

<http://www.mupwj.org/biblical.htm>

[Home](#) > [Theology of War and Peace](#) > [Quadrilateral](#) > **Scripture**

## *Biblical Perspective*

[replacement paragraph]

For John Wesley the Scriptures held the primary place in the Quadrilateral. But he realized that tradition, reason, and experience contribute to understanding of the Bible. As background for discussion of the theology of war and peace, we consider teachings of the Old Testament and the New Testament on matters related to war and peace.

**Old Testament** [<http://www.mupwj.org/oldtestament.htm>]

[To be written]

## **New Testament**

[new]

When we study the New Testament for guidance on how to deal with war and violence, we find very little on political and military strategy. But we discover much about dealing with adversaries. By words and deeds Jesus, his disciples, and the Apostle Paul revealed a twofold approach: (1) love your enemy and pray for those who persecute you and (2) do not retaliate but overcome evil with good. [Read more....](http://www.mupwj.org/newtestament.htm) [<http://www.mupwj.org/newtestament.htm>]

Navigation on left column: > Christian History  
> Theological Perspectives  
[change to]  
> Alternatives to War

# Bishops Analyze Old Testament

## U.S. Catholic Bishops

In their 1983 *Pastoral Letter on War and Peace* the National Conference of Catholic Bishops offer an analysis of how war and peace are portrayed in the multi-layered accounts of the Old Testament. They recognize: "Violence and war are very much present in the history of the people of God, particularly from the Exodus period to the monarchy." But the image of a warrior God "was not the only image, and it was gradually transformed, particularly after the experience of the exile, when God was no longer identified with military victory and might."

Then "the images of peace and the demands upon the people for covenantal fidelity to true peace grow more urgent and more developed." "It was part of fidelity to care for the needy and helpless....Furthermore, covenantal fidelity demanded that Israel put its trust in God alone and look only to him for security."

This led to a portrayal of hope for eschatological peace. In the final age, the Messianic time, creation will be made whole and "justice will dwell in the wilderness." "There will be no need for instruments of war." "A messiah will appear, a servant of God upon whom God has placed his spirit and who will faithfully bring forth justice to the nations."

For the U.S. Catholic bishops full exposition on the Old Testament, read pp. 10-13 in [The Challenge of Peace: God's Promise and Our Response](#).

[<http://www.usccb.org/publishing/interpol.shtml#peacemaking>]

## United Methodist Bishops

In their 1986 document *In Defense of Creation* the United Methodist Council of Bishops observe, "At the heart of the Old Testament is the testimony of *shalom*, that marvelous Hebrew word that means peace....*Shalom* is positive peace: harmony, wholeness, health, and well-being in all human relationships....It is harmony between humanity and all of God's good creation."

"To be sure," the bishops write, "the Old Testament tells of much violence and warfare. In Israel's earliest traditions Yahweh is often portrayed as a warrior. God's victory over Pharaoh and the Egyptians to liberate Hebrew slaves discloses God's implacable opposition to oppression and injustice, which violate *shalom*. Exodus is liberation."

"It is when the elders of Israel forsake their moral covenant for warrior-kings that the nation begins its dismal descent into generations of exploitation, repression, and aggression -- and then into chaos and captivity." The great prophets of Exile offer a renewed vision of *shalom*: "Swords into plowshares, arms converted to food and death to life, no more wars or training for wars, peaceable kingdoms,...new covenants written on the heart." "The images forecast the coming of One who will be the Prince of Peace."

Read pp. 23-27 in [In Defense of Creation](#)

[<http://www.cokesbury.com/search.aspx?scope=all&query=516641&pid=516641>]  
for the United Methodist bishops' full analysis of the Old Testament.

The United Methodist bishops offer further analysis of the Old Testament in their 2004 study guide, *In Search of Security*. Topics include the promise of God, to walk securely, the redemption of Israel, the question of justice, trust and security, and against false security.

Regarding the "wars of the Lord", the bishops point out that God destroyed the Egyptian army without any help from soldiers or weapons on Israel's side. "Even in the battles for the conquest of the promised land and its defense against its enemies we have many stories seek to show rather graphically that god is not 'always with the largest battalions'."

The United Methodist bishops conclude, "In the Bible, taking up arms is never the way to real security and peace." Their complete Old Testament analysis is found on pp. 7-11 of *In Search of Security* [<http://www.umc-gbcs.org/uploads/news/760Search%20of%20Security.PDF>]

<http://www.mupwj.org/securitydialogue.htm>

## Dialogue on "In Search of Security"

This section presents comments received on the study guide, *In Search of Security* [<http://www.mupwj.org/study.htm#security>], developed by the United Methodist Council of Bishops.

### **June2005**

[This is <http://www.mupwj.org/securitydialogue.htm#january2005>]

In blue navigation bar on left, show the months as they are added:

June 2005 [<http://www.mupwj.org/securitydialogue.htm#june2005>]

July 2005 [<http://www.mupwj.org/securitydialogue.htm#july2005>]

Etc.

<http://www.mupwj.org/dialogue.htm>

[Home](#) > [Theology of War and Peace](#) > [Participate](#) > Dialogue

## *Web-based Dialogue*

We want to extend the discussion of the theology of war and peace through web-based dialogue. Therefore, we invite study groups to send us their views on issues raised by this project. We will post them on this website. Others may also submit their ideas.

### **Submit Your Comments**

We are looking for comments not exceeding 250 words. We reserve the right to shorten any submission to fit our website. [Click here for the submittal form.](#)

[<http://www.mupwj.org/submittalform.htm>]

### **Read Comments of Others**

We will post comments received chronologically in five topical sections. The first relates to the UM bishops' study guide, *In Search of Security*. The next four are elements of the Wesleyan Quadrilateral: Scripture, Tradition, Reason, and Experience. The sections are as follows (click to read):

**[In Search of Security](http://www.mupwj.org/securitydialogue.htm)**      <http://www.mupwj.org/securitydialogue.htm>

**[Biblical Perspective](http://www.mupwj.org/biblicaldialogue.htm)**      <http://www.mupwj.org/biblicaldialogue.htm>

**[Christian History](http://www.mupwj.org/historydialogue.htm)**      <http://www.mupwj.org/historydialogue.htm>

**[Theological Perspectives](http://www.mupwj.org/theologicaldialogue.htm)**      <http://www.mupwj.org/theologicaldialogue.htm>

**[Alternatives to War](http://www.mupwj.org/actiondialogue.htm)**      <http://www.mupwj.org/actiondialogue.htm>

For web pages of project on Theology of War and Peace  
Methodists United for Peace with Justice

C. Reason: Theological Perspectives

2. Just War

a. The Just War Tradition by Alan Geyer

b. Application (mostly web linkages)

i. Nuclear Weapons

U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, *The Challenge of Peace* (1983)

United Methodist Council of Bishops, *In Defense of Creation*, pp.34-35 (1986)

ii. Gulf War

*Lines In The Sand*, Alan Geyer and Barbara Green

*Just War and The Gulf War*, James Turner Johnson & George Weigel

iii. Afghanistan War (2001)

Message from U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (accepts)

United Methodist statement (?)

iv. Iraqi War (2003- )

Statement by U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (against)

United Methodist statements (against; other than just war criteria)

v. Preemptive War

Papers from Churches Center for Theology and Public Policy

<http://www.mupwj.org/justwar.htm>

[Home](#) > [Theology of War and Peace](#) > [Reason](#) > **Just War**

## **Just War**

[Introduction with page contents]

The Just War Tradition [<http://www.mupwj.org/justwar.htm#tradition>]

Catholic Teachings [[http://www.mupwj.org/justwar.htm#catholic teachings](http://www.mupwj.org/justwar.htm#catholic%20teachings)]

Application by U.S. Catholic Leaders [<http://www.mupwj.org/justwar.htm#application>]

United Methodist Bishops: In Defense of Creation

[<http://www.mupwj.org/justwar.htm#Umbishops>]

Bibliography [<http://www.mupwj.org/justwar.htm#bibliograph>]

Web linkage [<http://www.mupwj.org/justwar.htm#linkage>]

### **The Just War Tradition**

[Main article to be written.]

### **Catholic Teachings**

### **Application by U.S. Catholic Bishops**

### **United Methodist Bishops: In Defense of Creation**

### **Bibliography**

### **Web Linkage**

This is <http://www.mupwj.org/Christianresponses.htm>. . Heading as shown here. It links back to <http://www.mupwj.org/tradition.htm#long>

## **Development of Christian Responses to War and Peace**

by D. Stephen Long

Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary

PDF View or print  
this section

Any discussion of the early development of Christian responses to war and peace is complex and open to criticism. This is largely due to the fact that no simple or consistent response was possible. The early Church did not have a commission that gathered and issued a position statement on a Christian's participation or non-participation in war like the modern church does. It took some time for that kind of unity to develop before specific pronouncements could be made.

### **The Jerusalem Council**

There was, however, the early Jerusalem council which is noted in Acts 15 where the Church met to determine what should be asked of Gentiles now grafted on to the Jewish covenant. James offered the following conclusion to that council: "Therefore I have reached the decision that we should not trouble those Gentiles who are turning to God, but we should write to them to abstain only from things polluted by idols and from fornication and from whatever has been strangled and from blood" (Acts 15: 19).

Because Jesus did not overthrow the law of holiness but fulfilled it, the early Christians had to address what aspects of the Jewish holiness laws Gentiles would be asked to observe. Three commands were still binding: avoid participating in things associated with idols, fornication, and eating things that were not properly prepared. Or at least that is most likely what was intended by the third conclusion – "from whatever has been strangled and from blood."

However, some in the early Church interpreted these three conclusions from the Jerusalem Council as commands to avoiding apostasy (idolatry), fornication, and killing. The latter was a misunderstanding of the Jerusalem Council, but nevertheless consistent with the Sixth Commandment given to Moses: "Thou shalt not kill (or murder)." These three prohibited acts became the three grave sins for which the early Christians first suggested no repentance was possible after baptism, and then gradually permitted one repentance after baptism and finally would permit repentance for these sins as long as it was genuine.

### **Participation in War**

The Jerusalem Council did not make a ruling on how Christians should or should not participate in war. The later tradition did interpret the Council's ruling as applying to

killing. Along with other biblical claims, such as Jesus' charge "to render unto Caesar what is Caesar's and unto God what is God's" as well as the teaching in the Sermon on the Mount to turn the other cheek, the early Christians had to discern how best to witness to Christ's life, death and resurrection through participation or non-participation in violence.

To simplify matters greatly, let me suggest that as the Christian tradition developed, two passages of Scripture set the stage for various responses to the question of Christian participation in warfare. They are both found in the 22<sup>nd</sup> chapter of Luke and occur at the Last Supper and in Gethesemne. In the first story Jesus tells his disciples that even though he sent them out previously without "purse, bag or sandals" and that they lacked nothing, now they should sell their purse or bag and buy a sword. The disciples tell him they have two swords with them, and Jesus responds, "It is enough." In the second vignette, Jesus is being betrayed in the garden and one of the disciples whips out the sword and cuts off the ear of the slave of the high priest. Jesus undoes the violence and says "No more of this."

### **Two Swords and Just War Tradition**

In the Christian tradition, the first story developed into the doctrine of the two swords. It stated that there are two swords by which God governs creation; one is wielded by the secular power and one by the Church. The secular sword is real; it is the means of violence, which should serve the end of justice. The Church's sword is allegorical; it is the power of "binding and loosing," or excommunication. It makes judgments as to what constitutes the holiness of life that the faith requires (See Matthew 16 and 18). Later in the Christian tradition, this meant that the Church had an obligation to determine the limits against which Christians could not transgress when they went to war as well as how they should wage war once they were in it.

Perhaps it was Bishop Ambrose (c. 340 – 397) who first developed this teaching by drawing on the wisdom of the pagan philosopher Cicero. Cicero wrote that people owe each other obligations even in wartime, especially not to kill the innocent or to use means that exceeded the justness of the end for which they fought. Ambrose developed this teaching for what became known as the Christian just war tradition. It permits Christians to participate in war, but it limits what they can do. Christians must not abandon Jesus' command to love their enemies.

For someone like St. Augustine (354 - 430) war is permissible only to defend against an unjust attack on one's neighbor and not to defend one's self. By the time we come to Thomas Aquinas (c. 1225 – 1274), the use of violence to defend one's self is possible not because one is directly defending one's self, but because by defending one's self one is indirectly defending others who depend upon you for their sustenance. But notice that the notion of mutual deterrence, torture, total warfare, genocide, terrorism or preemptive war – which are primarily modern inventions – violate just war teaching.

Most Christian churches, Roman Catholic, Anglican, Lutherans and Presbyterians for example, stand in the just war tradition. This teaching is also shared among Jews,

Muslims and Christians. We have not always practiced it even though we were commanded against unjust killing in the Sixth Commandment. But simply because we do not practice well our principles does not mean they should be ignored. That gives us all the more reason to abide by them.

### **Pacifist Tradition**

The Roman Catholic Church once taught that pacifists were the enemies of humankind and that war was an obligation if it was a just war. However, this is no longer an official teaching of the Roman Catholic Church. It now has a pacifist tradition as do what are called the historical peace churches. These churches argue that pacifism, or at least a Christian refusal to participate in violence such as abortion, capital punishment and warfare, bears witness to the most ancient tradition of thought in Christian tradition. They make nonviolence a necessary characteristic of Christian discipleship.

This brings us to the second vignette in Luke 24 when Jesus told his disciples “no more of this” when one of them (Peter) used the sword. For some in the early church, when Jesus took the sword away from this disciple, he took it away from every Christian. In fact, prior to the fourth century, the overwhelming testimony of the Church’s bishops, pastors and theologians was that they were not to be soldiers. Their political witness in the world was to be consistent with Jesus’ own, who did not seize power through the sword but endured the cross. For this reason, he was vindicated and revealed as the true Lord of all. As his obedient subjects, the sword has been taken away from us and we must follow their gentle Saviour by way of the Cross rather than the sword.

Not every theologian or bishop of the early church made such an explicit witness against Christian participation in warfare. But notice the following witnesses. Justin Martyr (c. 100 – c. 165) an early Christian apologist wrote,

“We [Christians] who had been filled with mutual slaughter and every wickedness, have each one – all the world over – changed the instruments of war, the swords into ploughs and the spears into farming instruments, and we cultivate piety righteousness, love for men, faith and hope which is from the Father Himself through the Crucified One.”<sup>1</sup>

In his essay explaining idolatry, Tertullian (160-225) an African Church father gives us one of the most explicit statements that warfare is impermissible to Christians. He wrote:

“But how will a Christian war, nay, how will he serve even in peace without a sword, which the Lord has taken away? For albeit soldiers had come unto John, and had received the formula of their rule; albeit, likewise, a centurion had believed, still the Lord afterward, in disarming Peter, unbelted every soldier.”<sup>2</sup>

Origen, (185-254), an Alexandrine church father, made a similar argument and explained that the Christians could not participate in violence because their origins were not like the

---

<sup>1</sup>Quoted in Cadoux, The Early Christian Attitude to War (New York: Seabury Press, 1982, p. 61.

<sup>2</sup> Tertullian, “On Idolatry” in *AnteNicene Fathers*, p. 73.

origins of all other nations. They were not founded in an act of violence against others, but by the cross endured by Jesus. He wrote,

If a revolt had been the cause of the Christians existing as a separate group, the lawgiver of the Christians would not have forbidden entirely the taking of human life. He taught that it was never right for his disciples to go so far against a man, even if he should be very wicked; for he did not consider it compatible with his inspired legislation to allow the taking of human life in any form at all. Moreover, if Christians had originated from a revolt, they would not have submitted to laws that were so gentle which caused them to be killed as sheep and made then unable even to defend themselves against their persecutors.<sup>3</sup>

And St. Athanasius (296-373), one of the leading bishops responsible for setting forth Christian orthodoxy, explains why it is Christians should believe Jesus was fully divine because of the peace his death accomplished.

Who, then, is he that has done this, or who is he that has united in peace men that hated one another, save the beloved Son of the Father, the common Saviour of all, even Jesus Christ, who by his own love underwent all things for our salvation? For even from of old it was prophesied of the peace he was to usher in, where the Scripture says: 'They shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their pikes into sickles, and nation shall not take the sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.' And this is at least incredible, inasmuch as even now those Barbarians who have an innate savagery of manners . . . and cannot endure to be a single hour without weapons; but when they hear the teaching of Christ, straightway instead of fighting they turn to husbandry, and instead of arming their hands with weapons they raise them in prayer, and in a word, in place of fighting among themselves henceforth they arm against the devil and against evil spirits, subduing these by self-restraints and virtue of soul. Now this is at once a proof of the divinity of the Saviour, since what men could not learn among idols they have learned from him.<sup>4</sup>

In what is called the Hippolytean canons, which were once attributed to Hippolytus who lived from 170-236, but most likely written much later, we find rules for church membership and discipline that refuse to allow soldiers into the communion of faith. It states, "A person who has accepted the power of killing, or a soldier, may never be received [into the church] at all."<sup>5</sup>

## **Changing Attitudes**

What do these early witnesses tell us about the early Christian's attitudes toward war and peace? One would be hard pressed to find a theologian or bishop of the church prior to St. Ambrose of Milan (339-397) who taught that Christians should be allowed to participate in warfare. Many said nothing about it. Many theologians, as the above quotes note, spoke against it. Some argued that those who wanted to be part of the faith must abandon

---

<sup>3</sup> Origin, *Contra Celsum*, 3.7.

<sup>4</sup> *On the Incarnation*, Library of Christian Classics, p. 106.

<sup>5</sup> Cadoux, p. 122.

it. We do know that Christians were found in the military and that some refused soldiering, even though it cost them their lives to lay down their swords. This history is relatively non-controversial.

The controversy begins when we ask why? Why was the early church on the whole opposed to Christian participation in warfare?

Some argue that this primarily had to do with the fact that soldiers during this time were called upon to make sacrifices to the Roman gods and thus the problem with military service was primarily idolatry. But the quotes from Tertullian and Origen above suggest otherwise. For them the refusal of Christian participation in war and violence was directly related to the fact that Jesus inaugurated a new people who were commanded not to use the sword. They were to live holy lives that differed from the violence around them.

This began to change about the fourth century. The conversion of the emperor Constantine is often viewed as the key reason for the change, but the historical record is much more complex than simply blaming Constantine for a transition from the Church's non-participation in warfare to an enthusiastic participation. Nevertheless, we can invoke the conversion of Constantine as a symbol for what was a change with respect to the Christian Church's relationship to the warmaking power of governments. We became comfortable with it and merged "throne" and "altar."

### **In Our Era**

Now in our post-Christendom era, it once again requires an intentional effort to be a Christian. It can no longer be acceptable that simply being a citizen of a so-called Christian nation makes one a Christian. While some bemoan this loss, others of us see in it a gift from God where the Church is given the opportunity to recover its witness without asserting the power of the sword. Refusing to participate in warfare and violence, as Jesus did and the early Church bore witness to, may be a crucial step in cultivating our own witness in this post-Christendom era.

---

This article is part of a project on "The Theology of War and Peace". For further information, go to <http://www.mupwj.org/theologyofWarAndPeace.htm>. Or contact Methodists United for Peace with Justice at 1500 16<sup>th</sup> Street, NW, Washington, D.C.20036 or at [mupwj@mupwj.org](mailto:mupwj@mupwj.org).

## Christian Responses to War and Peace

D. Stephen Long

Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary

Any discussion of the early development of Christian responses to war and peace is complex and open to criticism. This is largely due to the fact that no simple or consistent response was possible. The early Church did not have a commission that gathered and issued a position statement on a Christian's participation or non-participation in war like the modern church does. It took some time for that kind of unity to develop before specific pronouncements could be made. There was, however, the early Jerusalem council which is noted in Acts 15 where the Church met to determine what should be asked of Gentiles now grafted on to the Jewish covenant. James offered the following conclusion to that council: "Therefore I have reached the decision that we should not trouble those Gentiles who are turning to God, but we should write to them to abstain only from things polluted by idols and from fornication and from whatever has been strangled and from blood" (Acts 15: 19).

Because Jesus did not overthrow the law of holiness but fulfilled it, the early Christians had to address what aspects of the Jewish holiness laws Gentiles would be asked to observe. Three commands were still binding: avoid participating in things associated with idols, fornication and eating things that were not properly prepared, or at least that is most likely what was intended by the third conclusion – "from whatever has been strangled and from blood." However, some in the early Church interpreted these three conclusions from the Jerusalem Council as commands to avoiding apostasy (idolatry), fornication and killing. The latter was a misunderstanding of the Jerusalem

Council, but nevertheless consistent with the Sixth Commandment given to Moses: “Thou shalt not kill (or murder).” These three prohibited acts became the three grave sins for which the early Christians first suggested no repentance was possible after baptism, and then gradually permitted one repentance after baptism and finally would permit repentance for these sins as long as it was genuine.

The Jerusalem Council did not make a ruling on how Christians should or should not participate in war. The later tradition did interpret the Council’s ruling as applying to killing. Along with other biblical claims such as Jesus’ charge “to render unto Caesar what is Caesar’s and unto God what is God’s” as well as the teaching in the Sermon on the Mount to turn the other cheek, the early Christians had to discern how best to witness to Christ’s life, death and Resurrection through participation or non-participation in violence. To simply matters greatly, let me suggest that as the Christian tradition developed, two passages of Scripture set the stage for various responses to the question of Christian participation in warfare. They are both found in the 22<sup>nd</sup> chapter of Luke and occur at the Last Supper. In the first story Jesus tells his disciples that even though he sent them out previously without “purse, bag or sandals” and that they lacked nothing, now they should sell their purse or bag and buy a sword. The disciples tell him they have two swords with them, and Jesus responds, “It is enough.” In the second vignette, Jesus is being betrayed in the garden and one of the disciples whips out the sword and cuts off the ear of the slave of the high priest. Jesus undoes the violence and says “No more of this.”

In the Christian tradition, the first story developed into the doctrine of the two swords. It stated that there are two swords by which God governs creation; one is wielded by the secular power and one by the Church. The secular sword is real; it is the means of

violence, which should serve the end of justice. The Church's sword is allegorical; it is the power of "binding and loosing," or excommunication. It makes judgments as to what constitutes the holiness of life that the faith requires (See Matthew 16 and 18). Late in the Christian tradition, this meant that the Church had an obligation to determine the limits against which Christians could not transgress when they went to war as well as how they should wage war once they were in it. Perhaps it was Bishop Ambrose (c. 340 – 397) who first developed this teaching by drawing on the wisdom of the pagan philosopher Cicero. Cicero wrote that people owe each other obligations even in wartime, especially not to kill the innocent or to use means that exceeded the justness of the end for which they fought. Ambrose developed this teaching for what became known as the Christian just war tradition. It permits Christians to participate in war, but it limits what they can do for Christians must not abandon Jesus' command to love their enemies. For someone like St. Augustine (354 - 430) war is permissible only to defend against an unjust attack on one's neighbor and not to defend one's self. By the time we come to Thomas Aquinas (c. 1225 – 1274)), the use of violence to defend one's self is possible not because one is directly defending one's self, but because by defending one's self one is indirectly defending others who depend upon you for their sustenance. But notice that the notion of mutual deterrence, torture, total warfare, genocide, terrorism or preemptive war – which are primarily modern inventions – violate just war teaching. Most Christian churches, Roman Catholic, Anglican, Lutherans and Presbyterians for example, stand in the just war tradition. This teaching is also shared among Jews, Muslims and Christians. We have not always practiced it even though we were commanded against unjust killing in the

Sixth Commandment, but simply because we do not practice well our principles does not mean they should be ignored. That gives us all the more reason to abide by them.

The Roman Catholic Church once taught that pacifists were the enemies of humankind and thus war was an obligation if it was a just war. However, this is no longer an official teaching of the Roman Catholic Church, it now has a pacifist tradition as do what are called the historical peace churches. These churches argue that pacifism, or at least a Christian refusal to participate in violence such as abortion, capital punishment and warfare, bears witness to the most ancient tradition of thought in Christian tradition. They make nonviolence a necessary characteristic of Christian discipleship. This brings us to the second vignette in Luke 24 when Jesus told his disciples “no more of this” when one of them (Peter) used the sword. For some in the early church, when Jesus took the sword away from this disciple, he took it away from every Christian. In fact, prior to the fourth century, the overwhelming testimony of the Church’s bishops, pastors and theologians was that they were not to be soldiers. Their political witness in the world was to be consistent with Jesus’ own, who did not seize power through the sword but endured the cross, and for this reason, he was vindicated and revealed as the true Lord of all. As his obedient subjects, the sword has been taken away from us and we must follow their gentle Saviour by way of the Cross rather than the sword.

Not every theologian or bishop of the early church made such an explicit witness against Christian participation in warfare. But notice the following witnesses. Justin Martyr (c. 100 – c. 165) an early Christian apologist wrote, “We [Christians] who had been filled with mutual slaughter and every wickedness, have each one – all the world over – changed the instruments of war, the swords into ploughs and the spears into

farming instruments, and we cultivate piety righteousness, love for men, faith and hope which is from the Father Himself through the Crucified One.”<sup>1</sup> In his essay explaining idolatry, Tertullian (160-225) an African Church father gives us one of the most explicit statements that warfare is impermissible to Christians. He wrote:

“But how will a Christian war, nay, how will he serve even in peace without a sword, which the Lord has taken away? For albeit soldiers had come unto John, and had received the formula of their rule; albeit, likewise, a centurion had believed, still the Lord afterward, in disarming Peter, unbelted every soldier.”<sup>2</sup>

Origen, (185-254), an Alexandrine church father, made a similar argument and explained that the Christians could not participate in violence because their origins were not like the origins of all other nations. They were not founded in an act of violence against others, but by the cross endured by Jesus. He wrote,

If a revolt had been the cause of the Christians existing as a separate group, the lawgiver of the Christians would not have forbidden entirely the taking of human life. He taught that it was never right for his disciples to go so far against a man, even if he should be very wicked; for he did not consider it compatible with his inspired legislation to allow the taking of human life in any form at all.

Moreover, if Christians had originated from a revolt, they would not have submitted to laws that were so gentle which caused them to be killed as sheep and made then unable even to defend themselves against their persecutors.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Quoted in Cadoux, The Early Christian Attitude to War (New York: Seabury Press, 1982, p. 61.

<sup>2</sup> Tertullian, “On Idolatry” in *AnteNicene Fathers*, p. 73.

<sup>3</sup> Origen, *Contra Celsum*, 3.7.

And St. Athanasius (296-373), one of the leading bishops responsible for setting forth Christian orthodoxy explains why it is Christians should believe Jesus was fully divine because of the peace his death accomplished.

Who, then, is he that has done this, or who is he that has united in peace men that hated one another, save the beloved Son of the Father, the common Saviour of all, even Jesus Christ, who by his own love underwent all things for our salvation? For even from of old it was prophesied of the peace he was to usher in, where the Scripture says: 'They shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their pikes into sickles, and nation shall not take the sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.' And this is at least incredible, inasmuch as even now those Barbarians who have an innate savagery of manners . . . and cannot endure to be a single hour without weapons; but when they hear the teaching of Christ, straightway instead of fighting they turn to husbandry, and instead of arming their hands with weapons they raise them in prayer, and in a word, in place of fighting among themselves henceforth they arm against the devil and against evil spirits, subduing these by self-restrains and virtue of soul. Now this is at once a proof of the divinity of the Saviour, since what men could not learn among idols they have learned from him.<sup>4</sup>

In what is called the Hippolytean canons, which were once attributed to Hippolytus who lived from 170-236, but most likely written much later, we find rules for church membership and discipline that refuse to allow soldiers into the communion of faith. It

---

<sup>4</sup> On the Incarnation, Library of Christian Classics, p. 106.

states, “A person who has accepted the power of killing, or a soldier, may never be received [into the church] at al.”<sup>5</sup>

What do these early witnesses tell us about the early Christian’s attitudes toward war and peace? One would be hard pressed to find a theologian or bishop of the church prior to St. Ambrose of Milan (339-397) who taught that Christians should be allowed to participate in warfare. Many said nothing about it. Many theologians, as the above quotes note, spoke against it and some argued that those who wanted to be part of the faith must abandon it. We do know that Christians were found in the military and that some refused soldiering, even though it cost them their lives to lay down their swords. This history is relatively noncontroversial. The controversy begins when we ask why? Why was the early church on the whole opposed to Christian participation in warfare? Some argue that this primarily had to do with the fact that soldiers during this time were called upon to make sacrifices to the Roman gods and thus the problem with military service was primarily idolatry. But the quotes from Tertullian and Origen above suggest otherwise. For them the refusal of Christian participation in war and violence was directly related to the fact that Jesus inaugurated a new people who were commanded not to use the sword; they were to live holy lives that differed from the violence around them.

This began to change about the fourth century. The conversion of the emperor Constantine is often viewed as the key reason for the change, but the historical record is much more complex than simply blaming Constantine for a transition from the Church’s non-participation in warfare to an enthusiastic participation. Nevertheless, we can invoke the conversion of Constantine as a symbol for what was a change with respect to the Christian Church’s relationship to the warmaking power of governments. We became

---

<sup>5</sup> Cadoux, p. 122.

comfortable with it and merged “throne” and “altar.” Now in our post-Christendom era, it once again requires an intentional effort to be a Christian. It can no longer be acceptable that simply being a citizen of a so-called Christian nation makes one a Christian. While some bemoan this loss, others of us see in it a gift from God where the Church is given the opportunity to recover its witness without asserting the power of the sword. Refusing to participate in warfare and violence, as Jesus did and the early Church bore witness to, may be a crucial step in cultivating our own witness in this post-Christian era.

## **Dealing with Adversaries: New Testament Teachings by Word and Deed**

When we study the New Testament to learn how to deal with war and peace, we find very little on political and military strategy. But we discover much about dealing with enemies and other adversaries. Instruction comes from the words and deeds of Jesus, his disciples, and the apostles of the early Christian church.

The heart of the matter is in the Sermon on the Mount. By then Matthew has told of Jesus' birth, his baptism by John, temptations in the wilderness, and the calling of Jesus first disciples. Matthew describes how "Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and curing every disease and sickness among the people." (Mt. 4:23) As his fame spread, crowds grew larger. To offer his disciples special instruction, he took them up a mountain. The crowd followed and listened in.

Jesus began by telling them who is blessed. They aren't the ones the world would select. Rather they are the poor in spirit, those who mourn, the meek, those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, the merciful, the pure in heart. "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." He told his disciples that they were the salt of the earth, the light of the world. (Mt. 5:3-16)

Jesus said, "Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfill." (Mt.5:17) Then he offered six illustrations, indicating that fulfillment meant raising the standards. Not only is murder is wrong, but so also is becoming angry with your a brother or a sister. Adultery is wrong, and so is looking at a woman with lust in your heart. Divorce was said to be acceptable if a certificate of divorce is given, but divorce is

wrong except in cases of adultery. Swearing falsely is wrong, but don't swear vows at all. Just tell the truth. (Mt. 5:21-37)

"You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' But I say to you, Do not resist an evildoer." Turn the other cheek. Give your cloak as well as your coat. Go the second mile. (Mt. 5:38-42)

"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you." After all your Father in heaven "makes his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the righteous....Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect." (Mt. 5:43-48)

These two propositions are the keys to peacemaking: Don't resist an evildoer but rather respond in a positive manner. Love your enemy.

Shortly thereafter Jesus taught his disciples to pray:

Our Father in Heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
Your kingdom come,  
Your will be done,  
on earth as it is in heaven. (Mt. 5:9-10)

Thus, the kingdom of God, central to Jesus' ministry, is an aspiration for life on earth and not just a ideal for future life in heaven. Overcoming evil with good and loving your enemy, as traits of the kingdom of God, are meant to be applied here and now.

But it won't be easy. Later as Jesus revealed to his disciples what lay ahead for him in Jerusalem, he warned them, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me." (Mt. 16:24)

When they reached Jerusalem, Pharisees and Sadduces tried to entrap Jesus with his words. A lawyer asked him, "Teacher, which commandment is greatest?" Jesus answered,

"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." (Mt. 22:34-40)

Remember, Jesus had previously defined neighbor to encompass one's enemy. Here he says love of God and love of neighbor (enemy) are necessary to fulfill the law and the prophets.

Mark's version of this story also takes place in Jerusalem with a scribe as the interrogator. After Jesus gave his answer, the scribe agreed with him and said that the carrying out the two commandments "is much more important than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices." Jesus told him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God." (Mk. 28-34)

Luke places this exchange earlier when Jesus was still in Galilee. This time a lawyer has Jesus, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus turn the question back, asking, "What is written in the law?" The lawyer then recited the two great commandments. Jesus said to him, "You have given the right answer: do this, and you will live." In other words, will inherit eternal life. (Lk.10:25-28)

The lawyer still wasn't satisfied. He asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" Jesus replied with the story we know as the Good Samaritan, the one who showed mercy to a man beaten by robbers on the road to Jericho. (Lk.10:29-37) Jesus choice of examples was no accident: a foreigner not expected to show sympathy compared to the priest and the Levite deliberately passed by on the other side. The "enemy" held up for praise.

Jesus practiced what he preached when he and his disciples journeyed thorough Samaria. John reports a long conversation that Jesus had alone with a Samaritan woman at a well. By ancient law rabbis weren't supposed to speak to women in public. Moreover, many Jews considered Samaritans as religious heretics to be avoided. Neither inhibited Jesus as he offered the Samaritan woman the living water of eternal life. (Jn. 4:5-30)

The climax of Jesus' life and teaching came in Jerusalem. After a triumphal entry he spent several days in verbal encounter with priests, scribes, Pharisees, and Sadducees. After a final, sacramental meal with his disciples he led them to the Garden of Gethsemane to pray. Knowing what lay ahead, he prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet not what I want but what you want." (Mt.26:39)

After a while a large crowd with swords and clubs, from the priests and elders and led by Judas the betraying disciple, arrived. One of the disciples drew a sword and cut off the ear of a slave of the chief priest. Jesus admonished him, "Put your sword back into its place; for all who take the sword will perish by the sword." (Mt. 26: 52) Offering no resistance, Jesus was led away. All of his disciples fled.

Jesus was tortured, tried first by the chief priests and elders, then Pilate the Roman governor, and condemned to death by crucifixion. The gospel accounts provide different details. Luke reports that on the cross Jesus prayed, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing." (Lk. 23:34) Nearby women followers and from afar some of the disciples watched as he died.

Much can be said about Jesus' crucifixion and subsequent resurrection. For our purposes we can note that in the Sermon on the Mount Jesus taught nonresistance, love and forgiveness of enemies. In Gethesmane and on the cross he carried out what he taught.

It was a lesson that the disciples learned well and transmitted to apostles in the early church.

After the Holy Spirit came to the disciples at Pentecost they continued Jesus' ministry of healing and as apostles proclaimed that he had risen from the dead. This annoyed the priests and elders, who had Peter and John arrested. They offered no resistance and used their opportunity to offer their message to rulers, elders and scribes. (Acts 4:1-12)

The apostles continued to preach. The chief priest had them arrested again and put in a public prison. During the night an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and brought them out. (Acts 5:17-19) The temple police found them teaching in the temple. They arrested them, but without violence, and brought them before the council. The high priest told them, "We gave you strict orders not to teach in this name, yet here you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching." Peter and the apostles answered, "We must obey God rather than any human authority." (Acts 5:29) After some internal debate the high priests had them flogged, again ordered them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. The apostles accepted their punishment and continued to teach and proclaim Jesus as the Messiah. (Acts 5:40-42).

Things got worse. Stephen, full of grace and power, did great wonders and signs among the people. (Acts 6:8) He was brought before the council. He gave a long sermon that only increased their anger. They grabbed Stephen, dragged him out of the city, and began to stone him. Stephen prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Before he died, he cried out in a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." (Acts 7:57-60)

During the stoning a young man named Saul guarded the coats of the stoners. In this manner he approved their killing of Stephen. (Acts 8:1)

(Earlier in his ministry Jesus was led to broaden his mission beyond the Jews after an encounter with a Canaanite woman who appealed to him for help for her daughter. He healed the Gentile girl.) (Mt.15:21-28; Mk. 7:24-30)

## **Dealing with Adversaries: New Testament Teachings by Word and Deed**

How should Christians deal with war and peace? When we study the New Testament to seek answers, we find very little on political and military strategy. But we discover much about dealing with enemies and other adversaries. Instruction comes from the words and deeds of Jesus, his disciples, and the apostles of the early Christian church.

The Sermon on the Mount gets to the heart of the matter. To begin with Jesus tells that he is offering something new. He says, "Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have come not to abolish but to fulfill." (Mt.5:17) The six illustrations he offers indicate that for him fulfillment means raising the standards.

Not only is murder is wrong, but so also is becoming angry with your a brother or a sister. Adultery is wrong, and so is looking at a woman with lust in your heart. Although the ancients accepted divorce if a proper certificate is given, all divorce is wrong except in cases of adultery. Swearing falsely is condemned, but even better don't swear vows at all. Just tell the truth. (Mt. 5:21-37)

"You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' But I say to you, Do not resist an evildoer." Turn the other cheek. Give your cloak as well as your coat. Go the second mile. (Mt. 5:38-42)

"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you." After all your Father in heaven "makes his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the righteous....Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect." (Mt. 5:43-48)

Here are essential keys to Christian peacemaking: Don't resist an evildoer but rather respond in a positive manner. Love your enemy and pray for your persecutors. These are not merely ideals for a utopian future. They are meant for application here and now. For Jesus taught his disciples to pray, "Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." (Mt. 5:9-10)

Jesus knew this wouldn't be easy. Later in revealing to his disciples what lay ahead for him in Jerusalem, he warned them, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me." (Mt. 16:24)

When they reached Jerusalem, Pharisees and Sadducees tried to entrap Jesus with his words. One of them asked Jesus, "Is it lawful to pay taxes to the emperor?" He asked to see a coin used to pay the tax. Noticing the emperor's head on the coin, he said, "Give to the emperor the things that are the emperor's, and to the God the things that are God's." Knowing that by comparison God's list would be long, they walked away.

On another occasion a lawyer asked him, "Teacher, which commandment is greatest?" Jesus answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." (Mt. 22:34-40)

Jesus had previously defined neighbor to encompass one's enemy. Here he says love of God and love of neighbor (enemy) are necessary to fulfill the law and the prophets.

Mark's version of this story also takes place in Jerusalem with a scribe as the interrogator. After Jesus gave his answer, the scribe agreed with him and said that the carrying out the two commandments "is much more important than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices." Jesus told him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God." (Mk. 28-34)

Luke places this exchange earlier when Jesus was still in Galilee. This time a lawyer asks Jesus, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus turned the question back, asking, "What is written in the law?" The lawyer then recited the two great commandments. Jesus said to him, "You have given the right answer: do this, and you will live." In other words, you will inherit eternal life. (Lk.10:25-28)

The lawyer still wasn't satisfied. He asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" Jesus replied with the story we know as the Good Samaritan, the one who showed mercy to a man beaten by robbers on the road to Jericho. (Lk.10:29-37) Jesus choice of characters was no accident: a foreigner not expected to show sympathy compared to the priest and the Levite who deliberately passed by on the other side. The "enemy" held up for praise.

The climax of Jesus' life and teaching came in Jerusalem. After a triumphal entry he spent several days in verbal encounter with priests, scribes, Pharisees, and Sadducees. After a final, sacramental meal with his disciples he led them to the Garden of Gethsemane to pray. Knowing what lay ahead, he prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet not what I want but what you want." (Mt.26:39)

After a while a large crowd with swords and clubs, sent by the priests and elders and led by Judas the betraying disciple, arrived. One of the disciples drew a sword and cut off the ear of a slave of the chief priest. (The Gospel of John [18:10] says that it was Peter.) Jesus admonished him, "Put your sword back into its place; for all who take the sword will perish by the sword." (Mt. 26: 52) Offering no resistance, Jesus was led away. All of his disciples fled.

Jesus was tortured, tried first by the chief priests and elders, then by Pilate the Roman governor, and condemned to death by crucifixion. The gospel accounts provide different details. Luke reports that on the cross Jesus prayed, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing." (Lk. 23:34)

Much can be said about Jesus' crucifixion and subsequent resurrection. For our purposes we can note that in the Sermon on the Mount Jesus taught nonresistance plus love and forgiveness of one's enemies. In Gethesmane and on the cross he carried out what he taught. It was a lesson that the disciples learned well and transmitted to apostles of the early church.

After the Holy Spirit came to the disciples at Pentecost they continued Jesus' ministry of healing. As apostles, they proclaimed that he had risen from the dead. This annoyed the priests and elders. They had Peter and John arrested. The two disciples offered no resistance and used their opportunity to offer their message to the rulers, elders, and scribes. (Acts 4:1-12)

The apostles continued to preach. The chief priest had them arrested again and put in a public prison. During the night an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and brought them out. (Acts 5:17-19) The temple police found them teaching in the temple. They arrested them, but without violence, and brought them before the council. The high priest told them, "We gave you strict orders not to teach in this name, yet here you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching." Peter and the apostles answered, "We must obey God rather than any human authority." (Acts 5:29) After some internal debate the high priests had them flogged, again ordered them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. The apostles accepted their punishment and continued to teach and proclaim Jesus as the Messiah. (Acts 5:40-42).

Things got worse. Stephen, full of grace and power, did great wonders and signs among the people. (Acts 6:8) He was brought before the council. He gave a long sermon that only increased their anger. Some men grabbed Stephen, dragged him out of the city, and began to stone him. Stephen prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Before he died, he cried out in a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." (Acts 7:57-60)

During the stoning a young man named Saul guarded the coats of the stoners. In this manner he approved their killing of Stephen. (Acts 8:1)

Saul joined the persecution of the apostles, dragging off men and women to prison. (Acts 8:3) He obtained a letter from the high priests to synagogues in Damascus to search for any belonging to the Way so that he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. But on the road he experienced his dramatic conversion. (Acts 9:1-9)

King Herod joined the opposition to the growing church. He had James, the brother of John, killed with a sword. He had Peter arrested and put in prison. An angel of the Lord freed him from his chains and led him out. (Acts 12:1-11)

By then Saul, renamed as Paul, was on the road as a missionary of the Lord. He experienced the persecution that he had previously bestowed. He and Barnabas preached to Jews and Gentiles in Antioch and were driven out of town. (Acts 13:48-52) The same thing occurred in Iconium. (14:1-5) Their opponents followed them to Lystra, stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, leaving him for dead. (Acts 14:19)

On a visit to Phillipi Paul and Silas were attacked by a crowd. Magistrates had them stripped of their clothing and beaten with rods. After their severe flogging, they were put in the innermost cell of prison and with their feet fastened in stocks. Paul and Silas prayed and sang hymns to God. (Acts 16:20-25)

In his second letter to the Corinthians Paul recorded, "Five times I have received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I received a stoning." (2 Cor 11:24-25) Through it all Paul obeyed his master to resist not the evildoer and to love his enemies. In telling of the suffering of the apostles in his first letter to the Corinthians, Paul wrote, "When reviled, we bless; when persecuted, we endure; when slandered, we speak kindly." (1 Cor 1:12-13)

Paul wrote to the church of the Thessalonians, "See that none of you repays evil for evil, but always seek to do good. (1 Thess 5:15) He elaborated on this in his letter to the Romans,

telling them, "Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them....Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought of what is noble in the sight of all....Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God....No, if your enemies are hungry, feed them; if they are thirsty, give them something to drink; for by doing this you will heap burning coals on their heads. Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. (Rom 12:14-21)

Of course, in the next sentence Paul wrote, "Let every person be subject to the governing authorities; for there is no authority except from God, and those authorities that exist have been instituted by God." (Rom 13:1) This is the voice of Paul, a Roman citizen who used that status to his advantage, and Paul the scholar who was trying to establish an intellectual basis for the faith. But Paul the apostle was a frequent practitioner of civil disobedience by refusing orders of authorities to cease preaching. He was the victim of over-zealous civil and religious bodies. It seems likely that if pressed Paul would accept Peter's assertion, "We must obey God rather than any human authority." He would recognize the wide range of matters that belong to God rather than Caesar.

1,951 words

# **Dealing with Adversaries: New Testament Teachings by Word and Deed**

by Howard W. Hallman, Chair  
Methodists United for Peace with Justice

**Summary.** *Within the framework of the two great commandments, love God and love neighbor, the heart of Christian peacemaking is Jesus instruction (a) not to resist an evildoer but rather to respond positively and (b) to love your enemy and pray for those who persecute you. Jesus put his words into deeds in Gethsemane and on Golgotha. The disciples and apostles of the early Christian church carried out these teachings as they spread the good news of their risen Lord. They provide a model for dealing with adversaries without waging war.*

How should Christians deal with war and peace? When we study the New Testament to seek answers, we find very little on political and military strategy. But we discover much about dealing with enemies and other adversaries. Instruction comes from the words and deeds of Jesus, his disciples, and the apostles of the early Christian church.

## **Two Great Commandments**

Central to Jesus' teaching are the two great commandments: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind....You shall love your neighbor as yourself." (Mt. 22:34-39)

In Matthew Jesus indicated, "On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." (Mt.22:40) In Mark a scribe acknowledged that the carrying out the two commandments "is much more important than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices." Jesus told him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God." (Mk. 28-34)

In Luke a lawyer asked Jesus, "what must I do to inherent eternal life?" Jesus turned the question back, asking, "What is written in the law?" The lawyer then recited the two great commandments. Jesus said to him, "You have given the right answer: do this, and you will live." (Lk.10:25-28)

The lawyer still wasn't satisfied. He asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" Jesus replied with the story we know as the Good Samaritan, the one who showed mercy to a man

beaten by robbers on the road to Jericho. (Lk.10:29-37) Jesus choice of characters was no accident: a foreigner not expected to show sympathy to a stricken Jew compared to the priest and the Levite who deliberately passed by on the other side.

### **Sermon on the Mount**

Jesus went further in the Sermon on the Mount. He told his disciples and the crowd that listened in, "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you." After all your Father in heaven "makes his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the righteous....Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect." (Mt. 5:43-48)

This was the last of six illustrations Jesus gave to show how he had come not to abolish the law but to fulfill it. (Mt 5:17) For him fulfillment meant raising the standards. Whereas those in ancient times said, "You shall not murder", Jesus told them, "if you are angry with a brother or a sister, you will be liable to judgment." Adultery is wrong, and so is looking at a woman with lust in your heart. Although the ancients accepted divorce if a proper certificate is given, all divorce is wrong except in cases of adultery. Swearing falsely is condemned, but even better don't swear vows at all. Just tell the truth. (Mt. 5:21-37)

As a fifth illustration, Jesus stated, "You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' But I say to you, Do not resist an evildoer." Turn the other cheek. Give your cloak as well as your coat. Go the second mile. (Mt. 5:38-42) This joins the sixth illustration as essential keys to Christian peacemaking.

Don't resist an evildoer but rather respond in a positive manner. Love your enemy and pray for your persecutors. These are not merely ideals for a utopian future. They are meant for

application here and now. For Jesus taught his disciples to pray, "Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." (Mt. 5:9-10)

Jesus knew this wouldn't be easy. Later in revealing to his disciples what lay ahead for him in Jerusalem, he warned them, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me." (Mt. 16:24)

### **Putting Words into Deeds**

When they reached Jerusalem, they made a triumphal entry. He spent several days in verbal encounter with priests, scribes, Pharisees, and Sadducees, who tried to entrap him with his words. One of them asked Jesus, "Is it lawful to pay taxes to the emperor?" He asked to see a coin used to pay the tax. Noticing the emperor's head on the coin, he said, "Give to the emperor the things that are the emperor's, and to the God the things that are God's." Knowing that by comparison God's list would be long, they walked away.

After a final, sacramental meal with his disciples he led them to the Garden of Gethsemane to pray. Knowing what lay ahead, he prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet not what I want but what you want." (Mt.26:39)

After a while a large crowd with swords and clubs, sent by the priests and elders and led by Judas the betraying disciple, arrived. One of the disciples drew a sword and cut off the ear of a slave of the chief priest. (The Gospel of John [18:10] says that it was Peter.) Jesus admonished him, "Put your sword back into its place; for all who take the sword will perish by the sword." (Mt. 26: 52) Offering no resistance, Jesus was led away. All of his disciples fled.

Jesus was mocked and tortured, tried by the chief priests and elders, then by Pilate the Roman governor, and condemned to death by crucifixion. The gospel accounts provide different details. Luke reports that on the cross Jesus prayed, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing." (Lk. 23:34)

## **Application by Disciples**

Much can be said about Jesus' crucifixion and subsequent resurrection. For our purposes we can note that in the Sermon on the Mount Jesus taught nonresistance plus love and forgiveness of one's enemies. In Gethesmane and on the cross he carried out what he taught. It was a lesson that the disciples learned well and transmitted to apostles of the early church.

After the Holy Spirit came to the disciples at Pentecost they continued Jesus' ministry of healing. As apostles, they proclaimed that he had risen from the dead. This annoyed the priests and elders. They had Peter and John arrested. The two disciples offered no resistance and used their opportunity to offer their message to the rulers, elders, and scribes. (Acts 4:1-12)

The apostles continued to preach. The chief priest had them arrested again and put in a public prison. During the night an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and brought them out. (Acts 5:17-19) The temple police found them teaching in the temple. They arrested them, but without violence, and brought them before the council. The high priest told them, "We gave you strict orders not to teach in this name, yet here you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching." Peter and the apostles answered, "We must obey God rather than any human authority." (Acts 5:29) After some internal debate the high priests had them flogged, again ordered them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. The apostles accepted their punishment and continued to teach and proclaim Jesus as the Messiah. (Acts 5:40-42).

Things got worse. Stephen, full of grace and power, did great wonders and signs among the people. (Acts 6:8) He was brought before the council. He gave a long sermon that only increased their anger. Some men grabbed Stephen, dragged him out of the city, and began to stone him. Stephen prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Before he died, he cried out in a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." (Acts 7:57-60)

During the stoning a young man named Saul guarded the coats of the stoners. In this manner he approved their killing of Stephen. (Acts 8:1)

Saul joined the persecution of the apostles, dragging off men and women to prison. (Acts 8:3) He obtained a letter from the high priests to synagogues in Damascus to search for any belonging to the Way so that he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. But on the road he experienced his dramatic conversion. (Acts 9:1-9)

King Herod joined the opposition to the growing church. He had James, the brother of John, killed with a sword. He had Peter arrested and put in prison. An angel of the Lord freed him from his chains and led him out. (Acts 12:1-11)

### **Paul Becomes Practitioner**

By then Saul, renamed Paul, was on the road as a missionary of the Lord. He experienced the persecution that he had previously bestowed. He and Barnabas preached to Jews and Gentiles in Antioch and were driven out of town. (Acts 13:48-52) The same thing occurred in Iconium. (14:1-5) Their opponents followed them to Lystra, stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, leaving him for dead. (Acts 14:19)

On a visit to Phillipi Paul and Silas were attacked by a crowd. Magistrates had them stripped of their clothing and beaten with rods. After their severe flogging, they were put in the innermost cell of prison and with their feet fastened in stocks. Paul and Silas prayed and sang hymns to God. (Acts 16:20-25)

In his second letter to the Corinthians Paul recorded, "Five times I have received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I received a stoning." (2 Cor 11:24-25) Through it all Paul obeyed his master to resist not the evildoer and to love his enemies. In telling of the suffering of the apostles in his first letter to the Corinthians,

Paul wrote, "When reviled, we bless; when persecuted, we endure; when slandered, we speak kindly." (1 Cor 1:12-13)

Paul wrote to the church of the Thessalonians, "See that none of you repays evil for evil, but always seek to do good. (1 Thess 5:15) He elaborated on this in his letter to the Romans, telling them, "Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them....Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought of what is noble in the sight of all....Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God....No, if your enemies are hungry, feed them; if they are thirsty, give them something to drink; for by doing this you will heap burning coals on their heads. Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. (Rom 12:14-21)

Of course, in the next sentence Paul wrote, "Let every person be subject to the governing authorities; for there is no authority except from God, and those authorities that exist have been instituted by God." (Rom 13:1) This is the voice of Paul, a Roman citizen who used that status to his advantage, and Paul the scholar who was trying to establish an intellectual basis for the faith. But Paul the apostle was a frequent practitioner of civil disobedience by refusing orders of authorities to cease preaching. He was the victim of over-zealous civil and religious bodies. It seems likely that if pressed Paul would accept Peter's assertion, "We must obey God rather than any human authority." He would recognize the wide range of matters that belong to God rather than Caesar.

[Conclusion to be written.]

1.990 words

# **Dealing with Adversaries: New Testament Teachings by Word and Deed**

by Howard W. Hallman, Chair  
Methodists United for Peace with Justice

When we study the New Testament for guidance on how to deal with war and violence, we find very little on political and military strategy. But we discover much about dealing with adversaries. By words and deeds Jesus, his disciples, and the Apostle Paul revealed a twofold approach: (1) do not resist an evildoer but respond positively and (2) love your enemy and pray for those who persecute you.

## **Two Great Commandments**

Central to Jesus' teaching are two great commandments: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.... You shall love your neighbor as yourself." (Mt. 22:34-39)

The Gospels tell us that "on these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." (Mt.22:40) Carrying them out "is much more important than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices." (Mk. 28-34) They are the way to eternal life. (Lk.10:25-28)

In Luke the lawyer who engaged Jesus in discussion about the two commandments asked a follow-up question: "And who is my neighbor?" Jesus replied with the story we know as the Good Samaritan, he who showed mercy to a man beaten by robbers on the road to Jericho. (Lk.10:29-37) Jesus choice of characters was no accident: a foreigner not expected to show sympathy to a stricken Jew in comparison with a priest and a Levite who deliberately passed by on the other side.

## **Sermon on the Mount**

Jesus went further in the Sermon on the Mount. He told his disciples and the listening crowd, "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.'

But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you." After all your Father in heaven "makes his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the righteous....Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect." (Mt. 5:43-48)

This was the last of six propositions Jesus offered to show how he had come not to abolish the law but to fulfill it. (Mt 5:17) His fulfillment was conveying a broader and deeper understanding of God's will.

Thus, whereas those in ancient times said, "You shall not murder", Jesus told his listeners, "if you are angry with a brother or a sister, you will be liable to judgment." Adultery is wrong, and so is looking at a woman with lust in your heart. Although the ancients accepted divorce if a proper certificate is given, all divorce is wrong except in cases of adultery. Swearing falsely is condemned, but even better don't swear vows at all. Just tell the truth. (Mt. 5:21-37)

As a fifth proposition, Jesus stated, "You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' But I say to you, Do not resist an evildoer." Turn the other cheek. Give your cloak as well as your coat. Go the second mile. (Mt. 5:38-42) This is "nonresistance plus". It joins the sixth proposition about loving your enemy as essential keys to Christian peacemaking.

Don't resist an evildoer but rather respond in a positive manner. Love your enemy and pray for your persecutors. These are not merely ideals for a utopian future. They are meant for application here and now. For Jesus taught his disciples to pray, "Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." (Mt. 5:9-10)

Jesus knew this wouldn't be easy. Later when he revealed to his disciples what lay ahead for him in Jerusalem, he warned them, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me." (Mt. 16:24)

## **Putting Words into Deeds**

When Jesus and his disciples reached Jerusalem, they made a triumphal entry. He spent several days in verbal encounter with priests, scribes, Pharisees, and Sadducees, who tried to entrap him with his words. One of them asked Jesus, "Is it lawful to pay taxes to the emperor?" He asked to see a coin used to pay the tax. Noticing the emperor's head on the coin, he said, "Give to the emperor the things that are the emperor's, and to the God the things that are God's." (Mt. 22:15-22)

After a final, sacramental meal with his disciples he led them to the Garden of Gethsemane to pray. Knowing what lay ahead, he prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet not what I want but what you want." (Mt.26:39)

After a while a large crowd with swords and clubs, sent by the priests and elders and led by Judas the betraying disciple, arrived. One of the disciples drew a sword and cut off the ear of a slave of the chief priest. (The Gospel of John [18:10] says that it was Peter.) Jesus admonished him, "Put your sword back into its place; for all who take the sword will perish by the sword." (Mt. 26: 52) Offering no resistance, Jesus was led away. All of his disciples fled.

Jesus was mocked and tortured, tried by the chief priests and elders, then by Pilate the Roman governor, and condemned to death by crucifixion. The gospel accounts provide different details. Luke reports that on the cross Jesus prayed, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing." (Lk. 23:34)

In this manner Jesus displayed his commitment to nonresistance and forgiveness of adversaries.

## **Application by Disciples**

The disciples accepted what Jesus taught by word and deed. After the Holy Spirit came to them at Pentecost they continued Jesus' ministry of healing. As apostles, they proclaimed that

he had risen from the dead. This annoyed the priests and elders. They had Peter and John arrested. The two disciples offered no resistance and used their opportunity to offer their message to the rulers, elders, and scribes. (Acts 4:1-12) Another case of nonresistance plus.

The apostles continued to preach. The chief priest had them arrested again and put in a public prison. During the night an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and brought them out. (Acts 5:17-19) The temple police found them teaching in the temple. They arrested them, but without violence, and brought them before the council. The high priest told them, "We gave you strict orders not to teach in this name, yet here you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching." Peter and the apostles answered, "We must obey God rather than any human authority." (Acts 5:29) After some internal debate the high priests had them flogged, again ordered them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. The disciples accepted their punishment and continued to teach and proclaim Jesus as the Messiah. (Acts 5:40-42).

Things got worse. Stephen, full of grace and power, did great wonders and signs among the people. (Acts 6:8) He was brought before the council. He gave a long sermon that only increased their anger. Some men grabbed Stephen, dragged him out of the city, and began to stone him. Stephen prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Before he died, he cried out in a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." (Acts 7:57-60)

During the stoning a young man named Saul guarded the coats of the stoners. In this manner he approved their killing of Stephen. (Acts 8:1)

Saul joined the persecution of Jesus' followers, dragging off men and women to prison. (Acts 8:3) He obtained a letter from the high priests to synagogues in Damascus to search for any belonging to the Way so that he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. But on the road he experienced his dramatic conversion. (Acts 9:1-9)

King Herod joined the opposition to the growing church. He had James, the brother of John, killed with a sword. He had Peter arrested and put in prison. An angel of the Lord freed him from his chains and led him out. (Acts 12:1-11)

Throughout all these adversities the disciples maintained their commitment to nonresistance but with a positive attitude. They displayed love for their adversaries, just as Jesus had taught them.

### **Paul Becomes Practitioner**

By then Saul, renamed Paul, was on the road as a missionary of the Lord. He experienced the persecution that he had previously bestowed. He and Barnabas preached to Jews and Gentiles in Antioch and were driven out of town. (Acts 13:48-52) The same thing occurred in Iconium. (14:1-5) Their opponents followed them to Lystra, stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, leaving him for dead. (Acts 14:19)

On a visit to Phillipi Paul and Silas were attacked by a crowd. Magistrates had them stripped of their clothing and beaten with rods. After their severe flogging, they were put in the innermost cell of prison and with their feet fastened in stocks. Showing the positive element of nonresistance, Paul and Silas prayed and sang hymns to God. (Acts 16:20-25)

In his second letter to the Corinthians Paul recorded, "Five times I have received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I received a stoning." (2 Cor 11:24-25) Through it all Paul obeyed his master to resist not the evildoer and to love his enemies. In telling of the suffering of the apostles in his first letter to the Corinthians, Paul wrote, "When reviled, we bless; when persecuted, we endure; when slandered, we speak kindly." (1 Cor 1:12-13)

Paul wrote to the church of the Thessalonians, "See that none of you repays evil for evil, but always seek to do good." (1 Thess 5:15) He elaborated on this in his letter to the Romans,

telling them, "Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them....Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought of what is noble in the sight of all....Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God....No, if your enemies are hungry, feed them; if they are thirsty, give them something to drink; for by doing this you will heap burning coals on their heads. Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good." (Rom 12:14-21)

In the next sentence Paul wrote, "Let every person be subject to the governing authorities; for there is no authority except from God, and those authorities that exist have been instituted by God." (Rom 13:1) This is the voice of Paul, a Roman citizen who used that status to his advantage, and Paul the scholar who was trying to establish an intellectual basis for the faith. But Paul the apostle was a frequent practitioner of civil disobedience by refusing orders of authorities to cease preaching. He was the victim of over-zealous civil and religious bodies. It seems likely that if pressed Paul would accept Peter's assertion, "We must obey God rather than any human authority."

### **What About?**

Although a commitment to nonviolence, nonresistance to evildoers, and love of enemy is central in the life and teachings of Jesus, several seemingly divergent scriptural texts require consideration.

All four gospels describe how Jesus overturned the moneychangers' tables in the temple and drove out sheep and cattle. (Mt 21:12-13; Mk 11.19; Lk 19:45-46; Jn 2:13-17). John reports that Jesus fashioned a whip of chords, though apparently struck no one. This was a symbolic gesture, an expression of moral repulsion at the corruption that had taken root in God's holy temple. It may be a model for today's protestors at military sites, but certainly it offers no justification for physical violence.

Matthew quotes Jesus telling his disciples, "Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth; I have not come to bring peace, but a sword." (Mt. 10:34) This comes in the middle a long discourse to his disciples as he instructs them for going out to "the lost sheep of Israel" to proclaim the good news that the kingdom of heaven has come near. Jesus realized that they would face hardship and suffering and that their message would be divisive. The sword was a symbol of that division, not an instrument for military battle. In fact, Luke in telling this story uses the word "division" rather than sword. (Lk 10:51)

Likewise the word "sword" is used symbolically in Luke after the last supper before Jesus and the disciples went out to Gethsemane. Jesus reminded them how he had sent them out earlier without purse, bag, or sandals. Now times would be harder. They would need a purse and a bag. "And the one who has no sword must sell his cloak and buy one." They said, "Lord, look, here are two swords." He replied, "It is enough." They missed the point, for acquiring a sword was a symbol of preparing for hardship, not acquisition of weaponry. Later when one of them used his sword in Gethsemane, Jesus rebuked him. (Lk 22:51)

## **Conclusion**

We can debate whether Jesus teaching of nonviolence, nonresistance, and loving one's enemies is applicable in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. But is clear that these practices were central in the life of Jesus, his disciples, Paul, and other followers as depicted in the New Testament.

December 10, 2004

2,219 words

Fifth Draft

## **Dealing with Adversaries: New Testament Teachings by Word and Deed**

by Howard W. Hallman, Chair  
Methodists United for Peace with Justice

When we study the New Testament for guidance on how to deal with war and violence, we find very little on political and military strategy. But we discover much about dealing with adversaries. By words and deeds Jesus, his disciples, and the Apostle Paul revealed a twofold approach: (1) love your enemy and pray for those who persecute you and (2) do not retaliate but overcome evil with good.

### **WORDS**

The New Testament draws on two sources for telling us on how to deal with adversaries: (a) the words of Jesus presented in the Gospels and (b) letters of apostles to congregations.

#### **What Jesus Taught**

In the Sermon on the Mount, a set of teachings gathered together by Matthew, Jesus told his disciples and the listening crowd, "You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' But I say to you, Do not resist an evildoer." Turn the other cheek. Give your cloak as well as your coat. Go the second mile. (Mt. 5:38-42)

He also stated, "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven; for he makes his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous." (Mt. 5:43-45)

Luke used some of this same material in the Sermon on the Plain. In this version Jesus said, ""Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you." Turn the other cheek. Give your shirt as well as your coat. "And as you

wish that men would do to you, do so to them." As you love your enemies and do good, "you will be sons of the Most High; for he is kind to the ungrateful and the selfish." (Lk 6:27-36)

Matthew also included a version of the Golden Rule in the Sermon on the Mount: "So whatever you wish that men would do to you, do so to them; for this is the law and the prophets." (Mt 7:12)

Later in Jerusalem a lawyer asked Jesus, "Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?" Jesus told him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind....You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." (Mt. 22:34-40)

By then Jesus had broadened the concept of neighbor to encompass "enemy". He did this not to abolish the law or the prophets but to fulfill them. (Mt 5:17) His fulfillment came by conveying broader and deeper understanding of God's will. To show that he expected his teachings to be applied, Jesus taught his disciples to pray, "Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." (Mt 6:10)

### **Words of Apostles.**

Jesus' teachings were picked up in the writings of apostles. Thus, Paul wrote to the church of the Thessalonians, "See that none of you repays evil for evil, but always seek to do good." (1 Thess 5:15)

In his letter to the Romans, Paul told them, "Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them....Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought of what is noble in the sight of all....Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God....No, if your enemies are hungry, feed them; if they are thirsty, give them something to drink; for by doing this you will heap burning coals on their heads. Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good." (Rom 12:14-21)

The writer of the First Letter of Peter indicated, "Do not return evil for evil or reviling for reviling; but on the contrary bless, for to this you have been called, that you may obtain a blessing." (I Pt 3:9)

These writings of the apostles provide insight on what Jesus meant when he said, "Do not resist the evildoer." "Resist" is an English translation of the Greek word *antistēnai* which in turn is a translation of what Jesus spoke in Aramaic. Walter Wink points out that *antistēnai* is often used elsewhere in the Bible for military encounters such as violent rebellion. He says, therefore, that a proper translation would be: "Don't strike back at one who has done you evil."

This expression is appropriate because Jesus contrasted the old ethic of proportional retaliation ("an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth") with a new ethic of not taking revenge but rather offering positive responses to evildoers. Paul picked up this idea when he wrote not to repay evil with evil but overcome evil with good.

## **DEEDS**

The second set of New Testament teachings on how to deal with adversaries occurs in what Jesus, his disciples, and apostles actually did.

### **Jesus in Action**

Jesus knew that he would be challenged to put words into deeds when he went to Jerusalem. Being well known and favored by many, he made a triumphal entry. The next day Jesus entered the temple, overturned the moneychangers' tables, and drove out sheep and cattle. (Mt 21:12-13; Mk 11.19; Lk 19:45-46). The Gospel of John reports that Jesus fashioned a whip of chords, though apparently struck no one. (Jn 2:13-17). This was a symbolic gesture, an expression of moral repulsion at the corruption that had taken root in God's holy temple. It showed that Jesus was willing to engage in nonviolent protest.

Jesus spent several days in verbal encounter with priests, scribes, Pharisees, and Sadducees, who tried to entrap him with his words. One of them asked Jesus, "Is it lawful to pay taxes to the emperor?" He asked to see a coin used to pay the tax. Noticing the emperor's head on the coin, he said, "Give to the emperor the things that are the emperor's, and to the God the things that are God's." (Mt. 22:15-22)

After a final, sacramental meal with his disciples he led them to the Garden of Gethsemane to pray. Knowing what lay ahead, he prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet not what I want but what you want." (Mt.26:39)

After a while a large crowd with swords and clubs, sent by the priests and elders and led by Judas the betraying disciple, arrived. One of the disciples drew a sword and cut off the ear of a slave of the chief priest. (The Gospel of John says that it was Peter (Jn 18:10) ) Jesus admonished him, "Put your sword back into its place; for all who take the sword will perish by the sword." (Mt. 26: 52) Offering no resistance, Jesus was led away. All of his disciples fled.

Jesus was mocked and tortured, tried by the chief priests and elders, then by Pilate the Roman governor, and condemned to death by crucifixion. The gospel accounts provide different details. Luke reports that on the cross Jesus prayed, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing." (Lk. 23:34)

In this manner Jesus displayed his commitment to not retaliate against violence with violence and to forgive adversaries. He instructed us by his deeds.

### **Application by Disciples**

The disciples accepted what Jesus taught by word and deed. After the Holy Spirit came to them at Pentecost, they continued Jesus' healing ministry. As apostles, they proclaimed that Jesus had risen from the dead. This annoyed the priests and elders. They had Peter and John

arrested. The two disciples offered no resistance and used their opportunity to offer their message to the rulers, elders, and scribes. (Acts 4:1-12)

The apostles continued to preach. The chief priest had them arrested again and put in a public prison. During the night an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and brought them out. (Acts 5:17-19) The temple police found them teaching in the temple. They arrested them, but without violence, and brought them before the council. The high priest told them, "We gave you strict orders not to teach in this name, yet here you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching." Peter and the apostles answered, "We must obey God rather than any human authority." (Acts 5:29) After some internal debate the high priests had them flogged, again ordered them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. The disciples accepted their punishment and continued to teach and proclaim Jesus as the Messiah. (Acts 5:40-42).

Things got worse. Stephen, full of grace and power, did great wonders and signs among the people. (Acts 6:8) He was brought before the council. He gave a long sermon that only increased their anger. Some men grabbed Stephen, dragged him out of the city, and began to stone him. Stephen prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Before he died, he cried out in a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." (Acts 7:57-60)

During the stoning a young man named Saul guarded the coats of the stoners. In this manner he approved their killing of Stephen. (Acts 8:1)

Saul joined the persecution of Jesus' followers, dragging off men and women to prison. (Acts 8:3) He obtained a letter from the high priests to synagogues in Damascus to search for any belonging to the Way so that he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. But on the road he experienced his dramatic conversion. (Acts 9:1-9)

King Herod joined the opposition to the growing church. He had James, the brother of John, killed with a sword. He had Peter arrested and put in prison. An angel of the Lord freed him from his chains and led him out. (Acts 12:1-11)

Throughout all these adversities the disciples maintained their commitment to nonresistance but with a positive attitude. They displayed love for their adversaries, just as Jesus had taught them.

### **Paul Becomes Practitioner**

By then Saul, renamed Paul, was on the road as a missionary of the Lord. He experienced the persecution that he had previously bestowed. He and Barnabas preached to Jews and Gentiles in Antioch and were driven out of town. (Acts 13:48-52) The same thing occurred in Iconium. (14:1-5) Their opponents followed them to Lystra, stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, leaving him for dead. (Acts 14:19)

On a visit to Phillipi Paul and Silas were attacked by a crowd. Magistrates had them stripped of their clothing and beaten with rods. After their severe flogging, they were put in the innermost cell of prison and with their feet fastened in stocks. Paul and Silas prayed and sang hymns to God. (Acts 16:20-25)

In his second letter to the Corinthians Paul recorded, "Five times I have received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods. [by Romans] Once I received a stoning." (2 Cor 11:24-25) In telling of the suffering of the apostles in his first letter to the Corinthians, Paul wrote, "When reviled, we bless; when persecuted, we endure; when slandered, we speak kindly." (1 Cor 1:12-13) They put Jesus words into deeds.

Paul, the theologian, wrote to the Romans, "Let every person be subject to the governing authorities; for there is no authority except from God, and those authorities that exist have been instituted by God." (Rom 13:1) But Paul, the apostle, was a frequent practitioner of civil

disobedience by refusing orders of authorities to cease preaching. It seems likely that if pressed Paul would accept Peter's assertion, "We must obey God rather than any human authority." He would recognize that in deciding what is due Caesar and what is due to God, God has a far larger realm to uphold.

## **Objections**

Some critics, however, object to a completely pacifist interpretation of Jesus words and deeds by noting that in Matthew Jesus tells his disciples, "Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth; I have not come to bring peace, but a sword." (Mt. 10:34) This comes in the middle a long discourse to the disciples as he instructs them for going out to "the lost sheep of Israel" to proclaim the good news that the kingdom of heaven has come near. Jesus realized that they would face hardship and suffering and that their message would be divisive. The sword was a symbol of that division, not an instrument for military battle. In fact, Luke in telling this story uses the word "division" rather than sword. (Lk 10:51)

(In a similar manner at the time of baby Jesus' circumcision, Simeon warned Mary, "This child is destined for the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed...and a sword will pierce your own soul, too." (Lk2:34-35) )

Likewise the word "sword" is used symbolically in Luke after the last supper before Jesus and the disciples went out to Gethsemane. Jesus reminded them how he had sent them out earlier without purse, bag, or sandals. Now times would be harder. They would need a purse and a bag. "And the one who has no sword must sell his cloak and buy one." They said, "Lord, look, here are two swords." He replied, "It is enough." (Lk 22:35-38) They missed the point, for acquiring a sword was a symbol of preparing for hardship, not acquisition of weaponry. Later when one of them used his sword in Gethsemane, Jesus rebuked him. (Lk 22:51)

## Conclusion

We can debate whether Jesus' teaching of non-retaliation, nonviolence, and loving one's enemies is applicable in the 21<sup>st</sup> century in public affairs. But it is clear that these practices were central in the life of and teaching of Jesus, his disciples, Paul, and other followers as depicted in the New Testament.

---

## Notes

1. Biblical quotations are from the New Revised Standard Version.
2. Quotations from Walter Wink are from his *Jesus and Nonviolence: A Third Way*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003. pp. 10-11.
3. A helpful resource for this article was Richard B. Hays, "Violence in Defense of Justice" in *The Moral Vision of the New Testament*. San Francisco: Harpers, 1996. pp.317-346.

2,408 words

December 17, 2004

Draft 5(a)

## **Dealing with Adversaries: New Testament Teachings by Word and Deed**

by Howard W. Hallman, Chair  
Methodists United for Peace with Justice

When we study the New Testament for guidance on how to deal with war and violence, we find very little on political and military strategy. But we discover much about dealing with adversaries. By words and deeds Jesus, his disciples, and the Apostle Paul revealed a twofold approach: (1) love your enemy and pray for those who persecute you and (2) do not retaliate but overcome evil with good.

### **WORDS**

The New Testament draws on two sources for telling us on how to deal with adversaries: (a) the words of Jesus presented in the Gospels and (b) letters of apostles to congregations. In our discussion we are using the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible.

#### **What Jesus Taught**

In the Sermon on the Mount, a set of teachings gathered together by Matthew, Jesus told his disciples and the listening crowd, "You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' But I say to you, Do not resist an evildoer." Turn the other cheek. Give your cloak as well as your coat. Go the second mile. (Mt. 5:38-42) (The Scholars Version of the Bible translates the key phrase as "Don't react violently against the one who is evil." More on this later.)

Jesus also stated, "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven; for he makes his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous." (Mt. 5:43-45)

Luke used some of this same material in the Sermon on the Plain. In Luke's version Jesus said, "Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you." Turn the other cheek. Give your shirt as well as your coat. "And as you wish that men would do to you, do so to them." As you love your enemies and do good, "you will be sons of the Most High; for he is kind to the ungrateful and the selfish." (Lk 6:27-36)

Matthew also included a version of the Golden Rule in the Sermon on the Mount: "So whatever you wish that men would do to you, do so to them; for this is the law and the prophets." (Mt 7:12)

Later in Jerusalem a lawyer asked Jesus, "Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?" Jesus answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind....You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." (Mt. 22:34-40)

By then Jesus had broadened the concept of neighbor to encompass "enemy". He did this not to abolish the law or the prophets but to fulfill them. (Mt 5:17) His fulfillment came by conveying broader and deeper understanding of God's will. To show that he expected his teachings to be applied, Jesus taught his disciples to pray to God, "Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." (Mt 6:10)

### **Words of Apostles**

Jesus' teachings were picked up in the writings of apostles. Thus, Paul wrote to the church of the Thessalonians, "See that none of you repays evil for evil, but always seek to do good." (1 Thess 5:15)

In his letter to the Romans, Paul told them, "Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them....Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought of what is noble in the sight

of all....Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God....No, if your enemies are hungry, feed them; if they are thirsty, give them something to drink; for by doing this you will heap burning coals on their heads. Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good." (Rom 12:14-21)

The writer of the First Letter of Peter indicated, "Do not return evil for evil or reviling for reviling; but on the contrary bless, for to this you have been called, that you may obtain a blessing." (I Pt 3:9)

The way the apostles expressed Jesus' teaching helps to clarify what he meant when he said, "Do not resist the evildoer." As noted, Paul wrote, "Do not repay evil for evil" rather "overcome evil with good." First Peter instructed, "Do not return evil for evil." Luke quoted Jesus as saying, "do good to those who hate you."

In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus contrasted the old ethic of proportional retaliation ("an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth") with a new ethic of not taking revenge but rather offering positive responses to evildoers. The word "resist" used in the King James and New Revised Standard Versions is an English translation of the Greek word *antistēnai* which in turn is a translation of what Jesus spoke in Aramaic. Walter Wink points out that *antistēnai* is often used elsewhere in the Bible for military encounters such as violent rebellion. He says, therefore, that a proper translation would be: "Don't strike back at one who has done you evil."

## **DEEDS**

The second set of New Testament teachings on how to deal with adversaries occurs in what Jesus, his disciples, and apostles actually did.

### **Jesus in Action**

In his actions Jesus persistently stood up against evil, but he never reacted with violence against evildoers, never took revenge. Instead he forgave his adversaries.

Jesus knew that he would be challenged when he went to Jerusalem. He told his disciples, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me." (Mt. 16:24)

Being well known and favored by many, Jesus made a triumphal entry into Jerusalem. The next day he entered the temple, overturned the moneychangers' tables, and drove out sheep and cattle. (Mt 21:12-13; Mk 11.19; Lk 19:45-46). The Gospel of John reports that Jesus fashioned a whip of cords but struck no one. (Jn 2:13-17). This was a symbolic gesture, an expression of moral repulsion at the corruption that had taken root in God's holy temple. It showed that Jesus was willing to engage in nonviolent protest. He disrupted the system but did no bodily harm.

Jesus spent several days in verbal encounter with priests, scribes, Pharisees, and Sadducees, who tried to entrap him with his words. One of them asked Jesus, "Is it lawful to pay taxes to the emperor?" He asked to see a coin used to pay the tax. Noticing the emperor's head on the coin, he said, "Give to the emperor the things that are the emperor's, and to the God the things that are God's." (Mt. 22:15-22)

After a final, sacramental meal with his disciples Jesus led them to the Garden of Gethsemane to pray. Knowing what lay ahead, he prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet not what I want but what you want." (Mt.26:39)

After a while a large crowd with swords and clubs, sent by the priests and elders and led by Judas the betraying disciple, arrived. One of the disciples drew a sword and cut off the ear of a slave of the chief priest. (The Gospel of John says that it was Peter (Jn 18:10) ) Jesus admonished him, "Put your sword back into its place; for all who take the sword will perish by the sword." (Mt. 26: 52) Offering no resistance, Jesus was led away. All of his disciples fled.

Jesus was mocked and tortured, tried by the chief priests and elders, then by Pilate the Roman governor, and condemned to death by crucifixion. The gospel accounts provide different details. Luke reports that on the cross Jesus prayed, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing." (Lk. 23:34)

In this manner Jesus displayed his commitment to not react against violence with violence and to forgive adversaries. He instructed us by his deeds.

### **Application by Disciples**

The disciples accepted what Jesus taught by word and deed. After the Holy Spirit came to them at Pentecost, they continued Jesus' healing ministry. As apostles, they proclaimed that Jesus had risen from the dead. This annoyed the priests and elders. They had Peter and John arrested. The two disciples offered no resistance and used their opportunity to offer their message to the rulers, elders, and scribes. (Acts 4:1-12)

The apostles continued to preach. The chief priest had them arrested again and put in a public prison. During the night an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and brought them out. (Acts 5:17-19) The temple police found them teaching in the temple. They arrested them, but without violence, and brought them before the council. The high priest told them, "We gave you strict orders not to teach in this name, yet here you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching." Peter and the apostles answered, "We must obey God rather than any human authority." (Acts 5:29) After some internal debate the high priests had them flogged, again ordered them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. The disciples accepted their punishment and continued to teach and proclaim Jesus as the Messiah. (Acts 5:40-42).

Things got worse. Stephen, full of grace and power, did great wonders and signs among the people. (Acts 6:8) He was brought before the council. He gave a long sermon that only increased their anger. Some men grabbed Stephen, dragged him out of the city, and began to

stone him. Stephen prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Before he died, he cried out in a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." (Acts 7:57-60)

During the stoning a young man named Saul guarded the coats of the stoners. In this manner he approved their killing of Stephen. (Acts 8:1)

Saul joined the persecution of Jesus' followers, dragging off men and women to prison. (Acts 8:3) He obtained a letter from the high priests to synagogues in Damascus to search for any belonging to the Way so that he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. But on the road he experienced his dramatic conversion. (Acts 9:1-9)

King Herod joined the opposition to the growing church. He had James, the brother of John, killed with a sword. He had Peter arrested and put in prison. An angel of the Lord freed him from his chains and led him out. (Acts 12:1-11)

Throughout all these adversities the disciples maintained their commitment to nonresistance but with a positive attitude. They displayed love for their adversaries, just as Jesus had taught them.

### **Paul Becomes Practitioner**

By then Saul, renamed Paul, was on the road as a missionary of the Lord. He experienced the persecution that he had previously bestowed. He and Barnabas preached to Jews and Gentiles in Antioch and were driven out of town. (Acts 13:48-52) The same thing occurred in Iconium. (14:1-5) Their opponents followed them to Lystra, stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, leaving him for dead. (Acts 14:19)

On a visit to Phillipi Paul and Silas were attacked by a crowd. Magistrates had them stripped of their clothing and beaten with rods. After their severe flogging, they were put in the innermost cell of prison and with their feet fastened in stocks. Paul and Silas prayed and sang hymns to God. (Acts 16:20-25)

In his second letter to the Corinthians Paul recorded, "Five times I have received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods. [by Romans] Once I received a stoning." (2 Cor 11:24-25) In telling of the suffering of the apostles in his first letter to the Corinthians, Paul wrote, "When reviled, we bless; when persecuted, we endure; when slandered, we speak kindly." (1 Cor 1:12-13) They put Jesus words into deeds.

Paul, the theologian, wrote to the Romans, "Let every person be subject to the governing authorities; for there is no authority except from God, and those authorities that exist have been instituted by God." (Rom 13:1) But Paul, the apostle, was a frequent practitioner of civil disobedience by refusing orders of authorities to cease preaching. It seems likely that if pressed Paul would accept Peter's assertion, "We must obey God rather than any human authority." He would recognize that in deciding what is due Caesar and what is due to God, God has a far larger realm to uphold.

## **Objections**

Some critics, however, object to a completely pacifist interpretation of Jesus words and deeds by noting that in Matthew Jesus tells his disciples, "Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth; I have not come to bring peace, but a sword." (Mt. 10:34) This comes in the middle of a long discourse to the disciples as he instructs them for going out to "the lost sheep of Israel" to proclaim the good news that the kingdom of heaven has come near. Jesus realized that they would face hardship and suffering and that their message would be divisive. The sword was a symbol of that division, not an instrument for military battle. In fact, Luke in telling this story uses the word "division" rather than sword. (Lk 10:51)

Earlier at the time of baby Jesus' circumcision, Simeon warned Mary, "This child is destined for the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed...and a sword will pierce your own soul, too." (Lk2:34-35) Again the sword as a symbol.

Likewise the word "sword" is used symbolically in Luke after the last supper before Jesus and the disciples went out to Gethsemane. Jesus reminded them how he had sent them out earlier without purse, bag, or sandals. Now times would be harder. They would need a purse and a bag. "And the one who has no sword must sell his cloak and buy one." They said, "Lord, look, here are two swords." He replied, "It is enough." (Lk 22:35-38) They missed the point, for acquiring a sword was a symbol of preparing for hardship, not acquisition of weaponry. Later when one of them used his sword in Gethsemane, Jesus rebuked him. (Lk 22:51)

## **Conclusion**

We can debate whether Jesus' teaching of non-retaliation, nonviolence, and loving and forgiving one's enemies is applicable in the 21<sup>st</sup> century in public affairs. But is clear that these practices were central in the life of and teaching of Jesus, his disciples, Paul, and other followers as depicted in the New Testament.

---

## **Notes**

1. Biblical quotations are from the New Revised Standard Version.
2. Quotations from Walter Wink are from his *Jesus and Nonviolence: A Third Way*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003. pp. 10-11.
3. A helpful resource for this article was Richard B. Hays, "Violence in Defense of Justice" in *The Moral Vision of the New Testament*. San Francisco: Harpers, 1996. pp.317-346.

2,538 words

December 23, 2004

John reports that when Jesus and his disciples journeyed thorough Samaria, he had a long conversation alone with a Samaritan woman at a well. By ancient law rabbis weren't supposed to speak to women in public. Moreover, many Jews considered Samaritans as religious heretics to be avoided. Neither inhibited Jesus as he offered the Samaritan woman the living water of eternal life. (Jn. 4:5-30)

(Earlier in his ministry Jesus was led to broaden his mission beyond the Jews after an encounter with a Canaanite woman who appealed to him for help for her daughter. He healed the Gentile girl.) (Mt.15:21-28; Mk. 7:24-30)

When we study the New Testament for guidance on how to deal with war and violence, we find very little on political and military strategy. But we discover much about dealing with adversaries. By words and deeds Jesus, his disciples, and the Apostle Paul revealed a twofold approach: (1) do not resist an evildoer but respond positively and (2) love your enemy and pray for those who persecute you. [Read more....](#)

## Become a Study-and-Dialogue Partner

Methodists United for Peace with Justice is seeking 100 or more congregations to become *Study-and-Dialogue Partners* in this project on the Theology of War and Peace. Campus organizations and other groups are also welcomed as partners.

A Study-and-Dialogue Partner is expected to:

- ❖ Engage in group study of *In Search of Security* and the Theology of War and Peace.
- ❖ Participate in web-based dialogue by reading comments of others and sending your own.
- ❖ Contribute financially to the project. We suggest a contribution of at least \$100 from a congregation (\$200, \$300, or \$500 if possible) and \$50 or more from campus organizations. This will help pay for web management and conference planning expenses of this self-financed project.

Because the project will continually add new study material to this website, we will regularly send Study-and-Dialogue-Partners e-mail notices when this material is available. We will also send advance notice of the Conference that will be held in 2006.

\*\*\*\*\*

To become a Study-and-Dialogue Partner, please provide the following information and send the completed form and a check payable to "Methodists United for Peace with Justice" to  
Methodists United for Peace with Justice  
1500 16<sup>th</sup> Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20036

\_\_\_ We would like to become a Study-and-Dialogue Partner of the project on the Theology of War and Peace.

Enclosed is our contribution of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Organization \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Contact person \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

<http://www.mupwj.org/quadrilateral.htm>

[Home](#) > [Theology of War and Peace](#) > **Quadrilateral**

## *The Wesleyan Quadrilateral*

Among United Methodists the Wesleyan Quadrilateral

[<http://www.umc.org/interior.asp?mid=258&GID=312&GMOD=VWD&GCAT=W>] provides a useful tool for understanding the Christian faith. Derived from John Wesley's theological approach, the Quadrilateral refers to *Scripture, Tradition, Reason, and Experience*. For Wesley scripture was the primary source, but the Christian tradition, reason, and experience added depth of discernment.

[replacement paragraph]

In our exploration of the theology of war and peace we take up the Quadrilateral and consider (1) the *biblical perspective* and how it is illuminated by (2) tradition found in *Christian history*, (3) reason expressed through different *theological perspectives*, and (4) *practical experience* in dealing with conflict.

### **Biblical Perspective**

[replacement paragraph]

The Bible provides the foundation for the Quadrilateral in both the *Old Testament* and the *New Testament*. [Read more.....](#) [<http://www.mupwj.org/biblical.htm>]

### **Tradition: Christian History**

As Christianity spread from the Holy Land and interacted with different cultures and political systems, approaches to war and peace multiplied. [Read more....](#)

[<http://www.mupwj.org/history.htm>]

### **Reason: Theological Perspectives**

[replacement paragraph]

Two millennia of Christianity have yielded a variety of theological perspectives on war and peace, some of them contradictory. [Read more.....](#) [<http://www.mupwj.org/reason.htm>]

### **Experience: Alternatives to War**

[replacement paragraph]

During two millennia a wide range of experience has developed on the application of scriptural teachings to conflict situations. [Read more.....](#) [<http://www.mupwj.org/experience.htm>]

Navigation on left column: [\[strike}](#) > Wesleyan Quadrilateral  
> Study and Dialogue

> Conference



This is <http://www.mupwj.org/reason.htm>  
It links back to <http://www.mupwj.org/quadrilateral.htm#reason>

[Home](#) > [Theology of War and Peace](#) > [Quadrilateral](#) > **Reason**

## *Reason: Theological Perspectives*

### > **Christian Pacifism**

<http://www.mupwj.org/reason.htm#pacifism>

### > **Just War**

<http://www.mupwj.org/reason.htm#justwar>

### > **Liberation Theology**

<http://www.mupwj.org/reason.htm#liberation>

### > **Armageddon**

<http://www.mupwj.org/reason.htm#armageddon>

The application of reason to Christian faith gains expression in theological analysis. In the Wesleyan Quadrilateral this is a source of guidance for understanding and interpreting scripture.

Two millennia of Christianity have yielded a variety of theological perspectives on war and peace, some of them contradictory. Here we are particularly interested in theologies that undergird belief and action in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. First we examine the two oldest and most prominent expressions: pacifism and just war theory. Then we look at Liberation Theology as it emerged in the last fifty years and the theology of Armageddon, the final battle of good and evil.

[This is <http://www.mupwj.org/reason.htm#pacifism>.]

**Christian Pacifism** [set up like Old Testament at <http://www.mupwj.org/biblical.htm>]

Pacifism is simultaneously negation and affirmation. It is refusal to participate in war and other conflict situations with hate and violence. Instead the pacifist responds with love and nonviolence to achieve peace and reconciliation. Some pacifists engage in nonviolent direct action to resist aggression and oppose injustice. Christian pacifism derives from teachings and practices of Jesus and the apostles. It was a major factor in early Christianity. [link to <http://www.mupwj.org/Christianresponses.htm> when it is posted]

- ❖ A Short Catechism on Christian Pacifism  
<http://www.mupwj.org/reason.htm#hunsinger>
- ❖ Blessed Are The Meek: The Roots of Christian Nonviolence  
<http://www.mupwj.org/reason.htm#merton>
- ❖ Resources  
<http://www.mupwj.org/reason.htm#resources>
- ❖ Applied Pacifism  
<http://www.mupwj.org/reason.htm#applied>

[box]

[This is <http://www.mupwj.org/reason.htm#hunsinger>]

## **A Short Catechism on Christian Pacifism**

by George Hunsinger

### **What is a Christian pacifist?**

A Christian pacifist is someone who believes that in all situations of human life Jesus expects nothing less from his disciples than love. This love is especially marked by a spirit of forgiveness. Against those who inflict injury it refuses to retaliate, but instead responds with benevolence. "Love your enemies; do good to those who hate you; bless those who hurt you; pray for those who abuse you" (Luke 6:27-28).

Read more..... <http://www.mupwj.org/hunsinger>

[end box]

[box]

[This is <http://www.mupwj.org/reason.htm#merton>]

## **Blessed Are The Meek: The Roots of Christian Nonviolence**

by Thomas Merton

Nonviolence is perhaps the most exacting of all forms of struggle, not only because it demands first of all that one be ready to suffer evil and even face the threat of death without violent retaliation, but because it excludes mere transient self-interest from its considerations. In a very real sense, those who practice nonviolent resistance must commit themselves not to the defense of their own interests or even those of a particular group: they must commit themselves to the defense of objective truth and right and above all of *human beings*. Their aim is then not simply to "prevail" or to prove that they are right and the adversary wrong, or to make the adversary give in and yield what is demanded of him.

Read more.... <http://www.forusa.org/nonviolence/40merton.html>

[end box]

[box]

{This is <http://www.mupwj.org/reason.htm#resources>}

## **Resources**

### **Fellowship of Reconciliation**

The Fellowship of Reconciliation [<http://www.forusa.org/>] (FOR) is a major resource for information on pacifism. Formed in the United States in 1915, it carries on programs and educational projects concerned with domestic and international peace and justice, nonviolent alternatives to conflict, and the rights of conscience. Its membership includes Christians, Jews, Buddhists, Muslims, and people of other faith traditions, as well as those with no formal religious affiliation. It is part of the International Fellowship of Reconciliation

[<http://www.ifor.org/>] (IFOR) with branches in over 40 countries and on every continent.

A particularly good source is *Peace Is the Way: Writings on Nonviolence from the Fellowship of Reconciliation*

[[http://www.forusa.org/Merchant2/merchant.mvc?Screen=PROD&Store\\_Code=books&Product\\_Code=banww&Category\\_Code=AN](http://www.forusa.org/Merchant2/merchant.mvc?Screen=PROD&Store_Code=books&Product_Code=banww&Category_Code=AN)] (2000), edited by Walter Wink. Other available writings are identified on the FOR website. [<http://www.forusa.org/>]  
[end box]

## **Bibliography**

Writings on Christian Nonresistance and Pacifism from Anabaptist-Mennonite Sources

[<http://www.bluffton.edu/~mastg/pacifism.htm>]  
[Others to be added]

## **Web Links**

Christian Pacifism by Myron S. Augsburger

[http://www.intervarsity.org/news/news.php?item\\_id=1161](http://www.intervarsity.org/news/news.php?item_id=1161)

A Practical Christian Pacifism by David A. Hoekema [<http://www.religion-online.org/showarticle.asp?title=115>]

The Way of Peace [<http://www.bruderhof.com/articles/WayOfPeace.htm>] by John Howard Yoder

Writings of the Early Church [<http://www.jeramnyt.org/papers/peace.html#cfat>]

[end box]

[box]

[This is <http://www.mupwj.org/reason.htm#applied>]

## **Applied Pacifism**

On this website we consider applications of pacifism in the section on Experience: Alternatives to War where we review different forms of nonviolent action. [linkage]

[end box]



<http://www.mupwj.org/participate.htm>

[Home](#) > [Theology of War and Peace](#) > Participate

## *Study and Dialogue*

Our project on the **Theology of War and Peace** is designed to promote *study groups* and encourage *web-based dialogue* among them.

### **Study Groups**

To broaden discussion of the Theology of War and Peace we call for the formation of study groups in local congregations, on college campuses, in seminaries, within annual conferences, and in other organizations. [Read more....](http://www.mupwj.org/studygroups.htm) [<http://www.mupwj.org/studygroups.htm>]

### **Web-based Dialogue**

To extend discussion of *In Search of Security* and the Theology of War and Peace, we encourage study groups to post their conclusions on this website and respond to the views of others. [Read more....](http://www.mupwj.org/dialogue.htm) [<http://www.mupwj.org/dialogue.htm> -- this is new].

### **Conference**

To expand the conversation we will invite representatives of study groups to participate in a conference in 2006 for face-to-based discussion under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. [Read more....](#) [to be added later]

<http://www.mupwj.org/study.htm>  
[Part 1]

[Home](#) > [Theology of War and Peace](#) > [Participate](#) > Study Groups

## *Study Groups*

> **In Search of Security** [<http://www.mupwj.org/study.htm#security>] > **Theology of War and Peace** [<http://www.mupwj.org/study.htm#warandpeace>] > **Bishops' Statements on Nuclear Weapons** [<http://www.mupw=j.org/study.htm#bishopsstatements>] > **Dialogue** [<http://www.mupwj.org/study.htm#dialogue>]

To broaden discussion of the theology of war and peace we call for the **formation of study groups** in local congregations, on college campuses, in seminaries, within annual conferences, and in other organizations. We are giving particular attention to United Methodists around the globe: in the United States, Africa, Asia, and Europe. But we also welcome participation from Pan-Methodist denominations in the United States and autonomous Methodist churches that are part of the World Methodist Council.

[in a box]

### **Become a Study-and-Dialogue Partner**

- ❖ Receive e-mail notices when new material is available.
- ❖ Contribute financially to this project.

[To learn more, click here.](#)

[<http://www.mupwj.org/partner.htm>]

### **Study Guide: *In Search of Security***

[continue with part 2]

<http://www.mupwj.org/study.htm>  
[Part 1]

[Home](#) > [Theology of War and Peace](#) > [Participate](#) > Study Groups

## *Study Groups*

> **Study Guide: In Search of Security** > **Resource Material: Theology of War and Peace**  
> **Bishops' Statements on Nuclear Weapons** > **Dialogue**

To broaden discussion of the theology of war and peace we call for the **formation of study groups** in local congregations, on college campuses, in seminaries, within annual conferences, and in other organizations. We are giving particular attention to United Methodists around the globe: in the United States, Africa, Asia, and Europe. But we also welcome participation from Pan-Methodist denominations in the United States and autonomous Methodist churches that are part of the World Methodist Council.

### **Become a Study-and-Dialogue Partner**

- ❖ Receive e-mail notices when new material is available.
- ❖ Contribute financially to this project.

To learn more, click here.

[<http://www.mupwj.org/partner.htm>]

### **Study Guide: *In Search of Security***

[continue with part 2]

<http://www.mupwj.org/study.htm>  
[part 2]

### **Study Guide: *In Search of Security***

[This is <http://www.mupwj.org/study.htm#security>]

In June 2004 the United Methodist Council of Bishops released a study guide entitled *In Search of Security*. Drafted by Bishop Walter Klaiber of Germany and endorsed by the Task Force on Safety and Security, the document seeks to deepen Christian conversation within local congregations about what security means within our faith in the post-September 11 world. Sections deal with:

- ❖ The problem.
- ❖ Safety and security in a biblical perspective.
- ❖ Insights for our present situation.
- ❖ The search for security and a responsible lifestyle.

You can download *In Search of Security* in a PDF format [<http://www.umc-gbcs.org/uploads/news/760Search%20of%20Security.PDF>] from the website of the United Methodist General Board of Church and Society (GBCS). You can order printed copies of the 32-page study from the GBCS Service Department at 1-800-967-0880. Copies also are available from each active Bishop. Read more. [<http://www.umc-gbcs.org/news/viewnews.php?newsId=761>]

The bishops suggest that participants discussing *In Search of Security* should have familiarity with two recent U.S. government documents: *The National Security Strategy of the United States* [[www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss.html](http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss.html)] and *The National Strategy for Homeland Security* [[www.whitehouse.gov/homeland/book](http://www.whitehouse.gov/homeland/book)].

### **Resource Material: Theology of War and Peace**

[This is <http://www.mupwj.org/study.htm#warandpeace>]

As study groups consider the theology of war and peace, they can draw upon background information provided on this website. We organize it according to the *Wesleyan Quadrilateral* [<http://www.mupwj.org/quadrilateral.htm>]. The major components are:

- ❖ Scripture: Biblical Perspective [<http://www.mupwj.org/biblical.htm>]
- ❖ Tradition: Christian History [<http://www.mupwj.org/tradition.htm>]
- ❖ Reason: Theological Perspectives [<http://www.mupwj.org/reason.htm>]
- ❖ Experience: Alternatives to War [<http://www.mupwj.org/experience.htm>]

Each section contains short articles, bibliographical references, and linkage to material on other websites.

Within this framework study groups can determine their own pace and process of study. A brief overview could be presented in a four-week Sunday school class. Greater depth with fuller discussion would take longer, such as thirteen weeks over a three-month period.

## **Bishops' Statements on Nuclear Weapons**

[This is [<http://www.mupw=j.org/study.htm#bishopsstatements>]

Another useful source of background information comes from reports and pastoral letters issued by United Methodist and U.S. Catholic bishops on nuclear weapons. They offer analyses of biblical texts and theological perspectives that are relevant to broader issues of war and peace.

### *United Methodist Bishops*

In Defense of Creation: The Nuclear Crisis and a Just Peace. Foundation Document (1986)

[<http://www.cokesbury.com/search.aspx?scope=all&query=516641&pid=516641>]

A Pastoral Letter to All United Methodists [<http://www.zero-nukes.org/religiousstatements2.html#indefenseofcreation>]

Study Guide [[www.cokesbury.com/digitalstore.aspx?subsection=19&fid=11](http://www.cokesbury.com/digitalstore.aspx?subsection=19&fid=11)]

### *U.S. Catholic Bishops*

The Challenge of Peace: God's Promise and Our Response: A Pastoral Letter on War and Peace (1983) [<http://www.usccb.org/publishing/interpol.shtml#peacemaking>]

Summary [<http://www.zero-nukes.org/religiousstatements2.html#challengeofpeace>]

The Harvest of Peace Is Sown in Justice (1993)

[<http://www.usccb.org/publishing/interpol.shtml#peacemaking>]

Unfinished Business: Nuclear Disarmament and Proliferation [<http://www.zero-nukes.org/religiousstatements2.html#harvestofpeace>]

## **Dialogue**

**To extend discussion** of *In Search of Security* and the theology of war and peace, we encourage study groups to post their conclusions on this website and respond to the views of others. This can be done through our section on **Web-based Dialogue** [<http://www.mupwj.org/dialogue.htm>].

<http://www.mupwj.org/submittalform.htm>

[This page should be set up to send via e-mail to [comments@mupwj.org](mailto:comments@mupwj.org).]

## **Web-based Dialogue on Theology of War and Peace**

### **Submittal Form**

We/I would like to submit the following comments for posting on the website of Methodists United for Peace with Justice.

#### **Organization**

Name of organization [space for two lines]

Address [space for two lines]

Contact person

E-mail address

Telephone number

#### **Individual**

Name

Organization

Address

E-mail address

Telephone number

#### **Category** (check one)

In Search of Security

Biblical Perspective

Christian History

Theological Perspectives

Alternatives to War

**Submission** (not to exceed 250 words)

**Submit**

[to [comments@mupwj.org](mailto:comments@mupwj.org)]

# A Project on Theology of War and Peace

Initiated by  
Methodists United for Peace with Justice  
Washington, D.C.

The 20<sup>th</sup> century with two world wars and hundreds of smaller wars was one of the deadliest period in human history. In the early years of the 21<sup>st</sup> century war continues unabated. It ranges from terrorist attacks by individuals and small groups to civil war within nations to international conflicts. Wars are initiated without provocation. A doctrine of preemptive war is proclaimed.

This situation calls upon persons of religious faith to freshly examine their beliefs and theology on matters of war and peace. Among those us called United Methodists we seldom take the time to dialogue together on our theology and to prayerfully consider where we are called by God to stand and move and have our being. Methodists United for Peace with Justice, an unofficial association of laity and clergy, would like to encourage greater depth in considering theology of war and peace through a three step approach.

## Wesleyan Quadrilateral

Methodist tradition has a tool known as the Wesleyan Quadrilateral that provides a basis for studying and gaining greater understanding of Christian faith. It encompasses **Scripture, Tradition, Reason, and Experience**. We are proposing that the Quadrilateral serve as a tool for studying the theology of war and peace during 2005. To provide background information, beginning in January 2005 our website, [www.mupwj.org](http://www.mupwj.org), will post articles on different aspects and provide references to other sources.

## Study and Dialogue

We encourage the **formation of study groups** on the theology of war and peace throughout the United Methodist Church: in the United States, Africa, Asia, and Europe. This can occur in local congregations, campus organizations, seminaries, and other places. Study groups can begin with discussion of *In Search for Security*, a study guide developed by a task force of the United Methodist Council of Bishops. They can continue by using the Wesleyan Quadrilateral and material from our website as a basis for studying various aspects of theology of war and peace. To **extend the dialogue** we encourage groups to post their conclusions on the website and respond to the views of others. Individuals will be welcome to join this **web-based discussion**.

## Conference

We will invite representatives of study groups and other interested persons to come together in a **conference in early 2006**. Organized along the lines of the Quadrilateral, this gathering will convene in the Wesleyan tradition of holy conferencing. It will not to be a legislative event. There will be no resolutions, no pronouncements, but rather prayerful dialogue under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

November 8, 2004

(first page of new section)

<http://www.mupwj.org/theology.htm>

[model after <http://www.mupwj.org/methodistfamily.htm>]

[Home](#) > Theology of War and Peace

## *Theology of War and Peace*

[underline like for Methodist Family]

After two world wars and numerous smaller wars in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, war continues unabated in the early years of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It ranges from terrorist attacks by individuals and small groups to civil war within nations to international conflicts. Wars are initiated without provocation. A doctrine of preemptive war is proclaimed.

This situation calls upon persons of religious faith to freshly examine their beliefs and theology on matters of war and peace. Within Methodism we are long overdue for this kind of theological discussion. Methodists United for Peace with Justice, an unofficial association of laity and clergy, would like to encourage this process through a three step approach.

### **Wesleyan Quadrilateral** [<http://www.mupwj.org/quadrilateral.htm>]

Methodist tradition has a tool known as the Wesleyan Quadrilateral that provides a basis for studying and gaining greater understanding of Christian faith. It encompasses **Scripture, Tradition, Reason, and Experience**. We are proposing that the Quadrilateral serve as a tool for studying the theology of war and peace. We will use this website to post articles on different aspects of the Quadrilateral and provide references to other sources of information.

### **Study and Dialogue** [<http://www.mupwj.org/study.htm>]

We encourage the **formation of study groups** on the theology of war and peace throughout the United Methodist Church: in the United States, Africa, Asia, and Europe. This can occur in local congregations, campus organizations, seminaries, and other places. To **extend the dialogue** we invite study groups to post their conclusions on this website and respond to the views of others. Individuals will be welcome to join this **web-based discussion**.

### **Conference** [<http://www.mupwj.org/conference.htm>]

We will invite representatives of study groups and other interested persons to come together in a **conference in early 2006**. Organized along the lines of the Quadrilateral, this gathering will convene in the Wesleyan tradition of holy conferencing. It will not to be a legislative event. There will be no resolutions, no pronouncements. We will seek to put aside partisan baggage and engage in prayerful dialogue under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Navigation on left column: > Wesleyan Quadrilateral  
> Study and Dialogue  
> Conference

(1)

[Home](#) > **Theology of War and Peace**

## *Theology of War and Peace*

The 20<sup>th</sup> century with two world wars and hundreds of smaller wars was one of the deadliest in human history. In the early years of the 21<sup>st</sup> century war continues unabated. It ranges from terrorist attacks by individuals and small groups to civil war within nations to international conflicts. Wars are initiated without provocation. A doctrine of preemptive war is proclaimed.

This situation calls upon persons of religious faith to freshly examine their belief and theology on matters of war and peace. Among those us called United Methodists we seldom take the time to dialogue together on our theology and to prayerfully consider where we are called by God to stand and move. Methodists United for Peace with Justice, an unofficial association of laity and clergy, would like to encourage greater depth in considering theology of war and peace through a three step approach.

### **Wesleyan Quadrilateral**

Methodist tradition has a tool known as the Wesleyan Quadrilateral that provides a basis for studying and gaining greater understand of Christian faith. It encompasses Scripture, Tradition, Reason, and Experience. We are proposing that local churches and other entities form study groups during 2005 to study the theology of war and peace, using the Quadrilateral as a tool. To provide background information, this website will post articles on different aspects and provide references to other sources.

### **Interactive Dialogue**

Study groups may want to start with discussion of [In Search for Security](#), a study guide by a task group of the United Methodist Council of Bishops. They then can use the Wesleyan Quadrilateral and material from this website as a basis for studying various aspects of theology of war and peace. To extend the dialogue we encourage groups to post their conclusions on this website and respond to the views of others. Individuals will be welcome to join this web-based discussion.

### **Conference**

In early 2006 representatives of local study groups and other interested persons will come together in a conference, convened in the Wesleyan tradition of holy conferencing. It will not to be a legislative event. No resolutions, no pronouncements, but instead, prayerful dialogue under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The event will be organized along the lines of the Wesleyan Quadrilateral.

This is <http://www.mupwj.org/tradition.htm>. It links back to <http://www.mupwj.org/quadrilateral.htm#tradition>.

[Home](#) > [Theology of War and Peace](#) > [Quadrilateral](#) > **Tradition**

## *Tradition: Christian History*

### > **Development of Christian Responses to War and Peace**

<http://www.mupwj.org/tradition.htm#long>

> **Holy War** [to be added]

> **Within Methodism** [to be added]

> [Others to be added]

As Christianity spread from the Holy Land and interacted with different cultures and political systems, approaches to war and peace multiplied. Today how Christians think about war and peace issues is influenced by these traditions.

We first look at how the early church emphasized pacifism until the just war doctrine emerged in the fifth century and thereafter. We note how crusades took the form of "holy wars". We trace the approach to war and peace within Methodism and the Evangelical United Brethren traditions. [Others to be added.]

[box]

[this is <http://www.mupwj.org/tradition.htm#long>]

## **Development of Christian Responses to War and Peace**

by D. Stephen Long

Any discussion of the early development of Christian responses to war and peace is complex and open to criticism. This is largely due to the fact that no simple or consistent response was possible. The early Church did not have a commission that gathered and issued a position statement on a Christian's participation or non-participation in war like the modern church does. It took some time for that kind of unity to develop before specific pronouncements could be made.

[Read more....](http://www.mupwj.org/Christianresponses.htm) [<http://www.mupwj.org/Christianresponses.htm>]

[end box]

## **NEW ENTRY FOR TOP LINE**

**Theology of War and Peace** [could be two lines]

<http://www.mupwj.org/theology.htm>

## **DROP-DOWN BOX**

**Wesleyan Quadrilateral**

<http://www.mupwj.org/quadrilateral.htm>

**Study and Dialogue**

<http://www.mupwj.org/study.htm>

**National Conference**

<http://www.mupwj.org/conference.htm>

## **SUBSEQUENT PAGES**

**Wesleyan Quadrilateral**

<http://www.mupwj.org/quadrilateral.htm>

A main page with linkages to separate pages:

Biblical Perspective

Tradition: Christian History

Reason: Theological Perspectives

Experience: Peaceful Alternatives to War

## **SEPARATE PAGES WITH SECTIONS**

**Biblical Perspective**

<http://www.mupwj.org/biblical.htm>

Old Testament

<http://www.mupwj.org/biblical.htm#oldtestament>

Gospels

<http://www.mupwj.org/biblical.htm#gospels>

Epistles

<http://www.mupwj.org/biblical.htm#epistles>

Revelation

<http://www.mupwj.org/biblical.htm#revelation>

**Tradition: Christian History**

<http://www.mupwj.org/history.htm>

Early Christianity

<http://www.mupwj.org/history.htm#earlychristianity>

[other pages to be added]

**Reason: Theological Perspectives**

<http://www.mupwj.org/reason.htm>

Pacifism

<http://www.mupwj.org/reason.htm#pacifism>

Just War Theory

<http://www.mupwj.org/reason.htm#justwar>

[other pages to be added]

**Experience: Peaceful Alternatives to War**

<http://www.mupwj.org/experience.htm>

Nonviolent Action

<http://www.mupwj.org/experience.htm#nonviolence>

[other pages to be added]

Website Outline for

## **Theology of War and Peace**

### **I. Wesleyan Quadrilateral**

Introduction to explain Quadrilateral

#### **A. Scripture: Biblical Perspective**

1. Old Testament
2. Gospels
3. Epistles
4. Revelation

#### **B. Tradition: History**

1. Early Christianity (pacifism)
2. Roman Catholic (just war)
3. Crusades (holy war)
4. Orthodox
5. Protestant
6. Peace Churches
7. Methodist, United Brethren

Include historic statements

8. Evangelical (contemporary)

#### **C. Reason: Theological Perspectives**

1. Pacifism
2. Just War
3. Armageddon
4. Liberation Theology
5. Feminist Theology
6. Peace with Justice

#### **D. Experience: Peaceful Alternatives to War**

1. Nonviolent Action
2. Diplomacy and Sanctions
3. International Law and Organizations
4. Justice as Foundation for Peace

### **II. Study and Dialogue**

#### **A. Study Groups**

1. In Search of Security
2. Theology of War and Peace

#### **B. Web-based Dialogue**

1. In Search of Security
2. Biblical Perspectives
3. Theological Perspectives
4. Peaceful Alternatives to War

### **III. National Conference**

1. Initially an indication of intent.
2. Post more detailed plans as they are developed.
3. Later post registration form.

Drafted by Howard W. Hallman  
Methodists United for Peace with Justice  
November 8, 2004

Website Outline for

## **Theology of War and Peace**

### **I. Wesleyan Quadrilateral**

Introduction to explain Quadrilateral

#### **A. Scripture: Biblical Perspective**

1. Old Testament
2. Gospels
3. Epistles
4. Revelation

#### **B. Tradition: Christian History**

1. Early Christianity (pacifism)
2. Roman Catholic (just war)
3. Crusades (holy war)
4. Orthodox
5. Protestant
6. Peace Churches
7. Methodist, United Brethren

Include historic statements

8. Evangelical (contemporary)

#### **C. Reason: Theological Perspectives**

1. Pacifism
2. Just War
3. Armageddon
4. Liberation Theology
5. Feminist Theology
6. Peace with Justice

#### **D. Experience: Love in Action**

1. Nonviolent Action
2. Justice as Foundation for Peace
3. Other Peaceful Alternatives

### **II. Study and Dialogue**

#### **A. Study Groups**

1. In Search of Security
2. Theology of War and Peace

#### **B. Web-based Dialogue**

1. In Search of Security
2. Biblical Perspectives
3. Theological Perspectives
4. Peaceful Alternatives to War

### **III. National Conference**

1. Initially an indication of intent.
2. Post more detailed plans as they are developed.
3. Later post registration form.

Drafted by Howard W. Hallman  
Methodists United for Peace with Justice  
November 8, 2004

Website Outline for

## **Theology of War and Peace**

### **I. Wesleyan Quadrilateral**

Introduction to explain Quadrilateral

#### **A. Scripture: Biblical Perspective**

1. Old Testament
2. Gospels
3. Epistles
4. Revelation

#### **B. Tradition: Christian History**

1. Early Christianity (pacifism)
2. Roman Catholic (just war)
3. Crusades (holy war)
4. Orthodox
5. Protestant
6. Peace Churches
7. Methodist, United Brethren

Include historic statements

8. Evangelical (contemporary)

#### **C. Reason: Theological Perspectives**

1. Pacifism
2. Just War
3. Armageddon
4. Liberation Theology
5. Feminist Theology
6. Peace with Justice

#### **D. Experience: Alternatives to War**

1. Nonviolent Action
2. Justice as Foundation for Peace
3. Other Peaceful Alternatives

### **II. Study and Dialogue**

#### **A. Study Groups**

1. In Search of Security
2. Theology of War and Peace

#### **B. Web-based Dialogue**

1. In Search of Security
2. Biblical Perspectives
3. Theological Perspectives
4. Peaceful Alternatives to War

### **III. National Conference**

1. Initially an indication of intent.
2. Post more detailed plans as they are developed.
3. Later post registration form.

Drafted by Howard W. Hallman  
Methodists United for Peace with Justice  
November 8, 2004

Website Outline for

## **Theology of War and Peace**

Introduction with linkage to I, II, and III

<http://www.mupwj.org/theology.htm>

### **I. Wesleyan Quadrilateral**

<http://www.mupwj.org/quadrilateral.htm>

Introduction to explain Quadrilateral

#### **A. Scripture: Biblical Perspective**

<http://www.mupwj.org/biblical.htm>

1. Old Testament

<http://www.mupwj.org/oldtestament.htm>

2. New Testament

<http://www.mupwj.org/newtestament.htm>

#### **B. Tradition: Christian History**

<http://www.mupwj.org/tradition.htm>

1. Early Christianity (pacifism)

<http://www.mupwj.org/tradition.htm#earlychristianity>

2. Roman Catholic (just war)

etc.

3. Crusades (holy war)

4. Orthodox

5. Protestant

6. Peace Churches

7. Methodist, United Brethren

<http://www.mupwj.org/tradition.htm#methodist>

Include historic statements

<http://www.mupwj.org/statements.htm>

8. Evangelical (contemporary)

#### **C. Reason: Theological Perspectives**

<http://www.mupwj.org/reason.htm>

1. Pacifism

<http://www.mupwj.org/pacifism.htm>

2. Just War

<http://www.mupwj.org/justwar.htm>

3. Armageddon

etc.

4. Liberation Theology

5. Feminist Theology

6. Peace with Justice

#### **D. Experience: Love in Action**

<http://www.mupwj.org/experience.htm>

1. Nonviolent Action

<http://www.mupwj.org/nonviolence.htm>

2. Justice as Foundation for Peace

<http://www.mupwj.org/justice.htm>

3. Other Peaceful Alternatives

<http://www.mupwj.org/peacefulalternatives.htm>

### **II. Study and Dialogue**

<http://www.mupwj.org/participate.htm>

#### **A. Study Groups**

<http://www.mupwj.org/study.htm>

Partner form

<http://www.mupwj.org/partner.htm>

1. In Search of Security

<http://www.mupwj.org/study.htm#security>

2. Theology of War and Peace

<http://www.mupwj.org/study.htm#warandpeace>

#### **B. Web-based Dialogue**

<http://www.mupwj.org/dialogue.htm>

Submittal Form

<http://www.mupwj.org/submittalform.htm>

### **III. National Conference**

<http://www.mupwj.org/conference.htm>

December 20, 2004

Wesley Seminary

**Denise Dombkowski Hopkins (1986)**

*Professor of Old Testament*

Syracuse University, B.A.; Vanderbilt University, M.A., Ph.D.

[ddhopkins@wesleysem.edu](mailto:ddhopkins@wesleysem.edu)

**Douglas M. Strong (1989)**

*Professor of History of Christianity*

Houghton College, B.A.; Princeton Theological Seminary, M.Div., Ph.D.

[dstrong@wesleysem.edu](mailto:dstrong@wesleysem.edu)

**Sharon H. Ringe (1991) [Visit Professor Website](#)**

*Professor of New Testament*

University of New Hampshire, B.A.; Union Theological Seminary,  
New York, M.Div., Ph.D.

[sringe@wesleysem.edu](mailto:sringe@wesleysem.edu)

**Sondra Ely Wheeler (1993)**

*Martha Ashby Carr Professor of Christian Ethics*

Wesleyan University, B.A.; Yale Divinity School, M.A.R.; Yale University, Ph.D.

[swheeler@wesleysem.edu](mailto:swheeler@wesleysem.edu)

**Craig C. Hill (1995) [Visit Professor Website](#)**

*Professor of New Testament*

Illinois Wesleyan University, B.A.; Garrett-Evangelical Theological  
Seminary, M.Div.; Oxford University, D.Phil.

[chill@wesleysem.edu](mailto:chill@wesleysem.edu)

**Amy G. Oden (2002)**

*Professor of History of Christianity*

University of Oklahoma, B.A.; Southern Methodist University, Ph.D.

[aoden@wesleysem.edu](mailto:aoden@wesleysem.edu)

**Beverly E. Mitchell (1998)**

*Associate Professor of Historical Theology*

Temple University, B.A.; Wesley Theological Seminary, M.T.S.;  
Boston College-Andover Newton Theological School, Ph.D.

[bmitchell@wesleysem.edu](mailto:bmitchell@wesleysem.edu)

**Shaun A. Casey (2000)**

*Assistant Professor of Christian Ethics*

Abilene Christian University, B.A.; Harvard Divinity School, M.Div.;  
Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, M.P.A.; Harvard  
Divinity School, Th.D.

[scasey@wesleysem.edu](mailto:scasey@wesleysem.edu)

**James T. Clemons**

*Professor of New Testament (1967-1995)*

Hendrix College, A.B., D.D.; Southern Methodist University, B.D.; Duke  
University, Ph.D.