

# Modern Christian Pacifist Philosophy

By David B. Kopel

This Article examines the strengths and weaknesses of modern pacifist religious philosophy. The Article suggests that some intellectual arguments for pacifism are logically solid (once certain premises are granted), while others have serious flaws. The article discusses five influential philosophical advocates of non-violence Thomas Merton, Stanley Hauerwas, Leo Tolstoy, Tony Campolo, and John Howard Yoder. In addition, the Article examines three real-world cases where the practice of non-violence was put into action: the Danish rescue of the Jews during WW II, the American Civil Rights movement in the South in the 1960s, and the invasion of the Chatham Islands—the home of the pacifist Moriori tribes.

Notably, this Article does not address the pacifism of the Society of Friends (the Quakers) for their pacifism is logically irrefutable, because it is beyond reason. Quakers urge each person to listen attentively to the “inner light” of his or her own conscience, and they believe that as a person becomes increasingly open to that inner light, the person will eventually develop heartfelt convictions making interpersonal violence impossible. There are many Quaker converts who bear witness to the success of this approach.<sup>1</sup> As the great French philosopher Blaise Pascal said, explaining why he had faith in Christianity, “The heart has its reasons which reason does not understand.”

## I. Resistance to Hitler

Before studying particular pacifist thinkers, let us examine the most difficult problem faced by pacifists in the last century: the Nazis.

After the disillusionment that resulted from World War One, Christian pacifism in the West was riding higher than at any time since Constantine won the battle of Milvian Bridge in 312 A.D., or perhaps even before. Then Hitler started World War II in 1939, and

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1. The Quaker historian Meredith Weddle explains

Of all the testimonies, the peace testimony was most resistant to dogma...In Quaker belief, peaceful principles were not goals but were the logical consequences of righteousness....Transforming love could be the only genuine motivation, and the only restraint, that mattered....In this sense, truth could not be passed along, except for one element: the need to heed the voice within. They were patient, recognizing the nature of revelation as a process, a deepening. They tolerated a person's faltering steps toward the good; believing that God bestowed increasing capacities as he required increasing responsibility....they tolerated those who carried guns to their cornfields...Peace principles were extraordinarily difficult to develop, then, because the peace testimony was the fruit of attitude, not thought. But principles based on love—agape—once achieved, were unassailable in a way not available to a construct of the mind. A motion of the heart, profoundly established, is less susceptible to challenge than an intellectual frame.

MEREDITH BALDWIN WEDDLE, WALKING IN THE WAY OF PEACE: QUAKER PACIFISM IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY 37 (2001).

Tojo launched a surprise attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941. Pacifist ranks were devastated; pacifism lingered as a very minor element in Anglo-American Christianity during the first part of the Cold War, until disillusionment with the Vietnam War began to build.

Whatever arguments can be made about the implications of “turn the other cheek” or other scripture, mainstream Christians believed that pacifists had no satisfactory answer to the question, “What would you do about Hitler?” By extension, the pacifists could not answer “What would you do about Communism?” even though Josef Stalin and Mao Tse-tung each murdered more people than Hitler did. Hitler, Stalin, and Mao each offered an idealistic (in their own eyes) vision in which everyone in the world would either be dead or would be the virtual slave of totalitarian tyrants a hundred times worse than the worst tyrants of the Roman Empire.

During the Battle of Britain, Winston Churchill spoke to the British people, and to all free people. Churchill correctly warned:

Upon this battle depends the survival of Christian civilization...if we fail, then the whole world, including the United States, including all that we have known and cared for, will sink into the abyss of a new Dark Age, made more sinister, and perhaps more protracted, by the lights of perverted science.<sup>2</sup>

What Churchill asked of freedom-loving people was commensurate with the dangers they faced:

What is our policy? I will say; “It is to wage war, by sea, land and air, with all our might and with all the strength that God can give us: to wage war against a monstrous tyranny, never surpassed in the dark lamentable catalogue of human crime. That is our policy.” You ask, “What is our aim?” I can answer with one word: Victory—victory at all costs, victory in spite of all terror, victory however long and hard the road may be; for without victory there is no survival.<sup>3</sup>

What was the pacifist alternative to total war in order to prevent totalitarian genocide and slavery? One unsatisfactory answer had come from Richard Niebuhr, an eminent American Protestant theologian. In 1931, Japan invaded China, in violation of the 1928 Kellogg-Briand Pact, which Japan had signed and which outlawed offensive war. During the 1931-1945 Japanese invasion of China, the Japanese committed genocide against the Chinese.

In retrospect, we know that a firm response from the democracies might have prevented the Second World War. Britain, France, the United States, and other democracies could have imposed a complete economic boycott on Japan, and if the boycott had failed, they could have blockaded Japan, and if blockade had failed, they could have invaded Japan. Such an invasion would not have been easy, but it would have been much less difficult than winning the Second World War—which Japan and Germany certainly could have won, if they had not made some strategic errors.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Prime Minister Winston S. Churchill, speech of the United Kingdom House of Commons, June 18, 1940.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.*

<sup>4</sup> See, e.g., HAROLD C. DEUTSCH & DENNIS E. SHOWALTER, WHAT IF? STRATEGIC ALTERNATIVES OF WWII (1997).

Richard Niebuhr, writing in 1932, admitted that he could think of no good methods, short of war, to end Japanese aggression in China. But since he was a pacifist, force was out of the question. So he advocated “the grace of doing nothing.” That is, just sitting on the sidelines while Japan raped (literally and figuratively) the Chinese people, and hoping that God would solve things in the long run.

Niebuhr’s position might be called passive pacifism. It was “Resist not evil” carried to the extreme. Such a position might have made sense to a Christian in 82 A.D., when the Second Coming of Jesus was expected within a few months or a few years. Such a position was a tragic disaster in 1932, when it facilitated Japanese and German aggression that led to the deaths of thirty million people. In 1952, when Stalin and Mao were trying to finish the job that Hitler started—enslaving or murdering the entire world—“the grace of doing nothing” appeared to be fatuous and self-indulgent nonsense.

Richard Niebuhr’s brother, Reinhold Niebuhr, agreed with Richard that Jesus had really been a pacifist. But Reinhold Niebuhr was apparently motivated by the spirit of the *Torah* that told the Hebrews, “You shall not stand idly by the blood of your neighbor.” As a Christian, Reinhold Niebuhr understood that his “neighbor” included people in distant lands.<sup>5</sup>

Reinhold Niebuhr’s spirit was the opposite of Neville Chamberlin, who betrayed Czechoslovakia in the 1938 Munich Pact, and called Hitler’s aggression against democratic Czechoslovakia “a quarrel in a far-away country between people of whom we know nothing.”

In a famous exchange of letters with his brother Richard, Reinhold Niebuhr argued that the deeper principle of the pacifist Gospels was “the law of love.” He argued that the law of love required Christians to protect the victims of fascist aggression. His views were elaborated in his book *Moral Man and Immoral Society*.<sup>6</sup> After World War II, Reinhold Niebuhr became one of the founders of Americans for Democratic Action, an organization of liberal Democrats such as Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., Hubert Humphrey, and John Kenneth Galbraith who supported President Truman’s leftist economic policies, and who also supported the President’s staunch resistance to Stalin.

Passivism, or “the grace of doing nothing,” provided a very unsatisfactory guideline for the loving Christian. Although some pacifists still quote Richard Niebuhr’s words, thoughtful pacifists of the early twenty-first century tend to emphasize that pacifism does not mean “doing nothing.” Rather, pacifism means being very active, but in a non-violent way.

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5 Reinhold Niebuhr had once been national chairman of the ecumenical Protestant pacifist Fellowship of Reconciliation. He initially broke with the pacifists over the issue of revolution. At the time of the break, Niebuhr was a Marxist, and believed that violent revolution was justifiable in some cases.

6 REINHOLD NIEBUHR, *MORAL MAN AND IMMORAL SOCIETY: A STUDY IN ETHICS AND POLITICS* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Pr.2001)(1<sup>st</sup> pub. 1932). Niebuhr believed that the Gospels were pacifist, and that the pacifism was a guide for individual human behavior. However, he argued, that the pacifist ethic could not be applied to nations, which necessarily could not operate according to a perfectly Christian ethic. Hence the title of his book. Moreover, argued Niebuhr, the pacifism of the Gospels was an “interim ethic,” based on the (incorrect) expectation that the end of history was imminent; accordingly, there was no need to consider practical implications of radical pacifist behavior. Niebuhr’s position was broadly consistent with the early Luther, who distinguished the Christian as an individual from the Christian in society. Niebuhr’s concession that perfected Christianity is pacifist left his theory open to rebuttal from people who denied the validity of his argument that social ethics were different from individual ethics.

During the Second World War, some pacifists proposed an active alternative: when the Nazi troops arrived, unopposed by military resistance, they should be greeted with Christian love. Such a greeting would be disarming, and the Nazis, seeing that the invaded population were Christian friends rather than belligerents, would realize the error of the war-like Nazi ways.

Perhaps no more foolish words have ever been written by pacifists. Richard Niebuhr, at least, could be excused for not foreseeing in 1932 what his policies would create in 1942. By 1942, any reasonable person could see that Christian hugs would not disarm Nazi thugs.

In fact, the Western pacifist policy had been assiduously attempted in Eastern Europe. When Hitler launched Operation Barbarossa in June 1941, and swiftly conquered immense swaths of Soviet territory, the Nazis forces were often greeted with cheers and flowers. The conquered people had personal experience with Josef Stalin's genocidal tyranny, and they expected that any foreign conqueror had to be at least a little better. In fact, if Hitler emulated the worst parts of how Cortez treated the Mexican Indians, or how the Muslims treated their conquered peoples, or how the Western Europeans treated their colonies, or how the Teutonic Knights treated their conquests, or how the Germans treated Eastern Europeans during World War One, the conquered Soviet peoples would have been much better off under Hitler than under Stalin. Hitler would have enjoyed tranquility, and perhaps active cooperation, in all his conquered Soviet territory, and probably would have won the war.

But the flowers and the cheers from the Eastern Europeans meant nothing to the Nazis. They intended to kill or enslave all the Slavs, and to repopulate Slavic land with Germans. The Nazis dreamt of *Lebensraum* (living room) in the East. It is doubtful that Americans would have enjoyed better treatment, had Americans followed the pacifist instructions to greet the Germans or the Japanese with Christian love; both of the main fascist powers despised the Americans as an inferior mongrel race.

So during World War II, the pacifist arguments were self-evidently futile. And if pacifists could not address the most urgent question of the day, the survival of civilization, their other theoretical arguments appeared worthless.

During the Cold War, pacifists continued to be dogged with the question "What would you do (or what would Jesus have done) about the Nazis?" And by extension, "What are you going to do about the Communists?" Or now, "What are you going to do about the Islamofascists like Bin Laden?" A typical pacifist response was to change the question: Communists were different from Nazis. (True, in that Communists killed over a hundred million, while the Nazi killed several million.) Or nuclear weapons changed everything, because they threatened total annihilation, so "Better red than dead," in the words of British philosopher Bertrand Russell.<sup>7</sup>

Winston Churchill disagreed with the last sentiment. In his 1948 book *The Gathering Storm*, Churchill wrote:

Still, if you will not fight for the right when you can easily win without bloodshed; if you will not fight when your victory will be sure and not too costly; you may come to the moment when you will have to fight with all the odds

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<sup>7</sup> Today, Russell's vision is carried forward by the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation, which was established in 1963. [www.russfound.org](http://www.russfound.org).

against you and only a precarious chance of survival. There may even be a worse case. You may have to fight when there is no hope of victory, because it is better to perish than live as slaves.

“Live free or die” is the New Hampshire state motto. The English philosopher John Stuart Mill expressed the same sentiment in the nineteenth century:

War is an ugly thing, but not the ugliest of things. The decayed and degraded state of moral and patriotic feeling which thinks that nothing is worth war is much worse. The person who has nothing for which he is willing to fight, nothing which is more important than his own personal safety, is a miserable creature and has no chance of being free unless made and kept so by the exertions of better men than himself.<sup>8</sup>

“Better red than dead” was the expression of a moral degradation whose selfish interest in their physical survival trumped all spiritual and other values. The slogan was contrary to the spirit of the all the Christian martyrs (including the pacifist martyrs) who knew that preserving their souls was infinitely more important than preserving their bodies.

I am not arguing that submission could never be preferable to death. A world run by the Ottoman Turks or by Nebuchadnezzar’s Babylon, or by the Spanish Conquistadores would be an awful world by the enlightened standards of the twenty-first century. But Istanbul, Babylon, or Madrid at least allowed the existence of some degree of civil society. Not so under Hitler, Stalin, or Mao. And not so under Islamofascism, as when the Taliban ruled Afghanistan.<sup>9</sup>

One type of pacifism has always had a coherent response. In essence, the response is “So what?” Or to elaborate: “The Gospel forbids Christians to use force, and therefore we will not, and therefore we accept the consequences. And if the consequence is the whole world enslaved or murdered by Hitler or Bin Laden, we are willing to pay the price. It’s not our responsibility to make history turn out right.” Indeed, during World War II, some Christian pacifist sects in conquered Europe paid that price, and bravely went to their deaths.

Although one can disagree with the scriptural soundness of “So what?” the position has perfect internal coherence. The problem for advocates of the position is that it is unappealing to most people, who are inclined to reject a religious ideology that leads to a dark age of ultra-tyranny and genocide. “So what?” is fine for people who are already convinced by their reading of scripture (e.g., Mennonites) or by the moral intuition in their hearts (e.g., Quakers), but “So what?” is unlikely to convince anyone who is not already convinced.

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<sup>8</sup> JOHN STUART MILL, *UTILITARIANISM* (1863).

<sup>9</sup> It is true that over the course of several generations, the Soviet Union and Communist China have evolved into states which, while not free, are much freer than the hel-holes tyrannized by Stalin and Mao. That evolution was possible precisely because the West did not surrender as the “Better red than dead” cowards had urged. The continuing existence of free societies made it possible for some ideas of freedom to penetrate the Iron Curtain. Moreover, the economic dynamism of free economies forced the Communist states to allow some liberalization, lest the Communist countries be overwhelmed by the West.

So what is the solution to the decades-long failure of pacifists to answer the question, “What would you do about Hitler?”

The recent answer has been to claim that non-violence is *more* effective than violence; in fact, violence is futile, and non-violence works. Indeed, even advocates of force are willing to concede the point in particular cases. For example, Mohandes Gandhi’s campaign of non-violence brought independence to India, whereas the Indian people might not have succeeded at violent revolution.

No serious person would deny that non-violence *sometimes* works better than violence. But if pacifism is to be universal ethic, rather than a temporary tactic, then non-violence must *always* work better than violence. So now we are back to resisting Hitler. How did non-violence work against Hitler?

Tony Campolo is a leading American evangelical Protestant. He claims that “nonviolent resistance *did* work against the Nazis. As a matter of fact, it was the only strategy that had even limited success in stopping Hitler’s demonic persecution of the Jews.”<sup>10</sup> Campolo supplies one example to support his claim: the Danish resistance to Hitler. At last, it seems, pacifists have found an answer to “What would you do about Hitler?”

### **A. Danish Resistance to Hitler**

Modern pacifist literature is rife with tales of the Danish non-violent resistance to Hitler. A highlight of the tales is how the Danish king, Christian X, wore a Jewish yellow star, and told his countrymen to do the same, so that the Germans could not identify the real Jews.

The real story is rather different, as detailed in publications from Denmark’s Institute for International Studies, Department for Holocaust and Genocide Studies.<sup>11</sup>

In the years leading up to World War II, Denmark attempted to convince other Scandinavian countries to guarantee Denmark’s southern border against German invasion. The Scandinavian countries refused to offer such a guarantee, because persistent cuts in the Danish defense budget indicated that Denmark was refusing to take its self-defense responsibilities seriously.

In the spring of 1940, Hitler gave the orders for the invasion of Norway, which had been planned since the fall of 1939. The free passage of Nazi ships through Denmark was crucial to the operation. On April 9, 1940, the Germans attacked Norway and Denmark. The Norwegians fought as best they could, until June, when the King and the rest of the government, and some remnants of the military, fled to England, to set up a government in exile.

Denmark fought for only a few hours, during which about 4,000 Danish soldiers were killed. At 7:20 A.M. on April 9, King Christian and Denmark surrendered. The *Luftwaffe* planes that were on their way to bomb Copenhagen turned back.

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10 TONY CAMPOLO, 20 HOT POTATOES CHRISTIANS ARE AFRAID TO TOUCH 166 (1993).

11 Most of this section is based on *Denmark and the Holocaust*, eds., Mette Bastholm Jensen & Steven L.B. Jensen (Njalsgade, Denmark: Institute for International Studies, Dept. of Holocaust and Genocide Studies, 2003), [http://www.dchf.dk/publications\\_dk/information/dk\\_h\\_newbook.html](http://www.dchf.dk/publications_dk/information/dk_h_newbook.html); Hans Sode-Madsen, “The Perfect Deception: The Danish Jews and Theresienstadt 1940-1945,” *Leo Baeck Yearbook*, vol. 38 (London: 1994), [www.dchf.dk/staff/sode\\_artikler/terezin.pdf](http://www.dchf.dk/staff/sode_artikler/terezin.pdf).

The Germans had offered Denmark generous surrender terms: Denmark would become a “protectorate” of the Third Reich, but Denmark would be allowed to regulate its internal affairs, and would retain its sovereignty. Officially, then, Denmark was not under hostile foreign occupation, but remained a self-governing polity, according to Germany’s statement that “Germany has no intention through its conduct, neither in the present nor in the future, to violate the political integrity or territorial independence of Denmark.”

The deal had important advantages for the Germans. First, they gained the ability to pass through Danish waters, on the way to Norway, unhindered by any Danish resistance. The free transit was critical to German success in Norway, where the Norwegians were still fighting.

One can only speculate about whether the war might have turned out differently if a well-prepared Denmark had fought to the bitter end. If Danish fortifications had allowed the Danes to carry on a land war for weeks or months, and if a powerful Danish navy had harassed and sunk German troop transports headed for Norway, the British fleet (which was still far larger than the German fleet) might have been able to join the fray. If the Germans had not been able to reinforce their Norwegian forces so easily, perhaps the Norwegians would have been able to organize more durable resistance, especially in the mountainous and rugged north.

If the Nazis had found themselves in a Norwegian quagmire in May 1940, would they have launched the invasion of France and the Low Countries that month? If the Nazis had been forced to commit a much larger number of troops and planes to Norway, would they still have been able to knock France out of the war in six weeks? It is impossible to know for sure, but it seems clear that the lightning-swift surrender of Denmark was a great benefit to the Nazis in 1940.

In the Allied nations, the Danish capitulation was viewed with disgust during the next several years. All the other nations conquered by Hitler at least managed to fight for a few weeks, not just a few hours.<sup>12</sup>

Danish acceptance of the “protectorate” provided other advantages to the Germans. The *Wehrmacht* did not need to deploy soldiers to finish the war in Denmark, or to maintain control. Denmark’s bountiful farm economy provided much-needed food to the Germans (who could not import food from overseas, due to the British naval blockade).

Nazi ideology stressed that Hitler was the savior of all the Aryan peoples, not just the Germans. Alone among the non-German Aryan nations, Denmark could plausibly be portrayed as cooperating with its Aryan big brother. Hitler himself personally approved the special arrangement for Denmark.

Many powerful Germans developed a vested interest in making sure that “The Arrangement of 9 April” continued. In countries which had been officially conquered, the German army ran the post-conquest governments. In Denmark, though, the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs was the most powerful German influence, for there was no German military government. The German Ministry was loathe to disturb the April 9 arrangement, lest foreign service officers be elbowed aside by *Wehrmacht* officers.

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12 The Grand Duchy of Luxembourg was conquered in less than day, and the government fled the night before the invasion. Since Luxembourg is a micro-state rather than an ordinary-size nation, there was not as much of a backlash as the nation’s speedy conquest.

Many German businesses and civil organizations had long-standing ties with counterparts in Denmark. These ties were undisturbed after April 9, 1940, thus giving more Germans a financial and personal interest in preserving those ties, and therefore in making sure that Denmark remained “sovereign.”

Before the war, Denmark had been extremely stringent about not accepting Jewish refugees from Germany—even refugees who had close family ties with Danish citizens. However, the Danes had no interest in persecuting their own Jewish community of about 7,000. The grateful Jews reciprocated by staying inconspicuous. Despite some grumbling, the Germans involved with Denmark did not force the Jewish issue with their Danish counterparts.

By the summer of 1942, the United States was in the war, the Soviet Union had not been knocked out of the war, and on all three major fronts, the Axis lost the turning point battles: at El Alamein in Africa, at Stalingrad in the U.S.S.R., and at Midway in the Pacific. American forces invaded and conquered Algeria and Morocco.

At about this time, stories began appearing that King Christian had defied a German order that Danish Jews be made to wear the yellow star. In some versions, the King threatened to wear the star himself and said that other Danes would do the same. In other versions, the King actually did wear the yellow star, on his morning horseback rides through Copenhagen.

Today, Danes know that the story is fabrication, but the story is still almost as widely-believed in other countries as it was when it began to appear in the democratic press in 1942-43. What did change in Denmark is that many Danes began passive resistance to the Germans—not formally resisting, but giving the Germans “the cold shoulder.”

The summer of 1943 was a disaster for the Axis, and most Danes concluded that the Germans were probably going to lose the war—perhaps very soon. Germany’s most important European ally, Italy, was knocked out of the war by an Allied invasion, and Mussolini took refuge among the Germans. On the Eastern Front, the German summer offensive at Kursk was smashed, and the Soviets reclaimed more and more territory from the Germans. In the Pacific, the Japanese were on the defensive, losing one island after another.

On August 29, 1943, after the Danes refused German requests to impose martial law, the special arrangement broke down; the *Wehrmacht* declared temporary martial law, which would last until October.

Even though the April 9 arrangement had been abrogated, the Germans attempted to maintain a degree of friendly relations with the Danes. The Danish government was no longer in power, but the permanent Danish civil service was allowed to administer most of the government. Hitler sent King Christian a warm greeting on the King’s birthday, to which the King curtly replied “my best thanks”—enraging *der Führer*.

The Germans began moving their police into Denmark, to get ready for a round-up of the Jews. The Germans had been “warned by SS officers in Denmark that Danish police would probably forcibly resist attempts to take the Jews away by force, and there was to be no fighting between Germans and Danes.”<sup>13</sup> The Danish police were still functioning, and still armed.

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13 THOMAS MERTON, *THE NONVIOLENT ALTERNATIVE* 165-67 (N.Y.: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, rev. ed. 1980)(1<sup>st</sup> published at Thomas Merton on Peace, 1971).

Martial law was supposed to be lifted by November; the German officials in Denmark—and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Berlin—continued to hope for a resumption of friendly relations.

The round-up of the Jews was scheduled for October 1 and 2. Still deferential to the Danish civil service, the Germans promised not to break into any homes, but instead procured special door-opening keys.

Incredibly, on September 28, a high-ranking German official in Denmark deliberately leaked plans for the round-up. For the Danes, the next two weeks would be their finest hour. The seven thousand Jews went into hiding, often sheltered by people whom they had never met. Danish boats smuggled the Jews to safety in neutral Sweden. Thirty Jews died while attempting to escape. Fewer than a hundred Jews remained in Denmark, where they were hidden by friendly families until the war ended.

Two of the four ships that the Germans had brought to transport the Danish Jews were destroyed by Danes with explosives.<sup>14</sup>

It is very doubtful that the Danes would have abetted the Jewish escape so thoroughly if the April 9, 1940 arrangement had not been abrogated by the Germans on August 29, 1943.

Incredibly, much of the German forces remained passive. The smuggling boats were almost never interdicted by the German navy. The German police and army in Denmark were mostly torpid. Apparently much of the German leadership in Denmark was more interested in keeping up good relations with the Danish majority than in apprehending all the Danish Jews; the officials' conciliatory policy was supported by the German Foreign Minister Joachim von Ribbentrop (who had risen to power as part of the old German aristocracy, rather than as a Nazi party hack).

Why did the Swedes give refuge to the Danish Jews? Sweden had initially balked, not wanting to disturb its status as a pure neutral. But living in Stockholm was Niels Bohr, the father of quantum mechanics and one of the greatest physicists of all time. Bohr, who was a Danish Jew, had been smuggled into Sweden a while before, so that the Germans could not use his knowledge in their atomic bomb research. Bohr was scheduled to come to the United States to work on the Manhattan Project.

Bohr had never been religious, but when he heard that Sweden was refusing entry to Danish Jewish refugees, he put his foot down. He told his Allied military contacts that he would “sit on his duff” in Stockholm for the rest of the war, unless Sweden immediately agreed to admit every Danish Jew. Soon after Bohr gave the Allies his ultimatum, Sweden reversed its policy, and offered asylum to all Danish Jews.<sup>15</sup>

Precisely why Sweden suddenly decided to change its policy 180 degrees is still unknown. However, the reasonable inference is that American and British governments informed the Swedish governments that getting Bohr into the United States was of the utmost importance. The Allies would be extremely displeased with any Swedish policy that interfered with Bohr's work for the Allies. Since the Allies appeared to be already on their way towards winning the war, the Swedes decided to accommodate the Allies on a matter of supreme significance to the Allies.

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14 ABRAM L. SACHAR, *THE REDEMPTION OF THE UNWANTED: FROM THE LIBERATION OF THE DEATH CAMPS TO THE FOUNDING OF ISRAEL* 99 (1983)99.

15 *Id.*, at 100.

So one might say that the Danish Jews were saved by the atomic bomb—or least they were saved by the Manhattan Project.

Four hundred and seventy-four Danish Jews were captured, and sent to the “model” concentration camp of Theresienstadt, near Prague. The camp was established for certain privileged Jews, such as elderly German Jews who had served in the German army during World War One. All of the Theresienstadt inmates were eventually shipped to extermination camps, except for the Danes, who were turned over to Swedish custody by the Germans in April 1945. Conditions at Theresienstadt were awful, but better than in the extermination camps. Fifty-three of the Danish inmates at Theresienstadt died. Overall, ninety-eight percent of Denmark’s Jewish population survived the war.

Thus, the Danish Jews were saved by a combination of non-violent resistance by the general population—and by a specific threat to use force by the portion of the population which was armed and trained. Denmark is a good example of how non-violent and violent tactics (or threats) can work together. But if the Danish police had not been ready to fight, many more Danish Jews would have been sent to extermination camps. Accordingly, Denmark is not an example proving that non-violence, by itself, could have stopped the Holocaust.

In any case, the Danish example could not possibly have been followed in countries such as Poland or the rest of Eastern Europe, where the Germans were uninterested in friendly relations with the population, or in allowing the pre-war government to retain a pretense of internal sovereignty. The Holocaust in these countries came to an end only because millions of Allied soldiers went to war.

The way the Danish Christians treated Danish Jews during the Second World War was admirable. In other countries, such as France, Germans who were rounding up the Jews were assisted by many Christians. The glory of Denmark’s behavior should not be tarnished by myth-making. The Danes had an opportunity to do their particular good deeds only because Denmark enjoyed a unique status in the Nazi empire. Contrary to the assertions of some modern pacifists, the Danish example was not one which could have been followed in the rest of Nazi territory.

## **B. Other Resistance to Hitler**

There was another country on Germany’s border where the Jews had a survival rate of 100 percent—even better than Denmark’s 98 percent. Not one Jew in this country was sent to a concentration camp. Unlike Denmark, which accepted hardly any Jewish refugees from other countries, this country took in a large number of Jews, especially children, from other countries—and accepted Jews who had no prior ties to the nation.

In this country, no soldiers died in battle, in contrast to the four thousand Danish soldiers who died in German *blitzkrieg* of Denmark. This fortunate country made its own good luck, by following a policy which was the opposite of Denmark’s policy of cutting military spending even as the Nazi threat grew apparent. This happy country armed itself to the teeth, and made sure that every able-bodied male was a highly trained fighter.

As historian Stephen Halbrook shows in his book *Target Switzerland: Swiss Armed Neutrality in World War II*, the behavior of the Swiss people during the war was morally exemplary—superior, indeed, to the conduct of most of the rest of Europe.<sup>16</sup> As Winston Churchill recalled, “of all the neutrals Switzerland has the greatest right to

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16 STEPHEN P. HALBROOK, *TARGET SWITZERLAND: SWISS ARMED NEUTRALITY IN WORLD WAR II* (2003).

distinction...She has been a Democratic State, standing for freedom in self-defense among her mountains, and in thought, in spite of race, largely on our side.”

Nazi maps showed that the Third Reich would eventually include Switzerland, just as it would include all portions of Europe with German-speaking people. While the majority of Switzerland’s population is German-speaking (the rest speaking French, Italian, or Romansh) the nation was virtually unanimous in praying for the defeat of Germany. Infuriated by the lack of ethnic solidarity, and by the strongly anti-Nazi stance of Switzerland’s free press, Hitler predicted that Switzerland would be “liquidated” and that he would be known as “the butcher of the Swiss.”

As Halbrook details, in every stage of the war, the Axis had good military reasons to invade Switzerland. Before the fall of France, the non-Alpine part of Switzerland offered an inviting path to sweep into France to avoid the Maginot Line. After France fell and Italy entered the war, Switzerland offered the only convenient transport of military men and supplies between Italy and Germany. After the Allied landing in Italy, Germany’s need to deploy troops swiftly into Italy became even more urgent. As the war came to conclusion in 1944-45, the Nazi leadership laid plans to make a stand in the Alps, but Switzerland stood right in the middle.

By the summer of 1940, there was only one country on Germany’s borders whose free press and rights of assembly allowed the Third Reich to be publicly and lawfully denounced as the evil empire that it was. Switzerland protected her own Jews, and sheltered many more refugees of all religious backgrounds. Had America sheltered refugees at the same per capita rate as Switzerland, the United States would have taken in over three million refugees. Instead America accepted hardly any.

In all the countries that Hitler conquered, the economy was plundered for use in the Nazi war machine. As a neutral, Switzerland did trade with Germany and Italy, and with the Allies. (For the Allied trade, the Swiss smuggled out precision ball bearings and other military equipment disguised in consumer products like watches.) But unlike in the countries which Hitler conquered, the only products that Hitler could get from Switzerland were what he could buy at full price.

*Target Switzerland* includes the maps of the evolving Germans invasion plans for “Case Switzerland.” Yet although the Germans several times massed troops on the Swiss border for an invasion, the invasion never went forward. With so many reasons to invade Switzerland, why did the Nazis desist?

The Nazis could have eventually have conquered Switzerland, but at a fearful price. The *Wehrmacht* expected 200,000 German casualties; it would have taken a very long time to remove the Swiss military from the Alpine *Reduit* to which they planned to make a stand. By the time the Swiss were defeated, every bridge and train track and everything else of value to the conquerors would have been destroyed.

The reason that Switzerland was too difficult to invade—in contrast to all the other nations which Hitler conquered in a matter of weeks—was the Swiss militia system. Unlike all the other nations of Europe, which relied on a standing army, Switzerland was (and still is) defended by a universal militia. Every man was trained in war, had his rifle at home, was encouraged to practice frequently, and could be mobilized almost instantly. The Swiss militiaman was under orders to fight to the last bullet, and after that, with his bayonet, and after that, with his bare hands. Rather than having to defeat an army, Hitler would have had to defeat a whole people.

From the *Anschluss* of Austria to the Fall of France, Hitler swallowed nation after nation where cowardly ruling elites surrendered the country to the Nazis. But such surrender would have been impossible in Switzerland. The Swiss governmental system was decentralized, with the separate twenty-six cantons, not the federal government, having the authority. The federal government did notify the Swiss people that in case of a German invasion, any claim that there had been a Swiss surrender should be disregarded as Nazi propaganda. Because the military power was in the hands of every Swiss man, the federal government would have been unable to surrender had it ever wanted to. Nothing could stop the Swiss militiamen from fighting to the very end.

America's Founders admired Switzerland as a "Sister Republic" amidst the despotisms of Europe. The American Founders, like the Swiss, understood the moral implications of a universal militia system: a people who are trained to self-reliance and responsibility will defend their freedom to the utmost. But a people who rely on a professional standing army may not have the nerve to resist tyranny.

Switzerland never had the ability to invade Germany and overthrow Hitler. But other countries did, and if they had not been so squeamish about preemptive war, the Holocaust never would have happened. In 1936, the French considered but vetoed a British proposal to invade Germany and depose Hitler. In 1938, Britain and France could have gone to war with Hitler, rather than betray Czechoslovakia in the Munich Accords.

In retrospect, we know that preemptive war by the Allies in 1936-38 would have succeeded almost instantly. The upper ranks of the German officer corps were drawn mainly from aristocratic families who looked down on Hitler as a vulgar blowhard. The officers were terrified about a war with the West, and repeatedly made plans to remove Hitler in a coup if the West attacked. It was only the repeated cowardice of Britain and France, in the face of Hitler's repeated provocations in 1936-38, that convinced the officer corps to participate wholeheartedly in the war when Hitler invaded Poland in September 1939.

In sum, the modern pacifist effort to re-write the history of World War II is wrong. Denmark's record is more complicated than the pacifist myth-making claims. The traditional understanding of the lessons of World War II is correct: the way to prevent genocide is for democracies to build powerful militaries, and to act preemptively against dictators.

## II. Leo Tolstoy

Count Leo Tolstoy (1828-1910) was one of Russia's greatest novelists. In the last third of his life, he became a Christian pacifist and anarchist. When Tolstoy met with William Jennings Bryan, the American politician, Bryan asked Tolstoy what Tolstoy would do if he saw a criminal about to rape and murder a child. Tolstoy replied that in all his seventy-five years, he had never seen such a criminal. But he had seen wars in which millions of people were killed.

In a letter, Tolstoy elaborated, declaring "None of us has ever yet met the imaginary criminal with the imaginary child."<sup>17</sup> Tolstoy, then, was like the person who

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17 Leo Tolstoy, "Certain Things Christians Cannot Do," reprinted in JOHN H. YODER, WHAT WOULD YOU DO? 48 (1983). The Tolstoy letter to Ernest Howard Crosby is reprinted in full in TOLSTOY ON CIVIL

says he does not care about starving children, because they must not exist since has never met one, nor have any of his friends ever met one. As a Russian aristocrat living a life of privilege, Tolstoy never did meet a criminal who was about to rape and kill a child. But certainly such criminals do exist. Let us enumerate a few:

- In Merced, California, on August 23, 2000, a naked man wielding a pitchfork cut the phone lines to a home, then broke in and began attacking the four children, while their parents were not home. The oldest child, fourteen-year-old Jessica Carpenter was unable to retrieve her father's guns from a locked cabinet. She ran to a neighbor's home, and begged him to use his own gun to confront the attacker. The neighbor did not do so, but 911 was called. By the time the police arrived, Jessica Carpenter's seven-year-old brother and nine-year-old sister had been stabbed to death. Jessica's father's guns were locked up in accordance with California's gun storage law. The killer was finally stopped when police officers arrived and shot him.<sup>18</sup>
- On January 29, 1998, in Tulsa, Oklahoma, a paranoid-schizophrenic snatched a two-year-old girl from her mother's arms and fled. A nearby landscaper named Gene Case saw what had happened, and ran to his car to retrieve his .45 handgun. He chased the kidnapper, caught up with him, pointed the gun at the kidnapper, and yelled "Stop! Put the child down, or I'm going to kill you!" The kidnapper released the child, and was held at gunpoint until the police arrived.<sup>19</sup>
- On January 26, 1994, in Frayser, Tennessee, two home invaders slashed the throat of a six-year-old girl, before the girl's mother shot the attackers with a .22 pistol. The girl survived, after receiving eighteen stitches.<sup>20</sup>
- The last victim of serial killer Ted Bundy was a twelve-year-old girl whom Bundy kidnapped from a school in Florida. Would a Good Samaritan have shot Bundy to thwart the kidnap-murder, or would he have agreed with Tolstoy that such a victim does not exist?

A list of all the children who have been raped or murdered would be much longer than one of Tolstoy's long books. That Tolstoy had to pretend to himself that children are never raped and killed shows the weakness of his reasoning. He fell into an extreme version of the error some pacifists make in refusing to acknowledge reality.

According to Tolstoy, the neighbor in Merced who refused to get involved by shooting the pitchfork murderer did the right thing. According to Tolstoy, the police

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DISOBEDIENCE AND NON-VIOLENCE 181-90 (1968). Tolstoy's callous letter about the child was one of his few writings on personal defense. The bulk of his work exhorted people not to participate in the military or in government. Unlike many intellectuals of his time, he did not support the establishment of a democratic government in Russia. He viewed all government as violent coercive, and he therefore favored anarchy.

18 Kimi Yoshino, *No Easy Answers: Gun Advocates Say Fear of Liability Keeps Parents From Teaching Survival Skills*, FRESNO BEE, Aug. 26, 2000; John R. Lott Jr., *Unsafe Gun Laws: Reducing Access to Guns Makes People Sitting Prey*, INVESTOR'S BUSINESS DAILY, Sept. 22, 2000; Vin Suprynowicz, *If It'll Save a Single Child ... Repeal the Gun Laws*, LAS VEGAS REVIEW-JOURNAL, Sept. 24, 2000; Erich Pratt, *When Gun Safety Locks Kill*, Aug. 16, 2001, [www.gunowners.org/op0132.htm](http://www.gunowners.org/op0132.htm).

19 Robert Waters, 'An Extraordinarily Gruesome Case,' or *Why Everyone Needs a Gun*, SIERRA TIMES, Sept. 4, 2000, [www.sierratimes.com/archive/waters/edrw090400.htm](http://www.sierratimes.com/archive/waters/edrw090400.htm)

20 Robert A. Waters, *Do Women Really Use Guns for Self-Defense?* [www.trt-md.org/articles/Do-Women-Really-Use-Guns-for-Self.htm](http://www.trt-md.org/articles/Do-Women-Really-Use-Guns-for-Self.htm); Rob Johnson, *Bullets greet burglar in Frayser*, MEMPHIS COMMERCIAL APPEAL, Jan. 27, 1994.

officers who shot the pitchfork killer, the mother who shot the home invaders, and the landscaper who threatened to shoot the kidnapper were not behaving like true Christians.

Tolstoy was correct in pointing out that many wars have resulted in millions of pointless deaths. The record of most of the wars of Tolstoy's native Russia is appalling. It is a perverse moral theory, however, that says, "Because many people died in the Crimean War, it is immoral to shoot someone who is about to rape and murder an eight-year-old girl."

In the letter, Tolstoy asked why even a non-Christian should "decide to kill the criminal in order to defend the child? By killing the former, he kills for certain; whereas he cannot know positively whether the criminal would have killed the child or not."<sup>21</sup>

Tolstoy's argument is weak. Of course one cannot know the future for certain. It is *possible* that the criminal who is thrusting a knife at the child's throat might, a millisecond before the knife strikes, repent and turn the knife away. Maybe the blade will fly off its handle, and strike the criminal in the head, rendering him unconscious. Or the girl being kidnapped might, after being raped and tortured for several days, escape before she is killed. Or the killer might miraculously be struck by lightning.

But if we are going to indulge in far-fetched hypotheticals, then it is also hypothetically possible that the Good Samaritan might not kill the criminal, despite his intention to do so. Maybe the criminal will see the Good Samaritan drawing his gun, and will then run away. Maybe the bullet will stop the criminal, but the criminal will receive timely medical care, and survive. (Most people who are shot with handguns survive, especially if the person receives medical care in the "Golden Hour" after the shooting.)

Moreover, if the Good Samaritan does not stop the criminal, how do we know that the criminal will not kill more people later?

Tolstoy's argument has a much more profound flaw, however, than its selective attention to uncertainty about the future. The lives of the murderer and the girl are not equivalent.

The girl is an innocent. She has done nothing to deserve having her right to life stolen by the criminal.<sup>22</sup>

Not so for the criminal. Consider a person who purchased a knife which he uses to chop vegetables, and who purchased matches which he uses to light dinner-time candles for family meals. The person has a right to the matches and the knife. To take away the matches and the knife from the person would be unjust; the taking would be stealing. But if the person used the knife to stab his neighbor, and used the matches to burn down the neighbor's house, the person would forfeit his property right to the matches and the knife. Taking away the matches and knife would no longer be unjust; taking them away would be a moral duty.

The killer, by using himself to murder an innocent, likewise forfeits his right to life. By using his life to commit the most heinous offense possible—to destroy an innocent's right to life—the would-be killer forfeits his own life.

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21 Tolstoy, in YODER, p. 46.

22 Professor Herbert Weschler, one of the giants of twentieth American criminal and constitutional law, wrote that all legal systems recognize the right of self-defense, because of "the universal judgment that there is no social interest in preserving the lives of the aggressors at the cost of those of their victims." Herbert Weschler, *A Rationale of the Law of Homicide*, 37 COLUMBIA L. REV. , 736 (1937).

The New Testament supports such reasoning, because it sanctions the death penalty.<sup>23</sup> A murderer forfeits his own life. And if the state may take away the murderer's forfeited life—even though execution cannot restore the life of the victim—then there is no reasonable objection to a Good Samaritan taking away the criminal's life, in order to save the life of the innocent.

Thus, in Tolstoy's one-sided hypothetical, the Good Samaritan might think "If I shoot, there is a 100% chance the killer will die. If I do not shoot, there is only a 97% chance—or perhaps only a 25% chance—that the girl will die." In this hypothetical, the moral action is to shoot. By beginning a murder attempt—by acting so that the Good Samaritan *reasonably believes* (this is the standard of American law), that the girl is in imminent danger of death—the killer has destroyed the Good Samaritan's obligation to consider the hypothetical possibility that the girl might survive.

The criminal is the one who initiated the crime; all the risks of hypotheticals must be borne by the killer, because he assumed those risks by starting the crime. It is unjust for the innocent girl to be forced to assume *any* risks. A person who gambles voluntarily risks his money; a person who makes other people reasonably believe that he is about to murder someone voluntarily risks his own life. The potential victim of a robbery does not voluntarily put his money at risk, and the girl did not voluntarily put her life at risk.

### III. Thomas Merton

Thomas Merton (1915-1968) was a Trappist Monk and writer in Kentucky. Merton strongly opposed the Vietnam War and the nuclear arms race, and was much admired by pacifists.

Merton was not, however, a pacifist. He emphatically stated that a good Catholic could not assert that war is immoral under all circumstances. Merton supported the 1956 Hungarian uprising against Soviet colonialism as a just war.

He greatly preferred non-violent resistance to war, but he did not make non-violence an absolute rule:

In practice, when nonviolent resistance is impossible, *then violent resistance must be used, rather than passive acquiescence*... Mere passive acquiescence in evil is in no sense to be dignified by the name of nonviolence. It is a travesty of Christian meekness. It is purely the sin of cowardice...confusing heroism with degenerate and apathetic passivity. Hence, even the proponent of non violence will allow that in practice a man might use force to protect the safety of his family in a fallout shelter, assuming that he was not able to solve the problem in a legitimately nonviolent manner.<sup>24</sup>

Merton warned against the smug self-righteousness of some Catholic pacifists, which he described as "moral aggression" and "a weak and veiled form of psychological aggression."<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> See *Romans* 13:4. Cf. *Acts* 25:11.

<sup>24</sup> RONALD J. MUSTO, *THE CATHOLIC PEACE TRADITION* 104 (1986), citing Thomas Merton, *Nonviolent Alternative*

<sup>25</sup> *Id.* at 251.

When Merton began writing, American Catholicism staunchly supported the American military in the Cold War. By the end of Merton's life, he had done much to move vanguard Catholic intellectuals in a different direction. Over the coming decades, the American Bishops would adopt positions which were much closer to Merton's views than to the view of the Bishops of 1960. Merton was a very important catalyst in American Christian thinking on war and peace, and a careful writer who approached his subjects with the seriousness and depth of thought they deserved.

#### **IV. Tony Campolo**

The same cannot be said about Tony Campolo, Baptist preacher and writer. He speaks very frequently to evangelical and conservative audiences, and presents himself as a conservative Christian who believes in the inerrancy of the Bible.

Some conservative Christians, though, argue that Campolo's theology is mainly New Age, and that his politics are far to the left of Campolo's close personal friend Bill Clinton.<sup>26</sup> Campolo was one of seventy church leaders who signed a statement in late 2002 declaring that war in Iraq would be "illegal, unwise, and immoral."

Campolo's presentations are based on story-telling. Consider his book *20 Hot Potatoes Christians Are Afraid to Touch*, which includes a chapter asserting that Christians must be complete pacifists. The Biblical analysis does not even rise to the level of "sketchy." He briefly acknowledges that Old Testament contains many war stories and instructions, but he offers no doctrinal reason why the war parts of the Old Testament have lost their binding moral force. (Some Christians do have such theories, but Campolo does not offer one.)

Instead, Campolo relies almost entirely on the Sermon on the Mount.<sup>27</sup> He never mentions the soldiers who were baptized in the New Testament.

Campolo also offers an unusual interpretation of one other speech of Jesus, in *Matthew 25:40*, "I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these my brethren, ye had done it unto me."<sup>28</sup> By Campolo's theory, shooting a criminal is shooting "the least of these my brethren" and therefore equivalent to shooting God. But it would be just as logical to say "an eight-year-old boy" is "the least of these my brethren" and whoever willfully fails to protect the boy from a rapist-murderer has willfully failed to protect God from a rapist-murderer.

Campolo's first extended story in the chapter is Danish resistance to Hitler. As we have seen, Campolo's story is factually wrong, and he falls for the propaganda about King Christian X wearing a yellow star. Regarding Denmark, Campolo might be excused for believing a myth which is still widely credited outside Denmark.

On the other hand, Campolo is professor emeritus of Sociology at Eastern University, and was formerly on the faculty of the University of Pennsylvania.<sup>29</sup> It is not asking too much to ask an Ivy League professor to take the time to study what he is

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26 Campolo was known as a President Clinton's favorite preacher. A famous photograph showed the two men laughing together at the funeral of Commerce Secretary Ron Brown. During the impeachment crisis, Campolo told Christians that they had a religious duty to defend President Clinton.

27 CAMPOLO, at 164-65.

28 CAMPOLO, at 167-68.

29 Eastern University has created a "Campolo School of Social Change" in his honor.

writing about—especially when the writing involves, literally, life or death decisions and the professor is telling people to let themselves be killed by criminals.

The longest story in Campolo's pacifism chapter is how the human gladiatorial battles at the Roman Coliseum were ended. Here is the story according to the Christian historian and Bishop Theodoret of Cyrillus (393- approx. 457 A.D.), in his book *Historia Ecclesiastica* (The Ecclesiastical History):

HONORIUS, who inherited the empire of Europe, put a stop to the gladiatorial combats which had long been held at Rome. The occasion of his doing so arose from the following circumstance. A certain man of the name of Telemachus had embraced the ascetic life. He had set out from the East and for this reason had repaired to Rome. There, when the abominable spectacle was being exhibited, he went himself into the stadium and, stepping down into the arena, endeavoured to stop the men who were wielding their weapons against one another. The spectators of the slaughter were indignant. and inspired by the triad fury of the demon who delights in those bloody deeds, stoned the peacemaker to death.

When the admirable emperor was informed of this he numbered Telemachus in the array of victorious martyrs, and put an end to that impious spectacle.<sup>30</sup>

The Western Roman Emperor Honorius reigned from 395 to 423 A.D.; there are no surviving Roman legal documents indicating that he abolished the gladiatorial fights. Nor are there any surviving documents showing any gladiatorial fights taking place after 404 A.D., so it is possible that the Telemachus incident really did take place.<sup>31</sup>

The Telemachus story should be an inspiring one to Christians. By sacrificing his life, a young man put an end to a cruel and degrading spectacle of slaughter.

Campolo uses the Telemachus story to conclude his chapter insisting that Christians must never kill—although the story hardly supports Campolo's conclusion. St. Augustine, whose views on Just War are entirely the opposite of Campolo's, condemned the gladiatorial death matches.<sup>32</sup> In fact, Theodoret himself apparently did not read the Telemachus story as proving the immorality of all violence. Elsewhere, Theodoret wrote, "It is a fact of nature that each sex has special functions: the women spin wool, and the men cultivate the soil and wage war."<sup>33</sup>

Campolo's book provides a nine-paragraph version of the story. He does not cite any source, but does provide much imagined detail and dialogue. In Campolo's version, there is no date for when the incident occurred, and no name for the brave young Christian Telemachus. Telemachus came from the East, but Campolo starts him in the south of France. In the historical story, Telemachus was stoned to death by the angry crowd. In Campolo's version, the entire crowd was so moved by the young monk that they silently left the Coliseum, and so did the gladiators. According to Campolo, "Caesar

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30 THEODORET, THE ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY, book 5, ch. 26.

31 PHILIP SCHAFF, HISTORY OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH, VOLUME 3: NICENE AND POST-NICENE CHRISTIANITY. A.D. 311-600 (1<sup>st</sup> pub. 1882), ch. 3, sect. 21. Internet version of 5<sup>th</sup> edition at [www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/hcc3.all.html#fnb\\_iii.vi.ix-p18.1](http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/hcc3.all.html#fnb_iii.vi.ix-p18.1). Telemachus is recognized as a saint.

32 AUGUSTINE, CONFESSION 100-01 (Henry Chadwick trans., Oxford, England: Oxford Univ. Pr., 1998)(400 A.D.)(book 6, ch. 8).

33 Theodoret, "The Cure of Pagan Diseases," ch. 9, excerpted in MORALITY AND ETHICS IN EARLY CHRISTIANITY (Jan L. Womer trans. & ed., 1987), p. 126.

himself slipped away” from the Coliseum. In the historical story, the Emperor Honorius was not at the Coliseum, but heard about the stoning of Telemachus later.

There are serious Christian ethicists who have written thoughtful books which have policy positions similar to Campolo’s. It would be reckless, though, for any person to base an important decision in her life merely on Campolo’s superficial and sloppy work.

## IV. Stanley Hauerwas

A Theology professor at Duke University, Stanley Hauerwas was raised a Methodist, but now calls himself a “High Mennonite” because he believes the Mennonites have the best Christian answer to the problem of violence.

In *The Peaceable Kingdom: A Primer in Christian Ethics*, Hauerwas argues that Christians should imitate the life of Christ. The exclusive focus on imitation allows Hauerwas to ignore the statements in the New Testament about the legitimacy of violence.<sup>34</sup>

Hauerwas looks selectively at the life of Christ, ignoring the story about Jesus using violence to drive the moneychangers from the Temple. Likewise, Hauerwas places great emphasis on Jesus refusing to use physical means to defend himself from arrest and execution. Yet Hauerwas draws no lesson at all from Jesus’s refusal to use legal means or prayer to defend himself from arrest and execution.

Hauerwas is deeply authoritarian. He says that he has “a general distaste of liberal regimes”—meaning democratic regimes founded on the liberal principles of the Enlightenment.<sup>35</sup> Pointing out that “modern, liberal democracy” bombed Hiroshima and Dresden during World War II, and fought the Vietnam War, Hauerwas asks rhetorically, “This is the political system that must be preserved in order for Christians to be politically responsible?”<sup>36</sup>

Well, yes. If one grants Hauerwas’ assumption that Hiroshima, Dresden, and Vietnam were all crimes against humanity, one must still recognize that modern liberal democracies commit fewer crimes against humanity—against their own people and against foreigners—than do other forms of government. Democracies almost never start wars against each other—a fact which suggests that people who want peace would do well do work for the spread of democracy worldwide.

As for Hauerwas’ litany of alleged war crimes, the Vietnam War was a failed effort to prevent the imposition of genocidal Stalinist tyranny on Southeast Asia.<sup>37</sup>

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34 STANLEY HAUERWAS, *THE PEACEABLE KINGDOM: A PRIMER IN CHRISTIAN ETHICS* (1983).

35 *Christian Peace: A Conversation between Stanley Hauerwas and John Milbank*, in *MUST CHRISTIANITY BE VIOLENT?* 208 (Kenneth R. Chase & Alan Jacobs eds., 2003).

36 STANLEY HAUERWAS & WILLIAM H. WILLIMON, *RESIDENT ALIENS* (1989).

37 There is a plausible case to be made the Vietnam War was not a Just War, according to traditional criteria. First of all, President Lyndon Johnson grossly deceived the American public and Congress during his escalation of American involvement in the war. Accordingly, the war was never truly authorized by proper authority, because those authorities (the public and Congress) were deliberately prevented from making an informed decision.

Second, a Just War must have some reasonable possibility of success. However, as the war continued, it became increasingly clear that the Stalinist regime in the North would under no circumstances

Hiroshima led to a net saving of lives, including Japanese civilian lives. The alternative to ending the war by the atomic bomb or by an invasion with many more casualties was a treaty leaving the Japanese military dictatorship in charge of the country. Dresden and its suburbs contained legitimate targets, including factories which made military gunsights, radar components, fuses for anti-aircraft rounds, gas masks, and engines and cockpit components for military aircraft. Estimates of the casualties at Dresden were falsely inflated by Nazi propaganda, and later by Communist propaganda.<sup>38</sup>

Some modern liberal democracies practice separation of church and state, whereas hardly any non-democratic nations do. For supporters of religious freedom, separation is one of the elements of modern liberal democracy which makes democracy worth fighting for. Hauerwas disagrees. He complains that “the American experiment with separation of church and state has been deeply destructive to the practice of Christianity, as to every other religion.”<sup>39</sup>

His claim is quite wrong. Attendance rates at Christian churches in the United States are vastly higher than in European nations which had (and in many cases, still have) officially established religions with state support.<sup>40</sup> Does true Islam flourish the Islamic nations which make it a crime to raise questions about interpretation of the *Koran*? How can people develop a genuine religious conscience if state power imposes only a single “faith” and prevents them from thinking for themselves, and from learning about diverse understandings of the state religion or other religions?

According to Hauerwas, the war on terrorism is wrong, because terrorists are murderers and “you do not go to ‘war’ against murderers. Instead you try to arrest them.”<sup>41</sup> Yet when terrorists have a state which provides the terrorists with a safe haven and training facilities, and the state is governed according to the terrorists’ wishes, then going to war with that state makes sense. The United States did so in Afghanistan.

Stanley Hauerwas and Tony Campolo agree that Americans have too much freedom, too much prosperity, and not nearly enough government. Because Hauerwas is so timid about confronting the hard arguments against his position, he is much less

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abandon its goal of conquering the South. The only way to end the war would have been to change the regime in North Vietnam. Regime change would have required an American invasion of the North. American policy-makers were understandably reluctant to invade the North, for fear of provoking direct intervention by North Vietnam’s patron Communist China.

In addition, the American-backed regime in the South was corrupt and incompetent, and had little support among the people of South Vietnam.

38 FREDERICK TAYLOR, DRESDEN : TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 1945 ( 2004.)

39 Stanley Hauerwas & Paul J. Griffiths, *War, Peace & Jean Bethke Elshtain: An Exchange*, FIRST THINGS (Oct. 2003), at 42.

40 For example, England’s population is approximately 67 million, but only about half a million people attend a Church of England service on a particular Sunday. Edward T. Oakes, *Luther, the Movie*, FIRST THINGS, Jan. 2004, at 20. Overall, only eight percent of Britons attend church. Patrick Goodenough, *British Churches Face Worst Attendance Decline Ever*, CNSNEWS.COM, Aug. 30, 2000. Said Richard Cardinal Cushing, then-Archbishop of Boston, “I don’t know of anywhere in the history of Christianity where the Catholic Church, the Protestant church, or any other church has made greater progress than in the United States of America; and in my opinion the chief reason is that there is no union of church and state.” *The Cardinal’s Talk*, BOSTON GLOBE (Jan. 26, 1964), at A7.

41 HAUERWAS & GRIFFITHS, at 43.

persuasive author than the man whom Hauerwas acknowledges as his mentor, John Howard Yoder, perhaps the greatest pacifist writer of all time.<sup>42</sup>

## V. John Howard Yoder

John Howard Yoder (1927-1997) was a Mennonite ethicist who took full advantage of the ecumenical spirit of the American Christianity during the latter half of the twentieth century. He taught at Goshen Biblical Seminary (a Mennonite school) and at the University of Notre Dame (the most famous Catholic school in the U.S.). At Notre Dame, he was a leading scholar at the “Joan B. Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies,” which was funded by Joan Kroc, the late widow of the founder of the McDonalds global empire.<sup>43</sup> For most of American history, the Mennonites, like other Anabaptists such as the Shakers, had very little influence in the ethical debates conducted among Catholics and the large Protestant sects. Yoder, though, became quite influential among late-twentieth century Catholic ethicists.<sup>44</sup>

According to the *New York Times* obituary of Yoder,

“After World War II and the criticism of pacifism by Reinhold Niebuhr, Christian nonviolence had lost credibility,” said Stanley Hauerwas, a prominent Christian ethicist much influenced by Mr. Yoder.

“Yoder turned that around,” said Mr. Hauerwas.<sup>45</sup>

Without disparaging the rhetorical genius of Tertullian or Menno Simons, it is fair to say that Yoder’s enormous body of scholarship might be considered the best defense of Christian pacifism ever written. Yoder took care to understand, rather than merely caricature, opposing arguments. One of his books, *Nevertheless: The Varieties and Shortcomings of Religious Pacifism*, examined different theories of pacifism, and acknowledged the strongest arguments against them. Yoder argued that although all pacifist theories had serious flaws, nevertheless the anti-pacifist arguments had even greater flaws.

Another Yoder book, *When War is Unjust: Being Honest in Just-War Thinking*, did not attempt to argue against the principle of Just War, although Yoder abhorred the principle. Instead, Yoder surveyed the various Just War rules which had been articulated by Christian thinkers, and wove them together to argue that, as a practical matter, it was doubtful that any modern wars could be considered just; perhaps none were.

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42 Martin Luther King, Jr., was very effective pacifist leader, but someone who plagiarizes his Ph.D. thesis can hardly be considered a great writer. Mohandes Gandhi was a great pacifist writer, but Yoder did a much better job than Gandhi of addressing critical arguments against his position. From a purely stylistic viewpoint, Tertullian was incomparable. Even in translation, the brilliant wit of his Latin rhetoric shines through. However, when content is considered, Yoder wrote more persuasively, since Yoder wrote for a diverse Christian audience, whereas Tertullian talked himself into a very small corner of eccentric and extremist doctrine, and ultimately became a heretic.

43 LISA SOWLE CAHILL, *LOVE YOUR ENEMIES: DISCIPLESHIP, PACIFISM, AND JUST WAR THEORY* 226 (1994).

44 Drew Christiansen, *A Roman Catholic Response*, in JOHN HOWARD YODER, *WHEN WAR IS UNJUST: BEING HONEST IN JUST WAR THINKING* 102-03 (2001).

45 Peter Steinfels, *John H. Yoder, Theologian at Notre Dame, Is Dead at 70*, N.Y. TIMES, Jan. 7, 1998.

Yoder's writing style was thoughtful and temperate. He was just the opposite of people who call themselves "pacifists" because they are against physical violence, but who overflow with rage against people who disagree.<sup>46</sup>

Yoder's career is a model for writers and scholars who have a passionate belief about an ethical idea, but who wish to produce scholarship which reaches out to skeptics and critics in a positive intellectual way, rather than merely reinforcing the inclinations of the already-convinced.

### **A. Is it Wrong to Resist a Racist Murderer?**

Nobody is perfect, Yoder would be the first to acknowledge; and even a scholar as great as Yoder may sometimes become so carried away that he writes things which are indefensible. Perhaps the most awful words Yoder ever wrote came when Yoder adopted the theories of Frantz Fanon. Fanon was a Marxist psychiatrist who wrote *The Wretched of the Earth* (published in 1961, but still enormously influential on campuses today). The book described the Algerian anti-colonial war against France, and extolled the purifying force of violence, especially racial terrorism of natives against the distinct "species" of whites and their native allies. Fanon inspired murderous racists and hatemongers around the world, including the Black Panthers in the United States. Yoder used Fanon to make the point that it might be immoral for a crime victim to defend her life, because

the offender might be an oppressed person (as in the theories of Frantz Fanon), whose human dignity is dependent on rising up and destroying a symbol of oppressive order (an innocent symbol, true, but that makes no difference for the psychic need of the former slave).<sup>47</sup>

Yoder, citing Fanon, was suggesting that an innocent woman may have a moral obligation to let herself be murdered by a racist, because the murder fulfills the alleged "psychic need" of a racist. After the American Civil War, many Southerners felt humiliated, and viewed the victorious Union forces as oppressive and exploitive colonizers. Some of those Southerners developed a "psychic need" to empower themselves by killing or terrorizing people who were associated with the Northern power structure—such as Northern reformers or their Southern allies (freed blacks). All sorts of wicked people have felt a "psychic need" to murder the innocent; Charles Manson, Ted Bundy, Eric Harris, and Dylan Klebold had "psychic needs." Any decent system of religion or psychotherapy will try to prevent people from acting on the "psychic need" to murder innocents, rather than inciting murder (as Fanon does) or criticizing victims who resist (as Yoder did).

In any case, the innocent victim has psychic needs of her own, including staying alive. There is no reason to prefer the psychic needs of a racist murderer to the psychic needs of an innocent victim.

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46 Reinhold Niebuhr received hate mail from people who were furious that was urging resistance to Hitler. He once remarked, "I wish some of these pacifists would hate Hitler more and me less." ELISABETH SIFTON, *THE SERENITY PRAYER: FAITH AND POLITICS IN TIMES OF PEACE AND WAR* 226 (2003). Among modern "peace protesters", there is no shortage of people overflowing with hatred of George Bush and filled with excuses for tyrants.

47 JOHN H. YODER, *WHAT WOULD YOU DO?* 19 (1983). Parentheses in original.

## B. Is there a Duty to be a Martyr?

A more powerful argument of Yoder was that the deaths of martyrs have spread Christianity. “These deaths of Christian disciples make a greater contribution to the cause of God and to the welfare of the world than their staying alive at the cost of killing would have done.”<sup>48</sup>

Here, Yoder was indisputably right. But the fact that martyrdom can produce great spiritual results does not mean that martyrs cannot resist. The number of martyrs who worked very hard not to be martyrs is huge. Some hid or fled and were caught. Thomas More used every legal trick in the book to try to keep England’s King Henry VIII from turning More into a martyr. Joan of Arc did her best to use military force to keep the English from capturing her, and making her a martyr. What almost all the martyrs have in common is that once they are captured, they refused to renounce their faith.

Yoder’s rationale about the good which flows from martyrdom proves too much. The rationale proves the wrongfulness of doing *anything* to resist martyrdom. After all, if your being tortured to death by the secret police will forever after redound to the glory of Christianity, then hiding from the secret police would be just as wrong as shooting the secret policeman; either course of action deprives the body of Christianity of a martyr.

Suffering under persecution is not the only kind of suffering that can produce holy results. The list of saints contains many names of people who bravely endured painful illnesses or terrible disabilities. The spiritual glory of their suffering does not mean that a person should *try* to get sick, or that she should refuse medical care designed to kill the disease, or that a doctor who kills the germs or parasites is frustrating the glory of martyrdom.

Yoder amplified the “choose death” duty to martyrdom by pointing to the example of Jesus:

Christians have held that the death of a Christian believer, as the result of his behaving in a Christian way at the hands of the agents of evil, can become through no merit of his or her own a special witness, and a monument to the power of God...Why not accept suffering? Jesus did.<sup>49</sup>

Why not abjure marriage? Jesus did. What not use a whip to drive hypocrites out of the biggest church in town and vandalize property in the church? Jesus did. Why not act so that your family believes you are insane, and tries to have you put away? Jesus did.<sup>50</sup> Why not speak about your mother disrespectfully in public? Jesus did.<sup>51</sup> Just because the Second Person in the Trinity did something does not mean that everyone else must.

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48 YODER, WHAT WOULD YOU DO? at 26.

49 Yoder, quoted in HAUERWAS, at 125.

50 Mark 3:21. See also John 10:20.

51 Luke 8:19-21. Yoder argues that the *only* action of Jesus which Christians should imitate is the crucifixion, and that the imitation of the crucifixion should be all-encompassing. JOHN HOWARD YODER, THE POLITICS OF JESUS: VICIT AGNUS NOSTER 95 (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Pub., 2003)(1<sup>st</sup> pub. 1972)(“Only at one point, only on one subject—but then consistently, universally—is Jesus our example: in his cross.”)

### C. Yoder's Alternatives to Using Force

Pacifists are commonly asked “What would you do if someone were attacked by a murderous criminal?” Tolstoy’s answer was to dismiss the question, since he had never personally seen such a criminal. Many other pacifists also offer glib and unconvincing responses. Yoder, though, engaged the question head-on, in a short book titled *What Would You Do?*

If a friend were attacked, said Yoder, “I might use nonlethal force or a ruse.”<sup>52</sup> Elsewhere, he wrote, “I would defend the innocent victim of an attack; what I deny is that the intention justifies killing the assailant.”<sup>53</sup>

There are some situations in American law when a person may use lethal force when non-lethal force would suffice. One of these is the home protection laws in states such as Colorado. Under Colorado law, when a criminal enters a home to commit a violent crime against someone in the home, lethal force may always be used.<sup>54</sup> In recent years, many states have enacted “Castle Doctrine” laws applying similar rules to home invasions, or, in fewer states, to violent felony attacks in public places. Even those laws, however, may be seen as a legislative decision to protect crime victims from being second-guessed by District Attorneys. In any case, standard non-pacifist Christian ethics would counsel against deadly force if the victim were sure that lesser force would suffice.

Yoder argued that there are certain things Christians may never do. He was plainly right; for example, Christians may never commit adultery or worship idols, according to Augustine and Aquinas. Yoder included killing on his list of forbidden acts. Yet Yoder’s discussion of what he *would* do to defend the innocent includes two arguably forbidden acts.

First, Yoder would use nonlethal violence. Christian pacifists do not simply rely on “Thou shalt not kill” from the Sixth Commandment. They rely on various New Testament passages, such as the Sermon on the Mount and other New Testament which enjoin violence, according to the pacifist reading. *None* of these passages make a distinction between lethal and non-lethal violence. The Sermon on the Mount does not say “If someone strikes you the cheek with his right hand, hit him back, but do not kill him.” The Jerusalem council described in *Acts* did not instruct Christians to “abstain from blood, but it still alright to make someone bleed if you do not kill them.” Paul’s *Epistle to the Romans* did not tell Christians “Whosoever resisteth the power [of rulers] resisteth the ordinance of God, but ye may resist with sublethal force.” If one reads the passages as mandating pacifism, then the pacifist mandate makes no allowance for nonlethal force.

Yoder might also use “a ruse.” Augustine, however, argued that lying is never acceptable for a Christian. Augustine’s view was that lying is always evil, and Christians were never permitted to choose the lesser of two evils. The New Testament contains nothing which justifies lying. Indeed, if the example of Jesus’ martyrdom is the controlling example for Christian behavior, then we see that Jesus did not use “a ruse” to escape crucifixion. Jesus simply could have lied to the Sanhedrin and to Pontius Pilate: “I don’t know what these accusations are all about. I definitely never claimed to be the son

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52 YODER, *WHAT WOULD YOU DO?* at 28.

53 JOHN HOWARD YODER, *NEVERTHELESS: VARIETIES OF RELIGIOUS PACIFISM* 31 (1971).

54 Colo. Rev. Stats., § 18-1-704.5.

of God or the king of the Jews. Those claims are just malicious rumors. I deny them all.” With lies, Jesus might have escaped conviction.<sup>55</sup>

Yoder has other alternatives: kind words or words of moral authority might dissuade the attacker.<sup>56</sup> There are certainly times when words do work. American law forbids the use of force if words would suffice to stop a crime in progress. But we need to know what do after the words have failed, and the violent attack is continuing.

Yoder might also hope or pray for miraculous deliverance.<sup>57</sup> Hope and prayer are reasonable strategies for Christians, especially when the only other alternative is an act which is always and everywhere forbidden to Christians. Miracles do happen, but sometimes they do not. Still, if one accepts Yoder’s premise that lethal force is always and everywhere wrong, then prayer may be the only course of action. (Even though Jesus refused to rescue himself through prayer.)

Yoder pointed to Jesus’ statement that anyone who wishes to follow him must be willing to forsake his family. Yoder used the point to rebut the notion that moral responsibility requires a Christian to use violence to protect his family.<sup>58</sup> After all, many Christian thinkers would not allow a Christian to worship idols in order to protect his family. So if violence is as intrinsically immoral as idol worship, the Christian should let his family be killed, rather than use violence to save them.

#### **D. Heaven and Hell**

Yoder also examined the implications of Christian belief in the afterlife:

it would be most likely that my killing the attacker would seal for him that negative destiny [hell]. I would take away from him any possibility of repentance and faith. I would be doing this in order to save from death someone who—pardon the piety, but it is a meaningful Christian stance—is “ready to meet her Maker.” To keep out of heaven temporarily someone who wants to go there anyway, I would consign to hell immediately someone whom I am in the world to save.<sup>59</sup>

This argument, too, has force, but in a more limited context than Yoder acknowledged. An Italian Catholic Priest who defends the right of gun ownership for self-defense explains that if he personally were attacked by a murderer, he would let the murderer kill him, rather than kill the murderer. The Priest would make the choice because he knows he is in a state of grace, and therefore certain of going to heaven. He would let the murderer live, so that the murderer might later repent his evil ways and might gain salvation.<sup>60</sup>

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55 The Old Testament includes many ruses in the service of a righteous cause, but if Old Testament examples are a legitimate guide for Christian behavior, then the much more numerous examples of Old Testament violence and killing would legitimize Christian violence and killing.

56 YODER, WHAT WOULD YOU DO? at 28.

57 *Id.*

58 *Id.*, at 39.

59 *Id.*, at 40. Parenthetical added.

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“Shoot, shoot, shoot,” Father Giorgio Giorgi said from the pulpit of his church in Retorbido, near Pavia, Italy, during a sermon about a year ago...[Confronted by a criminal] “I might let him kill me,” he added. “Indeed, if I killed a bandit, I should

Accordingly, by Yoder's reasoning, a victim who is certain that he is going to heaven might choose to let the murderer kill him.

But the reasoning breaks down when third parties are involved. The Good Samaritan who is wondering whether to save the girl cannot know for certain the status of her salvation. If he knows her well, he might be able to make an educated guess, but he cannot know her inner thoughts; perhaps she is outwardly pious and good, but, unbeknownst to the Good Samaritan, has secretly begun molesting another child, or has become an atheist—even though she has not told anyone, and attends church with her parents. If the Good Samaritan does not know the victim at all—he has encountered a crime in progress while going for a walk in the park late at night—he cannot even guess at the victim's salvific status.

Moreover, even if we are certain that the victim will go to heaven, if the murderer is not stopped, the murderer might later kill someone else, and that next victim might be a person in a state of sin who would be denied a longer life in which she might repent.

Regardless of whether the victim in a state of grace, she might have family, co-workers, and friends for whom her life is a blessing. If she is currently saved (spiritually), she might bring many other people to salvation. If she is not saved, she still might live a life that helps other people find salvation. In contrast, it is much less likely that the criminal is leading a life which helps other people find spiritual salvation. The weight of the probabilities suggests that the future life of the victim might bring much more good to other people than the future life of the killer.

Finally, some but not all Christians believe in predestination. If the Christian does believe in predestination, then Yoder's argument is irrelevant. A person is predestined to be saved or damned. The Good Samaritan cannot change the killer's salvific destiny, but the Good Samaritan can save the life of the innocent.

## VI. Violence Solves Many Things

Broadly speaking, there are two major strains of pacifist argument.<sup>61</sup> One strain argues that violence is ineffective. Some adherents of this view believe that they win the argument with platitudes such as “violence never solves anything” or “violence begets violence.”<sup>62</sup>

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presume to send him to Hell, because he's not in the Grace of God. So it would be better for me to die, because, theoretically, I should always be in the Grace of God, given my job. But the father of a family is not a priest. He has the right, and before it the duty, to defend his wife, his children, and his property.”

Carlo Stagnaro, “Christians and Guns” (Mar. 30, 2002), [web.3b-isolazioni.com/portolibero/home/home-detail.asp?ID=21](http://web.3b-isolazioni.com/portolibero/home/home-detail.asp?ID=21)

61 Yoder argued that there is no single pacifist position. Even so, some broad generalizations can be made, with the understanding that there will always be exceptions.

62 Or “Violence never solves problems. It only creates new and more complicated ones.” Martin Luther King, Jr., *Facing the Challenge of a New Age*, in *PEACE IS THE WAY: WRITINGS ON NONVIOLENCE FROM THE FELLOWSHIP OF RECONCILIATION* 182 (Walter Wink ed., 2000). Or “violence never attains the objective it sets up.” J. Lasserre, *Révolution et non-violence*, *LE MONDE* (Apr. 27, 1967), *quoted in* JACQUES ELLUL, *VIOLENCE: REFLECTIONS FROM A CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE* 103 (Cecelia Gaul Kings trans., 1969).

The “ineffectiveness” version of pacifism is in some ways not a truly pacifist moral theory, but instead a variant of Just War reasoning. Just War requires a consideration of, among other things, the reasonable likelihood of success. If there is no prospect for success, then Just War theory would forbid fighting. So if violence never solves anything, then violence could never be just.

Whether or not violence does solve things is an empirical question. Or in Just War terms, the question is a “prudential” one.

“Violence never solves anything” is the ethical equivalent of flat-earth geography. It is a purportedly empirical claim which is contradicted by ample and obvious evidence.

Unless you want to abolish the police, then you cannot really believe that “violence never solves anything” or that “violence begets violence.” The police carry weapons and use them; even British Bobbies of the nineteenth century carried nightsticks. The police use weapons and violence when necessary to apprehend criminals. Societies create police because they believe that police violence (as well as the deterrent threat of police violence) leads to *less* violence.

When you watch the evening television news, you sometimes see stories such as “Policeman thwarts kidnapping by wounding kidnapper” or “Rapist stopped when policeman subdues him with billy club.” No reasonable person sees such stories and thinks, “Oh how terrible. The policeman used violence, and since violence begets violence, we are sure to have even more violence in the future.” Instead, rational people think “Oh good. Because the criminal was stopped and arrested, we will probably have a little less violence in the future. At least that criminal will not be attacking anyone else for a while.”

Most people think the same thing when citizens who do not work for the government stop a crime. If the newspaper headlines read, “Brave Students Wrestle School Shooter to the Ground, Breaking His Arm,” or “Elderly Woman Shoots Burglar; DNA Tests Identify Him as Serial Murderer,” all people who are governed by natural reason and ordinary human decency are happy that the crime was thwarted. They believe that the people who stopped the crimes reduced violence, and did not beget violence.

Every year, at least a hundred thousand Americans (according to the lowest estimates) or a several million Americans (according to the highest estimates) successfully use gun violence, or the threat of gun violence, to thwart violent criminal attacks.<sup>63</sup> Less violent crime, less violence.

At the national level, history tells many success stories for violence. Violence begat American independence, Greek independence, and Swiss independence. Violence kept the United States united, and then freed the slaves. Violence prevented Napoleon

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63 Gary Kleck & Marc Gertz, *The Illegitimacy of One-Sided Speculation: Getting the Defensive Gun Use Estimate Down*, 87 J. CRIM. L. & CRIMINOL. 1460 (1997)(approximately 2.5 million defensive uses); Tom W. Smith, *A Call for a Truce in the DGU War*, 87 J. CRIM. L. & CRIMINOL. 1468 (1997)(hundreds of thousands of defensive uses). The National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS), conducted by the Census Bureau, estimates about 110,000 annual defensive gun uses. However, the does not specifically ask about defensive gun use. Rather, it asks people if they did anything to resist the criminal; if a person did several things (e.g., shout for help, draw a gun, and try to reason with the attacker, the survey form only allows for one form of resistance to be recorded). Most defensive gun uses involving brandishing the gun, rather than firing it. For a thorough discussion, see GARY KLECK, *TARGETING GUNS: FIREARMS AND THEIR CONTROL* (1997).

from becoming dictator of Europe, and prevented Hitler and Hirohito from becoming dictators of Eurasia. The threat of violence, including nuclear violence, deterred Stalin and the Soviets from conquering Western Europe. Violence ended the Holocaust, established the modern state of Israel, and stopped the Arabs from driving the Jews into the sea in 1948 and 1967. Violence removed the Ceausescu communist dictatorship in Rumania. Violence removed Afghanistan as a secure training base for worldwide terrorists in 2001. Violence kept United Airlines flight 93 from being crashed into Washington, D.C.

Pacifists point out, quite correctly, that non-violence can be successful, and is sometimes *more* effective than violence. Gandhi's non-violence ended British rule in India, and the People Power movement in the Philippines removed the Marcos dictatorship in 1986.<sup>64</sup>

Only a person who is willfully blind to history can deny that violence and non-violence can both be effective.

The response of some pacifists to these obvious historical and social facts is to insist that violence must be *perfectly* effective. The pacifists point that World War II left Stalin in control of half of Europe. They point out that the War Between the States did not solve the problem of racism. However, the war was not fought for racial equality, so it is unfair to call the war a failure because it did not achieve an objective that the war never had. The war did end up eliminating slavery; the freedmen after the war were victims of pervasive discrimination, but discrimination is not as bad as having one's children sold to an owner in another state.

There is not much which humans can do which is *perfectly* effective. If perfection is the standard, then non-violence fails the test too. The peaceful People Power revolution in the Philippines has left the Philippines with many social problems, including a terrorist Islamic insurgency which was more effectively suppressed by the police state of Ferdinand Marcos. Gandhi's non-violent movement for Indian independence failed to produce a united India, and led to the creation of the Islamic state of Pakistan, which has suppressed civil liberty and abused non-Muslims much more severely than the British colonialists did. Non-violence by the Eastern European Slavs towards the Nazis only facilitated the Nazi crimes against humanity.

Non-violence by conscientious people begets violence by lone criminals and by criminal governments. Non-violence begat the worst violence in history, by paralyzing democracies from acting against Fascism when victory would have been easy.

## VII. The Civil Rights Movement

Pacifists often cite the American Civil Rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s as proof of the efficacy of non-violent resistance. The reality is more complex.

Under the leadership of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., the civil rights movement did engage in a wide variety of non-violent actions, such as bus boycotts, lunch counter sit-

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64 The Philippines was a client state of the United States, so Ferdinand Marcos was constrained by American public opinion. Indeed, when he decided to hold an election, he made the announcement on an American television show, rather than in a speech to the Filipino people. A dictator who was not worried about keeping the right side of democratic public opinion in his patron nation would be less vulnerable to non-violent tactics than Marcos was.

ins, and demonstrations. Some of these, such as the Montgomery bus boycott, succeeded quickly and directly. At other times, the benefits came more indirectly, but were still substantial. For example, when Birmingham, Alabama, police used German Shepherd attack dogs and fire hoses against peaceful protesters, the images shown on national television news played a major role in turning northern public opinion in favor of the civil rights protestors. The images showed that it was the racist police, and not the civil rights protestors, who were guilty of destroying public order. The changes in northern public opinion helped pave the way for Congressional passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

But part of the civil rights story has been ignored by pacifist myth-makers. That part is the great extent to which civil rights activists armed themselves for protection against the Ku Klux Klan and other terrorists.

White supremacist tactics in the 1960s were just as violent as they had been in the first Ku Klux Klan era, after Reconstruction. Then, the Klan would methodically disarm the freedmen in a community; after the freedmen were defenseless, the Klan would impose its reign of terror.<sup>65</sup>

In the 1960s, over 100 civil rights workers were murdered. The U.S. Department of Justice mostly refused to intervene to prosecute the Klan or to protect civil rights workers. Help from the local police was often out of the question; Klan dues were sometimes collected at the local station.<sup>66</sup>

Many blacks and civil rights workers armed for self-defense. John Salter, a professor at Tougaloo College and NAACP leader during the early 1960s, wrote “No one knows what kind of massive racist retaliation would have been directed against grass-roots black people had the black community not had a healthy measure of firearms within it.” Salter personally had to defend his home and family several times against attacks by night riders. When Salter fired back, the night riders, cowards that they were, fled. The unburned Ku Klux Klan cross in the Smithsonian Institution was donated by a civil rights worker whose shotgun blast drove Klansmen away from her driveway.<sup>67</sup>

Many civil rights advocates and blacks viewed nonviolence as a useful tactic for certain situations, not as a moral injunction to let oneself be murdered on a deserted road in the middle of the night. Based in local churches, the Deacons for Defense and Justice set up armed patrol car systems in cities such as Bogalusa and Jonesboro, Louisiana; they completely succeeded in deterring Klan and other attacks on civil rights workers and black residents. Sixty chapters of the Deacons were formed throughout the South.<sup>68</sup>

Martin Luther King, Jr., personally chose not to own a gun, but he also explicitly defended the right of self-defense. In 1959, the annual convention of the National

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65 STEPHEN P. HALBROOK, *FREEDMEN, THE FOURTEENTH AMENDMENT, AND THE RIGHT TO BEAR ARMS, 1866-1876* (1998).

66 John Salter, *Social Justice Community Organizing and the Necessity for Protective Firearms*, in *THE GUN CULTURE AND ITS ENEMIES* 19-23 (William R. Tonso ed., 1990).

67 *Id.*

68 Richard Maxwell Brown, *The American Vigilante Tradition*, in *THE HISTORY OF VIOLENCE IN AMERICA* 203, 217 n. 150 (Hugh Davis Graham & Ted Robert Gurr eds., 1969). After an especially violent white supremacist group began a terror campaign in Meridian, Mississippi, local blacks and their allies formed an armed self-protection group which successfully defended homes and churches. JACK NELSON, *TERROR IN THE NIGHT: THE KLAN'S CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE JEWS* 108-09 (1993). See also *Deacons for Defense* (Showtime Entertainment, 2003)(cable television movie and DVD).

Association for the Advancement of Colored People resolved, “we do not deny but reaffirm the right of individual and collective self-defense against unlawful assaults.”<sup>69</sup> King supported the resolution, explaining that violence “exercised in self-defense” was “moral and legal” everywhere. King pointed out that even Gandhi did not condemn self-defense.<sup>70</sup>

In short, the civil rights movement succeeded because of the combination of highly-public acts non-violence *plus* private readiness to use violence against racial terrorists.

The claims of some pacifists that non-violence is always more powerful than violence cannot stand up to historical scrutiny. Sometimes non-violence may work better, and sometimes non-violence on one front works wonderfully when supported by violence on another front. From a prudential viewpoint, non-violence always deserves careful consideration. However, a rational person will sometimes conclude that pacifism is not an effective option in certain situations.

The assertion that non-violence is *always* more effective than violence is implausible. As an ethical standard, absolute non-violence is untenable, if the practical consequences are taken seriously.

## VIII. Too Pure to Save a Life

An alternative version of pacifism argues that we do not need to look to the real-world results of pacifism. God simply forbids violence, and man’s duty is simply to obey, without regard for social utility. By this theory, violence is forbidden to Christians in much the same way that pork and shellfish are forbidden to Orthodox Jews: God prohibits it, and that is the end of the question.

This view, unlike the results-oriented view, is immune to criticism on grounds of efficacy. A skeptic might point that that pacifism by victims would lead to Hitler or Stalin or Bin Laden murdering millions, or conquering many nations, or even conquering the whole world, exterminating free all religions, and imposing worship of a false and wicked totalitarian god. The ritual purity pacifist could reply, “So what? If that’s what God wants, then that’s what God will get.” To argue against this view based on real-world consequences is as pointless as trying to convince an Orthodox Jew to eat a ham sandwich because the pig farmers will go bankrupt otherwise.

Let us examine a real-world application of purity pacifism. Long ago, on the Chatham Islands (about 500 miles east of New Zealand), there lived a people called the Moriori.<sup>71</sup> The Moriori probably migrated from New Zealand to the Chatham Islands around the thirteenth or fourteenth centuries.

The Moriori brought with them a culture of violence and cannibalism. But their revered chieftain, Nunuku-whenua, became sickened by the endless combat. One day,

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69. Gloster B. Current, *Fiftieth Annual Convention*, CRISIS, August-September 1959, at. 400-10; HERBERT SHAPIRO, WHITE VIOLENCE AND BLACK RESPONSE: FROM RECONSTRUCTION TO MONTGOMERY 460, 523-24 n. 18 (1988).

70. SHAPIRO, at 461.

71 This discussion is based on David B. Kopel, Paul Gallant, & Joanne D. Eisen, *A Moriori Lesson: A Brief History of Pacifism*,” NAT’L REV. ONLINE, Apr. 11, 2003, <http://www.nationalreview.com/kopel/kopel041103.asp>. The article is mostly based on MICHAEL KING, MORIORI: A PEOPLE REDISCOVERED (1989).

Nunuku jumped between two fighting forces, and ordered the fighting and savagery to stop. The stunned warriors pulled apart. According to Michael King's book *Moriori: A People Rediscovered*, Nunuku declared: "Listen all! From now and forever, never again let there be war as this day has been! From today on forget the taste of human flesh!" Those who refused to honor Nunuku's decree would be cursed: "May your bowels rot the day you disobey."

Almost overnight, a warring, violent culture embraced non-violence. As King notes, "The membrane of distance, which had protected the Chatham Islanders from contact with peoples who thought and behaved differently from themselves...allowed the uninterrupted evolution of their culture and the successful observance of Nunuku's law."

The Taranaki were one of the several Maori (not Moriori) tribes of New Zealand. In 1835, the Taranaki Maori decided to migrate to the Chathams.

The Maori majority who stayed in New Zealand fought a long and often successful series of campaigns against the British white invaders. Outnumbered by the whites, the New Zealand Maori invented a form of trench warfare, using timber and earthwork structures called *pa*. The Maori became expert in firearms and fought longer and more successfully than any other outnumbered indigenous group in the nineteenth century. It was only because of overwhelming white numerical superiority that the New Zealand Maori were finally defeated in the 1860s; even then they won citizenship rights and designated seats in the parliament. In New Zealand, the readiness of the whites and the Maori to fight had resulted, after much bloodshed, in a political settlement whereby the majority was victorious, but some minority rights were established. While the gentle stoneage Aborigines of Australia had been very quickly crushed and viciously subjugated, the fighting natives of New Zealand preserved a not-insubstantial degree of their rights.<sup>72</sup>

The outcome was different in the Chatham Islands. By late 1835, 900 Maori had arrived in the Chathams. The Maoris began to take possession of the islands by their ceremony of "takahi," or "walking the land."

King describes the takeover: "Parties of warriors armed with muskets, clubs and tomahawks, led by their chiefs, walked through Moriori tribal territories and settlements without warning, permission or greeting. If the districts were wanted by the invaders, they curtly informed the inhabitants that their land had been taken and the Moriori living there were now vassals."

A council of Moriori elders was convened at the settlement called Te Awapatiki. Despite knowing of the Maori's predilection for killing and eating the conquered, and despite the admonition by some of the elder chiefs that the principle of Nunuku was not appropriate now, two chiefs declared that "the law of Nunuku was not a strategy for survival, to be varied as conditions changed; it was a moral imperative."

So there would be no resistance, no compromise with the principle of Nunuku. King continues: "Morioris were taken prisoners, the women and children were bound, and many of these, together with the men, were killed and eaten, so that the corpses lay scattered in the woods and over the plains. Those who were spared from death were herded like swine, and even killed from year to year."

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72 DAVID B. KOPEL, THE SAMURAI, THE MOUNTIE, AND THE COWBOY: SHOULD AMERICA ADOPT THE GUN CONTROLS OF OTHER DEMOCRACIES? 233-36 (1992).

King suggests that the Moriori decision not to fight back was a spur to Maori brutality; the Maoris confused Nunuku with cowardice, “and—by implication—worthlessness.”

By 1862, only 101 Morioris out of an initial two thousand were left alive. The strategy “not designed for survival” led directly to the destruction of the Morioris. The Europeans watched the slaughter of Morioris by the Maoris, and did nothing to prevent it.

As King observes, “The Moriori had learned a tactical and philosophical truth that was to be articulated by other people from other cultures in the twentieth century: non-violence is an effective weapon only against an adversary who shares your conscience.”

The last full-blooded Moriori, Tommy Solomon, died on March 19, 1933.

Bravely accepting death, the Moriori refuted beyond all doubt the claim that all pacifists are cowards.<sup>73</sup>

The Argentine human rights activist Adolfo Pérez Esquivel won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1980. He observes, “What has always caught my attention is the attitude of the peace movement in Europe and United States, where nonviolence is essentially the final objective. Nonviolence is not the final objective. Nonviolence is a lifestyle. The final objective is humanity. It is life.”<sup>74</sup> Esquivel’s position is compatible with that of Mohandas Gandhi or Thomas Merton, who preferred non-violence, but who considered violence much better than passivity.

However, the Esquivel critique cannot shake a pacifist whose devotion to non-violence is based a sincere belief about purity. If one sincerely believes that the Bible mandates non-violence in all circumstances, and that the Bible is the certain word of God, then prudential arguments are irrelevant.

In a free society, purity pacifists should have every right to live their lives—or to sacrifice their lives. The government should not force them to engage in violence, such as by drafting them into the army. If the purity pacifists are consistent, they will not seek advantage from violence, such as by calling an armed policeman to help them when they are attacked by criminals.

What the purity pacifists should not do is attempt to force their morality on everyone else. Even if sixty percent of the voters in a community are orthodox Jews, it would wrong for them to outlaw pork sales for the other forty percent. Even if ninety-seven percent of the voters in a community are heterosexual Christians who believe that homosexual is an abomination, it is wrong for them to impose criminal penalties on homosexuals.

Indeed, criminal penalties contradict the whole premise of purity pacifism. Criminal laws are enforced by police officers who carry guns, clubs, and chemical agents, and who use those weapons against people who resist. Criminal law violators are placed

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73 In the United States, Britain, and Australia, some pacifists proclaim their moral superiority to the soldiers who protect the pacifists’ right to free speech. What happened to the Moriori would happen to these same pacifists, if not for the protection provided for many generations by the Anglosphere’s soldiers and sailors. What the Maori did to the Moriori would have been done a thousand times over to the pacifists by Hitler, Tojo, Stalin, and bin Laden—and every other tyrant whom the pacifists condemned the military for resisting.

A popular bumper sticker says “If you can read this, thank a teacher.” If you are a pacifist who has not been murdered or enslaved, thank a soldier.

74 WALTER WINK, *JESUS AND NONVIOLENCE: A THIRD WAY* 36 (2003).

in prisons and jails which are ruled by armed guards who use violence against inmates who step out of line. The criminal law is by nature violent.

## **Conclusion**

As John Howard Yoder insightfully noted, there is no single pacifist rationale. Rather, many different people adopt pacifism for a wide variety of reasons, or from impulses that are not based on strict reason. When we carefully examine the various claims made by some of the most important modern advocates of non-violence, we find that some arguments are very strong; if one sincerely believes that lethal violence is always and everywhere wrong—as did the Moriori—then there is nothing to say against such a belief, once one accepts the religious or spiritual premises on which that belief is based.

In contrast, another strain of pacifism argues that non-violence will always and everywhere produce superior results (in terms of lives saved, or other important human values) than does violence. The assertion is tenable neither in individual cases, nor based on the historical record of the last century. Non-violence is often—but not always and not necessarily—a superior tactic for protecting human lives and freedom.