

# A Time of War

## Is Armed Resistance to Abortion Morally Justified?

by

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### Defensive Action

In the early hours of July 24, 1994, a man named Paul Hill waited outside the The Ladies Center abortion mill in Pensacola, Florida, with a Mossberg shotgun hidden inside his overcoat. A regular protestor at the abortion mill, Hill once handed out pro-life literature and carried signs along the sidewalks in front of The Ladies Center. But despite his efforts, the slaughter of unborn babies continued. The morning of July 24 was different. That morning Hill intended to put the abortionists out of business for good. When the abortionist Dr. John Britton and his bodyguard James Barrett pulled into the parking lot, Hill stepped to the side of the vehicle and opened fire. Britton and Barrett slumped over dead. Hill then waited for the police to arrive and surrendered peacefully.

Most mainstream pro-life groups immediately condemned the shooting. Reasons given varied from the practical to the principled. Some said that violence was counterproductive to the pro-life cause. Others said that violence of any kind contradicted Christian teachings. For his part, Paul Hill justified his actions on the basis of Christian moral principles. Who was right? Hill or his detractors?

The shooting of Dr. Britton came little more than a year after another Pensacola abortionist named Dr. Gunn was gunned down by Michael Griffin. Like Hill, Griffin was a pro-life activist. Paul Hill had befriended Griffin while the latter prepared for his upcoming trial. Together with 33 other pro-life activists, Hill signed a *Defensive Action Statement*. The statement read in part: “We, the undersigned, declare the justice of taking all godly action necessary to defend innocent human life, including the use of force. We proclaims that whatever force is legitimate to defend the life of a born child is legitimate to defend the life of an unborn child. We assert that if Michael Griffin did in fact kill David Gunn, his use of lethal force was justifiable ...”

Paul Hill had served as a spokesman for the Defensive Action movement, appearing on radio and television talk shows, before his own arrest that day in front of The Ladies Center.

There had been other attacks against abortionists before the shootings in Pensacola. But the two shootings, coming back to back and carried out with deadly precision, signaled a dramatic escalation in the culture war. Rather than being actions of deranged loners, Griffin and Hill had the support of a small but vocal element within the pro-life movement. Several expressed support for Hill: C. Roy McMillan, executive director of the Christian Action Group, said, “It seems

apparent that Paul [Hill] has terminated a terminator ... I don't find it a sin to kill someone fixin' to exterminate children."<sup>1</sup>

Most mainstream pro-life groups, however, condemned Hill and Griffin. Indeed, the most vocal critics of Defensive Action were not the supporters of legalized abortion, but the leaders of mainstream pro-life organizations and the larger churches. Cardinal John O'Connor said of the shooting of Dr. Britton: "It's madness. It discredits the right-to-life movement. Murder is murder. It's madness. You cannot prevent killing by killing."<sup>2</sup>

More attacks on the providers of abortion would follow in the years ahead. After each attack the same spate of pro-life spokesmen queued up before the microphones to offer the same condemnations. It was a ritual of sorts. What seemed to concern them most wasn't whether the shooting of an abortionist was morally justified, but how the liberal media might use it to discredit their own organizations. When Scott Roeder gunned down Dr. George Tiller (May 30, 2009), an abortionist responsible for almost 50,000 gruesome late-term abortions, the Reverend Pat Mahoney of the Christian Defensive Coalition begged the liberal press, "Please don't use this tragic situation to broad-brush the pro-life community as extremists."<sup>3</sup>

Attacks on abortionists raised an uncomfortable question for these pro-life leaders: If abortion is really no different from genocide, as many of these same pro-life activists contend, and if the government refuses to do anything to stop it, then why wouldn't armed resistance be a legitimate response? For years these same pro-life leaders had compared abortion to genocide. It seemed only logical that individuals like Griffin and Hill would act upon that rhetoric.

Several pro-life leaders stated that even if abortion amounted to genocide, the killing of any human being violates Christian moral principles. "Such violence against a fellow human being is never justified," said David Bereit, national director of 40 Days for Life.<sup>4</sup> Bereit's comment reflects his commitment to absolute pacifism. Others, like the Reverend Rob Schenck, president of the National Clergy Council, claimed that nonviolence is not just a political tactic, it's a tenet of the Christian faith. Violence of any kind is anti-Christian, according to Schenck.

Are Bereit and Schenck right? Is Christianity a pacifist religion? I will argue to the contrary. Although Christianity places severe restrictions on the occasions for violence, the Scripture, both Old and New Testaments, recognize that in a sinful world lethal force is sometimes necessary to uphold the law and protect the innocent. Government actors typically enjoy a monopoly on the use of force under Romans 13, whereas private individuals may use force only in a limited number of situations. I will examine Romans 13 and attempt to find the line between legitimate defensive action and unjustifiable vigilantism. I will also defend Christianity's just war tradition against the latest arguments of Christian pacifists.

Bereit and Schenck have rejected the gospel of Jesus Christ in favor of the gospel of Mohandas Gandhi, conveniently ignoring the profound differences between the two. Christ's commandment to "love thy neighbor as thyself" (Matthew 22:39) precludes pacifism, because loving your neighbor sometimes means coming to his defense. From the Christian perspective, pacifism can lead to the sin of pride. Since normal, mentally healthy people will defend themselves against an unjust aggressor, if able, rather than submit to being killed, it is the height of narcissism for the pacifist to presume otherwise about his neighbor. It may be permissible for the Christian to refuse to defend his own life, but it is not permissible to refuse to defend his neighbor's.

This is not to say that violence is the best solution to the abortion controversy. Admittedly there are solid reasons why armed resistance to abortion, or any other evil for that matter, may be counterproductive. But political expediency is not the subject of discussion here. This paper shall focus on whether lethal force is ever justified on the basis of Christian moral principles, and how those principles may or may not apply to the contemporary struggle against abortion. But first, let's examine the arguments put forward by Christian pacifists.

## **Milquetoast Christianity**

Christian pacifism is in the ascendancy today. Its popular appeal among mainline Protestants and liberal Catholics makes it a dominant influence in the church. And the movement has attracted the support of some serious thinkers. Three prominent Christian pacifists are Richard Hays, John Howard Yoder, and Stanley Hauerwas. If you attend one of the more liberal seminaries, you're likely to study their work. A mix of progressive politics and philosophical pacifism, their ideas diverge from historical Christianity in fundamental ways. To distinguish this heterodox mindset from historical Christianity, I will often refer to it as milquetoastism, as a more accurate description.

As liberalism invaded every facet of social life, religion was forced to retreat into the private sphere. Milquetoastism is private religion, post-modern religion; it's liberalism with a bad conscience. Liberalism's core tenet of pluralism, which prevents society from endorsing any one idea of the good life, undermined Christianity's claim of transcendent truth. Liberalism's elevation of the autonomous individual above family and country destroyed what remained of transcendent value. The lack of transcendent value troubles man, for he is by nature a religious and social being. So man is forced to invent a private transcendence, a "private savior" to go along with his private rights. It's a form of self-helpism used to alleviate the alienation, which is liberalism's great gift to mankind.

In politics, the milquetoast defers to the liberal consensus. His overt pacifism is a declaration of disarmament, an acknowledgement of liberalism's hegemony over public policy. The milquetoast Christian holds dual citizenship: on the one hand, he claims to be a child of God, and on the other, a loyal citizen of liberal society. But the two are incompatible. The values of liberal society—abortion on demand, no-fault divorce, normalized homosexuality—are antithetical to Christianity. Hence the need for dual citizenship.

Milquetoastism is an old lady's religion. Its influence, though it claims millions of adherents, extends no further than the heavily-perfumed sanctuaries where the milquetoasts gather on Sunday morning to escape their meaningless lives in liberal America. The hallmark of milquetoast religion is pacifism.

We will start by examining the work of Richard Hays. His book *Moral Vision of the New Testament* has been hailed as a definitive statement of Christian pacifism. Hays argues that the New Testament ethos forbids Christians from participation in all forms of violence, even self-defense. Predictably, Hays bases his argument almost entirely on the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5-7). Hays describes the Sermon on the Mount as a "definitive charter for the life of a new

covenant community.<sup>5</sup> In this new covenant community, Hays says, “anger is overcome through reconciliation” (Matt. 5:21-26); “retaliation is renounced” (Matt. 5:38-42); “enemy love replaces hate” (Matt. 5:44).<sup>6</sup> In other words, San Francisco in the Summer of Love.

Hays likewise zeroes in on Jesus’s arrest in the Garden of Gethsemane and the verse pacifists love to quote, Matthew 26:52. In the narrative, the high priest’s henchmen come to arrest Jesus. Peter pulls his sword and lops off the ear of Malchus, one of the henchmen. Jesus then commands Peter, “Put up again thy sword into its place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword.” Hays interprets Matthew 26:52 as an “explicit refutation” of the rightness “of using force in defense of others.”<sup>7</sup> Hays insists that Jesus’s admonition to “love your enemies” is incompatible with killing them. Serving in the military or in a law enforcement role is therefore forbidden to believers, Hays says.

Another milquetoast work is the *Politics of Jesus* (1972) by John Howard Yoder. Yoder relies heavily on the Second Temptation of Jesus in the Wilderness. In the story, Jesus is led up into the wilderness to fast and pray and to be “tempted of the devil” (Matt. 4:1). The devil takes Jesus up into a “high mountain and showeth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee if thou wilt fall down and worship me” (Matt. 4:8-9). Rejecting the offer, Jesus says, “Get thee hence, Satan.”

Yoder interprets Jesus to mean a complete “repudiation of the principle of violent insurrection as such” and more broadly the use of violence in *any* supposedly “righteous political cause.”<sup>8</sup> Yoder broadens this to include a rejection of the “responsible sword,” even “legitimate defense.”<sup>9</sup> Here Yoder is referring to Romans 13, where Paul explicates the legitimate functions of civil authorities (Romans 13:1-13).

Like the Anabaptist sects (Amish, Mennonites, Quakers), Yoder interprets Paul as saying that while it is fine for nonbelievers to participate in the use of force exercised by the government, the job of a soldier or cop “is not the function to be exercised by Christians.”<sup>10</sup>

Stanley Hauerwas’s *The Peaceable Kingdom* (1981) combines anarchism with pacifism. He interprets the Second Temptation in the Wilderness as a blanket rejection of “dominion . . . peace through coercion . . . violence.”<sup>11</sup> Jesus’s example on the cross, Hauerwas says, enjoins Christians to suffer injustice willingly rather than resort to violence in self-defense.<sup>12</sup> Violence, even in response to grave injustice, “derives from the self-deceptive story that we are in control—that we are our own creators—and that only we can bestow meaning on our lives, since there is no one else to do so.”<sup>13</sup>

Hauerwas says that wars are fought “for state interests.” The nation state “is the history of godlessness . . . For what is war but the desire to be rid of God, to claim for ourselves the power to determine our meaning and destiny? Our desire to protect ourselves from our enemies, to eliminate our enemies in the name of protecting the common history we share with our friends, is but the manifestation of our hatred of God.”<sup>14</sup>

Hauerwas recasts arguments used centuries earlier by the Anabaptists and pietist sects, the core of which calls for the complete separation of the Elect and the world. The state is seen as the political representation of the world. “Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing . . .” (2 Cor. 6:17) is the Anabaptist’s favorite verse. Separation extends to any sort of participation in war or law enforcement. In reality the “separation” Anabaptists insist upon exists only inside their imagination.

Anabaptist societies like the Amish are parasitic, that is they depend upon the larger society in which they live to do the things they refuse to do themselves.

The parasitic nature of pacifist communities is but one of the chief flaws with Christian pacifism. Unlike Yoder and Hays, Hauerwas admits that the Bible as a whole cannot justify his conclusions: “The text of the Bible in and of itself does not require pacifism. Rather, only a church that is nonviolent is capable of rightly reading, for example, Romans 13.”<sup>15</sup> In other words, one must read the Bible with pacifist preconceptions to arrive at pacifist conclusions.

The Bible contains numerous stories of battles and kings and warriors. This is especially true of the Old Testament. To make their arguments plausible, pacifists generally cut loose of the entire Old Testament. But even in the New Testament soldiers are frequently praised for their piety or their faithfulness. So the pacifists ignore much of the New Testament as well. Instead, they narrow their focus to the Sermon on the Mount and a few other verses taken out of context. Only by ignoring much of the Bible canon are they able to reach such sweeping conclusions.

How are they able to dismiss most of the Scripture and still retain the name “Christian”? Progressive Christians generally subscribe to what’s called “higher criticism.” Higher criticism arose in the 19th century. Its exponents—historians, orientalist, philologists—dissected the Bible as just another piece of literature lacking in divine origin. The Bible, they discovered, was written over a period of centuries by numerous authors and contains the portrait of at least three distinct gods, spelled with a lower case “g.” The first god we come upon is the warlike Lord of Hosts of Moses and Joshua. The second god is the more compassionate deity of the prophets Isaiah and Elijah. Finally, we come to the pacifist Christ in the Sermon on the Mount. The three gods represent the moral evolution of a people, said the higher critics. Christ is the end of the moral evolution and a repudiation of the warlike god of Exodus.

By accepting the higher criticism, they dispense with Christianity’s fundamental doctrine, the Incarnation.

## **Incarnation**

When Jesus began preaching the gospel of the Kingdom of Heaven in Judea, people wondered about the charismatic teacher from the obscure backwater of Galilee. Some said that he was John the Baptist, some Elijah, some Jeremiah, or one of the prophets. No one had heard anyone preach like Jesus. Jesus remained a mystery to the multitude.

When Jesus queried his own disciples, most were unsure of his identity. All except Peter. Peter answered Jesus’s question thusly: “Thou are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” (Matt. 16:16). Later, Jesus took his disciples upon a high mountain where he revealed himself to them. The Scripture says “his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light.” And Jesus did speak with Moses and Elijah, and the disciples were in awe. While Jesus did speak “a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him” (Matt. 17:1-5).

Christianity’s central claim is that Jesus is not just a prophet, not and ordinary man, but the Incarnation of Yahweh the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. In John 10:30, Jesus says, “I and

my Father are one.” Now, claiming to be equal with God was blasphemy, a crime punishable by death under Jewish law. It was upon that very charge that Jesus was brought before the Sanhedrin, the religious court of the Jews. Failing to find any reliable witnesses to prove blasphemy, the high priest asked Jesus directly, “‘Are thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?’ And Jesus said, ‘I am: and ye shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, coming in the clouds of heaven.’ Then the high priest rent his clothes and saith, ‘Ye have heard the blasphemy: what think ye?’ And they all condemned him to be guilty of death” (Mark 14: 61-64). The Sanhedrin then handed Jesus over to the Romans on the false charge of sedition, and he was crucified.

What does it mean to be God? Theologians recognize two attributes of divinity: (1) omnipotence (all-powerful); and (2) omniscience (all-knowing). Standing outside space and time, God does not “evolve.” The Scripture says, “Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and forever” (Hebrews 13:8). The deity that drowned Pharaoh’s soldiers in the Red Sea (Ex. 14) is the same deity that healed Malchus’s ear (John 18). The Lord of Hosts that ordered Moses to “dispossess the inhabitants” of Canaan (Numbers 33) is the Christ who delivered the Sermon on the Mount (Matt: 5). Or else Christ’s claim to be one with the Father is a lie, and Christianity collapses.

## **God of War**

If God is the “same yesterday, and today, and forever,” his actions in the Old Testament must anticipate the New Testament. Let’s see God in action in Exodus. In those days the people of Israel are slaves in the land of Egypt. Moses repeatedly asks Pharaoh to let his people go, warning of dire consequences. But Pharaoh refuses, so Yahweh visits plagues on Egypt. After losing his first born son to plague, Pharaoh reluctantly relents.

The Israelites then embark on a perilous journey across the Sinai desert. Meanwhile, Pharaoh has a change of heart about releasing the Israelites. He sends an army after them with orders to return them to slavery. The Israelites are in the process of crossing the Red Sea, which Yahweh has miraculously parted, when Pharaoh’s chariots approach from the west. As the Israelites reach the far shore, Pharaoh’s chariots begin to cross in the passage between the waters. The defenseless Israelites face certain capture. Panic sweeps over the people. Then Moses quiets them with words as powerful today as when spoken almost 4,000 years ago: “Fear ye not, stand still and see the salvation of the Lord” (Ex. 14:13). Yahweh causes the waters to collapse, drowning Pharaoh’s hapless soldiers.

The Israelites are saved. The people rejoice and sing the “Song of Moses,” which contains these memorable lines: “The Lord is a man of war: and Yahweh is his name. Pharaoh’s chariots and his host hath he cast into the sea: his chosen captains also are drowned in the Red Sea” (Exodus 15: 3-4).

Reading Exodus 15, you understand clearly the difficulty pacifists face in trying to paint the portrait of a milquetoast god. Exodus 15 is not an isolated story. Yahweh, the “man of war,” makes frequent appearances throughout the biblical narrative.

The Israelites, saved from Pharaoh's army, wandered in the wilderness for another forty years. They prayed to Yahweh expecting to be led into the land that he had promised to Abraham. But the "Land of milk and honey" is currently occupied by several heathen nations: Canaanites, Hittites, Moabites, Amalekites, Midianites, and so forth. How were the Israelites to take possession of land that was already occupied? Through nonviolent protest? Sit-ins perhaps? Here is God's plan of occupation:

And the Lord spoke unto Moses in the plain of Moab by Jordan near Jericho, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye pass over Jordan into the land of Canaan; then ye shall drive out all the inhabitants of the land from before you, and destroy all their pictures, and destroy all their molten images, and quite pluck down all their high places: And ye shall dispossess the inhabitants of the land, and dwell therein: for I have given you the land to possess it.

(Numbers 33: 51-53)

Fording the Jordan River, the Israelites first set their sights on Jericho. Moses had died recently, but before his passing he'd handed over the reins to Joshua, an experienced warrior. Israel faced many decades of war and needed a proven warrior at its helm. Joshua lay siege to Jericho. But the city falls without much of fight. And the Israelite warriors "utterly destroyed all that were in the city, both man and woman, young and old, and ox and sheep, and ass, with the sword." Not a living soul is spared except Rahab the harlot. Rahab had sheltered two Israelite spies sent earlier to recon the city. As a reward, she and her family are spared (Joshua 6).

As was often the case, the Israelites disobeyed Yahweh's decree to "drive out the inhabitants of the land." Because of their disobedience, the Israelites remain one of many small nations contesting for control of the land. Over the next few centuries they survive under the leadership of judges. In the Hebrew language, "judge" means warlord or chief. These were centuries of war. From their heathen neighbors, the Israelites "partook of abominations, which they have done unto their gods; so should ye sing against the Lord your God" (Deuteronomy 20:18). For their sins, Yahweh removed his divine protection. The children of Israel were made to suffer under the tyranny of heathen kings like Eglon the Moabite.

But there were great warriors and heroes in the time of the judges, such as Gideon. Gideon defeats an entire army of Midianites and Amalekites with only 300 men. Gideon's group of 300 is an elite unit, selected from among the Israelite army. They move into the enemy encampment under the cover of darkness. Then they commence blowing trumpets to create the illusion of a larger force. In their panic, the heathens begin to slay one another. Gideon finally drives the alien host from the land, but not before capturing and beheading two of their kings, Oreb and Zeeb (Judges 7).

## **King David**

Against the advice of Samuel the prophet, the people of Israel demanded a king, so God granted their wish. He anointed Saul first king of Israel. Israel then began to rise to the rank of a first power in the region. But the Philistines remained one of the last obstacles to hegemony.

At the pivotal battle of the Valley of Elah, the Philistines challenge the Israelites to a duel of champions. But after seeing the Philistine champion, a giant named Goliath, no man among the Israelites agrees to fight him. To everyone's surprise, a lad named David steps forward to volunteer, saying, "for who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?" King Saul laughs at the braggadocio of David. But Saul lets the boy face the giant anyway, expecting the youth to die for his hubris. David, an expert with the sling, chooses five smooth stones out of the brook. Goliath upbraids David for his youth. David then hits the giant in the forehead with a stone and Goliath "fell upon his face to the earth." David stood upon the giant "and took his sword . . . and cut off his head therewith" (1 Samuel 17).

After killing Goliath, David's fame grows to surpass that of King Saul. Jealous of the upstart, Saul attempts to kill David. But David hides from Saul's wrath. Though given several opportunities to kill Saul, David withholds his hand, for he dared not strike down one whom God had "anointed." Eventually Saul kills himself rather than be captured by the Philistines. David is then anointed King of Israel.

No other figure is more revered in the history of Israel than King David. As a brilliant general and statesman, David laid the foundations of an empire that would stretch from the hills of Lebanon to the deserts of Egypt. The prophecy delivered to Abraham was finally fulfilled in King David.

In the years of war that it took David to conquer the nations, God watched over him. David attributed his success in battle to God: "Blessed be the Lord my strength, which teacheth my hands to war, and my fingers to fight" (Psalm 144:1). After every victory, David gave God the glory: "Thou has also given me the necks of mine enemies; that I might destroy them that hate me" (Psalm 18:40). A gifted poet as well as a warrior, David was a Renaissance man before there was even a Renaissance. Generations of Hebrew boys looked to King David as their role model. One of those youths was Jesus of Nazareth.

Jesus looked to David not only as a role model, but he was a direct descendant of David. In the first chapter of Matthew, the gospel writer records Jesus's genealogy in typical Hebrew fashion. A genealogy established one's Hebrew bona fides. A man from a good Hebrew family could be trusted. The first relation listed: "Jesus Christ, the Son of David" (Matthew 1:1).

In no fewer than five places, the New Testament refers to Jesus as the "son of David." In the Revelation of John, Jesus himself declared: "I am the root and offspring of David, and the bright and morning star" (Revelation 22:16). In none of these evocations of David will you find anything remotely like a repudiation of David's role as a warrior-king. For someone whose ministry was, according to Richard Hays, "a definitive charter for a new covenant community," one in which "retaliation is renounced" and "enemy-love replaces hate," it seems odd for Jesus to continually evoke the memory of the Bible's greatest warrior. True, Jesus evokes David primarily for his character rather than his battlefield prowess. But David's role as a warrior-king shaped his moral character in a positive way, and nothing in Scripture indicates otherwise.

More important than his prowess in battle, King David was a godly man. As Saul squandered God's grace, he searched for another to replace Saul. Samuel the prophet identified David as God's guy: For "the Lord hath sought for himself a man after his own heart . . ." (1 Samuel 13:14). Samuel's description of David is significant. He meant that David had written God's law into his heart. The Apostle Paul used the same description of David in the New Testament: "And when he had removed [Saul], he raised up unto them David to be their king, to



whom also he gave testimony, and said, I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfill all my will” (Acts 13:22). Part of God’s will included the destruction of the Philistines.

David was far from perfect. In fact, he committed some horrible sins. In the second book of Samuel, chapters 11 and 12, David begins an affair with Bathsheba, the beautiful wife of Uriah the Hittite. Uriah is a mercenary serving in the Israelite army. When Bathsheba becomes pregnant with David’s child, he conspires to get rid of Uriah so he can have Bathsheba all to himself. David sends word to his general Joab to have Uriah placed at the center of the fighting where he will be killed. After Uriah’s death, Nathan the prophet gets wind of David’s foul deed and confronts him with it. A corrupt king would’ve had Nathan executed for his impudence. But David, being convicted in his heart, confesses to the murder of Uriah: “I have sinned against the Lord ...” For his repentance, God “put away” David’s sin (2 Samuel 12:13).

It was David’s striving after godliness, his sincere self-correction that made him a “man after God’s own heart.” He had the sinfulness of man but aspired to follow God’s law.

## **The Law**

The people of the Book saw evil as a permanent fixture of human nature. All men are born with the original sin of Adam (Romans 5:14). What is sin? The Bible says “sin is the transgression of the law” (1 John 3:4). The first four books of the Bible constitute the law, the core of which are the Ten Commandments delivered to Moses on Mount Sinai (Exodus 20).

As a permanent fixture of human nature, evil has to be fended off and reversed, or else worse evil will surely follow. Retribution, the restoration of balance and order in the universe, lies at the heart of the law. The law has as its basis the *lex talionis*, an equivalent punishment for a crime. The Bible expresses the *lex talionis* in the formula: “And if any mischief follow, then thou shalt give life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot” (Exodus 21: 23-24).

Milquetoast Christians generally dismiss the law. But one law they love to cite is the sixth commandment: “Thou shalt not kill” (Exodus 20:13). Milquetoasts interpret the sixth commandment as a blanket prohibition on the taking of life. To the pacifist, the intentional killing of another human being, regardless of the circumstances or the motives of the killer, is always morally wrong. There’s no difference between an act of unprovoked aggression and self-defense; no difference between Osama Bin Laden and the Navy SEALs who hunted him down.

Such reasoning takes no cognizance of free will, without which discussion about moral responsibility is meaningless. The moral quality of any act depends mostly on the motives of the actor. The fact that a blade is being used to damage human flesh tells us nothing about the moral quality of the act, until we learn the motives of the man who wields it. He may be motivated by hatred and malice and a desire to inflict torture and pain on innocent people. Or, his intentions may be to fend off such an unprovoked attack by disabling or killing the assailant. Or, he might be out of his mind and unaware of his actions. Or, he might be a surgeon with a motive to heal.

All killing ends the life of a human being, but not all killing is murder. Murder is an unjustifiable killing motivated by greed, malice, or evil intent. The Bible clearly differentiates between murder and justifiable forms of killing, like manslaughter, self-defense, capital punishment, and war (Numbers 35: 22-24). The pacifist who quotes Exodus 20:13 conveniently ignores the fact that the Bible lists dozens of offenses that carry the death penalty. Breaking the sixth commandment is chief among them: “He that smiteth a man, so that he die, shall be surely put to death” (Exodus 21: 12). The sixth commandment clearly refers not to the taking of all life but to intentional murder.

The confusion over the sixth commandment is due to a translation error in the King James version of the Bible, an error pacifists are perfectly aware of but exploit for polemical reasons. In the Hebrew, the word is *ratsach*, which translates to “murder,” and carries all the connotations of unjustifiable killing. Correctly translated, Exodus 20:13 should read “Thou shalt do no murder,” which is exactly how the sixth commandment is rendered in other parts of the text. In Matthew 19:18, for example, Jesus cited the sixth commandment thusly: “Thou shalt do no murder.”

## **Vigilantism**

So far we’ve dealt with the biblical perspective on war and law enforcement as a function of a legally constituted government. Orthodox Christians support this function of the “responsible sword” even though pacifists do not. But what about private individuals using lethal force on their own volition?

Some traditionalists espouse an authoritarian doctrine that forbids private persons “taking the law into their own hands.” They argue that unless a man is faced with an imminent threat to his life or to the lives of others, he is forbidden from waging war, or enforcing law, or exacting vengeance on evil doers. The Bible, they claim, reserves vengeance to public authorities.

The above is true for the most part. Romans 13 reserves war and law enforcement mostly to the government:

Let every soul be subject to the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation.

(Romans 13: 1-2)

But fans of Romans 13 tend to overlook verse 3: “For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil.” As history shows, rulers are often the “terror of good works.” Instead of protecting their citizens, they tyrannize them. Stalin, Pol Pot, King George III are just a few of history’s many tyrants. Romans 13 is not a commandment to obey all secular governments regardless of the nature of the regime.

We shall take up the topic of justifiable revolution later. Suffice it to say that the Bible provides plenty of examples of individuals taking up the responsible sword, often in defiance of the civil authorities.

In Psalm 149: 5-9, God issues a mandate for individual action:

Let the saints be joyful in glory;  
Let them sing aloud on their beds.  
Let the high praises of God be in their mouth,  
And a two-edged sword in their hand;  
To execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon the peoples;  
To bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron.  
To execute upon them the written judgement;  
This honor have all his saints.

Before the Catholic Church began designating certain pious individuals as saints, the term “saint” referred to any zealous believer. In the Hebrew the word is *chachyed*, meaning a “religiously pious” person.

The psalmist had in mind someone like Ehud, who pulled off a political assassination in the time of the judges. For 18 years the children of Israel suffered under the lash of a fat Moabite tyrant named Eglon. Eglon tyrannizes the Israelites and teaches them to whore after foreign gods. But Yahweh “raised up a deliverer, Ehud the son of Gera.” Ehud seeks an audience with fat Eglon, promising to bring a “gift.” But instead of a gift, Ehud brings a dagger a “cubit long” hidden inside his cloak. Once inside the tyrant’s chambers, Ehud moves up close and whispers in Eglon’s ear: “I have a message from God for you.” Ehud then rams the foot-long dagger into Eglon’s fat belly with such force that he cannot draw it out again. Eglon’s entrails spill out onto the floor. Ehud then makes his escape.

Back at the Israelite camp, Ehud rallies his countrymen with news of the tyrant’s assassination. Encouraged by Ehud’s exploit, the men of Israel assault the Moabite towns “killing about 10,000” heathens (Judges 3).

To the above, the milquetoast would cite another of his favorite verses, Romans 12:19: “Dearly beloved, avenge not yourself, but rather give place unto wrath; for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.”

But the operative phrase of Romans 12:19 is “avenge not yourself.” Here Paul exhorts the faithful not to engage in the kind of blood feuds that have plagued mankind from time immemorial. Personal revenge is always hot blooded; it has the tendency to exact retribution in excess of the instant offense. It inverts the *lex talionis*: two lives for a life, two eyes for an eye, and so forth. Justice, on the other hand, is cold and impersonal and exacts no more than is just: “A life for life, an eye for eye ...” The famous statue “Justice” is rendered blind to symbolize the unbiased disposition judges need to decide cases fairly.

Nevertheless, vengeance does belong to God. More often than not, he doesn’t exact vengeance by raining fire down from heaven; he delegates it to man to carry out. Like Ehud.

We find another example of saintly vengeance in the story of Moses avenging the murder of a Hebrew slave (Exodus 2:11-15). Moses himself is born a Hebrew slave. But after Pharaoh issues a decree to kill the first-born child of every Hebrew household, Moses’s mother disobeys the law and bundles baby Moses into an ark and floats him down the Nile, hoping someone will rescue the poor infant. As it happens, Pharaoh’s daughter is bathing in the river. She rescues Moses and raises him as her own.

But Moses never fits in with his Egyptian family. Knowing his Hebrew ancestry, Moses yearns for the company of his own people. So when he is grown, he goes to visit the Hebrew

slaves and “look on their burden.” During his visit, Moses witnesses the murder of a Hebrew slave at the hands of an Egyptian taskmaster. The act of evil angers Moses. He “looked this way and that way, and when he saw that there was no man, he slew the Egyptian, and hid him in the sand.” When Pharaoh finds out, Moses is forced to flee into the land of the Midianites, where he marries and receives the mission from God to lead his people out of Egypt.

Now here was Moses, an Egyptian citizen and a member of Pharaoh’s own household, killing an Egyptian taskmaster, an official of the Egyptian government, in order to avenge the murder of a Hebrew slave. The Hebrew slave was already dead, so the so-called doctrine of “double effect” doesn’t apply. Moses killed the Egyptian to avenge the murder of the Hebrew slave. He committed an act of insurrection for the sake of justice. He took the law into his own hands. Which law? By Pharaoh’s law, Moses was a “murderer” and a “fugitive from justice.” But by God’s law Moses was justified, and I can find nothing in the Scripture to indicate otherwise. On the contrary, Stephen the martyr praised Moses in the New Testament: “And seeing one of them [Hebrews] suffer wrong, he defended him and avenged him that was oppressed, and smote the Egyptian” (Acts 7:24).

## **The Law in the New Testament**

Christian pacifists have an impossible task assimilating the Old Testament to their pacifist prescriptions. So they simply dispense with the entire Old Testament. They employ their evolving god theory to explain away Moses and Joshua and King David. Their evolving god theory says that God didn’t create man in his image; rather, man created god in his own image. The warlike, vengeful people of Exodus created a warlike, vengeful god, and so forth.

Following this logic, the Law of Moses, being the projection of a warlike, vengeful people, can be dispensed with in favor of Christ’s “law of love.”

Milquetoast theology would’ve come as a surprise to Jesus and his disciples, for whom the law was sacred. The first books of what we now call the New Testament didn’t even exist until several decades after Christ’s crucifixion. The entire New Testament wasn’t canonized until the fourth century. That’s roughly 300 years of Christian history without the books that milquetoasts claim are the only meaningful expressions of Christianity! So what did early Christians use for edification during this “dark period”? Well, of course, the law and the prophets.

In his youth, Jesus learned to recite the law and the prophets, for Scripture describes him “in the midst of the doctors [of law], both hearing them and asking them questions” (Luke 2:46). Later, when he travelled the length and breadth of Judea with his disciples preaching the kingdom, he drew upon the stories and lessons of the law and the prophets. For milquetoasts to suggest that his teachings were a repudiation of the law and the prophets is absurd.

When Jesus climbed atop that mount to deliver that famous sermon that Richard Hays described as the “charter for the life of a new covenant community,” Jesus began with this clarifier:

Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle

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shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven ...

(Matthew 5:17-19)

Rather than doing away with the law, Jesus came to perfect it. Jesus wasn't repudiating the *lex talionis* when he enjoined believers to "turn the other cheek" (Matthew 5:38-39), he was merely saying that believers should not be quick to retaliate for injuries that are minor. When Jesus enjoined believers to "love your enemy" (Matthew 4:44), he was paraphrasing Proverbs 25:21-22. Richard Hays contends that loving your enemies is incompatible with killing them. Not true. A man might kill an aggressor not out of hatred or malice, but simply because he can find no other way to prevent him from harming innocent people. Any student of military history knows that what motivates soldiers in combat is not hatred of the enemy but concern for their comrades; i.e., love. Virtually the entire Sermon on the Mount is an extrapolation of lessons from the law and the prophets.

Oh, but the works of the law will avail you nothing, milquetoasts often claim. We are "saved by grace, not by works." Once you're "saved," you can pretty much do whatever you like and still get into heaven.

Not true. The Bible tells us that actions speak louder than words. "Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: The devils believe, and tremble. But wilt thou know, o vain man, that faith without works is dead?" (James 2:19-20). And the Bible says that our disposition in the afterlife will be determined by our deeds in this life. A young man comes to Jesus to enquire, "What good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?" Jesus tells him, "if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments." When the young man asks which ones, Jesus proceeds to list the laws of Moses (Matthew 19:16-19). Again, in the Revelation of John we find a description of Judgement Day. At the end of the age there will be a great culling of humanity. The "dead, small and great, stand before God." And the Book of Life which contains the deeds of every man is finally opened. And the "dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works" (Revelation 20: 12-13). A man reveals his faith in his works: "... for the tree is known by his fruit" (Matthew 12:33).

The milquetoast generally rejects the doctrine of original sin, upon which the law is based. Believing that man is basically good, a belief at odds with all of Scripture, he insists that we are now under the "law of love," and love is incompatible with judgement. Jesus's vision of the Kingdom of God is "crucially defined by its non-coerciveness," according to milquetoast John Howard Yoder.<sup>16</sup>

This is another piece of milquetoast sophistry. Rather than being mutually exclusive, Jesus's "law of love" and the Law of Moses are one and the same. Jesus, after instructing the young man to "keep the commandments," summarizes the law thusly: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (Matthew 19:17-19). This was Jesus summarizing commandments six through ten. To love your neighbor means refraining from murdering him (sixth commandment), from violating his marriage bond (seventh), from stealing his property (eighth), from lying to him (ninth), or from coveting his lifestyle (tenth).

What the milquetoast cannot reconcile is love and judgement. His idea of "love" is the indulgent parent who spoils his child and cannot bring himself to ever administer punishment for misbehavior. This idea of love violates biblical principles. Love and judgement go hand in hand.

“For whom the Lord loveth he correcteth” (Proverbs 3:12). Parents who love their child discipline him for the sake of his soul. “Withhold not correction from the child: for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die. Thou beatest him with the rod, and shall deliver his soul from hell” (Proverbs 23:13-14). Also, a society that punishes a criminal does so not out of hate but out of concern to protect society from further harm and, last but not least, to reform the criminal.

At his core, the milquetoast is a child of Jean-Jacques Rousseau rather than Jesus Christ. Like Rousseau, the milquetoast sees man as essentially good. Problems arise not from within but from without: socio-economic inequality, racism, sexism, homophobia, bullying, bipolar disorder, toxic masculinity, alcohol and drug addiction, and so on. The Bible tells us the opposite: “For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies” (Matthew 15:19).

Like Rousseau, the milquetoast Christian understands the power of self-flagellation. His frequent “confessions” conceal selfish motives, for behind the façade of self-pity lies a colossal ego. Rousseau pioneered the technique in his own written *Confessions* (1770), later popularized by Oprah and Dr. Phil: outwardly frank in confessing to the most embarrassing aspects of one’s life, but inwardly full of guile. Shameful accusations aimed at himself builds up confidence in his regard for the “truth,” making his accusations against others seem all the more convincing.

In religion, the milquetoast gravitates toward the “personal relationship with Jesus,” rather than the moral law. The law is objective, but the “personal relationship” is entirely subjective. To the milquetoast, Jesus becomes his imaginary friend who comforts him in times of crisis and indulges his every whim, but never judges. The milquetoast confuses love with tolerance. He wants freedom without responsibility. He believes that no one is really responsible for where he ends up in life, so no one has the right to judge. His favorite verse is “Judge not, that ye be not judged” (Matthew 7:1).

This idea of nonjudgmentalism is summed up perfectly in a paid advertisement put out by the Churches of Christ. It shows parishioners entering a church on a Sunday morning. But instead of a preacher to welcome them with outstretched hands, a pair of muscular bouncers dressed in black guard the entrance, occasionally turning people away: “Sorry, you cannot come in,” they say. Those being turned away are homosexuals. The piece ends on a note of tolerance: “Jesus accepts all the people—all the people!” By acceptance, they mean the unconditional acceptance of homosexuals—without repentance.

It’s a touchy-feely piece of milquetoast propaganda that bears no resemblance to what Jesus taught. The Bible says homosexuality is sin: the intrinsic disordering of natural human sexual desires. Leviticus 20:11 prescribes the death penalty for homosexuals. The apostle Paul condemns the vile practice in no uncertain terms: “And likewise also men, leaving the natural use of woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet” (Romans 1:27).

The paid advertisement makes a mockery of Jesus’s teaching. Jesus taught us to follow the law to the best of our ability (Matthew 15:18-19). But he understood our shortcomings. No matter how hard we try we will “fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:10-12). But for those willing to repent and reform themselves (John 3:24), he offered forgiveness. Nowhere do we find the kind of unconditional tolerance portrayed in the paid advertisement.

The milquetoast interprets Matthew 7:1 as a get out of jail free card. Everyone has faults, so nobody has a right to judge. But if you read down through verse 5, you see it has the opposite meaning:

Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgement ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again. And why beholdest the mote that is in your brother's eye, but considereth not the beam that is in thine own eye. Or how will thou say of thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye: and behold, a beam is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then thou shalt see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.

(Matthew 7:1-5)

Clearly, Matthew 7 is not a blanket statement of tolerance. Rather it is an admonition against hypocrisy. Verse 5 is the key verse: "Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then thou shalt see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye." In other words, judge others as you judge yourself.

Jesus lived up to the spirit of the law. He preached not against the law, but against superficial or hypocritical observance. Since the days of Moses, the Jews had added over 600 ceremonial laws to the original Ten Commandments. Called the *Mishnah*, most of it had to do with ritual, dress, bathing, food, and so forth. The Jews had come to regard this ritual law as more important than the moral law of the Ten Commandments. The right clothes and associating with the right kind of people were more important than true charity or honesty or fidelity. Jesus said of the hypocritical scribes and Pharisees: "All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not" (Matthew 23:3).

Jesus's rejection of ceremonial law alienated orthodox Hebrews, the Pharisees, and the Sadducees. They accused Jesus of preaching disobedience to the law. Later, when the apostles started converting Gentiles, it caused a schism between observant Jews and Christian Jews. By the end of the First century Christianity had become primarily a Gentile faith. The division between Jews and Christians over observance of ritual law had grown into a chasm. But the Scripture makes it plain that Jesus and his apostles never abandoned the moral law. Rather, the Jews abandoned the moral law when they rejected Christ (Matthew 21:33-46).

To those Jews concerned about Jesus's continuity with the covenant, Paul wrote the Book of Hebrews. The entire book is devoted to establishing Jesus's place within the Abrahamic covenant. In chapter 11, Paul calls attention to those great patriarchs and prophets, stretching all the way back to Abraham. They kept the faith, even though many of the promises of God remained unfulfilled at the time of their passing: "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. For by it the elders obtained a good report" (Hebrews 11:1-2). Paul tells the story of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Included in the covenant narrative are the warriors of the faith: "Gideon, and Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthah; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets: who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens" (Hebrews 11:32-34).

Paul reveals Jesus as the culmination of the covenant established with Abraham: "Looking to Jesus the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Hebrews 12:2).

## **“Die By the Sword”**

Another verse milquetoasts love to quote is Matthew 26:52: “Put up again thy sword into its place: for all they that take the sword shall die by the sword.” Richard Hays insists that Christ’s saying represents “an explicit refutation” of the justifiability of the use of violence in defense of another person.<sup>17</sup> Christians should suffer any assault or injustice rather than resort to violence, says Hays.

This is yet another example of pacifists taking a verse out of context to reach a predetermined outcome. Read in context with the verses that come before and after, Matthew 26:52 has an altogether different meaning than Hays suggests.

Matthew 26:52 appears in the story of Jesus’s arrest in the Garden of Gethsemane. The story is told in all four gospels (Matthew 22; Mark 14; Luke 22; John 18). Some gospels add details not found in the others, so you have to read all four gospels to arrive at an accurate interpretation.

In the days leading up to his crucifixion, Jesus reveals to his disciples the prophecy about to unfold: “Ye know that after two days is the feast of the Passover, and the Son of Man is betrayed to be crucified” (Matthew 26:2). But the disciples don’t want to accept this horrible outcome as their master’s fate.

Jesus gathers his disciples together to eat the Passover meal in what Christians refer to as the Last Supper. He teaches them to remember him through the sacrament of Communion: the taking of his body and blood. Jesus then reveals the traitor Judas sitting among them. After Judas leaves, Jesus declares that all of his disciples will in fact deny him; “for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad” (Matthew 26:31).

At this point Jesus asks his disciples to remember the first evangelizing mission (Matthew 10) that he’d sent them on:

When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye anything? And they said, Nothing. Then he said unto them, But now, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip: and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one. For I say unto you that this is written must yet be accomplished in me, And he was reckoned among transgressors: for the things concerning me have an end. And they said, Lord, behold, here are two swords. And he saith unto them, It is enough.

(Luke 22:35-38)

Jesus is trying to say that his time is up, the crucifixion is part of God’s plan. Unlike the earlier mission, when he was able to shield them from the slings and arrows of the world, the disciples are going to have to look after themselves until his return. One practical challenge Christians will have to face is the need to defend themselves. Jesus instructs his disciples to buy a sword. Like the Old West circuit riders, who carried a Bible in one saddle bag and a Colt revolver in the other, the disciples are told to carry swords.



After the Last Supper, Jesus leads his disciples up the Mount of Olives to a garden called Gethsemane. It's dark. Jesus grows anxious as the hour of his passion approaches. He asks his disciples to watch while he goes off a ways to pray: "Oh my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt" (Matthew 26:39).

Meanwhile, the disciples have fallen asleep. As they sleep a throng with clubs and swords from the chief priests and elders of the Jews enter the garden, being led by the traitor Judas, ready to take Jesus. In the dark the guards know they'd have difficulty identifying Jesus, so Judas arranged to single him out with a kiss: "Judas, thou betrayest the Son of Man with a kiss," Jesus says (Luke 22:48). The guards then seize Jesus.

Suddenly awakened by the commotion, the disciples see their master being manhandled by the temple guards. Naturally they prepare to defend Jesus using the two swords they had with them. As the Book of Luke tells it, a disciple (Peter) asks, "Lord, shall we smite with the sword?" He slashes at one of the high priest's servants, cutting off his right ear. Then Jesus intervenes, saying, "Suffer ye thus far." And he touched the servant's ear and healed him (Luke 22:49-51). The Book of Mark has Jesus giving no response to Peter's swordsmanship. From the Book of John we learn the identity of the swordsman (Peter) and his victim (Malchus). Jesus responds to Peter thusly: "Put up thy sword into its sheath: the cup which my father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" (John 18:10-11).

It's in the Book of Matthew that we find the famous verse. But crucially the milquetoasts leave off verses 53 and 54. It's within the context of all the verses that we see Christ's meaning:

Put up again thy sword into its place: for all they that take the sword shall die by the sword. Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be? (Matthew 26:52-54)

The milquetoast thesis that Matthew 26:52 has Jesus repudiating all forms of violence doesn't hold up to scrutiny. First, it was Jesus himself who instructed his disciples to buy the swords to begin with. Second, the context of the quote makes it clear that Jesus's arrest and crucifixion were part of a prophecy that had to be fulfilled, Peter's resistance notwithstanding. Third, it doesn't make sense that Jesus would, in a moment of weakness and uncertainty, abandon his pacifist principles and tell his disciples to purchase a couple of swords, but when it came time to use them change his mind and revert to his original pacifism. The milquetoast interpretation of Matthew 26:52 makes no sense. The verse is not a general repudiation of violence; it's Jesus giving Peter a specific command: Don't interfere with prophecy because you're only putting yourself and the other disciples at risk. In this, Jesus was successful. He diverted attention away from the disciples, for the Bible tells us that all escaped before Jesus was led away (Mark 14:50).

## **Soldiers in the New Testament**

Soldiers appear frequently throughout the New Testament. Richard Hays resorts to a kind of post-modern literary criticism to explain away the soldiers' presence. He argues that scriptures

where soldiers appear are meant to dramatize the gospel among the most “unsavory characters.”<sup>18</sup> The Bible makes similar use of tax collectors and publicans, Hays says. In the light of the Christian community’s prohibition on violence, “the place of the soldier within the church can only be seen as anomalous.”<sup>19</sup>

Hays’s bit of post-modern literary criticism is fatuous. Take for example his comparison of soldiers to tax collectors and publicans. In the story of Zacchaeus the tax collector (Luke 19), his sin is not collecting taxes, a necessary government function like soldiering, but the sin of extortion.

In the Scripture sinners are often called to repentance. Magicians are enjoined to burn their magic books as a condition of conversion (Acts 19:18-20); tax collectors to mend their extortionate ways (Luke 19); but never once are soldiers exhorted to abandon their profession. On the contrary, soldiers are frequently singled out for praise.

John the Baptist had occasion to meet soldiers in his brief ministry. As the Book of Luke chapter 3 tells us, John went down to the river Jordan to “prepare the way of the Lord.” And the “multitude came forth to be baptized of him.” Others came seeking answers. To the tax collectors, John said: “Exact no more than that which is appointed you.” To the soldiers, he said: “Rob no one by violence or false accusations; and be content with your wages” (Luke 3:12-14).

Notice that John does not enjoin the soldiers to leave their profession, but merely to carry it out honestly without abusing the civilian population.

Predictably, Hays skips over the story of Jesus and the centurion (Matthew 8:5-13; Luke 7:2-10). A captain in the Roman army, the centurion asks Jesus to heal his servant who is “at home sick of a palsy.” Jesus immediately agrees to follow the centurion home to perform the healing. But the centurion, aware of the Jewish prohibition against entering the home of a Gentile, stops Jesus, saying, “I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof, but speak the word only and my servant shall be healed.”

Jesus marvels at the faith of the centurion, saying of him:

I have not found so great a faith, no, not in Israel. And I say unto you, that many shall come from the east and the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. But the children of the kingdom [Jews] shall be cast into outer darkness:

(Matthew 8:10-12)

And Jesus healed the centurion’s servant with a word.

Then there’s the story of the conversion of Cornelius found in Acts chapter 10. The Bible describes Cornelius as a “centurion of the band called the Italian Regiment. A devout man, and one that feareth God with all of his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God always.” God gives Cornelius a vision to seek out the apostle Peter. Learning of Cornelius’s desire to meet him, Peter is reluctant because “it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company” with a Gentile. But then Peter receives a vision of his own signifying that “God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted of him.” So Peter baptizes Cornelius along with his company of Roman soldiers, becoming the first Gentile converts.

Both stories, involving professional soldiers, prove the absurdity of Hays's argument. In the story of the centurion's sick servant, the centurion is introduced to Jesus not as a sinner but as one "worthy" of the requested miracle: "For he loveth our nation and hath built us a synagogue" (Luke 7:4-5). The same goes for Cornelius. In both stories, the drama turns on them being Gentiles, and Jesus and Peter deciding not to shun them as "unclean" under Jewish ritual law. In neither story were these professional soldiers enjoined to put down their arms.

The conversion of Cornelius was a harbinger of the future of Christianity. Historians once believed that conversions took place mostly among the urban poor of the empire, and until Constantine's conversion in 313 AD, Christianity remained a marginalized cult. Historians now believe many thousands of Christians were serving in the legions long before Constantine's conversion, and one reason for the emperor's conversion was to maintain the loyalty of his troops in the midst of a civil war with his pagan rival. The spread of the faith probably owed as much to soldiers like Cornelius as to the preaching of the apostles. Indeed, until the 4th century the majority of Christians in the empire were probably soldiers. *Pace* Hays, I doubt if their fellow Christians viewed their presence in the church as "anomalous," since they were the majority.

## **Just War**

After Christianity became the dominant religion in the Roman Empire, its newly established churchmen felt compelled to promulgate a political theory consistent with Christian principles. Integral to any political theory is the topic of war. Augustine (354-430 AD), Bishop of Hippo, is usually credited as the first churchman to write about what came to be called *just war doctrine*. Developed between the 5th century and the 17th century, just war doctrine is the dominant theory of war in the west. Later, in the 13th century Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) enumerated the elements of just war. The elements of just war are divided into two categories: (1) *jus ad bellum* (the justice of launching a war); (2) *jus in bello* (justice in the tactics of fighting the war). Aquinas listed six criteria for *jus ad bellum*:

1. Just cause: The injury inflicted on the nation must be lasting and grave.
2. Legitimate authority: The decision to launch a war resides mostly with civil authority.
3. Right intention: The war must aim to restore a just peace, not to annex territory, etc.
4. Last resort: All other means of resolving the conflict must have been shown to be ineffective.
5. Proportionality: The use of arms must not produce evils greater than the evil to be eliminated.
6. Prospect of success: Victory must be likely.

From the Christian perspective, war is an extreme form of retributive justice. Hugo Grotius (1583-1645) said war can only be justified in response to an "injury received."<sup>20</sup> Just war doctrine is rooted in the worldview that man is a fallen creature, capable of both good and evil. "Insofar as men are sinners, the threat of war hangs over them and will so continue until Christ comes again ..."<sup>21</sup>

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It's a peculiar feature of the modern western world, as opposed to other cultures and the ancient and medieval world, to search for the causes of war in impersonal forces: economic competition, class struggle, imperialism, dictators, and so forth. This tendency is rooted in the Enlightenment's faith in the essential goodness of man. Like any other object of nature, man and his institutions are believed to be infinitely malleable, requiring only the right kind of social engineering to forever rid mankind of scourges like war.

Christian just war doctrine holds to the ancient wisdom: it identifies human nature as the ultimate cause of war. It's not land, nor resources, nor justice, nor the lack thereof that causes wars. Sinful man carries war around with him like syphilis, its symptoms flaring up or in remission like the changing of the seasons.

The Bible expresses the cyclic nature of war and peace in Ecclesiastes chapter 3:

To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven: A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted; A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; ... A time to love, and a time of hate; a time of war, and a time of peace.

(Ecclesiastes 3:1-8)

Just war doctrine says that evil must be opposed, fought off, and reversed, or worse evil will surely follow. Indifference is not an option. Not to respond to evil is to say that it does not matter, and therefore its victims do not matter. Retribution ultimately derives from the Christian ethic of love of our neighbor, for the just warrior does not fight for glory, or revenge, or booty. He fights to protect the innocent and to punish the aggressor "with a sort of kind harshness," to impel him to "repent and embrace peace," Augustine says.<sup>22</sup>

Where ordinary legal mechanisms are unavailable, nations resort to war to punish violations of the natural law. Hugo Grotius listed three reasons nations go to war: defense against invasion; the recovery of stolen property; and the protection of its citizens or even the citizens of innocent foreign nations. War is a huge police action, to borrow a modern phrase. Defensive war is best, but where a foreign threat is in the process of developing, preventive war is also just. "As long as the danger of war persists and there is not international authority with necessary power and competence, governments cannot be denied the right of lawful self-defense, once all peaceful efforts have failed."<sup>23</sup>

## **Natural Law**

Just war doctrine is rooted in the natural law tradition. Natural law assumes the existence of a moral order that transcends any particular society or government. Viewed as part of God's creation, natural law exists independent of divine revelation. Natural law consists of the judgements of the human mind functioning under the natural reason which God endowed in humans.

The concept of natural law took shape in the Gothic period, when churchmen like Thomas Aquinas married Aristotelian ethics to Christian theology. Aristotle assumed that man, like all

other creatures, has an identifiable nature. Central to that nature is the pursuit of certain goals or ends, such that man's nature moves him toward a specific *telos*, or good. Man's good is defined in terms of those ends that allow him to flourish as the kind of creature that he is. Pursuing the good leads to happiness. The intrinsic goods that Aquinas identified include but are not limited to life, sociability, knowledge, and religion. Virtues are those human qualities that, if cultivated, enable man to achieve his good. Vices are the opposite. Virtues include courage, fidelity, friendship, and justice. Justice is often regarded as the chief virtue, for it is justice that enables man to apply the law correctly.

Natural law prohibits certain acts deemed to be intrinsic evils—theft, perjury, murder, betrayal—but leaves punishment to be decided by positive law. Positive law differs from nation to nation, but natural law is universal. The Ten Commandments is the best example of prescriptive natural law, says Francis Suárez (1548-1617).<sup>24</sup>

Rejecting radical individualism, natural law asserts man's natural sociability. Acts that militate against sociability—perjury, theft, murder—are intrinsic evils. Since family is the first society, acts that militate against family—adultery, homosexuality—likewise constitute intrinsic evils.

Doctor of church law Francis Suárez insisted that the tenets of natural law exist “independent of God as legislator.”<sup>25</sup> He says that “all men are innately aware of the most general principles of the natural law, such as those of the Ten Commandments.”<sup>26</sup>

Philosopher John Locke (1632-1704), whose *Two Treatises on Government* (1690) influenced our Declaration of Independence and Constitution, derived the natural rights of “life, liberty, and happiness” from natural law principles. Political society is natural to man; it is not an invention; neither are its laws. Even though it is up to different societies to apply the natural law to their historical situation, the positive law of any nation derives its moral legitimacy from adherence to the general principles of the natural law.

Positive law that contradicts natural law is not really law. “A law which is unjust or unrighteous is not, properly speaking, a law at all, and it possesses no binding force,” Suárez says.<sup>27</sup> John Locke put it this way: “Whenever the [natural] law ends, tyranny begins . . .”<sup>28</sup>

Just war doctrine extends to civil conflict as well as interstate war. Natural law recognizes the need for social hierarchy and the division of labor, as long as it is consistent with natural human capacities. But governments are instituted among men for the benefit of the “whole people” (common good), not for the enrichment of its rulers. Rulers who abrogate their responsibilities lapse into tyranny.

The principle of resistance to tyranny was expressed by John of Salisbury in the 12th century, Aquinas in the 13th century, and William of Ockham in the 14th century. With the rise of absolutist monarchs in the 16th century, like Henry VIII of England and Henry III of France, the question of resistance to tyranny took on new urgency. A new generation of just war thinkers expounded on the justice of armed revolution.

Grounds for deposing a tyrannical government involve grave violation of the natural law. Suárez says, “No human power, even though it be papal power, can abrogate any proper precept of the natural law, nor truly and essentially restrict such a precept nor grant a dispensation from it.”<sup>29</sup> John Locke concurs with Suárez: Revolutionary acts are justified “where the body of the

people, or any single man, is deprived of their right, or is under exercise of power without right ..<sup>30</sup>

## Double Effect

Admittedly there are problems with just war doctrine. One problem is the incorporation of the so-called “double effect” principle. Double effect states that the moral quality of any act hinges not so much on the good or evil effects, but upon the motives of the actor. From this evolved the concept of *mens rea* (criminal intent), by which the severity of an offense, like murder, depends upon whether the killer consciously intended to kill.

Focusing on intentions, I think, is an advance in moral philosophy when applied to crime and punishment. But focusing solely on intentions carries with it significant problems. Under its rubric, you can basically justify any act as long as you claim to have been motivated by “good intentions.” The road to hell, they say, is paved with good intentions. Intentions must be weighed alongside the good or evil effect of an act.

At the heart of double effect is the notion that to kill a human being is *always* to cause an evil; but not all killing is murder. Some killings are intentional (contract murder); some are accidental (car crash); some are necessary (law enforcement and war). Although the effect of these different kinds of homicide are the same, and therefore “evil” because they result in the death of a human being, what distinguishes them is the intention of the killer.

Theologians further distinguish between the effects of an act that a man *intends* and those he only *accepts* reluctantly. A man is permitted to intend only good effects (peace), but evil effects (killing) he may only accept as an *unintended* side effect of his actions. To qualify as morally licit, the caused death of another human being must be the “unintended side effect” of a rightly intended action. This leads to some rather contorted reasoning. For example, a man being assaulted may fire his pistol, but only if he intends justice, never the death of the assailant. A soldier in battle may use his weapon to bring about world peace, but never to intentionally cause the death of the enemy. Clearly, double effect is the invention of moralists who’ve never set foot on a battlefield. Can soldiers in combat really “intend” not to kill? Only if they want to be dead soldiers.

It’s not exactly clear why killing another human being is always to cause an evil. What if the human being is Joseph Stalin? Aquinas tells us it is not “an evil in itself” to kill an evildoer because when a man consciously commits himself to evil, he “falls away from the dignity of his manhood . . . and falls into the slavish state of the beast.” To kill an evildoer is therefore no different than to kill a beast.<sup>31</sup> Examples from the Bible are legion: God drowned Pharaoh’s soldiers; Moses slew the Egyptian slave-driver; Ehud assassinated Eglon; David beheaded Goliath. In each case the Bible suggests the world was made a better place without them.

True, life is sacred and an intrinsic good. Once upon a time Stalin was an innocent child. But Stalin the man intentionally committed acts of unspeakable evil, so that he became identified with evil. Stalin deserved to die under the moral law. The Bible decrees the death penalty for several crimes. But nowhere does the Scripture describe the executioner as having committed an

“evil.” The Bible says of those guilty of capital crime “their blood shall be upon them” (Leviticus 20:9-27); i.e., not upon the vessel by whom the sentence is carried out.

Although many Christian denominations have adopted the double effect principle as part of just war doctrine, it’s important to point out that double effect is an invention of theologians, many of whom disagree on its exact application. Suffice it to say, there is nothing remotely resembling double effect in the Scripture, and that’s enough for me to discount it. Just war theorist Nigel Biggar, a proponent of double effect, admits as much: “I am not aware that the Bible states or uses the doctrine of double effect; but I still have good reasons to think it valid.”<sup>32</sup> But he never explains what those “good reasons” are.

## **Clerical Pacifism**

War and violence are perennial features of the fallen world, according to the Christian tradition. But it was not supposed to be this way. It was Adam’s rebellion against God that brought sin into the world. In the Kingdom of Heaven there is no sin, or war, or death; therefore, there is no need to defend oneself or one’s country. And when Jesus returns to defeat Satan, he will bring the Kingdom of Heaven to earth, and with it the ethic of the kingdom.

As God’s representatives on earth, prophets and priests and preachers endeavor to live up to the ethic of the kingdom. The kingdom ethic includes peacefulness and compassion. Both the Hebrew and Christian tradition have therefore discouraged priests and prophets from shedding human blood. In the division of labor that serves Christian society, the clergy minister to man’s eternal soul while secular rulers govern his temporal body. The two orders minister to different aspects of one covenant community, but are not antagonistic.

Although politics and war traditionally belong in the secular domain, there are notable exceptions when clergy have been called upon to do a little network.

When the children of Israel wander in the wilderness, they chafe under Moses’s leadership and doubt the promises of Yahweh. While Moses is away on Mount Sinai receiving the Law, they build themselves a golden calf, that they might worship it instead of Yahweh. After descending the mountain, Moses is horrified at the sight of his people bowing before a false idol. There is a violation of the first commandment: “Thou shalt have no other gods before me” (Exodus 20:3).

Moses stands before the people and says, “Who is on the Lord’s side?” And many of the Israelites gather behind Moses. All the “sons of Levi” (the priestly tribe) side with Moses. Moses then orders the priests:

Put every man his sword by his side, and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbor. And the children of Levi did according to the word of Moses: and there fell of the people that day about three thousand men.

(Exodus 32: 25-28)

The prophet Elijah (Jesus's favorite prophet) likewise had to break bad once or twice. Ahab, the King of Israel, has shacked up with a whore named Jezebel. A Baal worshiper, Jezebel has a retinue of Baal priests living in the palace. Elijah asks Ahab to rid himself of Jezebel and her Baal priests. But Ahab refuses. As a demonstration of Yahweh's power, Elijah challenges Jezebel's Baal priests to a duel. Two altars are erected, and sacrificial animals are placed thereon. Whoever can call down fire from heaven and consume the offering wins. The Baal priests go first. They dance round and round the altar, lacerating themselves with knives. But after a few hours, the offering is untouched. The Baal priests collapse from exhaustion and blood loss. But the offering is untouched.

Then Elijah steps forward. He calls, "Hear me, O Lord, hear me, that this people may know that thou are the Lord God ..." And a fire falls from heaven and consumes the "burnt sacrifice."

Second prize for the Baal priests is death. Elijah commands the people to hold them fast, "let not one of them escape. And they took them: and Elijah brought them down to the brook Kishon, and slew them there" (1 Kings 18).

Jesus followed Elijah's example when he drove the money lenders from the temple. Yahweh had built the temple as a house of worship. But the corrupt chief priest and his Sadducees turn it into a flea market. So "Jesus went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves ..." (Mark 11: 15).

The practice of peacefulness, as well as celibacy and poverty, were common among Christian clergy of Western Europe. But the so-called "ascetic ideal" was never enjoined on the laity. And even among the clergy, pacifism was never absolute. Given extraordinary circumstances, priests and monks were called to take up the sword in defense of the faith. When secular magnates couldn't be counted on to protect pilgrims traveling to the Holy Land, the church sanctioned the formation of two military orders: the Poor Knights of Christ (Templars) and the Order of Saint John (Hospitallers). Members of the orders were subject to monastic vows (poverty, chastity, obedience), but were trained in the art of war. And no finer warriors ever lived. The military monks were the Navy SEALs of the era.

Christ's commandment to "love thy neighbor as thyself" (Matthew 22: 39) precludes absolute pacifism because to love your neighbor sometimes means coming to his defense. In the Christian view pacifism can become a form of pride. Taken to its extreme, the principle of nonviolence comes before human life. Since normal people will defend themselves (which is their God-given right) against an unjust aggressor, rather than submit to being killed, it is the height of narcissism for the pacifist to place the abstract principle of nonviolence before the real life of his neighbor. It may be permissible for the Christian to refuse to defend his own life, but it is not permissible for him to refuse to defend his neighbor's.

Augustine wrestled with this dilemma. Augustine inclined toward pacifism, but he couldn't find any justification for enjoining it on lay society. In his book *On Free Choice of Will*, Augustine considered our life in the world as transitory and less worthy than eternal life in the next world. He felt that defending your own life partakes of the pride and the lust for life. But a soldier or civil magistrate acts as an agent of the law and uses the sword to defend the innocent and keep the peace, therefore avoiding "lust in the performing of his duty."<sup>33</sup> Augustine



extrapolated from this that self-defense was permissible, not to save one's own life but to be available to save others.

Aquinas never adopted Augustine's extreme self-denial. Aquinas held that killing in defense of others is best, but natural law dictates that "a man is under a greater obligation to care for his own life than for another's, and therefore that a private person may kill another" to defend his own life.<sup>34</sup>

In short, Christians, whether clergy or lay members, are forbidden from practicing the kinds of absolute pacifism associated with Mohandas Gandhi. Christian peacefulness is conditional pacifism. In extremis, the Christian must be prepared to use lethal force in defense of the innocent. The role of the ruler and warrior in the church is considered no less as important as the clergy. In the twelfth chapter of 1 Corinthians, the apostle Paul compared the church to the body of Christ, each member, like an organ, playing a vital role:

For as the body is one, and hath members, and all the members of that one body, being one body, being many, are one body: so also Christ. For by one spirit are we all baptized into one body ... Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healing, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.

(1 Corinthians 12)

## **“Onward Christian Soldiers”**

No sooner had Christianity become the established religion of the Roman Empire, the empire began its slow decline. Moral decay and barbarian invasion combined to weaken the once mighty empire. By the 7th century civil society in western Europe had practically disappeared. The eastern half of the empire survived another seven centuries under the Byzantines. But the western empire collapsed. The Church was the lone beacon of civilization left in a world shrouded in darkness. Through its conversion of the Germanic barbarian tribes, the Church raised a new civilization on the wreckage of the old. The Church played the central role. For a thousand years the new “western” civilization was called Christendom.

In a famous poem of that era, Christendom's survival was said to depend upon three basic orders (estates): (1) “Those who fight” (nobles); (2) “Those who pray” (clergy); (3) “Those who work” (peasants). Christendom's survival was held in the balance several times in the early centuries. It was no coincidence that the first estate belonged to “those who fight,” for without them Christendom surely would've fallen.

The tradition of the Christian warrior stretched back to Cornelius the centurion. For a millennia barbarians and Muslims battered at the gates of Christendom. But for the Christian warrior, Christianity surely would not exist today. There's no more poignant example than Charles Martel (“The Hammer”).

The founding of western Christendom coincided with the rise of the Islamic caliphate. What we call the Middle East today once belonged to the old Roman Empire. Up until the 7th century its inhabitants were predominantly Christians. Beginning shortly after the death of Muhammad (632 AD), militant Islam burst from the deserts of Arabia like a plague of locust, consuming one nation after another. (The conquests of the Islamic state (ISIS) in Iraq and Syria in 2014 was a microcosm of the Muslim conquests of the 7th and 8th centuries.) Those who wouldn't convert were put to the sword, or sold into slavery, or forced to pay an onerous tax for the privilege of staying alive. By 700 AD the Islamic caliphate stretched from Afghanistan to Morocco. Its armies sat astride the Strait of Gibraltar, poised to invade Christian Europe.

In the spring of 711 the Muslim armies crossed the strait into Spain. The Muslim jihadists slaughtered entire villages of Christians. Muslim slave dealers sent trains of Christian slaves back across the strait to be worked to death in the caliph's mines. The Muslims conquered most of Spain, except for the small kingdom of Aragon in the far northwest.

Initially the Muslims seemed content to remain south of the Pyrenees mountains. But in 732 a huge Muslim army crossed the mountains into southern France. Panic gripped Christendom. Medieval Europe was divided into small fiefdoms. No one fiefdom possessed an army powerful enough to match that of the caliphate. Christian civilization faced a decisive moment in its short life. The issue would not be decided in the comfort of some legislative hall, nor by fashioning signs with cute slogans and marching in nonviolent protest. The issue would be decided on the field of battle. The outcome would determine whether Europe remained free and Christian, or fall under the yoke of Muslim tyranny.

At the head of a combined army of Frankish warriors, Charles Martel blocked the path of the Muslim horde. The Franks occupied the height overlooking the village of Tours. Before the Muslim armies could concentrate their forces, the Christian knights charged with horse and lance. The Muslims staggered under the tremendous blow. Furious hand-to-hand fighting ensued. The Christians held the field. The once mighty Muslim armies fled south back across the Pyrenees into Spain. Northern Europe was safe for the time being. If not for Charles Martel, you'd be praying toward Mecca today.

It took another 780 years to finally drive the Muslims out of Spain. Legendary figures like Sancho I, King of Navarre, and El Cid began the Reconquista of Spain. From their fortress at Cadiz (Cordoba), the Muslims held the advantage. The turning point came at the battle of Las Navas de Tolosa (1212). There a Christian army defeated the Muslims and liberated central Spain. The Muslims retreated to their fortress at Cadiz. But it was not until 1492, the year Columbus discovered the New World, that Cordoba was finally liberated. The Muslims scurried back across the strait into Africa. Liberated from the Muslim yoke, Spain entered a golden age of art, science, and discovery.

Christendom was not only threatened on its southern flank by expansionist Islam. Every generation or so a barbarian horde would emerge from the Asian steppe "like demons from hell," as one monk described it. Unlike the Muslims who wanted to conquer Europe, the barbarians came in search of plunder. Once laden with slaves and booty, they'd usually retreat back to the steppe from whence they had come. Although not on the same order of threat, their incursions were like large natural disasters. The destruction and loss of life left large tracts of Europe fallow for a generation.

Attila the Hun stormed out of the Hungarian steppe in 450 AD, sacking Metz, putting its people to the sword. Europe was unprepared for the onslaught. The once invincible Roman army had shrunk down to a few depleted legions. The brilliant Roman general Aetius gathered what troops he could. Crucially, he sought an alliance with Theodoric, king of the Visigoths. Having been a captive of the Huns years earlier, Aetius knew the tactics of his opponents well. The Huns, being poorly armored, relied upon ambush tactics in order to optimize use of their fleet horses and powerful recurved bow. But they were no match for armored warriors in hand-to-hand combat. The combined army cornered Attila's army near Troyes in present day France. The battle raged all day. The Christians prevailed, though noble Theodoric the Visigoth died of his wounds. Attila retreated.

But the barbarians kept coming. The Avars, another steppe people, ravaged central Europe in the 7th century and again in the 8th. The great Frankish King Charlemagne, grandson of Charles Martel, finally crushed their army on the Ems River in Bavaria in 796 AD, and captured their tent city capitol, the Ring. In the summer of 953, the Magyars invaded Germany. After mustering an army of Germans, King Otto I surprised their horde on the Lech River. Backed against the fast-flowing river, with no room to maneuver, the poorly armored steppe warriors were no match for the armored knights. Many Magyars drowned in the river trying to escape, horses and men flailing in the water stained red with blood.

The worst barbarian invasion occurred in the 1200s. After uniting the Mongol tribes, Genghis Khan embarked upon a conquest that would span Asia, the near East, and Europe and shake civilization to its very foundations. Historians estimate the loss of life of the Mongol invasions eclipsed anything up to the Second World War. Unlike previous barbarian invasions, the Mongols came to stay. After the death of Genghis, his son Occadai continued the expansion of their empire into Russia and central Europe. Kiev's entire population was exterminated, a typical Mongol tactic meant to instill terror in subject peoples. Highly mobile, the Mongols seemed unstoppable.

At the time, Europe's kingdoms remained divided. Pope Gregory IX was at war with the apostate Emperor Frederick II. Poland was divided among its dukes. Hungary's King Bela was at odds with his nobles. But when Mongol scouts were spotted in Poland and Hungary in 1241, the nobles began to muster armies. Unfortunately they never formed a united front.

In simultaneous thrusts, two Mongol armies invaded Poland and Hungary. In Poland, 40,000 Christians under Duke Henry of Silesia confronted the Mongols near Liegnitz. The Mongols feigned retreat, a typical Mongol tactic, luring the Christians into an ambush. The Christian army, in its pursuit of the "retreating" Mongols, became strung out. The Mongols then turned and surrounded the scattered elements of Henry's army. Flights of arrows disabled the Christian knights' horses, forcing the men to fight on foot, where they were sitting ducks for the Mongol horsemen. A moan could be heard in the nearby town of Liegnitz as the Mongols closed in for the kill. Only 5,000 Christians escaped. The Mongols removed the ears of the fallen Christians and filled nine large socks and sent them as presents to their generals Batu and Subutai. They placed Duke Henry's head on a pike and paraded it before the walls of Liegnitz, which continued to hold out.

King Bela's army of 80,000 Hungarians fared little better. Like Duke Henry, King Bela was lured into an ambush on the plain of Mohi. His army was virtually destroyed. Over 65,000 Christians were slain. King Bela barely escaped with his life. Europe lay wide open.

But then a miracle happened. The great Khan died unexpectedly (probably poisoned). As all Mongol successions were chaotic, General Batu decided to return to the Mongol capital at Karakorum in central Asia as the jockeying for power began. He ordered his armies to withdraw from Hungary and Poland. Church bells tolled across Europe to thank God for the deliverance.

## The Crusades

Meanwhile, the perennial struggle against Islam continued. In the 12th century Christian Europe decided to take the fight to the Muslim enemy. Over the next two centuries Christendom would send eight separate expeditions to the Holy Land. The Christians called the military expeditions the Crusades.

Liberal historians portray the Crusades as acts of aggression committed against poor innocent Muslims. They even blame the Crusades for deepening hostility between Christians and Muslims, leaving a legacy that has led to the 9/11 attacks. This is a lie.

Crusades were Holy Wars authorized by the pope for the purpose of defending Christendom. The first papal crusades were those to liberate Spain from the Muslim invaders (710 AD-1492). The more famous crusades to the Holy Land began in 1099. Like the earlier Spanish crusades, those to the Holy Land were meant to liberate Christian lands from Muslim invaders.

To understand the historical context of the crusades, you have to go back in time to the old Roman Empire. In the 3rd century the Roman Empire was divided in two for administrative reasons. The western half was still ruled from Rome, while the eastern half built a new capital at Constantinople, named in honor of the first Christian emperor. Over the centuries, the division became permanent. The western empire collapsed under the weight of the barbarian invasions of the 5th and 6th centuries. The eastern empire lived on under a new name, the Byzantine Empire. Greek Christians, the Byzantines inherited most of the ancient lands of the Near East. Its population was overwhelmingly Christian.

As noted earlier, upon the death of Muhammed (632 AD), Arab Muslim armies under his successor Abu Bakr embarked on a campaign of conquest. Damascus fell in 632. In 637 the Arabs defeated the Persians (Iran). The Muslims consolidated their conquests under one empire called the caliphate. Jerusalem withstood siege for two years, while the lands to the north and south of the city were swallowed up by the caliphate. Eventually Jerusalem was forced to surrender.

It was February 638 when the caliph Omar rode into Jerusalem on the back of a white camel, dressed in filthy robes and followed by an army of jihadists. Upon meeting Omar, the Christian patriarch of Jerusalem Sophronius remembered murmuring through tears, “Behold the abomination of desolation’ spoken of in Daniel.”<sup>35</sup>

By 720 the caliphate controlled the entire Middle East, all of North Africa, and most of Spain. Christians and Jews living under the caliphate became *dhimmis*, a segregated class and forced to live in ghettos, wear distinctive clothing and never ride a horse, and compelled to pay a special tax (*jizya*) for the privilege of remaining alive.<sup>36</sup>

The Byzantines still controlled much of Anatolia (present day Turkey) and had beat off an attempt to capture Constantinople in 718. Early in the 800s Crete and Sicily fell to the Muslims, and nearly every year they raided into Anatolia. Christian pilgrimage to the Holy Land, once popular among Christians, was ended by the caliphate. Christians remaining under Muslim rule were pressured to convert, so that Christianity became a minority faith in the land of Jesus and the apostles.

Understandably, the Christians of Europe thought the world was coming to an end, as it had for all those Christians living under the caliphate. But more disasters would follow. The Byzantine Emperor Romanus Diogenes suffered a crushing defeat at the hands of the Muslim Turks at the battle of Manzikert in 1071. A decisive battle, Manzikert led to the loss of Anatolia. The Turks pushed to the gates of Constantinople. Christians now controlled only a tiny strip of land opposite the city on the Asian side of the Bosphorus. A thousand years of Christian civilization in the Near East came to an end at Manzikert.

It was at this point that the Byzantine Emperor Alexius called upon his Christian brothers in the west for help in recovering lands conquered by the Muslims. The unity of Christendom was still assumed. Alexius sent envoys to Pope Urban II. Alexius's request for troops from the west came with the offer that if they were successful in retaking the Holy Land, the western nobles could claim the liberated lands for themselves, albeit under Alexius's suzerainty. Political ambition combined with religious idealism to produce the Crusades.

In the summer of 1095 Pope Urban II travelled to France and, in a rousing open-air public session at Clermont, he announced to a great multitude the need for a crusade. The massive crowd responded with cries of "God wills it!"<sup>37</sup> Enthusiasm was overwhelming. Urban announced that each member of the expedition would wear a red cross on his chest and not stop until Jerusalem was liberated.

The real teeth of the crusade took shape when secular magnates like Godfrey of Bouillon, Duke of Lorraine and his brothers Eustace and Baldwin, Raymond of Toulouse, and Bohemond, Prince of Toranto, agreed to lead the crusade. No finer man ever lived than Godfrey, a true exemplar of knightly virtues.

The army left Constantinople in the spring of 1097 and headed south through Turkish held Anatolia. In what most historians agree is one of the greatest military feats of all time, the small Christian army fought its way to Jerusalem, defeating a larger Turkish army at Dorylaeum, enduring cold and starvation and betrayal, besieging Antioch and taking the city. After two years of nonstop fighting, they finally captured Jerusalem in July 1099. Godfrey was then elected first king of Jerusalem.

Beside the Kingdom of Jerusalem, the Christians founded three other crusader states of Edessa, Antioch, and Tripoli. The crusaders' presence in the Holy Land lasted close to two centuries, from the liberation of Jerusalem in 1099 to the fall of Acre in 1291. There were brief periods of peace with the Muslims, but mostly the Christian states lived under constant siege from the surrounding Muslim (Saracen) states (a harbinger of what Israel faces today). In every major engagement the Knights of the Temple (Templars) and those of the Order of St. John (Hospitallers) served as the Christians' shock troops. These were monks who took priestly vows but carried arms in defense of the faith. Highly trained, they were the Navy SEALs of their era, and greatly feared by the Saracens.

The turning point came at the battle of Hatten (1187). A large crusader army under King Guy was lured into an ambush and defeated by the legendary Saracen commander Saladin. The vain, foolish King Guy of Jerusalem ignored the advice of his generals and led the army into a dry, barren wasteland where it was surrounded, cut off from water, and destroyed. Jerusalem fell shortly after Hatten. The Christians withdrew into a narrow strip of land along the Mediterranean coast.

The remaining six crusades were basically attempts to recover territory that had been lost after Hatten. The legendary King Richard the Lionheart defeated Saladin at Arsuf (1191). But it was a costly victory. Richard's army lacked the strength to recover Jerusalem.

The Christians remained on the defensive until their last stronghold of Acre fell in 1291. The Templars and Hospitallers covered the evacuation of the doomed city. While some 30,000 women and children crowded the docks to board ships to Europe, the warriors defended the city's gate towers. Smelling blood, the Muslims mounted a continuous assault. The Accursed Tower, key to the city's defense, fell to the Muslims. William of Beaujeu, grandmaster of the temple, was mortally wounded in a failed counter attack. There were not enough boats to evacuate everyone from the city. But the Templars and Hospitallers fought to the last man to ensure that as many civilians as possible could escape, following Christ's commandment: "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for a friend" (John 15:13).

The fall of Acre didn't restore peace and love to the world. Far from it. The Muslims now renewed their drive to rule the world. By 1300 Osman the Turk had consolidated his hold on Anatolia, declaring himself the first sultan of the Ottoman Empire. The Turkish sultans assumed the role of the caliph once exclusively held by Arabs. Osman's son Orhan sent troops across the Bosphorus in 1354, capturing Gallipoli. By his death in 1379, the Turks controlled all of Thrace. Constantinople was surrounded on land. The only way in or out of the former capital of eastern Christendom was by sea. The Turks continued their push into southeastern Europe. Bulgaria, Greece, Serbia, Hungary, and Romania fell under the Ottoman yoke. But Constantinople continued to hold out. Its two concentric walls on the land side were impenetrable to the siege machines of the era.

The great Christian city's time came in 1453. The Sultan Mehmed II had a large bronze cannon cast for the purpose of blasting holes in Constantinople's twin walls. The cannon was the first of its kind. Ferried across the Bosphorus, the cannon was wheeled up to Constantinople's outer wall, which had withstood countless assaults over the centuries, and within a matter of hours the Ottoman gunners had reduced sections of the wall to rubble. They quickly moved on to the inner wall. Pouring through the gaps in the walls, the Turks proceeded to massacre the city's inhabitants. The head of the last Byzantine emperor was impaled on a spear. Hagia Sophia, Christendom's greatest basilica, was turned into a mosque. The city named for the first Christian emperor henceforth became known as Istanbul.

The Sultan Mehmed's armies pushed all the way to the gates of Vienna. Once again Christendom faced extinction. But Vienna held. Dogged resistance from the great warrior János Hunyadi at Belgrade forced the Turks to withdraw. But it was a temporary respite.

The Ottomans renewed their drive in the 1570s, with Sicily and Italy in their sights. Since the Reformation, Christendom had become divided amongst themselves into Catholic, Protestant, and Orthodox. The Turks hoped to take advantage of the divisions. Organizing a massive armada of ships and soldiers, they sailed west into the Mediterranean Sea. The Spanish

and Venetians possessed the only fleets capable of matching the Turks. But the Venetians were reluctant to join forces with the Spanish. Spain occupied much of Italy at the time and the Italians had fought two wars to eject them. The Austrians had their own bone to pick with the Italians over control of the Tyrol. Pope Pius V pleaded with the Christian rulers to put aside their differences in order to fight the common enemy.

In the meantime, the Turkish armada had landed troops on Cyprus and laid siege to the city of Famagusta. Venetian Captain Marcantonio Bragadin commanded the tiny garrison. Facing hopeless odds, Bragadin agreed to terms with the Turkish commander Lala Mustafa: surrender Famagusta in exchange for safe passage of his garrison out of Cyprus. But upon opening the city gates, the Turks proceeded to kill the male inhabitants and rape the women. The decapitated heads of the Venetian lords were lined up in the city square. Bragadin had his ears cut off and was forced to carry dirt as a galley slave. Mustafa then ordered his guards to flay Bragadin alive. Bragadin expired about half way through the ordeal, but the guard continued until finished. Mustafa then had Bragadin's hide stuffed with straw, clothed in his old uniform, and sent to Istanbul as a trophy for the sultan.

Through the pope's efforts, a coalition of Spanish and Venetian vessels gathered. Don Juan of Austria was placed in overall command of the Christian fleet. Before embarking, the pope blessed the fleet in a scene reminiscent of Pope Urban II preaching the crusade at Clermont. Hardened warriors wept while receiving Communion. Political divisions, which had threatened to break apart the coalition, disappeared. Christendom was united once more. The Christian fleet met the Turks at Lepanto in the Gulf of Corinth in 1571. Ship to ship fighting lasted two days. Cervantes, the novelist, who lost part of his hand to a Turkish miniball, described a scene out of Dante's *Inferno*: Turkish ships on fire as far as his eye could see; heathens flailing in the bloody waters; clouds of gunpowder smoke. When the smoke finally cleared, what was left of the sultan's once mighty fleet was seen limping over the eastern horizon toward Istanbul. The Christians had won an incredible victory. The battle of Lepanto holds a place in history alongside Tours: pivotal not for one nation but for an entire civilization. If not for Don Juan of Austria, you'd be praying toward Mecca today.

The Turks tried one last time to take Vienna in 1680. But this time the outcome was never in doubt. In the century since Lepanto, a scientific revolution had taken place in Europe that would lay the foundations of the modern world. Western technology, weaponry, and tactics far outpaced the Muslim world, whereas the Muslim world entered a period of slow decline. At Tours and Lepanto, the Christians had faced larger, more sophisticated Muslim armies and fleets. The tables turned at Vienna.

King John Sobieski of Poland was called upon to lift the siege of Vienna. He marched his army to the hills overlooking the city. After scouting the Ottoman positions, King John noticed that the Muslim commander had neglected to occupy the high ground south of the city. It was the key position. He said of his Turkish opponent: "This man knows nothing of war." Occupying the high ground that night, King John launched his attack in the morning. It was a complete rout. The Turks never again threatened Vienna. But it would take another 200 years to finally drive them out of the Balkans.

The epic struggle between Christendom and Islam continues to this day. Although not as powerful as they once were, the Muslims are every bit as ruthless. What America witnessed on 9/11 is something our Christian ancestors experienced for centuries. Massacre is the Muslim

*modus operandi*. For the jihadist, the war must continue until all the world submits to Islam. Who will stop him? The milquetoast Christian? Or, the Christian warrior?

## **The Culture War**

The Christian warrior served as the bulwark of western civilization in the past. Despite all he has done to deserve our praise, he is no longer welcome in milquetoast churches today. So pervasive is pacifism in the church, even so-called “conservative” Christians are compelled to eschew militant Christianity. Milquetoast writer Karen Armstrong in her book *A History of God* describes Christian warriors like those who fought at Tours as “unevolved brutes,” a couple generations removed from barbarism. The medieval Christian knight is an archetype at odds with the teachings of Jesus, Armstrong says. Armstrong’s Jesus looks more like Mohandas Gandhi. He’s a weakling spouting nonviolence. The Jesus who drove the moneylenders from the temple (Mark 11:19) is alien to Armstrong. Armstrong’s Gandhi-Jesus has sadly replaced the son of David in most churches today. The faith that inspired Godfrey of Bouillon and Don Juan of Austria has been reduced to a self-help cult for weaklings.

The last remnant of Christians are those on the frontlines of the culture war. Culture determines the social life of a people. Those who control the culture control the people. Milquetoasts preach indifference to or surrender to the dominant liberal culture. Either strategy will lead to the extinction of Christianity. Conservative Christians are still fighting a rearguard action. The fight for traditional marriage, for the family, and for the unborn is Christianity’s last battle. Unlike the war with expansionist Islam, the culture war is a civil war, with Christianity pitted against secular liberalism. The struggle against abortion lies at the heart of the culture war.

The abortion controversy is not a religious debate, as liberals prefer to frame it. Child baptism versus adult baptism is a religious debate. Abortion, on the other hand, is about a fundamental question of justice: Is it permissible for one class of persons (adults) to kill another class of persons (unborn children) for reasons of social engineering and simply as a matter of convenience?

Under the natural law, human life has intrinsic value. Protecting innocent human life is therefore society’s chief mandate. Harking back to this natural law tradition, both sides in the abortion debate assent to this basic proposition, at least in theory. The disagreement centers on the personhood of the unborn child. The pro-life position recognizes the personhood of the unborn child and therefore wishes to extend legal protection. The pro-abortion side denies the personhood of the “fetus,” and therefore the question of legal protection is moot.

Were it a simple matter of demonstrating the personhood of the unborn child, the issue would’ve been settled a long time ago. Biology clearly proves that the unborn child is a separate, distinct human being at the earliest stages of the life cycle. The problem is not one of convincing supporters of abortion of the personhood of the unborn child, it’s in acknowledging that they simply do not care.

The so-called “pro-choice” position is a ruse to cover what is in fact rank inhumanity. The vast majority of those who support legalized abortion have no ideological opinions about the



issue one way or the other. To them, abortion is merely a means of avoiding an unwanted responsibility. The abortion clinic is little more than a sexual vomitorium. They want to gorge at the sexual revolution's buffet, but if an unwanted pregnancy should occur, they want to sneak off to the local abortion mill and disgorge themselves. As long as they're given enough distance from the act itself they scarcely consider the morality of their action.

Then there are the abortion ideologues. Mostly feminists and radical leftists, they're the folks who run the organizations that keep abortion legal in this country. In their writings they acknowledge that the unborn child is in fact a person. But they insist on a woman's right to an abortion as a necessary means of achieving equality with men. They view maternity as a handicap, a weakness that men have exploited to keep women dependent. Birth control and abortion have levelled the playing field, so to speak, between men and women. So even though it is the deliberate taking of a human life, abortion and infanticide are seen as legitimate responses to sexist oppression. Feminist ideologue Naomi Wolf explains: "Sometimes the mother must be able to decide that the fetus, in its full humanity, must die."<sup>38</sup>

Put in those terms, there can be no compromise on the abortion controversy. Both sides represent diametrically opposed philosophies. On the one side is natural law; on the other is egalitarian positive law.

Positivism is a filthy mutation of the radical Enlightenment. Positivism arose in opposition to classical natural law theory, which holds that man-made law must respect necessary moral constraints. As described earlier, natural law assumes the existence of a moral order that governs society and all its man-made laws. Legal positivism does not uphold an ethical justification for man-made law.

Denying the existence of a moral order to which all statutory law must conform, positive law theory holds that laws derive legitimacy from the *will* of the legislator. Morality is a matter of preference and unrelated to the law as such. Professor Hans Kelsen, a leading theorist of pure positive law in the 1920s, insisted that there are no limits to the power of the legislator, and no "fundamental liberties" limiting the latitude of the legislator. Kelsen's relativism extended legitimacy to dictatorships as well as democracies. Denying that even an unelected despotism lacks the character of a legal order "is nothing but the naiveté and presumption of natural law thinking," Kelsen wrote.<sup>39</sup>

Since morality and law are separate domains, law is whatever those in power say it is; it's a function of will rather than reason. Positive law theory contributed greatly to the great tyrannies of the 20th century. Kelsen's writings were taught in the Soviet universities. To the communist, law and morality are subordinate to historical processes. The individual person is devoid of any inherent moral worth. People are just the building blocks in creating the perfect society that lies at the "end of history." What matters are not individuals, but classes. Some classes are progressive; others are reactionary. Progressive classes are those on the "right side of history"; reactionary classes are those "deplorables" holding us back. Truly progressive societies like the Soviet Union disposed of their reactionaries in order to speed up the historical process. Stalin's Soviet Union disposed of an estimated 40 million "deplorables."

Positive law also seeped into the American legal system via proponents like Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr. Positive law theory became the basis of the judicial activism of the Warren Court of the 1960s and the Burger Court of the 1970s that resulted in decisions like *Roe v. Wade* (1973). The Court's *Roe* decision struck down state laws banning procured abortions. In

reaffirming *Roe* in the *Planned Parenthood v. Casey* (1992) decision, the Court reasoned that it is permissible for an “oppressed” class of citizens to murder another class of humans (unborn children) in order to further equality: “The ability of women to participate equally in the economic and social life of the nation has been facilitated by their ability to control their reproductive lives.”<sup>40</sup> An intrinsic good (life) is subordinated to an extrinsic good (equality). The egalitarian believes that unplanned pregnancy acts as a potential reactionary force, relegating women to domesticity and preventing them from pursuing careers that would enable them to achieve equality with men. The deaths of one million human beings every year is seen as a justified sacrifice in order to liberate women from domestic slavery. This is the real justification behind abortion on demand. From the Christian point of view, it represents pure evil.

Since *Roe* made abortion on demand legal nationwide, legal efforts to overturn *Roe* were dealt a heavy blow in *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*. On the political front, the Republican Party had adopted the pro-life movement in the 1980s, but it was only for the extra votes. The party’s establishment had no intention of ever fulfilling its promise to appoint pro-life judges who would reverse *Roe*. Ronald Reagan and Bush I gave wonderful speeches about protecting the “sanctity of life.” But during their administrations they appointed three of the Supreme Court justices—Kennedy, Souter, O’Connor—who were responsible for upholding abortion as a “fundamental right” in *Casey*.

Many culture warriors became disillusioned by *Casey*. A few prominent ministers had already opted out of the culture war, arguing that the church should keep clear of politics. After leading a minor effort to clean up Time Square, which had been overrun by prostitutes and porn shops, the Reverend Billy Graham retreated from the culture war. Instead, he devoted himself to “saving souls” and preparing for the Rapture. To reward Graham’s neutrality, the liberal regime anointed him “America’s Pastor.” During his long tenure as America’s Pastor, America was effectively de-Christianized.

By the 1990s legal and nonviolent efforts to roll back abortion had ended in failure. In decision after decision, the courts refused to stop the slaughter, so pro-lifers resorted to direct action. Operation Rescue blockaded abortion clinics, emulating the tactics of the civil rights movement. Washington responded by passing the Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances Act (FACE), which made it a federal crime to interfere with the business of baby killing. When some left-wing environmentalist chained himself to a redwood tree and shut down an entire logging operation, the government refused to intervene. The logging company was forced to negotiate. But when a pro-life activist so much as breathed heavy on a child murderer, the government sentenced him to federal prison. Pro-lifers had no representation in Washington, no place in the debate. So individuals like Michael Griffin and Paul Hill began to take action.

The shootings of Dr. Gunn and Dr. Britton in Pensacola were a deliberate escalation of the culture war. “Using the force necessary to defend the unborn gives credibility, urgency, and direction to the pro-life movement,” Paul Hill wrote. “These are traits that it has lacked and that it needs in order to prevail.”<sup>41</sup> Many pro-lifers agreed with the tactic. The shootings raised a question that none of the leaders of mainstream pro-life organizations dared to answer: If abortion is really no different than genocide, and if the government refuses to do anything to stop it, then why wouldn’t armed resistance be a legitimate response? The Defensive Action movement answered the question in Pensacola.

When 33 respected pro-life activists signed the *Defensive Action Statement*, justifying the shootings, Washington suspected a wider conspiracy. President Clinton ordered Attorney General Janet Reno to organize a task force to investigate Defensive Action under the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act (RICO) statute. But the worst attacks levelled at Defensive Action came not from the government but from the big churches and the mainstream pro-life groups. “And a man’s foes shall be they of his own household,” the Scripture says (Matthew 10:36).

## **The Nashville Declaration**

Most criticisms of Defensive Action were trite. “The pro-life community condemns violence on every level,” said the Reverend Patrick Mahoney. “That’s why we’re pro-life.”<sup>42</sup> By “violence on every level,” did Reverend Mahoney mean World War II, the War of Independence, as well as the violence necessary for law enforcement to subdue criminals? Any Christian with a cursory knowledge of Scripture could drive a truck through such hypocritical stupid statements. Someone had to answer the question: Were Michael Griffin and Paul Hill justified on the basis of Christian moral principles?

To answer that question, the Southern Baptist Convention issued *The Nashville Declaration of Conscience* (September 1994). The committee of theologians that authored the declaration disagreed with those who felt that addressing the *Defensive Action Statement* would only give it credibility. The authors believed that “the point of view of persons advocating violence against abortion doctors requires serious moral reflection and engagement, more serious than has thus far publicly occurred. A number of profound questions of Christian morality and citizenship are at stake.” Not to address the *Defensive Action Statement* risked losing control of the narrative: “Pro-life Christians must act quickly and vigorously to prevent a small but vocal band of militant activists from destroying the credibility, effectiveness, and witness of the mainstream pro-life movement.”<sup>43</sup>

*The Nashville Declaration* accepted orthodox teachings on the necessary use of lethal force in a fallen world. Rejecting the arguments of Christian pacifists, the authors recognized “a small number of tragic and exceptional circumstances in a fallen world in which the taking of human life can be morally justifiable.” First, civil authorities have a divine mandate to use force in “detering wrongdoing and bringing punishment on wrongdoers, thus protecting the innocent” (Romans 13:1-7). In most circumstances, civil authorities enjoy a monopoly on the use of force. But under the moral and civil law there are certain “circumstances, normally involving defense of self or third persons against deadly force, the taking of another human life by a private citizen might be justified.”<sup>44</sup>

On the moral and legal status of abortion, the authors give the pro-life party line. Abortion, they say, “represents a morally unjustifiable form of killing”; i.e. murder. And the “overwhelming majority of abortions in this country are performed for what can only be described as reasons of convenience.” Many parties are involved in the act: the mother, who wants to rid herself of an unwanted child; the boyfriend or husband, who wants to avoid the responsibility of fatherhood; the abortionist, who carries out the killing for money or cause. But

all these participants act under the protection of the laws of the government. Therefore, ultimate responsibility for abortion in America lies with the government. “In terms of gestational life, the federal government has wrongfully abdicated its responsibility to protect the innocent and to establish and enforce strict criteria for the justifiable taking of human life.”<sup>45</sup>

Despite the fact that the laws that permit abortion “represent a fundamental assault on the sanctity of life,” the authors insist that shooting an “abortion doctor is not a moral option for a Christian.” They reject the argument of the *Defensive Action Statement* that shooting an abortionist is the act of an individual defending a third party (unborn child) from imminent assault. The authors say that in both the civil and moral law “private citizens are permitted to use lethal force against another human being only if this occurs as an unintended effect of the act of defending oneself or another against an assailant’s unjust attack. Private citizens are not allowed to intend to kill another human being and are not allowed to engage in premeditated acts of deadly force in order to accomplish what they intend.”<sup>46</sup>

Notice the phrase “unintended effect.” This is the nonsensical principle of double effect discussed earlier. Recall that double effect states that the moral quality of an act hinges upon the intention of the actor. According to the double effect principle, killing a human being is *always* to cause an evil, but not all killing is murder. Killing can be justified if it’s a non-intended consequence of one’s actions. Try telling that to a soldier in battle who must intentionally kill or be killed. Furthermore, it’s not clear that killing is *always* to cause an evil. For example, those who sought to assassinate Hitler were condemned by the Germans at the time but are now viewed as heroic by most people including many Christians. And, as was pointed out earlier, the idea that killing is always evil is not supported in the Bible.

Additionally, in the authors’ rendering, double effect is applied only to “private citizens.” State actors are given *carte blanche* when it comes to intentional killing. Here the Southern Baptists reveal the authoritarian tendency that lies within Calvinism. The threshold for when a private person is permitted to use lethal force may be higher than it is for public actors, but private persons and public actors do not inhabit separate moral categories. *The Nashville Declaration* suggests a categorical difference between private persons and public actors similar to the old “Divine Right of Kings” theory of governance. Only nobles have been granted “by God” authority to use the sword. Peasants, on the other hand, may only “unintentionally” defend themselves. Intentional killing is intentional killing. Whether carried out by private persons or public actors, the question is whether the killing is morally justified. If you recall, our patriot forefathers who rose up against British tyranny were “private persons.” Were they wrong for intentionally killing British soldiers?

In any event, *The Nashville Declaration* insists that resorting to lethal force to protect an innocent victim from harm is illegitimate if the victim could have been defended in “any way other than causing the death of the attacker.” Besides, shooting an abortion doctor to save the life of one unborn child will likely not change the outcome because “the woman seeking an abortion will only find another abortion provider.”<sup>47</sup> This is like saying that killing one ISIS executioner does no good because there are always more to take his place.

The Southern Baptist Convention insists that we must save the victims of child murder, without harming the poor child murderers. How? *The Nashville Declaration* lists several “legitimate responses to abortion.” Christians should support “abstinence and values-based sex education programs.” They should establish “crisis pregnancy centers and maternity homes.” On

the political front, they should take advantage of the “wide-ranging avenues” available in the democratic system to change the laws on abortion. As for whether Christians should engage in civil disobedience in the vicinity of abortion clinics, the authors caution that such actions should “follow the failure of a range of other less radical forms of action.”<sup>48</sup> The authors liken abortion to mass murder, but they have serious reservations about pro-life activists chaining themselves to the doors of abortion mills!

*The Nashville Declaration* did get one thing right. The authors rejected the *Defensive Action Statement*’s claim that using lethal force to save unborn babies was equivalent to stopping a murder in progress. Paul Hill used this defense after gunning down Dr. Britton. “Two thoughts sustained me as I went through this ordeal,” Hill wrote. “The first was that if I did not intervene and prevent the abortionist from entering the clinic, he would kill two or three dozen children that day.”<sup>49</sup>

Hill’s explanation is understandable but ultimately disingenuous. Rejecting Hill’s claim, *The Nashville Declaration* said that shooting an abortionist is “better described as an act of revolution...”<sup>50</sup> Indeed, it is. Dr. Britton was not some lone criminal attacking innocent children in the park. He performed abortions under the full protection of the laws of the federal government. The abortions he performed were “legal.” Attacking Dr. Britton for performing legally sanctioned abortions was really an attack on the government.

The theologians at the Southern Baptist Convention described abortion as “the single gravest failure of American democracy in our generation.” But they wouldn’t countenance talk of revolution. “We reject the argument that a government that allows legalized abortion on demand has of necessity lost its legitimacy, and that in such circumstances private citizens are free to resist it ‘by any means necessary’.” Professing allegiance to the abortionist regime in Washington, the authors characterized abortion as a “failure of legitimate democracy, rather than as the imposition or decree of an illegitimate regime.” Rejecting the “logic of revolution that some have articulated,” the authors pledged themselves to “change the law through the democratic processes ...”<sup>51</sup>

Curiously, at the end of *The Nashville Declaration* the authors issued a veiled threat aimed not at the government in Washington, but at government in general. At “some point a government may lose its legitimacy as it sets itself against divine law and loses the popular support of its people.” Should that happen “then Christians, for the sake of conscience, may be forced to consider more drastic measures.” But stepping back, the authors denied that our “nation is nearing or has reached such a crisis.”<sup>52</sup>

## **The Nashville Declaration Twenty-Five Years Later**

Since *The Nashville Declaration of Conscience* was issued in 1994, another 25 million unborn Americans have had their lives snuffed out by abortionists, bringing the total number of abortions since *Roe* to somewhere north of 60 million. That’s the combined population of California and Texas. And the pro-life movement is no closer to the day when either the Supreme Court overturns *Roe*, or the states ratify a Life amendment. The pro-life faithful

continue to gather every January on the Washington Mall to mourn the anniversary of *Roe v. Wade*. But nonviolent efforts to end abortion on demand are effectively dead. If there's any soul-searching going on at the Southern Baptist Convention over its decision to adopt a nonviolent strategy and its ultimate failure, I haven't heard any. Which makes me wonder if they ever really considered abortion to be the "single gravest failure of American democracy in our generation." Obviously not grave enough.

Meanwhile the liberal regime increases its tyranny. The Supreme Court has recently imposed "gay marriage" on the nation in its *Obergefell v. Hodges* (2015) decree. In doing so, the Court overturned 36 state bans and the Federal Defense of Marriage Act. To reach its desired outcome, the Court used the same "substantive" (positive) logic it had used in *Roe v. Wade* to "discover" a right to abortion in the Constitution. The Southern Baptist Convention has yet to indicate if it believes *Obergefell*, like *Roe*, is also a "failure of a legitimate democracy rather than the imposition of or decree of an illegitimate regime." Not even the supporters of "gay marriage" or abortion believe that nonsense. Both *Roe* and *Obergefell* were government decrees. In both cases the Court exercised "raw judicial power," in the words of Justice Rehnquist's dissent in *Roe*.<sup>53</sup> Both decisions were issued in defiance of the expressed will of the people and the accepted meaning of statutory and constitutional precedent; i.e. they were decrees.

*Pace* the Southern Baptist Convention, America ceased being a country that settles political disputes democratically a long, long time ago. The gradual accretion of power by the administrative state and the judiciary since the New Deal in the 1930s has effectively usurped the constitutional role of "democratic processes." A liberal judicial oligarchy has controlled the direction of social change in this country for over 50 years, more often than not in open defiance of the will of the people. The founding fathers' dream of representative government died a long time ago; but I suspect the Southern Baptists know that already.

This begs the question: What if a majority of Americans had supported legalized abortion and "gay marriage"? Are Christians obliged to obey laws that directly contradict the moral law even if those laws were enacted democratically? *The Nashville Declaration* wants it both ways. On the one hand, the authors say Christians are obliged to obey all civil authority. Laws permitting abortion, which directly contradict moral law, were passed by the "people of the United States, acting through legitimate government institutions, who are responsible and ultimately accountable for immoral laws permitting and protecting the taking of unborn human lives."<sup>54</sup> Popular government is legitimate government, says the Southern Baptist Convention. But as we saw earlier in our discussion of natural law, a government's legitimacy hinges on its continued observance of the tenets of natural law. A government, however popular it may be, that abrogates the natural law lapses into tyranny. Nothing within the Christian tradition confers legitimacy on a government simply because it is popular, or else Hitler was the legitimate ruler of Germany.

But on the other hand, *The Nashville Declaration* concedes that "Christians are permitted, and sometimes even obligated, to violate a civil law that is in direct, specific conflict with the law of God."<sup>55</sup> The authors use the example of the Hebrew midwives (Exodus 1:16). Ordered by Pharaoh to murder firstborn male children, the midwives decide to circumvent the decree. They saved the babies rather than kill them.

Using the Hebrew midwives as an example instead of, say, Moses killing the Egyptian taskmaster (Exodus 2:11-12) is significant and deliberate. The reason is that the Southern Baptist

Convention wished to limit responses to abortion to civil disobedience rather than armed insurrection. But is civil disobedience the right response? If pro-life advocates are to be taken seriously, how can civil disobedience be the right response to a regime that has exterminated 60 million Americans and forced its citizens to subsidize the holocaust with taxes paid to Planned Parenthood?

For context, let us remember that our founding fathers took up arms against their own government because they were not being represented in the British Parliament for the purposes of taxation. “Taxation without representation,” became the rallying cry of patriot groups like the Sons of Liberty. The “revolutionary pulpit” echoed the cry and gave the revolution legitimacy. Is “taxation without representation” a graver injury to the nation than the murder of 60 million human beings?

At what point does a government “lose its legitimacy”? In the words of the *Nashville Declaration*, a government must “set itself against divine law and lose the popular support of its people.”<sup>56</sup> Popular support constitutes practical legitimacy but not moral legitimacy. It’s when a government “sets itself against divine law” that counts. The British Parliament wanted to raise taxes on the colonists to pay off debts it had accrued defending the colonies. It levied taxes without the colonists’ consent, and for this the colonists rebelled. The liberal regime behind abortion on demand has not only wiped out the equivalent of the populations of California and Texas, it fully intends to wipe Christian civilization off the face of the earth. If that’s not a government setting “itself against divine law,” I don’t know what is.

Clearly the authors of *The Nashville Declaration* dismissed the notion of armed resistance to abortion because they feared the consequences to their careers. Had they followed in the footsteps of the courageous 33 who signed the *Defensive Action Statement*, they’d have found themselves instant pariahs in the Southern Baptist Convention, and very likely would’ve lost their teaching positions in the seminary. But Scripture tells us, “No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money” (Matthew 6:24). Were they servants of God, they’d have said: Any government, democracy or dictatorship, that enshrines child murder into law has abrogated the natural law and declared war on its people; and it is the right of the people to defend themselves. Whether the people, collectively or individually, decide to take up arms in defense of its right in this circumstance is a matter of expediency, not morality. There may be solid practical reasons for not resorting to lethal violence against abortion, but there are no moral ones. This is what *The Nashville Declaration* should have said. Instead, its authors chose to serve “money.”

## **John Brown**

The authors of *The Nashville Declaration of Conscience* abrogated their responsibility to “speak the things that become sound doctrine” (Titus 2:1). With such timid leaders, is it any wonder that Christians like Paul Hill are searching elsewhere for examples? For his part, Paul Hill looked to the example of John Brown, the militant abolitionist.

In the 1850s the country was similarly divided. Today it's abortion; back then it was slavery. Abraham Lincoln described the crisis using a biblical metaphor: "'A house divided against itself cannot stand.' I believe this government cannot endure, permanently half *slave* and half *free*.'"<sup>57</sup> Abe was right. Abolitionists and freesoilers like Lincoln had battled nonviolently to halt the spread of slavery into the territories. But entrenched southern power in the federal government nullified their efforts. The *Dred Scott* decision, the Kansas-Nebraska Act, and the fugitive slave law ended nonviolent efforts to stop the spread of slavery. A political solution was rendered impossible.

John Brown never understood the timidity of most other abolitionists. Like the Old Testament warriors that he resembled, John Brown believed that the "Slave Power" could only be defeated by revolution. After attending a meeting of the New England Anti-Slavery Society, he walked out in disgust: "Talk! Talk! Talk!" he scoffed. "That will never free the slaves. What's needed is action—action."<sup>58</sup>

On October 16, 1858, Brown led a force of 18 men, including three of his sons, into Harper's Ferry, Virginia. He planned to seize the U.S. Armory and arsenal there and distribute arms to slaves from the surrounding plantations. Although he later denied it, Brown intended to incite a slave rebellion. Brown and his followers managed to seize the arsenal, but his army of slave recruits never materialized. During the night a company of U.S. Marines converged on Harper's Ferry and quickly surrounded Brown's force inside the arsenal. Eight raiders were killed in the ensuing gun battle. Several escaped. Wounded, Brown, along with six others, was captured. He was speedily put on trial.

The Harper's Ferry raid never had a chance of succeeding. No one knew that more than John Brown. But he sensed that its failure and its martyrdom would do more to advance the anti-slavery cause than had it succeeded. Newspapers across the North initially accepted the southern version of the raid as the work of a madman. But Brown's dignified demeanor at trial changed people's perceptions. In his closing speech before being sentenced, Brown rose to surpassing eloquence that has echoed through the ages:

This court acknowledges ... the law of God. I see a book kissed, which I suppose to be the Bible, or at least the New Testament, which teaches me that all things whatsoever I would that men should do to me, I should do even so to them. It teaches me, further, to remember them that are in bonds as bound with them. I endeavored to act up to that instruction. ... Now, if it is deemed necessary that I should forfeit my life for the furtherance of the ends of justice, and mingle my blood further with the blood of my children and with the blood of the millions in this slave country whose rights are disregarded by wicked, cruel, and unjust enactments, I say, let it be done.<sup>59</sup>

Sentenced to hang, Brown never wavered. The day of his execution church bells tolled in cities and towns across the North. Ministers preached sermons of commemoration. Thousands marched in silent procession. Ralph Waldo Emerson prophesied that John Brown would "make the gallows as glorious as the cross."<sup>60</sup> On the whole, people came to regard the Harper's Ferry raid to be wrong in method but right in intention. "History, forgetting the errors of [Brown's] judgements in the contemplation of his unfaltering course, ... and of the nobleness of his aims," wrote William Cullen Bryant, "will record his name among those of its martyrs and heroes."<sup>61</sup>



Bryant's assessment would prove prophetic. Two years after Brown was hanged, the Union armies marched south to free the slaves. As they marched, they sang the Union Army's favorite marching song: "John Brown's Body."

Paul Hill handled himself with every bit as much dignity as John Brown. Tried and convicted, Hill was sentenced to die in Florida's lethal injection chamber. At sentencing, he invoked John Brown: "If it be deemed necessary that I should forfeit my life for the furtherance of the ends of justice, and mingle my blood with the blood of the millions of unborn children whose rights are disregarded by wicked, cruel, and unjust enactments, I say, let it be done."<sup>62</sup>

On the night of Paul Hill's execution, a storm broke over the prison, and peels of lightning crashed across the black Florida sky. Inside the death house, Hill remained calm. Strapped to a gurney, Hill used his last words to encourage others to continue the fight: "If you believe abortion is murder, you should do what you have to do to stop it. May God help you to protect the unborn as you would want to be protected."<sup>63</sup>

Except for a handful of supporters outside the prison gate the night of Hill's execution, his act of martyrdom attracted little attention. No church bells tolled. No sermons of commemoration. No candlelight vigils. If compelled to comment on Hill's execution, the mainstream pro-life leaders regurgitated their hackneyed condemnations. Yet, those same so-called leaders continue to insist that abortion is murder. They continue to compare abortion to slavery and the Holocaust. In *The Nashville Declaration*, the Southern Baptist Convention characterized abortion on demand as the "single gravest failure of American democracy in our generation." But not grave enough to warrant the kind of resistance that ended slavery or the Holocaust.

## **Just War and Abortion**

Liberals are quick to point to pro-life hypocrisy when it comes to violent attacks on abortionists. In the wake of a shooting at a Planned Parenthood clinic in Colorado Springs in 2015, which killed two people, Damon Linker took to the pages of the *New York Times* to blame pro-life rhetoric for the shooting. "Because if we take pro-life rhetoric seriously—if we accept that hundreds of thousands of unprosecuted and unpunished murders are being committed every year in the United States—then violence sounds like a perfectly reasonable response."<sup>64</sup> Linker's immediate objective was to tar the pro-life movement as violent, and perhaps to shame its leaders to tone down their abortion-is-murder rhetoric. But Linker makes a valid point, the same one I've been trying to make in these pages.

Few pro-life advocates have confronted the issue honestly. Catholic pro-life activist John Zmirak came closest when he weighed the issue of abortion against just war criteria. Like *The Nashville Declaration of Conscience*, Zmirak correctly characterized lethal attacks on abortionists as acts of revolution, i.e. acts of war. Acts of war are held to more stringent moral criteria than acts of private individuals defending a third party.

Zmirak insisted that acts of war must meet all four just war criteria listed in the current *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. The current catechism lists only four just war criteria that parallel most of Aquinas's original six:

1. "The damage inflicted by the aggressor on the nation or community of nations must be lasting, grave, and certain."
2. "All other means of putting an end to it must have been shown to be impractical or ineffective."
3. "There must be a serious prospect of success."
4. "The use of arms must not produce evils and disorders graver than the evil to be eliminated."<sup>65</sup>

Abortion passes the first criterion, Zmirak says, but "clearly" fails criteria 2, 3, and 4.

The problem with Zmirak's analysis, and with the just war criteria, is that unless you are clairvoyant it is impossible to meet criteria 2, 3, and 4. Faced with the decision to go to war, no leader can possibly know ahead of time whether some "other means" might resolve the conflict short of war. In August of 1941, U.S. President Roosevelt placed an oil embargo on Japan for its aggression in Manchuria. The Japanese Imperial government stipulated shortly afterward that if a reversal of American policy were not achieved through diplomatic means by late November, Japan should launch a surprise attack on the United States. Washington became aware of Japan's war plans through its decryption of Japan's diplomatic code; it just didn't know where exactly the attack would come. Meanwhile, Japan's diplomats tried for months to have the embargo lifted. But FDR refused. Had he relented and agreed to lift the embargo, the Japanese certainly would've called off the planned attack on Pearl Harbor. But by appeasing the Japanese, FDR would have only encouraged them to escalate their aggression in Asia, postponing the inevitable clash with America, which would then be on less favorable terms. Sometimes it's better to go to war now when your enemy is weaker rather than later when he is stronger.

On criterion 3, no one can foresee whether the decision to go to war will end in success. When our patriot forefathers took up arms against British tyranny, they faced the most powerful military force on planet Earth. Few people expected their rebellion to succeed, not even the patriots themselves. But they fought anyway because they believed it was better to die on their feet than to live on their knees.

On criteria 4, it's impossible to foresee whether the resort to arms will "produce evils" worse than "the evil to be eliminated." The two sides that met at Bull Run Creek in July 1861 were certain that the war would end after one or two battles, after which they'd sign a peace treaty, either dividing or reconciling the nation. Neither side suspected that the Civil War would drag on for four bloody years and cost 600,000 American lives. But few today doubt whether the sacrifice was worth it.

*The Nashville Declaration* expresses similar reservation about the resort to arms: The Bible and history "affirm that a social movement's crossing over from nonviolence to violence is a most perilous, and almost always unjustifiable, step," the Baptist theologians warned. Attacks aimed at the "deed of abortion give way to attacks on those who perform abortions." The other side will respond in kind. Once bloodshed escalates, the target list will expand to include an "ever wider range of persons (are judges and politicians next?)." As with all wars, innocent persons caught between the warring sides often suffer worse than the actual combatants.<sup>66</sup>

All true. It was true of the War of Independence. It was true of the Civil War. It was certainly true of the Second World War, wherein civilian deaths greatly outnumbered combatant deaths. But if Americans were justified in going to war over taxes, secession, or Japanese aggression, why not the systematic slaughter of 60 million Americans?

Of the four just war criteria, number 1 is the only criteria that can possibly have any bearing on the decision to go to war. The damage abortion has inflicted on our nation “has been lasting, grave, and certain.” Some 60 million unborn Americans have been cruelly slaughtered. If that’s not a just cause for going to war, I don’t know what is.

True, resistance to a tyrannical government should preferably take the form of an uprising of the “whole people.” But the fact is, no rebellion, however just, has taken the form of an uprising of the “whole people.” Historians of our War of Independence estimate that support for the uprising in the colonies consisted of about a third of the population; another third remained loyal to the British; and another third couldn’t have cared less who governed America. Besides, people need leaders, something surely lacking in America today. Mainstream conservative politicians are a lot of cowards. At such times heroes like John Brown and Paul Hill must serve as torch bearers to light the way for the pusillanimous leaders. To revise a previous quote by William Cullen Bryant, when finally the long nightmare of liberalism comes to an end, history, “forgetting the errors of his judgement ... will record [Paul Hill’s] name among those of its martyrs and heroes.”

## **The Twilight of the Gods**

As noted earlier, Christian clergy have traditionally practiced peacefulness. And during time of war, civilians who shrink from bloodshed are granted “conscientious objector” status as long as they agree to help the war effort in some other capacity, such as the medical corps. Both are conditional forms of pacifism and consistent with historical Christianity.

But absolute pacifism is incompatible with Christianity. The Scripture, both Old and New Testaments, consistently uphold just war and just retribution in response to evil. Indifference is not an option for the Christian, as it is for the Buddhist. In a sinful world, Christians must sometimes use lethal force to uphold the law and defend society.

That said, no other civilization has placed more restrictions on the occasions for violence. Christendom was the first civilization to promulgate a “law of war.” During the Gothic period Christians called it chivalry. Later the customs of chivalry were codified in the Hague and Geneva conventions. Confucius or Muhammed would have thought the idea of a “law of war” an oxymoron. In spite of Christendom’s pacifist tendencies, Christian warriors, from Charles Martel to General George Patton, have formed the bulwark of western civilization. Paul Hill fits well within this tradition.

Milquetoast Christianity, on the other hand, is an aberration, an excrescence of the Enlightenment and not in any way a reflection of the true faith. Pacifism is incompatible with Christianity. Its widespread acceptance in the churches today is a sign of crisis, for only the church militant can survive the dark days ahead.

“Faith without works is dead,” the Scripture says. The church must engage the culture to remain relevant. But if it continues to turn inward it will die. To engage the culture means doing battle with liberalism. This means politics, for what is politics but the power to control your living space. If the church continues to retreat from politics and leaves that power in the hands of its enemies, it signs its own death sentence.

Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937), the Marxist critic of western culture, once remarked that the genius of historical Christianity was in its ability to speak to all classes of society: its intellectuals and illiterates; its young men and old ladies. Milquetoast Christianity speaks primarily to illiterates and old ladies. It is passive and effeminate, indifferent to history and science, concerned with personal well-being, and obsessed with death (end times).

But young men must have dragons to slay. And intellectuals must have truth. Christianity was once the dominant force in western civilization because it engaged the culture, it spoke to all classes in society. Gothic religiousness shaped every aspect of life in Europe. It raised magnificent cathedrals and sent crusader armies to the Holy Land and inspired Dante to write *The Divine Comedy*. The Reformation and Counter-Reformation inspired Columbus to discover the New World, and the Plymouth pilgrims to colonize it. The Great Awakening preached by George Whitefield in the 1740s helped shape American consciousness and inspired our founding fathers’ generation to fight a War of Independence.

But milquetoast Christianity inspires no one, it builds nothing, it certainly leads no revolutions. It’s a self-help cult for illiterates and old ladies. Milquetoastism is nothing but liberalism with a troubled conscience. Liberalism’s lack of transcendent value troubles man and causes him to have to invent a private one. The “private savior” is liberalism’s invention. A man’s savior must remain private because liberalism’s core tenet of pluralism forbids society imposing any one conception of the transcendent on others. Milquetoast religion is there to alleviate the alienation associated with living in liberal society, for alienation is liberalism’s great contribution to mankind. Like yoga or est or group therapy, milquetoast Christianity is another “wholesome” alternative to Prozac. But the ideas that truly govern peoples’ lives is secular liberalism.

To be or not to be, that is the question at stake in the culture war. Christians face an existential crisis every bit as vital as Charles Martel faced at Tours. Consider that militant Islam failed to destroy Christian Europe in a thousand years of war, but liberalism has secularized Western Europe in less than a generation. Why? Because the church declared itself neutral in the ideological battles of the 19th and 20th centuries. And when the dust had settled after the world wars, the people silently shifted their loyalty and worship to the victor, the social-democratic welfare state. Travel across Western Europe today and you’ll find empty churches. These are the monuments of milquetoastism. Europe today is America tomorrow. The church militant is the only thing that can save the faith, and western civilization.

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### **Defensive Action**

<sup>1</sup> *Washington Post* (July 30, 1994)

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Time* (June 1, 2009)

<sup>4</sup> CBN News (June 1, 2009)

### **Milquetoast Christianity**

<sup>5</sup> Richard B. Hays, *Moral Vision of the New Testament: A Contemporary Introduction to New Testament Ethics* (Edinburgh: T.&T. Clark, 1996) 321

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 321

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 324

<sup>8</sup> John Howard Yoder, *The Politics of Jesus: Vicit Agnus Noster* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972) 58

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 93, 100

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 197, 199

<sup>11</sup> Stanley Hauerwas, *The Peaceable Kingdom: A Primer of Christian Ethics* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 1981) 81

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 160

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 94

<sup>14</sup> Stanley Hauerwas, "Should War Be Eliminated? A Thought Experiment" (1984), in *The Hauerwas Reader*, ed. John Beckman and Michael Cartwright (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005) 421

<sup>15</sup> Stanley Hauerwas, "Can a Pacifist Think About War?", in *Dispatches from the Front: Theological Engagements with the Secular* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1994) 118

### **Incarnation**

<sup>16</sup> John Howard Yoder quoted in, Nigel Biggar, *In Defense of War* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2015) 23

### **The Law in the New Testament**

<sup>17</sup> Hays, *Moral Vision*, 324

### **Soldiers in the New Testament**

<sup>18</sup> Hays, *Moral Vision*, 335

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 337

### **Just War**

<sup>20</sup> Hugo Grotius, quoted in Frederick Copleston, S.J. *A History of Philosophy, Vol. III* (New York: Image, Doubleday 1963, 1993) 332

<sup>21</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2317

<sup>22</sup> Augustine quoted in Biggar, *In Defense of War*, 61

<sup>23</sup> *Catechism*, 2308

### **Natural Law**

<sup>24</sup> Francis Suárez quoted in Copleston, *History of Philosophy*, 388

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 388

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 389

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 382

<sup>28</sup> John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government* (1690); reprint (London: J.M. Dent, 1993) 217

<sup>29</sup> Francis Suárez quoted in Copleston, *History of Philosophy*, 388

<sup>30</sup> John Locke, *Two Treatises*, 201-202

### **Double Effect**

<sup>31</sup> Thomas Aquinas, quoted in Nigel Biggar, *In Defense of War*, 107

<sup>32</sup> Nigel Biggar, *In Defense of War*, 57

### **Clerical Pacifism**

<sup>33</sup> Augustine, quoted in Nigel Biggar, *In Defense of War*, 156

<sup>34</sup> Thomas Aquinas, quoted in Nigel Biggar, *In Defense of War*, 157

### **The Crusades**

<sup>35</sup> Steven Runciman, *A History of the Crusades*, Vol. I, (London: Cambridge University Press, 1951, 1996) 3

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 18

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 91

### **The Culture War**

<sup>38</sup> Naomi Wolf, “Our Bodies, Our Souls”, *The New Republic* (Oct. 16, 1993)

<sup>39</sup> Professor H. Kelsen quoted in Friedrich A. Hayek, *The Constitution of Liberty* (Chicago, Ill: University of Chicago Press, 1960) 238

<sup>40</sup> *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*, 505 U.S. 852 (1992)

<sup>41</sup> “The Radical, Unrepentant Ideology of Abortion Clinic Killers,” *Washington Post* (Nov. 30, 2015)

### **The Nashville Declaration**

<sup>42</sup> “Pro-Life Leaders Respond,” CBN News (June 1, 2009)

<sup>43</sup> *The Nashville Declaration of Conscience, The Struggle Against Abortion: Why the Use of Lethal Force is Not Morally Justifiable* (Published by the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention, Sept. 1994) 1.7, 6.3

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.8, 2.5, 2.10

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.9, 3.5, 3.4

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.7, 5.1, 5.2

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.3, 5.4

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.2, 4.3, 4.11

<sup>49</sup> “The Radical, Unrepentant Ideology of Abortion Clinic Killers,” *Washington Post* (Nov. 30, 2015)

<sup>50</sup> *The Nashville Declaration*, 5.6

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.10, 5.7

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.12

### **The Nashville Declaration Twenty-Five Years Later**

<sup>53</sup> *Roe v. Wade*, 410 U.S. 113 (1973)

<sup>54</sup> *The Nashville Declaration*, 5.9

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.10

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.12

*A Time of War: Is Armed Resistance to Abortion Morally Justified?*

**John Brown**

<sup>57</sup> James McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988) 179

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 203

<sup>59</sup> John Brown quoted in *Battle Cry of Freedom*, 209

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 209

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 210

<sup>62</sup> Paul Hill, *Allocution*

<sup>63</sup> *Miami Herald* (Sept. 4, 2003)

**Just War and Abortion**

<sup>64</sup> *The New York Times* (Nov. 30, 2015)

<sup>65</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2309

<sup>66</sup> *The Nashville Declaration*, 5.15, 5.17