

The Case for the Abolition of War in the Twenty-First Century

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Can History be Written Nonviolently?

Our call for the abolition of war will strike most of our colleagues in the "field" of Christian Ethics as at best naive or worse, just downright silly.¹ That the "Appeal" will elicit such a response is but an indication of why such an "Appeal" is so needed. War possess our imaginations, our everyday habits, and our scholarly assumptions. To begin to think what it might mean to abolish war cannot help but call into question some of our most cherished convictions: convictions whose importance may not be recognized because they so seldom need to be made articulate. We suspect that among our deepest moral intuitions is the presumption that war is necessary if we are to live worthy lives.²

One of the difficulties we face by calling for the abolition of war is whether we know what it is we are calling to be abolished. War may be ubiquitous, but that there always seems to be a war taking place somewhere does not mean we know what we mean when we say war³.

Clearly war is a contested concept that requires analogical display. For example, is the violence, often highly ritualized, between African people the same as the kind of conflict exemplified by World War I? We cannot pretend to answer this question in this paper, but we note it as an ongoing problem. It is, moreover, a problem not just for us but also for those representing the just war tradition. Just war is, perhaps, best understood **not** as an attempt to test whether a war meets the criteria of just war but rather just war reflection is an attempt to control the description, "war." In other words, only if a war is

¹For the text as well as an attempt to begin some justification of the 'Appeal,' see Hauerwas 'Reflections on the 'Appeal to Abolish War' or What Being a Friend of Enda's Got Me Into,' in *Between Poetry and Politics: Essays in Honor of Enda McDonagh*, edited by Linda Hogan and Barbara Fitzgerald. (Dublin: Columba Press, 2003), 135-137

²The details of this claim that war is a significant moral endeavor is discussed by Hauerwas in 'Sacrificing the Sacrifices of War,' in *Religion and Violence*, edited by Linda Hogan (forthcoming).

³For a fuller discussion of this issue, see 'Reflections on the Appeal to Abolish War,' in *Between Poetry and Politics: Essays in Honor of Enda McDonagh* (Dublin: Columba Press, 2003): 135-147.

just does it deserve the description "war." This requires we ask, "If a war is not just, what is it?" We will see the importance of this question when we turn to just war reflection, but we raise it now because one of the issues raised by this question is whether we can write a history of warfare.

One of the most determinative intellectual challenges to our call for the abolition of war surely involves how we understand history as well as write history. As might be expected, no one has made this clearer than Michel Foucault. In his lectures at the College De France in 1975 through 1976 entitled, *Society Must Be Defended*, Foucault argues that Clausewitz's famous proposition, "War is the continuation of politics by other means" should be inverted. Foucault observes "The role of political power is perpetually to use a sort of silent war to reinscribe that relationship of force, and to reinscribe it in institutions, economic inequalities, language, and even the bodies of individuals. This is the initial meaning of our inversion of Clausewitz's aphorism--politics is the continuation of war by other means. Politics, in other words, sanctions and reproduces the disequilibrium of forces manifested in war".⁴

According to Foucault, the inversion of Clausewitz's proposition helps us see that a crucial transition in the practices and institutions of war, which were initially concentrated in the hands of a central power, became associated both in *de facto* and *de jure* terms with emerging State power. "The State acquired a monopoly on war" which had the effect of making war seem to exist only on the outer limits of the great State units. War now became the technical and professional prerogative of a carefully defined and controlled military apparatus. The army now becomes an institution.⁵ This means, Foucault argues, that we cannot assume that society, the law, and the State are like armistices that put an end to wars. Rather beneath the law war continues to rage. "War is the motor behind institutions and order. In the smallest of its cogs, peace is waging a

⁴Michel Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended*, edited by Mauro Bertani and Alessandro Fontana, translated by David Macey (New York: Picador, 2003), 15-16.

⁵Foucault, pp. 48-49. We are following Foucault (or his translator) by capitalizing the State though we are not sure why that convention is followed in these lectures.

secret war. To put it another way, we have to interpret the war that is going on beneath peace; peace itself is a coded war. We are all inevitably someone's adversary."⁶ Contrary to Hobbes, sovereignty is not the result of the war of all against all, but rather what we should learn from Hobbes is that it is not war that gives birth to States but rather sovereignty is always shaped from below by those who are afraid.⁷

According to Foucault history has always been the form of discourse related to rituals of power. From the first Roman annalists to the late Middle Ages (and perhaps even the seventeenth century and later) history had two roles: (1) to recount the history of kings and their victories and (2) to use the continuity of the law to establish a juridical link between the king and power.⁸ But from the eighteenth century their emerged a specifically modern dimension of politics in which historical knowledge becomes an element of the struggle. "History gave us the idea that we are at war; and we wage war through history."⁹

Foucault suggests that is why philosophers, scientists, and political thinkers have tried to ward off historicism. They do so because historicism makes the link between war and history and how history participates in war by showing that no matter how far one goes back, the knowledge that is history discovers only unending war. Thus the "Western organization of knowledge," that is that truth must belong to the register of order and

⁶Foucault, 50-51.

⁷Foucault, 96. Foucault has an extended discussion of Hobbes that is as interesting as it is counter-intuitive. For example, Foucault suggests that rather than being the theorist of the relationship between war and political power, Hobbes wanted to eliminate the genesis of sovereignty. "A large part of the discourse of *Leviathan* consists in saying: It doesn't matter whether you fought or did not fight, whether you were beaten or not; in any case, the mechanism that applies to you who have been defeated is the same mechanism that we find in the state of nature, in the constitution of a State, and we also find, quite naturally, in the most tender and natural relationship of all: that between parents and children. . . . It is not really war that gives birth to States, and it is not really war that is transcribed in relations of sovereignty or that reproduces within the civil power--and its inequalities--the earlier dissymmetries in the relationship of force that were revealed by the very fact of the battle itself." (97) Foucault argues that the main purpose of Hobbes was to render invisible the conquest of England by the Normans.

⁸Foucault, 66.

⁹Foucault, 172.

peace, that truth can never be found on the side of violence, disorder, and war, becomes the way the modern State “has now reimplanted in it what we might call the eighteenth century's 'disciplinarization' of knowledges.”¹⁰ Historicism becomes unacceptable to us because we cannot accept the unavoidable circularity between historical knowledge and wars it tells about and which at the same time history itself is enacting. Foucault, therefore, takes as his task as a historicist “to analyze this perpetual and unavoidable relationship between the war that is recounted by history and that is traversed by the war it is recounting.”¹¹

Foucault's argument involves ontological claims that require a historical display. Accordingly he provides a fascinating account of how war as a contest between kings or revolt against kings is replaced by what he calls race wars. One no longer kills because of loyalty to this or that monarch, but because one is a Frank or Gaul. This creates a new form of historical discourse in which sovereignty is no longer the central problem, but now the story is about “race struggles that go on within nations and within laws.”¹²

We cannot pretend to do justice to the complex challenge Foucault presents to our call for the abolition of war. We think, however, that Foucault is right to direct attention to history as the crucial category. Indeed we think his understanding of the relation of history and war is extremely important for the case we want to make. Foucault makes clear that any call for the abolition of war entails a different historical imaginary. Indeed such a call would inevitably challenge the disciplines of knowledge that are now enshrined in the modern university.¹³ Moreover given the power of those disciplines,

¹⁰Foucault, 173. Foucault observes that "knowledge is never anything more than a weapon in a war, or a tactile deployment within that war. War is waged throughout history, and through the history that tells the history of war. And history, for its part, can never do anything more than interpret the war it is waging or that is being waged through it." 173.

¹¹Foucault, 173-174. Foucault acknowledges that this argument owes much to Nietzsche.

¹²Foucault, 69.

¹³Foucault has several pages in these lectures dedicated to the university as the state apparatus to centralize knowledge through organization into disciplines. The university becomes the way knowledge is domesticated in the name of "science" (182-183).

disciplines that constitute the universities, that make war seem a necessity, it is quite understandable that our call for the abolition of war seems naive.

We think that Foucault rightly helps us see that the call for the abolition of war requires us to challenge our most basic explanatory modes of knowledge. Yet we think such challenges are possible. For example in his recent book, *The Unconquerable World: Power, Nonviolence, and the Will of the People*, Jonathan Schell begins to offer the kind of history we think is so desperately needed. Schell begins his book by describing the “war system,” that is, the view of the world that assumes that the normal relation between states is one of war. The war system in fact forces all reality to submit to its power: “The democratic revolution brought the Rights of Man *and* millions of willing recruits for war; the scientific revolution offered pure knowledge *and* better artillery and explosives; the industrial revolutions created consumer goods *and* provided more material for larger and longer wars; imperial possession won trade and spoils *and* strategic global position.”¹⁴

Schell does not deny the descriptive power of the history that has been created by the war system, but he argues that there is a “less-noticed, parallel history of nonviolent power. The chronicle has been a hopeful one of violence disrupted or in retreat--of great-power war immobilized by the nuclear stalemate, of brutal empires defeated by local peoples fighting for their self-determination, of revolutions succeeding without violence, of democracy supplanting authoritarian or totalitarian repression, of national sovereignty yielding to systems of mixed and balanced powers.”¹⁵

For example, Schell has an extensive account of that extraordinary figure, Gandhi, in which he argues quite persuasively that Gandhi's ability to combine nonviolence with political reality has not been appropriately appreciated. Schell rightly praises Gandhi's campaigns of noncooperation, *satyagraha*, but points out that Gandhi's most persistent efforts were in support of constructive programs. His “fasts unto death” were launched in

¹⁴Jonathan Schell, *The Unconquerable World: Power, Nonviolence, and the Will of the People* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2003), 31.

¹⁵Schell, 305.

the name of bringing justice to workers of Ahmedabad, of no longer having an “untouchable” caste, of making peace between Hindus and Muslims.¹⁶ Schell is well aware that Gandhi is “strange,” but he argues that Gandhi is a resource for how we tell the story of our time that makes war less likely.

Schell argues that revolutions first occur nonviolently simply by people discovering forms of cooperation that make it possible to say “no” to the established powers. For example, he observes that the Bolsheviks did not need to use violence to win power, but they used it to keep power.¹⁷ When violence is used to keep power, moreover, the revolution is lost. Thus the extraordinary events of 1989 in which Eastern Europe was freed from totalitarian control remain a testimony to the power of nonviolence. Schell suggests that the secret to that continuing revolution was that Michnik and Havel saw it would be a mistake to think they should overthrow the system, but rather they directed their attention to achieving modest and concrete goals on the local level that effected everyday life.¹⁸

Schell draws on the work of Hannah Arendt to argue that politics is nonviolent action. He uses Arendt's argument that power is not the result of some people coercing others but rather common action in support of common purposes to suggest that liberal democracy can be understood to be a peace movement.¹⁹ Yet Schell also quite rightly sees that the very character of liberalism can lead to imperialism just to the extent liberalism assumes an international character shaped by universalistic pretensions.²⁰ In fact the great challenge before America is the possession of a massive military with no enemy to fight.²¹ Possession of such a military is very dangerous for a country like America that

¹⁶Schell, 139.

¹⁷Schell, 179

¹⁸Schell, 193.

¹⁹Schell's account of Arendt is on 217-219 and his suggestion about liberal democracy is on 240.

²⁰Schell, 269-270.

²¹Schell, 322.

fails to understand Arendt's point that a country's violence can destroy its power.²² Schell concludes, "The days when humanity can hope to save itself from force with force are over. None of the structures of violence--not the balance of power, not the balance of terror, not empire--can any longer rescue the world from the use of violence, now grown apocalyptic. Force can lead only to more force, not to peace. Only a turn to structures of cooperative power can offer hope."²³

It is not our intention to suggest that Schell provides a sufficient response to Foucault, nor do we want to dispute Foucault's claim. What the juxtaposition of Foucault and Schell suggests to us however is that if we are to untangle ourselves from the logic of war and the imperatives of the war system then an alternative imaginary needs to be constructed. We believe that Schell's alternative history is crucial to the construction of that new imaginary because it helps us to see that nonviolence is deeper than the violences that possess our speech and our imaginations. As such it is precisely the kind of work that is needed if our call for the abolition of war is to be persuasive.

Just War Theory and the Logic of War

Shell's historical analysis qualifies Foucault's claim that the knowledge that is history discovers "unending war", by refuting the idea that one *only* discovers war. His history is important too because though it illustrates the unavoidable circularity of historical knowledge and the wars it tells about, it also attempts to disrupt it. Moreover it is this unavoidable circularity that explains in part why war appears to be inescapable. Yet recognising this circularity also opens up a space in which we can see the logic of war as both a construct and function of a particular historical narrative. Historical analysis relativises the logic of war by revealing war to be primarily a function of history. This is easy to discern in the context of specific wars. Historical narratives determine assessments of provocation and the requirements of defense. History constructs a version of cause and intention and is crucial in assessments of when political solutions have been

²²Schell, 344.

²³Schell, 345.

exhausted. Indeed its importance is acknowledged in the fact that, even centuries later, the meaning and significance of certain events is hotly debated. History creates the logic for war and perpetuates the logic of war.

Recognising how history functions in perpetuating the logic of war may help us to understand, in part, the grip that war has on our imaginations as well as explain its dominance in both realist and constructivist analyses of international relations.²⁴ However we suspect that a historicist analysis may have a further role to play in questioning the pre-eminent role that just war theory plays in our moral discourse about national and international policy. We mentioned earlier our intuition that we operate with a deep-seated presumption that war is necessary if we are to live morally worthy lives. We believe that this intuition is expressed and elaborated with considerable nuance in the principles of the just war tradition whose ultimate conviction is that in certain extreme circumstances, the moral course of action involves being prepared to wage war in order to protect the innocent²⁵ We do not underestimate the persuasiveness of the view that in certain circumstances the ethical response to political violence, in its various manifestations, is a comparable, though proportionate, display of physical force. However what we are seeking to do here is to loosen the grip that just war has on our ethical discourse by questioning, not the nature of criteria and their applicability, but rather the way in which the tradition functions in our moral assessments of war.

²⁴ There are other important drivers of course, not least among them the economic ones. See for example Gideon Burrows' *No-nonsense Guide to the Arms Trade*, London, New Internationalist in Association with Verso 2002 and Richard Bitzinger's *Towards a Brave New Arms Industry?* Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2002 on the economic drivers of conflict.

²⁵ Of course one of the problems with just war calculations is that, given the way war works one cannot identify and thereby protect 'the innocent'. Clearly the *in bello* restriction on killing non-combatants is more observed in the breach than in the observance. Moreover the character of modern wars makes the delineation of the category of civilian virtually meaningless. Estimates vary regarding the specifics of changing proportions of civilian and military casualties in twentieth century wars. In *The First Casualty, The War Correspondent as Hero and Myth-Maker from the Crimea to Kosovo*, London, Prion Press, 1975, 2000, Phillip Knightley claims that at the beginning of the twentieth century military casualties accounted for 90% of the casualties of war whereas at the end of the century civilians accounted for that percentage. Others claim that at the beginning of the twentieth century the ratio of military to civilian casualties was 8.1 whereas today it has been almost exactly reversed. See Mary Kaldor's *New and Old Wars: Organised Violence in a Global Era*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 1999 and Simon Chesterman, *Civilians in War*, Colorado, Reinner, 2001 for more extensive discussions of these and other points.

The more we understand the relationship of history to war the more we see that rationalisation becomes the narrative of war. Rationalisation enables participation in the slaughter that is at the heart of war, drives its progress and is the process by which the barbarity and chaos of war becomes comprehensible. There are no narratives of wars that are not legitimations of those wars. Yet just war theory depends on making sense of motives, gaining clarity about the nature of causes, judging when all political alternatives have been exhausted and assessing proportionality. Moreover it assumes that we can give a more or less adequate account of *in bellum* behaviour. However analyses like Joanna Bourke's *Intimate History of Killing*²⁶ and Christopher Hedges' *War is a Force that Gives Us Meaning*²⁷ show how deeply problematic these assumptions are. War is self-legitimising and self-perpetuating, and has a logic that undermines the central premises of the just war tradition. Of course just war theorists have long recognised that the tradition can be manipulated and knowingly misused in attempts to justify particular military interventions. This is not what is at issue. What is being raised here is the concern that just war tradition is premised on the fiction that war is a rational pursuit and as a result unwittingly functions as part of the logic of war.

A genealogical investigation of just war reasoning would undoubtedly reveal much about the role it has played in legitimating particular wars, and from which we could learn much about the role of just war tradition in what Schell calls "the war system"²⁸. The *post factum* assessment of the allied participation in World War II is a case in point. Historical revisionism particularly regarding motivation²⁹ and *in bellum* proportionality³⁰

²⁶ Joanna Bourke *An Intimate History of Killing, Face-to-Face Killing in the Twentieth Century*, London, Granta 1999.

²⁷ Christopher Hedges *War is a Force that Gives Us Meaning*, New York, Public Affairs, 2002

²⁸ Schell op. cit.,

²⁹ It is particularly interesting to note how, over time, 'bringing an end to the holocaust' became the primary explanation of why the allies waged war from 1939 on, despite overwhelming evidence that, although it was a factor, it was fairly low on the agendas of each of the allied powers at that time.

³⁰ Ethicists have yet to incorporate in their assessments of World War II the historical evidence that, particularly in the Pacific theatre, *in bellum* practice did not conform to the principle of proportionality. The wide-spread killing of prisoners of war is a case in point. See for example Clayton Laurie 'The Ultimate Dilemma of Psychological Warfare in the Pacific: Enemies Who Don't Surrender and GIs Who

is especially apparent here. Yet though there is an acknowledgment that historical revisionism abounds, there is a reluctance to accept the consequences this has for just war theory's confidence that causes, intentions and *in bellum* behaviour can be adequately described. The absence of genealogies of the just war tradition means that the inevitable rationalisations involved in that tradition's construction of just causes, of laudable intentions and of last resort have been ignored. Neither has the tradition given much attention to interrogating the role that just war reasoning plays in the construction of the narratives of war (both retrospective and prospective). Again the case of the allied participation in World War II comes to mind. What is being raised here is the possibility that just war theorising may be no more than a function of the rationalisation of war, that it may be so caught up in the construction and continuation of such narratives that it fails to see how self-legitimising and compelling the logic of the just war itself has become. Both supporters and critics of the just war tradition are likely to acknowledge that the tradition can get caught up in the logic of war, what is being suggested here however is that it may be inescapable.

Just war theorists tend to conceive the nature and purpose of the tradition in one of two ways, each of which has a bearing on whether the call for the abolition of war is regarded as feasible. If just war tradition is regarded as an exception to Christian non-violence, then a case for the abolition of war is conceivable. Taking account of this understanding we would need to argue that the exception to which just war refers can be managed within, rather than outside, the norm of Christian non-violence. Thus just war reasoning need not constitute an exception. If however just war tradition is conceptualised primarily in terms of the pursuit of justice, (which is the way in which most contemporary scholars speak about just war reasoning) then advocating the abolition of war is likely to be regarded as problematic, if not unethical. This is because war is seen to involve the pursuit of goods that would otherwise be unattainable. In this case just war reasoning involves the delineation of the circumstances in which the demands of justice

Don't Take Prisoners' *War and Society*, 14.1, (May 1996) 117 and Arnold Krammer 'Japanese Prisoners of War in America' *Pacific Historical Review*, 52, (1983), 69, both quoted in Bourke. Yet the revisionism of the late twentieth century has either ignored or downplayed the mixed motives and the war crimes that are intrinsic to that narrative. Instead it has constructed this war as an unambiguously just one.

can legitimately be sought through the use of violence. Thus Oliver O’ Donovan speaks of just war as “force put under the discipline, and in the service of, justice.”³¹ In this case our challenge is to explain why we do not accept the claim that in particular circumstances justice can *only* be accomplished through the use of violent force. In what follows we will attempt to address these twin challenges by arguing that, as Christians, we need to recognize that our lives are more determinatively constituted by peace than by violence and moreover that eschatology names for Christians an alternative history free of war. We will conclude by testing the political implications of such a stance in relation to humanitarian emergencies, and make a case for the refusal of violent solutions.

A New Imaginary : Beyond the Just War v Pacifism Debate

Like most significant ideas, words and practices pacifism enjoys a variety of meanings and expressions. In this context of Christian ethics and for the sake of clarity in the debate pacifism will be treated primarily as the stance of Christians opposed to the use of force for political ends. Qualifications may emerge as the debate develops but this at least is the starting-point. Without rehearsing the biblical and historical arguments advanced in favour of this position it is proper to acknowledge the power of this position in terms of both the teaching and example of Jesus Christ and of his early followers as well as of that strand of the Christian tradition which kept faith as it believed with the New Testament paradigm. The love of enemies which Jesus taught and exemplified, his renunciation of violent defence of his own life, and his resurrection reassurances to fearful disciples with his peace greeting and prayer shaped the disciples and martyrs of these early centuries and continued to influence Christian history if at times only in brackets.

The bracketing has a long and tangled history also within political, cultural and economic contexts. Human weakness and confusion undoubtedly played a part in the bracketing or sidelining of the pacifist stance of Christians but it would be a mistake to underestimate the power and attraction of the what became the preferred alternative for most Christians over fifteen hundred years or more, the acceptance of just war. Its strengths were the

³¹ Oliver O’Donovan, *The Just War Revisited*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press 2003, 96.

natural correlatives of what appeared to be the weaknesses of the pacifist position, in particular the obligation to protect the innocent neighbour from the violent, lethal aggression of the enemy. The context was now that of a Church tolerated, supported and then established by the Roman Empire as distinct from that of a persecuted sect. The move from the catacombs to the basilicas brought the fresh responsibilities and temptations of earthly power with which Church leaders and theologians had to struggle. The prophetic role of a pacifist community was gradually exchanged for the wisdom role a spiritual-political authority, justified by many as a new and effective form of love of neighbour. In the ensuing centuries pacifists seldom managed to persuade Christians at large that their Christian, moral and political responsibilities could be discharged by renouncing war or political violence in any or all circumstances. As a result they were regarded as immorally refusing their moral call and while they played important roles in the promotion of conscientious objection and the acceptance of non-combatant roles during particular wars as well as occasionally influencing certain peace negotiations they were treated even by the mainstream Churches as at worst cranks and at best marginal to society and Church. Or at least they were until very recently. The twentieth century which has seen such horrific wars, genocides and the threat of even more horrors, has also and perhaps inevitably experienced new interest in and commitment to alternatives to war. The alleged political paralysis of the pacifist stance has been replaced by activist peace movements of Christian and other inspiration in the most unlikely places in face of the most violent aggressors and oppressors. The location, race and gender of these movements, their leaders and achievements from India through South Africa and Eastern Europe to the United States itself offers an ironic comment on the commitment to peace and democracy articulated by Western white, male leaders. What would Mohandas Gandhi, Aung San Suu Kyi, the Dalai Llama, Nelson Mandela, Václav Havel, Simone Weil, Dorothy Day and Martin Luther King make of the western war against terrorism and the western presumption to defend civilisation with precision and cluster bombing (what an oxymoron!)? In biblical terms we may be witnessing a fertile conjunction of the prophetic and wisdom traditions, in the renunciation of political violence and the development of new means to political freedom and justice, peace and security.

At the heart of the just war tradition in theory and practice there lies a Christian contradiction. On the one hand its 'realist' defenders maintain that peace is not possible in our fallen, sinful world, on the other hand they promote war as the only way to defend/achieve a just peace, freedom, democracy or whatever. Every major war is presented as the war to end all wars. The so-called war on terror which escapes normal categorization and the usual expectation of a limited time-span and a final conclusion acknowledges the 'irrealism' of war as an effective means of response. Of course the children of the light, in so far as the Christian opponents of war may be called such, may be no wiser in their stance unless they are prepared, committed and trained, to provide a humane and more effective response in defence of the neighbour under attack. The parables of Jesus which so often combine the prophetic and the wise regularly call for the preparedness which political non-violence entails and even goes so far as to criticise the foolishness of the leader who with inadequate manpower would set out to confront his enemy. There remains however the Gospel truth accepted by all Christians that the fullness of peace belongs beyond human history in the *eschaton*. So where does that leave those who would believe that stable and adequate peace can be achieved in the here and now by whatever means?

Eschatological Nature of Peace

The Shalom of the Hebrew Bible, usually translated in English as peace but perhaps better rendered as human flourishing in community, belongs to the messianic times inaugurated for Christians by Jesus Christ as the Reign of God already among us. The New Covenant (*he kaine diatheke*), the new creation (*he kaine ktisis*) and the new community (*he kaine koinonia*) have been established by the self-emptying (*kenosis*) of Jesus on the Cross on our behalf and so reconciling humanity with His and its God. The violence which Jesus endured in love has undone the human history of violence in hatred as well the blood-sacrifices by which Israel and other human communities attempted to expiate their hatred and violence. Through the new community and in the new community human beings are gifted with and called to that flourishing in community in which to quote the psalmist "justice and peace shall kiss". The first earnest (*arrabon*) of this divine break-through in human history is already among us although its completion

awaits the completion of history itself. The eschatological character of this peace no more excludes its presence now as divine gift and its call to human beings to live it and further develop it any more than the eschatological character of justice excludes its urgent presence as gift and call.

Indeed the eschatological dynamic within history itself not only constitute continuing condemnation of breaches of that peace but by destabilizing the unjust and violent status quo it gives Christians, the first bearers of this message and imperative, no alternative except to proclaim and promote justice and peace to the whole world. In that other image of Jesus' message and achievement, God was in Jesus reconciling the world with Godself and so his followers, the first recipients of that message and achievement, are to be ambassadors of reconciliation to that world. The tension between the already and not yet is open to a variety of serious misinterpretations. According to some critics of their position early Christians renounced political violence because of their belief in the imminence of Christ's second coming at the *eschaton*. The opposite vision of establishing the final reign of God in history played some role in the justification of war in defence or extension of empire as Christendom. Indeed some modern day Christians would seek to combine both these stances in the preparing of an imminent *parousia* by means of war itself. The complexity and opaqueness of these 'in-between times' are not readily intelligible. They do however, as the Gospel call to discipleship makes clear, include both an acknowledgement of the divine gifts including the gift of peace and the summons to human effort in expressing and developing these gifts. Further to that Gospel gift and call it is difficult to see how political violence could be their appropriate expression, since eschatology names for Christians an alternative history free of war as its major characteristic.

Creation and Reconciliation

It is commonplace in Christian theology to distinguish sharply between a theology of creation and that of redemption. In a recurrent 'pelagian' tendency redemption by God in Jesus Christ is devalued and even ignored. A more robust redemption theology emphasizes human sinfulness and its absolute need for saving grace. Neither extreme

offers much comfort to those seeking to transcend the ways of political violence. More helpful may be a reconsideration of God's continuing differentiation of and loving commitment to creatures as other, other than the Creator-God and other than their fellow-creatures. The divine loving commitment seeks to bring the creating and created others together in harmony, in what theologically as well as etymologically might be called reconciliation. In that context the emergence of free and knowing human others who may reject the divine other demands further divine initiatives in reconciling the human world with Godself. Such reconciliation accomplished in the reconciling work of Jesus has to be achieved within the human community by breaking down the hostile divisions of Jew and Gentile, male and female, bond and free. In this human enterprise as in the divine enterprise which it seeks to express, the end of reconciliation must be expressed in the means of reconciling which would exclude the hostilities of war-threatening and war-making. Gandhi was one of several thinkers and activists who recognized that the end, reconciliation, had to include the means, creative as opposed to destructive, and reconciling as opposed to divisive.

Such an intrinsic link between the divine activities of creating and reconciling breaks surface in Hebrew scriptures from the creation stories through Abraham and Moses into the history and songs of the people of Israel. Its climactic expression for Christians is in the life and ministry, the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The event of Incarnation in its mysterious union of God and a human being initiates the fullness of reconciliation between creator and creature while fully respecting their unbreachable otherness. That reconciliation is sealed and given historical as well as everlasting presence in Jesus' death and resurrection. By the further paradox of Pentecost the otherness in unity of the triune God becomes the gift and task of Jesus' disciples on behalf of the whole human family. The new creation and final reconciliation are at hand in the sending of the Spirit, the inauguration of the *eschaton*, of the completed reign of God. The flourishing in communion (*shalom*) of all the earth and its creatures has definitively broken through as divine gift and human call.

Narrating and Enacting the Future

In the earlier sections of this paper the relation between history, war and peace were analysed in the light of Foucault's argument that history is basically a rationalization of war even when peace appears to prevail. In the theological terms of creation-reconciliation outlined above war becomes the hostile social and lethal breakdown between human groups which disrupts creativity but which can release its divine and human reconciling dynamic. This dynamic belongs in the Christian vision to the future oriented energy of the inbreaking reign of God. It embodies the attracting force of the risen Christ and provides for a new history of the human community. Peace (*shalom*) is a primary characteristic of these messianic times and the peace-makers become the architects, planners, enactors and narrators of the history of reconciliation. The eschatological achievement of the abolition of war and its replacement by reconciling justice enters and shapes human history and its narration in a finally unstoppable way. Christians are to be the first heralds and exemplars of this good news. The good news of peace is for all humankind and will progressively need the collaboration of all, a message endorsed from Isaiah through the New Testament to our twentieth and twentyfirst century contemporaries such as Mohandas Gandhi and Jonathan Schell.

Enacting and narrating present and future peace will make many spiritual, moral and even aesthetic demands. Good performance (en-acting) and good story telling (narration) involve aesthetic dimensions. In matters of peace and war aesthetics and ethics may have much to converse about even if poets and politicians seldom make comfortable dialogue partners. The legendary horrors of war have created aesthetic revulsion as much as and perhaps more than moral outrage. The poets of the Great War (1914-1918) were not the first to notice this or expose it in searing verse. Picasso's *Guernica* evoked and still evokes profound shock. A more revealing and creative contribution by artists lies in their ability not just to expose the past but to anticipate the future. The signs of the coming times are Isaiah-like sometimes theirs to read. Yeats' *Second Coming* and Eliot's *The Waste Land* or in would be imperial times Wallace Stevens' *The Emperor of Ice Cream* come to mind.

Photography and television have heightened if also sometimes exploited the more horrific images of war. Their famous influence on public opinion during the Vietnam War no doubt have led to the resurgence of the oxy-moronic practice of 'embedded reporters' in the latest Iraq war and the general dumbing down of the media for so long through military restrictions, political pressure and pseudo-patriotism. Such cover-up which is becoming inseparable from the exercise of great military power and which has such a corrupting influence on power-politicians, military and media, re-inforces the argument which so many contemporary artists advance for the abolition of war. Truth remains the first casualty and military accounts the first if not necessarily the final draft of history. How for example will we ever know what really happened in Falluja in November 2004?

More positively the creative work of the artist with its new beginnings and slow, patient and reconciling movement into the future of the finished poem, painting, sculpture or symphony could provide a model for peace-provision by politician and citizen. The untidy and unpromising beginnings 'in the foul rag and bone-shop of the heart' (WB Yeats), in the chaos of Darfur or Rwanda, call for vision, imagination and trust in the creative capacities of human beings to enact and narrate a political and peaceful future comparable to the creative products of a Shakespeare or a Michelangelo, of a Henry James or an Emily Dickinson. Such new political creation will necessarily be a political reconciliation also. The parallels between the creative and reconciling movements into the future by artists and politicians are sustained for Christians by the eschatological dynamism of the coming, future God.

Such creative movement will always face serious difficulties for politicians and citizens as well as for artists. Particular problems may appear insuperable at times beyond the creative resources or technical skills of artist or politician. Yeats advice to Irish poets to learn their trade might also be offered to those political leaders who are tempted to abandon that trade for the unimaginative and destructive alternative of violence, what Thomas Merton has called 'haste in time'. In the new imaginary of the incoming reign of God, politicians like poets and prophets have to toil in hope at the slow, painful process of creating justice, peace and beauty out of the dust and dirt of this earthly estate. Just as

it is in hope in Paul's phrase we are saved so in hope is the salvific condition *shalom* already available. Two thousand years later the Irish poet Seamus Heaney could speak of 'when hope and history rhyme' in celebration of the Peace Agreement in Northern Ireland. In the twenty-first century they may rhyme for all the earth's people. There are still arguments to be concluded and problems to be solved, only one of the most obvious of which can be addressed in the remainder of this paper, i.e. the idea of waging war for humanitarian reasons.

Humanitarian Intervention

So, if we are to advocate the abandonment of war as an instrument of national and international policy, including on those occasions that are likely to be justified according to just war criteria, we will need to forward a morally compelling and politically persuasive alternative to 'military interventions for humanitarian purposes'. Of course this phrase 'military interventions for humanitarian purposes' hides innumerable debates, many of which have a bearing precisely on the appropriateness of the use of military means to advance humanitarian purposes. The complex issue of the intervener's motivation is one such matter.³² The blending of political and humanitarian motives, or to use President Clinton's phrase a country's 'moral and strategic' interests,³³ at the very least raises questions about whether this category of humanitarian intervention is as transparent as just war advocates would have us believe. Nonetheless for the purposes of this argument we will assume the best of the interveners' intentions. These emergencies,

³² In the traditional understanding of humanitarianism, in order for an intervention to be characterized as a *humanitarian* one the intervening state would intervene for exclusively humanitarian reasons. Self-interest would play no part in a decision to intervene. However it is difficult to find examples of states motivated to intervene in other states on exclusively humanitarian grounds. Motivation is complex, and at the very least tends to involve both political and humanitarian concerns. Interventions in the post-Cold war period are characterized by an elision of political and humanitarian motives, which has led critics like Chomsky (*The New Military Humanism: Lessons From Kosovo*, London Pluto Press, 1999) to see today's humanitarian interventions as no more than the revival of an earlier imperialism, whose objective was to civilise. Opération Turquoise in Rwanda can be understood in this light, as can the coalition's intervention in Afghanistan. Particularly interesting in that case is how 'establishing women's rights' became part of the moral justification given for waging 'war on terror'. In defending US policy, President Bush never failed to mention the liberation of women as one of his moral ends. Greeting the fall of Kabul in January, he announced that the mothers and daughters of Afghanistan were now free. See Christine Delphy, 'Free to Die: The US (Govt.) Doesn't Give a Damn About Women's Rights in Afghanistan', *Le Monde Diplomatique* 12th March, 2002.

³³ He used this phrase in relation to Kosovo in 1999 found in Chomsky, N., op. cit., p. 3 quoting articles from the *Boston Globe* and *New York Times*

such as the unfolding one in the Darfur region of Sudan or the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, press against the limits of our appeal because of the apparent need to wage war to protect human life and to prevent atrocity. Advocates of military intervention point to the international community's failure to intervene forcibly in Rwanda as an example of the dire consequences that ensue when there is a reluctance to execute a military intervention for humanitarian reasons. The lesson of Rwanda, it is concluded, is that there are situations when the only morally worthy response involves military intervention, and on such occasions the international community must be prepared to wage war.

However here again we wish to question this unambiguous conclusion and the assumptions on which it is based. Even on a pragmatic level the 'humanitarian war' response is problematic. The fact is that these interventions have rarely achieved their objectives. Even according to the minimalist criteria of saving lives and ending or at least reducing hostilities, the vast majority of these operations are not effective. Military interventions in situations of political instability themselves take a very high toll on civilians especially on those that the interventions are intended to protect. During Operation Restore Hope in Somalia for example it is estimated that between six and eight thousand civilians were killed³⁴. In addition the numbers of refugees and IDPs that arise from the escalation that inevitably results from military interventions run to tens, sometimes hundreds of thousands³⁵. More worryingly still, and contrary to the assumptions of concerned citizens world-wide, there is ample evidence that military interventions of this kind tend to intensify and prolong conflict, rather than resolve it. Moreover the introduction of an additional armed group (albeit with humanitarian goals) often merely adds another set of belligerents to an already over-militarised situation.³⁶

³⁴Nicholas Wheeler, *Saving Strangers, Humanitarian Intervention in International Society*, Oxford University Press, 2000, 116.

³⁵ UNHCR "2003 Global Refugee Trends: Overview of Refugee Populations, New Arrivals, Durable Solutions, Asylum Seekers and Other Persons of Concern to UNHCR" available at <http://www.unhcr.ch/cgi-bin>

³⁶This is William Shawcross' conclusion in *Deliver Us From Evil, Warlords and Peacekeepers in a World of Endless Conflict*, London, Bloomsbury, 2000. The thrust of Alex de Waal's *Who Fights? Who Cares? War and Humanitarian Action in Africa* Eritrea, Africa World Press Inc., 2000 is essentially the same.

Nor should it surprise us that what is essentially the promise of the quick-fix solution (limited armed intervention) is inadequate, given the complex political, economic, ethnic and inter-generational character of most contemporary humanitarian emergencies. Some may dispute this negative assessment by pointing to the few military interventions that have been relatively successful. However what is beyond dispute is that this growing phenomenon of ‘military humanitarianism’ has fallen very far short of the expectations of its advocates. Remarkably however military intervention continues to be regarded as our ‘best hope’ in humanitarian emergencies, despite its lack of effectiveness.

Pragmatics aside however, the obvious disjunction between means and ends also leads us to question the assumption that military responses are suited to humanitarian emergencies. Let it be clear however, lest it is not, that our argument is not against the idea of intervening across sovereign borders *per se*, but with the employment of military means to do so. In our view approaches that stress the incremental process of resolving conflict non-violently by containing aggression, addressing grievances (real or imagined) and building local political capacity provide a more appropriate frame of reference for the resolution of humanitarian crises. Such is the grip that militarism has on contemporary humanitarianism however that such a suggestion seems at best naïve and at worst a recipe for disengagement. Yet military options in these situations are only compelling because of earlier failures, failure to give political support for the implementation of peace agreements, failure to mount appropriate political, economic or diplomatic interventions, failure to support indigenous peace activists and political reformers and most of all failure to commit in advance the significant resources needed to deal with the complex synergy of violence and poverty that is at the heart of most of these conflicts.

The international community’s abandonment of Rwanda to its fate in 1994 illustrates this well. Although analyses have focused primarily on the international community’s failure to intervene militarily, it is at least arguable that the failures occurred much earlier and were, in a sense, more banal. Reading General Roméo Dallaire’s *Shake Hands with the Devil, The Failure of Humanity in Rwanda*³⁷, one is struck by just how little he believed

³⁷ General Roméo Dallaire’s *Shake Hands with the Devil, The Failure of Humanity in Rwanda* Canada,

it would have taken to prevent that genocide. Some read his memoir as an argument for a properly resourced military intervention. We read it differently however. Throughout the text one can see that as each request (for reliable intelligence, for accurate maps of the country, for humanitarian assistance) fell on deaf ears, the needs grew. What Dallaire needed, and what was lacking from the very beginning of his mission in 1993, were the material resources to make this classic peace-keeping operation work. However each preventative measure was either under-resourced, half-heartedly implemented or refused. Had there been the international determination to make the Arusha peace accord work, had there been an amnesty provision in the agreement, a demobilisation plan, a genuine attempt to deal with the refugee problem, radio broadcasts to challenge the views of extremists, humanitarian co-ordination, the provision of adequate policing, resources such as riot-gear, maps, up-to-date information, early warning systems linked to institutions that could initiate preventative nonviolent action together with a culture of accountability and strong international institutions, then the genocide would have been prevented. The failure in Rwanda was a failure of politics, the result of a lack of faith in and commitment to the slow and unglamorous work of non-violent political action. We can debate whether this lack of faith in politics is the cause or the consequence of our fixation with militarism; however what is clear is that military options only seem morally compelling because of a host of lost opportunities.

Creating Peace in Hope

Perhaps here we need to reflect once more on the potential creativity of politics and the actual destructiveness of military activity. This will involve the new imaginary, religious and aesthetic as well as ethical/political which emerges from a fresh reading of history and of the eschatological dynamic which for Christians fuels creativity in all dimensions of human living. Speaking and acting out of that dynamic offers liberation from the inherited seductions of political violence and the vision, commitment and hope of early and persistent non-violent engagement with both the immediate crisis and its underlying causes. The development of alternative attitudes, structures and activities will be slow and difficult for many. Actual examples past and present are in the end more persuasive

than theological or theoretical argument, so with the impetus of a new century ahead hope will be sustained and sustaining if a start can be made now. International security has already been the subject of a major report by a UN Commission in 2002. Political leaders and political scientists with artists and ethicists could take it further by integrating it into the vision of replacing war and identifying and tackling non-violently the more immediate concrete problems. Peace-making and peace-keeping within and between countries will demand their own specialist strategies and personnel. Central to this will be the fulfillment of arms control treaties, the much stricter control of arms manufacturing and trade leading to their gradual replacement by Isaiah's ploughshares and the instruments of peace. Which kind of developing global political structures can help to achieve some or all of this it is difficult to predict but the close cooperation of the resource-rich political nations and the still embryonic world structures represented by the United Nations Organisation and its global collaborators at least provide a starting point. Fundamental to all this will be the creation of a new economic world in which world justice and respect for the environment globally, fair trade and effective attention to the neediest become the preoccupations of the world politics and inspire the transformation of present structures. Work for a century indeed but only possible in the cooperative world of Jonathan Schell and in the Christian hope for the universal reign of God's love and forgiveness, truth, and freedom, justice and peace.

New beginnings must be everywhere, always and for everybody, politicians and citizens, academics and artists. For the group to whom the appeal was originally addressed, Christian leaders and theologians, and the Christian ethicists which this gathering represents, much collaborative work is needed in critical debate and investigation into the theological foundations and the ethical/political feasibility of our proposal.