to carry out the new mandate (Isa 11:2; 42:1, 5; 61:1; cf. Joel 2:28-29, quoted in Acts 2).

13. Time frame: now. The new community is expected to get busy on this considerable agenda in the present, rather than waiting for a special future, eschatological era (Isa 42:6).

B. Future or Present?

When is all this supposed to happen? Apparently the actions and values of this new community are to be implemented immediately. Still, the indicators for a time frame need a careful look. We might begin with a point on Hebrew grammar, namely our understanding of the certitude perfect verb aspect, both in general and in these passages. The certitude perfect employs the perfect verb aspect (which normally denotes a completed action) to represent something which is actually in the future as so certain that it can be described *as if* already accomplished. Certitude perfects are used in large numbers in these new community passages (e.g., for “judge” and “decide” in Isa 11:4).

But when? How soon? The “prophetic perfect,” which was the name for this verb aspect in the old Hebrew grammars, was considered to imply a time frame in the distant, eschatological future. But this was based more on theological interpretation than syntactical evidence. Virtually every verifiable instance of the certitude perfect refers to the very near or imminent future, such as the three verbs in Numbers 17:12:

his predecessors and his successors” (“Ezekiel,” in *The New Oxford Annotated Bible*, ed. by Michael D. Coogan, 3rd ed. [Oxford: Oxford University Press], 1238). This exilic idea of a temple plan “as an embodiment of the community’s values” would align closely with the values of the new community.

18. Compare the “new songs” in Pss 33; 40; 96; 98. Do any of the new songs supersede previous, war-like hymns like the Song of the Sea? For example, Psalm 98 looks like a reinterpretation of Exodus 15. We need a study on “Psalms and Songs for the New Community in the Later OT Witness.”

“The Israelites said to Moses, ‘We are perishing; we are lost, all of us are lost!’”¹⁹

In reality, there is nothing peculiar about this, because we use it in daily life. For example, a colleague points out that we commonly use this grammar without realizing it when ordering food.²⁰ “A waitress uses the certitude perfect all the time. After receiving lunch orders, she repeats to each person at the table, ‘You had the chicken Caesar; and you had the cheeseburger. You had the beef quesadilla.’ Now, she says this as if we had already eaten but before the cook even knows about the order. Restaurants may sometimes be slow, but if this use of the perfect tense were referring to millennia, we’d all be dust by the time the order was (ful)filled. In the OT use of the certitude perfect, God orders a new kind of community where the inhabitants are to feast upon peace, justice, and mercy, and God expects imminent (ful)fillment of that order, just as we do in a restaurant.” In short, the time frame in both cases, whether biblical witness or restaurant discourse, is not the distant but rather the very near future—a virtual now.

Along these lines, Isaiah 42:9 proclaims that earlier things are finished and something new is about to happen *now*:

See, the former things have come to pass,
and new things I now declare;
before they spring forth,
I tell you of them. (Isa 42:9)

The question, of course, is what exactly are these new things? Verses 6-7 give a list:

I am the LORD, I have called you in righteousness,
I have taken you by the hand and kept you;
I have given you as a covenant to the people,
a light to the nations,
to open the eyes that are blind,
to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon,
from the prison those who sit in darkness.
(Isa 42:6-7)

The list includes a call from God regarding right actions, with divine leading and protection, to keep some kind of commitment (covenant) which will bring light to the darkened international world and liberate people from bondage.

The implication is that God expects these actions now, in the present, without further delay or ado. That expectation would apply to the entire list of features of the new community, including no more war.²¹

19. See already GKC 106n for a *perfectum confidentiae* “to express facts which are undoubtedly imminent.” It goes on to state, “This use of the perfect occurs most frequently in prophetic language (*perfectum propheticum*).”

20. Sharon Baker, email communication of Oct 22, 2006.

21. Here going farther than, e.g., Marvin Tate, who arrives at this door but stops at the threshold: “Our mission is clear. We are to move toward the vision of justice and peace which the Divine War-

VI. JUSTIFIED WAR AND THE OLD TESTAMENT WITNESS FOR TODAY

By way of summary, this piece offers the following take on the nature of the OT witness regarding Justified War for the people of God today.

A usable OT hermeneutic begins by looking where the OT points, and going on that journey, following the divine leading to the creation of a new community, a new people of God, proclaimed especially in a group of passages in Second Isaiah and in other, related, prophetic witness. The NT witness points in the same direction, that is, to that same later, normative OT witness.

That the later OT witness takes priority over the earlier has hermeneutical implications for the church today. We should ascertain whether anything in the OT which is described as commanded or approved or worked with by God in the past has later been changed. A list of things so changed or left behind might include sacrifices and offerings, kingship, temple, Jerusalem, the Sinai covenant, earlier prophetic oracles using the Sinai covenant as a criterion, promised land, chosen people (in the exclusive sense for salvific purpose), and warfare of every type.

This hermeneutical journey passes through some important transitional territory, namely, the prophetic critique of militarism which does not altogether prohibit warfare but which seriously undermines both the ethics and the practicality of the enterprise. This in turn prepares the way for the “no more war” requirement laid upon the new people of God in the later OT witness.

As a result, the OT witness implicitly deals with Justified War by expecting the people of God to dispense with warfare entirely—to end the types of actions and attitudes which can lead to warfare or support it—and to live in an entirely different way. In other words, the OT witness on the subject of Justified War can be summarized in two words: “No more.”

What then of the “light to the nations” which is part of our original assignment? Indulging in a slightly procrustean method, I might imagine the following, based on none other than one of the foundational descriptions of the new community and its leadership, Isaiah 42:

I am the LORD, I have called you in righteousness,
I have taken you by the hand and kept you;
I have given you as a covenant to the people,
a light to the nations. (Isa 42:6)

Here “you” is the new community called into being by God, and the “light to the nations” is labeled a covenant, a binding agreement.

While the full terms of that covenant are not spelled out in this passage, they are immediately linked to opening blind eyes and to liberating prisoners from bondage (Isa 42:7). But in fact they are linked in context to the entire work of the new servant leader of the new community, who will give birth to interna-

rior has given to his people. . . .” (“War and Peacemaking,” 595). I would say not merely “move toward” but go all the way.

tional justice and hurt no one in the process (vv. 1-4).

Bringing about international justice without hurting anyone in the process would require the virtual absence of war, and also the conversion of the current global military economy into something more productive and less harmful. This would be new indeed. So the new status of these features is here summarized as the “new things I now declare,” in contrast to the “former things” which have passed (Isa 42:9).

Nor is this the only place in the OT bringing such good news. Isaiah 49:6 links this “light to the nations” with worldwide rescue or deliverance, an apt description of the release from bondage to militarism which the world would experience. Isaiah 51:4 identifies this “light to the peoples” as divine teaching and justice. The thought is quoted as mandatory for the new people of God in Acts 13:47 where the writer identifies “you” as “us”: “For so the Lord has commanded us, saying, ‘I have set you to be a light for the Gentiles, so that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth.’”

In larger summary and conclusion, the OT witness for the people of God today expects us to work for an end to all war. Such a hope and expectation shines like a clear light across a darkened global community in bondage to conflict of every kind. It illuminates the path for this difficult, yet required, and utterly worthwhile journey.

The two roads still lie before us, the easy and the hard, lead-

ing to destruction or to life:

“. . . the road is easy that leads to destruction, and there are many who take it. . . . [but] the road is hard that leads to life, and there are few who find it.” (Matt 7:13-14)

Obviously this observation is still true. However, a natural and serious question to ask is: “Can nonviolent alternatives work?” As a matter of fact—literal fact—the answer is a simple “Yes.” That option works far more often²² than many people realize, though not always. But this is the option on which to focus. “Where there’s a will, there’s a way”—the path of obedience and the road to success in ending war. But where there is no will there is no way, no road to success, but only a path to barren death. The choice is ours, and I vote for choosing life.

22. For useful and informative surveys of successful nonviolent resolution to major conflicts, see, for example, Walter Wink, *Engaging the Powers: Discernment and Resistance in a World of Domination* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992), chap. 13; Daniel L. Buttry, *Christian Peacemaking: From Heritage to Hope* (Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1994), chaps. 3-4.

In contrast, for the record of failure by the Justified War doctrine to limit or prevent warfare, and the tendency of that doctrine functionally to promote or support war instead, see Michael K. Duffy, *Peacemaking Christians: The Future of Just Wars, Pacifism, and Nonviolent Resistance* (Kansas City: Sheed & Ward, 1995), chap. 5.

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An Interview with George Hunsinger

George Hunsinger is the Hazel Thompson McCord Professor of Systematic Theology at Princeton Theological Seminary. He also serves on the board of the Coalition for Peace Action and is the founder both of Church Folks for a Better America and the National Religious Campaign Against Torture (NRCAT). On September 23, the Princeton Theological Review's own W. Travis McMaken sat down with Professor Hunsinger to ask him some questions about his work and other issues related to the theme of "Theology and Global Conflict."

PTR: Professor Hunsinger, thank you for taking time out of your busy schedule for this interview. Both as an academic theologian and as a committed political activist, you are perfectly situated to address the topic of "Theology and Global Conflict." What can you tell our readers about your various political initiatives?

Hunsinger: I'm not sure quite where I'm going with Church Folks for a Better America. It's on the back burner at the moment. It was a kind of stepping-stone into what became the National Religious Campaign Against Torture. While I got some project money for Church Folks, I didn't ever get any seed money to build an organization. I wanted to find an executive director, because I just couldn't do it all on my own. With the National Religious Campaign Against Torture, everybody who is making the organization work is doing it as a second full-time job, including me, but we can't go on this way indefinitely. We need to find a major donor, which we are working on. I was pretty close to burnout in June and I'm getting back to that point now. We have our work cut out for us as far as funding goes, and this very week is a crucial one for torture and human rights.

PTR: Why is that?

Hunsinger: Well, there is a bill before congress that the administration is trying to rush through, called the Military Commissions Act, but which conservative columnist Andrew Sullivan calls the "Legalizing Tyranny Act." There is actually no real rush. It's all for political reasons related to the upcoming election. As Jay Leno remarked, "President Bush said the United States is still under the threat of attack and will continue to be right up until Election Day." Senators McCain, Graham, and Warner were holding out for a better bill, but a compromise was struck and what is in the compromise is very dismaying. So,

my colleagues and I are doing everything we can to mobilize a religious voice on Capitol Hill.

PTR: How did your concern over the issue of torture develop and how did the National Religious Campaign Against Torture come into existence?

Hunsinger: I recently purchased a copy of Life Magazine from July 17, 1970. I had tried to find an article online that I remembered reading years ago. This issue had the famous photo essay on the "Tiger Cages" in Vietnam. As a result of that exposé, investigations were begun in Congress. There was the 'Pike Commission' led by Otis Pike in the House, and the 'Church Commission' led by Frank Church in the Senate. That was really the first time that I became aware of torture as being sponsored and condoned by our own government. This was back when I was in seminary. I've been asking myself, "What did I know and when did I know it?" That was the first time, I think, that I was ever confronted with the awareness that this was not something that the United States government was avoiding.

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in the years since Vietnam.

The US government has a mixed record, and of course the government is a complex institution. Until quite recently it has had a strong reputation for upholding human rights. The State Department issues a human rights report every year and condemns countries that practice torture on an administrative basis. But now it is becoming

clearer that other parts of our government - especially the intelligence services and the CIA, and more recently the "independent contractors" who engage in interrogations in places like Afghanistan and Iraq at the behest of the CIA - have a long history of practicing torture and training in torture.

The CIA trained the intelligence services in Iran under the Shah, called SAVAK. The intelligence services in the Philippines, in Chile, South Korea, Pakistan and in other places, all of them known for torture, had ties with the CIA. There exists this whole intelligence network, this underworld, this netherworld. Right now, for example, some of the independent contractors in Iraq are hiring former interrogators from countries like South Africa and Chile. Apparently, they know how to find each other.

It's quite dismaying and troubling that our government would be resorting to these kinds of practices. With the new compromises that have just been struck between the three Republican senators and the President, a loophole has been created for the CIA once again. In its statement, which I essen-

tially wrote, the National Religious Campaign Against Torture calls for America to “abolish torture now - without exceptions.” That’s the final sentence. Up until quite recently that seemed like a shocking statement, because who would think to accuse the government of making loopholes? But, it’s no secret now. The same is true about the matter of secret prisons. When Dana Priest of the Washington Post broke that story, she was vilified for publishing it, because she was supposedly endangering American efforts to make the country secure from terrorism.¹ The US wouldn’t even admit that there were such prisons. But now the President has openly admitted it. That’s the pattern over the years: these things are denied, and denied, and denied, and finally it comes out – usually long after the fact so that nobody pays much attention anymore. If you care about these things you can learn to find sources of information that tell you about it when it’s current and not ten or fifteen years later.

PTR: What are one or two of those alternate news sources that you use and would recommend to others who may be interested?

Hunsinger: Through my recent work I’ve come into increasing contact with people in human rights organizations. Human Rights First has been very important for me.² These are very inspiring people to know and be around. Torture is such a depressing topic, and it is encouraging to me to have seen the dedication of such fine, thoughtful, and grounded human beings. I’ve met distinguished human rights lawyers like Scott Horton in New York City, who has a lot of inside information.

But of things that might be more available to ordinary people, I could mention a website that is run by a professor at Yale Law School. His name is Jack Balkin. He runs a website³ and has some of the top international lawyers and human rights experts in the country writing for him. Marty Lederman, especially right now, who is at the Georgetown Law Center, writes outstanding analyses every day. I noticed that one of his articles about this compromise bill was dated at something like 4:37 AM. This guy was sitting up all night, and he said that he only had a chance to read the 94 page document twice and that he

1. Cf. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/11/01/AR2005110101644.html>

2. <http://www.humanrightsfirst.org>

3. Cf. <http://balkin.blogspot.com/>

hadn’t fully made up his mind. These are careful people.

There really are credible sources of information out there. The Internet makes research and keeping up to date much easier than it used to be. There is a lot out there now on the Internet – quality stuff. Bloggers get trashed in the mainstream media, and maybe rightly so, but it’s a very complex and very diverse set of materials that are out there. And when you’ve got a Yale law professor posting his views, and other distinguished law professors from all over the country, you can count on this being quality material.

On another note, there is a website called Democracy Now!⁴ that gives an alternative version of the news. It is run by Amy Goodman, for whom I have a lot of respect. She covers topics that are often neglected and has a critical perspective that we don’t

often find. American politics right now is dominated by the far-right and the center-right. We don’t have a progressive political party or a progressive political voice that gets much credence or that has much access to the American people. Looking for that missing progressive voice in sources like Amy Goodman and Democracy Now! seems important.

We’re somewhat unusual in that regard in the United States. Our media over the years have increasingly fallen under corporate control. There has been a dumbing down of the news too. It’s moving much more in a tabloid direction. I really see this in what has happened over the years to CBS. Back in the days of Edward R. Murrow and Walter Cronkite, it was a really different matter. When I listen to CBS news on the radio, mainly to get traffic and weather, there is always some sensationalist story about a rape or a child who has been murdered or some other gore. There is a place for something like that, but now it’s always in your face. You’re getting that kind of thing all the time - there’s nothing like a good sex scandal - and if you wanted to find out how many civilians have died in the Iraq war, you could listen to CBS news 24 hours a day 7 days a week 365 days a year and you would never find out. You have to look for alternative sources.

It used to be that the right had the wallet and the left had the pen, but then the right figured out that if you had the wallet you could buy the pen. That has really happened in the years since Vietnam. The political right has massively funded all these major new think tanks, like the American Enterprise Institute. Then these people write articles, and they get interviewed on television. We’ve seen an increasing amplification of voices on

4. Cf. <http://www.democracynow.org/>

I would say that at this point the National Religious Campaign Against Torture is unprecedented in its religious diversity. There has never been a religious movement of this kind before in American history. We have major Roman Catholic voices, we have Jews, we have Muslims, we have evangelicals and peace church people and mainline Protestants. That’s a pretty amazing mix!

the right and an increasing marginalization of anything beyond the center right, which passes these days as liberal. The myth of the “liberal media” is part of what the propaganda machine spews out, especially on the more vicious radio talk shows.

It’s also interesting that in that 1970 issue of Life Magazine that I bought there is also an article about a family that moved to Canada because they were disillusioned with the United States and its Vietnam policy. These kinds of stories are out there for the American people to some degree, but the propaganda system always manages somehow to recover its equilibrium. It’s as if these stories don’t stick somehow - it’s like Teflon or something, it doesn’t stick, it doesn’t take.

I know people have their own problems and their daily lives. How much attention are they going to pay to political issues that don’t seem to affect them directly? But it deserves attention when it’s a matter of bombing civilians or torture or horrendous activities like overthrowing governments in the name of democracy and establishing a brutal dictator like Pinochet over against Allende, who was a democratic socialist. He was smeared as a communist and a threat to the hemisphere. He was murdered in the Pinochet coup, with the collusion of the CIA.

I can’t remember the name of the archbishop of Santiago, but I read a book about this once. His deepest regret in life is that he didn’t excommunicate Pinochet. That’s another thing we have to think about. It’s not just America and American Christians. Christianity is an international community. There’s actually a book written by Latin American evangelicals against the war in Iraq: *Terrorism and the War in Iraq: A Christian Word from Latin America*, Ediciones Kairos (2004) by Rene Padilla and Lindy Scott. In similar church circles in our country this kind of stance would be unheard of.

PTR: If we could return again to the National Religious Campaign Against Torture, what can you tell us about the make-up of this group? Is it primarily a Protestant group of people? Is it even primarily a Christian group of people? Could we understand it as some kind of new political ecumenism?

Hunsinger: It’s a very young organization. It’s about nine months old. Everything has to be taken in the frame of, “Let’s wait and see.” I started trying to raise money for a conference on “Theology, International Law, and Torture” in the summer of 2005, and I got \$10,000 right away. That kept me going, but then I didn’t get anything else. Finally, a donor that I was counting on came through for me at the last possible moment in early November. I was locked into the Martin Luther King weekend dates of January 2006 because it was the only time free when Princeton Seminary facilities could be used. So the conference had to be organized at breakneck speed.

It started out as a project of Church Folks for a Better America. I had contact with Human Rights First in New York and they were willing to help me. They said that at some point I might want to reach out to Rabbis for Human Rights. Well, I had a lot to do, it was on my mind but it wasn’t at the top of my list. So, I’m trying to think of who we could get at such short notice to be speakers on the program, and Rabbis for Human Rights found out about it and wanted to be part of it. They started helping us organize and they pitched in with some money. Now all of a sudden I have to find a way that they can have Shabbat services during the conference.

And then the Islamic Society of North America finds out about it and because the topic was important to them they were interested in having some speakers at the conference. So, I have to figure out how to schedule Muslim prayers into the conference.

The conference schedule didn’t look the same from one day to the next for about the last five weeks as I was juggling these things around. We also made a big outreach to evangelicals. We had a number of very prominent evangelicals speaking at the conference, including David Gushee. His front-page cover story for the February 2006 issue of Christianity Today called “Five Reasons Why Torture Is Always Wrong” was already written at the time of the conference.⁵ NRCAT is

making a special effort to include evangelicals and make them feel comfortable. We want them to be a part of this movement.

I would say that at this point the National Religious Campaign Against Torture is unprecedented in its religious diversity. There has never been a religious movement of this kind before in American history. We have major Roman Catholic voices, we have Jews, we have Muslims, and we have evangelicals and peace church people and mainline Protestants. That’s a pretty amazing mix! We’re not trying to work it out at the level of beliefs and theology. Everyone comes to the table out of their own tradition.

At the January conference, for example, before the meals I would just have a moment of silence. I did not try to construct some kind of generic religious prayer. Some conference members said to me, “Can’t you do more than just have silence?” And I said, “Well, I don’t believe in lowest common denominator ecumenism.” In fact, I don’t believe in “inter-religious” services – partly because I don’t think that they are truly inter-religious. There is almost always some sort of Protestant grid that’s being imposed. At a place where there might be a Scripture reading, they might let a Buddhist beat a drum, but that isn’t how a Buddhist would set it up. That’s not ecumenism to me. If the Buddhists are going to have their worship and others are welcome, fine, but trying to force them into a basically Christian mold seems dubious. Even when it’s done with all

5. <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2006/002/23.32.html>

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the goodwill in the world, there is still something imperialistic about it to me.

NRCAT has a commitment across the board to try to end torture and related abuses by our government without exceptions, without any loopholes – including loopholes for the intelligence services. We believe that torture is morally wrong and we believe that it is also counterproductive. Even from the standpoint of patriotism and caring about national security, we believe – as many people believe – that torture only makes matters worse. There are a lot of people who see it that way. We have something like 54 different organizations at all different levels, from local congregations to the National Council of Churches to the Islamic Society of North America. We’re still hoping for the US Conference of Catholic Bishops. They’re a little harder to get on board, but our commitments are the same as theirs and there are promising signs there. It’s a very diverse group, and the peg that holds it together is a very basic concern for human dignity and for faithfulness to God – however God is understood – in not wanting to do anything that makes it possible for our government to resort to torture or cruel, inhumane and degrading treatment.

One of the things that make the current administration so extreme is that they have tried to sever the definition of torture from the idea of cruel, inhumane and degrading treatment. In international law, such as the Geneva Conventions or the UN Declaration on Human Rights, torture is linked in an ironclad way with cruel, inhumane and degrading treatment. If you snap off cruel, inhumane and degrading treatment and then narrow the definition of “torture,” in effect you’ve kept the word but changed the dictionary. Torture by any other name is still torture.

When the President says, “We do not torture,” he doesn’t mean what ordinary people mean or what international law means or even what some of our domestic law means. In recent discussion it has been a question of whether water-boarding is still torture. It is shocking to have to discuss such things. Water-boarding is simulated drowning. This is a technique that our government has admitted using in recent times, and for a while they were trying to say that it was excluded from the definition of torture. I found a woodcut from the 16th century that shows water-boarding and carved into the woodcut at the bottom it says, “The Water Torture.” In the 16th century they knew how to call things by their proper names. There was none of this

legal maneuvering to try to get around it.

So, there’s water-boarding. There’s also induced hypothermia. This actually happens. It’s gut-wrenching to read about. They strip people naked and put them in these cold cells and pour water on them to get their body temperature down just above the point where they would die. And they have doctors on hand who use rectal thermometers to take the victim’s temperature, and get the person warmed up so that they can put the victim through the same process all over again. That is still allowed under the new so-called compromise. Induced hypothermia is allowed. Subjecting people to sleep deprivation and what’s called ‘long-time standing,’ where for days people are chained to single positions, or that famous iconic picture from Abu Ghraib of the man standing there with a hood over his head and his arms stretched out with wires coming down. That posture is called “The Vietnam.” That’s the name for it in the CIA. It’s called The Vietnam, and it wasn’t invented in Abu Ghraib. There is a long history here.

The word “Torture-Lite” that has gained currency in recent journalism is really an obscene term. Studies have shown that “no-touch” torture in the form of sensory deprivation, which is what the hood represents, and having your arms extended or immobilized for long periods of time as a kind of self-inflicted torture, these are more damaging and more shattering to the victim over time than actual physical torture, than actually using electric shock.

These people are damaged for life. It’s not as if the use of torture is something new in the conduct of American foreign and military policy, but it’s becoming much more blatant. It’s being openly justified.

Along with that, in the new compromise there is the matter of habeas corpus, which in Latin means, “we have the body.” This goes back to 1215, this goes back to the Magna Carta, to the Great Writ. Like the prohibition against torture, this issue of *habeas corpus* is not just one issue among others. It’s archetypal. It’s bedrock. It’s what separates civilization from barbarism. If we start compromising habeas corpus, that brings us one step closer to a police state. Habeas corpus means that you can’t just arrest people and throw them into a dungeon and forget about them. You have to bring them to court and explain what the charges are. You have to give the detainee the right of self-defense. We’re trying to exclude the detainees that we have, the numbers around the world right now climb into in the tens of thousands, from the basic right of habeas corpus. In the

Like the prohibition against torture, this issue of habeas corpus is not just one issue among others. It’s archetypal. It’s bedrock. It’s what separates civilization from barbarism.

This is really very disturbing. It’s an alarming development within our society. It represents a major step away from Democracy, away from the rule of law, away from the America that most people believe in.

recent Supreme Court decision that came down at the end of June which instigated this new flurry of legislation, the Hamdan decision, the Supreme Court went out of its way to say that the military tribunals were illegal and did not provide sufficient protections to the defendants.

At the same time, while the Court usually makes very narrow decisions, and this is not a liberal court, they also went out of their way to lift up Geneva Common Article 3. Common Article 3 is the bedrock provision of all the Geneva Conventions. It basically says what all the other established international laws for human rights say, namely, that there are basic protections against cruel, inhumane and degrading treatment that have to be honored and upheld. In its decision, the Supreme Court made human rights violations as committed by the United States enforceable in a way that the torture memos back at the beginning of the so-called War on Terror tried to circumvent.

The ‘torture memos’, which the Office of Legal Counsel provided for the President, claimed that the Geneva Conventions were quaint and obsolete. All of a sudden after Hamdan they aren’t so quaint anymore, they are the rule of law. In effect, the Supreme Court said that the President had committed crimes, as had a lot of other people, by permitting these kinds of abuses and terrible forms of interrogation. It meant that there were no loopholes. It meant that Geneva Common Article 3 applied across the board, not only to the military but also to the intelligence services. Now this would⁶ compromise Geneva Common Article 3, deny *habeas corpus* to a certain broad class of people, and would give the President of the United States sole discretion for any methods of interrogation that he sees fit to justify as a so-called “interpretation” of the Geneva Conventions.

It also gives the government the right to declare anyone, including a U.S. citizen, to be an “unlawful enemy combatant,” which means you could be arrested and essentially disappeared, with no due process of law. I’m not making this up. It’s what I read from legal experts. A retired Foreign Service officer I’ve gotten to know, who is now a dissident, just wrote an article called, “In Case I Disappear.” This is really very disturbing. It’s an alarming development within our society. It represents a major step away from Democracy, away from the rule of law, away from the America that most people believe in.

PTR: Well, on that somber note, I’m afraid that I have to shift gears a little bit and take our conversation in a more strictly theological direction. You are teaching a class right now entitled, “Toward a Theology of Nonviolence.” In very broad

6. The legislation in question has, since this interview, been signed into law.

strokes, how would you go about making a theological case for nonviolence?

Hunsinger: I think the deepest consideration has to do with the theology of the cross. You can go to the Sermon on the Mount, as many Christians have done, you can go to the Image of God, as Roman Catholic theology often likes to do. I’m not opposed to that, it all has its place. But it’s a question of how does God in Christ confront evil and remove it? The strategy is a kind of divine ju-jitsu. Evil is defeated by giving it its full reign and showing that it does not have ultimate power. It’s overthrown by being absorbed and overcome. Jesus goes to the cross in order to bear the penalty of sin and death as a consequence of our fallen condition in order to save us from it. It’s an essentially nonviolent strategy, as it were, on God’s part.

This was recognized in the patristic period, when the Christian church was still largely if not entirely pacifist in its convictions. There is a wonderful passage even at the end of “On the Incarnation of the Eternal Word of God” by Athanasius. Like many theologians in the patristic period, he understood that Christianity meant peace and that the reconciliation which was achieved for us by Christ in our relationship to God had not

just a vertical but also a horizontal dimension. It had to do not only with confronting violence and evil, but also with a way of overcoming it, by bearing it and bearing it away.

That became more complex over time, it was modified and maybe rightly to some degree, but that pacifist strain in early Christianity became, after Constantine and Theodosius, far too marginalized. It has lived on only as a little side stream to the mainstream of Christianity. But it remains as an important stream, which I would say that God has never allowed to disappear. It has always been a kind of corrective. In recent times the whole question has become much more acute with the development of weapons of mass destruction. There is a whole new interest on the part of many thoughtful Christians and theologians in the resources available from the tradition for Christian peace-making.

God overcomes evil by a strategy of voluntary suffering and non-retaliation, by a kind of transcending of the evil without resorting to it in kind. That, I think, is a profoundly Reformational way of thinking about it, even though this line of thinking was not pursued much in the 16th century. I do not find this atonement-grounded approach in John Howard Yoder, who comes out of a more Anabaptist tradition. He doesn’t have what I would call a robust view of the Atonement – nor does Stanley Hauerwas.

But, in his book *Jesus and the Nonviolent Revolution*, An-

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dré Trocmé had the basic moves down. He was a Reformed pastor. After World War II he became the head of the International Fellowship of Reconciliation. But during the Nazi occupation of France and the Vichy regime, his congregation in the mountains of southern France saved the lives of thousands of Jewish children. It's a very moving story. He had prepared them ahead of time through his preaching. They had thought about these kinds of things in advance. Young people who had met together with him for Bible studies every week ran this whole resistance movement. Trocmé understood this aspect of the theology of the cross.

Really, it comes out of an understanding of substitutionary atonement – not penal substitution in the more familiar sense, but substitution. This is really a Jewish concept. People who reject vicarious atonement are really cutting us off from our Jewish roots. They are in danger of a kind of Marcionism. The idea of a great exchange (*admirable commercium*), as von Balthasar rightly points out, is not only Jewish but also patristic. It's in the patristic writers, they all understood this, they were all close enough to the Jewish origins of Christianity not to write off the pattern of exchange where the guilt of the guilty is placed on the innocent and the innocence of the innocent is transferred to the guilty. That's a profoundly mysterious transaction.

When Immanuel Kant and the enlightenment encountered this kind of thing it made no sense to them at all. Kant thought this was an abomination that one person should bear the guilt of another, and of course within his framework that's exactly right. But you have to let this other Jewish cultic framework, based in divine revelation, take precedence over these rationalistic, commonsense considerations. Once you have a pattern of exchange where the innocent suffers for the sake of the guilty in order to take that guilt and bear it away, you've got the seeds of a whole communal strategy for thinking about a properly Christian response to evil and violence.

PTR: Now, we've bumped up against this tangentially, but some people do argue that what we have in the event of the cross is an instance of divine torture, divine abuse, happening between God the Father and God the Son. How would you address that argument?

Hunsinger: Well, I think it shows how alienated some of our contemporary theologians have become from the historic Christian faith. They're bringing an alien framework of judgment to bear upon this. No one in the patristic period ever understood the cross as sanctioning violence and abuse. Nor did poor Anselm in the middle ages, who often has to take it in the neck for these things. I think that there are some fundamental problems

in the way Anselm went about this question in *Why God Became Human*, but they're not at this level.

You actually put the question a bit wrongly, I think, as far as these recent critics are concerned. It's an innocent human being that is tortured to death by a vindictive father in heaven. There is no Trinitarian frame for this, but there is certainly a Trinitarian frame in Anselm. This whole transaction occurs for him with inner Trinitarian consent. This is divine suffering for

We are looking at a very tendentious and questionable move that I think is not really done in good faith. Labeling Christ's atoning sacrifice as a warrant for child abuse is about on the same level as calling Christians cannibals for celebrating the Lord's Supper.

the sake of a larger good. The Father suffers as much as the Son in the power of the Spirit in Anselm, if we read him fairly and in the spirit of what he is offering. God's redemptive suffering is undergone in love for the sake of the world. People who don't like this thought often don't have a very robust understanding of sin nor of what it cost God to remove sin and death from the world to bring about our

salvation. It is a salvation promised not just for individuals one-by-one, but also for communities. It brings hope for the liberation of the whole of creation from the destructive forces of sin, death and corruption.

It's a completely alienated way of framing the question and then of shoving it in the face of the church. I don't regard it as an instance of nonviolence on the part of the critics, because they haven't made a serious effort to understand the teaching of the church in a fair and sympathetic way. We are looking at a very tendentious and questionable move that I think is not really done in good faith. Labeling Christ's atoning sacrifice as a warrant for child abuse is about on the same level as calling Christians cannibals for celebrating the Lord's Supper.

PTR: Coming back to talking about nonviolence, do you believe in what some people might call "utter" nonviolence? That is, is there ever a moment for a Christian individual or a Christian as part of a nation to participate in actions of self-defense and national defense?

Hunsinger: There are degrees of pacifism and there are degrees of non-pacifism. One of the texts we are using in my course on nonviolence this semester is entitled *Waging Nonviolent Struggle* by Gene Sharp. He points out that many people who have engaged in successful nonviolent movements were themselves not necessarily opposed to resorting to armed struggle under other circumstances. Here you have kind of the opposite case from where you started out in your question, but I want to make a point. You have people who are not pacifist in principle or in any categorical sense who nonetheless resort to nonviolent strategies, because they are morally superior and because they promise to be effective.

Even Gandhi and Martin Luther King were not uncondi-

tional pacifists. It surprises people, but there are statements on record from them to that effect. But in almost all circumstances they are committed to nonviolent approaches first and foremost. If you're committed to nonviolence, as they were, armed struggle is not the sort of exception that you actually plot out in advance according to some calculus, because at some point you expect nonviolence to fail. Could there be times of exception? Well there might be times when you might have to depart from a strictly nonviolent stance in order to defend yourself or your neighbor or the vulnerable innocent, and there might be times when it's better to suffer and die for peace than to kill for peace. Nonviolent struggles always bring about reprisals, and sometimes even death, for those who put it into practice.

Karl Barth moved very close to a strict pacifist position, but he never wanted to close the door on anything without qualification. Life is too complex and God is too unpredictable. Barth called his pacifism, and this is what he saw indicated by the New Testament, a practical pacifism, a pacifism in practice. He wasn't willing to commit to an unqualified pacifism.

It was very largely, for Barth as for Trocmé, a pacifism of witness – bearing witness to the love of God, doing so by conforming to the pattern that divine love took in the Incarnation as it led to the Cross. God's love was an enactment of compassion that was willing to suffer and die rather than retaliate and destroy. The avoidance of retaliation and ultimate destruction was central. The presumption for Barth was always in favor of non-retaliation and nonviolence first, and after that he believed that there might be times when you would be led to resort, as a last resort, to means that were not nonviolent. But there's a resourcefulness, and now also an accumulated body of historical cases where people have resorted to non-cooperation and have avoided violence in social movements and have been at least as effective as any resort to violence might have been.

Violence is not always as effective as its cracked up to be, and it brings severe consequences in its train. And nonviolence isn't always as ineffective as its cracked up to be, and can often sow the seeds for reconciliation. In the Christian church in recent times there has been too much of a presumption in favor of militarism and violence and too little in favor of nonviolence. This imbalance is beginning to be addressed. You don't have to be an extreme militarist or an extreme pacifist to exhaust the options.

I think it's kind of a pseudo-question. People feel that if

they get you to say that there might be circumstances in which a resort to other means of self-defense is justified, that it supposedly opens a very wide loophole. Even the Just War tradition, when it's properly upheld and understood, has to allow that there are certain things that you and your government will not do even if it leads to defeat.

This is one of the reasons that I admire George Kennan. Here at Princeton Seminary back in the 1980's I think it was, he gave a lecture called "A Christian's View of the Arms Race," which was published in *Theology Today*. When it came out in a book of essays, *The Nuclear Delusion*, it was abridged so you

didn't get the full force of it. You can find it online because all those old *Theology Today* issues are online.⁷

Kennan comes to the point where he says that there are certain things that we would not resort to as Christians even if it meant that we might suffer defeat. He wrote: "Those who [resort to military means] owe it to their religious commitment to assure that the sufferings brought to innocent and helpless people by the military operations are held to the absolute minimum and this, if necessary, even at the cost of military victory." Kennan was regarded as a "Christian realist," but I am aware of no statement quite like this from Reinhold

Niebuhr. Kennan knew that it is better that we should suffer defeat than to engage in the indiscriminate slaughter of civilians, including non-combatants like defenseless women and children. That's the pacifistic element within even the Just War tradition.

For Christian ethics, so-called military necessity is not finally the over-riding consideration. People who look for these loopholes are trying to get a *carte blanche* to do whatever they think is "necessary" in order to protect themselves, whereas a really principled stance, whether regarding the Just War tradition or a relatively pacifist position or an unqualified pacifist position, holds that there is a point where there is a certain criminality of the means to which we will not resort. Certainly torture and related abuses ought to fall into that category, as well as the indiscriminate killing of civilians through bombing cities, which began on the Allied side during World War II. To be a Christian means that there are some things more important than avoiding military defeat.

It used to be only fascists who would directly bomb civilians. There are some very interesting speeches given by Franklin Delano Roosevelt against the Nazis and the fascists for

7. <http://theologytoday.ptsem.edu/jul1982/v39-2-article4.htm>

bombing civilians. “The bombing of helpless and unprotected civilians,” he stated, “is a strategy which has aroused the horror of all mankind. I recall with pride that the United States consistently has taken the lead in urging that this inhuman practice be prohibited.” Over the course of the Second World War that was eroded, and it ended with Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Paul Ramsey, who was the great advocate of Just War thinking in Christian ethics, could not defend the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki even if it meant dire consequences for the Allies. There are just certain things that you do not do or you lose the very reasons that make it worthwhile to try to fight and hold off anyway.

Goebbels remarked something to this effect when he said, “Even if we lose we win because our values will have been inculcated into the ranks of our enemies.” This is why Thomas Merton worried, and this was an extreme position and I don’t know if I would completely affirm it, that the West would end up becoming too much like its enemies if it engaged in these kinds of military tactics.

Feuerbach said, “You are what you eat.” But, even more deeply I think we could say, “You are what you hate.” You become what you oppose when you oppose it in that systematic and really visceral way. It takes over. That’s part of the way in which evil works. It insinuates itself into you by the very methods you chose to resist it.

The principled stance that there is a bright red line that you will never cross, come what may, is absolutely essential to Christian ethics.

PTR: Professor Hunsinger, you have been more than gracious with your time this afternoon. There is just one last question that I would like to give you a chance to address. As a professor here at Princeton Theological Seminary you are uniquely situated to influence a generation of ministers. In closing, what one thing would you most like to say to that generation concerning the theme of Theology and Global Conflict?

Hunsinger: Calvin saw his whole work as a theologian as trying to make it possible for ordinary Christians to understand the Bible. The Bible was not in the vernacular at the time of the Reformation and the interpretation of Scripture was closely held by the papacy and the bishops of the Roman Catholic church. The people were just given certain doctrines to assent to and so on. The Reformation was opposed to that. The Reformation wanted to put the Bible in the hands of the people so that they could read it and understand it for themselves, and so that it could be their daily bread. There will be no serious resistance possible in our churches without a solid grounding in Scripture. Of course there are many people who do have a living relationship to Scripture who don’t understand it in the way that I’m suggesting, so it’s not an absolutely sufficient condition by any means. But if there are seminarians and pastors who are concerned about justice and peace, and who want to have congrega-

tions that are concerned about justice and peace, in the long run it’s not going to happen without a revitalized understanding of the place of Scripture in the Christian life.

Read the Bible in one hand and the newspaper in the other. Pay attention to people like Karl Barth, Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Martin Luther King, who although his declared theology was on the liberal side he had deep roots in the very different piety and theology of the black church. This is what really sustained King, I think, and in those days there was not much access to an intellectually respectable form of evangelical Christianity which we have now as people are finally understanding what theologians like Barth and von Balthasar were about.

It’s a complex matter, but I just don’t see our churches as being equipped for doing much of anything that’s seriously Christian because of the erosion that has taken place at this very fundamental level. We’re not catechizing our young people, they don’t know up from down in terms of basic Christian beliefs. They’re not in congregations where family devotions are taken for granted or where Scripture is the norm as it points us to the living authority of the living Lord Jesus Christ.

It’s a complex matter. It’s not just a matter of knowing what websites to read and where to get valid sources of information. I would say that in the long run it’s easier to liberalize evangelicals than it is to evangelize liberals. Liberals are not terribly self-sustaining or self-perpetuating. These are more or less people on their way out. Not many people come into the church through liberalism. It’s good that we have it. Liberals are not asleep at the wheel on the burning social and political issues of the day in the way that so much of the rest of the church is.

But unless we have a kind of progressive evangelicalism that is rooted in Scripture these things won’t be everything that they could be. This is why I think that so many of the progressive trends in Christianity, which of course I’m basically in favor of, reach a glass ceiling. These people put forward progressive ideas beginning already in the 19th century with the religious socialist movements in Germany and Switzerland and the Social Gospel movement in the United States. But it wasn’t adequately rooted in the heart of the Gospel, and consequently it never reached its full potential, and it continues to languish today. Feminism in the churches hits a glass ceiling because people don’t see beyond a certain point in the congregations how it actually relates to the core of traditional belief, not to mention everyday life.

Every time progressives have asked Christians to make a basic choice between the historic Gospel and progressive politics, they have lost. Christians are going to choose the historic Gospel every time. This is a problem with the World Council of Churches – it’s a big problem around the world. People get disillusioned with the churches and its historic theology. They don’t see the potential of overcoming this false dichotomy between a vibrant evangelical catholic Christian faith and a progressive politics. That’s the split that we have to overcome and that, in my own small way, I’m trying to work on myself.

REFLECTION

Breaking the Chain of Antagonism and Conflict: A Reflection on Vladimir Jankelevitch's Works on Forgiveness

Hyun Soo Kim

Every Wednesday since 1992, dozens of elderly Korean women have gathered outside the Japanese embassy in Seoul. Armed with pickets and flags, they shout slogans: "We want your earnest apology!" "Pay full compensation!" These women are determined and committed demonstrators, undeterred by heavy rains and snows.

They are former "comfort women" who were forced to sexually serve Japanese soldiers in the Second World War era. Drafted for military sexual slavery by the Japanese colonial government, thousands of Korean women underwent unimaginable trauma and degradation. Since the early 1990s, Korean NGOs have petitioned the Japanese government to take legal responsibility for the former Korean comfort women who are still alive. However, the Japanese government has refused to take legal responsibility or pay any monetary reparations to the victims. Instead, the Japanese government proposed that Japanese civilians set up a foundation to receive donations for the victims. The government classified this money as "gifts of atonement" to the victims.¹ The failure of the Japanese government to take responsibility for its past crimes continues to provoke the victims, whose 700th demonstration took place March 15, 2006.

This sad story represents the deeply embedded enmity which permeates the history of Korean-Japanese relations. A number of thorny issues, including this case, remain unresolved as the two countries fail to overcome their mutual antagonism. Both countries perpetuate this problem. On the one hand, without Japanese judicial reparations, the Korean people are not willing to forgive and embrace the Japanese. The Japanese people, for their part, reject this demand and resist confessing their wrongdoings in a way the Korean people perceive to be authentic. The chain of animosity and conflict between the two parties only lengthens. Therefore, both the Korean and Japanese people need an event of true forgiveness, an event that will break the chain of hatred and conflict. Once an event of forgiveness between both peoples takes place, they can experience the fruits of peace, reconciliation, and a hopeful future.

The French philosopher Vladimir Jankelevitch offers us important insights on forgiveness which are particularly instructive here. In his two major works on forgiveness, *Forgiveness*² and

1. Etsuro Totsuka, "Military Sexual Slavery by Japan and Issues in Law," Ed. Keith Howard and Trans. Young Joo Lee, *True Stories of the Korean Comfort Women* (London: Cassell, 1995), 199.

2. Vladimir Jankelevitch, Trans. Andrew Kelly, *Forgiveness* (Chi-

"Should We Pardon Them?"³ Jankelevitch illustrates the difficulty of forgiveness in a paradoxical way. In *Forgiveness*, Jankelevitch relates forgiveness to the idea of "the instant." That is, forgiveness is an event, which can be granted in an instant. Jankelevitch clarifies, "Terminal and initial all at once, the event that is called *forgiveness* closes a continuation in order to begin another one. The instant of forgiveness terminates the anterior interval and founds the new interval."⁴ Thus, forgiveness can only take place paradoxically as a disappearing appearance. Every time it happens, forgiveness becomes an instantaneous and miraculous event of "gift" that is freely given by the offended person to the offender.

This instant of forgiveness as a gift points to the most important aspect of Jankelevitch's argument: true forgiveness is radically unconditional. Pure and true forgiveness, therefore, forgives the inexcusable and the unforgivable. Jankelevitch emphasizes, "Forgiveness is there to forgive precisely what no excuse would know how to excuse: for there is no misdeed that is so grave that we cannot in the last recourse forgive it. Nothing is impossible for all-powerful remission! Forgiveness can in this sense do everything. Where sin flows, Saint Paul says, forgiveness overflows."⁵

This is the most powerful support for the unconditional forgiveness that forgives the unforgivable. Such forgiveness does not seek any reason for forgiveness because seeking legitimacy makes forgiveness impure. Without depending on any remorse, excuse, or repentance, pure forgiveness forgives "everyone for everything for all times."⁶ Unconditional forgiveness knows neither impossibility nor limitation. In this sense, true forgiveness is mad forgiveness. Only mad forgiveness creates "a new era," "new relations," and "a *vita nuova*."⁷ Jankelevitch strongly argues that we are morally obliged to practice this mad forgiveness. Forgiveness thus becomes a moral imperative.

However, in a January 3, 1965 article in *Le Monde*, "Should

cago: The University of Chicago Press, 2005).

3. Vladimir Jankelevitch, Trans. Ann Hobart, "Should We Pardon Them?," *Critical Inquiry* 22 (Spring 1996), 552-572.

4. Jankelevitch, *Forgiveness*, 149. Emphasis is original.

5. *Ibid.*, 156.

6. *Ibid.*, 157.

7. *Ibid.*, 150.

We Pardon Them?” Jankelevitch protests against the possibility that the French government might rule the Germans’ crimes legally prescriptible. Here, he pronounces the death of forgiveness: “Pardoning died in the death camps.”⁸ According to him, one cannot forgive the Germans for their crimes against the Jews for two reasons.

First of all, the Germans’ crimes are imprescriptible beyond any statute of limitations, because they are crimes against humanity. In Jankelevitch’s view, the crime against the Jews is the most monstrous crime in history in the sense that it was “the product of the pure wickedness.”⁹ The Germans treated the Jews as sub-humans who do not have the right to *be*. They even considered existence itself to be an inexpressible sin for a Jew, using this logic as a motive for Jewish genocide. Jankelevitch categorizes this crime as metaphysical in nature and claims that forgiving this metaphysical crime would be immoral. He writes, “When an act denies the essence of a human being as a human being, the statutory limitations that in the name of morality would lead one to absolve that act itself contradicts morality. Is it not contradictory and even absurd to call for a pardon in this case?”¹⁰ In short, since the Germans’ crime is inexpressible, one cannot forgive them.

Furthermore, the Germans’ crime against humanity cannot be pardoned because they never asked for forgiveness. According to Jankelevitch, only the repentance of the guilty can make “a pardon sensible and right.”¹¹ The possibility of forgiveness for inexpressible crimes comes only from true remorse on the part of the offender. Many former Nazis, however, remained unrepentant. Cynically, Jankelevitch asks, “Why would we pardon those who regret their errors so little and so rarely?”¹² There is no forgiveness for Nazis, he declares, because “there are no reparations for the irreparable.”¹³

Jankelevitch leaves us with two contradictory views on forgiveness, one unconditional and the other conditional. Jankelevitch, in Jacques Derrida’s view, turns from his early notion of unconditional forgiveness toward a judicial logic of forgiveness, claiming that people are incapable of forgiving what they cannot punish.¹⁴ This judicial notion of forgiveness is problematic in the way it accompanies the retributive logic of justice, which deprives forgiveness of its meaningfulness and fruits.

How are we to understand the dilemma in Jankelevitch’s works between the unconditional logic of forgiveness and the conditional claim of forgiveness? In his inconsistency, in fact, Jankelevitch offers us a practical lesson on forgiveness. The unconditional logic of forgiveness remains almost impossible

for human beings to practice. For forgiveness to be meaningful, a certain aspect of reciprocity is needed. The question remains: What sort of reciprocity is needed for the event of forgiveness? To find an answer, we need to attend to the biblical instruction on forgiveness.

The Bible also provides apparently paradoxical statements on forgiveness. Some passages seem to suggest that forgiveness is offered in the absence of repentance and as an unmerited gift (Math. 18:21-22). Other passages state that forgiveness can be given to those who are confessing and repenting their sins (1 John 1:9; Luke 17:3-4). In my view, these paradoxical messages seem to imply a soft, yet realistic form of reciprocity concerning forgiveness. As the gift of God’s grace, forgiveness “is there,” always available for human beings. Before human beings repent, the possibility of God’s forgiveness is open to every sinner. Without their human response of repentance, however, human sinners cannot make God’s forgiving grace their own. Though the former lexically comes first, both God’s gift of forgiveness and the human response are inseparable. Finally, a new world of reconciliation and peace with God opens up for human beings. This realistic logic of conditionality implies that God’s economy of forgiveness is not cheap grace.

The same realistic logic of reciprocity attested to in Scripture can be applied to solve Jankelevitch’s dilemma and potentially help alleviate the mutual enmity between the Korean and Japanese in the following way: First, the Koreans must assert that their forgiveness “is there” for the Japanese. This means that the victims’ invitation of the offender to the event of forgiveness comes first. To put it differently, the willingness to forgive and embrace comes first because forgiveness is a gift of the victims to the wrongdoers. This is equatable to the biblical conception of grace and Jankelevitch’s idea of “mad forgiveness.”

Secondly, the Japanese must acknowledge that the imprisonment of Korean women into sexual slavery was a crime that denied these women’s very humanity, making it—to use Jankelevitch’s term—a “metaphysical crime.” Conceptualizing the crime in this way is central to Jankelevitch’s assertion that forgiveness for such an offense is only possible when the guilty party confesses guilt. It also affirms the biblically held view that in order to receive God’s grace the sinner must repent. There is thus a limit to the gift of forgiveness, namely, the moral burden on the part of the offenders, who must listen to the victim’s voice and confess their wrongdoings. This is the condition of justice that makes forgiveness possible and effectual. If both sides take these steps, justice can become restorative and not retributive. In so doing, the victims and the wrongdoers create space for the event of reconciliation between them, thus completing the process of forgiveness. With the chain of enmity broken, a new future opens up for both parties—both Korean and Japanese, soldier and comfort woman—a future shaped not by the enmity of sin but by the peace of reconciliation.

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8. Jankelevitch, “Should We Pardon Them?” 567.

9. *Ibid.*, 556.

10. *Ibid.*

11. *Ibid.*, 567.

12. *Ibid.*, 568.

13. *Ibid.*, 571.

14. Jacques Derrida, Trans. Mark Dooley and Michael Hughes, *On Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 37.

REFLECTION

How Can a Pastor Serve In the Armed Forces?

Mark S. Winward

Anyone who has served in a combat zone is all too aware that war is a nasty, brutish affair. When all pretenses of glory are stripped away, we see in war's face the wasteful desecration of human life. War diverts limited resources, consumes precious lives, and destroys the fruits of our labor. As a military chaplain now studying at Princeton Theological Seminary, the politely unasked question is, "Why in the world would a *pastor* ever want to be involved in such an activity?" While many people simply contend Christians—*let alone pastors*—should have nothing whatsoever to do with the military, others do not understand the role of military chaplains.

Regrettably, in a fallen world, it is necessary for nations to retain military forces for their defense. Absent a *national defense*, we simply cannot guarantee our *national security*. If we grant the military is an unfortunate necessity of a fallen world, we simply cannot *prohibit* Christian participation without creating an untenable double standard. In such a society, Christians would rely on non-Christians to perform morally objectionable, but necessary, tasks. Jesus called those who would follow Him to be the salt and light of the world. Consequently, if an institution is necessary for the legitimate functioning of a society, Christians not only *can* but *should* be involved in that institution.

The problem is: there always exists a potential for the armed forces to be used for tasks other than *legitimate* national defense. A Christian service member, thus, may find him- or herself in an unjust conflict. Those in law enforcement face a similar dilemma. Few theologians question the legitimacy of Christians serving as police officers despite the *potential* of having to enforce an unjust law.

Does it not follow a Christian may serve in the military even though there exists the *potential* of having to participate in an unjust war? No service member, though, is expected to comply with an order that is unlawful or unconstitutional—having sworn to support and defend the Constitution. It is certainly a possibility that, on *rare* occasions, service members may find a conflict so at odds with their faith that they cannot continue to participate in good conscience. In such *extreme* cases, service

members must find the moral courage to step aside regardless of the repercussions.

Because of the necessity of a standing military force, service members cannot be at liberty to *lightly* pick or choose in which conflicts they will participate. The nature of modern warfare is sufficiently complex as to demand years of experience, continued equipment maintenance, and constant training. Warfare was simpler in the time of the early American militias, but today, these kinds of demands dictate that any credible standing force cannot simply spontaneously arise when faced with a specific national crisis. Therefore, the common good of a secure nation necessitates the continued commitment, participation, and proficiency of its service members.

This commitment is enforced by the *Uniform Code of Military Justice* in prohibitions against "unaccounted for absences" and "desertion" (i.e., absences of greater than 30 days). Unlike members of most other vocations, service members are not at liberty either to refuse a lawful order or spontaneously to resign without severe repercussions. The compulsory nature of military service, though, is fundamentally necessary for the good order of society.

In a democracy, the military serves the civil authority—presumably acting in accordance with the same Constitution that service members swear to support and defend. At its most basic level, our Constitution

conceives of the military as a weapon in the hands of that civil authority. Just as a soldier reasonably expects his or her weapon to function when employed, our Constitution assumes service members will perform their duty when ordered by lawful civil authority. We need only recall history's many military coups to recognize that a self-serving military is contrary to the good order of a civil society. Military service, thus, cannot be had without military discipline. Unless Christians surrender the role of national defense to non-Christians, Christians in the military must assent to military discipline—even given the risks for possible conflicts of conscience.

Military chaplains act in a capacity quite different, though,

If we grant that the military is an unfortunate necessity of a fallen world, we simply cannot prohibit Christian participation without creating an untenable double standard.

Chaplains, at the most basic level, affirm the fundamental worth of all persons—friend and enemy alike.

from other service members or clergy. Regardless of their branch of service or faith group, military Chaplains serve a unique role in ministering to those entrusted to their care. Military chaplains maintain a precarious balance by bearing witness to their faith as both *insiders* and *outsiders*. As insiders, chaplains may find themselves in a combat zone. As outsiders, they are recognized by the laws of war as non-combatants—prohibited from carrying weapons or participating in action against the enemy. As insiders, chaplains are commissioned officers serving at the pleasure of the President. As outsiders, they are ordained pastors who *continue* to serve only with the endorsement of their denomination or faith group. And as insiders, chaplains go everywhere their troops are called—be it on base, in a combat zone, or on the sea. But as outsiders, chaplains focus not on operations but on the moral, spiritual and emotional well-being of the service men and women under their care. In sum, despite the fact that chaplains are *outsiders* by virtue of their role, ordination and mission, service members primarily accept their chaplains as *insiders* by virtue of their wearing the same uniform, living under the same hardships, and enduring the same hazards.

Insiders by virtue of presence, outsiders by virtue of calling, chaplains are no less than ambassadors of God. Indeed, the nasty, brutish character of war is the antithesis of the Prince of Peace. Close association with combatants can tempt chaplains

to compromise their distinctive character as ‘outsiders.’ This occurs when a chaplain falls into the error of becoming *an officer who happens to be a pastor* rather than *a pastor who happens to be an officer*. When this tragically occurs, a chaplain unwittingly becomes part of the machinery of war thus capitulating to the State his or her representation of the Prince of Peace. Yet the chaplains who faithfully cling to their distinctiveness in the midst of the darkness and chaos of war can serve as extraordinarily powerful witnesses to God’s Light. In an environment where it is all too easy to forget about God, the very presence of a chaplain reminds service men and women whence they have come and to whom they belong. Chaplains, then, at the most basic level, affirm

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the fundamental worth of all persons—friend and enemy alike. In faithfully upholding this principle, a chaplain stands witness to the principles of a loving Creator in whom one finds accountability, assistance, and hope.

Military service frequently calls young men and women away from the support of family, friends and faith communities. Sacrificing many of the freedoms Americans take for granted, they serve in the most demanding of conditions, in the farthest reaches of the world, at hazard to their own safety. A chaplain’s credibility is earned *only* by sharing in those same sacrifices. If ordained men and women will not step forward to bear the Light to them, who will?

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REFLECTION

The Sword that Christ Came to Bring: An Instance of Canonically Theological Exegesis

W. Travis McMaken

Introduction

With the publication of the *Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible*,¹ and as the first issues of the *Brazos Theological Commentary on the Bible* begin to roll off the press, theological exegesis has achieved the academic respectability and staying power that its proponents have worked toward for many years. Practitioners of theological exegesis, or of “theological hermeneutics,” are those whom have become convinced that the general hermeneutic strategy of the various forms of historical-critical exegesis is not properly suited to the interpretation of Scripture. Because Scripture is the unique instrument of God’s communicative activity, so the argument goes, it requires a hermeneutic strategy that recognizes this and seeks to understand it as such.² This is not to set aside historical-critical exegesis, but to move beyond it by asking further questions of the text. These questions have to do both with how we might better understand the text in light of the Christian theological tradition, and with how we might better understand the text in light of the canon of Scripture as a whole. In what follows, we pursue an understanding of the canonical context of Jesus’ saying in Matthew 10.23, “I have not come to bring peace, but a sword.” Our discussion centers around the New Testament uses of the word “sword,” and seeks to answer questions about what kind of “sword” Jesus brings. How is it that Jesus wages war? How is it that he exercises power? What kind of “sword” did Jesus come to bring?

What kind of sword?

We begin our survey with John 18, where Peter cuts off the ear of one of the chief priest’s servants, Malchus, who was a member of the party sent to arrest Jesus. Jesus miraculously healed the servant and rebuked Peter for his action. If Jesus came to bring a sword like Peter thought, this would have been a perfect time to put such a sword-wielding plan into action. But Jesus didn’t. This exchange helps us to understand that by saying he was bringing a sword, Jesus did not mean he was going to lead an armed revolution.

The next place we hear about swords in the New Testament is in Romans 13, where Paul warns the unlawful that governing authorities do “not bear the sword in vain.” However, since it

is the government that has a sword here, not Jesus or Christians, this passage does not help us figure out what kind of sword Jesus was talking about.

A sword shows up again in Ephesians 6.17. Paul is discussing the armor of God and he tells us to, “Take...the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.” From this we are led to connect the idea of a sword with that of the word of God—Scripture. Hebrews 4.12, which is the next passage wherein we find a sword, strengthens this idea. Here, the word of God is again described as a sword. But it is not just any sword. This sword is both living and active, and it is even sharper than a double-bladed sword. It pierces so deeply that it gets to the middle of our bones, and it does this in order to judge our thoughts and intentions. We have to ask ourselves if, in light of everything else we know about Jesus, it makes sense that this is the kind of sword in which he would be interested.

Perhaps the most important place that we find a sword in the New Testament is in Revelation 19.11f:³

Then I saw heaven opened, and there was a white horse! Its rider is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war. ¹²His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems; and he has a name inscribed that no one knows but himself. ¹³He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is called The Word of God. ¹⁴And the armies of heaven, wearing fine linen, white and pure, were following him on white horses. ¹⁵From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron; he will tread the wine press of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. ¹⁶On his robe and on his thigh he has a name inscribed, “King of kings and Lord of lords.” (NRSV)

Here we find a depiction of Jesus returning to the earth. This is a both a striking and a fearsome image. The battle-scene kicks into high gear a few verses after the sword appears, but we need not be concerned with that. What we need to notice is the location of the sword in this image. Jesus, the King of kings and Lord of lords, comes riding out of heaven on a white horse. His eyes are filled with fire; he has a bunch of crowns stacked on his head; and he has blood on his white robes. His name is

1. Vanhoozer, ed.; Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic Press, 2005.

2. Cf. Kevin J. Vanhoozer’s “Introduction” and Daniel J. Treier’s entry on “Theological Hermeneutics” in *Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible* for a much more scholarly treatment of this material.

3. My interpretation of Revelation 19 is deeply indebted to Richard B. Hays’s work. Cf. especially Richard B. Hays, “Revelation: Resisting the Beast,” pp. 160-186 in *The Moral Vision of the New Testament: Community, Cross, New Creation: A Contemporary Introduction to New Testament Ethics* (HarperSanFrancisco; 1996).

the Word of God and a sword is coming out of his mouth with which to strike down the nations.

If we are really paying attention, we realize that something is off in this picture. Where does a warrior usually hold his sword? The sword should be in Jesus' hand, but instead, it is in his mouth. Furthermore, Jesus is here called the "Word of God," and we saw that the image of a sword is often connected to the notion of the word of God. Is Jesus himself the sword that he came to bring? Is Jesus himself what will upset the false peace of the world—a peace established by the Roman Empire through the use of swords (*Pax Romana*)? Is Jesus God's sword that will destroy and render unnecessary the kind of swords the Roman Empire used? What does all this mean?

There is one more important thing to notice here. Jesus' robes in this passage are bloody. But how did they get bloody? He is just now riding out of heaven. The battle does not start for a few more verses, so it cannot be blood from the enemy. How did his robes get bloody? If we stop a moment and think about

what Jesus is best known for, we might get the idea that Jesus' robes are stained with his own blood, the blood he shed for us on the cross. This image of Jesus riding out of heaven, soaked in his own blood, with a sword coming out of his mouth instead of in his hand, is not what we expect. What we expect is an image of power defined by the sinful world around us. We expect to see an image of Christ with a sword in his hand, striking down his enemies and splattering their blood all over his robes.

This is not the image shown to us, because we are dealing here with the kind of power that we will one day encounter at the end of time. In

the end, Jesus, the word of God, God's sword, will come again. He will speak the truth, and this is the most powerful weapon of all.

The truth is that God loves us and that Jesus came to earth not to condemn us, but to redeem us and free us from sin. Indeed, Jesus came to bring the sword, but this is not the same kind of sword that the Roman soldiers carried. He came to bring the sword of the Gospel.

If Jesus came to bring a sword like Peter thought, this would have been a perfect time to put such a sword-wielding plan into action. But, Jesus did not.

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BOOK REVIEWS

Creston Davis, John Milbank, and Slavoj Zizek, Eds. *Theology and the Political: The New Debate*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2005, pp. 496. \$29.95 (paperback)

The fifth publication in Slavoj Zizek's SIC series, *Theology and the Political*, is the product of a conference at the University of Virginia entitled "Ontologies in Practice." In a broad variety of ways, the essays in this volume work from the assumption that current political issues must be addressed on the level of ontology. The discussions include the nature of the political subject, difference, politics beyond ontotheology, and materialism. Philip Goodchild, in his essay on "an eschatological ontology," states what functions as a kind of *credo* among these various contributors: "Ontology thus informs practice" (129).

For those familiar with Radical Orthodoxy, this volume serves as a compendium of the most recent work in that movement. Most of the major players in R.O. are represented here, including John Milbank, Catherine Pickstock, Conor Cunningham, Daniel M. Bell, and Graham Ward. Many issues addressed by Radical Orthodoxy are present here as well, such as the interaction with continental philosophy, the reinterpretation of Augustinian and Thomistic thought, the rehabilitation of the *analogia entis*, and the consistent emphasis on the ecclesial

Gregory A. Boyd, *The Myth of a Christian Nation: How the Quest for Political Power is Destroying the Church*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006, pp. 208. \$19.99

The Myth of a Christian Nation arose from a sermon series that cost mega-church pastor and theologian Gregory Boyd twenty percent of his five-thousand member congregation in the time leading up to the 2004 Presidential election. *Myth* centers upon Boyd's premise that the kingdom of God is not the kingdom of the world because God exercises power differently than the world. While the kingdom of the world imposes its ideals through forceful "power-over" others, the kingdom of God advances through peaceful "power-under" (14). Based on this distinction, Boyd argues that "a significant segment of American evangelicalism is guilty of nationalistic and political idolatry" because it "fuses the kingdom of God with a preferred version of the kingdom of the world" (11). It is no wonder, then, that the sermon series and the resulting book were and remain controversial.

While controversial, the book is not difficult to follow. Boyd assumes that being "Christian" means looking like Jesus, who died for those who crucified him. Chapters 1-3 develop the argument that since no country has ever looked like Jesus then no nation has ever been "Christian." All nations are one form or other of the "kingdom of the world" - the power set up by God

community as the center for a revolutionary praxis that counters the hegemony of capital.

The volume is especially interesting in that it brings together both Christian and atheist voices in an attempt to find a common language (to use Rowan Williams's metaphor from the introduction) for discussing the relation between religion and society. Alongside those in the R.O. camp are noted scholars such as Terry Eagleton, Simon Critchley, and Antonio Negri. These disparate voices are brought together with the aim of forging a (theo)political ontology that will sustain a post-Marxist form of revolutionary praxis.

The result of this collaboration is a generally consistent reader, though one that remains inaccessible to those not already familiar with the literature on political ontology. The contributions have lofty goals - "Toward a Theological Materialism," "Rewriting the Ontological Script of Liberation," "The Theological Praxis of Revolution" - and though always stimulating, they generally demand an audience well versed in modern philosophy. Even so, a collection of this caliber on such a timely subject is to be welcomed.

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but controlled by demonic forces. The radical alternative - the "kingdom of God" - was inaugurated by Jesus and is none other than the "radical, non-commonsensual, 'power-under' love" that "reflects the nature of God and looks like Jesus" (42).

Chapters 4-5 illustrate from historical and contemporary examples how the kingdom of God has been co-opted by the kingdom of the world and made little more than a religious version of the kingdom of the world. Boyd suggests that this co-opting is most clearly seen in the motto: "Taking America Back for God," which for Boyd is problematic at best and idolatrous at worst. Chapters 6-8 illustrate five negative consequences seeing America as a "Christian" nation. In his estimation, such rhetoric harms global and local mission work, Christian spirituality, individual witness, and the advancement of God's kingdom in the world. In the final chapter, Boyd wrestles with five questions concerning Christianity and violence.

Even though *Myth* operates out of theological assumptions about the kingdom of God, it is not a work of theology. It is a work of Christian ethics. Perhaps because of previous altercations with acerbic critics in the Evangelical Theological Society, Boyd focuses on what unites Christians - the cross and discipleship. Boyd even suggests that evangelicalism's lack of Christ-like love should be counted as heresy (cf. 83, 134). The American churches' political division and the resulting partisan shouting-match do not exhibit kingdom love. And this is more than heresy for Boyd; it is idolatry.

Boyd points to two New Testament disciples, Simon and Matthew, as a striking example of opposing political views work-

ing together for God's kingdom. In Jewish politics, Simon was the leftist and Matthew the member of the vast right-wing conspiracy. Boyd remarks wryly, "To compare them to, say, Ralph Nader and Rush Limbaugh wouldn't come close" (62). Instead of allowing political differences between Simon and Matthew to work against his mission, Jesus preached the kingdom of God and did not allow his disciples to be co-opted by the kingdom of the world. Though the divisions were deep, real, and rawer than the worst in modern politics, the zealot and the tax-collector worked together for the kingdom of God.

Boyd argues that evangelicalism's growing politicization and polarization, in direct contradiction to the example of Simon and Matthew, bears witness to a harrowing reality - American Christians have handed over God's kingdom for a preferred vision of the kingdom of the world. If the American church were to seek "wisdom from above," Boyd contends, it could see beyond its partisan conflicts to distinctly kingdom-of-God solutions based on the needs of the moment and the principle that the kingdom of God looks like Jesus dying for those who crucified him.

In following Christ's example, Boyd suggests that kingdom-of-God solutions become *things to be done* instead of *arguments to be won*. The dispute between Matthew and Simon is not overcome by a vote; it is overcome by Christian *practice* (cf. 124). Again and again, Boyd maintains that the question Christians should be asking themselves and others is not, "How should we vote?" but, "How should we *live*?" or "How do you *bleed*?" (143, 146). As Christ exercised "power-under" the world by bleeding on the cross, so should Christians exercise "power-under" by self-sacrificial acts of Christian love that are

not constrained on either the right- or left-side by kingdom-of-the-world partisan politics.

Comparing the two kingdoms by their relationship to power is both helpful and insightful. However, Boyd stumbles theologically when defining the two kingdoms solely in these terms. Whereas classical conceptions of the kingdom of God focus on topics of righteousness and obedience to the rule of God, Boyd frequently objectifies the principle of self-sacrificial love, going so far as to say that it was "in the power of self-sacrificing love" that Jesus himself put his trust (34). While Boyd notes that the kingdom of God always looks like Jesus dying on the cross for those who crucified him, one possible implication is that Jesus' death and resurrection only have significance in their witness to the *efficacy* of self-sacrificial love. Had Boyd chosen to define the two kingdoms in terms of righteousness and obedience (and how those are enacted and instituted in Christ), his deep and often powerful analysis could have rested on surer theological foundations.

Despite these problems, *Myth* is a wonderful choice for study groups or church-based Christian education classes seeking to engage the topic of faith and politics, and it will continue to cause American Christians (conservative and liberal alike) to rethink the practical implications of their allegiance to God's kingdom for their relationships with politics, policy, and the Simon or Matthew across the aisle.

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Stanley Hauerwas, *Performing the Faith: Bonhoeffer and the Practice of Nonviolence*, Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2004, pp. 7 + 252. \$21.99

In another collection of timely, insightful and entertaining essays, Stanley Hauerwas engages a wide variety of topics in an attempt to answer critics while also following the trajectory of arguments he has made since his career began. To the reader unacquainted with Hauerwas' unique point of view, *Performing the Faith* may seem like a merely random collection of essays. It certainly would be merely random were it not for the earlier collections of essays, articles, and observations he has published. It would be much "easier" if one could begin to study Hauerwas by opening a systematic treatment of theology or ethics in which all topics were dealt with from beginning to end. But Hauerwas intentionally remains "in the middle of things" where theology is a conversation that moves effortlessly from liturgy to ethics and back again. Following Hauerwas' work requires one to enter into a discussion built upon his earliest publications and engaging many other thinkers along the way. Moving from John Howard Yoder to Karl Barth to Alasdair MacIntyre, Hau-

erwas has now chosen, in *Performing the Faith*, to add Dietrich Bonhoeffer to his list.

Bonhoeffer is an inspired choice, for he is certainly part of any discussion of Christians and nonviolence. *Performing the Faith* is an examination of Bonhoeffer's claim that a community of peace can only exist if it does not rest on lies and injustice. Many readers are struck by the power of Bonhoeffer's arguments, along with that of the testimony provided by his actions, but few agree with Hauerwas that these arguments are normative beyond the original totalitarian context in which they were made. While few would argue that the church did not need to become visible in the midst of Nazi Germany, the role of such a visible alternative to society is much more difficult to reconcile with democratic politics. But, does that make it less necessary? Perhaps liberal democracies have as hard a time telling the truth as any other political system. Those who rule on behalf of the people can sometimes hide the truth even from themselves. In making these arguments, Hauerwas understands himself to be arguing, alongside Bonhoeffer, that the church must have a visible political existence in its own right even within a "peaceful" democracy.

In the next set of essays Hauerwas again takes up many themes and ideas from his earlier works in order to make clear the connection between truthfulness and nonviolence. These

topics range from the performing arts to Aquinas and Wittgenstein. Telling the truth is a practice that cannot be replaced by a theory. Should one forget one's own contingency, telling the truth becomes impossible. Christian truth-telling requires that Christians acknowledge the contingency and particularity of their own story. To clarify any misconception, Hauerwas even weighs in on the appropriateness of the label "narrative theologian." He fears that the many assumptions lurking within the term "narrative" have made it problematic. Narrative is no apologetic device, according to Hauerwas, nor is it an attempt to reduce the work of theology to storytelling. Narrative is important precisely because Christians have one, and this Christian narrative makes unavoidable claims about the way the world is. This peculiarly Christian narrative is inseparable from a particularly Christian ethic, neither of which can be divorced from the truthful performance that the church calls liturgy. This second set of essays concludes with "Suffering Beauty: The Liturgical Formation of Christ's Body". Here Hauerwas continues his lament that ethics has been divorced from liturgy, and prayer from the moral life.

The book ends with a gracious reply to Jeffrey Stout, whose *Democracy and Tradition* points to Hauerwas as the source of widespread Christian resentment against democracy. While this postscript will surely provide for a fruitful discussion with Stout and others about the role of theological convictions in democratic societies, Hauerwas' own sermons and reflections on September 11, 2001 should serve to inform a genuine understanding of the type of Christian engagement that Hauerwas is advocating. Hauerwas' writings on September 11, 2001 are not the product of an impartial bystander more interested in his own morally virtuous community. Rather, "A Pacifist Response" is a plea for the truth to be told. Hauerwas is critical of how quickly and blindly America turned to war in the wake of September 11, arguing that the desire for revenge drowned out the silence and reflection necessary to see how one might tell the truth. America turned instead to its tried and true method for forgetting how badly terrorism hurts: killing. That America would do so should be alarming not only to all Christians but to all Americans. A community of peace cannot be forged by lies and violence. Hauerwas believes that the manifold lies necessary to produce the "war on terror" are destructive to any community that claims peace for its members. To seek the peace of the city, one must speak the truth to the city.

In a time of global conflict and the possibility of a new American imperialism, the arguments presented in *Performing the Faith* could not be more relevant. Even Christians who disagree with Hauerwas would do well to carefully examine the nature of their political involvement in light of the war on terror. In the wake of September 11, 2001, many bemoaned the great "failure of imagination" of not anticipating and preventing such an attack. May the church not be found guilty of its own failure to imagine a peaceful and hopeful alternative to the war on terror.

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Mark Lewis Taylor, *Religion, Politics, and the Christian Right: Post-9/11 Powers and American Empire*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2005, pp. xiv + 194. \$16.00 (paperback)

"How did we get here?" That is the question that burdens so many American minds when they hear of the ever-growing number of casualties in the Middle East, the torture of prisoners, wire tapping, and the now revealed secret prisons. Since 9/11, questions about American policies and practices abroad and domestically have given pause even to some of the most ardent Bush supporters and the question naturally arises, "How did this all come to pass?" Mark Lewis Taylor seeks to answer this question by analyzing the political posturing and rhetoric of the Christian Right and neoconservatives.

In *Religion, Politics, and the Christian Right: Post-9/11 Powers and American Empire*, Taylor explores two specters of American politics that have coalesced and risen to power during the Bush administration in the wake of 9/11. This event caused not only physical damage to those who were directly impacted. It also landed a blow to the national psyche. In order to reclaim a sense of belonging, identity and security, a brand of nationalism emerged that was tinged with the cultural residue of American romanticism and contractual liberalism.

American political romanticism is the first specter to which many Americans have fallen prey. As Taylor defines it, American romanticism celebrates "past national forms as ideals for the present" (51). American romanticism extols a mythic ideal of the past, seeking a return to the past as the greatest hope for the future. This includes resisting change and attempting to overturn court cases, such as *Roe v. Wade*. The Christian Right often promotes this kind of American romanticism. It is helpful to note that the term "Christian Right" does not mean conservative Christians, but refers to a "subset of conservative Protestants in the U.S., one that adheres to and is committed to developing an aggressive U.S. American political romanticism" (x). Within the celebration of the past, the idea often emerges that the United States is a country blessed by God and as the bearer of God's truth to the world. The blending of the Christian faith with political activity within the current administration can be clearly seen, for example, in the final line of many of President Bush's speeches: "May God continue to bless America". Former Attorney General John Ashcroft has even declared, "Unique among nations, America recognized the source of our character as being godly and eternal, not being civil and temporal... We have no king but Jesus" (59). This religiously infused American romanticism tends to exclude diverse points of view, uplift members of the Christian Right as ideal Americans, and view leadership as divinely appointed. President Bush epitomized this attitude when he told Bob Woodward, "I'm the commander - see, I don't need to explain - I do not need to explain why I say things. That's the interesting thing about being president. May-

be somebody needs to explain to my why they say something, but I don't feel like I owe anybody an explanation" (68).

The specter of American Romanticism is entangled with the specter of contractual liberalism. U.S. Americans have long claimed that they stand for the freedom and equality of all human persons, yet history shows our failure to grant equal rights to all people. Contractual liberalism, Taylor argues, is a liberalism that only applies to a select group (cf. 77-78). The presence of contractual liberalism can clearly be seen from an economic point of view, although it is present in all realms. For example, the United States and many other European nations have exploited the resources and work forces of Asia, Africa, and Latin America without allowing those nations to participate in the U.S. and European economic system. Taylor's analysis argues that in the wake of 9/11, promoters of contractual liberalism joined with the promoters of American romanticism to safeguard themselves from critique and reform, as well as to preserve the current economic order. These two combined to create a nationalism that silences opponents, restricts freedom while proclaiming to defend freedom, and allows the government to operate unchecked under the banner of national security (cf. 80-83).

Taylor offers up a third specter as a source of recourse and hope in the face of the present circumstances. Instead of finding national identity in the founding fathers, who practiced contractual liberalism and had a sense of divine appointment, as seen in the Constitution and Declaration of Independence, U.S. Americans should look to the revolutionary spirit that gave birth to the Revolutionary War. Various groups, such as Native Americans, abolitionists, slaves, farmers, pirates and many others rioted and

protested against England. Each of these groups sought a genuine liberalism to give freedom and liberty to disregarded members of society. The founding fathers harnessed this revolutionary spirit and then limited the freedom won from England. Taylor proposes that people should reclaim this revolutionary heritage and prophetic spirit to challenge today's oppressive policies. He suggests three categories in which the revolutionary spirit ought to emerge: aesthetic imagination, public enactment, and deliberative reasoning (cf. 142-147). Aesthetic imagination, in the form of the arts, creates a physical representation of the future we hope to live into. Art is a powerful way of making the "not yet" present and active as a source of hope. Public enactments, such as protesting, "are means for agents and movements of revolutionary expectation to build support for their revolutionary dreams" (144). Deliberative reasoning casts a self-critical eye upon revolutionary movements, asking such questions as "Is anybody being left out? Are we staying true to the ideals of revolutionary expectation? How can we broaden our vision?"

Taylor presents an insightful analysis of post-9/11 nationalism and politics and offers practical ways of participating in movements against the present currents of nationalism. However, the volume leaves one feeling overwhelmed by the situation and the work that needs to take place. There are glimmers of hope on the horizon, but Americans need to pay attention to their government's policies and seek ways of actually promoting the ideals of freedom and justice for all.

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Marc Ellis, *Toward a Jewish Theology of Liberation: The Challenge of the 21st Century*, 3rd Ed. Baylor, TX: Baylor University Press, 2004, pp. xviii + 260. \$34.95

"To be faithful to our ancestors, particularly those who have struggled, suffered and died in the Holocaust, is to be attentive to their cries, which must guide us. But, fidelity to our own values and history is intimately connected to the struggles for liberation of others; the brokenness of our past is betrayed, our political empowerment made suspect, when others become our victims" (2).

The above quote captures the essence of Ellis' work in *Toward a Jewish Theology of Liberation*. As a Jew, he seeks to speak to his fellow Jews and to the state of Israel on the basis of Jewish history, tradition and theology. His is a voice raised in protest to the suffering that the empowerment of Jews through the state of Israel has unleashed upon Palestinians.

In order to substantiate this protest, Ellis engages in far-ranging yet careful analysis of the history of the Jewish people after the Holocaust, paying particular attention to what he calls "A Tradition of Dissent" (Ch. 4) that emerges in each of the

most politically decisive eras of the Israeli state. Numerous personalities are engaged, both Jewish and otherwise, including Naim Ateek (a prominent Palestinian theologian and churchman), Martin Buber, Irving Greenberg, Yitzhak Rabin, and Elie Wiesel. Ellis also makes extensive but judicious use of news sources and personal accounts to punctuate the historical narrative.

Ellis is a skillful and thoughtful writer, and this work would well serve those who are interested in exploring the Israeli-Palestinian conflict by introducing them to a voice that is heard even more seldom than that of the Palestinians – the voice of Jewish protest to the history and policies of the state of Israel. One of this volume's drawbacks is its age.

Even though it was published only three years ago, it will necessarily contain no reference to the most recent conflicts; namely, the recent hostilities between Israel and Lebanon, and the tension between Israel and Palestine with reference to the Gaza strip.

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Vincent E. Bacote, *The Spirit in Public Theology: Appropriating the Legacy of Abraham Kuyper*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2005, pp. 176. \$18.99 (paperback)

In *The Spirit in Public Theology*, Vincent Bacote explores the intersection of three separate themes: the work of the Spirit in creation, public theology, and the life and work of Dutch theologian and statesman Abraham Kuyper. To explore this intersection, he draws a number of other theologians into conversation and also gives a thorough reading of Kuyper's theology by examining public addresses throughout his political career. By examining the peculiarities of each of the three themes carefully, Bacote at first seems to distance them from each other. However, as he continues the reader finds that she has been learning about the intersection of the three all along, and ends up with a richer view of this intersection and of the three themes individually. Also, by drawing on Kuyper's work, Bacote finds a theology that can motivate Christians to public action and creation stewardship. Bacote begins by distinguishing cosmic pneumatology, a focus on the Spirit's work in the world, from a pneumatology that he sees as subservient to Christology, that is, a pneumatology that focuses only on the Spirit's work in the redemption of individual human beings (19). This is certainly an important distinction to make before delving into the Spirit's impact on public theology. Since his intent is to articulate a reading of Abraham Kuyper for the twenty-first century, Bacote next gives a brief summary of the cosmic pneumatology of a number of contemporary theologians. He categorizes them by describing Geik Müller-Fahrenholz, Jürgen Moltmann, and Mark Wallace as having pantheistic and panentheistic perspectives of the Spirit's immanence, while Sinclair Ferguson, Colin Gunton, and Clark Pinnock emphasize "more traditionally orthodox perspectives" (39). Bacote seeks a voice among these theologians that gives the Spirit's role in creation an appropriate emphasis. He hints that he believes that such an emphasis can be found in an appropriation of Abraham Kuyper for our time.

Before moving on to the constructive task, Bacote gives a summary of two contemporary approaches to public theology. The first, as represented by Max Stackhouse, is described as "apologetic," since it emphasizes the idea that the Christian faith should be comprehensible and life-enhancing for all people. The second, as represented by Ronald Thiemann, is described as "confessional," since he emphasizes the self-identity of the community of faith in the midst of a pluralistic world (47). Where does Kuyper's public theology fall in this spectrum?

Because Kuyper emphasized both the antithesis between Christians and the world and the common grace that God extends to all creation, Bacote believes that Kuyper maintains a tension between an apologetic and a confessional public theology (82). Bacote also includes a brief biography of Abraham Kuyper (at the conclusion of chapter 1), as well as a more exten-

sive look at the development of his public theology through examining a series of public addresses given throughout his career (chapter 2). Although these biographical sections were perhaps only tangentially related to the themes of cosmic pneumatology and public theology, they were some of the most enlightening in the book because of their insight into Kuyper's real-life motivation for formulating his ideas about 'common grace' and 'sphere sovereignty.'

Kuyper certainly held to a coherent theology, but the development of that theology was driven by a concrete desire to motivate Christian citizens to action in the Netherlands (89).

Chapter 3 articulates the substance of Kuyper's public theology, beginning with an explanation of Calvin's doctrine of common grace and an analysis of Kuyper as a neo-Calvinist. Kuyper's doctrine of common grace distinguishes between saving grace, which redeems the Christian, and common grace, which restrains all people from sin and enables good in the world. In addition to differentiating between saving and common grace, he also establishes a strong connection between them by referring to creation (common grace) and re-creation (saving grace) as interrelated acts of God towards humanity (100).

In chapter 4, Bacote can finally move to the task at hand: finding the intersection between public theology, cosmic pneumatology, and the work of Abraham Kuyper. When Kuyper describes the work of the Holy Spirit in creation, he links it to the initial act of creation, the animation of life after creation, and the restraint of sin. Each of these three aspects is either a reason for or a function of common grace. Bacote summarizes, "...the Spirit's cosmic activity is the dynamic element of common grace...as such, the Spirit's work in creation can be understood as a central yet unacknowledged force underlying Kuyper's public theology" (116).

Bacote combines the work of Kuyper with that of a fellow Dutch theologian, Arnold Van Ruler, in search of a contemporary re-reading of Kuyper. Van Ruler helpfully uses the term "indwelling" to describe the work of the Spirit in creation (125). Bacote concludes by stating that an appropriation of Kuyper's theology of common grace, combined with a properly strong emphasis on the work of the Holy Spirit, should motivate the Christian to public action and humble stewardship (148).

The Spirit in Public Theology is probably best understood by a reader who has previously been introduced to at least one of the three themes of the intersection. That having been said, Bacote does support his thesis with clarity, even though it involves a complex interweaving of a number of themes. Also, although it is evident that Bacote has a great deal of respect for Kuyper, he pays Kuyper the greatest respect by avoiding a blind application of Kuyper's thoughts onto the socio-political situation of twenty-first century America. Rather, he reads Kuyper in his own context (turn-of-the-last-century Holland) and, as the subtitle indicates, "appropriates" that legacy for our world of Christian thought today.

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Call for Papers: Spring 2007 Issue

You are invited to submit an article, reflection, or book review for publication in the Spring 2007 issue of the Princeton Theological Review! This issue's theme will be Theology and the Arts. If you would like to submit an article, reflection, or book review that is pertinent to the PTR's Spring 2007 theme, please visit www.princetontheologicalreview.org for more information. All submissions are due by January 15, 2007.

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You are invited to submit an article, reflection, or book review for publication in the Fall 2007 issue of the Princeton Theological Review! This issue's theme will be On the Atonement. If you would like to submit an article, reflection, or book review that is pertinent to the PTR's Fall 2007 theme, please visit www.princetontheologicalreview.org for more information. All submissions are due by September 15, 2007.

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