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NEVERTHELESS

The Varieties and Shortcomings of Religious Pacifism

John Howard Yoder

Revised and Expanded Edition

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Foreword

This is a tremendously helpful and timely book. The Christian discussing pacifism ought to know something about the various types of pacifism, and here one can learn a great deal.

In this new edition John Howard Yoder has revised and expanded the original (1971) publication. To the seventeen major types of pacifism included in the first edition, Yoder has added four more, including "The Pacifism of Rabbinic Monotheism." Thus with the eight types covered only briefly (chapter 17) in both editions, the reader is confronted with twenty-nine clearly distinguished arguments against war.

These types are not presented as being mutually exclusive. Indeed, the pacifist reader will be surprised at how many types one finds within oneself, and the nonpacifist reader may be surprised that there are so many ways of arguing against war.

The book is generously sprinkled with the kind of new and refreshing insights many readers have come to expect from this author.

From high school classes to sophisticated academic debate, discussions about war could profit greatly by using the typology of this book. Communication will be im-

After All

This utopian pacifism trusts less to an irrational leap of faith than does the rhetoric which tells us that by forcibly making refugees, we are defending self-determination; or that by supporting a puppet government, we are enabling democracy to grow. There is no more utopian institution than an idealistic war. The Atlantic Charter or the Wilsonian fourteen points are utopian documents, no more responsibly meshed with the historical realities than is the vision of the New Jerusalem in Revelation 20. War is utopian both in the promises it makes for the future and in the black-and-white way of thinking about the enemy, which it assumes.

The utopian character of war has been demonstrated repeatedly in the past century in the outworkings of the assumption that after we defeat the one bad nation, the forces of good can go home. We were told in the USA that the invasion of Panama would endow that country with freedom and prosperity. The Persian Gulf War was supposed to inaugurate a "New World Order."

The warmaker is utopian in believing that there will ever be a world in which world moral leadership can be exerted by a nation whose overseas presence is predominantly commercial and military. It is utopian in continuing to believe, or at least to say that it believes, that one can win a war without committing atrocities. It is utopian in believing that the only obstacle to peaceful settlement is the inexplicable obstinacy of the other side.

In all these dimensions (speaking now for the United States civilization), it is the purist vision which seems to be guiding United States policies overseas. That purism is the product of the morality of the Western novel or film, with the easily (ethnically) identified good guys and bad guys, and the unlimited justification of violence in the hands of the good.

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The Pacifism of the Virtuous Minority

The regenerated do not go to war nor engage in strife. Spears and swords of iron we leave to those, who, alas, consider human blood and swine's blood of well-nigh equal value.

—Menno Simons, 1539.

The church appreciates and prays for the government. It also gives to the government a clear testimony as its own convictions on war, but there is no attempt to control the government, and no demand that it follow a given course with respect to specific points of foreign policy. Its only demands are those which the New Testament directs to Christians themselves as regenerated members of the kingdom of God.

—Guy F. Hershberger, *War, Peace, and Nonresistance*

Ever since Constantine, it is a normal reflex in everyone's ethical thought to assume that, when we ask about right behavior, we are seeking a standard to apply consistently to all people. It is always thought to be a fair test to ask "What if everybody did this? Can you ask this of everyone?"²¹ This line of thought generally supports the legiti-

mation of war, because of the self-evident need to save society and because of the unreadiness of many persons to live sacrificially.

We can plausibly doubt that the sacrifices demanded by war are ultimately so much easier to make than those demanded by nonviolent love. We can doubt that war does actually save society. Those arguments, however, are not our present concern.

Instead, on simply logical grounds, we call into doubt this axiom that the same ethics are for everybody. The same question is raised in different forms from within several religious traditions. Within Roman Catholicism there is the ancient tradition of the "evangelical counsels." These guidelines hold up before people the call to a level of morality distinct from that of merely keeping the law. Poverty and loving one's enemies are things that not everyone has to do, but it would be fine if some did. All are invited to live on this level, but not all are expected or required so to live. The members of a religious order are more likely expected actually to be able to live on the level of these counsels, which are not enforced by law and not expected of everyone.

Within the pietist and Wesleyan traditions there is the somewhat similar concept of "Christian perfection." This again is a level of moral being, and of performance derived from that level of being, which is not assumed to be given to or demanded of all people. Life on this level is not a matter of demand but a very special gift.

Protestantism in general has not explicitly developed this kind of vision of a minority morality. It runs counter to some of the major emphases of the mainstream Reformation. In practice, however, most Protestants do expect of their pastor and of the missionary a higher level of wholesomeness and unselfishness than they expect of themselves. This is quite distinguishable from the kind of

life which they assume the church has a right to ask of the rest of them.

In a different form, the ethic of the free church or believers church tradition within Protestantism² is likewise not an ethic for everyone. Discipleship after the pattern of the humanity of Jesus may well be the calling of all, be they Christian or not, aware of their calling or not. But that calling can only become a concrete expectation in the life of the individual and in the practice of the church if members have committed themselves to a discipline in response to that call.

The *believers church*, constituted of adult members who have joined the community by their own choice, holds that all Christians must be committed to full discipleship. But it is not meaningful to expect the same quality of life from others who have not made that commitment, and therefore improper to seek to enforce it for others. Non-Christians cannot equally draw upon the resources of forgiveness and regeneration, the guidance of the Spirit, and the counsel of fellow believers. Christianity is for everybody; but Christian ethics is a normal, natural expectation for Christians.³

This type of minority morality had already made it clear in the Middle Ages that killing must be rejected for persons who live on the level of the gospel. In Catholic canon law, it still applies to the cleric and the member of a religious order, and it is recognized in the laws of some states. This probably explains the cultural and emotional rootage of *conscientious objector* privileges in Western legal systems, even though these have then come to be extended to persons who understand their position in other terms.

The Axiom

Underlying this view is the understanding that morality finds its context in a freely covenanted response to the call

of God. In this joyful fellowship, life is freed from concern both for personal merit and for demonstrable results. The good is not what promises to move the world in the right direction. The good is experienced in responding to the nature of God as he has graciously manifested himself, and in participating already in the nature of that toward which the world must move.

The first step is to free morality from the bind of needing to meet the test of applicability to all. Then we are for the first time able to look at the good action as a question distinct from judgmental casuistry. We observe that deed which has about it the quality of conformity to the goodness of God. This is what is meant by our title's reference to the virtuous minority.⁴

Only if we recognize that ethics is not generalizable are we free to use in a wholesome way the concept of virtue, of good that is intrinsic in certain kinds of action or character. This pattern of thought is demanded by biblical language with its catalogs of virtues and vices. It is strongly supported, not only by the tradition of monastic self-discipline, but also by the stoic naturalism of the modern person's self-cultivation. Violence is a vice to be avoided. Nonviolence or meekness is a virtue and to be cultivated.

Shortcomings

There are flaws in this type of minority pacifism. Once its adherents have withdrawn from the majority, they may acquiesce in the compromises made by the majority in their own interest, and thereby undermine their claim to be heard as critics. The "monastic" few may accept minority status, feel pride in it, and feel set apart by it, rather than regarding it as living out a call addressed to all people. This temptation is built-in, especially if one develops a theory of two moral levels,⁵ an intentional double standard for clergy and laypersons, or for church and world.

A quite analogous temptation besets the sectarian Protestant form of minority morality. The minority can easily become ecumenically irresponsible, unconcerned for the needs or concerns or commitments of other Christians. Sometimes the search for a virtue is not anchored pragmatically and becomes obscurantist, or is self-centered and thereby self-righteous. One may seek to save one's own soul by turning the back to others. Thus one may be too easily reconciled to the inability of the minority to do any good in a wider world.

One normal implication of this minority stance is to approve by implication, for most people, the very position one rejects for oneself. The Catholic understanding of the monastic morality has no trouble with this. Those in this tradition do not identify the freely chosen Rule with everyone's moral obligation. They tell Christians in the Historic Peace Churches to accept such minority status and be accepted in it. Thus the minority stance can be a special gadfly performance to keep the rest of society from being at peace with its compromises.

This understanding of a vocational role for the peace churches has been fostered by the relativistic or pluralistic mood of modern denominationalism. The question of objective right and wrong is relativized by the acceptance of a great variety of traditions, each having its own claims to truth arising out of its own history. Each may be recognized as having a portion of the truth, on condition that none impose their view on another.

What in denominational pluralism arises out of democratic self-restraint, becomes in some contemporary Protestant theologies a committed relativism. This indefiniteness is founded in a view of truth as itself having no firm landmarks, but consisting in the interplay of several positions. Various stances may be recognized as "valid" or "authentic" or "adequate," but none specifically as *true*. In

this spirit many nonpacifists since the 1930s have been willing to concede to the pacifists a prophetic or vocational role.⁶ Nonpacifists grant this recognition on condition that in turn the pacifists accept always being voted down by those who have to do the real (violent) work in the world.

Ultimately, such an acceptance of minority status as defined on majority terms is morally unsatisfactory. It concedes to the majority that for the majority the position of compromise is justified. It agrees that a position faithful to the gospel cannot be practiced within real life. It further courts the danger of complacency or self-righteousness for the persons or group taking the "set-apart" position which is acknowledged to be morally superior. At the same time they are released, under the mantle of mutual tolerance, from the discipline of seeking to commend their position effectively to others.⁷

Peace church members who accept the "vocational" label tend to use it as a cover for failing to be clear on their own convictions and the relevance of those convictions to their fellow believers and the world. They affirm Jesus as their own guide but not as Lord over the cosmos. Yet they still take credit for a consistent stance.

Nevertheless

Yet the morality of the New Testament is a minority morality, and the same will be the case wherever the Christian church lives in genuine missionary nonconformity. The pacifism of the minority avoids the puritan legalism which would seek to impose upon all persons a level of performance for which they do not have the spiritual or educational resources. It also avoids the latitudinarian legalism which spends its efforts planning pretexts for permitting almost anything because someone is going to have to do it anyway.

Only in the minds of critics has the nonconformist minority renounced social effectiveness. At least in certain times and places and ways, this stance is the presupposition of any meaningful communication. One excellent modern sample of this is Dorothy Day, the spirit at the heart of the Catholic Worker movement.⁸ For two generations she was at the center of a movement of charity and social nonconformity possessing almost no settled constituency and no legal status. Yet the bishops at Vatican II listened to her, simply because of the symbolic quality and integrity of her commitment.

After All

War likewise has its own minority ethic, that of the SS or the Green Beret. Special military units, paratroopers, marines, and commandos of various kinds, Western movie and espionage heroes—these have always been especially honored and publicly rewarded for practicing a morality which would not be tolerated within an orderly society. Certainly the spiritual danger of self-congratulation is no less in this case.

On the international scale, the vision of an elite calling has long been used as a justification of war. That model has been applied just as proudly, and far more destructively, than the pacifists' sense of privilege has ever been applied to their abstention from war. The Knights Templar and the Order of Malta, the white man's burden and the saving of Asia from communism—these all have justified war under the label of a unique and righteous calling which other persons or nations do not have.

The Pacifism of the Categorical Imperative

The kingdoms of this world may become the kingdom of the Lord and of his Christ.

—H. J. Cadbury

It seems practically self-evident to the average Western mind that any ethical commitment can be most usefully tested by the question: “What happens if everybody does it?” In the heritage of Christendom, it used to be realistic to assume, when speaking about right and wrong, that everyone would be listening, and in fact would have to obey. It was assumed that theologians could do the moral thinking for the whole of Western Christian civilization, for whom the Christian church was recognized as the authoritative moral teacher. This called for every moral decision to be evaluated by *two tests*, which usually coincide in their effect but may be distinguished in their logic:

- What will happen if it becomes public policy? What if the king or the president would do this?
- What would happen if everybody did it?

We have referred earlier to the impact of this kind of assumption when it is linked with further predefinitions of the goals which must be met by a public policy. People wonder how much unselfishness can be expected of persons in large numbers or in large groups. Such logic leads to one of the most self-evident kinds of justification not only for violence but also for class and national egoism. For this reason we pointed out above (chapter 9) that the assumptions of this Christendom logic of generalizability are by no means self-evident. It might be more appropriate to say that Christian ethics should seek to be able to meet the test of another set of questions:

- What will happen if *not* everyone does it?
- What will happen if what Christians do is *not* public policy?
- What would be intrinsically “right” to do if we had no occasion to calculate “what will happen”?

Although I am pointing to the limits of the criterion of generalizability in moral logic, this does not mean that I grant the claimed universality (and consequent legitimacy) of group selfishness. Nor should it be granted as proved that this “Christendom” mode of thought always works in favor of violent positions. Immanuel Kant stated what he called “the categorical imperative”: “Act in the way you wish everyone would.” He meant this dictum to function not as a screen to filter out every idealism on the ground that not everyone is likely to be willing to share it, but rather as a prod to setting higher goals.

The Unspoken Axiom

Behind this approach is the assumption that one of the safest ways I can seek to stand in judgment upon my own propensities to selfishness is a mental act of generalization. In that act I posit others, or all others, as the moral

agent. I can ask how things would look if everyone else did what I contemplate doing.

By "everyone" we *might* mean not "the majority of people as they are now," but rather "our vision for the way the world should become." If so, then we can understand much of the liberal and utopian pacifism of the 1930s in its most authentic light. Test how you want to behave by whether you would want to live in a world where everybody would act as you do. Would you want a world where every prince and every parliament reserves the right of wrathful redress? If not, then you must make the renunciation of coercion and retaliation the law of your own community.

Suppose everyone in the U.S. were a conscientious objector. Then, true enough, the American capacity to influence governments around the world would be much less if they only respect a big stick. But so would the American crime rate be less. We would at least be sure that American cities would never be destroyed by an atomic exchange nor by an invading army. American integrity might then produce more long-term good effect in the international scene. The funds and personnel available for influencing the world in peaceful ways and for healing our society would be increased by more than half the present federal budget. The hypothetical test is not a very probable one, but it still makes a clear point.

Shortcomings

This kind of reasoning is full of logical loopholes. As self-evident as it seems at first, it is not a fully helpful kind of proof. We can rather easily dramatize the limited usefulness of putting questions this way by reminding ourselves that a society populated completely by conscientious objectors would have little crime, no military expenditures, and large resources available for social welfare

causes. To say that I would want to live in a world where everyone would treat me the way I would want to be treated may be a sign of psychological immaturity. It certainly has no direct relation to any questions we really ask or have any occasion to solve in concrete ethical decisions.

Nevertheless

Yet it would be irresponsible for us not to take some cognizance of the fact that in the Western world, Christian moral thought does impinge on a large element of society. It reaches well beyond the committed members of disciplined Christian communities. When clearly spoken, Christian appeals for international aid, civil rights legislation, extension of the right of education, or protection of the rights of minorities have had a public effect. "Would you want to be in a world where everyone does it?" may be considered a reformulation of the golden rule¹ onto the social scale.

Its most logical implication is to remind us to ask critically what the world would be like if every nation felt called to police half of the world. Or what a society would come to be like if everyone were a soldier. Especially the pacifist implications become clear if one recognizes the illogic of limiting generalizability to one nation. Suppose everyone in this country were a conscientious objector. Then by the same hypothetically miraculous conversion, it would be just as realistic to posit that at least most people in most other countries would also be considerably more peaceable than they are today. Therefore, they would constitute much less of a threat.

After All

It is still the traditionally promilitary argument which uses this appeal most readily. The question to a pacifist, "What if everybody did it?" is second in frequency only to

“What if a burglar . . .?”² These objections seem to be most self-evidently convincing to those who have not thought much about the arguments. The nonpacifist mind can hardly tolerate any challenge to making the nation as a whole or the ruler the proper agent of ethical decision. Then it ought to be a fair argument to point out that the “categorical” reasoning really works the other way if you recognize the rest of humanity: What if other nations acted like ours?

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The Pacifism of Absolute Conscience

“I cannot serve as a soldier,” said Maximilianus. “I cannot do evil; I am a Christian.”

Dion told him: “In the retinue of our lords . . . there are Christian soldiers and they serve.”

Maximilianus replied, “They are responsible for their own doings.”

Maximilianus was sentenced to death and the sentence was immediately carried out.

—The story of a noble martyr, 295

It is undeniably a part of human personality, or at least of the personality of certain persons, that they are possessed by an undeniable, irrefutable, immediate conviction of right and wrong. This “conscience” will be nourished and given content by experience and education. Yet in the immediacy of its claims upon the person, and in its choice of when and how deeply the person will be concerned about certain issues, it cannot be fully explained by educational considerations.

This conscience expresses itself by using all kinds of arguments, and may in the course of time in turn be modified by all kinds of arguments. But at the moment of imme-

motions he receives are determined more by his showing those qualities than by his solving all his problems cleanly.

The Pacifism of the Messianic Community

*The hint half guessed, the gift half understood,
is Incarnation.*

—T. S. Eliot

It is not by accident that the writer of 1 Peter said that Jesus carried men's sins "in his own body." Because it happened in Jesus' body, it can also happen in ours.

—Walter Klaassen, *What Have You to Do with Peace?*

The more carefully and respectfully I have sought to interpret the positions of others, the more difficult it becomes for me not to make my own view benefit unfairly from comparisons. The critical observer can of course discern in this last position as well a combination of several distinct strands, which might be further dissected.¹

To say that this is the pacifism of the *messianic* community is to affirm its dependence upon the confession that Jesus is Christ and that Jesus Christ is Lord. To say that Jesus is the Messiah is to say that in him are fulfilled the expectations of God's people regarding the coming one in

whom God's will would perfectly be done. Therefore, in the person and work of Jesus, in his teachings and his passion, this kind of pacifism finds its rootage, and in his resurrection it finds its enablement.

When we confess Jesus as Messiah, we find his uniqueness and his authority not simply in his religious teachings or in his spiritual depth. His authority is expressed also in the way he went about representing a new moral option in Palestine, at the cost of his death.

The Underlying Axiom

It follows that the character of such a messianic-community position can be known only in relation to Jesus Christ. This simple sentence is not as obvious as it may at first seem. It is a statement first of all about the nature of revelation. On our own resources, we cannot possibly figure out just what it means to believe in Jesus as Christ, or just what it means to follow Jesus Christ as revealer of the nature and will of God. This position is thus comparable to the principled (type 3) and the cultic (13) positions described above. It makes its appeal clearly to something that people must be told.

Yet it varies from those two types decisively. The telling has come to us not on a tablet of stone chiseled by the finger of God alone on Sinai, or from the mouth of a prophet or an oracle. Instead, the telling has come in the full humanity of a unique and yet complete human being. Note well that although all of the positions reviewed above are held by Christians, this is the only position for which the person of Jesus is indispensable. It is the only one of these positions which would lose its substance if Jesus were not Christ and would lose its foundation if Jesus Christ were not Lord.

Since Jesus is seen in his full humanity as responding to needs and temptations of a social character, the problems

of our obedience to him are not problems in the interpretation of texts. Nor is the question of our fidelity to him one of moralism, a stuffy preoccupation with never making a mistake. The question put to us as we follow Jesus is not whether we have successfully refrained from breaking any rules. Instead, we are asked whether we have been participants in that human experience, that peculiar way of living for God in the world and being used as instruments of the living of God in the world,² which the Bible calls *agapē* or cross.

When we speak of the pacifism of the messianic *community*, we move the focus of ethical concern from the individual to the human community experiencing in its shared life a foretaste of God's kingdom. Persons may severally and separately ask themselves about right and wrong in their concern for their own integrity. That is fine as far as it goes. The messianic community's experience, however, is different in that it is not a life alone for heroic personalities. Instead, it is a life for a society. It is communal in that it is lived by a covenanting group of men and women who instruct one another, forgive one another, bear one another's burdens, and reinforce one another's witness.

Think back over the line of varieties of religious pacifism. We could have pointed out along the way that the major streams of pacifist experience (except for the particularly withdrawn communal ones, types of chapters 9, 14-15) tend to be represented by powerful individuals. These persons have perhaps numerous sympathizers but few followers, no congregation, and only limited success in creating a movement.

This community resource is not merely a moral crutch or a psychological springboard which enables individuals to feel more free and confident as they take pacifist positions. Even that would be nothing to sneeze at. Being crip-

pled, I am unashamed of needing a crutch; and most of us are moral cripples. Yet the social meaning of a peace witness is far more fundamental than that. The existence of a human community dedicated in common to a new and publicly scandalous enemy-loving way of life is itself a new social datum. A heroic individual can crystallize a widespread awareness of need or widespread admiration. However, only a continuing community dedicated to a deviant value system can change the world.

A Shortcomings

When measured by the standards of the critical ethicist, this view suffers because it is not for all people. Those who uphold it affirm that the discipleship of which they speak is a necessary reflection of the true meaning of Jesus. The call to follow Jesus is a call addressed to all people. But the standards by which such a life is guided are not cut to the measure of persons in general. That pattern of life can be clearly perceived—to say nothing of being even modestly and partially lived—only through that reorientation of the personality and its expression which Jesus and his first followers called repentance and new birth.

Repentance initiates that authentic human existence to which all are called. But as long as a given person or a given society has not undergone that change of direction, it is not meaningful to describe how they would live as pacifists. Thus it is not possible to extrapolate directly from this stance of faith a strategy for resolving the urban crisis or the arms race of the crisis in the Middle East tomorrow. This position can not be institutionalized to work just as well among those who do not quite understand it or are not sure how much they believe in it.³

Many count it a further disadvantage that this position is utterly dependent upon who Jesus was and the attitude one takes toward him. All of the positions mentioned

above call for some kind of commitment and some kind of "faith." All of them are minority positions which can be taken only by someone willing to run risks and be different.

However, as we have seen, *only this* messianic-community position collapses if Jesus be not Christ or if Jesus Christ be not Lord. This is a disadvantage for some kinds of Christians, and for others it is not. It is a serious drawback for most habits of ethical deliberation. Christian theologians are generally dedicated to making Jesus normative in their thought about deity and the creeds. Yet many of them tend to be startled by the suggestion that Jesus might be indispensable in defining a proper political humanity.

Another disadvantage of this position is that it does not promise to "work." It cannot promise "success" as, for example, programmatic pacifism (type 4) can do to a modest degree. We cannot sight down the barrel of suffering love to see how it will hit its target. The resurrection is not the end product of a mechanism which runs through its paces wherever there is a crucifixion. The Christian hope in the kingdom embraces that peculiar kind of hoping assurance which is called faith. But this is not the preponderant probability of early success which is desired by the just-war theory or by a prudential ethic.

Nevertheless

This position is closer than the others to the idiom of the Bible and to the core affirmations of the Christian faith. It reckons seriously with the hopelessness of the world as it stands and yet affirms a gospel of hope. It shares the integrity of the principled views (types 3, 8-9, 14) without their withdrawal from history. It includes the practical concern of the programmatic views (types 2, 4-5) without placing its hope there.

After All

The invocation of violence to support any cause is also implicitly a messianism. Any national sense of mission claims implicitly to be a saving community. One cannot avoid either messianism or the claim to chosen peoplehood by setting Jesus or his methods aside. One only casts the aura of election around lesser causes.

20

What Have We Learned?

Careful reflection upon this variety of patterns of thought may throw some light on our conversation about Christian faithfulness today.

Examining Prior Assumptions

It is easy to distort the discussion about the Christian and war by transmuting it into a comparison of ethical systems. As we moved through the inventory above, the critical reader has noticed that in most cases the models of ethical thought with which we were dealing represented attitudes not simply to war but to the whole problem of ethics. Arguments of almost the same form could have been presented section by section for dealing with monogamy, promise-keeping, truth-telling, or art.

Since post-Niebuhrian nonpacifists reject pacifism, they see all pacifism as utopian purism (types 8-9) or as withdrawal (9, 13-16), rather than recognizing a respectable pacifist argument when presented in their own terms (2 or 4). The advocates of situation ethics reject pacifism for its inflexible principles (3, 8). They do not bother to take seriously those pacifisms which calculate carefully in the situation (2), or which preserve the integrity of the

loving disposition of free decision in every context (11).

In such cases, in other words, people are not really discussing war; they are talking past each other out of logically incompatible prior assumptions about whether and how one can think morally at all. Each kind of pacifist position has its rootage in a wider context and should be fairly evaluated only in that frame of reference.

Comparing Logics

The argument around pacifism is only one of the points where the multiplicity of our models of ethical thought becomes manifest. Academic Protestant ethical thought in midcentury was largely dominated by the social-responsibility models of the brothers H. Richard and Reinhold Niebuhr. Academic Catholic thought was comparably dominated by older principle-application models, and by the changes in those patterns arising out of internal self-criticism.

New approaches to the problem of war played only a small role in those developments. That has begun to change in both families, and there have been rapprochements and overlappings among the several denominational worlds (including the evangelicals and the philosophers, not mentioned above) which cannot be reviewed here. Only for a few of these developments has the issue of war been part of the picture.

Does not the manifold diversity of the approaches displayed above call us to a less monochromatic practice of ethical theologizing? Each of these logics has its own integrity, as we noted under the regular rubric "Nevertheless." In each case we were able to criticize but not really to refute. Must we seek to boil each type of pacifism down to where we can call it an inferior version of some other approach?

Weaving Threads Together

My first plea is thus that each type of pacifist reasoning be respected in its own right. From that, it should not be inferred that a position which holds purely to one of these "types" will be more worthy of respect, or more effective, than one which blends them. I admit that *in some cases* mixing the modes may make for serious moral or practical confusion, especially when pragmatic arguments (type 4) or just-war reasoning (2) are interlocked with some of the others.¹

Nevertheless, it may well be the case that a position which weaves together more than one compatible strand will be more convincing, more effective, and more viable. Examples might be the positions of Martin Luther King, Jr. (types 4-5, 7, and perhaps 3), of the Catholic Worker (1, 3, 6, 9), and of Anabaptism (3, 9, 14-15). Here are fabrics where the several threads reinforce one another.

Recognizing Practical Common Conviction

A final in-group word might be addressed to the attitude of those ethically dualistic Mennonites (type 16) who, by eschewing "pacifism," risk an unavowed and uncritical acquiescence in nationalism. Their critical point is well taken. There are many kinds of pacifism held to by many kinds of Christians for many kinds of reasons (to say nothing of several more non-Christian types which we have only hinted at here). They should not be confused with each other.

Yet, having recognized this, it is time for nonresistant Mennonites to move beyond their initial defensive reflex to the recognition of a real degree of practical common conviction. They do and properly should share this common persuasion with non-Christian pacifists and (much more) with non-Mennonite Christian pacifists. There is not and need not be total agreement. But at every point a

shared antiwar commitment *nevertheless* represents a greater degree of commonality and a clearer recognition of common adversaries than when Mennonites are so concerned to stand clear of pacifism that they unconsciously but practically become covert militarists.

There is certainly a real sense in which Christians in any country, and therefore also Mennonite Christians in the United States, are not simply Americans like all their neighbors. Nevertheless, it would be more nearly correct, and contribute more logically to reasonable discussion, to say that they are Americans of a particular kind. They are Mennonite Christian Americans, not denying their origins and identity and pretending to be Russian or Argentine or Vietcong.

Likewise, there are ways Mennonites can contribute more to sober conversation. They can stop fixing upon an irrational avoidance of the word "pacifist." Instead, they can recognize with more precision and responsibility, more ecumenically and supportively, the varieties of ways in which people are led to recognize the wrongness of war and to devote themselves to the service of their fellow human beings.

Sometimes these fellow pacifists come to their positions by intelligent analysis, sometimes by emotional revulsion, sometimes by irrational optimism, and sometimes perhaps by the Spirit of God (whose workings may not always be completely distinguishable from "all of the above"). They may arrive at pacifism in ways or under labels and with understandings other than those a historic peace church has found most adequate. Yet they merit and may need recognition from and dialogue with the peace church communions. The christological nonresistance of the Radical Reformation or of the Historic Peace Churches is *nevertheless* one form of Christian pacifism, and it is most honest when it is ready to be counted as such.

Seeing the Critique Boomerang, After All

I have reviewed an assortment of varieties of religious pacifism. Now we need to reflect on the whole. It can be argued cogently that any ethical system, if taken seriously and as more than self-justification, can lead to one kind of pacifism or another. Indeed, it can cogently be demonstrated that some ethical systems *must* lead to pacifism.

These various pacifisms are sometimes compatible with one another, sometimes even mutually reinforcing (13-16; or 1-2, 4), and sometimes directly contradictory in their assumptions (4 versus 8-9, 16). Yet they are no more so than are the varied reasons people have for participating in war. In their denunciation of war, however it be explained, the moral commonality of all of them is greater than the systematic diversity.

We therefore can and should direct one form or another of the pacifist appeal to every ethical system, to every morally responsible stance a Christian can take. *As indicated under the rubric "After All," every serious critique one can address to the pacifist, if taken honestly, turns back with greater force upon the advocate of war.*